

Know different

Innovative learning for all

Inside jobs

Lifting the lid on in-demand skills

Knowledge is power

Talent insights for the post
Brexit era



Wise up

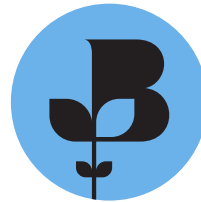
genesis
personnel

YOUR RECRUITMENT EXPERTS

since 1975



01224 565010
genesis-personnel.co.uk



**Aberdeen &
Grampian
Chamber of
Commerce**

Dear Reader,

this issue of the Business Bulletin was printed prior to the full impact of the COVID-19 outbreak being felt by businesses and, as such, contains details of some events and training courses which are no longer accurate.

We are committed to providing the support that businesses need at this time in order that we retain a strong and resilient North-east business community when we come out the other end. Therefore part of our events programme will run in the form of webinars, details of which can be found on the Chamber website, agcc.co.uk/networking-events.

The Ultimate Business Show is now expected to take place in August or September. Look out for updates. If you have any queries get in touch at events@agcc.co.uk.

Our training courses scheduled to take place up to the end of April have been postponed and will be rescheduled to alternative dates later in the year. Our team is in the process of contacting every customer impacted by this. The current schedule can be found at agcc.co.uk/courses. If you have any queries please contact training@agcc.co.uk.

For members trading internationally, be assured that our services are continuing. We are working with our customers to increase self-service capability and would encourage all customers to adopt this approach. While the Chamber office is currently closed, the expert team are still available 9am-5pm Monday to Friday to ensure continuity in the movement of goods overseas during this exceptional period. For any specific questions, please contact documentation@agcc.co.uk or call **01224 343900**.

We remain fully accessible to discuss any concerns which you may have and the team can be contacted through the regular channels. And we are in daily dialogue with Government and their agencies to ensure the voice of business is heard and that the necessary actions are taken to support business through these unprecedented times.

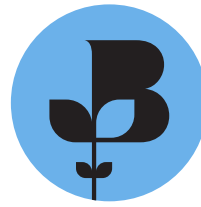
Please also remember that Chamber members have access to a range of money-saving and added value services including a free 24-hour legal helpline agcc.co.uk/offers.

These are indeed unprecedented times and the situation will remain challenging. The Chamber is not a government organisation and our core operations are entirely privately funded. We too are a small business facing the same pressures as you. It is only the support of our members that enables us to do the work we do on your behalf. Thank you for this.

Best wishes

Russell Borthwick

Chief executive



**Aberdeen &
Grampian
Chamber of
Commerce**

Our policy team is focused on getting the information businesses need around access to financing, self-isolating and government support to them.

If you are looking for answers, visit the COVID-19 Hub at agcc.co.uk to access the latest government announcements, Chamber guidance and clarity on the most frequently asked questions from business owners.

The hub is updated daily however our team can also be contacted directly at policy@agcc.co.uk

Now more than ever we need to **#supportlocal. Are you a North-east business looking for support? Or can your products and services help others out? We can help you connect.**

We've all seen great examples of how a community can come together to get through a crisis. The Chamber has created a new platform on LinkedIn, the Chamber Help Hub, to provide the forum for you to let others know where you need help, or to shout about the assistance your business can provide - and get connected.

Link in with us now and start posting.



Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

The Hub
Exploration Drive
Aberdeen Energy Park
Bridge of Don
Aberdeen
AB23 8GX

T 01224 343900
E info@agcc.co.uk
www.agcc.co.uk

Affiliated Chambers
Moray

Bulletin Team



Editor

Laura Grant
T 01224 343926
E business.bulletin@agcc.co.uk



News features

Graeme Smith Media
T 01224 275833



Advertising

Kathryn Collie
T 01224 343901
E kathryn.collie@agcc.co.uk



Design & production

Andrew Taylor
T 01224 343934
E production@agcc.co.uk



Editorial support

Michelle Walker
T 01224 343907
E michelle.walker@agcc.co.uk



Taylor-Ann Robertson
T 01224 343918
E taylor-ann.robertson@agcc.co.uk



Cameron Stirton
E cameron.stirton@agcc.co.uk

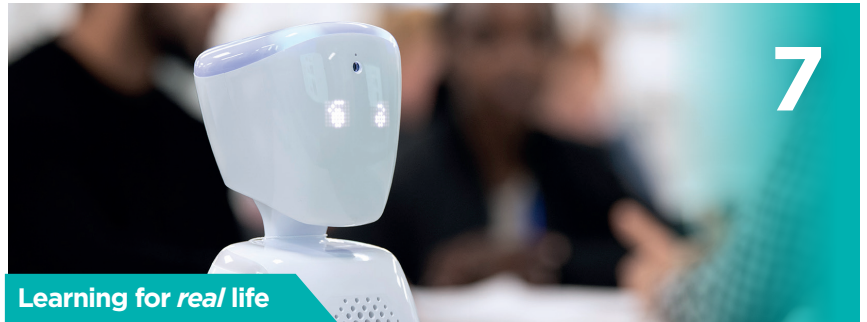
Cover image
Skills and learning

May's theme
Coast and waters

Contents

APRIL 2020

Focus on **Skills and learning**



7

Learning for real life



12

Ready, set - recruit



24

The Brexit effect

Regulars

PAGE |

POLICY UPDATE

James Dunphy, Robert Gordon University

31

TRAINING CALENDAR

Upcoming courses

34

BUSINESS LESSONS I'VE LEARNED

Gus McAskill, ZynQ 360

37

SME SPOTLIGHT

A quick look at a dynamic North-east business

44

INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

Lorraine Neish, Chamber of Commerce

45

EVENTS CALENDAR

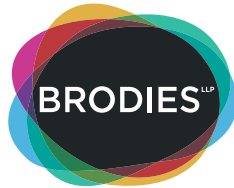
Dates for your diary

46

ON THE MOVE

Who is going places in the region?

48



Our 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.

If you'd like to find out more contact our membership and events director, Seona Shand

T 01224 343929 E seona.shand@agcc.co.uk

Aberdeen's got talent

WHETHER we understand it and like it or not, we are in the midst of the fourth industrial revolution, representing a fundamental change in the way we live, work and relate to one another. The difference between this and the previous three is not just the incredible pace of technological development but also its frightening and seemingly almost unlimited capability.

'Humans are being replaced by machines; the end of the world is nigh'. Not necessarily.

Yes, robots and artificial intelligence will become the default solution for many tasks. Just as manufacturing of goods moved from artisans in small shops and homes to steam powered machines in large factories. And innovative farming equipment replaced people and horses in our fields in the 1700s and 1800s. However, as was the case then, in the wake of these changes, humans will be needed to create and deliver value in brand new ways for brand new business models.

One report suggests that 85% of job roles in 2030 are currently unknown to us and could include: augmented-reality journey builder, biofilm installer, makeshift structure engineer, rewilder, digital currency advisor and drone traffic optimiser.

Of course we still need, and in greater numbers, actual people in the fields of health and social care, education, science and advanced engineering to name just a few - as well as human beings who can make sure the machines are doing what they are meant to.

And as we morph ourselves from being Europe's oil and gas capital to a global leader in energy transition, building on the unrivalled skills and technologies developed here in the North Sea, we will need to convince a whole new generation that it's both socially acceptable and professionally secure and rewarding to pursue a career in this field.

Although the 85% figure feels a little unlikely, it serves to make an important point. How can we nurture the future talent we need to power our economy if

we don't know what they'll need to know? Perhaps therein lies the opportunity.

Talent is defined as natural aptitude or skill. Maybe the future is less about subject-specific knowledge or manual dexterity and more about things like originality, fluency of creative ideas, adaptability, judgment, social intelligence, decision-making and self-management ability. So are these not the things that should form the core part of our curriculums and degree courses? And in an increasingly dynamic environment, we must encourage and support an active approach to lifelong learning.

Don't ask our young people: 'what do you want to be?' but instead, 'what do you want to change?' reflecting the increasing trend towards social conscience and wanting to do good; to make a difference.

This region was recently rated as the best place in the UK to start a business based on start-up and five year survival rates. We must continue to leverage our leading entrepreneurialism eco-system supported by our universities, Elevator, ONE, OGTC and others aligned with our growth sectors.

Finally, if we are to succeed in delivering our economic vision, we need to retain our home-grown talent providing young people across the city region with the motivation to want to be part of our renaissance region story; at the same time attracting the very best to want to come here to study, work and live. Central to this is getting all of us to Absolutely continue to share the narrative of a positive future with a range of high-quality jobs and the great quality of work/life balance offered right here in Aberdeen.



Russell Borthwick
chief executive



Partnership in Guyana for Swire

SWIRE Oilfield Services has announced a strategic partnership agreement with Global Oilfield Services Inc for the supply of offshore containers and equipment to support the growing energy market in Guyana.

Global Oilfield Services will offer a full range of Swire Oilfield Services including offshore containers, baskets, waste skips and tanks to support the increased international operator's drilling campaigns across Guyana.

Global Oilfield Services Inc is a company registered in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and is wholly owned by Guyanese shareholders.



Numbers on the up for graduates

SCOTLAND'S first batch of accountancy graduate apprentices is counting on a bright future thanks to a new route into the profession.

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) worked with the sector and Robert Gordon University (RGU) to develop the first Graduate Apprenticeship in accountancy. Now almost 40 people are working, earning and learning to gain a degree in accountancy with RGU and a range of different employers.

The employers come from sectors including oil and gas, and engineering, as well as accountancy and finance firms. The first accountancy programme is a pilot with RGU and has been developed in conjunction with two professional bodies - ICAS and ACCA.

Students complete both an Honours degree and a professional accounting qualification in a five year period - a significant time saving in comparison with more traditional graduate routes.

RGU has worked closely with employers, offering additional practical support such as a mentor coach.



AGCC member, Findlay Leask trusts Jim Reid to deliver his vehicles so he can deliver his coffee.

Craigearn Business Park, Morrison Way, Kintore, Inverurie AB51 0TH
T: 01467 634000 E: sales@jimreidvehiclesales.co.uk W: www.jimreidvehiclesales.co.uk



The experience is everything

Hydrogen double deckers hit the road

THE world's first hydrogen-powered double decker buses will be working in Aberdeen this summer.

First Aberdeen, part of the multinational First Group which originated in the city, is to run the 15 buses along one of its most popular service routes, underlining the city's role as a pioneer in hydrogen.

The hydrogen double deckers will arrive in the city in the spring and will undergo several weeks of final testing along with training for drivers.

The £8.3m project has been funded by Aberdeen City Council, the Scottish Government and the European Union (FCH JU), with an investment of about £500,000 per vehicle.

The buses are as efficient as electric equivalents, with refuelling taking less than 10 minutes and offering a greater range. Water is the only emission from the vehicles which reduces carbon emissions and contributes to the city's commitment to tackling air pollution.

The UK's first hydrogen production and bus refuelling station was opened in Aberdeen in 2015 as part of a £19m green transport demonstration project. The Aberdeen City Council-led project tested the economic and environmental benefits of hydrogen transport technologies and aims to drive the development of hydrogen technologies.

Septuagenarian dips a toe in the water

A 73-YEAR-OLD Sport Aberdeen member has conquered a lifelong fear of water and finished her final swimming assessment as part of a local adult swimming programme.

Jennifer Whittet recently completed the Adult Improvers Learn to Swim programme at Bridge of Don Swimming Pool. The programme is delivered by Aquatics Aberdeen, part of award-winning charity Sport Aberdeen.

Dianne Breen, Sport Aberdeen coached programmes manager said: "The Learn to Swim programme's main aim is to encourage and enable people of all ages and abilities to swim with confidence and take part in physical activity more often.

"Stories such as Jennifer's are a great reminder that the hard work of our instructors and the wider Aquatics Aberdeen team has a huge impact on a personal level, allowing people to learn new skills and in some cases move past barriers that have persisted for a long time, allowing our participants to really enjoy the sport."

Learning for *real* life



DR KIRSTY Kiezebrink has some rather unusual students in her lectures at the University of Aberdeen's Institute of Applied Health Sciences (IAHS). They never interrupt, but make it clear when they want to ask a question; they interact enthusiastically with their fellow students, but never mix socially; and their faces clearly show when they are confused or happy and, perhaps surprisingly, they never have that faraway look.

Alvin, Anna, Ahmed and Abha are robots which are literally changing the face of teaching by bringing online students from around the globe into the classes on the Aberdeen campus. The telepresence robots enable the university's remote students in Nigeria, Hong Kong, Taiwan, or any of the 100+ other countries in which the university delivers online courses and degrees, to sit in on lectures, lab work, field visits and tutorials anywhere teaching is taking place.

Through the McRobots' electronic eyes and ears, students can see and hear exactly what's going on and can ask questions. The robots light up to

alert tutors to incoming questions and illuminated facial expressions highlight a problem or contentment.

Dr Kiezebrink, a senior lecturer in the IAHS, explained that the robots being trialled in this pilot scheme were originally designed for use by children unable to attend school because of ill health so they could continue to learn and interact with their classmates.

"They have proved a great success," she said. "They have enabled me to identify the features which work well for our situation and others which would be helpful. For example, these robots don't have screens because children might not want to be seen in their bedroom but I would quite like the option to see the student. Also, there is no zoom to prevent children inappropriately zooming in on others but for adults in a teaching situation that could be very helpful.

"The current trial is assessing whether this novel teaching method can help student retention rates and make for a more engaged learning experience. So far the feedback has been very positive, with our online students reporting that they feel closer to discussions taking place in the classroom. We can have a

clinician, who is studying online, working with a health economy student and a health economist and all have different skill sets and they can learn from each other.

"Online learning is not new but I think we're really starting to look at how we bring online learning into a university setting and co-teaching. There is a massive change in the approach to learning. I think fewer and fewer students will have the luxury of taking time out of their lives to just study and more people will follow short courses and built up degrees.

"Many people, by the time they get to Masters level, have significant other life commitments and can't take a year out to move to a new city to study. Online lets them do it in smaller bits but they want the experience of interaction and that's where things like the robots really come into their own. We have found that those operating the robots - and their names go on them as soon as the class starts - become really involved, rather than just observers. They become an integral part of the group."

Nancy El-Shayeb, an MSc clinical nutrition student based in Malaysia



who has been one of the pioneers of this mode of learning, said: "Using the robots made me feel like I was in the classroom and meant that I could exchange ideas and take part in group discussions, which is very helpful in online learning."

As well as teaching methods being transformed by technology, so is the working environment and big data, automation and robotics are among the pieces of the jigsaw being slotted together as the picture of the workforce of the future comes into sharp focus. North East Scotland College has grasped the opportunity to be at the heart of new and exciting developments for the region with learners from school age through to adults retraining and reskilling to embrace new and rapidly evolving subject areas.

Through the college's growing School Links programme – offering secondary pupils the opportunity to combine school studies with a broad range of NESCol courses and qualifications – budding young engineers are being offered a first taste of robotics.

The recently introduced automation and renewables course is designed to provide an engaging introduction,

aiming to inspire the next generation of innovators.

Kevin Bruce, head of faculty for engineering and construction at NESCol's Fraserburgh Campus, said: "As a college we've got a strong track record in electrical and mechanical engineering, two disciplines at the heart of the advances we're seeing all around us in automation and robotics. Automation is making life easier for us all in day to day life, not to mention in industry. From remotely operated vehicles in the oil and gas sector to robotics and industrial motion control in manufacturing, the progress has been significant. Education and training have to keep pace with that change and we've been very proactive with STEM subjects.

