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A different look at reality

## Code of ethics

Morality in the digital era

## Man and machine

Keeping people at the heart of technology

# Immerse yourself



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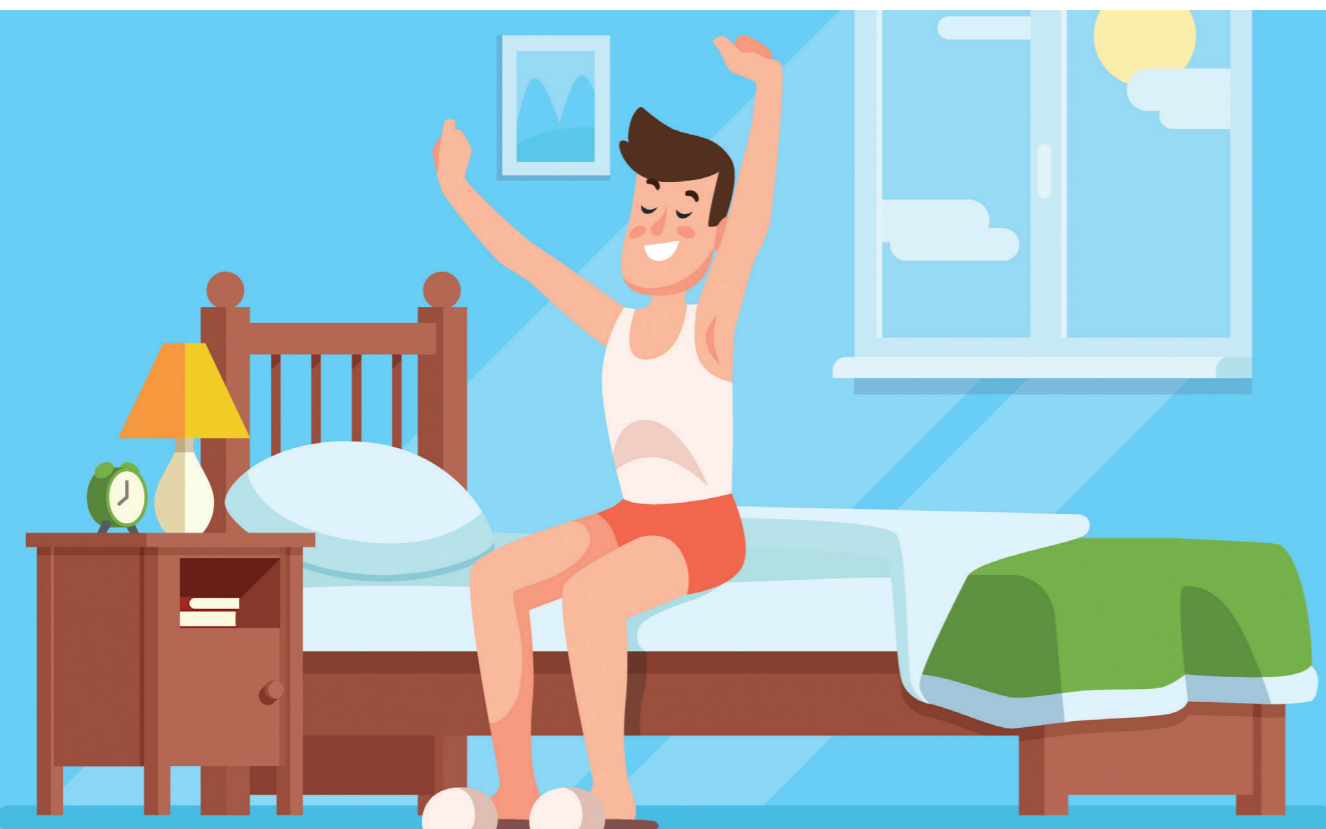
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**Cover image**  
Technology & innovation

**March's theme**  
Leisure & tourism

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FEBRUARY 2019

Focus on **TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION**



Virtually unstoppable



In tech we trust



Enhancing the user-experience

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## Our Partners

As well as helping our member businesses to be better through a range of activities, the Chamber is committed to progressing key issues to create the conditions for success.

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 head of membership, Seona Shand

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# — Innovate to succeed

**THOSE of us of a certain vintage (D.O.B. pre-the last time the UK wasn't part of the EU), might recall the phrase: "Gentlemen, we can rebuild him. We have the technology. We have the capability to make him better than he was before. Better...stronger... faster." For the rest of you, please indulge us for a moment...the content of this article will get more relevant shortly!**

Of course, these were the words of NASA chief Oscar Goldman in the cult 70s sci-fi show The Six Million Dollar Man referring to the astronaut Steve Austin who was re-modelled into a cyborg, part man - part machine, following a catastrophic crash landing.

The six million dollar question here is, what role does technology have in rebuilding and positioning the North-east economy for a bionic future?

Leaving aside the still, as yet, unclear implications of the ongoing Brexit circus, the next couple of years represents a highly significant period in shaping the future of this region.

On the topic of leaving the EU, please rest assured that the Chamber is working tirelessly behind the scenes with our colleagues at the British Chambers of Commerce to ensure both that the voice of business is heard by Government and to prepare a toolkit of practical advice and support for members once the detailed trade implications become clearer.

What is certain is that 2019 and 2020 will see positive transformational change in the Aberdeen city region, making it an even better place to live for our residents and more attractive to visitors, relocators, students and investors. We will begin to see the productivity benefits from the AWPR, enjoy cultural experiences at the re-vamped Music Hall and Art Gallery,

welcome big acts, global conferences and events to the incredible new TECA, see the world's biggest cruise liners sail into the new South Harbour and much more. But we can't rest on our laurels and need to look to the next set of horizons to ensure we remain relevant in a highly competitive global economy.

So, in this first Bulletin of the year you will be able to read about lots of amazing tech stuff, much of which fries the brain of a luddite like me. Artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality, the growing need for information integrity and data security. All framed in the context of how this is driving new ways of doing business and securing competitive advantage.

This is a place famed globally for its innovation with the 2nd highest number of patents filed per head of population in the UK and we need to build on this reputation. The Oil & Gas Technology Centre is creating an environment of innovation and entrepreneurship in our energy sector. Our two universities are working on numerous initiatives and partnerships with businesses of all kinds. And in just a few months we will see the opening of the ONE Digital Technology Hub; creating a focal point for digital company cluster growth and a platform for further cross-sector digital transformation. So, the foundations are 'technically' in place!

Wishing all our readers a very happy and successful 2019. This is Aberdeen's time. Let's all play our part in making it as great as it can be.

**Russell Borthwick**  
chief executive



## Dyce teacher among top educators



John Naples-Campbell, with pupils

A TEACHER at the city's Dyce Academy has been hailed as one of 2018's top 10 educators in the country by The Times Educational Supplement Scotland.

John Naples-Campbell was recognised for highlighting several issues including the #MeToo movement in education and the importance of arts in a child's education and for helping drive through historic equality and diversity legislation for education which will see Scotland will become the first country in the world to have lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) inclusive education embedded in the curriculum.

Councillor John Wheeler, educational operational delivery convener at Aberdeen City Council, said: "Our ambition for Aberdeen is for the city to be a place where everyone can prosper and where daily interactions are underpinned by fairness. So we were absolutely delighted to learn that John has been recognised for his contributions not only to equality and diversity in school but in the wider community."

## Stewart Milne invests in leadership

STEWART Milne Group has invested more than £250,000 in bringing out the best in leadership and managerial skills for 128 of its managers across the UK.

The housebuilder has developed a highly successful and structured approach to managerial training and development that consists of monthly workshops delivered by their training partner, Edinburgh Consultants Group, designed to maximise leadership potential.

Stewart Milne Group's learning and development manager Susan Hudson said: "We're passionate about providing our employees with access to an extensive programme. The training provided allows members of our team to gain a vast range of knowledge regarding various principles of management and leadership."

## Balmoral acquires to expand

BALMORAL Tanks has acquired a majority shareholding stake in Tamworth-based Water Environmental Treatment Ltd (W.E.T) to fast-track its move into the legionella compliance and water industry services market.

Balmoral will retain the current management and workforce of 25, fully integrating W.E.T into the company structure.

Allan Joyce, managing director at Balmoral Tanks, said: "Our stake in W.E.T provides a platform to extend our service offering to our global client base. To date in 2018 almost one third of our UK manufactured products have been exported around the world."

## Wood and Nobel JV

WOOD and Nobel Oil have entered into a joint venture agreement to provide engineering and operations support services to the oil and gas market in Azerbaijan.

The JV will combine Wood's engineering and technical services capabilities with Nobel Oil's local knowledge and expertise in the Caspian region. It will primarily support in the delivery of brownfield engineering, procurement and construction management contracts across a range of assets offshore Azerbaijan.

## International award for activpayroll

ACTIVPAYROLL, the global payroll and employee mobility specialist headquartered in Aberdeen, won the 'International Payroll Award' and was highly commended for the category 'Service Provider Team Award' at The Rewards 2018 in London.

The Rewards, now in its eighth year, is the leading independent awards for payroll, HR and reward professionals.

The International Payroll Award was awarded to activpayroll in recognition of its innovative singular global payroll solution supporting over 1,000 clients in more than 140 countries worldwide, phenomenal international growth and exemplary customer service offered to its customers.



# Virtually unstoppable

**STRATEGIC technology trends are facilitating a different way of doing business, revolutionising the way companies interact with their staff and customers and drive competitive advantage. After several years on the fringes, artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality (AR) are finally coming of age.**

DeepMiner is a ground-breaking company which has developed a new search engine using the immense power of AI. Like nothing you have seen before, the technology is challenging the norm to change how we search for market intelligence to drive and improve strategic decision making.

By radically changing the way companies carry out searches online, DeepMiner provides business to business intelligence from around the globe which is up to the minute and relevant. Delivering deep commercial insight into focused information, DeepMiner provides organisations with real competitive advantage.

The company was formed a year ago by business strategist Duncan Hart and data scientist Aine Ui Ghiollagain in response to the Scottish Government's CivTech Challenge which brings together public sector expertise and private sector creativity to solve real business challenges.

