

AUGUST 2022 | BUSINESS SERVICES

BUSINESS BULLETIN

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On April 22, after more than two years apart, over 700 people from the North-east business community gathered for the 2022 Northern Star Business Awards at P&J Live.

It was great to be back and the incredible feedback we received directly and on social media suggests that the 700 people in the room certainly agree.

The Northern Star Business Awards, now in its 19th year, provide a unique stage to showcase and celebrate the brilliant work being done by businesses of all sizes, from all sectors and across the length and breadth of our fantastic area.

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It's all about people, people

THIS month's Bulletin focuses on the vital business services sector, diverse knowledge-intensive industries which provide specialised support to companies.

From legal and accountancy to facilities management. From office services and equipment to construction. From design and architecture to IT and digital services. And many more. They make up more than a fifth of the Chamber's membership of over 1,100 ambitious organisations in this region. Please do business with them!

Everything they provide is vital to keeping the world of commerce moving, but even with increasing automation and adoption of new technologies, their common currency remains people.

People still do most of the tasks required in the workplace. People buy from people. Learn from people. Relate to people. Even like them sometimes!

Every company invests to survive and develop. In property, in plant, equipment, technology, R&D, but do we see our people as an investment...or a cost?

Human capital will continue to be the single most important factor in determining the success - or failure - of Scotland's businesses and the overall economy. We often hear and read about the need for more training, skills gaps, re-skilling, lifelong learning... all of which, of course, are vital ingredients.

In the North-east of Scotland the re-skilling challenge is crystalised by our transition from a fossil fuel-driven economy to renewables.

The recent 'Making the Switch' report by Robert Gordon University shows that currently in North-east Scotland, 45,000 people are employed in the offshore energy sector.

It looks at four future scenarios and the worst of these "regional decline", sees this figure fall by an eye-watering 17,000 by 2030 as the

UK oil and gas industry declines. That's the price of failing to take the opportunity in front of us.

The good news is that if we achieve our ambitions to become a "global new energy hub", the 45,000 could grow to 54,000, but only if we get the nature and timing of related decisions right.

But even more fundamental than any of this is the growing reality of a lack of people. If our workforce simply isn't large enough, our economy will stagnate and fail to reach its potential.

In line with most European neighbours, Scotland's population is aging. By 2030, a fifth of our population will be of retirement age. By 2050, that figure will surpass a quarter, meaning, without population growth, the number of employees available to companies will continue to decline.

World Bank figures show that Scotland's population grew by only 5% between 1970 and 2020. This lags well behind peer nations



Denmark (17%), Finland (20%), Norway (38%) and Ireland (67%) and so far it seems Brexit is serving only to exacerbate this gap.

So, first and foremost, our challenge is to ensure that immigration policy is fit for purpose and even possibly devolved to regions to ensure our places have access to the workforce they need to prosper. And then we need to be better at telling our story to ensure people choose to locate, live and work here. Only then can we turn our attention to ensuring they have the necessary skills to fill the range of jobs that will power our future economy.

Back to the here and now, and as a result of the above factors, in tandem with the incredible cocktail of events we are living through, we are all in one of the tightest employment markets in living memory.

The pandemic saw staff training and development slip down the list of priorities as well as being more difficult to meaningfully deliver. Many job roles changed during this period but due to the prevailing circumstances and challenges, those staff were often not given the training to enable them to step up and deliver these new duties to the best of their ability.

The good news, however, is that a growing number of businesses see investing in staff training and development as being key to retaining and attracting the very best people in this highly competitive environment. Using training to enhance the expertise and productivity of teams provides a competitive advantage both in business performance and staff satisfaction.

And this is borne out by the increasing number of bookings and enquiries we are seeing for the comprehensive training programmes offered by the Chamber. From business, finance, management and leadership to international trade and lots more. Across our network we run around 4,000 courses attended by 30,000 delegates every year (read more at training.agcc.co.uk).

But staff development is about more than just formal training.

It's about on-the-job learning, mentoring, ad-hoc colleague support and the simple fact for employers is that achieving this and meaningful inclusion is much more challenging in a virtual environment.

New Office for National Statistics data unsurprisingly suggests that the number of people still working from home has more than doubled compared to before the pandemic, with more in Scotland than other parts of the UK. Well, there's a surprise, with Scottish Government messaging having stopped well short of saying that it's ok to return to the office.

This is a particular challenge for our young people, recent graduates or those in their first jobs from school. Many of them have never been in an office, met their colleagues face-to-face or had the opportunity for the incidental, environmental learning previous generations benefitted hugely from.

We need the public sector to take a lead and employers to be brave in resisting the idea that emergency measures should be made permanent. Otherwise, the cost will be borne by the workforce of the future, who won't have the rounded skillset we need for them, and their employers, to succeed.



Russell Borthwick
Chief Executive



Our premier partners

As well as helping our member businesses to be better through a range of activities, the Chamber is committed to investing a significant amount of energy in moving forward the economic growth agenda and lobbying for change on key issues to create the conditions for success. Our regional renaissance.

Without the support of our Premier Partners, we would not be able to undertake much of the good work that we do. Their engagement is hugely valued and appreciated.



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wood. worknest



Jane Spiers

APA officially Living Wage employer

ABERDEEN Performing Arts has been accredited as a Living Wage employer. The Living Wage commitment means everyone working at the charitable organisation receives a minimum hourly wage of £9.90 per hour, positively affecting 165 staff.

This rate is higher than the government minimum for over 23s, which currently stands at £9.50 per hour.

In Scotland, more than 14% of all jobs pay less than the real Living Wage - around 330,000 jobs.

TAQA successfully removes Brae installations

ABU Dhabi National Energy Company (TAQA), has completed the safe and successful removal of the Brae Alpha West drilling rig (Rig 1) and the Brae Bravo upper main jacket in the Northern North Sea.

The operation, which was the latest in TAQA's extensive UKCS decommissioning programme, involved the removal and transport of more than 12,000 tonnes of material.

The HAF Consortium, Heerema Marine Contractors and AF Offshore Decom, were contracted to execute the operation on behalf of TAQA.

The Heerema-operated Sleipnir semi-submersible crane vessel first removed the 1,000 tonne Brae Alpha Rig 1, in a single lift.

Sleipnir then moved to Brae Bravo to remove the 11,000-tonne upper main jacket. This forms part of TAQA's decommissioning obligations and follows the removal of the Brae Bravo topsides modules and flare bridge, jacket and tower last summer - one of the largest topsides removals in the UK North Sea.

The operation was completed with zero health and safety incidents.

Both Rig 1 and the Brae Bravo jacket have been safely offloaded at the AFOD Environmental Base in Vats, Norway, and are being processed with the aim of reusing or recycling 95% or more of the material, which is expected to be completed in 2023.

Changing the world for the better

Net Zero Technology Centre (NZTC) has launched applications for the fifth cohort of its award-winning TechX Clean Energy Accelerator programme.

With up to £100,000 of grant funding available for 12 clean energy start-ups, the programme will help high potential companies scale up through mentorship, expert technology development guidance, commercial support and access to an extensive industry network.

Backed by its global Strategic Partners - bp, Equinor and ADNOC - the programme presents unique opportunities for participating start-ups to refine their business models and investor propositions, find potential field trials, raise additional funding and more.

The TechX Clean Energy Accelerator has an established track record of helping start-ups shine. Since the programme launched in 2018, its alumni of 45 technology start-ups have gone on to raise £33million of additional equity funding and achieve five commercialisations. Their innovative solutions are set to save millions of tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year by the end of the decade, propelling carbon intensive industries towards net zero.

The online application process is now open for the TechX Clean Energy Accelerator, which will begin in February 2023. Applications will close on October 9, 2022, with places confirmed in December 2022.

Verlume and Oasis Marine Power sign MoU

VERLUME, an intelligent energy management and storage technologies specialist, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with electric vessel recharging pioneer Oasis Marine Power.

The MoU will explore the creation of new intelligent in-field energy storage and charging infrastructure for crew transfer vessels, further enabling electrification of offshore wind farm operations.

The non-exclusive MoU will evaluate the viability of using an intelligent power conditioning and management system with a powered mooring station to create a microgrid interface within the wind farm. This innovative configuration will allow for the in-field charging of hybrid and electric wind farm vessels, contributing to significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions over the life of the wind farm.

The proposed intelligent infield charging system will use energy available at the optimum time whilst providing a safe mooring point and maximising value to both the vessel and offshore wind farm operator.

Exclusive:

Ambitious AAB on acquisition hunt

IT IS now 32 years since accountants Mike Brown, Bobby Anderson and Sheena Anderson left their jobs at EY set up their new business, Anderson, Anderson & Brown, with just five staff in offices in Carden Place.

Today, thanks to the entrepreneurial DNA which they embedded in the firm, AAB employs around 550 staff, continues to expand and has its purpose-built headquarters on the Prime Four business park at Kingswells.

Its first-year turnover of around £600,000 has now multiplied by a factor of 70 to £420million.

Last year AAB merged with Glasgow-based accountancy firm Hardie Caldwell and then acquired Edinburgh-based Purpose HR. Following that, AAB secured significant investment from August Equity to fast-track its ambitious growth plans and strategic vision of becoming a key UK regional player in the accountancy and wider business services market.

The tech-enabled business critical services group then followed that with mergers of Sagars in Leeds and recently announced a merger with FPM, a leading all-Ireland independent accountancy and business advisory firm which builds on its regional presence across the UK.

“There will definitely be more M&A activity in the year ahead,” said

Graeme Allan, the Chief Executive who has been driving the growth for the past seven years. “There are deals either in exclusivity or well advanced in the pipeline, and as well as more M&A activity, there will also be quite a lot of integration this year. We are bringing these large regional businesses together under the banner of the AAB group, but with the intention of taking the best parts of each as part of the integration.

“It is about learning from the other businesses which are joining us, so the group adopts best practice.

“August was brought on board because the AAB partners wanted an investor to back our strategic aim which is to build a big regional business across the UK which is tech-enabled. We needed an investment partner who wanted to support our journey, rather than a private equity house that wanted us to deliver their plan.

“August was very much aligned with our strategic aim around bringing together big regional businesses across the UK which have good cultural alignment. It’s not about being in every town and in every city, it’s about acquiring regional hubs, in partnership, to make a group which is

Graeme Allan,
Chief Executive,
Anderson Anderson & Brown LLP

**NEW L
MORE
SAME**

and the desire to give clients an 'awesome service' is as strong today as it was over 30 years ago. The same can be said about building a great team with great people."

Graeme joined the business in 2007 when the transformation was in its infancy. Diversification from a traditional accountancy firm to one more focused on business services with the start-up of its payroll and wealth businesses took a few more years. Now AAB is providing audit and accounting, tax, payroll and HR, outsourcing and consultancy, wealth management and advisory solutions globally from offices across Scotland, England and now Ireland, but also with multinational clients around the globe.

When Graeme took over as Managing Partner in 2015 the business was still very North-east focused and the diversification he has guided since then has not simply been about geographical expansion and from a very energy focused business.

"Change at AAB was as much about creating opportunities for the team as it was about the speed at which the business was growing," he said. "We had a lot of great team members we needed to try to retain and make it possible for them to develop their careers taking them all the way from coming in as a school leaver or a graduate to becoming a Partner. The only way to do that was to create more roles and therefore build the business. We were also losing people at that time who had perhaps joined the business after university, had qualified here and passed their exams. They were then returning to the central belt for family reasons or lifestyle. Having a different footprint somewhere else has allowed us to retain quite a few who otherwise would have left us.

"The expanded footprint allowed us to demonstrate we could build our business in a different geography and that took us to the next part of the journey, understanding that the professional services world was changing.

“

When Bobby, Sheena and Mike set up AAB they wanted to deliver services to the SME market and that continues to be the focus of the group.

different to what is in the market at the moment.

"When Bobby, Sheena and Mike set up AAB they wanted to deliver services to the SME market and that continues to be the focus of the group. Yes, today we have a considerable number of enterprise clients but the majority of our clients across the group would all fit in the SME space

**LOOK.
SERVICES.
PEOPLE.**

AAB

“We probably started that journey earlier than others because we recognised that, by the mid-2020s, professional services would probably look different as the demand for more services from the same provider became prevalent. CV19 accelerated that change. We were thinking more like a business services business before CV19 which allowed us to explore the private equity opportunity in the business services space.

“Following the deal we did in Ireland recently our team is now over 550 and we are still recruiting like crazy.”

AAB describes itself as “a tech-enabled business” and according to Graeme that has been a crucial factor in its growth.

“Technologies are changing dramatically in business services. It’s important from a client

perspective - in terms of how they use technology day-to-day which dictates how they want to buy services. It’s also important from a team perspective, allowing people to work from anywhere, giving them the best platform and enabling them to make their job more interesting by removing repetitive tasks. It is about them being more client facing, giving more advice and supporting those clients.”

He said being tech-enabled was important so that the group has all the latest technology and back systems to facilitate things like single point sign on, mobile access and functionality which clients now want.

“Further down the line it is about how we capture information from clients. There are no paper records anymore and that’s what they want. We need systems which allow us to make the clients’ experience the best and the simplest it can be.

“If you take data from the source systems, you can automate quite a lot which is better from the team’s perspective and the clients.”

He said AAB remains committed to Aberdeen and the North-east and the technological revolution has strengthened the area’s position.

“Aberdeen is always going to be seen to be the head office. It is where our biggest single people population is and it’s a significant part of our business. We see it developing and growing in the same way we would have in any previous year.

“The ability to work from anywhere means that we have people in the team now who are remote to any of the offices, including Aberdeen, but work for the business. That’s partly the way we are organised in terms of the divisions or business units we have. We will have team members working on audits in Aberdeen who are in Edinburgh or Leeds or Glasgow or wherever, because we can.”