"As a college we work closely with industry to meet the workforce needs on the horizon - automation and robotics is one of the areas of great potential. The School Links course, combining automation with another of the growth areas in renewables, is a really good hands-on introduction for pupils. It includes 3D printing and programmable logic controllers (PLC), so covers a range of emerging technologies.

"We also have the Fujitsu Innovation Hub at the heart of the Fraserburgh Campus and that's a resource that will come into its own in the coming years. We're planning to continue investing in equipment and technology to allow us to build on the work already being done and from a college perspective the opportunities for students are really beginning to open up, growing from the knowledge and experience we have across electrical and mechanical engineering."

With the future of engineering being explored with new audiences in the workshops and classrooms at the Fraserburgh and Altens campuses, at NESCol's City Campus the potential of big data, artificial intelligence and cyber security is being brought to the fore through the computing faculty's work. The recent addition of Dr Ibrahim Alwawi to the lecturing staff has also brought a new perspective, stemming from his PhD studies in big data, and adds to the focus on the skills required for students with their sights set on a career in a fast paced and changing industry.

Cameron Walker, head of faculty for computing and science at the college, said: "In recent years we



have seen a spike in interest in courses across computing, including in software development, and given the career opportunities and pathways to further study we hope to see that continuing. Artificial intelligence, big data, data analytics and the role of software development in harnessing that power to provide solutions is a fascinating area and bringing computing to life is something NESCol and our team prides itself on.

“Technologies in business is one of the new courses that we’re gaining traction with, bringing together the technical areas such as big data and user interface design with the entrepreneurial elements of project management and business communications in a new way. Our first HND students are progressing through that course and developing skills that are aligned to the demand we can see in the business sector.”

One man who understands the importance of young people gaining new skills but also of providing training for people of all ages is Jimmy Milne, chairman and managing director of the Balmoral Group.

As he enters his ninth decade,

he continues to have a thirst for developing: “They say you can’t teach an old dog new tricks – well, I can tell you that just isn’t true,” he said. “Learning is a life-long journey and I’m proud to say that I’ll be 80 years young this year and count each day as a school day. Why else would you get out of bed every morning?”

“We place the highest priority on learning at Balmoral and, as the business world changes around us, one thing that hasn’t altered is our commitment to personnel development with the ultimate focus on client satisfaction. From the establishment of our in-house Skills Academy in 2012, when serious industry skill shortages were recognised, to the introduction and development of the Balmoral Leadership Academy, we acknowledge that we must invest in our people, across all ages and disciplines, to maintain our market-leading position.

“I’ll always remember the quote I read many years ago when one company director said to another: ‘What happens if we spend a lot of time and money training these guys and they go and leave us shortly afterwards?’ To which his contemporary replied: ‘What happens if we don’t and they stay?’

“Our Leadership Academy is a pragmatic programme and fully accredited by the Institute of Leadership Management. It focuses on real opportunities and challenges within the business to equip current and future leaders with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to succeed in our competitive and dynamic markets.

“It has turned good people into great people and these great people have become a catalyst for change. They have raised the bar in terms of culture, quality and leadership in all areas of the business.”

Standard Real Estate Ltd

We have a portfolio of office buildings across Scotland, available to let, with suites from 100 sq ft to 12,500 sq ft on highly competitive rental terms.

Aberdeen office rents from £8.50 per sq ft.



Please contact us on the email or telephone numbers below to discuss your occupational requirements.

Scott Campbell

scott@standardrealestateltd.com

Tel. 07881 620 180

Hamish Munro

hamish@standardrealestateltd.com

Tel. 07951 939 932

www.standardrealestateltd.com

It's time to take up the challenge

by Cate Nelson-Shaw,
marketing director,
Remarkable



ABERDEEN, hard enough to resist abrasion, strong enough to bear significant weight, resilient enough to resist the weather. And that's just the stone from which much of the Granite City is built. And I know, I lived in Banff for a few years and still have family in the area, an area built very much on farming, fishing and, of course, oil.

Since the discovery of black gold in the North Sea, Scotland's place as a centre for global excellence in offshore engineering, subsea technology and in the export of offshore goods and services has been secured - an industry that today is worth around £4bn per year.

And now I see new opportunities emerge; opportunities that offer operators, and those within its supply chain, the rapid development of new capabilities. The biggest? Decommissioning - safely plugging the holes in the earth's surface and disposing of the equipment used in offshore oil production.

As I read OGUK's 2019 report I was staggered by how huge some of the numbers are. Forecasts that predict £15bn will be spent worldwide on decommissioning over the next 10 years, 43% of which will be in the

North Sea basin. So, more and more workers need to be attracted to the sector, some 25,000 is predicted. Many of these will be undertaking roles that don't currently exist, which I find both exciting and daunting in equal measure. The sector and its people are indeed evolving.

I believe that success will require attracting, recruiting and retaining the right people at all levels within organisations. People who embrace change and are open to innovative ways of working. People who are resilient, proactive and flexible; effective optimisation and management of people's performance can raise productivity by as much as 25%. However nearly half of organisations in the North-east are finding it difficult to attract staff, with a quarter claiming employment challenges were the result of difficulty recruiting for these new, non-traditional roles.

On average we spend over 2,000 hours at work every year; roughly equivalent to about 80,000 hours during our lifetime. These hours need to be enjoyable, meaningful and fulfilling. Made-so, I believe, through inspirational leadership, through creating a supportive workplace and by committing to continuous improvement. These elements are

the bedrock of an organisation made better by, and filled with, happy, healthy people.

If not now, when? As Aberdeen's landscape and that of its environs change in ways unimaginable, now is the time to take up the challenge, to give employees the tools they need to succeed; to build happy, healthy workforces and to make businesses in the North-east sustainable and profitable. And finally, to ensure the prosperity of this unique and beautiful part of Scotland, so that we progress from 'jist chavin' awa' to all being 'fair-tricket'.

Ready, set - recruit



WIND has not only made its presence felt in the recent destructive storms Ciara and Dennis but also in raising hopes for future job creation in the North-east, according to Amanda McCulloch, managing director of Thorpe Molloy McCulloch Recruitment Ltd.

“Subsea UK has projected the recruitment of almost 9,000 people in the next three years as a result of increasing output from subsea SMEs and more activity in renewables, particularly offshore wind,” she said.

“As a recruiter, job creation through the local supply chain is music to my ears. But the value of these jobs can only be realised through the placement of people with the right skills and attributes.”

TMM Recruitment’s recently published North East Scotland 2020 Salary Guide reveals that 2019 was a year of significant change with more recruitment activity, an additional 10,000 jobs supported by the oil and gas industry and investment and training definitely back on the agenda and critical for alleviating the skills crisis.

“The job market has improved significantly but the benchmark with which we have to compare it is pretty low, lest we forget how dramatically the job market was disrupted only a short time ago,” said Amanda. “The recruitment tipping point occurred during the third quarter of 2019. Teams too lean to deliver on business objectives require additional resource and this has increased job flow in earnest, across all levels.

“Many employers coming back to the job market discover that recruiting skilled staff is much harder than they anticipated. There’s a candidate shortage in niche areas and a lack of immediately available candidates exacerbates the difficulty of filling

roles at short notice and for short term contracts too.

“There’s a number of reasons for this, including a depleted talent pipeline as a result of training and development cuts, knowledge loss and geographic relocation. To an increasingly confident candidate audience, employers have to work harder to dispel perceptions around lack of diversity and overly-hierarchical cultures.”

She said in this respect energy industry employers can be their own worst enemy, slowing down the recruitment process through protracted decision making which can be a deterrent to candidates, particularly those fielding more than one offer of employment.

“In this job market, role content and role potential are increasingly important to job seekers,” she added. “There’s also growing



“Manufacturing and engineering are pivotal in UK subsea activity. Over 50% of subsea companies specialise in manufacturing and engineering so engineers will be in demand. But in addition to the traditional engineering and manufacturing skills, the industry will need digital skills, including data science and data analytics, automation and artificial intelligence.”

Neil Gordon,
chief executive,
Subsea UK

interest to work for a company where the business leaders act as a force for good, balancing purpose, people, planet and profits.

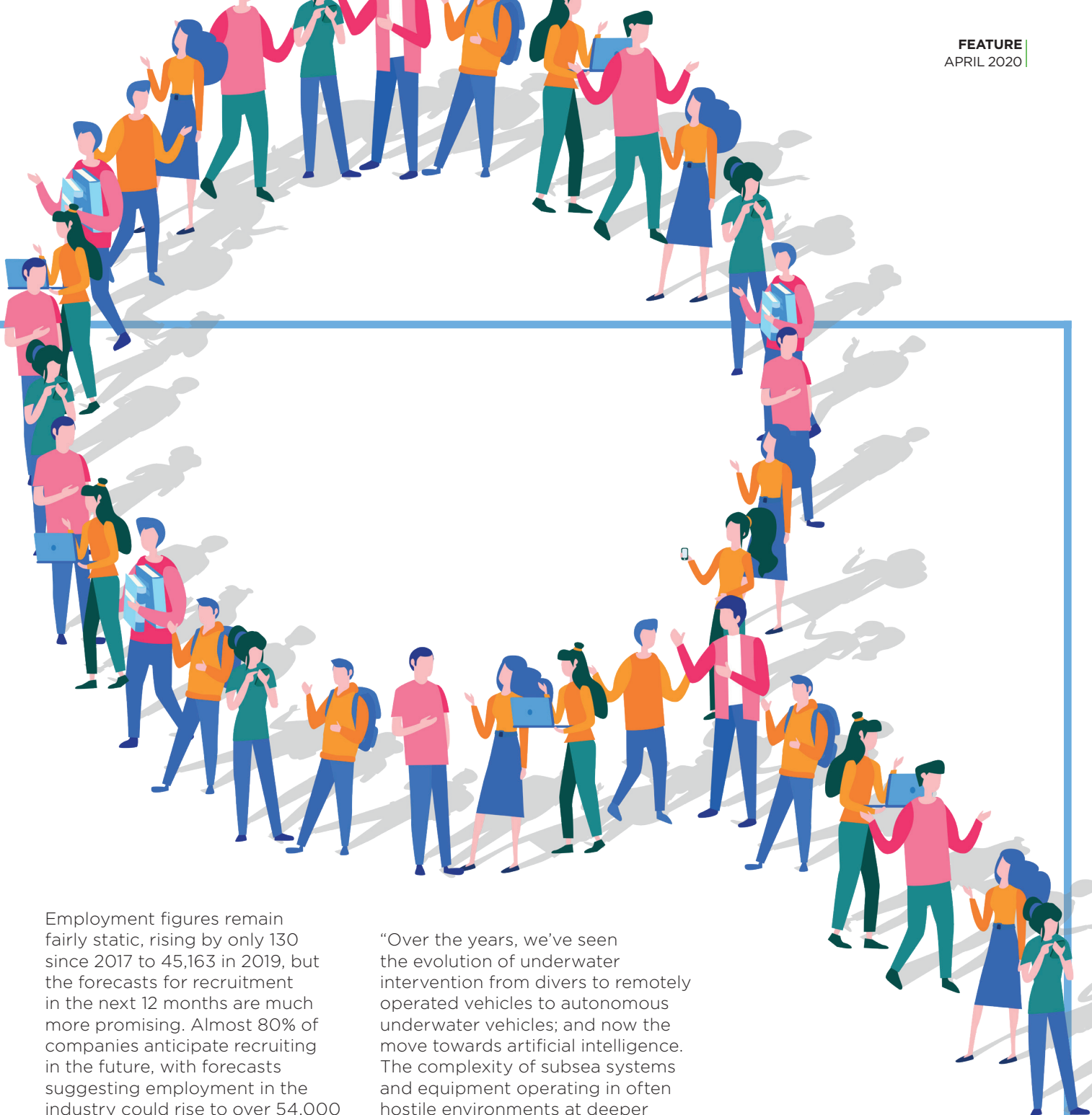
“Sustainability is serious business and although corporate strategies are evolving, and we are witnessing it locally through the announcements and actions taken by companies committing to the energy transition, my sense is we’re only at the beginning of a long period of change.

“It is not only operational skills that must be nurtured. Change requires good leadership, where management teams bring breadth of experience, distinct skills and individual strengths to bear. OPITO’s report UKCS Workforce Dynamics: The Skills Landscape 2019 - 2025, reports that around 75% of all managers and team leaders working in the UKCS are over 40 years old and 40% are over the age of 50. There’s a need to prepare our workforce for leadership.

“Undoubtedly, there’s tremendous employment potential, but to capitalise on these opportunities requires a change in the way we approach talent attraction, upskilling and people development.”

Another recent, and optimistic report - Subsea UK’s Business Activity Review - seeks to gauge the temperature in the subsea industry, exploring current and future revenues, sectoral activity, exports and export markets, employment and recruitment trends.

The findings reveal the industry has turned a corner, following the long and deep downturn in oil and gas, its biggest market. Revenues are on the rise, firms are doing business in more sectors and international markets than ever before and recruitment is set to take off.



Employment figures remain fairly static, rising by only 130 since 2017 to 45,163 in 2019, but the forecasts for recruitment in the next 12 months are much more promising. Almost 80% of companies anticipate recruiting in the future, with forecasts suggesting employment in the industry could rise to over 54,000 by 2022. This would surpass the 53,000 reported in 2013, before the oil and gas downturn. 78% of respondents expect to recruit in the next 12 months with 75% expecting to create 8,928 jobs in the next three years.

Subsea UK chief executive, Neil Gordon, said: "Manufacturing and engineering are pivotal in UK subsea activity. Over 50% of subsea companies specialise in manufacturing and engineering so engineers will be in demand. But in addition to the traditional engineering and manufacturing skills, the industry will need digital skills, including data science and data analytics, automation and artificial intelligence.

"Over the years, we've seen the evolution of underwater intervention from divers to remotely operated vehicles to autonomous underwater vehicles; and now the move towards artificial intelligence. The complexity of subsea systems and equipment operating in often hostile environments at deeper depths mean that automation and remote intervention of subsea systems is advancing.

"As the industry strives to become ever more cost and energy efficient, while reducing risk, innovation and new technology in these areas will accelerate. Condition-based monitoring, whereby repair and maintenance is predicted and planned, is increasingly driven by subsea sensors and data analysis. The drive towards net-zero also presents major opportunities for those with the imagination and ingenuity to develop subsea solutions that reduce our carbon footprint and accelerate the energy transition.

"For the new generation entering the subsea industry, STEM subjects will be critical and this is why Subsea UK invests in initiatives and resources with schools. Encouraging the uptake of subjects like maths, science and computer science is crucial for developing and attracting new talent into the industry. We must excite young people about the opportunities available within the blue economy and how they can make a real difference in how we responsibly and sustainably exploit the rich resources below our oceans."

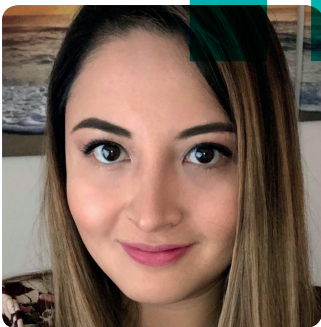
Which skill have you found most valuable in your career?



“As a business owner I use many business skills, from marketing to financial management, problem solving to delegation. However, the most valuable skill, which is used every day, is leadership. Leadership keeps my team motivated, inspires them to be the best version of themselves which in turn makes them strive to deliver the best service for our clients.