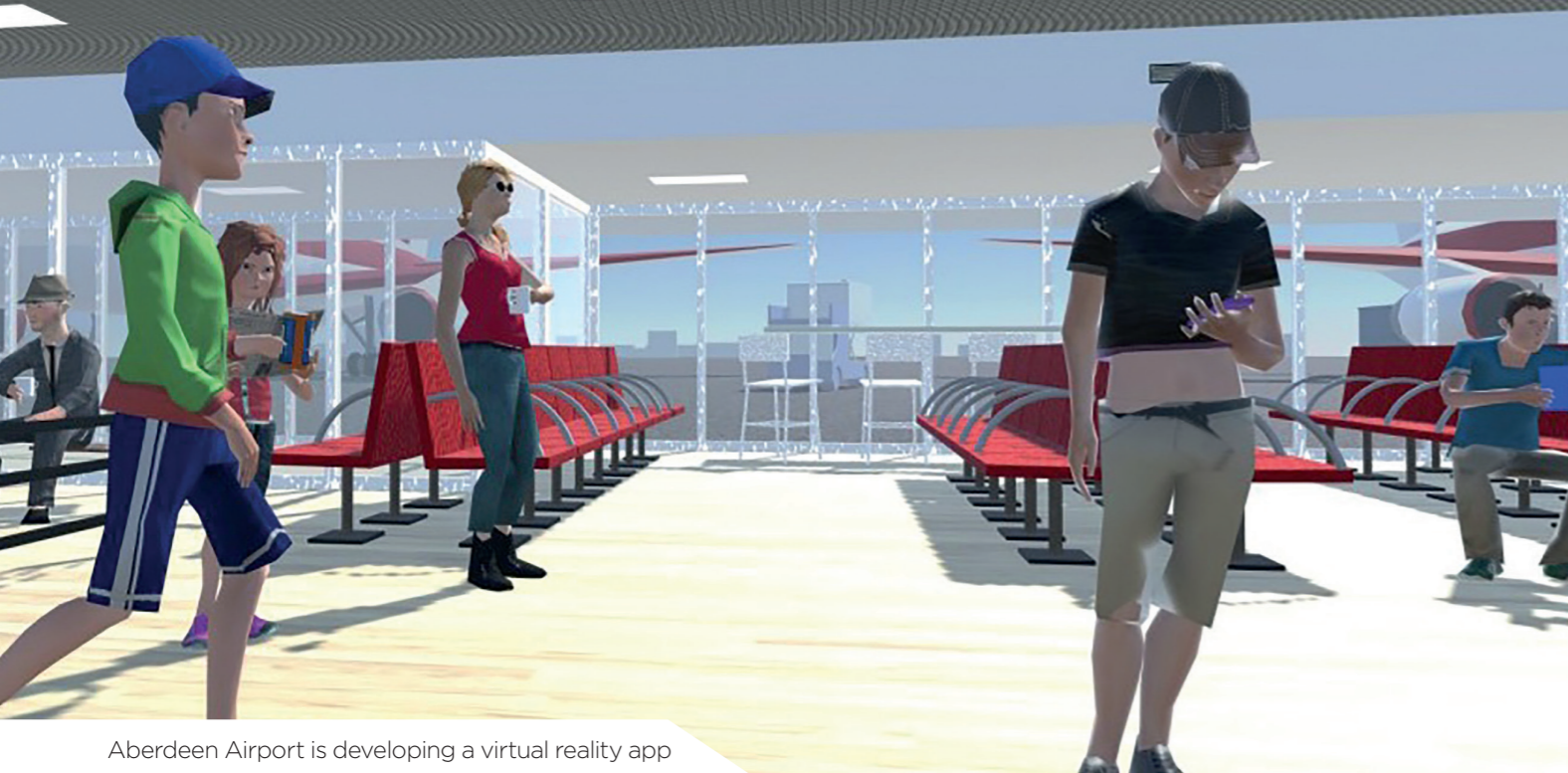
"The world is full of information and the business environment changes so rapidly that if you don't stay on top of it you are left behind," said Duncan. "We looked at how, from a strategic decision-making perspective, you can process the information overload and see the right data quickly enough to be able to make decisions based on what you find."

Duncan further explained that traditional ways of gathering business intelligence can be time consuming, expensive, too consumer focused and the information is quickly out of date: "We recognised this was a business challenge for both public sector and private organisations and wondered how we could improve search →"



**"The world is full of information and the business environment changes so rapidly that if you don't stay on top of it you are left behind."**

**Duncan Hart, business strategist, DeepMiner**



Aberdeen Airport is developing a virtual reality app



methods to give business decision-makers clarity and all the relevant information they require so they can actually see what is happening in their market. As data scientists with an expert team skilled in machine learning and artificial intelligence, we have used our knowledge and experience to build a unique search engine to revolutionise how to view business intelligence and search the web.

"We don't use any search engines, nobody pays us to promote content, nobody can make our results biased because we effectively go directly to websites and perform near real time search using AI.

"We surface the most relevant and up-to-date search terms including people, companies, subject matter or location and results are updated daily from global news and information sources. Search results are ranked on relevancy, not revenue generation potential and there is the ability to save and track prospects."

If, for example, you are involved in the aviation market and looking to diversify and grow your business by exporting to America, you need to know who your competitors are in the region. DeepMiner can target this specific data and provide you with search results including the key companies, people and locations which are really being talked about. It will also highlight current trends, topics of conversation, the noise on the

street, big movements which people are focusing on and how these people and businesses are connected.

"The strategic tool is extremely useful for tracking industry trends allowing users to really push the boundaries of knowledge about their industries," added Duncan. "For example, running a search which a company in Houston might do on oil and gas in Aberdeen, the search shows the current trends here in the city including that there is a strong focus on digitalisation, that health and safety is still hugely important and a lot of noise can be seen around skills gaps and training.

"The search engine can be used in many ways including competitor analysis or for sales prospecting and targeting specific companies. DeepMiner won't just bring up company websites or paid for content, the results include everything related to the organisation and you'll see what they're talking about, what interests them so when you are making an approach, you know their current landscape and key drivers.

"Information is much more business relevant, not influenced in any way and it's extremely timely. We aim to give you the most up-to-date information from today, yesterday and the day before, not back to January 2016.

"DeepMiner really has the capability to change the business world and how businesses view themselves but more importantly, how organisations can

use data to have clear insight, strategic impact and success."

When it comes to AR, according to Paul Caruana, a director PWK Sales & Marketing, the full extent of its capabilities are yet to be appreciated.

"AR blurs the line between offline and online content and provides an incredibly flexible technology platform for businesses to utilise," he said.

In marketing, AR allows businesses to link to their audience directly, offering real time interaction through traditional print advertisements. Consumers can visualise and imagine what it might feel like to own the product or experience the service before purchasing it.

"If you are redecorating your home you can try out the colour of paint on walls first by scanning the room and 'virtually' painting it. If you like the look of a car in an advert you can scan it to watch the manufacturers' video, find your local stockist and book a test drive. By creating virtual tours of brick-and-mortar shops, property developer's show homes or tourist destinations, businesses can add an element of fun while allowing buyers to learn more about the products or services," added Paul.

"It gives a more immersive platform to tell a story providing deeper content, game-like features, bringing the consumers into the experience. Scanning a 'Walking Dead' wine bottle on the supermarket shelf unleashes

the zombies which spring to life on your screen. New revenue streams can be created by adding e-commerce 'buy now' options and with return on investment of a traditional print advertisement difficult to quantify, AR provides marketers with vital, measurable statistics.

"The most common way of accessing AR is by smartphone and with ownership of these predicted to

increase to over 53m individuals by 2022 in the UK - an increase of over 12m new users from 2015, this represents a huge opportunity for businesses to connect with their target audience in an interactive and fun way.

"Forward thinking industries are already reaping the benefits by applying AR in a wide variety of areas including: repair and maintenance, medical training, design and modelling, logistics, tourism, training and education, field service and public safety. As AR becomes more sophisticated and the cost-savings and business applications expand, the demand for and investment in this technology will increase - The Fourth Industrial Revolution perhaps?"

Aberdeen International Airport is constantly seeking to identify new and emerging technologies with the potential to improve the customer experience and enhance operational efficiency, according to Fraser Bain, airport duty manager.

"For some passengers with additional support needs the airport environment can be an overwhelming experience," he said. "That's why we're working with Friendly Access, a hidden disabilities charity which is trialling a pioneering virtual reality (VR) app for those who may find travel challenging.

"Friendly Access, together with the School of Simulation and Visualisation at The Glasgow School of Art and 3D visualisation specialists Crag3D,

have devised iSenseVR, funded by the European Social Fund and Scottish Government support through the Social Innovation Fund.

"iSenseVR will positively impact those who may experience anxiety and sensory difficulties in busy environments, like airports, shopping centres and other highly populated areas. The app is now in its final stages of development with testing and research with volunteers.

"At the airport, we've been delighted to assist the iSenseVR team with the creation of the app in any way we can, as we all have a common interest in making airport experiences as comfortable and as relaxing as possible.

"The app allows users, with the help of VR compatible mobile phones and affordable VR headsets, to immerse themselves in a populated digital recreation of the airport. This familiarisation is essential to help our passengers feel at ease and allows them to prepare for the journey ahead.

"We've been working with local community groups and charities as part of our wider work to improve inclusiveness at the airport. We've made great progress, and the iSenseVR app will ensure technology is at the forefront of our work with those with hidden disabilities."



**"It blurs the line between offline and online content and provides an incredibly flexible technology platform for businesses to utilise."**

**Paul Caruana,**  
**director, PWK Sales & Marketing**

## Which innovation have you introduced, or would you like to introduce, to your business?



“Hotels and hospitality have come a long way in recent years with innovation and technology. Front of house software, online presence and booking sites mean the latest technology is a must to stay competitive. Gone are the days when most people booked by calling - its click, click and that's it.

“Bedroom tech is about fast wifi, smart TVs and charging points for mobiles and tablets. All our hotels are therefore making full use of the latest tech but this has plateaued out, so what does the future hold for innovation and hospitality? Much as this is about innovation, in hospitality, it cannot replace a warm welcome, a friendly face, good service, relaxing surroundings and quality cuisine. Moving forward with more innovation, we in this industry must never forget that.”

**Robert A J Smith**, *managing director*, Brudolff Hotels Group  
(owners of the Craighaar Hotel)



“TMS has recently installed a virtual reality (VR) suite allowing our customers using 3D CAD software to bring their 3D designs into our premises and experience them in a virtual 3D world. Using the VR suite, our customers in the architectural, oil and gas, engineering, manufacturing and construction sectors can invite their clients along to allow them to fully experience the proposed designs at concept stage and beyond.

“Design changes and any issues can be highlighted at a much earlier stage using the VR technology and so far it's proved a great success with many of our customers. I have every faith in the technology which provides an amazing experience and from the feedback we've received it seems our customers and their clients can't get enough of it.”

**Alex Lowe**, *managing director*, TMS



“Ripples has been operating full time for four years and 'direct to garment technology,' (DTG) which we recently purchased, has made a significant difference to our business. This is a new option which cost effectively combines many of the benefits of both screen printing and vinyl printing. Screen printing is really only viable for larger numbers of garments and can also be costly if the design requires lots of different colours. Vinyl printing produces vibrant colours and can be used for one-off orders or small quantities but is very time consuming and is not as hard wearing as screen printing.

“DTG is hard wearing, produces vibrant colours and the number of colours is immaterial as you pay per design. It's quick and easy and less labour intensive and training someone for the necessary skills is much quicker. It's easier to set up, can be used for one-offs or large runs and requires a much smaller space so it can be done in an office rather than a warehouse.”