He said integration will be one of the main challenges in the year ahead, but they could not ignore the fact that there are huge inflationary pressures across pay.

“Inflation is a challenge we will face, just like everybody else, it’s the biggest inflationary pressure seen probably since the 70s.”

For Graeme personally there is the challenge of a significantly increased number of team members.

“You have to recognise that looking after 100 people and looking after 600 people requires something quite different. What you need is for the those leading to all have the same mindset and direction of travel for the business and I’m very lucky to have a great leadership team.”





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HOT TOPIC

“If you had £3billion to improve transport in the North-east, how would you spend it?”



For me, the primary thing would be rail improvements. Peterhead and Fraserburgh are the largest towns in the UK without adequate rail links to Aberdeen, a city which struggles because there is no rail link to the airport. So, my primary focus would be improving the rail links, bringing people to our regional hub and, from an airport perspective, attracting people internationally. Improvements in the air routes and accessibility around the airport would be my next major focus. Peterhead and Fraserburgh would be connected and the airport would be connected to the city, all via rail. Give them a billion each and, if there was anything left over, make sure that the airport reflects the national nature of Aberdeen in terms of destinations and connectivity. And when people arrive, they should find what they expect elsewhere – a train link straight to centre of the city.

Richard Tinto, *The Vision Guy*, Tinto Architecture



A monorail from South harbour to the city centre and out to Dyce - and at some point a link out to Deeside far as Ballater. If we're serious about tourism in the North-east, then a royal connection with Deeside is an absolute must and the easiest way to do it is from a high level, not a ground level train, but a monorail. I've seen them in other parts of the world and they are fabulous. I'm really genuine about the monorail. Trying to get hard surface infrastructure into an established environment as we have in a large part of the UK is very, very difficult. A monorail on stilts is nearly invisible, it's silent, it's clean, it's got electric induction motors and it is the way forward. I don't know how we manage forward because I've lost faith entirely in the master plans that we've come forward with in Aberdeen. Each one is worse than the previous one and they have been since the superb 1952 "Granite City" masterplan. And it's all to do with politicians trying to do something to gain public support to keep them in office. And really that's not what the management of our community and environment is about long term.

John Michie, *Partner*, Charles Michies Pharmacy



Looking at the bigger picture for Aberdeen means creating a destination that visitors and businesses aspire to be part of. Before investing in transport that goes against the low emission targets and positive change the pedestrianisation of Union Street created, there needs to be the equivalent foresight of cities such as Dundee. Using investment that attracts tourism and in turn, helps the city's economy is a must. As a business, our aim is to create a sustainable way of working when it comes to transportation of goods and our products – investment to encourage and support local businesses and the community with these efforts would be welcome by many. Investing in improvements such as the use of electric vehicles (charging points etc), ensuring transport infrastructure supports neighbourhoods to utilise greener transport options, improving efficiency of transport routes and encouraging the development of greenways by improving pedestrianisation would all be positive investments. Attracting tourism and investing in the North-east to help move towards its aims of reducing the carbon footprint of our transportation is vital.

Ali Baxter, *Brand Director*, Burnobennie Distillery



Fergus Mutch, Geoff Aberdein, Martin Gilbert and Aileen Easton

True North strategic advisory firm launched

TWO of Scotland's most highly regarded strategic communications professionals have launched True North, a new strategic advisory firm headquartered in Aberdeen and supporting organisations across the UK.

Geoff Aberdein and Fergus Mutch have formed a partnership specialising in public policy insight, advocacy expertise and impactful communications strategies for a range of businesses and organisations, particularly those navigating the transition towards net zero.

Geoff Aberdein is former Global Head of Public Affairs, Policy and Campaigns at abrdn plc and former Chief of Staff to the First Minister of Scotland. Fergus Mutch is the former Head of Communications and Research for the SNP.

The two Managing Partners are joined by Aileen Easton, a respected communications expert with a background in government communications and national newspapers, as Chief Corporate Affairs Adviser.

Lending his considerable insight as the partnership's Business Ambassador is Martin Gilbert, Co-founder and retired CEO of Aberdeen Asset Management and presently Chairman of AssetCo, fintech company Revolut, Aberdeen's Net Zero Technology Centre and Scottish Golf. Martin will play a key role in identifying opportunities for True North to grow.

Geoff Aberdein, Managing Partner, said: "True North is already making positive change happen for a number of organisations and I'm delighted that, by launching this partnership, we are in a position to grow the business as well as the scale of support and services we offer to enhance our clients' profile and reputation.

"Many businesses are seeking expert advice and guidance in navigating the policy and communications landscape through a crucial period of economic recovery and the transition to a low carbon economy. True North has the team and expertise in place to support them in identifying and maximising the opportunities as part of this process."

Fergus Mutch, Managing Partner, said: "Geoff and I have worked closely together for many years, on high-profile campaigns and media strategy. We share a keen focus on getting the best outcomes for our clients and their teams. Embedding ourselves in organisations to deliver maximum lasting impact is fundamental to the True North approach.

"We're both proud of our North-east roots, and understand the leading role our home city is already playing in the net zero revolution. But we share a broad international outlook, through established connections in the global energy, finance and food and drink sectors.

"We're excited by what the future holds for True North, eager to work with new partners as we grow and will be actively building capacity in our team in the months ahead."



Nick Scott

Brodies closes in on £100million revenue

UK and leading Scottish law firm, Brodies LLP, has reported a twelfth consecutive year of growth for the 12 months to April 30, 2022.

The firm reported revenue of £98.5million, up 19.5% from £82.5million the previous year. Operating profit increased from £39million to £46.1million.

Throughout the year, Brodies assisted its clients to navigate a wide range of domestic, international, political and economic factors, against a constantly changing backdrop, with each practice area - banking and finance, corporate and commercial, litigation, personal and family, and real estate - delivering double digit income growth.

The financial year to April 2021 had seen the firm prioritise the wellbeing, roles and financial security of all colleagues at the height of the pandemic. That judgement saw it begin the year to April 2022 with a full complement of colleagues across all areas. Continued investment in people over the last 12 months saw headcount increase from 748 to 771 with all eligible colleagues receiving bonuses in May 2021, January 2022, and June 2022.

Brodies Managing Partner, Nick Scott, said: "Our clients, be they businesses, individuals or organisations, continue to seek the support of our firm on new and interesting instructions. We are grateful for their continued support to which our progress this year is testament. Our firm's management boards remain focused on their core task of delivering the remaining outcomes targeted in our 2021-24 strategic plans.

"Throughout the year, investments continued to be made in people, with recruitment of colleagues in legal and business services teams, the payment of bonuses, and the introduction of new reward structures more closely aligning individual performance with reward. These measures represent the single largest investment in colleagues and colleague reward the firm has, to date, made.

"We begin the 2022/23 financial year inspired by our clients and our colleagues, aware of the challenges but excited by the opportunities ahead, and conscious of our responsibilities as a business and to the communities in which we work."

ITI acquires Cimlogic

ITI, one of the UK's largest independent systems integrators, has acquired Cimlogic, a leading digital manufacturing solutions and services provider to some of the world's largest manufacturers.

This acquisition will enable the group to provide a wider, end-to-end portfolio of digital solutions which advance customers' operations and have the ability to transform the way manufacturing and national infrastructure operates in our rapidly changing world.

ITI is currently celebrating 50 years of experience providing real-time monitoring and information systems to the UK's major operators in the energy and infrastructure sectors. These systems monitor and predict safety issues and equipment performance. Cimlogic's solutions complement these capabilities by enabling reduced costs, regulatory compliance, increased capacity, on-time delivery, accelerated new product introduction and sustainable operations.

More than £1million worth of contract wins for AV One Solutions

ABERDEEN audiovisual company AV One Solutions, has won significant new business and invested in its operations as the demand for remote communication and live, in-person events continues to surge. The firm has secured over a million pounds' worth of contracts within the last six months. The work relates to the audiovisual equipment sales and installation side of the business, resulting from the need for companies to better accommodate hybrid working, as well as a major growth in the events offering following the return of in-person gatherings and the need to include remote participants.

The firm has invested a five-figure sum in its Bridge of Don office with the creation of a new demonstration facility, a purpose-built space where customers will be able to view and test a range of audiovisual equipment, remote collaboration and digital solutions. The recent addition of Grant MacLean as Business Development Manager, brings the company's workforce to 10 staff.

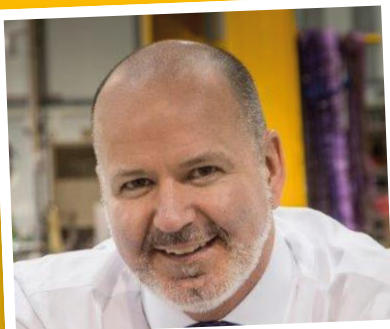
Managing Director, Graeme McGuire, said: "Live business events - whether conferences, townhalls, presentations, exhibitions, dinners or award ceremonies - have been a cornerstone of our business since we launched, and like the rest of the events industry, we're excited to see their full return. The past two years have underlined the importance of meeting face-to-face and the social benefits that brings, with live business events playing a crucial role. Now they've fully resumed, we are seeing the inclusion of online streaming as standard and are ready to support the varying needs of organisers."

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MEET THE



Jim Davidson,
CEO,
Albacom Limited

WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

Albacom was once part of the Ferranti group, established in 1953. We have over 60 years of trading history, and Albacom as we know it was officially founded in 1990.

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

Albacom delivers customised solutions in electronic, mechanical, sustainable and assembly engineering. Our collaborative approach and expertise results in high-quality, reliable products and customer outcomes.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE AT THE MOMENT?

Our key markets are proving slow to recover from the pandemic. Timescales are unpredictable and it's difficult to forward plan.

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

Our ability to provide battery storage combined with control systems into the green energy market. Battery storage systems can store energy when it's available from renewable sources and release it on demand across a wide range of commercial and industrial applications.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE AND PROUD OF?

Our skilled team has made it possible to diversify and react to change in the market. With roots in the defence sector, we're now proud to offer services from three additional core divisions.

WHAT DO YOU FIND VALUABLE AS MEMBERS OF ABERDEEN + GRAMPIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE?

We value the chance to gain insight through up-to-date market knowledge and the chance to efficiently network with a neighbouring region is great.



Dr Cristina Romete,
CEO,
ROC Private Clinic Limited

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

Our private GPs and Consultant Specialists are committed to offering the finest level of medical care in a relaxed, pleasant, and professional setting. Our physicians have extensive hospital and general practise expertise. They train alongside our London colleagues to continue their medical education and ensure that their clinical practise reflects the most recent

developments in medicine, in order to give patients with the most up-to-date care. Our Aberdeen clinic provides a wide array of on-site investigations, with rapid laboratory turnaround of 24 hours for certain investigations - a feature that sets us apart from many other medical facilities.

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

We provide all types of healthcare to private patients either with or without medical insurance. We also provide a full range of occupational health services to companies in many sectors and locations across the UK.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE AT THE MOMENT?

As a private healthcare provider, we see the coming months and years as pivotal in supporting the NHS for private patients as we exit from the world of CV19. Also, from an occupational health perspective transitioning from the safety of staff CV19 testing to then provide a range of services that have been overlooked in previous years will be a challenge. The focus will be to

provide companies with healthcare that supports their staff and promotes a "healthy staff, healthy business" ethos.

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

With free care available on the NHS making the decision to self-pay to receive the care you need when you need it will be a seismic mind shift for some people but the coming years with undoubtedly see a change in how the public access healthcare. Medical insurance cover will be on the rise to effectively allow people to afford private healthcare.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE AND PROUD OF?

Our mission statement is "Excellence - Every patient, Every time". Our patients are our responsibility and providing a five star service is paramount to delivering this. A lot of patients have struggled over the last two years to access care and treatments that due to CV19 were not available at the time and we are proud to have assisted with this and ensured that every patient we treat receives "excellence".

MEMBERS



Cerri McDonald,
Managing Director,
Prospect 13

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

We are a vibrant marketing agency supporting businesses to better manage their marketing and communications. Our goal is to offer strategic marketing vision and insights whilst delivering a hands-on specialised service tailored to suit clients' business challenges.

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

We support a diverse portfolio of cross sector businesses including energy, automotive, education, commercial property development, technology, events and professional services. We make large marketing agency-style capability accessible and affordable to SME's through our flexible subscription-based support model and a pool of creative talent where skills are matched to client need on a project-by-project basis.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE AT THE MOMENT?

Finding the right people with the right skillset to fit with our ethos and values can sometimes pose a challenge. With most of our new work coming from referrals and recommendations from the existing client base, we have achieved success this year which has led to a recruitment drive, and I am proud of our strong team of eight supporting clients in the UK and globally. Therefore, ensuring we continue to attract and retain highly

skilled people is a huge priority, but it does bring with it some hurdles.

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

We are experiencing an upcycle in clients who are keen to expand their marketing efforts and embrace digital marketing as a tool for success. As such, we will be ramping up our web design services as well as tapping into new target sectors that we believe we can add value and continue to deliver the highest levels of marketing support and customer satisfaction.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE AND PROUD OF?

The P13 dream team. Our success so far is down to the passion, commitment and tenacity that myself, my team and family have put in to make Prospect 13 the business it is today. It's incredible what you can achieve with an inspired idea and a lot of hard work, and I'm delighted to have cultivated strong values, culture and growth mindset.



Murray Alexander,
Managing Director,
XIC - Design | Print | Display

WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED?

In 1986 by our former owner Bill Fawcett, known as Xpress Print, then becoming Xpress Image Communications (XIC) in 2006.