“Over the years I’ve had to call upon this skill during the good times and bad, from motivating my team during the downturn, to influencing them to share my excitement and passion about new ideas. My leadership skills enabled me to engage with my team to make the necessary strategic changes to the business ensuring its long-term future as an independent insurance broker. I believe in leading by example; acting with honesty and integrity, being accountable, genuinely caring about your clients and apologising when required.”

Shona Robertson, *partner*, H & R Insurance



“The skill that I have found the most valuable during my career I would say is my perseverance. I have been fortunate enough to have mentors throughout my career that have seen potential in me and this belief and trust that companies have put in me are what drives me to deliver and exceed their expectations. I have learned that there is no limit to what one can learn or bring to the table if one is passionate enough.

“I am always developing new strategies to spread the word about what we do and the benefits that we deliver across multiple industries, doing this takes persistence. You have to do the steps, work the plan and put the time in. You must put one foot in front of the other and keep going until you reach your goals, so my advice to anyone is never give up. You never know when your hard work is going to pay off.”

Brenda Harrison, *global sales and marketing coordinator*, ZynQ 360



“I started my working life in sales and learning the value of good ethics when selling and the skill I’ve found to be most useful through the years is understanding what makes a good salesperson. People want to work with people they can trust to look after them so you need to know the full package of what you are selling. Anyone can claim to be able to sell but it’s not all about closing the deal at any cost and you have to be able to back up what you are offering and build that trust.

“High customer service levels, pride and professionalism are at the core of AV One and that ensures we are an extension of the customers team and not just a supplier. This has helped us establish ourselves as one of the country’s go-to providers of innovative technology solutions.”

Graeme McGuire, *managing director*, AV One Solutions Ltd

Lifesaving diving bell research

A TOTAL of 10 subsea companies have pledged £65,000 towards a medical research project which aims to determine the best procedure for resuscitation of divers in a diving bell.

Led by Philip Bryson, medical director of diving services of Iqarus, the joint industry project will find out how resuscitation techniques should be delivered to a casualty in a diving bell at depth.

Divers at depth are exposed to a multitude of hazards which increase the risk of losing consciousness and requiring CPR. Divers are accompanied by a bellman who monitors the diver's life support and stands by to administer first aid if required.

But diving bells present unique challenges to first aiders performing CPR as the confined space prevents casualties from lying flat so that traditional compressions can be administered.

To date the JIP is being funded by Boskalis, DFS Diving, KD Marine, Kreuz Subsea, Rever, Shelf Subsea, Statoil, Technip and Total. A further £15,000 is still to be secured from the industry to complete the research.

Middle East investors look outside London

RESEARCH released by global real estate advisor CBRE has revealed that the UK regions outside of London were the preferred destinations for Middle Eastern investors in 2019 as spending levels overtook those in the capital for the first time.

According to the property advisor, in 2019 Middle East investors deployed £230m into Scotland and a total of £880m across the UK regions, compared to £650m in Central London.

Whilst investment into the UK from the Middle East in 2019 was down on 2018, falling from £3.7bn to £1.5bn, this is the first time investors have deployed more capital into UK regional cities than into Central London.

In Scotland, transactions took place in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen, and the £67m purchase of Abbotsinch Retail Park in Paisley by Ashby Capital represented the largest acquisition by Middle Eastern investors. Other notable deals included the £27m acquisition of Centrica's HQ in Edinburgh by BLME/Darin Partners, the £55m acquisition of the Sauchiehall Centre in Glasgow by 90 North and Arbah Capital, and the £22m purchase of Technip HQ in Aberdeen by Black Sands.



Investing in the meta-skills of our future workforce

"Scotland's workforce needs constantly developing skills, knowledge and capabilities to thrive in this complex, ever-changing environment." (Skills Development Scotland, 2020) This is why developing the meta-skills of our future workforce such as; social and emotional abilities like empathy, collaboration, leadership, creativity and curiosity are key in driving change and closing the skills gap. Traditional methods such as apprenticeships, although slower and more costly to implement, contribute towards strengthening meta-skills by exposing people to a professional work setting. The government is focused on apprenticeships to deliver positive change, but will it be enough?

Udrafter (The University Draft), an Aberdeen based start-up is taking a different approach with their on-demand micro-internship platform. University and college students can gain extra skills as they study by completing degree relevant paid projects posted by local businesses. By completing various, flexible projects students learn a multitude of different meta-skills. Luke Morrow, Founder and Commercial Director of Udrafter states that "Confidence is one of the meta-skills we have observed that is lacking from students and graduates. Thankfully we have also observed a significant uptick in their confidence after completing just one project through Udrafter.

Employers can capitalise on this by putting people in positions of responsibility that will stretch them early on and not 2 to 3 years down the line." Echoing the thoughts of Geoff Leask (Chief Executive of Young Enterprise Scotland) more bridges must be built between higher education and industry to give students the meta-skills required to drive growth in the UK economy. At present, almost half of young people aged 17-23 are not confident that their education prepares them for working life - and many businesses will agree with this.

To learn more about Udrafter
visit udrafter.com



Neptune signs operated exploration licence

NEPTUNE Energy has signed an operated exploration licence with the Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation for Egypt's North West El Amal offshore concession, underlining the company's commitment to growing its presence in North Africa.

Neptune will acquire 100 km² of 3D seismic data and drill one exploration well in the first phase, with two further wells planned in phase two.

The North West El Amal offshore concession covers 365 km² and is in the central part of the Gulf of Suez, approximately 42km south of Ras Gharib and 105km north of Hurghada.



The SIGNAL2NOISE team with their gongs

Awards glory for SIGNAL2NOISE

ABERDEEN-BASED digital media production company SIGNAL2NOISE has won four awards at the Aurora Awards in the USA for films made for two Aberdeen-based businesses, Equinor and Aberdeen Harbour Board. The awards include two Platinum 'Best of Show' awards.

'Come to Aberdeen' was commissioned by Aberdeen Harbour to promote the 2020 British Ports Association Conference which is being hosted in Aberdeen by the Harbour Board in October this year. Meanwhile 'A Digital Frontrunner' was commissioned by Equinor to promote its commitment to innovation and digital technology, and to showcase some of those technologies in action in its Mariner field.

Jamie Baikie, SIGNAL2NOISE's senior producer said "2019 was our best year yet. We have big plans in 2020 and several major projects in the pipeline. We're delighted to be successful in once again bringing home international awards. They've confirmation that we're on the right track."

GM Flow investment for global expansion

ABERDEEN gas flow measurement firm, GM Flow, has secured a six-figure sum investment from two Scottish equity firms and the Scottish Investment Bank (SIB), the investment arm of Scottish Enterprise, as it continues to develop its game changing gas flow technology for the oil and gas market.

The company developed Adjusta-Cone, an adjustable natural gas cone flow meter to provide a safe and cost-effective alternative to the traditional dual chamber orifice meters that currently exist in the market.

The investment which has been secured from Aberdeen based Alba Equity, St Andrews based Eos Advisory and SIB, has already helped the business secure larger premises in the North-east. The investment will also better position the business to continue its research and the development of its technology, in order to expand into new markets globally.

Growth gap with UK to narrow

IN THE face of a slowing global economy and continued political uncertainty the Scottish economy is predicted to grow by 0.8% GVA in 2020 and subsequently narrow the growth gap between Scotland and the UK by 2022, according to the EY Scottish ITEM Club 2020 Forecast.

The report shows the Scottish economy grew in 2019 by 0.9% GVA and will continue to do so in 2020 (0.8% GVA). While it is expected to trail UK economic growth, 1.4% GVA in 2019 and 1.2% GVA in 2020, the growth gap between the two will decrease year-on-year from 0.5% GVA in 2019 through to 0.2% GVA in 2022.

Consumer spending in Scotland is expected to grow by just 0.4% in real terms this year. While this will be aided by 0.8% in real terms growth in personal disposable incomes, consumer spending is predicted to be held back later in the year as caution increases when nearing the deadline for the EU transition period.

Private services, which make up more than half of the Scottish economy, will continue to drive growth across the country by accounting for more than two-thirds of Scotland's total GVA growth in 2020. The sub-sector professional, scientific and technical activities will make the largest contribution - 20% of total growth.

Six cities are expected to experience an increase in employment annually with only Aberdeen narrowly missing growth at -0.1% per year from 2020-2024. A common area of GVA growth to all seven cities is predicted to be professional, scientific and technical activities, a sub-sector of private services.

Kippie
Life!

**TEAM BUILDING
SUMMER BBQ'S**
www.kippielodge.co.uk

Our front lawn and patio areas offer an idyllic setting for BBQ's. Coupled with use of our Driving Range and Golf Course makes Kippie the ideal venue.



The honorary graduates

RGU stages honorary graduation ceremony

ROBERT Gordon University (RGU) has held an honorary graduation ceremony to mark the importance of creating equal opportunities for young people from all backgrounds.

The university has awarded honorary degrees to Nicola Benedetti, Scottish classical violinist, and Mark Williams, chief operating officer of Streetsport, for their respective contributions to transforming the lives of young people through the power of music and sport.

The ceremony was held on March 9 and celebrated Nicola and Mark's ongoing commitment to providing opportunities for young people, promoting inclusion and encouraging participation.

Professor John Harper, principal of RGU, said: "RGU has a mission to transform people through the provision of a skills rich, professional education. As part of this, the university has a long-standing commitment to enabling a wide range of individuals to benefit from higher education no matter of background or circumstance."

TEMS moves to new global HQ

TURNKEY Environmental Management Services International Ltd (TEMS International) has relocated to new global headquarters at Union Point, Blaikies Quay. It is anticipated the move to more modern accommodation, which includes a training facility, will be instrumental in satisfying an increasing portfolio of international contracts.

These include the company's recent employment by a major international operator during the drilling of Mexico's first ever offshore deepwater wells. Using environmental legislation knowledge gained in the Gulf of Mexico and Trinidad deepwater regions, TEMS International assisted in generating and establishing offshore Deepwater Mexico environmental legislation during the successful drilling of two wells in this emerging marketplace.



First indoor running event to take place at P&J Live

THE world's biggest inflatable 5k is coming to P&J Live on October 24, 2020. This will be the first indoor running event to take place at the brand new venue P&J Live and is brought to the North-east by UK Running Events.

A company spokesperson said: "We want to encourage more people to get out and run and we are back better than ever with new, bigger and crazier obstacles."

Obstacles will be placed inside P&J Live, meaning the event is completely weather-proof. The inflatable 5k route includes 27 obstacles such as the Temple of Doom, The Mangle and The Boss, including the newest obstacle The Demon, which runners will encounter twice.

Claire-Lena Miller-Davis, exhibition sales manager at P&J Live, said: "We look forward to bringing the first indoor running event to be held within P&J Live. The event is expected to bring over 5,000 participants and we can't wait for Aberdeen to experience this fun inflatable run."

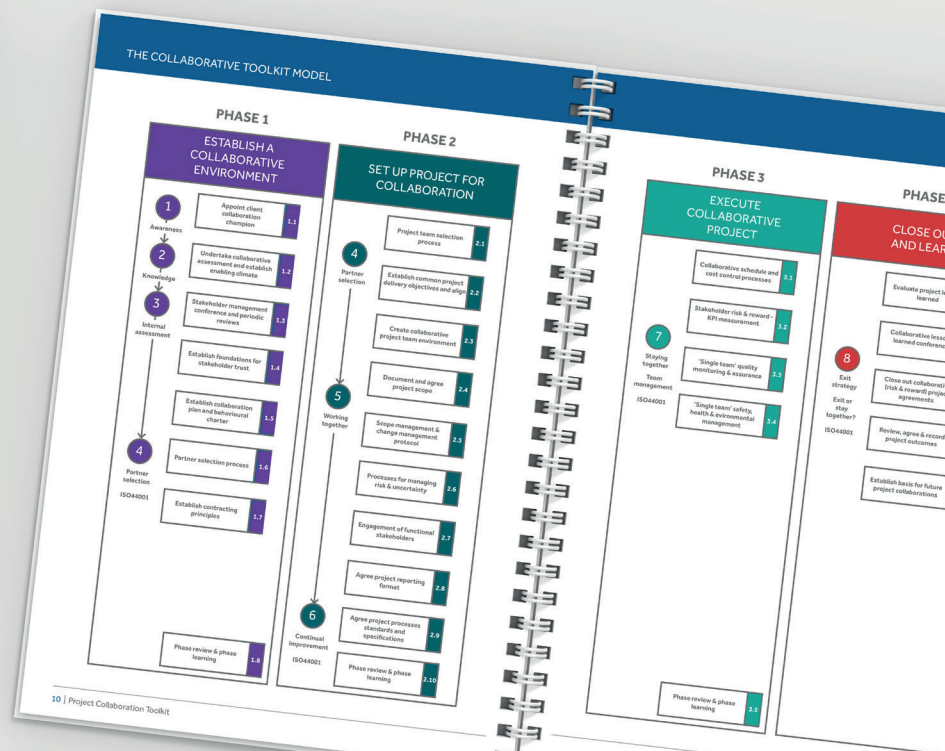
Runners don't have to limit to the 5k route, other options include one lap, which is 2.5k or up to six laps which is a 15k course route. Runners will be rewarded with a high-quality finisher medal, a pair of runner socks, a neck buff and other finish-line goodies.

The event is suitable for participants of all athletic abilities, families and children aged five and over.

Biffy Clyro kick off UK tour at P&J Live

HAVING recently announced details of their eagerly anticipated new album 'A Celebration of Endings', Biffy Clyro now reveal details of their first full-scale UK arena tour since 2016, including P&J Live, Aberdeen date on September 25 2020.

The champions of stadium rock start the tour with two huge shows in Scotland with P&J Live as their first tour date, and the schedule also includes gargantuan 20,000 capacity venues in London and Manchester. Louise Stewart, head of entertainment at P&J Live said: "We can't wait to welcome Biffy back to Aberdeen, especially performing to a bigger crowd in our new venue. We know they'll be a huge hit as they always put on an incredible performance and production, we expect tickets to sell fast."



THE CASE FOR COLLABORATION

In 2014, the Wood Report promoted the notion of collaboration in the oil and gas sector. In response to this, the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB) developed and launched its Project Collaboration Toolkit, a practical 'go-to' guide for project professionals to support and benefit projects through improved collaboration and smarter ways of working across the engineering construction industry.

Results from early adopters - such as Apache's Callater Field and Shell's Brent Bravo - have already demonstrated that collaboration boosts productivity and leads to significant cost savings. So much so that ECITB has just rolled out its Project Collaboration Toolkit Edition 2 at an event for industry leaders in Aberdeen.



Chris Claydon
ECITB
Chief Executive

ECITB Chief Executive Chris Claydon said that while the UK oil and gas sector has shown recent signs of recovery, margins remain tight making it an opportune time to help project managers deliver greater value.

"The Project Collaboration Toolkit Edition 2 is a revised and updated version of the original and builds on the successful application of this framework, which has already proven its worth in enhancing project delivery," he said.

"Having seen the Project Collaboration Toolkit work successfully in oil and gas, the ECITB is now keen to share the benefits of collaboration in project delivery by encouraging its adoption on capital projects throughout all other UK industry sectors."

As the leading skills body for the industry, ECITB is at the forefront of driving change that helps engineering construction remain competitive globally. Developed in conjunction with the Oil & Gas Project Management Steering Group (OPMSG) and endorsed by a number of organisations, including OGUK and the Oil & Gas Authority (OGA), the toolkit focuses on the behavioural aspects of project management.

Presented as a workflow with four distinct phases that map to a typical project lifecycle, the toolkit is designed to be used at all levels of the supply chain, from regulators and operators through to contractors and suppliers, with the intention of building on existing synergies and help them become even stronger over time. The whole toolkit can be used to support project collaboration from inception to completion, or individual phase steps and activities can be applied by project managers to projects which have not been established on a collaborative strategy.