**Ola Adeyemi**, *director*, Ripples Custom Designs and Prints

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Business Manager, Oil & Gas Service Company

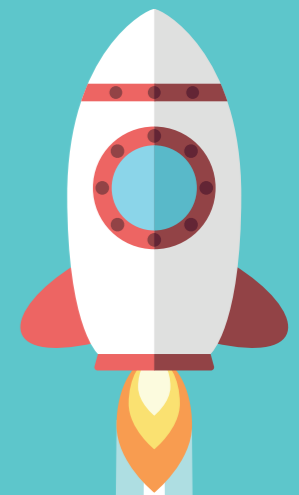
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# In tech we trust

**THE UK has established the world's first Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation in a bid to put the country at the forefront of emerging Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies.**

Its first task, which was approved in the November Budget, is to explore how data is used to influence people's experiences online and the potential for bias in algorithmic decision-making. The Centre will report to government on what steps could be taken to ensure data-driven technologies are used responsibly so they support businesses and society.

Advances in how data is used, and the technologies which lie behind it, are transforming the world. There has been huge progress in areas such as medical diagnosis, the delivery of public services and in tackling social challenges like climate change.

Dr Robert Duncan, a teaching fellow at the University of Aberdeen, is a former accountant and computer scientist and he believes the Centre is much needed and has great potential.

He said his perception is that over a period of years the very ethical behaviour of many directors changed from ensuring the long-term

stewardship of their companies to producing short term results, often under pressure from major institutions which, as shareholders, could have them ousted at the AGM.

"By taking the short-term approach it might well mean that eventually a big black hole would appear but the thinking of many was that they would move on after three or four years, so it became someone else's problem."

He said that at the same time there was a rapid move into computing but many people in high powered positions didn't understand the finer points. "They forgot it is the directors who should drive the company and not the IT people," he commented.

However, the introduction of legislation, including the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), is now beginning to ensure that all companies once again do things properly or face crippling fines. Dr Duncan believes that strict controls are now necessary to similarly control data.

"What this new Centre should be doing is encouraging people to behave in a very ethical way, irrespective of their level within an organisation

because at the end of the day you'll only ever be as good as the worst employee in the company," he said.

"Companies need to have some form of data governance to ensure proper security, proper privacy and you also need to ensure proper data quality because the data is useless if there are errors and mistakes.

"Oil companies have been collecting data for decades, whether it be physical data as in core samples or electronic in terms of what the rigs are doing out in the North Sea or elsewhere.

"However, many have ended up with a massive collection of data which they can't even access, let alone do anything with, because the contractors who carried out the data collection would only guarantee the software would work for two evolutions of the software.

"This is in contrast to today's giants like Amazon, Facebook, Google and Microsoft - they live for data and anything they can collect is something they can use. They can do analytics on it and they can sell information from it to other people. They have a very switched on attitude to data and it

really pays dividends for them because they are multibillion-dollar companies which 10 or 12 years ago didn't exist. Some of the oil companies have been around for over 100 years and they still haven't cracked it - although they are starting to do so now.

"There are many terrible things that can happen because companies are not sufficiently switched on to looking after your data properly and I think the Centre will be a great idea if it can help companies to really get the message on that.

"The massive companies like Google and Facebook should already be well organised but of course they could probably take a lesson from the ethical perspective because they don't really have many ethics when it comes down to what they can do to exploit this information. For them it's manna from heaven and they won't want to give it up, so they will have to be forced into doing things the right way. But certainly, if the message gets across and enough people start doing it then it will definitely be a good thing for society because we all will suffer if it doesn't happen and they don't get their act together."

Steve McNaught, assistant manager at Henderson Loggie chartered accountants, said that because technology is transforming the way business is done companies are wise to ensure their professional advisers are as up to date as they are.

He suggests there may be a need for a new code of ethics to provide guidance for accountants on how to respond to the challenges in the digital age.

"Software automation, crypto currencies and block chain, whilst providing opportunities, are among the new technologies that give rise to several risks, including cyber security threats, data protection, fraud prevention, ethics and governance," said Steve.

"If advisers are not actively working to continually refresh their professional skills and knowledge, they may not be properly equipped to provide the level of service required to remain vigilant about omissions, errors and deliberate accounting violations which could cost a company dear.

"In order to navigate these new ethical situations, professional advisers need to build knowledge of emerging →



**"What this new Centre should be doing is encouraging people to behave in a very ethical way, irrespective of their level within an organisation because at the end of the day you'll only ever be as good as the worst employee in the company."**

**Dr Robert Duncan, teaching fellow, the University of Aberdeen**



technologies. Indeed, the fundamental principle under threat of compromise in the digital age is professional competence and due care.”

“Under the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland (ICAS) Code of Ethics, members commit to maintaining a high level of trust and integrity in the profession, although the code does not specifically provide guidance on how members should act if they are asked to work with an organisation which has failed to

**“If advisers are not actively working to continually refresh their professional skills and knowledge, they may not be properly equipped to provide the level of service required to remain vigilant about omissions, errors and deliberate accounting violations.”**

**Steve McNaught,**  
*assistant manager, Henderson Loggie Chartered Accountants*

address the ethical implications of its use of a new technology. At a time when there needs to be more, not less, importance placed on the ethical and professional judgement of individuals arguably there is a need for a new code of ethics to provide guidance for accountants on how to respond to the challenges in the digital age.

“Regardless, business owners need to keep their eye on the horizon and manage the risks associated with the possibility that their technologies are moving faster than their advisers can keep up with. The stakes could be high if accountants, and specifically auditors, have insufficient knowledge of a technology to assess and address its ethical implications. The financial crisis revealed the extent to which highly complex financial systems make instances of unethical behaviour harder to monitor and report. The reputational damage from unethical practices can take years to repair.

“Where the business strategy includes adoption of new technologies there needs to be clear communication between boards and their professional advisers so that they have a firm understanding of these technologies and how they apply to a particular

business which provides professional advisors opportunity to continue to add value to the business, whether they are internal as part of the key management team or act externally in an advisory or audit capacity.

“For many SMEs the challenge is to adapt and remain competitive in an increasingly digital economy, which means engaging with advisors who not only offer competitively priced services but also provide access to a range of consultancy services in areas such as cybersecurity and emerging technology. While there remains a demand for the core services that ‘traditional’ business advisors offer, the challenge for professionals such as accountants is to ensure that their skill sets continue to evolve and adapt in response to the risks that are being faced by their clients.

“Many accountancy practices now recognise this and are well placed to advise on the steps a business should take to protect itself because emerging risks, such as cyber security, aren’t just about technology and computers: it involves people, information, systems, processes and culture too.”

# Nothing works better than an **active** workforce



**Look after your employees’ health and wellbeing with Sport Aberdeen and you will be investing in much more than your own workforce.**

100% of the money made by local award winning charity, Sport Aberdeen, is reinvested into the local communities across Aberdeen City to ‘create opportunities, inspire people and change lives’ through sport and physical activity.

The Active Workforce programme can be tailored to the needs of your business, from health checks, discounted gym memberships and classes held in your workplace, to adventure team building days and nutrition advice.

**For more information or to start your active workforce journey email:** [activeworkforce@sportaberdeen.co.uk](mailto:activeworkforce@sportaberdeen.co.uk)



**[www.sportaberdeen.co.uk/active-workforce](http://www.sportaberdeen.co.uk/active-workforce)**





RGU Racing team

## RGU Racing aiming for pole position

A TEAM of students from Robert Gordon University (RGU) have begun preparations which will hopefully see them race a car at Silverstone which they have designed and built.

The creation of the new 'RGU Racing' student association, made up of a group of 20 engineering and business students, is the first foray into the racing world and they will join teams from across the globe in Formula Student, a testing ground for the next generation of engineers and racing enthusiasts.

RGU Racing is being championed by applications supervisor from RGU's School of Engineering, Scott Murison, who is working closely with the students on the design stage, which will see them submit plans to the Institute of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) in summer 2019.

If all goes to plan, the team will then take their designs into the workshop to build their car with the ultimate goal of racing at the home of British motorsport, Silverstone, in 2021.

## ABNCommunity award winners

ABNCOMMUNITY, an online and face-to-face business networking organisation, has held its fifth annual awards event in Aberdeen.

ABN, led by director Andrew Smith, holds around 22 networking events each year. In addition, its online presence - [www.abncommunity.com](http://www.abncommunity.com) - has more than 7,000 members.

This year's winners were: Best Contact Builder - Yekemi Otaru (Doqaru); Best Charity Member - Myles Edwards (Gathimba Edwards Foundation); Best 10 Groups Member - Nicola Currie (XIC); Best Online Member - Phil Anderson (Phil Anderson Financial Services); Best Overall Member - Mark Thouless (Flux Creative)

Andrew said: "The awards put the focus on our members' successes in the past year. It was great to bring people together to highlight the power of networking in the past 12 months. In addition, it was an opportunity to showcase our new and improved business networking website."



Phil Anderson, Nicola Currie, Mark Thouless, Yekemi Otaru and Myles Edwards.

## Recovery raises recruitment conundrum

A NUMBER of recruitment and retention challenges have arisen as a result of the recovery being underway, according to Thorpe Molloy Recruitment.

The firm's North East Salary Guide 2018/19 shows recruitment has steadily increased throughout the year and, generally, fewer job seekers are immediately available which, in conjunction with more job choice, means employers are finding it harder to source skilled and experienced professionals.

Candidate confidence is on the rise and curiosity around job opportunities is evolving into a more determined mindset to secure new employment. Lack of progression, poorly defined career paths and frustration that remuneration does not reflect personal contributions are increasingly common reasons for candidates to re-engage with them to support their job search.

Thorpe Molloy says the shifting market has created a recruitment and retention conundrum for employers. In the depths of the downturn there was less investment in training and development. Fewer apprentices and traineeships were on offer too. This has created a skills deficit now.

A complimentary copy of the 2018/19 Northeast Salary Guide is available via <https://www.thorpemolloy.com/>

## Fine dining festival raises £251,000

SCOTLAND'S only fine dining festival, Signature, has raised more than £251,000 for charity more than doubling the amount raised at the 2017 event.

£239,000 will be donated to the Friends of the Neo Natal Unit at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and £12,000 was raised for Friendly Access, a charity which supports those living with hidden disabilities.

Seven of the UK's best-known chefs, including Glynn Purnell, known as the Yummy Brummie; Atul Kochhar, the first Indian chef to be awarded a Michelin star; and Martin Wishart, brought their menus to The Chester Hotel in Aberdeen for Signature.

The Chester Hotel co-owner Graham Wood, the inspiration behind Signature, said: "The people of Aberdeen and those who travelled to Signature have such big hearts. It's all thanks to the generosity of everyone who bought tickets for the dinners, donated during the afternoon tea event and bid for auction prizes."

## Chambers and Forces form new alliance

A NEW initiative has been launched to bring Chambers of Commerce and military units closer together.