WHAT DOES YOUR BUSINESS DO?

At our core we provide creative design, print and display services.

WHAT SORT OF COMPANIES DO YOU DO BUSINESS WITH?

We work with a variety of sectors including energy, automotive, hospitality, healthcare, education, legal and many more.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE AT THE MOMENT?

Managing the rapid regrowth of our business following the effects of the pandemic.

AND THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY?

Focusing on our display service. We introduced this last year and have already been working on some great office branding projects for local companies including Well-Safe Solutions, Waverley Tools and Boskalis.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE AND PROUD OF?

How we have maintained our ability to consistently deliver very high levels of service and added value despite whatever challenges we may have faced, testament to having a great team.

WHAT HAS BEEN MOST VALUABLE TO YOU AS MEMBERS OF ABERDEEN + GRAMPIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE?

Getting the opportunity to support annual events such as the Northern Star Business Awards and The Ultimate Business Show along with smaller scale events has certainly helped us raise our general profile.



Duncan and Todd team members

Duncan and Todd Group bring hearing care to Banchory

SCOTLAND'S largest privately-owned optician and hearing care provider has added Eyewise Optometrists in Banchory to its growing portfolio. Eyewise Optometrists, based on Banchory's High Street, is now trading as Duncan and Todd, with staff and patients transferring to the Duncan and Todd Group.

As well as bringing audiology services to the Aberdeenshire town for the first time, the latest acquisition takes Duncan and Todd Group's total branches to more than 40 across Scotland.

Group Managing Director, Frances Rus, said: "We are pleased to have added another branch to our location offering, meaning we now have 13 branches across Aberdeen City and Shire.

"As a fellow long-established independent optometrist who is committed to providing a high quality and personal service to its local communities, Eyewise Optometrists was a great fit for us, and the team are excited to expand our offering to the community in Banchory."

Science centre is visitors' choice

ABERDEEN Science Centre has received the Traveler's Choice Award from Tripadvisor for the second year in a row, just weeks after achieving five-star visitor attraction status by VisitScotland.

Travelers' Choice recognises businesses which consistently deliver great service. Businesses awarded this certificate are ranking among the top 10% of listings on Tripadvisor, and to qualify, a visitor attraction must have great reviews from travellers around the globe on Tripadvisor over the last 12 months.

Bryan Snelling, Chief Executive of Aberdeen Science Centre, said the award is extremely valuable, as it directly reflects a visitor's experience.

"The team has done an amazing job engaging and supporting visitors to the science centre, and that's often pointed out along with our fascinating science experiments in the reviews."

Hemp oil production development

COLD pressed hemp oil has been commercially produced in Scotland for the first time, inspired by research taking place at the University of Aberdeen's Rowett Institute into the crop's nutritional, health and environmental benefits.

Hemp cultivation dates back more than 6,000 years and it was once widely grown in Scotland. It is currently being used in building materials, as a biofuel, textile fabric, food source and even as an alternative to plastic.

Now, cold pressed hemp oil has been commercially produced in the North-east using Scottish hemp seed grown in Aberdeenshire and Angus and pressed at Norvite Animal Nutrition Company north of Oldmeldrum.

The development comes as a result of research taking place at the Rowett Institute led by Dr Madalina Neacsu and others. Their insights into the benefits of hemp led to Dr Neacsu establishing the partnership that led to last week's pressing, which includes the involvement of Scottish farmers from the Scottish Hemp Growers Association.

The oil and by-products from the first cold pressing will now be used to investigate the potential of hemp as a sustainable food crop.

Well-Safe raises £50million

SPECIALIST well decommissioning services provider Well-Safe Solutions has completed its third investment round, raising £50million.

Well-Safe Solutions will use the funds for the purchase of its third rig and to broaden the capabilities it offers to clients around the world.

The funding round was led by MW&L Capital Partners, a London-based principal investment and financial advisory firm, with participation from a consortium of new and existing investors.

This latest investment brings the total capital raised by the company to more than £150million.

ASCO's role in Suriname energy

GLOBAL integrated logistics and materials management company, ASCO, has signed an agreement with Kuldipsingh Port to provide technical expertise for its supply base operations, playing a major role in Suriname's energy industry.

The agreement will involve the Aberdeen headquartered company supporting new oil and gas developments and collaborating with local businesses to encourage regional investment and key recruitment opportunities for local people.

APEX

TUBULARS

www.apex-tubulars.com

Apex Tubulars, originally formed in 1984, specialise in the supply of downhole casing, tubing and associated accessories for the offshore and onshore oil, gas and renewable energy sectors.

At Apex Tubulars customer satisfaction and the personal touch is paramount! As a small dynamic team with 100 years of experience between us, we strive to provide our clients with the highest quality casing and tubing and we ensure that every step of the order process is flawless.

In 2021 we moved into more energy efficient offices located in Westhill, making us within easy reach of the bypass and Aberdeen airport.

We are passionate about social performance and pride ourselves in supporting our local community. Most recently, Apex participated in the River Dee Trust Initiative to sponsor the planting of new trees along the banks of the River.

After nearly 40 years, Apex Tubulars are still going strong and we look forward to many more years supporting the energy sector in the North Sea and around the world.



SCAN HERE
FOR MORE
INFORMATION



Thanks a million Kayleigh

OLDMELDRUM-based charity, Kayleigh's Wee Stars (KWS) has raised a total of £1million following the success of its flagship fundraising event, the Barra 10k, which has been run for the first time since 2019.

KWS was set up in 2012 by Jonathan and Anna Cordiner after losing their two-year-old daughter Kayleigh to a terminal brain tumour.

Around 200 participants ran the Barra 10k as well as 130 youngsters who ran the children's races co-ordinated by Active Schools. Due to the success of the event KWS is now looking to double the capacity of the event to 600 for 2023.

A KWS team is also taking part in Ride the North 2022 on Saturday, August 27, to fundraise for the charity. In addition, KWS is organising its annual, family-friendly, cycle sportive which will take place in autumn and information is available via its website - www.kayleighsweestars.co.uk



Mark Williams, Alistair Findlater and Tony Dawson

Sandaig's first renewables contract

SANDAIG Engineering has won its first renewables contract. It will be supplying consultancy services to Kinetic Renewable Services which provides wind turbine service, maintenance and statutory inspections.

Sandaig Engineering offers tailored QA/QC supply chain, project management and quality engineering consultancy services to energy operators around the globe. This new work augments current long-term contracts with oil and gas operators in the UK, Norway and Europe.

In 2018 when Sandaig Engineering launched, energy transition was well underway and moving into the renewables sector was high on its agenda.

New "Stories from our Home"

VISITABERDEENSHIRE has added to its suite of videos in the "Stories from our Home" series featuring local people who work in or around the tourism sector, describing their passion for the region they call home. Four new videos have been released.

Each video tells of a different aspect of the North-east from its culture and heritage, outdoor activities, wildlife and food and drink

Chris Foy, Chief Executive of VisitAberdeenshire, said: "The authentic voices in these engaging videos capture the essence of the region and its many diverse, top quality attractions. We are sure they will help entice visitors to come and experience for themselves all that this beautiful part of the world has to offer."

Sport Aberdeen and Denis Law Legacy Trust kickstart new partnership

SPORT Aberdeen has kickstarted a dynamic new partnership with Denis Law Legacy Trust and its flagship programme, Streetsport.

Streetsport, delivered in partnership with Robert Gordon University, aims to improve the lives of young people through free week-nightly sports and creative activity sessions across Aberdeen City.

The new collaboration, which will run until March 2023, will see Sport Aberdeen provide free access to its 3G pitches at both Lochside Academy Astro and Northfield Bill Burr Astro for Streetsport to deliver its weekly Friday night sessions.

Tony Dawson, Sport Aberdeen Chairman, said: "The new partnership provides exceptional synergies as both Sport Aberdeen and Streetsport are committed to creating opportunities for young people to take part in sport and physical activity.

"We look forward to working more closely with Streetsport and supporting each other with future opportunities."

Alistair Findlater, Denis Law Legacy Trust Chairman, said: "We're very grateful to Sport Aberdeen for their continued support and partnership. In a climate of spiralling costs for many, being able to host Streetsport sessions and offer free sport to young people across the city is so important.

"Having free access to the Astro pitches means we can deliver these sessions to the best of our ability with added staff and sporting equipment to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for our participants."



Aberdeen to host global energy conference

FOR the first time, Scotland will host the World Energy Council's Energy Trilemma Summit and 2022 Executive Assembly. The events take place on October 12 and 13 at Aberdeen's P&J Live.

The summit and assembly, which is themed "Transformational solutions in turbulent times," will be attended by representatives from the world's energy community who will discuss practical actions to accelerate clean and just energy transitions in all global regions, with special attention to transformational solutions which address the energy trilemma of security, affordability, and environmental sustainability.

These two events bring together the World Energy Council's leadership and expert community from nearly 100 countries. They are part of the countdown to the Council's centenary anniversary of listening, learning and leading in energy since 1923 and the first World Power Conference in 1924 when Kilmarnock entrepreneur Daniel Nicol Dunlop founded the world's first, permanent energy organisation which could transcend national politics.

Cooperation agreement signed

NEPTUNE Energy, ExxonMobil subsidiary XTO Netherlands Ltd, Rosewood Exploration Ltd and EBN Capital BV have signed a cooperation agreement to progress the L10 large-scale offshore carbon capture and storage project in the Dutch North Sea.

The agreement brings together the technical and commercial capabilities necessary to create a robust carbon storage offering for industrial customers in the Dutch sector. It intends to take the L10 carbon capture and storage development to the concept select stage in 2022 and to have the project FEED-ready by the end of the year, followed by the submission of a storage licence application.

ESS chef to Andrew Fairlie

IZABELA Ginter, Chef de Partie for ESS, the defence, energy and government services sector of Compass Group UK & Ireland, has been announced as the first apprentice to take up a placement at Restaurant Andrew Fairlie.

Izabela was chosen from a number of high performing Compass Scotland apprentices to join Scotland's only two Michelin-starred chef and Compass Scotland's Culinary Ambassador, Stephen (Stevie) McLaughlin, for a four-month internship. She will work alongside the award-winning team and learn direct from Stevie in the kitchen at Restaurant Andrew Fairlie at Gleneagles in Perthshire.

A former winner of the Compass Young Chef of the Year competition, Izabela also won three awards at the Salon Culinare in March 2022, one of the world's top competitions for chefs.

Port video provides bird's eye view

A PROMOTIONAL video for the newly rebranded Port of Aberdeen has been selected among the "Best Animated Videos" by global agency Design Rush.

The innovative animation was designed and produced by Aberdeen-based digital media production company, signal, which was tasked with creating a short and catchy 2D animation to promote the organisation's new brand.

In its review of "Best Animated Videos," Design Rush describes signal's video animation for Port of Aberdeen as "expertly crafted." The feature applauds the designers' ability to "bring the port to life by simulating the location along with its processes" and calls it a "bird's eye view of the entire Port of Aberdeen."

AREG's first Energy Futures Conference and Exhibition

ABERDEEN Renewable Energy Group (AREG) will host its first Energy Futures Conference and Exhibition on November 15, bringing together diverse stakeholders to discuss the latest technology developments and the fast pace of change required to reach net zero.

Offering interactive speaker and panel sessions, networking and dedicated exhibition spaces, the event at Aberdeen's P&J Live conference centre, will showcase North of Scotland capabilities and ambitions on a broad range of topics including primary energy production, community and household initiatives, heating and transport systems - underlining the need to decarbonise energy systems and scale up renewable energy production.

The conference programme will delve into new projects, skills and supply chain priorities and highlight latest innovations and barriers to overcome with contributions from industries, communities and policy makers.



DeltaTek team

DeltaTek Global announce exponential growth

DELTA TEK Global has announced exponential growth throughout the first half of 2022 including, surpassed milestones, internal growth and portfolio expansion.

DeltaTek is paving the way to Ultimate Cement Placement thanks to the deployment of its forward-thinking solutions, including SeaCure®, QuikCure®, CoreCure® and SeaCureRS®. The entire Cure Range has contributed to DeltaTek surpassing multiple cost-saving milestones for its clients, including global net CO₂ savings of 10,000 MT and over 1,000 rig hours.

Furthermore, SeaCure® has been deployed to more than 83% of new UK subsea riserless cement jobs with further contracts already secured, forecasting a successful remainder of 2022.

Thanks to DeltaTek surpassing its operational targets and a 30% increase in its historic global job count, the highly skilled team has seen further expansion.

CEO Tristram Horn comments: "DeltaTek's global growth, successful technology deployments and the expansion of our team is reflective of our commitment to the continuous development of the well construction industry.

"Following on from DeltaTek's success in 2021, we are delighted to see such promising results so early in 2022. With further contracts already secured for the remainder of the year, we're looking forward to continuing to support our customers with our well construction solutions."

Ithaca contract for Well-Safe

WELL-Safe Solutions has been contracted by Ithaca Energy to plug and abandon six wells on the Anglia platform in the Southern North Sea, approximately 55km from the UK mainland.

The contract – for an undisclosed sum - will see the Aberdeen-based well decommissioning specialist provide project management, well engineering and all managed delivery services for the project.

The Well-Safe Protector harsh environment jack-up rig is nearing the end of extensive technical preparations and will mobilise to the field in late summer 2022.

Research anticipates face to face meeting this year

LONDON North Eastern Railway (LNER) has revealed that 89% of office workers are confident that face-to-face meeting will become the norm again by the end of the year.

The insight into what the future of business travel looks like forms part of a new report, Railway to Recovery.