Chris added: "The Project Collaboration Toolkit was developed for industry, by industry and I am confident that we will now see it go from strength to strength on the back of this evidence of improved project value and help the industry remain competitive in what remains a challenging operating climate."

For more information, visit the ECITB website for a number of resources including a copy of the Project Collaboration Toolkit, bite-size videos, industry case studies and information regarding any additional support required to develop project collaboration. To download a copy of the Project Collaboration Toolkit, please go to www.ecitb.org.uk/professional-management-training/project-collaboration-toolkit.



New biomedical engineering MSc

A NEW Master's programme launched by the University of Aberdeen is offering students the chance to forge a career at the cutting edge of medical science.

Biomedical engineering is used to create artificial limbs and organs, surgical machinery and robots, and is at the forefront of medical research and the invention of new, potentially life-changing devices.

Combining medical sciences and engineering, the new Biomedical Engineering MSc programme is interdisciplinary, drawing on one of the main themes of the university's newly launched strategic plan.

The programme has been designed in line with the Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine (IPEM) educational framework and will be delivered by experts in medical technologies from the University's School of Engineering and School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition.



Douglas Martin

AAB top dealmaker for 15th consecutive year

ANDERSON Anderson & Brown LLP (AAB), one of the UK's leading independent firms of chartered accountants and business advisors, has been named the top dealmaker in Scotland for the 15th year running.

Scottish Business Insider has recognised AAB's success in completing the most deals in Scotland in 2019. Its latest figures revealed that AAB successfully completed 62 deals in 2019, nearly double the number of any other accountancy firm during the same period and 29 more than its closest rivals

Douglas Martin, head of corporate finance, said: "We have had a great start to 2020 with a number of significant deals already announced during this first quarter including James Donaldson Group's acquisition of Rowan Manufacturing and Smith & Frater, the buy-out of Tepnel Pharma Services from Hologic and the growth capital investment in Aqualife Services. It's proving to be a massively exciting time for us and we look forward to delivering even greater success during 2020."

A word of advice



Ray Milne,
operations director,
Legasea Ltd

Area of expertise:

We are passionate about promoting reuse in the oil and gas industry, central to our ethos is the concept of the circular economy, taking one company's waste and restoring it to be of value elsewhere. Legasea offers clients the opportunity to divert new and used equipment from the scrapyards, making reuse a simple process, offering cost and time efficiencies, and improving green credentials in the industry.

What should people know:

That reuse isn't a new concept, it's something that's been used for decades in other industries, such as the automotive and aviation industries. There are many strategic advantages in promoting reuse. For example, the most commonly used piece of subsea production equipment is the subsea xmas tree with a value of around £2.2m new. When no longer required by the industry, it's only option until now was disposal through the scrapyards with a value of around £5k. By following our Recover, Refurbish, Recertify, Reuse process these components could be worth substantially more.

What's the biggest mistake companies make?

Classifying their equipment as waste before investigating reuse opportunities.

What's your top tip?

Speak to us. We can assist with changing company policies and procedures, offering advice and support to clients to make the most of all reuse opportunities, pre and post decommissioning activities. When refurbishing and recertifying equipment, Legasea calculates an estimated CO2 emission saved for each project, showing a real time saving that our clients can use in their corporate social responsibility reporting. This can increase the intangible asset value of a company through goodwill valuation, particularly important in the ever-changing landscape of oil and gas industry.

Sponsored by

RAINBOW CITY TAXIS
878787

DOWNLOAD OUR TAXI APP NOW!

Download on the App Store

ANDROID APP ON Google play
uBook by Rainbow City Taxis

Practice what you preach

Donna McWilliams,
managing director,
Electra Learning



AS A change management and learning specialist, it is increasingly important for us to ensure we practice what we preach and embed a culture of continuous learning and improvement within Electra. We're often so busy training others that we forget to stop and reflect on our own learning and development.

To address this issue, a critical initial development for us was to stop using our old appraisal system which we'd implemented across both our UK and Canada offices. Following this we introduced a custom-built competency and personal development framework called PACE (Personal Achievement Continuously developed at Electra).

The PACE model provides tools to enable:

- Our people to develop technical skills and behavioural competencies in relation to their role to ensure our knowledge is continually progressing with ever-evolving changes in technology
- The 'Electra Way' to support and assist our team to live and breathe our values, and ensure this is reflected when working with clients

- Our people to have the right skills and resources at the right time to fulfil any project requirements

We used our core values of teamwork, passion and quality, combined with our business objectives, to develop the behavioural competencies of PACE.

During the process, discussions take place between an individual and their line manager in order to progress personal development plans and identify any competency gaps. Following this, steps towards career development are introduced and clear goals are established.

It's been six months since PACE was introduced and, in the spirit of continuous learning, we have already identified development areas within the framework which we are now implementing. We have also received great feedback from our team about how it is supporting them, some comments include:

"I think the program is great as it lets us discuss performance and areas of improvement. This is a completely new approach for us, and I felt it worked great. I found it worked really well for me."

"The framework works well. It lets me see if I'm on track with my goals and how I've developed over time."

"It gives me the time and opportunity to reflect on what I am learning."

"It motivates me to develop my skills and identify areas to improve, and it gives me an achievable goal."

One objective of the new framework is to encourage everyone at Electra to reflect on their own abilities and competencies, with a view to the company introducing steps to ensure we are always supporting our team, to assist in their own progress, and our clients, by using a system of constant improvement to ensure we achieve their goals.

The value of continuous learning comes from the opportunity to advance your skills and share it with others. From new starts and onboarding through to talent development and succession planning, the PACE framework supports us in our endeavour to continuously improve upon our abilities. Through evolving our knowledge, and supporting others in their development, we can empower individuals to work confidently and achieve more.

Keenan wins five-year contract

KEENAN Recycling has secured a further five-year contract with an estimated value of £5m with SUEZ recycling and recovery UK.

Having successfully delivered this service for 18 years, Keenan Recycling has been re-awarded the new contract by SUEZ on behalf of Aberdeen City Council. Under the contract, the Aberdeen-based organic waste recycling company will recycle all household garden and food waste from the city's brown bin service and recycling centres.

Aberdeen City Council has been at the forefront of providing an organic waste recycling service in Scotland for many years. The partnership SUEZ developed with Keenan Recycling in 2002 enabled the council to provide a garden waste collection service and then subsequently a food waste collection service when it became a legal requirement.

As a result of demand across the city for organic waste recycling, Keenan Recycling secured a grant from the Waste And Resource Action Programme in 2008 which was part of an initial investment of £3.2m to build a state of the art In-vessel composting facility to handle the city's organic waste.

OPEX Group and Wood Mackenzie launch new oil and gas data service

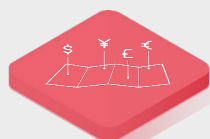
AN ABERDEEN-BASED provider of data science and predictive analysis services OPEX Group has joined forces with global natural resources research and consultancy firm Wood Mackenzie to launch a new data service for the oil and gas industry.

The Operations DataHub™, developed in partnership with the two companies, enables operators to securely pool and gain insight from operations data from multiple assets across the UKCS basin, with the aim of learning from each other and sharing best practice to make more informed decisions, reduce costs and optimise operational performance.

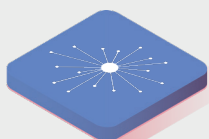
Crucially, operations DataHub™ provides these benefits without any risk of commercially sensitive data being exposed or identified to competitors.

Jamie Bennett, chief executive of OPEX Group, said: "OPEX currently works with individual operators, helping them to tap into the potential of the vast volumes of data at their disposal. Being able to take the right decisions and the right actions at the right time helps our customers to reduce costs, increase revenue and achieve compliance."

REIMAGINE GLOBAL PAYROLL.



Global Payroll



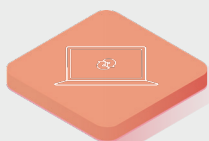
Global Mobility



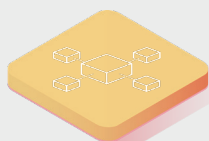
Audit & Compliance



International Payment Solution



activ8



System Integrations

activTechnology



ePay



eFile



myAccount



ePeople



eHelp



eExpense



eLeave



eTime



eReport

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
www.activpayroll.com



Aberdeen International Airport scoops national award

ABERDEEN International Airport has won a prestigious national tourism award.

The Northern Lights Lounge was one of four projects shortlisted in the Working Together for Tourism accolade. The Scottish Thistle Awards, now in their 27th year, help shine the spotlight on individuals and businesses going above and beyond to create a destination and visitor experience worth talking about amongst our valuable tourism industry. They champion the very best of the Scottish tourism industry, celebrating innovation, success and excellence in the sector.

Jemma Forrest, travel services manager at Aberdeen International Airport, said: "We were delighted to be nominated in the Working Together for Tourism award and to win is simply amazing. It was a tough category because there were some great initiatives also shortlisted. "When we were recognised at the Aberdeen City and Shire Tourism Awards in November it was fantastic. Our staff and suppliers work extremely hard and we love being able to showcase our amazing region and all the North-east has to offer."



The Johnston Carmichael team

Johnston Carmichael on cloud nine

JOHNSTON Carmichael, Scotland's largest independent accountancy and business advisory firm, also a UK top 20 firm, has been recognised as Large Firm of the Year at the Xero Awards 2020 – the Oscars of the cloud accounting world.

The firm has invested heavily in its cloud accounting offering in recent years as part of preparations for Making Tax Digital, introduced by HMRC in April 2019. However, the increased focus is also part of a wider strategy to realise the benefits of cloud accounting, which delivers real time data and enables businesses to monitor performance and drive improvement much more effectively.

Ewan Bolt, head of digital Solutions at Johnston Carmichael, said: "The awards are the pinnacle of the cloud accounting sector so to be recognised by them is a major achievement. It is also an important acknowledgement of the journey we have been on as a business to grow our digital expertise and deliver the best possible service for our clients."

Women's toiletry collection for Aberdeen food bank

SUBSEA 7 and CNOOC International have joined forces to gather donations of women's toiletries to be given to beneficiaries of an Aberdeen food bank operator, Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE). The collection was an employee-led initiative as part of International Women's Day activities, and will be made available to women in need through CFINE's food bank.

CFINE's food bank distributes on average two tonnes of toiletries annually. Beyond providing access to toiletries, CFINE has been an advocate of tackling period poverty. In partnership with Aberdeen City Council, the Scottish Government and through its FareShare Grampian programme, CFINE delivers free sanitary products to over 430 access points across Scotland.

Dave Simmers, CFINE chief executive officer, said: "CFINE welcomes the generosity of the teams at Subsea 7, CNOOC International and everyone who have contributed. Women and men who struggle to get by often have to prioritise between personal hygiene and food. We believe, access to shower gel, shampoo and other essential personal hygiene products should not be a luxury. Thanks to everyone who helps us work towards restoring vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals' dignity by making sure that they have access to self-hygiene essentials."

As well as this joint initiative, Subsea 7 donated £5,000 to CFINE last Christmas after employees requested that a donation could be made instead of spending money on internal Christmas costs and gifts.

CNOOC International also donated funds totalling almost £20,000 in 2019 and has also worked with many of its fellow businesses located at the Prime Four business park to support CFINE. Most recently, they worked together to organise a 6-month long food drive for the charity's food bank. This year, CFINE and the Prime Four businesses are working on further strengthening their partnership, involving a range of different activities to support those in poverty whilst also positively impacting the environment.

Acquisition paints bright future for North-east decorating firms

AN ABERDEEN entrepreneur has expanded his painting and decorating business portfolio with the acquisition of a well-established North-east business, supported by Drummond Finance and two other Aberdeen-based professional advisors.

Artur Levickis, who owns A&B Property Services, has acquired the Aberdeen division of Nodram Decorators. He has purchased Nodram Decorators (Aberdeen) Limited, a specialist painting and decorating company, from Donald and Cyril MacPhee for an undisclosed sum. They retain ownership of Nodram's north and central divisions, which are based in Inverness and Bathgate.

International students - a new immigration route

by **Annika Neukirch**,
senior solicitor, employment, Stronachs LLP



THE UK higher education sector enjoys a world-class reputation, attracting large numbers of overseas students. UK employers benefit from having a pool of highly educated candidates from across the world who chose to stay and enter the UK workforce.

Figures from the Higher Education Statistics Agency show that in the academic year 2018/19 over 485,000 overseas students were studying in the UK. Of those over 143,000 were from EU member states. The UK's departure from the EU will affect the rights of students from the EU depending on when they arrived in the UK to study. For those who arrive in the UK before December 31, 2020, there should be very little change. However, for those arriving from January 1, 2021 onwards there may be a number of significant changes dependent upon the outcome of negotiations between the UK and EU about the future relationship.

There are concerns that changes to tuition fees may reduce the number of EU students studying in the UK. However, the number of non-EU 'international' students studying in UK has been growing in recent years. In the year ended September 2019 over

275,000 study visas were issued to international students, a 16% increase from the previous year. There is no cap on the number of international students that may study in the UK, indeed the UK government's stated objective is to increase the number to 600,000 by 2030 as they hope to grow 'education' exports.

The free movement rights of EU nationals to work in the UK is set to end upon expiry of the current transition period at the end of 2020, with a new points-based immigration system due to take effect from January 1, 2021. Whilst generally there will be new restrictions for EU nationals seeking work in the UK there are government initiatives which aim to promote certain types of immigration, such as a new 'Graduate Immigration Route' which will extend the right of graduates (both from the EU and from non-EU countries) who have studied in the UK to remain and work in the UK for two years after their studies are completed.

This opportunity will be available to overseas students who have a valid study visa at the time of application and who have completed a degree at undergraduate level or above at a higher education provider with

a track record of compliance with immigration regulations. Successful applicants on this route will be able to stay and work, or look for work, in the UK at any skill level for a maximum period of two years. However, the route is non-extendable and will not count towards settlement. The UK government has indicated an in-country application process will be 'light touch', subject to criminality, identity and security checks. A fee will apply, as will the immigration health surcharge. Graduates will be able to switch into skilled work once they have found a suitable job.

The new route is to be launched in the summer of 2021, meaning that any eligible student who graduates in the summer of 2021 or after will be able to apply. This includes students who have already started their courses. However, those whose study visa expires before the route is introduced will not be eligible but will continue to be able to seek skilled work under the skilled work route.

It remains to be seen how well these measures will mitigate general concerns about skills shortages arising as a consequence of the end of freedom of movement of EU citizens.

Stronachs

The Brexit effect

WE MAY have officially left the European Union and be in a transition period until January 1, 2021 but the Brexit uncertainty which has affected businesses since the referendum on June 23, 2016 continues.

What is certain is that there will be significant change for businesses from the rules and regulations they have to negotiate for exporting and, in many cases, how they staff their operations.

Jane Gratton, head of people policy at British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), said that businesses of all sizes and sectors are already finding it increasingly difficult to access the skilled people they need.

“BCC research shows that across the country around three in four businesses are struggling to fill job vacancies,” she said. “With record high levels of employment, low levels of productivity and an ageing workforce, it is clear that employers are already facing significant challenges. But when you add the challenges posed by a shake-up of the UK immigration system to the mix, the competition for skills becomes even tougher and firms may need to consider developing their own talent from within.