The ChamberFORCE programme is a partnership between five Chambers of Commerce and designated personnel from the Army, Royal Navy and RAF Reserves. Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber had previously demonstrated its support for the Armed Forces by signing the Armed Forces Covenant and winning bronze Employer Recognition Scheme Award. Along with the four other Chambers, it also operates in the geographical reach of the Highland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (HRFCA) who are co-ordinating the programme.

Michelle McKearnon, regional employer engagement director for HRFCA and a former CEO of Chambers of Commerce, said: "It is important that the Ministry of Defence recognises the vital role Chambers play in the business community and that we give something back to all the employers who support our people."

## Old technology is helping tackle poverty

XS RESOURCES (XSR) and Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE) have launched a new circular economy service for Aberdeen city and Aberdeenshire. As part of the XS Tech project, unwanted, functional IT equipment will be collected free of charge.

CFINE will collect the equipment straight from offices. It will be handed over to Re-Tek who will securely wipe all information on the machines and sell the machines for profit, part of which will be donated to CFINE. To book a collection visit [www.xsresources.org/it-equipment-collections](http://www.xsresources.org/it-equipment-collections)

## Tanzanian partnership for Norwell

NORWELL EDGE, the global online oil and gas technical training provider, is to partner with the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) in Tanzania, to explore joint working opportunities in both education and the wider oil and gas industry. The agreement will explore opportunities to work together on joint educational projects, outreach initiatives and to collaborate on oil and gas industry projects.

Mike Adams, co-founder of Norwell EDGE, said: "It is fantastic to formalise our relationship with this respected university. The undergraduate students here have been part of our story for the last two years and were among the first in the world to test our new platform."

# Competition, consolidation and collaboration drive change at AVC Immedia



by Spencer Buchan,  
managing director



AVC Immedia HQ at Grandholm Mill



Bruno Brookes, CEO Immedia PLC with  
Spencer Buchan, MD, AVC Immedia

**AS THE saying goes, fortune favour's the bold. That's fine but being bold in a market that favours the cost conscious is a risky strategy for any business and one that needs backing up by results.**

Most of you reading this article are likely to either have heard of AVC or to have watched, listened to or have come into contact with our services and team members. We have been operating in Aberdeen city since 1976, so at some point in our evolution, I suspect you will have interacted with us.

But it hasn't always been easy to engage and build our audience. Growing, developing and driving the AVC business in a volatile oil-price-sensitive market has had its challenges.

Change sits at the heart of everything we do at AVC. From initially supporting the offshore industry with various forms of entertainment through the VHS era in the 80's and 90's, on to supplying SKY entertainment services at the turn of the Millennium and onward through the digital evolution, AVC has always had to adapt to the needs of the industry we serve and a more technology savvy end viewer.

Supplying both content and the AV platforms on which to view has always been driven by the audience, in fact everything we do starts with the audience and understanding how, where, and for what purpose the content and AV technology is required.

Competition keeps you sharp. Consolidation, whether it be in services or in employee numbers, allows

flexibility for change. Collaborating with partners, manufacturers and suppliers increases our knowledge and understanding of new technology that can be communicated back to you, our clients past, current and future.

I recently spoke to a visiting business lecturer who was new to our city and on asking what I did for a living and explaining it back to him, he was more than taken aback that in the past year we had spent eight weeks in Russia working for FIFA at the 2018 World Cup, had supported dozens of energy companies with their video, animation and AV requirements both locally and globally, worked with an international sports retailer and produced subsea content whilst also filming from the skies via our drone fleet.

His parting words were about flexibility, change and most importantly, our passion to succeed through change. This matters when working with our clients who sometimes fear change in an engineering driven sector that prefers safe steps.

AVC's DNA is rooted in driving change, at times disrupting the accepted way of doing things and presenting back the value of 'shaking the tree' and accepting new technologies, showing businesses ways of being safer, quicker and more profitable.

Driven by our passion for our clients and the sectors we serve continues into 2019 and beyond.

AVC will continue to attend and support a host of industry events including the Subsea Expo next

month, OTC in Houston late April and the first Offshore Europe to be held at the new state of the art TECA (The Event Complex Aberdeen) facility for which we produced the fly-through animations.

Following the ISE 2019 event in Amsterdam, AVC will be hosting Aberdeen's first AV Technology Day at the Sandman Hotel on Thursday, February 21, 2019, this is an event targeted at IT managers, architects, facilities managers, educators, local authority representatives, travel, tourism, food and drink, event companies and marketing people.

The event is supported by various leading manufacturers and our main supplier Midwich, showcasing the very latest in cutting edge SMART Technology.

Not just aimed at AV requirement, we have local suppliers of services such as IT, cyber security and telecoms attending who will provide their expertise on how AV and other industries link together in the ever changing fast paced world of technology.

As a key partner of the Chamber, I would like to extend an open invitation for you to visit us on our AV Technology Day on Thursday, February 21 at the Sandman Hotel in Aberdeen.

Contact [Rbooth@avcimmedia.com](mailto:Rbooth@avcimmedia.com) to register your attendance or book via Eventbrite at <https://www.eventbrite.com>



# Mentors support growth of rising stars

by **Pat Machray OBE**,  
chair, ONE food, drink and agriculture



**SINCE the launch of the first Opportunity North East (ONE) food and drink Business Growth Programme (BGP) in 2017, supported by Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council, more than 30 businesses have participated in this bespoke programme which helps them to realise their growth ambitions.**

Participants have gone on to secure new customers, increase turnover and number of employees, and invest in new product development, premises and equipment. ONE is committed to on-going support for these businesses on their growth journey and our recently established mentor network is an important part of that.

Working with high-growth potential businesses of all sizes is a strategic priority for ONE's food, drink and agriculture team as we prioritise action and investment to grow the sector in the region to match the Scotland Food and Drink Ambition 2030 target of 5% growth per annum.

Mentoring support helps maintain momentum and provides specific strategic industry insight to BGP alumni. From an initial pilot in January last year, we now have a total of 10 mentor relationships established with ambitious companies from primary meat and fish producers to sauce companies. For many of these

businesses on a growth trajectory, practical issues including secondary processing and upscaling production are new challenges. Our mentors can provide input, feedback and connections to specific topics ranging from exporting, retail sales, chilled production, distribution and financial management.

As the UK's only private sector led and funded regional economic development body, ONE is fortunate to have more than 90 senior business people, higher education and public sector leaders involved in our main and strategic sector boards.

The majority of our current mentors are active members of the ONE Food, Drink & Agriculture board and as we prepare to launch the third BGP later this year and support even more of our region's growing businesses, we are seeking new potential mentors with relevant food and drink industry experience to share their knowledge, contacts and shape priorities. Whether your background is in food service, production or retail, the mentor-mentee relationship provides an opportunity for both parties to learn something new and gain a unique insight into another business.

Running your own business can often be a lonely experience, so having someone independent to act as a sounding board, providing

reassurance, validation and challenge can make all the difference to generate focus on priorities as the business develops.

ONE's role is as a facilitator with knowledge of both the company and mentor. While the application process is designed to be flexible to accommodate the needs of both parties, all involved need to be clear about their expectations, experience and availability to ensure the match is successful. Over the course of an up to 12-month period, objectives should be set which are designed to guide the medium to long-term direction and priorities of the business.

The growth and ambition of our home-grown food and drink companies is vitally important to the future prosperity of the region. As we aim to build on our established strengths across primary production, processing and manufacturing, mentoring provides a unique opportunity to play your part.

If you are interested in becoming a mentor, please contact Jane MacLeod, business growth manager at ONE at [jane.macleod@opportunitynortheast.com](mailto:jane.macleod@opportunitynortheast.com)

## Guyana trade mission hailed a success

AN EVENT aimed at forging links between the North-east of Scotland and Guyana has been hailed as a resounding success.

During a three-day trade mission to the area, 12 representatives of Guyanese government, industry, academia and commerce met with local businesses and organisations in a bid to strengthen relationships between the locations. A highlight of the itinerary was the inaugural Aberdeen-Guyana Gateway lunch at Macdonald Norwood Hall Hotel which drew an audience of 90.

The trip was hosted by Aberdeen-based Granite PR, ABIS Energy and Aberdeen City Council and supported by other companies and industry bodies interested in exploring or expanding opportunities in Guyana.



Gateway speakers and visiting delegates

## Six electric charging points at airport

ABERDEEN International Airport has debuted six new electric charging points in its short stay and priority car parks.

The new service will be free for customers using the car parks, with four units located on the first floor of the short stay zone and two further points in the priority area. Passengers wishing to use the electric car charging points can turn up at the short stay or priority car parks and pay the gate rate for the duration of their stay. Alternatively, car owners can pre-book parking online at least two hours in advance of arrival at the airport.

## Kittybrewster hydrogen station open to public

ABERDEEN'S innovation in hydrogen technology has taken a significant step forward with the opening of the Kittybrewster re-fuelling station to the public.

Originally opened in 2015 to fuel the hydrogen buses in operation across the city as part of the Aberdeen Hydrogen Bus Project, the station is now capable of re-fuelling the city's hydrogen cars and vans. The station has been upgraded to allow 700 bar refuelling for cars as well as 350 bar pressure for vans, trucks and buses.

A range of 37 hydrogen vehicles - including buses, cars, vans and trucks - are currently being trialled by various partners across the city. This is set to increase to over 60 vehicles by the end of 2019, including 10 new buses.

## Videos highlight North-east's strengths

ABERDEEN-based AVC Immedia has created a series of promotional videos for VisitAberdeenshire to encourage tourists in the UK and overseas to holiday in North-east Scotland.

The Destination Strategy, launched by VisitAberdeenshire last year, revealed Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire's competitive strengths. Food and drink, such as fresh seafood and locally-produced whisky rank highly - as does culture, heritage and events - while the natural landscape and opportunities to take a road trip to explore the outdoors remain a visitor favourite. The final strength highlighted by the strategy is the choice of stunning golf courses.

AVC has worked with VisitAberdeenshire to take these destination strengths as the inspiration for a series of five videos showcasing the region. Using its experience of the area and technology such as sophisticated 4k camera drones, AVC has filmed at venues, events and across the local landscape.

## DM Hall merger

DM HALL, one of Scotland's largest independent firms of chartered surveyors, has reached agreement with Livingston-based JA Pollock Property Consultants, to merge its business into DM Hall's Scotland-wide operations.

A director of the company, Graeme Pollock, will join the firm as the commercial agency director running the east of Scotland agency operation.

# MTC Media arrives in Aberdeen

ONE of Scotland's largest digital agencies, MTC Media Ltd, is opening an office in Aberdeen, having already worked with a wide range of clients in the North-east.

The firm was founded in Dundee 19 years ago and has since gone from strength to strength with over 120 staff in offices in Dundee, Edinburgh, Manchester and Riga delivering websites, digital integrations, digital marketing and SEO services.

"We built up our business by offering clients, big and small, advanced digital solutions that help build up their businesses. This keeps them coming

back to us and it has been great to see how we have changed people's lives by turning small start-ups into global providers," said MTC founder Mike Callachan.