To help navigate the new world of business travel, LNER worked with experts Thread & Bloom and Nina & Pinta to identify the key challenges that lie ahead for businesses, such as hybrid working and bringing teams together face to face.

Based on specially commissioned research with regular business travellers and in-depth interviews with some of the UK's largest travel buyers, LNER found 46% admitted that when it comes to the pandemic, it was harder to maintain existing relationships and 37% believe a lack of face-to-face meetings would negatively impact.

Research contained in the report also shows that environmental and productivity benefits are major reasons why business travellers choose to travel by rail. More than half (53%) cited working on the move as one of the reasons they prefer rail and 49% said it was down to environmental reasons – recognising that business travel can be both productive and environmentally sustainable.

Using technology to tackle homelessness

ABERDEEN City Council has become the first local authority in Scotland to adopt a new technology-led approach to tackling homelessness.

The council has partnered with an online fundraising platform and social enterprise which helps homeless people and council tenants at risk of homelessness to find jobs.

The social enterprise organisation, Beam, was launched in London in 2017 and has gone on to support more than 850 homeless people across the UK into stable jobs and homes.

Through Beam's platform, residents can fundraise for the cost of items that can be a financial obstacle to starting work, such as job training, childcare, a laptop and, travel costs.

As well as providing funding support, Beam has also built tools to aid jobseekers with CV writing, job interview preparation and online job applications. Beam then matches residents with employers it has partnerships with.

Beam honours the council's strong commitment to reduce homelessness across Aberdeen and aligns with the rapid rehousing transition plan which aims to end homelessness in Aberdeen by 2024.



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Milestone campaign for Exceed

WELL management expert Exceed has been awarded a milestone, vessel-based well plugging and abandonment (P&A) campaign to be carried out in partnership with Mermaid Subsea Services UK on behalf of four operators.

The result of a tranche of initial bids from the strategic partnership builds on Exceed's 130+ well abandonment track record is the company's largest vessel-based well P&A campaign to date and represents Mermaid's entry into the North Sea marketplace.

The multi-operator vessel-based campaign is thought to be one of the largest its type on the UKCS for at least a decade and currently comprises the decommissioning of 10 E&A wells across Northern, Central and Southern areas.

P&J Live - Venue of the Year

SCOTLAND'S newest live events venue, P&J Live, has been named Venue of the Year (more than 20,000sqm) at the AEO Awards, defeating ADNEC - Abu Dhabi National Exhibitions Centre, ExCeL London, RAI Amsterdam, SEC - Scottish Events Campus, The NEC and The O2 in London.

It was also named Best Conference Venue (401-1100 Theatre Style) at the Conference and Events Awards 2022. The competition included other shortlisted entrants Etele Plaza, Hilton London Bankside, London Hilton Park Lane, The Belfry Hotel & Resort, The Mermaid London, Whittlebury Hall & Spa and Wyboston Lakes Resort.

Smashing the career break curse

ENGINEERS and people working in STEM in Aberdeen have the opportunity to break through the so-called "career break curse" thanks to a new job scheme launched by Harbour Energy.

The independent oil and gas company has teamed up with award-winning STEM Returners to run the scheme at its site in Aberdeen and roles will include technical assistants in the subsurface business unit and a change and release engineer and incident and problem engineer in the IT unit.

The scheme's launch coincides with the results of STEM Returners' annual survey, which asked a range of questions to more than 1,000 STEM professionals on a career break to understand their experiences of trying to gain employment.

Natalie Desty, Director of STEM Returners, said: "It's disappointing to see that 66% of STEM professionals on a career break are finding the process of attempting to return to work either difficult or very difficult and that nearly half (46%) of participants said they felt bias because of a lack of recent experience.

"We need to do more to challenge unconscious bias, which prevents so many highly skilled and talented people from returning to work."

Pinsent Masons aims to reduce climate change

MULTINATIONAL law firm Pinsent Masons is one of the first law firms to have its global net zero target verified by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi), as it doubles down on efforts to reduce its impact on climate change.

The firm's objective is to reach net zero by 2040 - five years ahead of the Scottish Government's target and 10 years ahead of the 2050 deadline set by the UK Government and the Paris Agreement.

The professional services firm employs more than 3,500 staff globally, including approximately 570 lawyers and support staff at its offices in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The validation of a net zero target by SBTi provides a defined, long-term pathway to reduce greenhouse gas emissions consistent with limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C. To deliver this commitment, at least 90% of the firm's 2019 baseline emissions will be fully abated by 2040 at the latest.

The target includes direct emissions resulting from business operations, indirect emissions associated with the generation of purchased electricity, and all other indirect emissions across global supply chains.

The SBTi is a global organisation which defines and promotes best practice in emissions reductions and net zero targets in line with climate science. Its Corporate Net-Zero standard launched in 2021 and is the world's first framework for corporate net zero target setting.



Big step for Big Mannys'

BIG Mannys' Pizza has opened at a third location, Codona's Amusement Park.

The new base is another major step forward for Big Mannys' Pizza, which launched in October 2020.

The location is a 120-cover restaurant at the former Lucky's Pizzeria at the park. The venture will add around 12 jobs to the current kitchen team of 20 at Codona's, who will operate the restaurant as part of the collaboration.

Peterson in joint venture

INTERNATIONAL energy logistics provider Peterson and Coast Renewable Services have formed a joint venture company to provide integrated services to the offshore wind sector.

The new company, Coast Offshore, will combine Peterson's 50 years of energy logistics experience with Coast Renewable Services' extensive experience in providing full turn-key solutions to the onshore wind sector. Coast Offshore will be led by Michael Leitch as Managing Director.

In addition to marine management, warehousing, stevedoring and customs formalities, Coast Offshore will provide a comprehensive range of technical solutions to support offshore wind farms throughout the energy lifecycle. It also has the geographical footprint and transferrable skills to support the construction and installation of floating wind projects.

Intellicore partners du Pré Marine

NORTH-east headquartered software solutions company, Intellicore, has been appointed as technical partner of global maritime industry firm, du Pré Marine.

The contract is initially for three-years and is anticipated to be worth £250,000 over the first 12 months alone. Intellicore will build an initial six solutions for du Pré Marine to enable more sophisticated remote control of navigation systems, data and media.

Entrepreneurial talent honoured

THE elite entrepreneurial talent of the North-east has been recognised at the 21st Elevator Awards.

Jacqueline Law, Managing Partner at Aberdeen Considine, was named as Entrepreneur of the Year. Jacqueline became Managing Partner in 2014, 21 years after first joining the firm as a trainee lawyer. Since taking over the day-to-day running of the firm, she has led it to consecutive years of record turnover and has overseen two acquisitions which allowed the firm to expand in Glasgow and trade in England and Wales for the first time.

The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Bob Edwards, Scotframe Managing Director, of Scotframe which he established in 1989 with its first timber frame kit used at Links Road in Aberdeen. The company went on to make a further 100 house kits that year and has continued to expand ever since. It is now the largest timber frame manufacturer in Scotland operating across the UK with a growing portfolio of international clients.



PPE to plant pots

SUSTAINABILITY is at the heart of everything Camphill School Aberdeen does and its latest collaboration is no different.

Throughout the past two years of the CV19 pandemic, Camphill has gone through 2,000-2,500 disposable PPE face masks every week. To tackle this waste, the charity entered into a collaboration with local start-up, Origin, to make plant pots out of the single-use facemasks. The plant pots are then used for corporate gifts for Christmas or for use in the school.

Nicolas Nino-Ramirez, Sustainable Development and Social Enterprise Lead said: "We wanted to find a way to recycle our disposable PPE throughout Camphill School Aberdeen as we didn't want them going to landfill. When the opportunity with Origin came up, we couldn't wait to get started. It is an initiative we are very proud of. We hope that this is the start of a continued collaboration with Origin, which may even lead to skills opportunities for our students."

Cala supports local businesses

CALA Homes (North) has launched a new initiative to encourage the support of local businesses around its development in Rosemount, Aberdeen, as part of a new first-of-its-kind campaign.

"Showhome of Support" will involve the homebuilder working in partnership with small independent retailers and creators, by giving them a platform to showcase products, produce and designs.

Cala will source 10 small businesses from the community in Aberdeen and purchase items to help furnish the upcoming show apartment at its TwentyFour, Rosemount development.

The show apartment will launch in early autumn and is being designed by Haus Interiors.

This will be the first showhome of its kind in the region and the homebuilder is expected to roll the initiative out across several new showhomes thereafter.

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Scottish customers could pay less for for electricity in energy price shake-up



Households in Scotland could get cheaper electricity than those in the South as the UK Government launches plans for the 'biggest electricity market reform in a generation'.

Ministers are consulting on a series of proposals to improve energy security and cut costs for consumers in the long term, including a model that would see prices set locally, based on the amount of electricity being generated in that area, rather than nationally.

This would mean mean lower bills for those living near wind farms, which are primarily located in Scotland and Northern England.

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Teaching a new dog old tricks

IT IS now 31 years since Ian Ord launched his successful B2B marketing and communications agency, Fifth Ring, in Aberdeen and today it has locations in the Americas, Europe and Asia.

1991 was also the year that the USSR officially ceased to exist, the Gulf War took place, Silence of the Lambs was the top film and Robert Maxwell disappeared over the side of a boat while holidaying in Tenerife.

However, it was in this month in 1991 that an event took place which would transform everyone's lives, and ultimately Fifth Ring's way of doing business. On August 6, 1991, the world wide web went public advancing the digital age, or information age, with phenomenal pace.

"The marketing discipline has probably changed further and faster in the last two years than in the previous 10, accelerated by the changes in behaviour and working practices around CV19," said Ian. "Some of that is about marketing technologies or "martech."

"Let's embrace all the new technologies that are available to us," he says, "but let's never lose sight of the fundamentals which

were drummed into me mercilessly when I was learning my craft.

"The purpose of any marketing communications material is to attract and hold the favourable attention of the maximum economic number of the right kind of people whilst a selling story is told and a desired action or reaction is taken."

He said that a buyer's journey begins with awareness, progresses to interest then consideration and finally a decision.

"Marketing's function when Fifth Ring began was of awareness but since then buying habits and human behaviour have changed out of all recognition.

"There's pretty much nothing you can't see online. Now your interest can be stoked by well-produced websites. Not only can you hear what the manufacturer says about the product, but you can go and look at reviews and rule in or rule out a client's product or service based on your own research and discovery.



Ian Ord,
Founder,
Fifth Ring

"You had this absolute split between marketing causing awareness and salespeople nurturing the sale. Now the marketing function has to work through awareness, interest and consideration by producing really informative content and a B2B model that gets you to that shortlist before they talk to the salesperson.

"Marketing and sales are inextricably linked. They're not awkward bedfellows, they're there together under the covers. It's changed dramatically and that's largely driven by human behaviour and the availability of marketing technologies.

"When we started out we had client services people, advertising people and creative people. Now we've got developers, analysts and consultants. We've still got the creative writers but they are far more involved in the crafting of messaging and informed by much more ready access to statistical information and competitive data that informs and sharpens that creative edge to find a

differentiator. What are other people saying? Where's the gap in the market? How do we position ourselves uniquely? There's much greater thought and planning going into business-to-business marketing than ever was the case before."

He said that the regularly used quote: "I know 50% of my marketing works, I just don't know which 50%" was now redundant.

"There are now well-worn paths of A/B testing - what positioning works, what messaging works, which campaign works, which one doesn't work, how could it be improved? There's a whole set of analytics that come out of the back of every campaign which influence the next one.

"In any campaign today there must be a selling story. People buy into stories, so you have to take them on that journey. Then, most importantly, a desired action or reaction because if there is no action there are no sales - so how do you create that breadcrumb trail into your website, how do you create a next step?"

"These for me are the fundamentals whether we are living in the 21st century or when advertising was in the days of Madmen. Yes, there's been a change in the sales marketing dynamic, but let's not abandon the first principles of good marketing content which is about generating a return on that investment and not just making a noise."

Not long after Ian launched Fifth Ring, Morven Mackenzie was beginning her career in PR in London and she too has experienced a transformation.

"Back then we used to print off hundreds of press releases, which the poor postie had to collect at the end of the day; back-breaking stuff for sure.

"Transparencies were stuck to the press releases with sticky tape before being popped into A4 envelopes and addressed with what can only be described as very squint labels. And the process usually involved a battle with the office printer, particularly if multiple pages and staples were involved.

"If we weren't posting press releases, then we were standing over a fax machine for hours waiting for the final status report to be printed so that we could confirm that yes, indeed, everything had gone through successfully.

"Fast forward nearly 30 years and those days are unrecognisable. Technology alone has completely revolutionised the way we work.

"Now it's possible to send emails, proofread copy and post to social media, all from your phone. Nobody needs to 'dial up' to send a message, 'Google' means no more having to read books for research, and there's



Eilidh McCluskie,
Founder and Managing Director,
Bold St Media



Morven Mackenzie,
Managing Director,
Hampton

actually no need to meet people in order to build up that invaluable media contact list.

“But even if our old means of communicating seems somewhat archaic now, I don’t think the art of PR has changed as much as people might think.

“For me it’s still about educating a market, getting a message out, raising awareness and managing reputations, regardless of the platforms being used.

“I also believe that building relationships with people is still key, and face-to-face meetings will have a place for some time to come. I hope so anyway.

“One significant difference, perhaps, is that PR and marketing are no longer seen as two very distinct specialisms; they are in fact very much aligned.

“These days I work for Hampton, a brand and creative agency, not a PR one, but I have to say I still miss those good old days; especially when I think of how much fun I had. PR in the 1990s and 2000s was definitely not for the faint hearted, that’s for sure.”