“There is a strong case for more business investment in workforce training and development to ensure the business remains relevant and competitive in a post Brexit world. With increased use of digital and automated processes across the both the manufacturing and service sectors the workplace is changing rapidly. Many of us will need to continuously upskill and reskill for different roles throughout our working lives. Businesses will need to plan for skills across the whole organisation. As individuals, we will also need to take some responsibility for ensuring our skills are up-to-date.”

Jane said that as well as changing the way employers access migrant skills, a new relationship with Europe will place even greater emphasis on the need for firms to ‘think global’ and have the communication skills and cultural awareness to trade successfully in international markets.

“Overcoming skills problems, maximising opportunities and sharing best practice is the focus of the BCC’s Workplace Training and Development Commission. Our influential group of business leaders and skills experts is researching how well the skills system is working for

business. How can employers be supported and incentivised to invest more in developing the skills of their workforce? How can Chambers of Commerce and other organisations collaborate more effectively to support businesses? What does UK government need to do to make it easier for employers upskill and reskill the workforce in all regions and nations of the UK?

“Businesses want to support the development of employees to ensure people are effective in the job role and can contribute to the success of the business. They need access to high quality, flexible and cost-effective training and development - available on-line, in the classroom and in the workplace. When a business is contributing to the cost of an individual’s training, the employer wants to have some influence on the content, delivery and quality assurance to ensure it also meets the needs of the business.”

She said that access to a skilled and productive workforce is becoming increasingly important. The BCC is keen to be made aware of examples of best practice in all geographical areas and sectors and urged members to join the conversation and submit



to the call for evidence by visiting the campaigns section of the its website.

One sector for which there will be a sharp learning curve when it comes to training and knowledge as we exit Europe is fish processing. Elaine Lowndes, customs manager at Bethan Customs Consultancy, said that the fact that the UK exports most of the seafood we catch, while we import most of the fish that we eat is a paradox which is not lost on the fish-processing sector in the North-east.

“With intra-EU trade - fish caught and processed within Europe - making up the majority of EU exports (77%), it’s little wonder that there is a palpable sense of uncertainty in an industry which employs around 7,000 people across the north of Scotland,” she said.

“While the rest of this year will be transition, from January 1, 2021, the fish processing sector will need to adopt and become conversant with a raft of new legislation if they are to continue exporting to the EU. However doing your homework and being prepared will go a long way towards alleviating potential disruption to your business or supply chain.

“Currently, UK fish processors can

export their produce to the EU with minimal paperwork. However, from January 1, 2021 the UK will be classed as a third country and will need to adhere to the rules applicable to non-EU states, incurring potential delays and additional costs.

“The first step should be to ensure you have all the relevant approvals in place in the UK and the EU. Have you registered for Fish Export Approval? Are you aware of UK Catch Certificate criteria? Are you registered to buy and sell fish by the UK competent authority? Catch certificates must outline detailed information, such as the value of the fish to be exported, the vessel which landed it, as well as the weight and classification of each species of fish in the consignment. Similarly, before an Export Health Certificate is awarded, the produce must be examined by a vet.

She explained that following the UK’s official exit from the EU vessels will only be able to land at specific ports in the EU which are authorised to allow border inspection to take place. She said this will be a crucial consideration for those exporting perishable goods such as processed seafood.

“The need for more paperwork,

combined with a greater volume of ships landing at fewer ports, could potentially lead to a perfect storm of delays in consignments clearing customs. Outstaying our welcome in these ports could also incur penalty charges.

“When it comes to contracts, the devil is in the detail. Fish processors exporting to the EU should consider which commercial terms they have signed up to with their customers. Who is liable for any additional payments due to delays or more paperwork? What are the consequences of a worst-case scenario where a consignment is deemed unfit for import to the EU? It is a prudent business that carefully checks the terms of their contracts with their EU counterparts.

“The waters may be choppy at the moment but be proactive in making sure your procedures are water-tight and there should be no reason why your business can’t continue to cast its net across the EU.”

For advice on importing and exporting to the EU see page 45.



SCOTTISH INDEPENDENT SECONDARY SCHOOL OF THE YEAR 2020

THE SUNDAY TIMES



ST MARGARET'S
SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

WORKING OPEN MORNINGS

Friday 24 April & Friday 29 May
From 9.30am to 12pm

To find out more about what St Margaret's can offer your daughter, please contact our admissions office on 01224 584466 or admissions@st-margaret.uk

ST-MARGARET.ABERDEEN.SCH.UK

Registered Charity with OSCR (Reg. No. SC016265)

THE NURSERY

at ST MARGARET'S



GREAT STARTS... MAKE BRIGHT FUTURES

DID YOU KNOW THAT FROM AUGUST 2020 THE NURSERY AT ST MARGARET'S SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL, IS PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO OFFER FULLY FUNDED PLACES OF 1140 HOURS PER SCHOOL YEAR?

CURRICULUM

We provide active learning opportunities in our well-resourced nursery and outdoor area for girls and boys aged between 3 and 5. We promote learning through planned and spontaneous play to encourage imagination, creativity, exploration and problem solving. The children's interests lead and develop our planning.

OUTDOOR LEARNING

At St Margaret's, we have long recognised that education is more than just classroom-based and that children are generally more curious, creative, self-directed and focused when playing outdoors. As such, outdoor learning has become an integral part of the school's academic programme, from nursery right through to secondary school.

In our nursery, the Wee Green Spaces programme allows the children a chance to explore and learn about their local area.



“ We promote learning through planned and spontaneous play to encourage imagination, creativity, exploration and problem solving.

ANNA TOMLINSON

Once a week, they pull on their wellie boots and jackets and walk to a local public garden, where they are encouraged to risk assess and make decisions during their play while creating awareness of looking after themselves and others through a range of play-based experiences.

Head teacher Anna Tomlinson explains that being outdoors allows children to take some risks so they can learn from making mistakes and from having success. They are more likely to try something out with their comfort zone, which helps develop their resilience skills. It is about creating positive memories of enjoying the freedom of the great outdoors.

LOOSE PARTS PLAY

We are fortunate at St Margaret's that our outdoor space is a safe, secure grassed area with enough room for all children to play and is the ideal environment to support loose parts play. The children are encouraged to play using crates, planks of wood, tyres and cardboard boxes supporting active and imaginative free play. The children can become anything they wish from creating and making a bus to constructing their own den.

MUD KITCHEN

The nursery's mud kitchen is also extremely popular with the children, especially the ice cream shop and soup making. The children make notes on clipboards, wooden discs and chalkboards, while using the telephone to make bookings and the till to take payments. We have grown herbs to put in our 'soup' and have a wide variety of pans, utensils and small kitchen appliances to support role-play. The children love it when they have access to water, enabling yet more creativity and imagination, even if it does occasionally result in soggy trousers!

SPECIALIST TEACHING

In the nursery, the children have the opportunity to participate in timetabled music and gym sessions with specialist teachers twice weekly. Pre-school children enjoy taking part in dancing lessons on a weekly basis with a specialist.



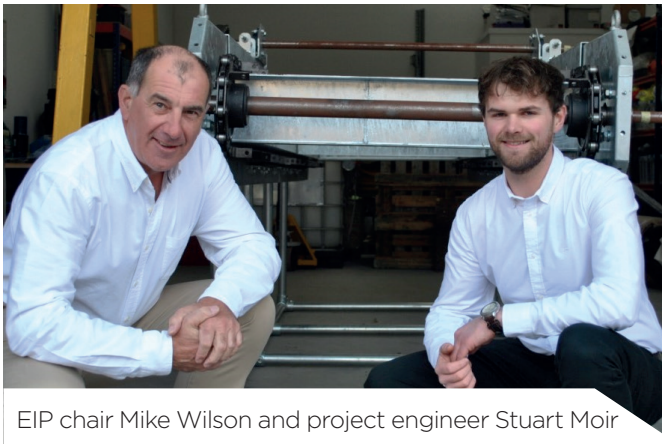
“ It is about creating positive memories of enjoying the freedom of the great outdoors.

ANNA TOMLINSON

NURSERY HOURS

The core nursery day will operate during term time from 8:40am to 3:00pm. Morning care will continue to be available within the nursery from 8:00am and after school care will be provided from 3:00pm to 5:30pm. There will be a charge payable to school for morning care and after school care but nursery hours will be fully funded. Nursery children can also benefit from our own popular holiday club during school holidays. Many parents choose for their daughter to continue her education at St Margaret's into our 1 Junior class. A number of activities are planned to make this transition as smooth as possible.

To find out more about our nursery and what St Margaret's can offer your child, or to arrange an individual tour, please contact our admissions office on 01224 584466 or admissions@st-margaret.uk



EIP chair Mike Wilson and project engineer Stuart Moir

Turning slow moving water into energy

ECOSSE IP Ltd (EIP), a Scottish company which invests in inventing and commercialising its technology, has launched its latest product. Mass of Water Turbine (MOWT) has been developed to generate energy from slow-moving water.

The MOWT technology, which has a patent-pending, is designed for use in rivers, estuaries and subsea current and tidal environments, offering an energy solution with minimal environmental impact.

There are many applications for MOWT including powering subsea assets, as an alternative to tidal barrages and supplying energy to communities by harnessing kinetic energy from slow-moving water. The MOWT technology will apply to offshore energy, renewables, utilities, aquaculture, marine and defence sectors.



Prof Wiercigroch receiving his award

Top award for professor

A UNIVERSITY of Aberdeen academic has won a prestigious Scottish Knowledge Exchange Award.

Professor Marian Wiercigroch, from the University of Aberdeen's School of Engineering, was named joint winner of the Knowledge Exchange Champion of the Year. He is an internationally renowned researcher, conference organiser, engineer and inventor of new technology.

He won the award for demonstrating exceptional engagement with industry and delivery of knowledge exchange to energy companies - including establishing Aberdeen's Centre for Applied Dynamics Research, which has organised over 100 research seminars to date.

Carbon-Zero's new partnership

ABERDEEN firm Carbon-Zero has formed a partnership with CO2balance, a global carbon finance project company.

This provides North-east businesses with the opportunity to invest in global carbon offsetting projects which deliver the combined benefit of reduced carbon dioxide emissions and improving the socio-economic conditions for the target communities.

Since it is not possible to be totally carbon free in a business, any residual carbon footprint can be offset against carbon creditable projects in developing countries which do not have the means to reduce their own GHG emissions. These accredited and verified projects include Safe Water provision and Improved Cookstoves.

Tendeka and Wellvene seal deal

INDEPENDENT global completions service specialist Tendeka has worked with design engineering and manufacturing company Wellvene to create and qualify a new version of its swellable sealing solution, SwellStack.

The use of the patented technology ensures production can be reinstated to wells which are closed in due to the failed sealing of an insert safety valve, thereby eliminating any requirement to consider higher cost and long lead straddles or potential workovers.

Seeking the heart of the matter in Mexico

ROBERT Gordon University (RGU) is partnering with Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) on a research project which will develop support tools for the diagnosis of cardiovascular diseases in Mexico, specifically pulmonary hypertension.

Researchers from RGU and UNAM's schools of computing will design a system to aid diagnosis from medical images with state-of-the-art techniques such as deep learning and data science.

According to the World Heart Federation, cardiovascular diseases are one of the most prevalent causes of morbidity and mortality in almost two-thirds of the world population.

Early detection is vital to the prevention of pulmonary hypertension however there is no viable or cost-effective medical image-based solution to do so. The support tools developed will provide a significant advantage in the reduction of time needed to diagnose patients, which in turn will have a positive impact on the Mexican economy and social welfare. It will also contribute to the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goal of reducing premature death from non-communicable illnesses such as cardiovascular disease.

£400,000 expansion for MTL

FPSO and marine vessel integrity and repair management company Marine Technical Limits (MTL) has appointed six new recruits as part of a £400,000 investment in the organisation.

The Kintore-based company has recruited Angela Noonan, Ashley Kilgour, Beau Buxton, David Smith, Rachael Buchan, and David Clark – three software developers, two CAD designers and an equipment technician.

The software developer appointments come as part of a significant investment by MTL to develop its PYXIS integrity management system, used by clients to track and manage the maintenance, inspections and repairs of their assets.



The AgriFood Tech Buster workshop at Lochter Activity Centre

Digital innovation in North-east food, drink and agriculture

A PILOT programme and fund designed to stimulate and test digital technology developments within the food, drink and agriculture sector has been announced by Opportunity North East (ONE).

The 12-month AgriFood Tech Boost Programme has begun with workshops designed to raise awareness of the digital opportunity for North-east primary supply and food and drink businesses and connect them to technology companies in the region.

The workshops will catalyse the creation of new digital innovations focused on productivity improvements-assisted by a small supporting fund.

ONE will work with food, drink and agriculture businesses with promising ideas, to test their proposition and link them to technology expertise and funding sources for further development.

Patrick Machray, chair of the ONE food, drink and agriculture board, said: "Our ambition is to help increase productivity of the North-east's food and drink businesses by 25% by 2025. New technology developments within real business situations are vital to achieving this, with the potential to radically improve growth rates, efficiency and profitability of farms and food and drink businesses of all sizes. This programme is the first step in positioning the region as a leader in productivity growth, with the expertise required to apply and develop these technologies."

DCT more than doubles turnover

OIL and gas technology development company Deep Casing Tools (DCT) increased turnover by 120% in 2019 and as a result of strategic growth plans the company has increased its headcount and expanded its footprint in key international regions.

DCT increased its staff by a fifth in 2019 and included a global sales manager, European and Middle East sales managers and a product line manager for casing recovery systems, which forms part of the company's focus on the plug and abandonment sector.

The growth has been driven by a surge in demand for DCT's technology over the past 24 months during which it secured several major contracts. The company entered 2020 on a high by signing an agreement with a national oil company with an initial annual value of up to \$13m. The growing demand for its technology has led to DCT forming a series of strategic partnerships in key regions including Malaysia, Africa, Australia and Brazil.

Boris bounces house prices up

THE property market in Aberdeen enjoyed a sharp rise in sales following Boris Johnson's general election win, new research has revealed.

Aberdeen Considine's Property Monitor report shows that, for the first time since the oil and gas industry downturn, sales in the city jumped by 10.1% during the final quarter of the year, indicating better times may lie ahead for the Granite City. A total of 1,129 homes were sold in Aberdeen, with the value of transactions leaping 10.8%, to £220m.

Prices are also stable in Aberdeen at £194,528, down just 0.1% on last year, with the average cost of a home in Aberdeenshire falling slightly further, 1.6%, to stand at £213,413.

Across Scotland, more than 10,000 homes changed hands in December, an unseasonal jump of 15% on November and the highest single month of sales recorded since October 2018.

In total, sales increased in 25 out of the country's 32 local authority areas and £1.9bn worth of property was purchased in the post-polling day rush. Scotland registered sales totalling just under £18.7bn for the year thanks to the late surge, £550m more than 2018.

Jacqueline Law, managing partner at Aberdeen Considine, said the figures were early signs that the so-called 'Boris Bounce' was being felt both north and south of the border.

"After a year of political and economic uncertainty, it would appear that the decisive nature of the election result has brought a fresh wave of confidence to the property market," she added.

Mackie's success bucks the trend

SOARING chocolate sales and ice cream growth which bucked a wider market decline have combined to help Mackie's of Scotland achieve record revenues.

The company recorded a 20% increase in annual turnover to £16.7m with a 60% spike in operating profits to £2.1m, for the financial year ending May 2019.

A key driver included sales of chocolate which grew 63% on the previous year off the back of recipe refinement, with growth within Scotland and surging orders in key export markets boosted further by the introduction of a smaller 35g bar across its four flavours.