"We saw that a lot of digital providers in Aberdeen went under or shrank during the oil price crash but our wide, global portfolio meant it had little impact on us. We've picked up a number of new Aberdeen clients who were looking for a stable company with a large development team that they just couldn't get locally. With a number of new Aberdeen clients under our belt, we've decided to establish a more permanent footing in Aberdeen in 2019," Mike continued.

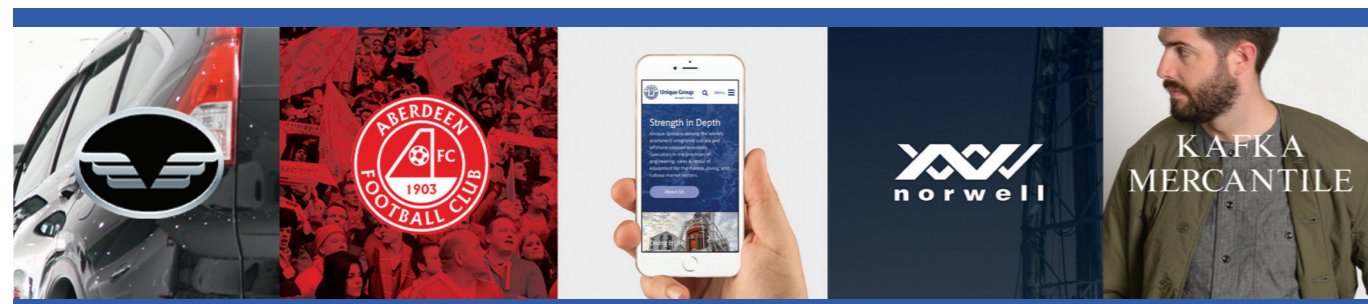
The new office will be headed up by Scott Graham, a veteran of the Aberdeen digital scene who is optimistic about the move: "I've been with MTC for the last couple of years and the service that we will deliver in Aberdeen is transformative for both clients and the local digital community and I am really excited about what we can do here," he said. "I hope to grow the business, recruit new people and see a return to growth of digital services in Aberdeen."

For more information contact [scott.graham@mtcmedia.co.uk](mailto:scott.graham@mtcmedia.co.uk)

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## Have you reduced the gender pay gap?



by Gary Johnstone,  
payroll & employment taxes director,  
Anderson Anderson & Brown LLP

**THE gender pay gap was a topic we heard plenty about in 2018 when over 10,500 companies publicly reported their figures for the first time. Whilst there were many facts found in these reports, overall they showed that, on average, a woman in the UK today is most likely working at a company which pays men more than women.**

This was just the beginning as it is now time for private companies and charities with larger than 250 employees to take stock again, review progress and prepare their annual gender pay gap snapshot as at April 5, 2018 and report by April 4, 2019. It is likely these numbers will invariably prove if any productive steps have been taken to tackle their gender pay issues and for many the crucial test will be the reports and industry comparatives that will follow alongside a challenging public relations backdrop.

### Understanding and telling your own story

Many predict that the numbers are not going to be much better this year as the majority of issues driving pay gaps require a longer-term approach to demonstrate impact. That said there are a number of actions employers can take to tackle gender pay inequality, including offering more flexible hours, senior part-time roles and also encouraging the uptake of shared parental leave. Organisational circumstances will be different of course but being able to demonstrate a clear understanding of the causes and committing to meaningful action which will reduce those gaps over time is key.

Whilst 25% of reporting companies from 2018 chose not to provide any form of narrative to explain their figures, we would always advise on telling your own story. The results of pay equality are increasingly impacting brand perception and the ability to attract, retain and drive employee engagement and so this upfront approach will avoid others doing it for you.

### Your data has value

The government has said it expects most employers to take five years to come to terms with the legislation and demonstrate real progress. However, as we are well into the second year of reporting, it is important that your business is not left behind, so address the key challenges now by efficiently gathering and understanding your data.

To achieve this it is crucial to find a partner who provides a solution which will integrate with your human resources and payroll data sources, calculate the required statistics and create a comprehensive management tool and suite of reports. This approach, combined with the use of dashboard technology and regular review and measurement throughout the year, can keep businesses focused on managing and reducing any gender pay gaps.

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# — Enhancing the user-experience

Technology and innovation are key at the Gordon Highlanders Museum

**TECHNOLOGY evolution and innovation is constantly changing our daily lives. We spoke to a selection of third sector Chamber members to understand the impact it is having on their organisations.**

Technology has transformed, and continues to transform, the lives of those who suffer from sensory loss according to Charles Clark, the information communication technology (ICT) officer for North East Sensory Services.

Charles, who has no sight, provides specialist input, advice and instruction on the use of computers and digital technology for people with serious sensory loss. He has two loyal friends who go with him wherever he travels: his guide dog Marshall and his iPhone.

“People, historically, would have used computer program software to magnify what’s on the computer screen or make it speak or do both but the introduction of tablet devices has opened up opportunities for us visually impaired people to live in a more sighted world,” he said.

“There is a learning curve for tablets

and phones but that is the same with all technologies and to help those with visual impairment there are certain approved apps which make that learning curve easier.”

Charles explained that devices like iPhones and iPads do not need to be specially adapted because, although many are unaware, they have several inbuilt skills for disabled people and it simply requires the settings to be changed.

Visually impaired people can make phone and video calls, send text messages, and email. The camera can be used as a magnifier for people who have some sight and a mirror image of what’s on your tablet/phone device can be transferred to a large flat screen. For those with no sight it can be used as an Optical Character Recognition (OCR) scanner which takes a photograph of anything printed and speaks the content back to them.

Other technological aids include electronic handheld magnifiers which are ideal for elderly people who don’t want to learn how to use an iPad or

android phone and scanning devices which can take a photograph and read back anything which is printed. There are also Bluetooth compatible hearing aids, so a smart phone can send audio direct to the listener.

There are continuous advances, often just by linking different programmes which are available.

“What I would like is, when I am finished work, simply to say to my phone: ‘That is me leaving my office’ and it would guide my route home,” said Charles. “It would activate the green man as I approach traffic lights because that can be hard to do with a guide dog in one hand and something in the other. It would tell me where my bus stop is and when the next bus is due. All these independent features are available and it just needs someone to link them.”

Technology and innovation are key components in ensuring visitors to Aberdeen’s Gordon Highlanders Museum enjoy the best possible experience as they explore the extraordinary 200-year story of ‘the finest regiment in the world’.



**“In phase two we plan to use audio visual aids and recreate not only the sounds of the trenches but the smells.”**

**Bryan Snelling,  
chief executive, Aberdeen’s  
Gordon Highlanders Museum**

The museum is just about to launch a new website as a major strand of its active social media policy to inform and attract visitors.

Chief executive Bryan Snelling explained that the museum now has its own app which provides information about its facilities but becomes an interactive guide once inside the premises. As visitors walk round beacons activate pages on their mobile devices which provide them, depending where they are, with details about everything from the Gordons’ involvement in the Battle of the Somme to the current menu in the tea room.

Other new technology which has proved popular includes a large touch screen in the permanent collection which allows people to identify where the Gordon Highlanders have been at any point in their history.

The interactive screen will then provide information, videos or photographs about the particular subject in which the visitor is interested.

The trenches of World War One had only the most basic facilities and could

not be further from the technological world of today and from this month visitors will see just how basic as the museum’s latest exhibit is a replica trench.

However plans are underway to introduce technology to the exhibit to enhance the experience.

“In phase two we plan to use audio visual aids and recreate not only the sounds of the trenches but the smells,” said Bryan. “It is all about finding a balance. We have fantastic volunteer guides to show people around and bring the stories to life however not everyone wants to be shown around and engage either with technology or an individual, so we have to try to be everything to everyone.”

Absafe is an award-winning safety education charity dedicated to saving lives and reducing harm by instilling a positive safety culture in our communities. Emma Bellu, chief executive, said: “Technology and innovation is fundamental to what we do at Absafe in making the learning experience we provide immersive and engaging for the school children who visit the facility. →



Absafe make learning fun

“For example, in our railway safety area the kids are run over by a train using similar special effects as making a film. It creates the experience of risk without the actual danger in a highly memorable way.

“We have just opened two new areas and one, which is sponsored by Cabot, focuses on water safety where we are using technology to create a sensory experience for visitors, for example, demonstrating how much colder water gets just below the surface which is a cause of cold-water shock.

“The other is about alcohol safety and is sponsored by CNOOC International and in it we use special goggles to recreate the loss of balance and other effects caused by drinking too much alcohol.

“We are currently investigating how we can use virtual and augmented reality to further enhance the experience. Technology isn’t going away. It’s becoming a fundamental part of our daily lives and has amazing potential to make a positive impact and helps us relate to this new digital generation in a familiar way.

“Part of what we do however is helping children learn how to be responsible for their own safety,

especially online. Children are highly exposed to risk from technology because it’s constantly changing so much it is really hard for parents and teachers to keep up. It’s therefore critical that children understand risk and have the knowledge of how to protect themselves, so they can make the important decisions that will keep them safe.”



## Double success for Brodies

BRODIES LLP enjoyed a double success at the Law Awards of Scotland, winning awards for outstanding contribution and innovation.

Bill Drummond, managing partner of Brodies for 20 years, received the Outstanding Contribution award in recognition of his services and commitment to the legal industry in Scotland, while the firm’s employment team picked up the Innovation Award for its online HR and employment law tool, Brodies Workbox.

During his 20 years as managing partner, he transformed the firm from a 175-employee business trading from a single office in Edinburgh, into Scotland’s largest independent law firm, with 650 employees and offices in Aberdeen, Dingwall, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Brussels. His contribution to the Scottish economy, including his work with SCDI over more than a decade, was also highlighted by the judging panel.



Margaret Taylor, The Herald; Kathleen Morrison, Brodies; Julie Keir, Brodies; Fred MacAulay

## Misconceptions about manufacturing

NEW research from Barclays Corporate Banking shows that only 4% of Generation Z (16-23 year- olds) in Scotland are considering a career in manufacturing. Nearly half (49%) of these say this is because the career path does not appeal to them, or they do not believe they have the skills required (38%) for the role. Instead, young Scots aspire towards careers in digital, technology and IT, with manufacturing ranking only 18th out of 19 potential career paths.

One reason why young people are reluctant to take up a career in manufacturing is that there are misconceptions around the skills that workers can develop: less than a third (31%) of young people in Scotland believe a career in manufacturing will provide them with advanced technology skills. This is despite the fact that advanced technology is a key driver of growth for UK manufacturing companies.

## Nippon acquires Dominion Technology

DOMINION Technology Gases, as part of the European industrial gas business of the US company Praxair Inc. has been acquired by Taiyo Nippon Sanso Corporation (TNSC) and will form part of the new NIPPON GASES Europe.

Nippon Gases Europe will retain the assets, the organisation, employees and management which have made it a successful and highly competitive company.