Eilidh McCluskie founded Bold St Media six years ago to “cut through the noise” for its clients.

The Oldmeldrum-based integrated PR, communications and marketing business has flourished and recently doubled its team to six to meet demand.

“It’s impossible to overstate the impact that the digital revolution has had on PR,” said Eilidh. “It’s inextricably linked with how we promote not just our clients, but also our own business.

“Back in 2005 when I started my career in PR, there was no such thing as social media, no influencer marketing, no sponsored content. Our tools were the traditional PR go-tos, the likes of good old press coverage and out-of-home advertising. Back then we measured our worth in newspaper

circulation figures and advertising equivalent rates. Not particularly accurate or helpful.

“Nowadays there continues to be more and more opportunities to reach target markets which is exciting, as is the data at our fingertips. Metrics on views and engagement measure the success of any campaign. They also help us refine messaging and approach which is hugely helpful for informing the next steps of plans for continuing to get our clients’ names out there and ensuring budgets are working their hardest.

“It’s not just the ‘how’ of our work that has changed; the ‘when’ has changed too. In the past the news cycle was much slower – we didn’t have 24/7 rolling news on a multitude of digital channels. The pace of PR and marketing has ramped up massively in the last 20 years, compelling us to be ever-more nimble and reactive. Is there a trending conversation on social media that’s relevant to our clients? We need to get on it today. We already do this of course, but I feel it’s going to become a larger component of PR strategy going forward and the speed of being truly reactive is only going to increase.”

Melissa Forrest, Director of three-year-old digital marketing firm Razor Digital Media, said that while she hopes the printed press will remain a key part of our world, there is no denying that things have changed over the past 10 years or so.

“Yes, we will always want our clients to appear in the relevant business pages, but when we create a story, we have to be mindful that the printed press is also replicated online and that some publications are solely digital,” she said.

“For us, this may often mean a different style of approach; will the story work as well online as it will in print?”

“Equally, we have to consider that news appears not only in ‘long read’ form, but also in a variety of shorter – and perhaps more visual – formats, particularly on social media. The range of audiences, the variety of devices upon which they read news, the times at which they will access that content – all these variables inform how we write. Writing for a variety of platforms is now a skill that all PR and marketing companies need to offer, and that is perhaps the biggest shift over the past decade.”



Melissa Forrest,
Director,
Razor Digital Media



Energy brandsitic

The background features a dark gradient from black at the top to a deep red at the bottom. Overlaid on this are several dynamic, multi-colored light trails in shades of blue, green, red, and white. These trails form fluid, swirling patterns that suggest motion and energy, particularly concentrated in the lower half of the frame.



on

Hampton is a brand-focused, creative marketing agency for an inspired energy sector in transition.

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Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce 2022 training calendar

Skills for Business	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Assertiveness at Work Learn to communicate your point of view without causing conflict	30				
Communication and Interpersonal Skills Develop effective communication techniques				8	
Customer Service Excellence Discover the techniques to excel at customer service		26			
Dealing with Difficult Situations Understand the variety of personalities and determine how to alter your approach				14	
Emotional Intelligence Develop situational awareness and manage emotion in self and others			4		
Improve your Professional Confidence Promote a positive and confident self-image in a professional manner		13			
Negotiating and Influencing Skills Learn tactics and skills of persuasion that lead to success		15			
Personal Effectiveness Improve your self-management by changing the way you work	3				
Presentation Skills Deliver a dynamic and motivational presentation confidently		8			
Project Management - The Fundamentals Understand the principles of project management and the complexities of scale				24	
Report Writing Learn to produce clear, concise and effective reports				30	
Taking Notes and Minutes (half day) Record meetings effectively and accurately with high quality minutes				23	
Time Management Identify time wasting activities and manage your day more effectively					
Train the Trainer Feel confident whilst developing and presenting different types of training	31				

Management and Leadership	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Advanced Management Skills Grow as a manager and improve the performance of your team			17		
Building Effective Teams Understand what makes a great team and learn how to build one					
Essential Management Skills Become equipped with the knowledge and skills required of a manager		20		1	
Essential Supervisory Skills Bridge the gap between doing and supervising	24			5	6
HR for Non-HR Managers Understand responsibilities and techniques in relation to HR requirements			11		
Motivation and Delegation Create a motivational environment and use effective delegation				9	
Reviews and Appraisals Assess performance constructively and increase reviewee's motivation			13		
Stakeholder Engagement and Relationship Management Identify and engage with stakeholders to build effective and lasting relationships				29	
Supervisors Next Steps Improve techniques and add new areas of awareness and understanding				10	

Business Development	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Business Development Accelerator Develop a powerful strategy to drive sales				4	
Sales and Account Management Develop a structured approach to selling				21	
Social Media - Developing Your Recruitment Profile See the importance of a personal and corporate brand using social media	18	12			

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Four half day workshops

Member
£950

Non-member
£1450

The aim of the programme

This course will build the resilience of businesses in North-east Scotland by building knowledge around the climate emergency and carbon reduction. The content will help businesses understand how they need to adapt to operate in the net zero environment and to begin to put the necessary steps and plans in place.

What's included?

The programme is made up of **four half day workshops** and a follow-up consultation with our in-house expert covering:

- Climate and net zero definitions, language and meaning
- How to measure your carbon footprint
- How to develop a mitigation programme
- Risk management and action planning
- A 1-1 follow-up consultation with our net zero and Circular Economy expert

Over 40 companies have already successfully completed the programme and almost half have begun to develop and implement their net zero strategy.

Are you ready to start your net zero journey?

Email training@agcc.co.uk to get started.

Finance	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Budgeting and Planning - An Introduction Learn how to establish and maintain budgets			7		
Finance - The Basics Develop a broad understanding of business finance		2		22	
Finance for Non-finance Managers Gain an understanding of many aspects of finance and how it impacts business		29			8

International Business and Exporting	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
A Beginners Practical Guide to Exporting Gain a high level overview of the exporting process	23				
Understanding Export and Export Documentation Demystify what is involved to save time and money		14			
Customs Procedures and Documentation Learn how to navigate the various customs systems, procedures and documentation			5		
Import Procedures, Inward and Outward Processing Avoid pitfalls when importing, understanding methods of claiming relief			20		
Incoterms 2020 Benefits of International Commercial Terms for buyers and sellers				29	
Methods of Payment and Letters of Credit Ensure your Letter of Credit is not rejected and compare payment methods				16	
Preference Rules of Origin Understand the importance and rules of Preference Rules of Origin					1
Understanding Commodity Codes Guidance through the international coding process and the paperwork involved				30	

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YOU'RE IN SAFE HANDS

Over the cliff edge there is now a new dawn

At a recent Chamber Business Breakfast, Geoff Aberdein of True North Limited, shared a quote which instantly grabbed the attention of all in the room.

It was by Pulitzer Prize winner Thomas Friedman, who specialises in global trade, and it reads: "The country that owns green, that dominates that industry, is going to have the most energy security, national security, economic security, competitive companies, healthy population and, most of all, global respect."

Wow. That's the size and scale of the opportunity in front of us as we accelerate towards a net zero society.

Over the decades, we have been the careful custodian of the UK's world-leading energy sector. But

the prosperity it has brought us has always felt finite.

Most feared, or were perhaps in denial, that one day the sun would set on the oil and gas titans dotted along our coastal horizon, taking with it our lucrative energy jobs.

However, things have changed. Over that cliff-edge there is now a new dawn; one with longevity.

The climate crisis - thrown into sharp focus by COP26 last year - has brought about an unprecedented opportunity for our country to become the pioneers who will unlock the low carbon technologies of the future.

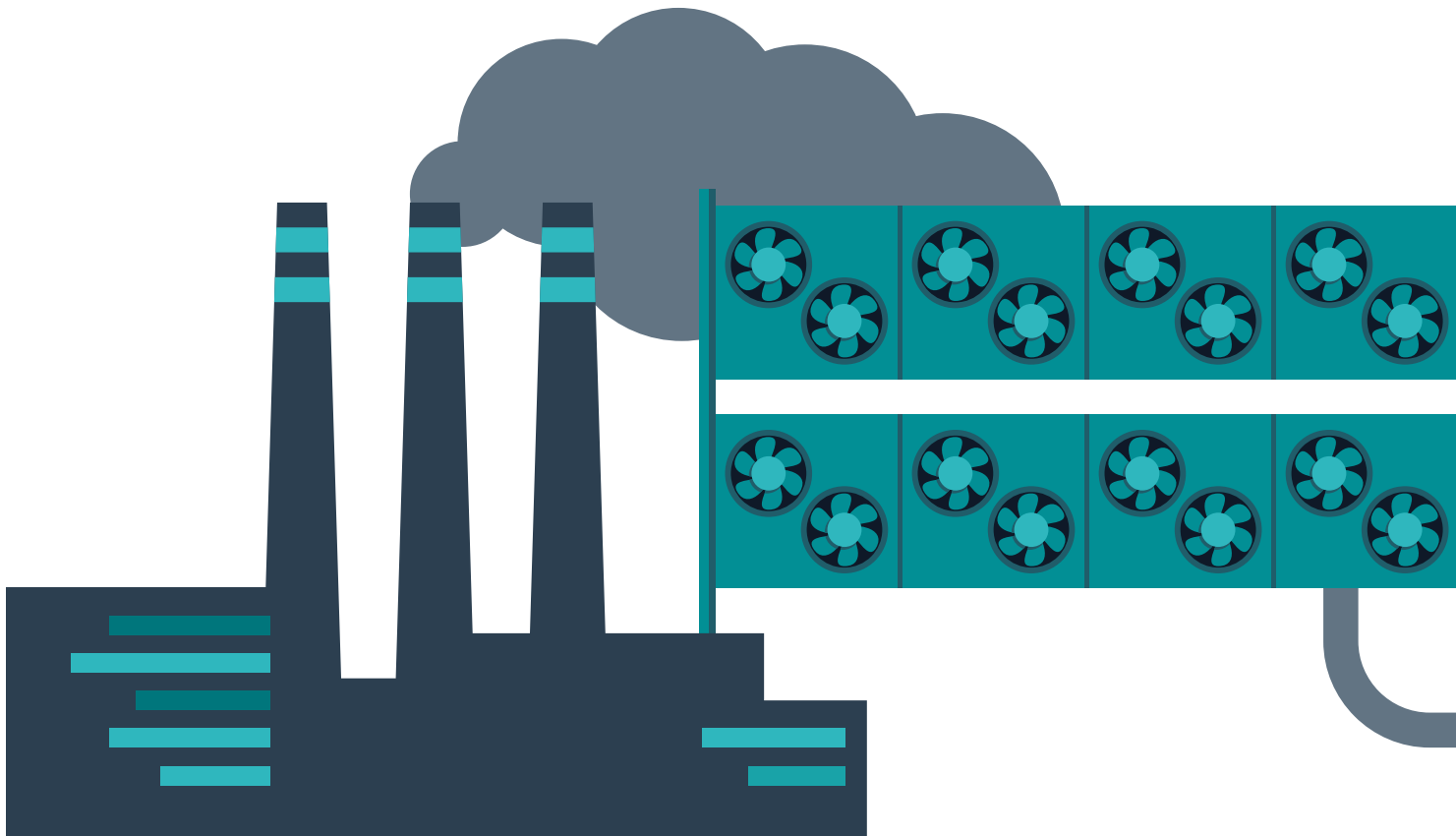
But winning a prize this big was never going to be easy. The challenges we face are equal in scale to the opportunities.

Essentially, we need to deliver the reindustrialisation of Scotland to make sure we capitalise on our green energy potential.

This includes delivering an integrated energy cluster focused on the delivery of net zero, with manufacturing and subsea engineering expertise to maximise economic benefit from Scotland's rapidly growing offshore wind and hydrogen sectors.

To do this, fiscal stability will be crucial factor in giving companies the confidence to invest. The less said about the Energy Profits Levy in this regard, the better.

We are asking companies and investors to channel billions of pounds away from oil and gas into technology and industries with a longer payback and lower margins. They can only do that with certainty about the taxation they will be subject to.



Westminster really did Aberdeen no favours with its windfall tax, but the damage can be undone, and we need them to get behind the region's Green Freeport bid.

The bid - led by the Port of Aberdeen, Peterhead Port Authority, Aberdeen International Airport, and the region's two councils - will deliver 32,000 jobs across the tax sites, and generate £8.5billion for the regional economy.

The package of tax incentives on offer will usher in a new era of investment, innovation, regeneration and opportunity for this region. And, above all else, it will help deliver, at pace, the interventions the UK needs to tackle the climate emergency (see our story about hydrogen cars on page 44).

It will deliver a globally recognised integrated energy cluster focussed on the delivery of net zero, contributing significantly to national energy and economic security.

It will leverage private sector investment to attract new manufacturing and subsea

engineering companies which will maximise the significant opportunities for the regional and Scottish supply chain provided by ScotWind and INTOG licensing.

It will accelerate the delivery of Acorn, Scotland's only carbon capture cluster, and establish Europe's largest direct air capture facility on the Buchan coast. And it will accelerate the impacts of a new green hydrogen production and distribution hub to produce the renewable gas for regional and national markets, and ultimately export.

We can be that nation that Thomas Friedman describes.

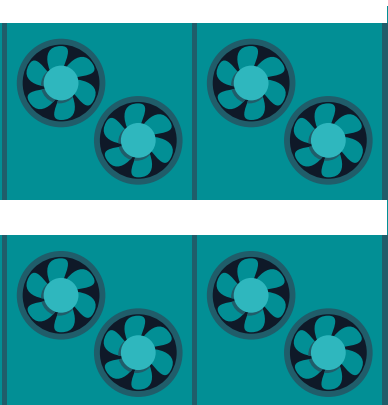
Competition will be fierce, but Scotland (and the North-east in particular) has natural assets and a rich industrial legacy to lead the world once more.