Ice cream sales also grew, with its traditional flavour remaining Scotland's top selling ice cream product while rising to the fourth throughout the entire UK against a total market decline of 1.8%. The firm is now targeting further market expansion in London and the South-east.

Across the entire business, revenues from exports increased by 72%, with the US and Far East markets developing at pace. Its Aberdeen parlour, Mackie's 19.2, also saw sales increase by 136% as it established itself as the city's ice cream and dessert destination.



Greg Houston and Simon Cowie

Double success for Infinity

ABERDEEN accountancy firm Infinity Partnership won two awards at a UK accountancy event held in Birmingham.

Simon Cowie, managing partner at Infinity, won Accountancy Professional of the Year at the 2020 IRIS Customer Awards, the same award which associate director Greg Houston won at the previous event.

In addition, the Infinity team collected the Client Excellence Firm of the Year Award at the International Convention Centre. Infinity was the only Scottish practice to be shortlisted in the accountancy section of these awards.



Acumen
employee benefits

EMPOWERING BUSINESS THROUGH PEOPLE

Our experienced team work with clients to understand their needs and deliver solutions across the spectrum of Employee Benefits.

Find out how our team can help yours.

Telephone: 01224 001946

info@acumeneb.com



Developing the workforce which business, industry and society needs

by James Dunphy,
*director of enhancement of learning,
teaching and access,*
Robert Gordon University; and member
of the Chamber's policy council



THE world of work is changing at an ever-increasing pace with the onset of 'Industry 4.0' and the move towards digitalization and automation. As an education provider we have a considerable role to play in developing graduates who are equipped with the skills needed to drive our economy.

Key to this is a determination to ensure our provision is demand-led, remains highly relevant and incorporates learning within the workplace wherever possible.

Work-based learning in particular presents a major opportunity and is a critical feature of our approach to education. With the workplace as the classroom individuals work and learn concurrently and the knowledge and expertise acquired to meet business needs can be immediately applied. This also provides a rich environment in which to further develop other skills – meta-skills – which can enable us to learn, work with others, make connections, identify opportunities and embrace change.

Absolutely crucial to this is the close partnership we have with employers, many of which are Chamber members. RGU has always been a firm and clear supporter of business and industry and has consistently been there to help businesses equip themselves

with the workforce they need for the challenges they face.

As we face the challenge of the future, strong and purposeful partnerships with employers will remain critical. In this, we are both proud of, and deeply committed to, furthering these links to ensure collective success for individuals, businesses and our economy.

A prime example of this is being applied through graduate apprenticeships (GAs). RGU is working in partnership with employers and professional bodies to provide work-based learning degrees, creating stronger links between industry and education; and upskilling workforces for the future. They were designed with the aim of addressing national skills shortages in key areas and to enable employers to shape their workforce in line with business demands while offering a high value, low cost option to upskill staff.

GAs help to develop the workforce across Scotland with the essential expertise, tools and innovative skills to navigate changing working landscapes and fulfil the needs of industry. This approach is a considerable step-change in learning and is proving extremely popular for both the students and the participating organisations.

Further to this the university is now giving strategic importance to the whole-person education model, whereby our students are given all the skills, tools and attributes required to go on and thrive in their careers.

This is about developing not just the deep technical skills that an individual will need to be successful in a chosen profession but also those broader meta-skills that will help them to face the challenges that they'll see, not just in their career but also in their life. It is important that our graduates have resilience, embrace wellbeing and make sure that they can be successful, not just as they enter the workplace, but as they progress through their career.

As our students take on this challenge it is our pleasure to be right there with them – supporting their success and enabling their onward journey.

An international education in the local economy

Nick Little,
head of school,
International School Aberdeen



A FEW years ago, I worked in China. My secretary was Chinese. Although her English was fluent, communication wasn't always easy. In my first week I asked her to update the staff phone list. At least in my mind, my exact words were: 'It might be easier if the phone list was organised alphabetically. Would you mind looking into it?' A week later I followed up as the list was not updated, only for her to tell me: 'Oh, I didn't realise you wanted me to actually change the list.'

I found when I phrased 'commands' as polite suggestions, fellow Brits felt they were being treated with respect. My Chinese staff, however, saw it as a lack of clarity and an evasion of responsibility.

How to give effective instructions isn't the only challenge in a multi-cultural workplace. How do you persuade your colleagues? How do you talk to your boss or give feedback? What approach is required to get the best out of your team and motivate? What message do you send to clients with the way you run a meeting? Do they see you as professional or cold; friendly or slapdash?

Workplaces are increasingly multi-national. More than 25% of Aberdeen

residents were born outside of Scotland, mostly outside the UK meaning clients and suppliers are as likely to be in Singapore as Perth.

They are also multi-cultural. Long gone are the days when more than half of the population tuned into Morcombe and Wise at Christmas and Coronation Street every Thursday night. The internet means we splinter off into thousands of different interest groups. A colleague may have a British passport but an Italian mother and have lived in Nigeria for two years.

Even if we could write an instruction book for all the different types in a multi-cultural world, it wouldn't do much good. We still have to deal with individuals with increasingly varied experiences who do not fit into passport stereotypes.

An international education is the perfect preparation and you don't have to travel abroad to get one. Nearly half the students at International School Aberdeen (ISA) are locals - part of a worldwide boom. More and more parents feel that to thrive in a globalised world their children need to think like global citizens. This is partly through having the every-day experience of a diverse environment but more importantly,

it is the higher order thinking skills that an international education emphasises.

In the modern economy it is no good meeting a client from Egypt or Japan and thinking 'I met someone from there once, this is what I should expect'. It is more about approaching the situation with an open mind and having the ability to critically reflect with a high level of self-awareness. To have a flexible attitude for a fast changing and diverse world.

An ISA education culminates in the highly prestigious International Baccalaureate Diploma. University admission tutors in England, Scotland and the US rate it as 10 times more effective in encouraging global awareness and connectivity than A levels or Scottish Highers, and considerably more effective in promoting independent inquiry, an open mind and self-management skills.

When I worked in China I had to learn and adapt very quickly on the job. How much better would I have been to have come with an international education, prepared for an ever changing and complex global society.

Technology saves teaching workload

ABERDEEN City Council is using new technology to reduce the administrative workload involved in drawing up teaching plans.

The council has become the first local authority in Scotland to use Robotic Process Automation (RPA) in this way – freeing up time that will equate to having 14 more teachers in city schools.

Until now city teachers have been required to re-type information from individual educational plans into a central system where it could be accessed by other agencies supporting a young person’s development. Under the new process, school staff will still create the plans but RPA will securely transfer the data to the central system. The use of RPA will also make it easier to access critical information outside of school hours and in the school holidays.

The introduction of RPA is the latest example of Aberdeen City Council using technology to transform services and operations. Earlier this month the council, in collaboration with Microsoft, launched a chatbot to provide customers visiting the website with information about education, waste and recycling, roads and street lighting and council tax.



Barry McLernon

Texo Group growth jobs boost for Blyth

FAST-GROWING Texo Group has recruited a workshop manager and 13 new employees as it ramps up its fabrication operations at Port of Blyth.

Texo Fabrication, which established its presence in the North-east of England with the development of a purpose-built quayside facility on Port of Blyth’s South Harbour terminal in 2018, has ambitious expansion plans as it targets the growing offshore oil and gas and wind energy sectors.

Barry McLernon has joined Texo Fabrication as its Blyth workshop manager having joined from Responsive Engineering, while the other new recruits bring with them a range of skills in engineering, manufacturing and welding. Barry will work closely with James Russell, Texo Fabrication operations director, to facilitate projects on behalf of customers and to grow the team on site.



Incident Command System training

on-call services

evacuation reception

emergency response training

Response Consultants

relatives response

intermediate/major/SoSRep exercises

emergency response specialists, since 1995

emergency procedures

crisis management training

**contact
Claire or Moira
01224 595111**

**follow us on
LinkedIn or
Facebook**




April

207
courses
run by the Chamber



Covering

66 
different
subjects

Attended by

1,127
people in North-east
businesses



22 Wed

1 day

Maximising Sponsorship Revenue

Maximise your sales and obtain great results for your clients

22 Wed

1 day

Continuous Improvement

Essential tools to maximise workplace efficiency and achieve excellence

23 Thu

1 day

Essential Supervisory Skills

Bridge the gap between doing and supervising

May

1 Fri

1 day

Finance - The Basics

Develop a broad understanding of business finance

5 Tue

1 day

Report Writing

Learn to produce clear, concise and effective reports

**5 - 6
Tue - Wed**

2 day

Essential Management Skills

Become equipped with the knowledge and skills required of a manager

6 Wed

1 day

Preference Rules of Origin

Understand the importance and pitfalls for exporting

7 Thu

1 day

Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Develop effective communication techniques

8 Fri

1 day

Budgeting and Planning - An Introduction

Learn how to establish and maintain budgets

12 Tue

1 day

Project Management - The Fundamentals

Understand the principles and complexities of scale

12 Tue

1/2 day

Taking Notes and Minutes

Record meetings effectively and accurately with high quality minutes

12 Tue

1/2 day

Resilience, Survive and Thrive

Equip yourself with the tools to manage stress

13 Wed

1 day

Negotiating and Influencing

Learn tactics and skills of persuasion that lead to success

13 Wed

1 day

Personal Effectiveness

Improve your self-management and drive results

14 Thu

1 day

Assertiveness at Work

Clearly communicate your point of view without causing conflict

14 Thu

1 day

Essential Supervisory Skills

Bridge the gap between doing and supervising

For more information

Susan Staniforth, training team leader

T 01224 343917 E training@agcc.co.uk

Wellness in the workplace



TRAINING isn't just for technical or practical skills. With an increasing focus on wellness in the workplace many organisations are looking to get the most out of their people by investing in essential skills for business.

Whilst often overlooked as an area of development for success, skills like emotional intelligence, time management, confidence and composure in the face of difficult situations go a long way towards creating a culture of wellness and foster a caring environment – all off which is proven to have a positive effect on individual productivity and, ultimately, cost savings.

The individual

The ability to succeed in an often-stressful business environment is not always a simple task.

Training in the more introspective softer skills can provide valuable coping mechanisms to manage any build-up of stress at work. These can also easily be used outside of work when facing the strains of daily life, allowing them to thrive in their career. Physically attending a training course allows employees to address any issues or problems outside of their workplace. It provides a safe environment for them to engage with the classroom community, and the trainer can provide an easily applicable toolkit, backed up by discussion and practical exercises.

Employees may also discover areas of improvement in their wellness that were previously unknown to them.

The company

Training in workplace wellness is not just for the employee as recognising the need for issues to be addressed is just as important. Once trained people may be able to identify potential issues or facilitate smooth communication through problematic discussions.

From a wider company perspective promoting wellness in the workplace holds several benefits. These include:

- Increased employee engagement
- Increased productivity
- Reduced costs
- Smoother internal and external communication

The Chamber's extensive suite of training courses could be just what you need to

- Personal Effectiveness
- Emotional Intelligence
- Professional Confidence
- Time Management
- Motivation and Delegation
- Essential Management Skills
- Dealing with Difficult Situations
- Resilience Survive and Thrive

To find out how we can help, contact us at training@agcc.co.uk.



Transport came under the spotlight at the March Business Breakfast with speakers including Alison Irvine from Transport Scotland, Rab Dickson from Nestrans, David Phillips of First Aberdeen; and Steve Szalay of Aberdeen International Airport.



The Chamber team were in Westminster recently to present the policy action plan and discuss priorities with Kirsty Blackman MP, Stephen Flynn MP, Richard Thomson MP and Andrew Bowie MP.

There was also a productive roundtable session with the Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills, Jamie Hepburn MSP.



Cakes, biscuits and chocolatey treats were the order of the day on March 10 when the Chamber staged a tea party to raise money for VSA.





Gus McAskill,
Account and project manager EU and UK, ZynQ 360

What does your company do that others don't?

We excite the industry with our innovative visualisation technologies. We provide a unique and secure cloud-based application that allows clients to integrate their existing data and systems to create a powerful digital twin of their critical assets. We take them beyond their expectations into the digital transformation world.

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

For us everyone is on a digital transformation journey but many companies are in the process of finding or creating the roadmap that will help them achieve their goals. The biggest challenge is becoming that key enabler of change, by offering the platform that exploits innovation at every stage of any assets' lifecycle and create new ways of working to generate new sources of value to the business.

We find that people can be reluctant to embrace that change but, for us, working with stakeholders and focusing on the industry's requirements is vital to ensuring clients achieve long term digital sustainability, which is viable from the day of initial implementation and well into the future and beyond.

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

Take the risks that take you somewhere new. After working within forensics at the highest level for 25 years I changed careers and it took me to where I am today and it is something I would never change.

What is the most valuable piece of business advice you have ever received?

Know what you stand for and what you don't. It gives you clarity. I stand for persistence, hard work and never taking shortcuts.

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

Achieving the Associateship from the British Institute of Professional Photographers and also being youngest to gain a Forensic Associate at the age of 21.

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

Change the mindset of those who take the North-east for granted. This region has given so much to so many people over the decades and I think it is time to give back and embrace growth and change. We are fortunate to live in such a beautiful part of the country and it is vital to respect it, care for it and look after it now for our younger generations to follow.



Quick fire round

What was your first job?

A darkroom technician with Grampian Police.

When would you like to retire?

I don't ever see myself as fully retiring, I still have too much to learn.

What did you have for breakfast?

A protein and fruit smoothie shake.

Who, or what, inspires you?

People with a positive outlook in life who take the good from any situation.

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

The last film I saw was Joker.

Civil engineering apprenticeship places announced

THE University of Aberdeen has announced 15 places on its Graduate Apprenticeship BEng Civil Engineering programme starting in September.

The programme, launched last year, is funded by Scotland's national skills body Skills Development Scotland. Graduate apprenticeships are designed to enable employers to develop new or existing staff through a blend of work-based and on-campus learning, meaning staff remain working for their company while earning their degree.

Skills Development Scotland developed graduate apprenticeships in partnership with employers, universities, colleges and professional bodies to create stronger links between education and industry.

The university's civil engineering programme is considered among the best in the UK and is accredited by the Institution of Structural Engineers, Institution of Civil Engineers, Institute of Highways Engineers and the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation. The graduate apprenticeship consists of two, two-week blocks of campus-based learning each year, each followed by a period of work-based-learning.

Major step forward for NDC

THE National Decommissioning Centre (NDC) and Chevron Corporation have signed an agreement which will support research at the NDC through to 2023.

The anchor partnership will fund a portfolio of research projects aiming to better quantify the environmental impacts of decommissioning and provide guidance on best options from an environmental perspective.

The projects will focus on techniques for monitoring fish stocks around installations and pipelines as man-made marine habitats, the bioavailability of potential decommissioning-related substances; and modelling the longevity and eventual fate of offshore infrastructure left in situation.

They will be delivered by three PhD students and a postdoctoral researcher under the supervision of leading biological sciences and engineering academics from the University of Aberdeen.

This is the first anchor partnership - a financial investment and a three to five-year commitment - between the NDC and an energy major. It marks a significant step forward in the NDC's intention to work with companies to become a global leader in research and development focused on reducing costs, extending field and asset life and transforming the approach to decommissioning.

Can you help us teach children to save lives – and train your staff?

Grampian Training Services, (GTS), have launched a Corporate Sponsorship package to benefit companies and schools.

Companies are obliged by HSE workplace regulations to provide some staff First Aid (Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW) or the full First Aid at Work (FAW) courses.

Working in partnership with Grampian Training Services, companies can train their staff & enhance their own Corporate Social Responsibility commitment, improve their community involvement and train generations of Primary 5, 6, 7 schoolchildren to save lives.