Nippon Gases Europe employs approximately 2,600, servicing more than 100,000 customers and has a diversified involvement in broad industries such as healthcare, food, manufacturing, metallurgy, chemical products, electronics and energy. Dominion Technology Gases has a strong history operating globally in the offshore sector with particular focus on specialised diving gases.

## £15.3bn decommissioning spend over the next decade

THE pace of decommissioning in the UK oil and gas industry is steadying as the sector becomes more efficient and gains in expertise, according to Oil & Gas UK’s 2018 Decommissioning Insight Report.

It provides a fresh insight of the market over the next 10 years (2018-27) and reveals that decommissioning expenditure is expected to run at about £1.5bn per annum over the next decade, 20% lower than forecast in 2017.

The report indicates that the UK is expected to spend £15.3bn on decommissioning over the next decade, with around 1,465 wells expected to be decommissioned over the next 10 years, representing 1/5th of total UK Continental Shelf (UKCS) stock. More than 950,000 tonnes of topsides are scheduled for removal across the North Sea, of which just over 605,000 tonnes will be from the UKCS.



Andrew Mills, managing director, Servelec Controls

## Management buyout of Servelec Controls

MANAGING director Andrew Mills has led a successful management buyout of Servelec Controls, backed by private equity firm Alcuin Capital Partners.

Andrew and the management team now aim to transform Servelec Controls into a robust, stand-alone entity and a market leader in systems integration. They say the ability to run the business as a standalone entity will enable Servelec Controls to be more agile in its approach to both its staff and its customers in critical industries which include oil and gas, power, infrastructure and defence.

“We are in a fairly unique position, active in growing niche markets where operational excellence and enhanced safety is imperative,” said Andrew. “This development will enable us to ensure that all our systems and processes are aligned to the industries in which we operate and we are confident that this new chapter in the company’s development will be beneficial to both our customers and staff, allowing us to deliver on our ambitions.”

## Old Course Hotel is simply the best

THE OLD Course Hotel, Golf Resort and Spa ended 2018 by winning the title of AA Hotel of the Year. This followed the completion of an extensive refurbishment and the addition of a new health and fitness centre.

The AA award was one of several achieved in 2018. They included Scotland’s Leading Resort 2018 in the World Travel Awards; Spa of the Year – Scotland in the Professional Beauty Awards; and Best Luxury Hydrotherapy Spa - Global Winner in the World Luxury Spa Awards.

## Womble Bond Dickinson cuts emissions

WOMBLE Bond Dickinson (WBD) has completed its first year of carbon footprint reporting with The Planet Mark. The transatlantic law firm calculated the emissions of its eight UK offices for the year ending December 2017 and set a target to reduce emissions by 5% annually.

## RGU chooses 28 for Startup Accelerator

TWENTY-eight startups have been selected to join Robert Gordon University’s new Startup Accelerator, the first funded programme of its kind in North-east Scotland designed to help entrepreneurs execute business models, deliver valuable products or services and create local jobs.

The chosen startup teams cover a range of industries including healthcare, digital media, education technology, energy, food, fashion and textiles, financial technology and retail, with business applications for physical products, software, sustainable manufacturing, autonomous vehicles, mobile health, virtual environments, blockchain, mobile apps and online platforms.

The RGU Startup Accelerator, which is part of the university’s innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives, will support the entrepreneurial teams of students, staff and recent alumni from RGU and North East Scotland College (NESCol), with the aim of helping the region’s entrepreneurs and innovators to create new businesses.

# Evolution Digital Transformation - learning to walk

**DIGITAL transformation. What does that phrase mean and why should you care? In the sea of buzzwords and mis-used terms, digital transformation is up there on the podium. Let’s break it down.**

**Digital.** A vague word but necessary shorthand to encompass many technological and societal changes that continue to converge at an exponential pace.

**Transformation.** The dictionary lists transformation as: the act or process of transforming, to change in form, appearance, nature or character.

Can we then assume that digital transformation means to change rapidly from a previous state into one that integrates emerging technology with people and processes?

And why should you care anyway?

In the opening statement of a recent white paper by Skills Development Scotland and the Centre for Work-based Learning it reads ‘Technological and societal disruptions are coming at us thick and fast. Whilst we cannot predict the future, we can prepare

for a future that is increasingly unpredictable. We not only need to cope with change but need to learn to thrive in it.’

From a global perspective, Credit Suisse cite technology as the disruptive force killing off older companies earlier and at a much faster rate with the average age of an S&P 500 company now under 20 years, down from 60 years in the 1950s.

Data privacy and security underpin digital. New data protection legislation and the increased threat of data breaches all require a call to action.

So, is worth taking a moment to redefine digital transformation and why it’s crucial for the survival of your business?

At 4\_ttude we break digital transformation down the into three key stages or layers and help you reimagine your business by navigating between:

- Digital optimisation: adoption of digital tools to change the nature of a process/service. Analogue becomes digital with the optimising of services. The business model will not change; it allows for modification and efficiency.

- Digital transformation: utilising digital tools through changing ways of working. It expands the definition of digital to include structure, culture (privacy by design) and leadership styles

- Digital innovation: utilising digital tools and new ways of working to completely change the business model. It opens up possibilities for a different set of products/services or modifies the company’s value chain.

Tempting as it is to jump straight into transformation or innovation, infrastructure, digital literacy, ways of working and data privacy and security need to be in place for success.

But don’t stop there either. Digital isn’t just a CRM or better designed processes. Once digitally mature, businesses need to strive for transformation and innovation. So, scratch the term transformation and digitally evolve instead – walk before you run and keep preparing for change.

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Cave bar, Meldrum House

## Best bar award for Meldrum House

MELDRUM House, the independent country hotel in Oldmeldrum, won the Hotel Bar of the Year title at the Whisky Magazine Icon Awards.

The hotel's Cave Bar was shortlisted for the award alongside 11 of Scotland's top hotels including The Balmoral, The Torridon, The Craigellachie and Dornoch Castle.

Andy Burgess, CEO at Meldrum House said: "We have a unique bar which is part of the rich history here at Meldrum House. It showcases over 120 whiskies, a huge selection of spirits including many from the local area, cocktails and a casual dining menu. This has been an amazing year for the hotel."

## Getting on the right track

by Shane Taylor,  
senior policy and government  
affairs executive, Aberdeen  
and Grampian Chamber of  
Commerce



## Silver service for Entier chefs

THREE chefs from Entier formed part of a six-man Scottish team which won a silver medal at the 2018 Expogast Culinary World Cup in Luxembourg last month. The event, which is organised by the World Association of Chef's Societies and takes place every four years, sees teams of chefs from across the globe compete in a number of categories, including 'Best Culinary Team in the World.'

Entier's Orry Shand, Craig Palmer and Rory Taylor joined fellow Scottish chefs Robbie Penman, Andrew Mackay and Jamie Mackinnon to win silver in the 'Hot Kitchen' category. The six chefs had six hours to cook up a feast for 110 people in a restaurant style setting, with judges tasting plates at random throughout the two-hour service.



Rory Taylor, Craig Palmer and Orry Shand

## Collaboration remains high

THE OIL and gas industry's drive to increase collaboration between suppliers and operators in the UK Continental Shelf (UKCS) has continued to maintain a consistent performance, according to an annual survey published by Deloitte and Oil & Gas UK.

The findings of the UKCS Upstream Supply Chain Collaboration survey 2018 showed that, while activity levels in the basin were gradually picking up and the appetite for collaboration remains very high, the industry-wide Collaboration Index score of 7.1 has remained the same as 2017. This is a strong sign that the industry can increase efforts to build on the track record it has attained over the past three years.

**THE theme for this month is technology so here's a tech fact: on the railway between Dundee and Aberdeen, Victorian technology, specifically semaphore signalling, still forms an integral part of our inter-city rail network. This obsolete technology, with its heavy reliance on mechanical elements, is one of the factors which holds back our regional connectivity.**

Rail and physical connectivity is critical for our region. In its recently released Urban AGE report, Burness Paull emphasised connectivity as one of the critical barriers that Aberdeen needs to tackle. As a region with key sectors aiming to rapidly internationalise, taking our supply chain expertise across the world, our ability to connect is absolutely vital. Cutting journey times and improving the perception of the North-east as a connected region is a core part of how we should approach this challenge.

Fortunately ScotRail has recently brought upgraded HSTs to the Aberdeen to Central Belt line. Still the fastest diesel trains in the world, the new trains have a comfortable operating speed of 125mph. Less fortunately however, they're limited to 100mph on the Aberdeen to Central Belt line, partially due to this outdated infrastructure.

This is where the £200m in funding, committed by the Scottish Government around the time of the City Region Deal in January 2016, should be bearing fruit. One of the core aims of this investment was to 'help improve journey times and increase capacity on key rail links between Aberdeen and the Central Belt.'

To its credit, Transport Scotland identified, and has now begun work on, some immediate improvements around Craiginches and Newtonhill but the deployment of the vast bulk of this investment has been painfully slow.

Transport consultant Arup was tasked with coming up with a plan to deliver the promised improvements. This report, after delays, was presented to the Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee in December 2018, and managed to identify a mere two minutes of total journey times savings - that's £100m per minute. Unlikely to meet anyone's definition of value for money.

Causing further concern, following on from the unveiling of this report, the Scottish Government's draft budget, issued by Cabinet Secretary Mackay on December 12, completely omitted the Central Belt journey times project from its list of rail priorities.

As a region, and as a business community, we simply can't allow this project to slip or delay any further. We can't accept our region's bold future ambitions being constrained by Victorian technology from the past.

It is for this reason that the Chamber wrote to Bill Reeve, director of rail at Transport Scotland, to express our frustration and to ask for a revised plan which delivers the substantial reductions to journey times envisaged.

In the weeks following our letter we've seen some welcome action from a number of local parliamentarians keen to get answers for our region but we won't be resting on our laurels. The Chamber will continue to ensure that the voice of the North-east business community is heard directly on this vital issue. We expect to see a revised plan, which offers a clear route to significantly reduced journey times, in the first quarter of this year.



# Considering an exit for your business?

by **George Yule,**  
director, BGE Consultancy



**FOLLOWING on from the last four years of local economic challenge associated with the industry downturn in the oil and gas sector, many businesses are hoping for better times ahead but also bracing themselves for further financial uncertainty as a consequence of any post-Brexit outcomes - and who knows what the impact on local businesses will be?**

The North-east of Scotland has been - and will continue to be - an incubator for realising entrepreneurial aspirations but post-recession and pre-Brexit many battle-weary business owners are facing up to a recurring question: 'Should I be preparing a succession plan that enables me to exit the business?'

This may be due to their lack of appetite to experience another cycle of reduced revenues and tighter margins, or it may simply be because it is their time to step back from the front line of business combat. Whatever the specific motivation, there's no doubt the secret to a successful exit is a combination of planning / preparation - and timing.

For many local business owners the prospect of third parties (aka potential buyers) carrying out detailed diligence into the very heart of their business activities is an intrusion, with the potential to become an unwelcome digression on normal day-to-day operational activities.