Ryan Crighton,
Director of Policy
and Marketing,
Aberdeen & Grampian
Chamber of Commerce



Westminster really did Aberdeen no favours with its windfall tax, but the damage can be undone, and we need them to get behind the region's Green Freeport bid.



CO₂

H₂O





Bridging the Digital Skills Gap

For several years the digital skills gap in Scotland has threatened productivity and growth. Despite attempts to address it, the Digital Economy Business Survey 2021 showed that the number of businesses that are fully equipped with the necessary skills to meet digital technology needs had dropped to 21% from 26% in 2017.

This shortfall is perhaps further compounded by the fact that digital projects significantly contribute to Scotland's progress. EY's Attractiveness Survey Scotland 2022 found that the country's ability to attract foreign direct investment for digital enterprises increased by 73.6% in 2021, compared to only 7% in the UK overall. The survey also placed the country in second place as a top location for digital projects. This growth represents a great opportunity and makes addressing the skills shortage a pressing priority.

Knowledge and skills gaps echo across the UK. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport report Quantifying the UK Data Skills Gap found a significant and growing demand for data skills with up to

234,000 roles potentially available and almost half of the businesses reporting difficulty recruiting. They also predict that data analysis will become one of the most in-demand skills, but unless a knowledgeable workforce can meet the surge, the gap will grow wider.

Organisations' decision-making processes have increasingly become data-driven, with Business Analytics empowering companies to make informed and strategic decisions, gain competitive advantage and increase productivity. These professionals extract and analyse insights from data to identify trends and forecast events making this skill set essential for businesses.

The shift to a data-centric approach represents an opportunity for the North East to build on these skills and lead the industry. The Digital Economy Maturity Index 2021 reported that while only 1% of businesses surveyed had an expert level of digital skills, those companies were most likely to be in the North East.

Committed to enhancing the region's potential, Robert Gordon University (RGU) has been focusing on developing research, training,

and education, purposefully taking an industry-informed approach to preparing the workforce. Having secured Data Lab funding, the University offers full scholarships for MSc courses in Business Analytics, Data Science, and Information Technology with Business Intelligence. Hundreds of students have also been taking advantage of fee-waiver places on online upskilling courses in related areas, including data science, data analytics and digital marketing.

By closely working with the industry in providing training and education, we are generating the talent that the country needs and positioning the North East as a leader in digital expertise. This approach will be critical for boosting Scotland's economic future.

For more information on any of our courses at The School of Creative and Cultural Business visit www.rgu.ac.uk/marketing-data

RGU's upskilling courses for 2022/23 will open for registration in August.





Quartzelec expands operations

QUARTZELEC, a long-established provider of rotating machine and engineering support services to the Aberdeen economy is expanding its operations in the region.

Having successfully met requirements from clients in the maritime, oil and gas, power-generation, hydro and renewables sectors for over 30 years, it is now relocating into two separate locations.

A new waterside facility in the Port of Aberdeen, still close to its loyal customer base, will become the hub for the marine engineering team to continue to support the local marine markets as well as providing an established base for the LV (low voltage) contracting team.

Additionally, the location will serve to offer bespoke storage of electrical machines including regular testing and maintenance to ensure machine reliability.

Quartzelec is also taking the opportunity to relocate its main workshop to a new facility in Dyce. As well as being able to streamline the repair, rewind, service and test processes, the business will be integrating the manufacturing operation for Quartztec's LIFEVIEW® suite of condition monitoring sensors and analysers. With significant growth over recent years the existing dockside facility was becoming increasingly restrictive and was unable to accommodate workshop expansion plans. With a high proportion of LIFEVIEW® customers being located internationally, proximity to the airport is an added advantage.

The University of Aberdeen ranked 4th in UK for student satisfaction

THE University of Aberdeen has been ranked 4th in the UK - and 2nd in Scotland - for overall student satisfaction, out of 122 UK higher education institutions, in this year's National Student Survey (NSS).

The University has continued its year-on-year rise in student satisfaction ranking in this key sector survey, which captures students' views on a range of areas relating to their learning experience. Last year they were ranked fifth for overall student satisfaction in the UK.

Professor Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal (Education), said: "I am absolutely delighted that feedback from our students has generated such excellent NSS results. Our collective effort as a university across schools and directorates, and our partnership approach with students, has allowed us to continually improve what we do so that we can offer a great student experience."

Helping pupils understand finance

AS MORE and more gen zers turn to social media to gain financial advice, Acumen Financial Planning has created a range of resources to help schools expand students' access to financial education.

Working in collaboration with local schools, the financial planning experts have created a series of short bite-sized videos to explain the importance of finance skills.

With the aim of equipping youngsters early on with the skills they will need in the future, they have been specially developed to cover key areas such as how to understand your first payslip, the importance of pensions, and the role of income tax and national insurance.

Acumen Financial Planning has been working with local schools in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire to assist young people in understanding good day-to-day financial practices. Members of the team including a former pupil from Westhill Academy, Kieran Knowles, who joined Acumen as a Graduate Apprentice in the last academic year, have presented on different financial topics including pensions, tax, and payslips.

In addition to developing partnerships with schools and universities, the firm is currently looking for its next group of talented young people to make the first step into a career in finance.

Local schools interested in accessing the educational visits or for more details about recruitment opportunities can contact Nicola Doohan on 01224 392350 or opportunities@acumenfp.com



Stuart McPhee,
Director,
Siberia Bar & Hotel

Area of expertise?

I have 14 years in the hospitality industry from glass collecting and pot washing to running the award winning Siberia Bar & Hotel, an independent city centre venue. This has given me an insight into the ups and downs of such a wonderful sector of our economy. We employ a team of 30 staff and all are geared towards giving our customers the best experience we can provide, every time they visit.

What should people know?

Communication is key. The best thing you can do with your team is take them with you in the decision-making process, fill them in on how you came to a decision and make sure they follow through with the actions that are needed. It is also key to make sure your communication is concise and not all encompassing. For too long there were 24/7 lines of communication that meant no or little separation. It is important to communicate effectively, but effectively within boundaries (and not endless WhatsApp groups).

What's the biggest mistakes companies make?

Holding people back. Businesses are run by people and the people that are best geared to run them are the ones that are engaged, have clear vision and commitment. If you don't empower them, you risk losing them. If you don't nurture, train, or trust them, you risk losing them. Losing good people is a sign that things are not going right somewhere and to me is a big red flag. Empower your people and trust them on the road ahead.

What's your top tip?

Do not forget the art of conversation. What is lacking so often nowadays is the ability to speak to someone to solve a problem. We need to reinvigorate our sense of being sociable, our sense of connecting with others through being able to hold a genuine and honest conversation. At present we are teaching our younger generation that doing this via other mediums like text or socials is a credible substitute, do not forget the art of good old conversation.



Linda Wilson,
Centre Manager,
Centrum Serviced Offices

Area of expertise?

Centrum specialise in offering a professional working environment for either co-working or private office hire. With Centrum, all cleaning, maintenance and bills are covered in your lease.

What should people know?

Here at Centrum, we aim to be very customer focused and we're always looking for ways to offer a bespoke service that suits your needs and business model. We have a number of lease options available from 12 month commitments to options for monthly rolling so you don't have to worry about committing.

What's the biggest mistakes companies make?

Not putting their employees first. If you look after your employees, it shines through to the customer. Ensuring your employees have a safe and comfortable place to work and making the use of their down time or lunch breaks is the key to great productivity, I think. I love the breakout areas we have at Centrum, my favorite thing to do on my lunch hour is take a book down to our bean bag hub.

What's your top tip?

Make the most of co-working by ensuring you use all the facilities your location has to offer. Take the opportunity to network with other tenants, as you never know where your next lead is going to come from and have a structure to make the most out of your hours.



Tomas Karger,
Associate,
Marks & Clerk LLP

Area of expertise?

Marks & Clerk is a leading global intellectual property firm, working in partnership with businesses of all shapes and sizes all over the world. Providing them with people whose legal, technical and commercial expertise exactly meets their needs. Shaping our services around them. Protecting, enforcing and maximising the value of their intellectual property (IP) to support them in achieving their business ambitions.

What should people know?

Businesses in the North-east employ some of the brightest and most experienced engineers and scientists in the UK. An internal IP policy ensures inventive solutions to technical problems are documented and protected as needed to build company value and achieve a competitive advantage.

What's the biggest mistakes companies make?

Setting up and running a business can be exciting, hectic and unpredictable. Getting your IP properly protected from the outset is vital to future success. With so many other aspects of the business requiring attention considering protection of a brand, or novel design can often be an afterthought. However, accidental public releases of new technology at a conference, online or in an academic journal can deprive a business of a market edge and the chance to build company value through an intangible asset.

What's your top tip?

Consider IP early in the process. This does not always require spending big when finances are tight, but carefully documenting research, and controlling the flow of information will protect the business against costly disclosures. Engaging an IP professional at this early stage equips a company with a specialist to help the business grow and prosper.



Stuart Kuczynski,
Director,
Media for Good

Area of expertise?

Our areas of expertise are advertising and marketing, but more specifically, helping to get your brand onto TV and delivering successful results.

What should people know?

My Co-founder Andy and I have over 35 combined years of media planning and buying experience, so we know what it takes for an advertiser to achieve brand fame. We aim to try and change advertising for the better in a fragmented world where it's increasingly hard to find the truth. Plus, we give back 10% of our profit to local charities and community projects in need.

What's the biggest mistakes companies make?

We're a very new company so perhaps not yet qualified to judge, however as an ex-employee I'd say the failure to comprehensively look after the needs and personal requirements of their staff is a huge mistake. Not fully understanding who you are as a company and where you sit in the market can also be a fatal error, especially when it comes to marketing.

What's your top tip?

In the words of the master, Yoda: "Do. Or do not. There is no try."

Business lessons I've learned



Calvin Burnett,

Profit Center Manager, Aberdeen Electric Center

What does your company do that others don't?

We offer a same day service with over £1million of stock in Altens to service our customers. We have two vans that go out twice daily to offer a service that others just can't do. Next day is good but when a contractor needs goods urgently to have the stock available in Aberdeen is a great advantage.

What are the most pressing challenges that your industry sector faces today, and why?

Delivery lead times are really hurting us just now. However, we buy bulk to keep ahead of these issues as much as we can. Online "discount" sites are also proving a problem for us as they are offering non-UK or old versions of items at a rock bottom price. What we hear a lot of is when something might be cheaper but turns up and doesn't work the warranty is as good as useless. We like to work with our customers to sort issues with strong links to the suppliers direct we manage nine times out of 10 to fix problems which arise instantly.

What is the hardest lesson you have learned in your career to date?

The best bit of business advice I have ever received was to gain trust and create a business relationship. My sales team act as an extension to the workforce for every contractor. By gaining the customers trust and becoming part of their team you become so valuable that they nearly can't do their jobs without you!

What's been your proudest career achievement to date, and why?

My proudest achievement so far is the steps Altens Electric Center has taken since I took over five years ago. Our level of service has gained the trust of the customers and our sales have grown every single year. When people start calling you through word of mouth based on how good your service is, it's the biggest compliment in our line of work. With the team I have now, I feel we can service any sort of contractor without even taking pause to ask "will be able to do this or not?" It is a go get them attitude to succeed which is great to be a part of.

Quick fire round

What was your first job?

Paper boy.

When would you like to retire?

I know a lot of people that put a date on it which can easily be passed. I would say I would like to retire when I feel I have achieved all of my business goals.

What did you have for breakfast?

Bran flakes (very boring)

Who, or what, inspires you?

My partner Sarah is a big inspiration to me, her work ethic has rubbed off on me.

What's the last book you read / film you saw?

We watched some terrible Netflix movie which was so good and bad I can't even remember the name!

If you could make one thing happen tomorrow that would benefit North-east Scotland, what would it be?

The circular economy is something I am very passionate about. I believe any projects that happen in the North-east should go to contractors in the North-east, which will then filter through the wholesaler, keep people in jobs and keep the market buoyant. We still have contractors from all over the country including South of England travelling up to do jobs which Aberdeen contractors could very easily do.



Plan for medical drone deliveries given a £10million lift

A CONSORTIUM led by AGS Airports in partnership with NHS Scotland to deliver what will be the UK's first medical distribution network using drones has secured £10.1 million in funding from the Future Flight Challenge at UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

It is the second successful round of funding for the CAELUS (Care & Equity – Healthcare Logistics UAS Scotland) consortium which brings together 16 partners including

the University of Strathclyde, NATS and NHS Scotland. Together they are working to deliver what will be the first national drone network that can transport essential medicines, bloods and other medical supplies throughout Scotland including to remote communities.

Since securing £1.5million in January 2020, the CAELUS consortium has designed drone landing stations for NHS sites across Scotland and developed a virtual model (digital twin) of the proposed delivery network which connects hospitals, pathology laboratories, distribution centres and GP surgeries across Scotland.

NHS Scotland has said it will bring its “Once for Scotland” approach to the project, the second phase of which will involve live flight trials and removing remaining barriers to safely using drones at scale within Scotland’s airspace.

Fiona Smith, AGS Airports Group Head of Aerodrome Strategy and CAELUS Project Director, said: “The CAELUS project is set to revolutionise the way in which healthcare services are delivered in Scotland. A drones network can ensure critical medical supplies can be delivered more efficiently, it can reduce waiting times for test results and, more importantly, it can provide equity of care between urban and remote rural communities.