When a company books an EFAW course or a FAW course, GTS will train 3 classes - up to 90 children, or 6 classes - up to 180 children, respectively - FREE of charge.

The company's name will be closely associated with the training the children receive in recognition of the support they are providing:

- Company support will be flagged up whenever schools, parent councils and PTAs tell parents that Grampian Training Services is on board
- Company branding will feature on the certificate that is awarded to every pupil who completes our course as well as the other printed materials used
- Company name will appear alongside ours across mainstream and social media.
- The event provides the company a unique marketing opportunity

For further information, please email Iain Fullerton on iain.fullerton@grampiantrainingservices.co.uk





Carbon-Zero's Mark Eadie and Colin Lawson

Colin Lawson goes carbon neutral

ABERDEEN-based Colin Lawson Transport Limited, which operates a fleet of more than 75 vehicles and specialises in the energy sector, has been certified as carbon neutral.

Working with independent auditors Carbon-Zero, the firm completed a detailed assessment of operational activities to calculate its carbon footprint. As a result of the audit, Colin Lawson Transport is supporting carbon offsetting activities around the world.

The company is also exploring additional ways of reducing its environmental impact including water recycling.

Owner Colin Lawson said: "This is just the start of an ongoing commitment to play our part in safeguarding our environment by eradicating unnecessary pollution and mitigating the impact of the company's activities on the planet.

"The UK government has committed to a target of net zero emissions by 2050, which means reducing the UK's emissions by 100% from 1990 levels. There will always be emissions that cannot be reduced, and these must be compensated for by funding vital carbon reduction projects in other parts of the world."

Share Fair new date

OGUK postponed several events this year in light of the spread of coronavirus. The Share Fair, scheduled for last month, will now take place on September 16.

OGUK said the safety of its members and visiting delegates was of the upmost priority and it will communicate the rescheduled event dates in due course, with a replacement ticket issued to those who had already purchased.

Gareth Wynn, OGUK's stakeholder and communications director, said: "We are continuing to work closely with our members to circulate official advice on COVID-19 from the relevant agencies and will continue to work across the sector to help ensure the health of people in the oil and gas industry."



Euan Macalister

OPEX increases staff and invests £750,000

OPEX Group, an Aberdeen-based provider of data science and predictive analysis services, has secured contracts worth £1m since the start of 2020 amid a period of significant growth for the firm.

Since the turn of the year OPEX Group has entered into agreements to collaborate with a number of global oil and gas operators to apply their X-PAS predictive analysis service to their offshore assets.

During the same period OPEX has bolstered its team by 10 and committed to investing £750,000 in research and development of new technology over the next 12 months, with several new service offerings in the pipeline.

Euan Macalister, VP of business development at OPEX Group, said: "By investing heavily in R&D over the next year, we are demonstrating our commitment to continually enhancing the technology we use to help our customers improve performance, reduce costs and achieve compliance."

Survivex invests in competence and safety

A NEW training centre of excellence for drilling and well control has been unveiled in Aberdeen to train drilling and well control personnel in the onshore and offshore oil and gas industry, in an aim to boost competence and safety.

Survivex, part of the 3T Energy Group, has invested a six-figure sum into the new state-of-the-art facility, within its existing training centre near Aberdeen International Airport in Dyce. The facility, accredited by the International Well Control Forum (IWCF), features the latest generation of drilling simulation technology where delegates will learn the fundamentals of critical drilling and well control in an immersive virtual environment before embarking on the real thing.

As well as providing the world's most advanced simulators for every delegate on each course, the new centre will include a central command unit where instructors can demonstrate and teach critical drilling and well control techniques and a dedicated assessment room.

**NORTH EAST
SCOTLAND
COLLEGE**



ON COURSE TO SHAPE THE REGION'S FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

Collaboration, innovation, diversification and inclusion - four cornerstones of the renaissance in the regional economy and the same principles underpinning North East Scotland College's ambitions for a bright, bold future.

The College has become adept at evolution, tracing its roots back to the 1930s, and the next chapter in the story promises to be the most compelling as digital advances, a rapidly changing employment landscape and a wealth of new opportunities combine to drive change at pace.

Neil Cowie, in his first months as Principal and Chief Executive at NESCol, is determined to build on the College's strong foundations across its City, Altens and Fraserburgh campuses.



He said: ***"We are entering an enormously exciting period for the region as the economic horizons broaden. The challenges this part of the country have faced have been unique - but so too are the opportunities opening up as the result of a proactive approach and the very powerful partnership work that we're proud to be part of."***

"The focus on innovation and diversification is already bearing fruit and will continue to create new paths for our students to explore. As a College we're committed to opening up those routes and providing the guidance and encouragement to help students to embrace a raft of new possibilities."

"Our passion is for giving every individual the best chance to fulfil their potential in an engaging and supportive learning environment. We're also motivated by NESCol's major role in the bigger picture and the energy there is around the regional economy - the College has a very important part to play in ensuring the continued flow of skills, knowledge and talent to support the aspirations of the private and public sectors in the years ahead."

The College remains a constant in established industries in the North East - from construction and engineering to hospitality as well as fishing through the Scottish Maritime Academy at Peterhead - but it will also be integral to the region's ability to prosper in growth areas and emerging fields. Oil and gas has been one of those staple sectors for the College, with the focus for the future on supporting energy transition and ensuring the workforce is equipped with new skills and knowledge in that area.

Travel and tourism, as the area's cultural revival continues and infrastructure developments such as The Event Complex Aberdeen and Aberdeen Harbour expansion support the aim of bringing more international visitors to the city's shores, is one of the expanding sectors in which the College has a strong track record.

NESCol is also at the forefront of the focus on digital and creative skills through courses as diverse as cyber security and digital forensics to filmcraft and animation, computer games development and electric vehicle maintenance.

The new Principal, who has been elevated to the role from the post of Vice Principal at NESCol having first joined as a lecturer in 1999, added: ***"It is important that the College is agile and responsive to the needs of industry. The breadth and quality of the full and part-time offering demonstrates our ability to adapt and we are continuing to innovate across the curriculum, bringing new subjects and progressive opportunities for students."***

"By working with partners in industry and economic development we can forecast many of the demands that are approaching - but many of the jobs our students will fill, even over the course of the current decade, have yet to be invented. That is inspiring for the College and helps to fuel our own innovation. Transferable skills and giving people a platform for the future is vital."

Whilst NESCol is established as a destination for school leavers - 42% of Aberdeen school leavers and 36% in Aberdeenshire chose the College in 2019/20 - a growing number of adults returning to education are enrolling for a wide range of courses. A more fluent workforce, with an appetite for upskilling and retraining, is underpinning that trend.

The introduction of new and innovative School Links courses, which include offering secondary pupils the opportunity to embark on a Foundation Apprenticeship as part of their senior phase school timetable, has been a positive influence on widening the College's provision.

Another shining example of the collaborative approach is the Degree Link partnership with Robert Gordon University, which last year alone enabled 400 students to enter the third year of their chosen RGU degree on completion of their studies at partner colleges.



The focus on partnership extends into industry. NESCoI is working extensively with many employers to address priority skills gaps through bespoke and tailored training, including packages funded through the Flexible Workforce Development Fund.

Collaboration is also essential in building the College's positive influence on the communities it serves, with NESCoI an active member of community planning partnerships in both the city and Aberdeenshire as the shared goals of addressing social, economic and educational inequality are put at the top of the agenda. Inclusive economic growth and encouraging social mobility are an important feature of the regional strategy.

Neil added: *"As a College we're increasingly becoming a partner for life. Learning opportunities span the generations - from the school pupils taking the first steps towards apprenticeships to the adult returners learning new skills and the students of all ages who benefit from the vocational and social benefits of a vibrant part-time offering. The College sector will continue to grow and evolve and we're looking forward to being at the centre of that positive change."*

ACCESS FREE TRAINING WORTH UP TO **£15,000** FOR YOUR BUSINESS

**IS YOUR COMPANY
MAKING THE MOST OF THE
FLEXIBLE WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT FUND?**

**NESCOI CAN HELP
YOUR ORGANISATION
ACCESS A SHARE OF
£1.1M OF REGIONAL
FUNDING**

**APPLY NOW FOR UP TO £15,000 OF TRAINING
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR TEAMS**

**COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING PORTFOLIO
AVAILABLE THROUGH NESCoI**

**AVAILABLE IN SCOTLAND TO ALL UK
APPRENTICESHIP LEVY PAYERS AND
THEIR SUPPLY CHAIN**

**ELIGIBLE BUSINESSES TYPICALLY EMPLOY
AROUND 100 PEOPLE, WITH AN ANNUAL
WAGE BILL IN EXCESS OF £3M**

APPLY NOW!
DEADLINE - 31 JULY 2020
FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED BASIS
DON'T MISS OUT!

Find out more at:

www.nescol.ac.uk/fwdf

Council's chatbot answers your questions

ABERDEEN City Council has launched AB-1, Scotland's first Microsoft local authority chatbot.

AB-1 can be found on Aberdeen City Council's website where customers can key in questions about waste and recycling, roads and street lighting, education and council tax.

The chatbot will answer these questions directly or signpost customers to relevant information. AB-1 has the capability to 'learn' how to deal with queries in the most effective way and the number of services covered will be expanded in due course.

AB-1 is the product of an ongoing collaboration between the council and Microsoft, formed to harness digital technology to transform service delivery with the aim of increasing convenience for customers, freeing staff to carry out specialised tasks and saving public money.



Mike Naysmith

Anniversary boom for Cala

CALA Homes (North) is set to deliver 47% more homes this year in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire than in 2019 and has opened a new city centre.

Mike Naysmith, managing director for CALA Homes (North), said: "2020 marks 145 years since we were established as the City of Aberdeen Land Association and we have had an encouraging start to the anniversary year in terms of sales. Our new premises, The Living Room, on Rosemount Place, sits on land which CALA once owned and our investment in a city centre office location is a strong indication of our confidence in the market and in Aberdeen itself.

"This, coupled with our strongest January sales since 2013 when CALA Homes (North) launched, has seen us begin 2020 with real optimism for the year ahead."

As well as having seven developments currently live, the homebuilder has a further seven sites set to move through the planning system in 2020, equating to over 500 homes for the region.



The CLAN lunch is a popular annual event

Pick of the fundraising pops

GLOBAL oil and gas company BP is helping North-east Cancer Support hit all the right notes with a unique music-themed lunch event to raise funds for CLAN's vital cancer support services.

Taking place on May 15 2020 at the Marcliffe Hotel and Spa, the CLAN Jukebox Lunch puts the power of music choice in their guests' hands as they choose their favourite tunes to be played throughout the afternoon. The event was a massive success for the charity in 2019 with over 265 attendees and raising over £16,000 for CLAN's cancer support services.

Clare Jamieson, CLAN's events and marketing coordinator, said: "We are incredibly grateful to our sponsor, BP, who have been supporting the event for 11 years now. Their support enables us to ensure that every penny raised during the event goes directly to CLAN, helping to support anyone affected by a cancer diagnosis in the heart of communities throughout North-east Scotland, Moray, Orkney and Shetland."

York contract for Wood

WOOD has been appointed by the City of York Council as a lead partner in delivering its Smarter Travel Evolution Programme (STEP), the first transport modelling and connected vehicle project of its kind in the UK which is supported by the Government's National Productivity Investment Fund.

Authorities in the historic city of York are aiming to reduce congestion, emissions and journey times in the city, as well as improve reliability of the network, create better public spaces and enhance safety.

Wood will support the city's mission by designing and deploying a live model of York's traffic network, in a dynamic digital representation fed from a wide range of real-time data sources. As well as providing real-time digital traffic optimisation through the live model, a strategic model will inform long-term decision making including the local transport plan, development planning decisions and business case applications.

Building a financial planning talent pipeline

Nicola Doohan,
recruitment and development manager,
Acumen Financial Planning



NO WRONG path. Around exam results time, over the last couple of years, it's been an important message that's hard to miss on social media. And rightly so.

Established in 2017 by Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), #NoWrongPath is a social media movement designed to inspire and reassure young people; showing them what options are out there and underlining the point that exam results are not necessarily the key to future success.

The simple fact is that financial planning offers diverse roles and employment opportunities.

Of course gaining relevant knowledge on matters such as tax, investments, pensions, trust planning, inheritance planning and other areas is essential yet, at its heart, financial planning's about dealing with people and, as the name suggests, planning.

A great place to start, for example, is in an administrative role where organisation, software, letter-writing and attention-to-detail skills are essential.

In fact, Scottish Financial Enterprise says the sector generates around £8bn for the Scottish economy so it's

important for the industry to establish links to build a talent pipeline for the future that extends to schools, colleges and universities.

And that pipeline building's a principle that underpins much of the work we do with school pupils and students. Including our own partnership with DYW and Kemnay Academy we are also building relationships directly with local academies such as Portlethen and Westhill.

To date with schools, we've helped with mock interviews, careers fairs and delivered financial education. One student from Westhill Academy, Andrew McRae, joined us on a work placement in 2018 and ultimately joined the team permanently as a trainee financial planning administrator in 2019, a role which supports colleagues across our offices in Aberdeen, Elgin and Edinburgh.

Our university partnerships are also extremely constructive. For example, thanks to a strong relationship with Napier University in Edinburgh Wendy Morrison, a trainee paraplanner, came to Acumen Financial Planning as part of her university placement in 2018, before joining our team permanently.

Of course, the training never ends. It's

now standard practice for financial planning firms to train from within, and it's a profession where you never stop learning. A career in the financial planning profession is a great choice for a young person.

We continue to support employees to receive training and development. We recognise the benefits for employees, company and clients of having a first class well qualified team and will continue to support our teams training and development.

We continue to build our relationships with local schools and universities to attract young talent to our business whilst continuing to ensure that our employees can develop and progress in their current role.

Peterson and Blue Water in Caribbean connection

PETERSON has entered a formal partnership with Blue Water Shipping for the Caribbean region to work exclusively with each other to deliver customers' local and international project logistics requirements.

Through the MOU, Peterson and Blue Water Shipping will work together to provide freight management, marine agency, import and export brokerage, materials management and handling services to clients.

Peterson already has a strong presence in the Caribbean and North America supporting local customers and major contractors with safe, reliable and value-added logistics solutions from offices in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Surinam and Mexico.

Blue Water Shipping is a global provider of transport and logistics to the oil, gas and energy sectors. In recent years the company has increased its operation in the Caribbean.



The Involve HR team

Involve HR launch new-look website

ABERDEEN-BASED HR consultancy, Involve HR has launched a new-look website as part of their 10-year anniversary.

The new website has been designed not only to improve user experience but also tell the story of how Involve HR support organisations across the energy, higher education and third sectors including some of the North-east's most well-known charities.

Working with local virtual marketing consultancy, Prospect 13, Involve HR wanted to create a website which showcased their range of HR support services but also reflected the team's personality, giving users a real sense of who they are and their individual approach to outsourced HR services.

Designed and built to better reflect the company's personal approach to doing business, the streamlined site looks to promote their team, projects and industry knowledge by having a responsive platform which can be used on mobiles, tablets, laptops as well as desktops.

SME Spotlight



Martina Chukwuma-Ezike,
chief executive,
Asthma and Allergy Foundation

When was your business established?

November 2009 and gained charitable status in November 2011.

What does your business do?