However looking at it from the acquirers viewpoint, given that the incumbent owner is unlikely to remain in position post-deal, it's absolutely essential that they fully understand what they're buying, how the DNA of the business operates, where the company sits in their specific market, their unique selling points, the extent of any intellectual property, their target markets / sectors / clients, who the main competitors are; and whether the business has further growth potential.

This part of an exit process is generally referred to as due diligence and the business's commercial interest or privacy is usually protected by a formal confidentiality or non disclosure agreement between the parties.

For any business owner considering selling up but perhaps unfamiliar with the process, my advice would be to start planning for this as soon as possible as there are a number of actions along this journey, including carrying out a full review of every area of your business from commercial documentation, financial processes, budget forecasts and market knowledge to HSEQ and HR procedures to ensure they are up to date, accurate and will withstand third party scrutiny.

Typically it can take up to two years from the point of planning an exit to the reality of achieving a sale, with a successful outcome being largely dependent on a blend of the business's strength and performance - and also timing in terms of market conditions.

There are plenty of case studies and qualified advisors in the local area who can share experiences, so do your own homework before setting out along this journey.

## Kiltwalks raise £5m

LAST year's year's Royal Bank of Scotland Kiltwalks raised a record-breaking £5m for Scottish charities.

More than 20,000 participants took part across all four events, a 42% increase on 2017's 14,000 total. Walkers raised an incredible £3.6m for 1,156 charities, with a further 40%, £1.4m, added by Sir Tom Hunter and The Hunter Foundation.

Sir Tom said: "20 082 walkers, 1156 amazing charities benefitting from an incredible £5m of funding - Kiltwalk is on the march. The statistics, whilst amazing, don't scratch the surface of the impact on those most in need. If anyone typifies the character, humility and sheer determination of our walkers it's Joanna Lamb from Edinburgh. Joanna is an incredible young woman with terminal cancer walking to support fellow cancer sufferers and It's Good 2 Give; powerful and emotional; truly amazing.

"As 2019 approaches I'd like to thank our walkers, Kilties, sponsors and everyone that supports the Kiltwalk as we step out once again to make a difference to those most in need - thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Dates have been announced for the 2019 events, with Aberdeen's walk taking place on June 2. For more information or to register visit [www.thekiltwalk.co.uk](http://www.thekiltwalk.co.uk)



Joanna Lamb



Alex McLeish, Lucy Hunter and Sir Tom Hunter



Ron Taylor and Keith Barclay at the site of Parklands' proposed Inverness development

## BGF invests £5m in Parklands

PARKLANDS Group, one of the largest independent care home providers in the north of Scotland, has received a £5m to accelerate its growth from BGF, the UK's most active investor in growing businesses.

Set up in 1993 in Buckie by Ron Taylor, Parklands provides residential care for older people at eight care homes across Moray and the Highlands. Parklands was one of the first nursing care providers in Scotland to achieve Investors in People status and the group has won a series of awards for the quality of its care and its commitment to staff development and training.

The investment marks BGF's first investment in the Highlands and Moray, having invested more than £200m across 27 businesses in Scotland since 2011. The growth capital from BGF will be used to support the building of a £4m 40-bed care home in Fortrose and a £6.5m care hub in Inverness, comprising a 48-bed care home and 16 assisted living suites.

# March

5

**218**  
courses  
run by the Chamber



Covering  
**55**  
different  
subjects



Attended by  
**1,250**  
delegates



<b>5 Tue</b> 1/2 day	<b>Commodity Coding System for International Trade</b> Guidance through the international coding process and the paperwork involved
<b>5 Tue</b> 1/2 day	<b>Preference Rules of Origin</b> Understand the importance and rules of preference
<b>6 Wed</b> 1 day	<b>Improve your Professional Confidence</b> Promote a positive and confident self-image
<b>6 Wed</b> 1 day	<b>Sales and Account Management</b> Learn the structured approach to selling in a business to business setting
<b>7 Thu</b> 1 day	<b>Boost your Sales Success</b> Maximise your sales success to attract new business and open new doors
<b>7 Thu</b> 1 day	<b>Budgeting and Planning - An introduction</b> Understand how and why to establish and maintain budgets
<b>12 Tue</b> 1/2 day	<b>Social Media for the Uninitiated</b> Gain a practical understanding of Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn for business
<b>12 Tue</b> 1/2 day	<b>Social Media Advanced - Using Mixed Media In Your Digital Communication</b> How to integrate social media into a digital communication plan
<b>13 Wed</b> 2 day	<b>Essential Management Skills</b> Become equipped with the knowledge and skills required of a manager
<b>19 Tue</b> 1 day	<b>Marketing 101</b> Develop a successful integrated marketing strategy
<b>19 Tue</b> 1 day	<b>Dealing with Difficult Situations</b> Understand the variety of personalities and how to alter your approach for each
<b>20 Wed</b> 1 day	<b>Investigation in an HR context</b> Plan and manage investigations effectively

<b>21 Thu</b> 1 day	<b>Stakeholder Engagement and Relationship Management</b> Identify and engage with stakeholders to build effective and lasting relationships
<b>21 Thu</b> 1 day	<b>Customer Service Excellence</b> Excel at customer service both within your business and externally
<b>21 Thu</b> 1 day	<b>Export Documentation Explained</b> Understand what is involved in documentation to save time and money
<b>26 Tue</b> 1/2 day	<b>INCO Terms</b> Understand International Commercial Terms for buyers and sellers perspective

<b>26 Tue</b> 1 day	<b>Talent Management</b> Get on top of your talent agenda and maximise potential
<b>26 Tue</b> 1/2 day	<b>HM revenue and Customs END Use Awareness (1/2 day)</b> Take advantage of Shipwork End Use (END) system and navigate the rules
<b>27 Wed</b> 2 day	<b>Advanced Management Skills</b> Grow as a manager and improve the performance of your team
<b>27 Wed</b> 1 day	<b>Performance Management</b> Get it right for the bottom line or service delivery
<b>27 Wed</b> 1 day	<b>Coaching Conversations</b> How to coach others to improve and be their best
<b>28 Thu</b> 1 day	<b>Essential Supervisory Skills</b> Bridge the gap between doing and supervising



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**For more information**

Susan Staniforth,  
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T 01224 343917 E training@agcc.co.uk



Kirsteen Scott, Laurie Scott, Chris Foy and Isabelle Foy.



Rachel Thomson, Jo Robinson and Mitch Gaglardi.

Aberdeen Performing Arts Chairman Craig Pike, Lord Provost of Aberdeen Barney Crockett, Aberdeen Performing Arts CEO Jane Spiers

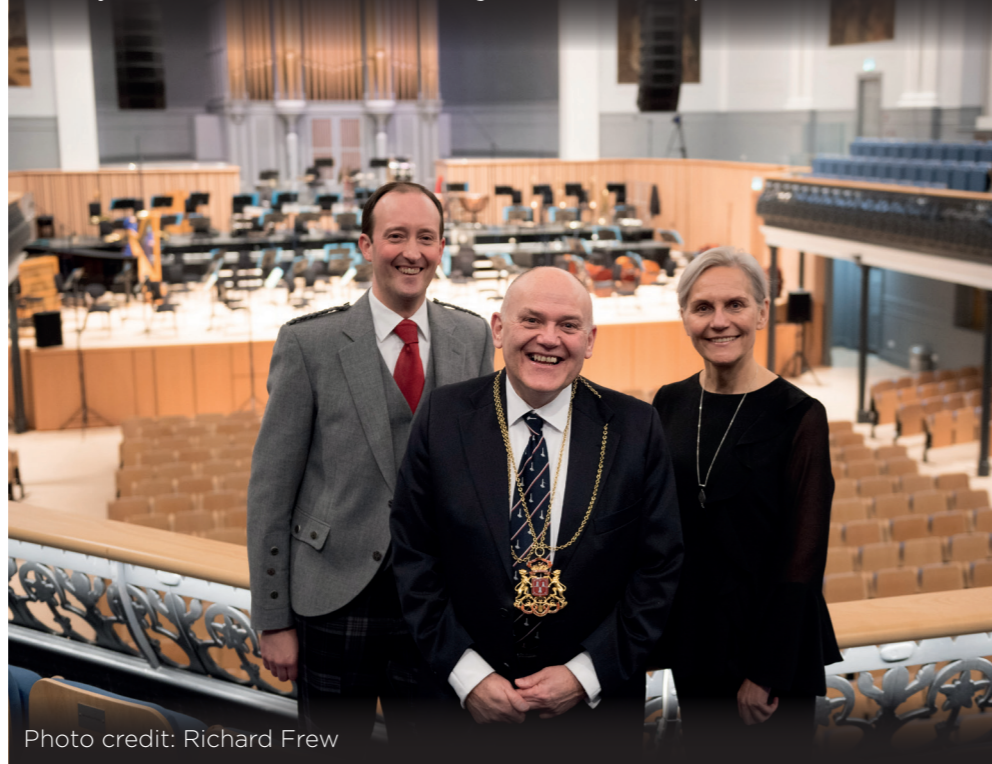


Photo credit: Richard Frew

A selection of pictures from the reception of the Music Hall opening gala concert with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra on December 15.

and

Delegates enjoying a range of informative seminars and presentations at the Chamber's inaugural How2 conference which took place at Robert Gordon University on December 6.



## Quick fire round



David Rennie,  
managing director, Test Centre Aberdeen Ltd

### What does your company do that others don't?

Having worked for operators and achieving Offshore Installation Manager (OIM) status, I have a very good understanding of the operator's requirements. Ultimately wherever the service is in the supply chain the final client is the oil and gas operator. We can therefore assist our clients in ensuring the operator's requirements are met.

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

Getting onto clients approved vendor lists. Once accepted the challenge is offering a competitive price while maintaining the high quality that is a key aspect of the Test Centre Aberdeen Ltd.

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

The handling of people is one of the hardest aspects. Each has to be handled differently. There is a time for praise and time for discipline but at the heart is understanding, to ensure morale in the workplace is maintained to a high level.

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

Recruit the right people and understand them. Ensuring that you spend time to recruit the right people with the right aptitude and attitude. We are a small growing company where each person requires to show an ability and skills to multi-task and work as a team.

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

There are two: the day I became an OIM in January 2006, having started my career as a mechanical technician; and the second is giving employment and career development to people.

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

Globally, I'd like to maintain the current oil price. With the oil price returning to an acceptable financial level, operators will have increased budgets to drill, maintain the production plants and carry out selected projects. Locally, to ensure the survival and longevity of local SMEs I'd like to readdress business rates in the area and support survival and growth.

### What was your first job?

Apprentice mechanical technician for William MacKinnons Engineering in Aberdeen.

### When would you like to retire?

I have retired from offshore work after nearly 40 years but I do not see myself retiring fully in the short term, hence taking on a new challenge in starting up Test Centre Aberdeen Ltd.