“The second round of funding from UKRI will allow our consortium to undertake live flights and begin to deploy the physical infrastructure needed to support the drones across Scotland. This will involve building prototype landing bases as well as digital and communication infrastructure. We will also work with local communities to ensure they understand why and how the drones will be used.”


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Major contract awarded at Peterhead Carbon Capture Power Station

A PIVOTAL low-carbon development in Aberdeenshire is continuing to build momentum as a major contract award was announced.

SSE Thermal and Equinor are developing what could become Scotland's first flexible power station equipped with carbon capture technology and have appointed a consortium to deliver the Front End Engineering Design (FEED) contract.

Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Group, Worley and Técnicas Reunidas will deliver a detailed plan for the Peterhead Carbon Capture Power Station, which would have a generating capacity of up to 910MW.

The station would connect into the Scottish Cluster's CO₂ transport and storage infrastructure, which underpins plans to deliver one of the UK's first low-carbon industrial clusters.

The current Peterhead Power Station plays an essential role in keeping the lights on and is crucial to Scotland's electricity system. There is a clear need, however, to decarbonise power generation and the proposed Peterhead Carbon Capture Power Station represents this next phase of society's energy transition – helping to meet net zero targets in Scotland and the UK, while providing flexible back-up to Scotland's growing renewables sector and bolstering security of supply.

The UK Government has set ambitious targets for the country to become a world leader in carbon capture and storage, and Peterhead Carbon Capture will play a pivotal role with the ability to capture up to 1.5MT of carbon annually, which represents around five per cent of the Government's 2030 target.

A recent report by SSE shows that the new development would create significant economic benefits in the transition to net zero, with £60million expected to be contributed to the Aberdeen City and Shire economy during development and construction, with 980 years of employment supported. Over the station's operational lifetime, it is estimated that around £25million will be added to the wider Aberdeen economy each year, with around 240 jobs

supported on an annual basis.

Catherine Raw, Managing Director at SSE Thermal, said: "As renewables scales up, the importance of flexible energy only increases – however that generation needs to be decarbonised which is why we are committed to delivering this landmark carbon capture project at Peterhead. As we begin work with the consortium on the engineering design, we hope to see the UK Government recognise the need for multiple power-CCS plants when it provides an update on Cluster Sequencing later this month. Crucially, it must give clarity on the Scottish Cluster and accelerate its development, which is necessary if Scotland's net zero ambitions are to be achieved."

Grete Tveit, Senior Vice President for Low Carbon Solutions at Equinor, said: "This is an important step in realising our ambition to build Scotland's first flexible power station equipped with carbon capture technology. By providing low carbon back-up power to compliment intermittent renewables generation, Peterhead Carbon Capture Power Station will improve energy security through the energy transition. We are excited to be working with SSE Thermal and the consortium to deliver this critical project, unlocking investment that will bring both local employment and supply chain value."

Bradley Andrews, President at Worley, on behalf of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Group, Worley, and Técnicas Reunidas consortium, said: "Cooperation with a common vision is key to the energy transition. The consortium's work with SSE Thermal and Equinor is an example of how companies can collaborate to overcome the challenge of reaching net zero. This project will produce flexible and clean power allowing further renewable generation while reducing carbon emissions at scale. It's a landmark project for Scotland in its ambitions to help decarbonise industrial clusters in the UK – and it supports our efforts in delivering a more sustainable world."

A S36 planning application for the project was submitted to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit in March of this year.

Chief checks out

Lorraine Neish,
*International Documentation Team Leader,
Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce*



IT'S THE end of an era. It has been confirmed that the Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight (CHIEF) system, which Customs Declaration Service (CDS) replaces, will be fully closed as of March 31, 2023.

CHIEF has been the UK government's system for customs entries for nearly 30 years.

The new CDS system will provide a more secure and stable platform that has the capacity and capability to grow in line with the government's ambitious trade plans.

CHIEF will be closed in two phases:

- On September 30, 2022, it will no longer be usable for import declarations
- On March 31, 2023, export declarations will close on the CHIEF and the National Exports System (NES)

What this means for traders

Whether you want to complete customs declarations or just

download your deferment account and postponed VAT statements from the CDS portal, you will require a Government Gateway account.

Most VAT registered traders will already have an account to file their VAT returns, so adding CDS shouldn't be too difficult. We recommend you check with the account holder in your organisation and register as soon as possible.

CDS does not generate a C88 or E2 document as it is 100% electronic. However, traders like paper, therefore both are now combined into one document which will display the Movement Reference Number (MRN). The MRN is a customs identification number that's created each time a declaration is submitted for importing or exporting goods. The number generated is bespoke, allowing your goods to be uniquely linked to you and as such, it forms an important part of the audit process for your declarations with HMRC.

The MRN on CDS performs the same function and is equivalent to the CHIEF entry number (which

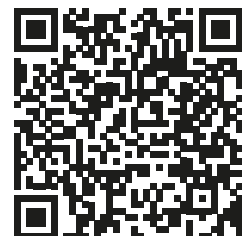
includes the Entry Processing Unit (EPU) and the CHIEF Entry Number (ENO)) and is linked to the Goods Movement Reference (GMR) in the same way.

Your GMR supplier will now need to enter the MRN on the GVMS system instead of the EPU and ENO when presented with a CDS entry.

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce can manage customs declarations for you, we have a wealth of international trade experience and technical expertise and offer a high level of compliance and assurance for our customers on whose behalf we issue certification to move goods worth half a billion pounds every year across borders.

Our ChamberCustoms is the UK's leading broker with direct access to government authorities to problem solve and badges to clear goods through every sea, road and airport in the UK.

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OUT MORE**



Green Freeport status could bring pioneering hydrogen car factory and 800 jobs to the North-east

ONE of the world's most innovative new cars could be built in the North-east of Scotland if the region secures green freeport status, creating over 800 jobs.

Riversimple – the inventors of the pioneering Rasa hydrogen vehicle – is in active talks about locating a 150,000sq ft manufacturing plant in Aberdeen.

The Riversimple plant would produce over 5,000 vehicles per year. The company is currently beta testing a small fleet of Rasas, with a new car also under development for production.

The company's founder, Hugo Spowers, believes the two-seater eco coupe is "the most energy efficient car on the planet", and the BBC's Top Gear has billed it as "the car which wants to save the world".

Oxford University trained engineer and entrepreneur Mr Spowers – who was made an MBE in June – has visited the North-east of Scotland to scope out potential sites after being invited by Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce.

Riversimple has since signed a letter supporting the North East Scotland Green Freeport bid, saying the tax status, together with the world-leading energy sector supply chain already based in the region, would "significantly increase" the likelihood of the company investing.

"One of the locations we are considering for the establishment of operations is the North-east of Scotland," the letter states.

"We are in discussions with regional powers about the possibility of establishing a manufacturing plant...encouraging the clustering of supply chain companies and other OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturer) within the hydrogen sector."

The Scottish and UK governments are working together to create two green freeports in Scotland by next year. The special economic zones will offer tax breaks and lower business tariffs to stimulate investment.

As many as 32,000 jobs could be supported in an £8.5 billion boost to the regional economy, if the joint Aberdeen and Peterhead bid was successful.

The North East Scotland Green Freeport consortium – led by the Port of Aberdeen, Peterhead Port Authority, Aberdeen International Airport, and the region's two local authorities – has vowed to use the designation to place the area at the heart of the global energy transition.

The Riversimple letter adds: "Aberdeen, as a leading hydrogen city, and the surrounding region is attractive to our business on account of the hydrogen initiatives already underway.

"These include the rolling out of hydrogen-powered buses and commercial vehicles operating in the city, the joint venture partnership between the city council and BP to deliver the Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub and the Acorn Hydrogen project at St Fergus.

"North East Scotland Green Freeport, with its stated aim of making the North-east of Scotland the Net Zero Capital of Europe and a global pioneer of hydrogen energy, would make the region even more attractive to us, increasing significantly the likelihood of our investment into the region."

The engineering of Riversimple cars is highly unique compared to other vehicles on the market. The hydrogen in the fuel cell goes via a proton exchange membrane, where it interacts with oxygen to generate water and electricity. The electricity is then routed to the motors located in each wheel. These motors are compact, lightweight, and provide four-wheel drive to the vehicle.

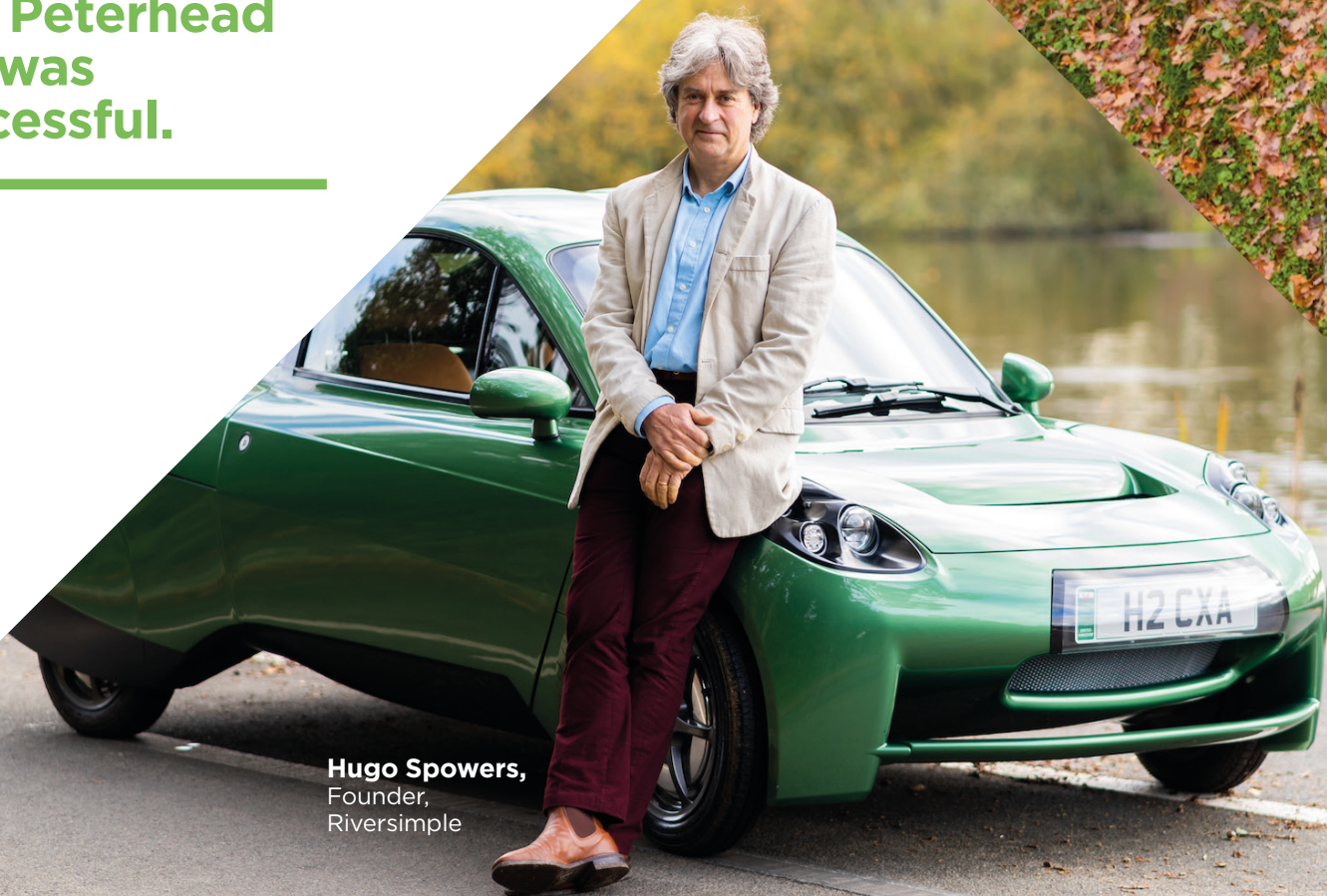
When the car stops, the kinetic energy that is commonly lost as heat gets caught as electricity. This electricity flows into a bank of supercapacitors at the front of the car as the car slows.

The Riversimple Rasa has a 300-mile range while emitting just water and delivers more than 200 mpg equivalent. It has a top speed of only 60 mph, but because of the car's clever construction, it reaches that pace in under 10 seconds.

“

As many as 32,000 jobs could be supported in an £8.5billion boost to the regional economy, if the joint Aberdeen and Peterhead bid was successful.

Hugo Spowers,
Founder,
Riversimple



What's coming up in 2022?



August 23, 2022 | 11:45 - 14:00
October 27, 2022 | 08:30 - 10:00

Member £35.00
Non-member £50.00

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

Speed networking is a fantastic way to grow your network and bring you new business opportunities.

Once you've grabbed a cuppa, take a seat and wait for the bell to ring for the first round. You'll be given around a minute to introduce yourself and tell the person opposite all about your business. At the halfway point the conversation will switch and you'll be in the listening seat. The bell will ring and then you'll move on to meet somebody new.

Over the hour you'll continue to meet everybody one by one and there'll be the opportunity to continue to network and talk to delegates in more length over lunch, allowing you to connect with up to 50 delegates in a short time.

What support does your business need right now? Are you clear on how to get the most out of the Chamber resources at your fingertips?

Get to know us and your potential new business partners of the future at this interactive discussion in which you tell us what's important to your company – or pitch to other new Chamber members – and we provide a forum for knowledge-sharing, idea-generating and networking while connecting you with the experts across the Chamber team to help you take the next steps.

Free to attend, come ready to join in.