We provide evidence-based health information, confidential advice and support to people with asthma, their families, carers and friends across the North-east of Scotland. The charity is run by a team of trustees, staff and volunteers with personal asthma experiences and who are passionate about promoting asthma awareness and care in Scotland. As the only asthma charity in Scotland, we aim to ensure that all those who turn to us for support get the help that they need so that they or their loved ones with asthma can live healthy, active and full lives – just like everyone else.

What sort of companies do you do business with?

We work with organisations and businesses in the oil and gas sector, the NHS, Aberdeen City Council, University of Aberdeen, Robert Gordon University, Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations, the local ACVO TSI and other third sector organisations.

What is the biggest challenge facing your business at the moment?

The poor level of awareness of asthma as a life-threatening health condition. Asthma affects 5.4m people in the UK, 368,000 people in Scotland and about 35,000 in Grampian. UK has one of the highest numbers of asthma deaths in Europe with three people dying every day due to an asthma attack.

And the biggest opportunity?

The opportunity to save lives.

What are you most passionate and proud of when it comes to your business?

I feel really honoured to be part of the work we do at Asthma and Allergy Foundation, helping people with asthma breathe easier and preventing them from dying needlessly. We have also been able to support about 140 young people move into paid employment through volunteering, training and mentoring.

Sponsored by

GOLDSTAR
cleaning services

ALWAYS AT YOUR SERVICE

email: sales@gold-star.co.uk
web: www.gold-star.co.uk
tel: 01224 897 063

Do you import or export goods from the EU?

by **Lorraine Neish**,
export documentation team leader,
Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce



CUSTOMS declarations are enormously important and a necessity for all businesses that import and export goods.

To give some idea of the scale, around 180,000 UK businesses only trade within the EU, 68,000 only trade outside the EU and 73,000 trade in both. Being outside the customs union will mean that imports into the UK from the EU will be treated the same as those from the rest of the world. They will shift from being goods in free circulation within the EU, to imports subject to duty and VAT.

From December 31, 2020 the number of customs declarations made by traders is forecast to increase from 55 million to around 300 million every year. Businesses that import or export goods will need to complete a lot more administration when clearing goods through UK ports.

ChamberCustoms is the customs brokerage service from Chambers of Commerce in the UK. It's different from other brokerage services by harnessing the reach, expertise and knowledge of the Chamber network to offer an unbeatably fast, reliable and compliant service.

The only customs broker in the country to offer a 'one stop shop' with direct links to all sea, air and road ports and terminals in the UK, the Chamber will help you keep control while we do the hard stuff, acting in your best interests every time.

The team in Aberdeen are ready to respond to increased demand for compliant-led services with an HMRC compliant service that you can trust.

Q: What are customs declarations and why is it so important that businesses get them right?

A: Customs declarations are forms which are used to accompany goods that are entering or leaving a market. They're used internationally to communicate the origin of the product and its relevant tariff, to allow customs and regulatory authorities to calculate what duty is payable and understand applicable restrictions. They are crucial because they enable authorities to know where goods are coming from or going to, in order to control the flow of goods, ensure the safety and security of the country and collect the correct duty.

Q: What is ChamberCustoms?

A: It's a customs brokerage service run

by your local Chamber of Commerce. In the aftermath of the Brexit referendum the amount of paperwork required to import and export goods from overseas will increase in both volume and complexity. The dedicated team of experts at your local Chamber of Commerce can be trusted to have the expertise and knowledge to help traders to keep on trading.

Q: Why is ChamberCustoms unique?

A: Put simply, we're unique because we have direct relationships with every port in the UK. This means we don't need to rely on any third parties to clear goods for import and export. Most other customs brokers have to rely on third parties to offer a fully national service, exposing you to a loss of control and potentially effecting the accuracy, speed and cost of their service. It can also expose traders to penalties from the tax authorities.

Q: How much does it cost?

A: Unlike other customs brokers our pricing structure is completely transparent. We charge a small fee to process your declaration directly through HMRC, plus a fixed 10% handling charge for the port fees which we will pay on your behalf.



Specialist Resource Solutions
Bespoke Complex Care

Offering
efficient and
caring support
services in
North East
Scotland

For further information about what we can offer you:
Tel: 01224 467 897 | Email: enquiries@specialist-resource-solutions.co.uk
www.specialist-resource-solutions.co.uk   
WATERTON GRANGE, STONEYWOOD, ABERDEEN AB21 9HX

April



24 Apr

Maximise Your Membership

08:30 - 09:45
AGCC

It can be a little overwhelming knowing where to start when it comes to taking advantage of being a Chamber member. We've developed our Maximise Your Membership events to help enlighten members about key information and ensure that their organisation and its employees fully understand and use the benefits of Chamber membership.

This free event is also open to non-Chamber members who want to find out more about what joining the Chamber can do for your business.

How can the benefits and services your membership provides support your business?

29 Apr

Business Breakfast - Taking the fear out of fintech

07:30 - 09:00
Village Hotel
Club Aberdeen

Are you evolving and innovating from a fintech perspective or are you feeling left behind? Join us later this month to hear how Aberdeen can grow its current cluster of fintech companies, capitalise on the opportunities it presents and discover how fintech can help grow your business. Our speakers will include Stephen Ingledew, chief executive of FinTech Scotland and Adam Bell, owner of Moment.

30 Apr

Inventor compensation and what makes the perfect patent?

12:00 - 14:00
AGCC

Patents can be a powerful tool to protect a company's intellectual property and a strong portfolio will attract investors and add value. But is there such a thing as the 'perfect patent' and, if yes, how do you make it happen?

Join us and expert our speakers Dr Richard Gibbs and Dr Mairi Rudkin, UK and European patent attorneys at Marks & Clerk, to find out more.



Do you know how to protect your IP and get the best value from your patent? We'll help you make sure.

Thanks to our sponsors



Part of Immedia Group plc.



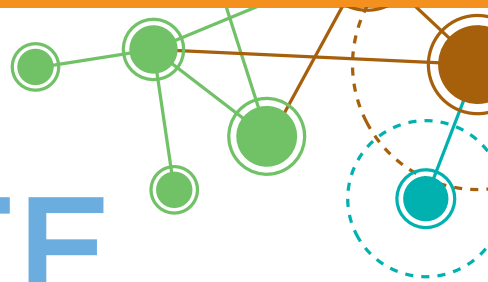
COMPASS PRINT

PRINT IS ALIVE!

PRINT SIGNAGE EXHIBITIONS & DISPLAY PROMOTIONAL GIFTS

June

THE ULTIMATE BUSINESS SHOW 2020



The Ultimate Business Show 2020 | 17 Wed | P&J Live

BRINGING together organisations of all sizes and from every sector, The Ultimate Business Show will return on June 17, providing the perfect platform to source products and services here in the North-east of Scotland.

Now in its fifth year, we'll be in a new home this year as we move to P&J Live. A sell-out since its inception, 'TUBS' brings together more than 80 local exhibitors to showcase their services and products to more than 800 delegates, helping keep our regional economy buoyant.

Offering an excellent platform to raise your company profile, generate business to business sales leads, connect and build relationships with prospects and a programme of free seminars, this one-day show is the must-attend business to business event in the North-east calendar.

Visit agcc.co.uk for more information about exhibiting, attending or sponsorship opportunities.

"We have been exhibiting at TUBS since its launch and we are delighted to be taking part again in 2020 at its new home. The show attracts such a diverse selection of both exhibitors and visitors and through networking with them, we have developed new contacts and business. Looking forward to a great TUBS2020!"

Helen McLoughlin,
director of Sales,
The Aberdeen Altens Hotel

Do you want to receive details of our upcoming events direct to your inbox?

Let us know at info@agcc.co.uk



Craig Fraser

Craig Fraser has joined READ Cased Hole as a senior field engineer at the company's Aberdeen headquarters. Craig has eight years of oil and gas experience, gained in field engineering and project management roles with one of the world's leading energy services companies. He also previously worked with READ as a field engineer.



Lucy Sikora and Emma Quinton

Gleneagles, the iconic Perthshire property, has appointed Emma Quinton and Lucy Sikora to its senior sales team as it sets out ambitious plans to strengthen its presence in the groups market. They have 20 years of collective industry experience and will look after business development for the hotel.



Fiona Booth

Fiona Booth has joined the Remarkable team as one of its specialists. With experience gained from more than 20 years at managerial and director level in public, private and third sector organisations, she is focused on continuous improvement and maximising resources.



Chris Pearson

Robert Gordon University has appointed Chris Pearson as director for the National Subsea Centre to lead the centre's drive to tackle current and future challenges in subsea engineering with world-class research and development. Chris will be responsible for the development of the multimillion-pound partnership between RGU and The Oil & Gas Technology Centre.



Professor Stephen Logan

Aberdeen Science Centre has appointed Professor Stephen Logan as chair of its board, ahead of its reopening following a multi-million-pound redevelopment. Professor Logan was chairman of NHS Grampian from 2015 until 2019 and was previously senior vice-principal at the University of Aberdeen, where he has held various positions since 1994.



Maeghan Cuthill

Family owned Skene Business Centres has promoted Maeghan Cuthill to director. The business centres have expanded in the last few of years with the addition of 2 and 8 Queen's Gardens. Maeghan project managed the renovations in number 2 will now undertake the refurbishment of 3 Queen's Gardens which was purchased recently.



George Thom

VT Wealth has appointed George Thom as operations director. Working across the Aberdeen and Fraserburgh offices, George will work with his wife Vee. He enjoyed a 38-year banking career with RBS/NatWest and now holds a management role at St James's Place. He is also an official ambassador of the Chamber.



Renato Barbedo & Jim McGowin

Independent global completions service company Tendeka has appointed Renato Barbedo as business development manager for South America as the company increases its support for oil and gas operators in the region. He has more than two decades of global experience in upstream projects. Also appointed is Jim McGowin as VP for North and South America. He has more than 30 years' experience in sales, marketing and operations management of oilfield wellbore construction, completion systems and services and enhanced oil recovery techniques and will be based in Tendeka's Houston office.



Bob Asher

Hotel industry specialist Bob Asher has joined Brodies LLP. With more than 20 years' experience in the hotels sector he has handled some of the most high-profile transactions in the industry, including the recent conversion of the Old War Office and the Admiralty Arch in London to luxury hotels.



Bertie Armstrong

Aberdeen Harbour has appointed Bertie Armstrong as a non-executive director to its board. He retired as chief executive officer of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF) and SFF Services Ltd in 2019 after more than 14 years at the helm; and was previously Queen's Harbourmaster of the Clyde Dockyard Port.

Other recent appointments

An Aberdeen-based creative agency has made two key appointments as it continues to expand its business across Scotland. **Georgina Hay** and **Kelsey Barbour** have both joined Hampton as account managers and will be responsible for a broad range of clients including Aberdeen Sports Village, BrewDog, Mackie's, Petrofac and VisitAberdeenshire.

Aberdeen's newest hotels Hilton Aberdeen TECA and Aloft Aberdeen TECA, both operated by RBH, have strengthened their senior and commercial sales teams. Operations managers have been appointed for each property, with **Kevin Tinto** joining Hilton Aberdeen TECA and **Kimberley Morrison** taking up her position at Aloft Aberdeen TECA. Kevin joins Hilton from his role as conference and banqueting manager at Sandman Signature Hotel Aberdeen while Kimberley rejoins the RBH portfolio following her role as front of house manager at Aberdeen Altens. Strategic structural changes in the commercial sales teams have resulted in **Rachael Malley** being appointed sales manager at Hilton Aberdeen TECA and **Alana Welsh** promoted to sales executive at Aloft Aberdeen TECA.

To support continued growth, Aberdeen-based microbiology, analytical services and biological material storage company NCIMB has appointed **Dr Jude Huggan** as business development manager, and **Dr Carol Devine** to the post of consultant microbiologist.

Independent optician and hearing care specialist Duncan and Todd Group has strengthened its senior team with two key appointments as it continues its plans to expand across Scotland. **Ross McLellan** has been appointed as finance director while **Cheryl Smith** has joined as group marketing manager.

Claire Herriot has been promoted to associate director in Savills' Aberdeen office. Head of office Dan Smith said: "The strength of our Aberdeen business is reflected in the continued progression and development of our staff. I would like to congratulate Claire who has played a key role in the business space team in Scotland."

Welcome to the Chamber

Aberdeen Business Coaching Ltd

Franchise of ActionCoach, providing business coaching to SME's in all sectors - Aberdeen city and Aberdeenshire.

T 01224 733333

E brendahector@actioncoach.com

W www.actioncoach.co.uk/brendahector

C Brenda Hector, business growth specialist

—

Borland Insurance Ltd

Commercial insurance broker.

T 01224 578256

M 07701 289762

W www.borlandinsurance.co.uk

E mark.amos@borlandinsurance.co.uk

C Mark Amos, commercial account executive

—

Castlegate Arts trading as Aberdeen Arts Centre

A charity organisation set up to run the activities within the Aberdeen Arts Centre.

T 01224 635208

E enquiries@act-aberdeen.org.uk

W www.aberdeenartscentre.com

C Gavin Birnie, centre director

—

Complementary Health Orthopaedic and Alternative Therapies Ltd

Complementary therapies, education and products provider.

T 01358 742888

E comphealthuk@hotmail.com

C Blair Gibb, head therapist and director

—

DGF Communications

Communications provider.

T 07860 577110

E dgfindlay77@gmail.com

W www.dgfcommunications.co.uk

C David Findlay, managing director

—

Imenco UK Ltd

Consists of The Camera Division, (Subsea and Harsh Environment CCTV) and Nautronix Division (Through Water Digital Acoustic Communication and Positioning Systems).

T 01224 226500

E douglas.corbett@imenco.com

W www.imenco.no/home/about

C Douglas Corbett, QHSE advisor

North East Transport Training (NETT)

Social enterprise.

T 07818 448664

E info@northeasttransporttraining.co.uk

C Rachel Milne, director

—

Optimal

Physical asset management experts specialising in reliability engineering and materials management.

T 01224 967337

E enquiries@optimal.world

W www.optimal.world

C Dr Leslie Moyo, director

—

Positive Planet UK

Positive Planet UK aims to develop and manage high impact entrepreneurial ventures and value chain initiatives for under-served communities in the UK and Africa.

T 01463 576408

E lisa.lambie@positiveplanet.ngo

W www.positiveplanetuk.com

C Lisa Lambie, chief executive officer

—

Standard Real Estate Limited

Commercial real estate - letting and managing office space throughout Scotland.

T 07951 939932

E hamish@standardrealestateltd.com

W www.standardrealestate.com

C Hamish Munro, director

—



Acumen Financial Planning

architects of financial promise

Supporting families through all of life's performances.

We help clients achieve their full financial promise, whatever the future may hold.

- Savings & Investments
- Tax Planning
- Pensions & Retirement Planning
- Estate Planning

4 Kingshill Park, Venture Drive,
Arnhall Business Park,
Westhill, Aberdeenshire, AB32 6FL

Tel: 01224 392350
info@acumenfp.com
acumenfp.com

Aberdeen

Edinburgh

Elgin

Peterhead

Acumen Financial Planning Limited is authorised & regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. FCA number 218745. Tax planning and tax advice is not regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.



Chartered



THE LADY-DATEJUST

A timeless expression of elegance and refinement, the Lady-Datejust continues to go beyond its classic glamour with exceptional engineering and the latest Rolex technology. This is a story of perpetual excellence, the story of Rolex.

#Perpetual



OYSTER PERPETUAL LADY-DATEJUST

Jamieson & Carry

142 UNION STREET, ABERDEEN AB10 1GF

WATCH FEATURED SUBJECT TO STOCK AVAILABILITY