MAXIMIZE YOUR MEMBERSHIP

August 26, 2022 | 08:30 - 10:00
November 18, 2022 | 08:30 - 10:00

Member £0.00
Non-member £0.00

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

To see our full programme of events, visit agcc.co.uk/events



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Business Breakfast

UK ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Inflation is running at its highest rate in 40 years, interest rates are rising at the fastest level since 1995 and the cost of doing business has gone through the roof.

So, what does the next 12 months hold? Are we heading for a recession? And what should the Chancellor do in what will be the most important Autumn Budget in a generation?

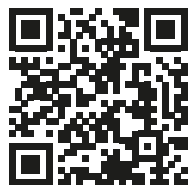
Join us for a special Business Breakfast where you can hear exclusive insight from former Treasury insider, Tom Pugh, who is now a leading UK economist for accountancy firm RSM.

Renowned for his ability to distil complex economics into simple data that business owners can use to inform decision making, Tom will share the inside track on everything from energy markets and global trade, to the labour crisis and the constitution.

If your business is being challenged by what's happening in the economy right now, this is a breakfast you do not want to miss.



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Dominic Millar and Lewis McManus

Global real estate advisor, CBRE, has announced two new appointments for its Aberdeen office. Dominic Millar has joined both the advisory and transactions and rating team, and Lewis McManus joins the UK project management and building consultancy team.



Emily Reid

Solab IT Services has promoted from within with the appointment of Emily Reid as its new Business Development Manager. Emily first joined Solab in 2017 as a Sales Administrator having graduated from RGU with a First-Class Honour's Degree in International Business Management.



Sian Lloyd Rees

Sian Lloyd Rees, the UK Managing Director of Aker Offshore, has joined the Board of The Net Zero Technology Centre (NZTC). In her new position on the NZTC Board, Sian will work with CEO Colette Cohen and Chair, Martin Gilbert, to set the overall strategic direction of the Net Zero Technology Centre to build long-term success technologies.



Austa McKendrick

Austa McKendrick has joined the Aberdeen office of ZynQ 360 as Global Sales Manager. Austa has worked with clients all over the world and across various markets and spent seven years working out of Houston, so is well placed and connected to support and enhance the firm's US operations.



Teresa Bremner, Emma Panton and Sarah Chalmers

Clan Cancer Support has appointed three new staff members as part of the charity's growth plans. Former Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce Membership Network Manager, Teresa Bremner, has been appointed as Sculpture Project Trail Manager. Emma Panton has been appointed as Communications and Marketing Manager and Sarah Chalmers has been appointed as HR Assistant and will support Clan's 54 employees.



Laurent Melaine

Laurent Melaine has been appointed as GEODIS' Executive Vice President, Commercial and Marketing. He now joins the GEODIS management board and will be responsible for leading the sales and marketing teams in order to develop the group's business volume.

Looking for export support?





Ryan Odlin and Daniel Wisely

Independent housebuilder Dandara is continuing its drive to encourage young people to forge successful careers in the construction industry with the appointment of Ryan Odlin (pictured) and Daniel Wisely. Ryan joined Dandara Aberdeen in September and has now been given a permanent position as an Assistant Site Manager. Ryan graduated with a degree in construction management from the city's Robert Gordon University. Site assistant Daniel from Portlethen is on a six-month placement with Dandara while completing a four-year construction course also at Robert Gordon University.



Steven Murdoch, Daniel Crighton and Wiqas Qaiser

KPMG UK has promoted three staff in its Scottish offices across key growth areas for the business. Daniel Crighton is promoted to Director within KPMG's audit practice. Based in Aberdeen, Crighton has extensive experience working with upstream oil and gas clients. He joined the firm in 2010 as a graduate. Steven Murdoch has been promoted to Director within KPMG's deal advisory tax team in Glasgow and Wiqas Qaiser becomes director in the FS Audit team and is based in Edinburgh.



Alan Venters, John Anthony, Peter Rhodes and Steven Wallace

Integrated solutions specialist, EnerMech, has bolstered its technical capabilities by appointing a new Valve Operations Manager and three subject matter experts to its team. The appointments follow a successful first quarter, with 71% higher revenue year on year, from existing client work and new projects. Joining the company are, Alan Venters (Operations Manager, Valves), John Anthony (Subject Matter Expert, Valves), Peter Rhodes (Subject Matter Expert, Process) and Steven Wallace (Subject Matter Expert, On-site Machining Services).



Paul Yeats

Due to continued growth and an ongoing focus on project delivery, ROVOP has appointed Paul Yeats, formerly Chief Commercial Officer to the newly created role of Chief Operating Officer. He joins the senior leadership team alongside the CEO and CFO. Paul has 30 years' experience in the energy sector, including previous roles in Oceaneering and i-Tech 7.



Kevin Murray

Kevin Murray has been appointed Managing Director of the UK Operations of underwater technology company MacArtney UK, based in Aberdeen. He has been Sales Director since joining the company in March 2021.

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

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Pete McIntosh, Kelsey Barbour, Susan Montgomery, Jaye Christie, Julie Owens, Rhona Hourston and Zoe Powell

Aberdeen-based creative agency Hampton has promoted a number of its team. Pete McIntosh and Kelsey Barbour take on the roles of Senior Account Managers, while Susan Montgomery has been promoted to Head of Design and Jaye Christie to Creative Lead. Julie Owens becomes Senior Designer, Rhona Hourston a Mid-weight Motion Designer and Zoe Powell a Mid-weight Designer. The promotions follow a busy period for the agency which included a move to new premises in Aberdeen's West End and establishing a presence in Glasgow.



James McIntosh

James McIntosh, a graduate of Robert Gordon University with a BA (Hons) Law and Management degree, has joined Blackford as the Group's first Graduate Broker with exposure to arranging commercial and private client insurances. James is learning how the insurance industry operates and how to achieve the best results clients.



Doug Michael

Anderson Anderson & Brown has appointed Doug Michael as partner and United States tax practice lead, based in the business' London office. Doug has joined AAB to launch a new US tax service as part of the payroll and employment taxes team, providing individual and employment tax advisory and compliance support to clients with a US footprint.



John Skinner

Cross-industry solutions provider, Spiral Services has appointed John Skinner as Workshop Manager as it continues its growth in the engineering, manufacturing and fabrication fields. John has more than 40 years of experience and an extensive engineering and fabrication background having spent time with James Fisher Offshore, Rotech Fabrication and latterly Whittaker Engineering.



Martin Clunes

The World Clydesdale Show 2022 has appointed Martin Clunes as show president. The writer, presenter and actor is also a heavy horse enthusiast who took over as president of The British Horse Society in 2011.



Mark Houston and Lynne Walker

Independent business advisory and accountancy firm Johnston Carmichael has appointed a new Chair and Vice Chair. Mark Houston, Partner and Head of Johnston Carmichael's Glasgow office, is stepping up from his current role as Vice-chair to Chair. Mark, who joined the firm as a Director in 2006, became Partner in 2008 and was selected to lead the Glasgow office in 2011 before being appointed to the Board in 2013. Lynne Walker, Partner and Head of Business Advisory, has been appointed Vice-chair. Lynne, who is based out of the firm's Elgin and Inverness offices, started as a newly qualified Chartered Accountant in the firm's audit team 17 years ago. After becoming audit Director in 2014 she was promoted to oversee business advisory services, becoming Head of Business Advisory in 2017 and partner in 2019.



Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce



Katie Mearns

Aberdeen Considine has strengthened its corporate benefits team with the appointment of a senior corporate and employee benefits expert. Katie Mearns has joined the firm in a newly created Corporate Benefits Adviser role. She has more than 10 years' experience in the corporate benefits industry, working with a range of clients across the country.



Finlay MacLean

Optical specialist Duncan and Todd Group, which owns J M MacDonald in Inverness and Skye, has appointed expert audiologist Finlay MacLean to provide hearing care services to patients across the North. He has more than 17 years' experience in the audiology sector and is based at J M MacDonald on View Place in Inverness.



Mark McCluskie, Georgina Hay and Louise Garden

PR and marketing agency, Bold St Media, has doubled the size of its team to meet escalating customer demand. The Oldmeldrum-based firm has appointed Mark McCluskie as its first Technical Director, while Georgina Hay and Louise Garden have joined as PR Account Managers.



Anne Littlejohn, Gavin Cooper and Scott Rennie

Raeburn Christie Clark and Wallace has promoted three members of its residential property team to partner across its North-east branch network. Anne Littlejohn, who joined RCCW in 2012, has extensive experience in residential conveyancing matters across Aberdeen City and Shire and is based at the firm's Property Shop at 399 Union Street. Also based there is Gavin Cooper, a Solicitor with more than 25 years' residential conveyancing experience in the boosting branch representation at Partner level is Scott Rennie who joined the firm as an Associate in 2019 when RCCW took over Connors of Stonehaven. Based in RCCW's Stonehaven branch, Scott assists clients in buying and selling properties across Stonehaven and Kincardineshire.



Angela Mitchell

Deloitte has appointed Angela Mitchell as a new Senior Partner for Scotland. Angela Mitchell is the first woman to hold this senior position in Scotland and has been office senior partner for Deloitte in Glasgow since 2020 and has led the firm's public sector practice in Scotland for 12 years. She has more than 25 years' experience.



Jenni Macfarlane

Openreach, the digital network business in Scotland, has appointed a new Service Delivery Director. Jenni Macfarlane will lead a field force of around 1,200 engineers whose role is to keep people connected across the whole of Scotland, on behalf of more than 600 providers who use Openreach's network to provide services to their customers.

Scan here to explore the latest vacancies from our members





Mark Shepherd

NRC Environmental Services UK Ltd has appointed Mark Shepherd as Director of Operations, running NRC international industrial services and emergency response operations based in Oldmeldrum. Mark has a wealth of experience in the energy sector, including emergency response, crisis management, equipment and base management as well as leadership abilities.



Sylvia Halkerston

Sylvia Halkerston, who became a Burgess in 2009, has been appointed as the Lord Dean of Guild of the City of Aberdeen. She is the first woman to be in post in Aberdeen since the role of Dean of Guild was established in 1214. The Lord Dean of Guild is the senior official who represents the Guildry of Burgesses, who are responsible for upholding the laws and customs of the burgh.



Jacqueline Stroud

Law firm, Brodies LLP, has added to its family practice with the appointment of Jacqueline Stroud, who joins the firm as Partner. With more than 30 years' experience in family law, Jacqueline will be based in Brodies' Edinburgh office.



Dale Millward

STATS Group, has added more staff to its Middle East operations as the result of a post-Covid uptick in project activities, while one of its most experienced pipeline intervention experts has relocated to the region. Dale Millward has been appointed vice president technical assurance in Doha.



Katy Burke, Michael Jamieson and Roger Campbell

Johnston Carmichael has bolstered its private client advisory team with three new senior appointments. Katy Burke has been appointed as Director and Michael Jamieson and Roger Campbell have both been appointed as Senior Tax Managers in the team, all working with Johnston Carmichael clients across the UK.



Morio Kajiwara

International School Aberdeen (ISA) has announced the appointment of Morio Kajiwara as its new Elementary School Principal. Morio has more than two decades' experience in the education sector and has taken up his new role as principal for preschool to Grade 5 (preschool to Primary 6).



Kerry Omand

ANM Group, has announced appointments to its livestock division to strengthen its Orkney and Shetland operations. Kerry Omand has been appointed to a part-time role as Livestock Procurement Agent for Orkney. Kerry is a former NFU policy advisor and represented NFUS Orkney members, influenced policy and liaised with agricultural stakeholders at a local and national level.





Brenda Wyllie

Aberdeen-based STEM education charity, TechFest has appointed energy industry specialist Brenda Wyllie as Chair and restructured its board as it looks to pave the way for STEM education in an evolving sector.



Tom Murdoch

Brimmond Group, the Aberdeenshire-based provider of hydraulic, lifting and mechanical equipment and services, has integrated the divisions of its business by absorbing sister company Rigrun Europe. The company, which is rebranding as Brimmond after dropping "Group" from its title, also announced Tom Murdoch as Managing Director of the newly unified entity.



Carolyn Richards

Carolyn Richards has joined Raeburn Christie Clark & Wallace LLP as a Partner, continuing its investment in the housebuilding team in the firm's commercial property department. Carolyn has almost 30 years' experience of the new homes sector and will help lead a team which supports builders in both setting up development sites and the onward sales of individual new build properties.



Gary Gray

Energy recruitment specialist Strategic Resources has promoted Gary Gray to the position of Managing Director. The appointment follows Shonah Raffan's decision to retire after more than three decades with the business, including the past 27 years as managing director.



Andrew Pilkington and Lesley Milne

Nimbus Blue has two new team members. Andrew Pilkington has joined as Technical Team Lead to ensure the smooth and slick running of their technical solutions, and Lesley Milne has joined as Accounts and Admin Manager.



Paul Gilfeather

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation appointed Paul Gilfeather as its Head of Communications as it prepares to move the dial on issues like air pollution, child poverty and increase awareness of asthma as a life threatening and life-limiting health condition. Paul has more than 20 years' experience in political journalism and public relations.



David Gray

Rapteck has appointed David Gray as General Manager. He joined an expanding team to help strengthen its wide range of manufacturing and innovative engineering solutions across the energy sector. David has over 25 years' experience in the oil and gas sector.

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C Lyndsey Boden, Venue Manager



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C Derek Leith, General Manager



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The UAE-UK Business Council is a thought leadership forum that brings together business leaders from both countries to discuss market access and trade policy issues and to identify emerging trends and opportunities. As a bilateral organisation, they represent the business interests of both UAE and UK corporates, and while working closely with both Governments, its aim is to align and add value to G2G dialogues and develop new connections and opportunities through a network of members and stakeholders.

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C Sally Davies



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