### What did you have for breakfast?

I continue having the same breakfast from the time I worked as an OIM - toasted fruit loaf with butter and a cup of weak tea with no milk or sugar.

### Who, or what, inspires you?

I find inspiration from many people, it varies from key industrial and political leaders to young apprentices who show the passion and drive to learn.

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

I enjoy thrillers and comedy films, Caddyshack is one I have watched couple of times. I'm presently reading Goodbye Europe, which has contributions by various writers and artists on what makes us British and what makes us European.



**Madeleine Gillan,**  
*fundraising manager, Macmillan Cancer Support in the north of Scotland*

**What does your company do that others don't?**

Being told 'you have cancer' can affect so much more than your health – it can affect your family, your job, even your ability to pay the bills. But life with cancer is still life. We get that. And, after over 100 years of helping so many people, we get what's most important: that we treat everyone as a person, not just a patient. We want to help everyone with cancer find their best way through, from the moment of diagnosis, so they're able to live life as fully as they can.

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

It is now estimated that one in two of us will receive a cancer diagnosis in our lifetime. However, those diagnosed are now twice as likely to survive at least 10 years than they were at the start of the 1970s. The challenge Macmillan has set itself is to ensure everyone with a cancer diagnosis gets the support they need. Currently we are able to reach approximately 25% of those with cancer, we want to reach 100%. Given that more people will be experiencing cancer the challenge of reaching them all is no mean feat but something everyone at Macmillan, including me, feel impassioned to achieve.

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

Realising that I could not always solve someone's problems. Sometimes no matter how many resources or

information you have you just cannot resolve a situation for someone. I have found it difficult in the past to accept that I cannot 'fix' things for someone but I can help carry the load.

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

I used to work as a domestic abuse financial inclusion officer for a Citizens Advice Bureau in partnership with the local Women's Aid. The post was the first of its kind locally and allowed me to provide advice and assistance to those fleeing domestic abuse. I am immensely proud that I took this role from its tenuous beginnings and developed it for over three years.

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

I would love to see communities coming together on an even larger scale to support each other and affect change locally. Macmillan relies on the generosity of the public to operate, 98% of our income comes from fundraising.

In the North-east the money fundraised by the public has funded projects such as Move More Aberdeen, a community based programme that offers activities including gardening, gentle movement, walking groups and exercise classes, as well as a homebased activity DVD. We're positive that Move More can lead to major health benefits for local people affected by cancer and improve their overall quality of life.



# Quick fire round

**What was your first job?**

At 14 years old I was hired as a cleaner in my local residential care home.

**When would you like to retire?**

I will continue volunteering for as long as I can.

**What did you have for breakfast?**

Porridge with left over chocolate buttons (terrible sweet tooth!)

**Who, or what, inspires you?**

People who help others in the face of adversity.

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

I am afraid I re-watched Lord of the Rings for the twentieth time.



The 'Forget Me Not' walking football team

## £85,000 donated to local charities

SPORTSCHALLENGE, the North-east's premier sports-themed fundraising dinner, has provided an £85,000 new year boost to local charities.

The charity event, organised by the recently rebranded, Simmons Energy, has shared all funds raised with long-term beneficiaries, Maggie's and Children's Aid (Scotland), as well as two smaller, North-east charities.

These include Banchory-based charity, The Forget-Me-Not Club, which helps individuals and families of those with dementia, and the Grampian MS Therapy Centre in Dyce, who provide therapy services for those with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and other similar conditions.

Planning for Sportschallenge 2019 is already underway, with the event taking place on Thursday, September 12 at The Event Complex Aberdeen (TECA), one of the first corporate events to be held at the new £333m development.

# All aboard for the Tourism Conference 2019

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## Pressure Test Solutions celebrates 10 years in business



Gary Notman, managing director of PTS

AN Aberdeen-based energy industry service company is celebrating 10 years in business following a successful first year for its latest products division.

Pressure Test Solutions Ltd (PTS) was established in 2008 and specialises in the rental, sales and calibration of equipment to the energy industry.

The business invested £250,000 in a new hydraulics and pneumatics products division in Q4 2017 to complement existing company services by offering hose assemblies and hose fittings for use on and offshore.

After only 11 full months trading, the new division is contributing 20% of company turnover.

Additional premises in the Bridge of Don, Aberdeen, were secured to house the new division, and a team of three members of staff were employed to support the enterprise, including manager Ian Reid who has more than 25 years' industry experience.

Gary Notman, managing director of PTS, said: "The last few years have been very challenging for everyone in the energy industry but we found a way to adapt and diversify our range of products to continue to generate income and secure the business.

"We're very excited about the year ahead and look forward to continued growth and success in 2019 following our investment in the team and new premises."

## First Minister joins line up for Granite Noir

GRANITE Noir, Aberdeen's crime writing festival, is pleased to announce Scotland's First Minister as chair for one of the festival's opening events.

A voracious reader since childhood, Nicola Sturgeon will chair an event with author Abir Mukherjee on February 22 at 7pm at the Music Hall, exploring the shared heritage of Scotland and Bengal. The event is just one of the festival's diverse programme celebrating, showcasing and debating the cream of crime fiction from around the world.

Produced by Aberdeen Performing Arts, in partnership with the Belmont Filmhouse, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Archives and Aberdeen City Libraries, Granite Noir is now entering its third year and, with several events already a sell-out, this year's festival is set to be the biggest and best yet.

## Food and drink restrictions set to impact small businesses

FOOD and Drink Federation (FDF) Scotland has submitted its members' response to the Scottish Government's consultation on restricting the promotions of food and drink products: 'Reducing health harms of foods high in fat, sugar or salt'.

The organisation expressed disappointment over the Government's decision to press ahead with legislation to restrict promotions, citing a lack of evidence of the effectiveness of these measures in tackling obesity.

Chief executive officer David Thomson said: "Iconic Scottish brands who sell more of their products in Scotland will be disproportionately affected by restrictions, such as banning of end of floor displays and free samples. As an example, for just one of our members, these types of restrictions would reduce their sales by up to £1m per year and will likely result in major redundancies. This is just one example of why small Scottish businesses are deeply concerned about the Scottish Government's proposals.

"Instead of punishing Scottish businesses, we urge the Scottish Government to work in partnership with the industry to make a real difference to the health of the Scottish people."

## Get ahead in the customs authorisation race

by **Stuart Webster**,  
*regional manager, Petrasco*

**COMPANIES** involved in international trade should explore **Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) certification to avoid a potential flurry of post-Brexit administrative checks.**

In partnership with the Chamber our specialists can help businesses achieve AEO certification, an internationally-recognised quality mark which is regarded as the highest level of compliance for customs controls and procedures.

Whilst not mandatory, having AEO status can give firms quicker access to certain customs procedures and, in some cases, the right to 'fast-track' shipments through selected customs, safety and security procedures. In turn, this can save time and money as well as providing a competitive advantage in demonstrating that a company's role in the international supply chain is secure, efficient and compliant.

It is also a practical step companies could make in preparation for uncertainties caused by Brexit.

Anyone involved in the international supply chain that carries out customs related activities in the EU can apply for AEO status, regardless of the size of their business. This includes manufacturers, exporters, freight forwarders, warehouse keepers, customs agents, carriers and importers, among others.

Working in partnership, we will provide specialists who will guide companies through the process which includes assessing whether they have the necessary import and export procedures in place, how goods are stored and transported, and how procedures for making and recording customs declarations are managed.

Once a gap analysis has been completed, Petrasco will assist clients with the application preparation and submission process and will be present at every verification visit conducted by HMRC.

We are delighted to offer support, guidance and advice to Chamber members throughout their AEO application. Petrasco has successfully gone through the process itself, as well as assisting several clients, so understand how complex and detailed the application process can be.

Working alongside clients, our experienced customs consultancy manager George Jenkins can analyse their existing business practices, operations, safety and security measures, customs processes, procedures and management tools against the relevant AEO criteria.

Our aim throughout the process is to assess the company's current position, identify what may need to be changed and provide advice on the relevant amendments or implementation of processes and procedures that will meet AEO criteria and gain the required accreditation.

**The Chamber is holding two events with Petrasco in February designed to help companies understand the AEO process and the support available to them.**

Delegates will also learn about the new Customs Declaration Service (CDS) being introduced by HMRC, the replacement to the 25 year old Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight (CHIEF) system and how the Chamber could assist businesses in a smooth transition mitigating the risks associated with the introduction of this new system.

'Brexit preparations: A safe and cost effective route via AEO and CDS', will take place on:

**February 8, 2019**

**February 26, 2019**

For more information or to book, visit the Brexit hub at [www.agcc.co.uk](http://www.agcc.co.uk)



19

# February



Learn about making the switch to electric and be ahead of the game

**7 Thu**  
7am-9am  
Millenium Copthorne Hotel

**Business Breakfast - Dynamic Digital**  
Did you know that 90% of marketers say social media marketing has increased their business exposure? In the modern world, every company needs a presence on social media. It's an easy concept to understand but much harder to pin down the specifics on how to make it work for you. Come along to this breakfast to find out how the web and social media channels can help you boost your business.

**8 Fri**  
8.30am-10.30am  
AGCC

**Brexit preparations: a safe and cost effective route via AEO and CDS**  
Our focus at the Chamber remains firmly on assessing the implications for business, seeking clarity and providing practical guidance on the key issues you need to be aware of after March 29, 2019. Any company involved in international trade should be exploring Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) certification. This event will provide an introduction to the potential benefits of AEO, business compliance and estimate the investment required in time and resource. You will also hear about the new Customs Declaration Service (CDS) and how the Chamber could assist businesses in a smooth transition mitigating the risks associated with the introduction of this new system.

**19 Tue**  
8.30am-10.30am  
AGCC

**Switch on to Electric Vehicles**  
Come along to our Switch on to Electric Vehicles breakfast and make sure you're ahead of the game and find out how you can make the switch.

**22 Fri**  
11.45am-2pm  
AGCC

**Maximise Your Membership**  
What does the Chamber do? How can the benefits and services we provide support your business? This event is ideal if you've just joined the Chamber or are new to a member organisation and want to learn more about us.

**26 Tue**  
11.45am-2pm  
AGCC

**Brexit preparations: a safe and cost effective route via AEO and CDS**  
Due to high demand this is a repeat event from February 8. Details given on previous page.

**28 Thu**  
11.45am-2pm  
AGCC

**Speed Networking**  
Too busy to network? Speed networking enables people with busy schedules to spend time effectively by building business connections and increasing brand awareness over lunch.

**Sponsorship opportunities available**

email [events@agcc.co.uk](mailto:events@agcc.co.uk) for more details.

# March

20

**5 Tue**  
8.30am-10.30am  
AGCC

**IR35 - How to navigage the changes**  
The Budget proposed changes to the IR35 regime, shifting the risk and tax cost of engaging contractors through personal service companies onto clients and employment businesses by 2020. While this date may seem far off, there is alot to be done between now and then to make sure you understand the impact on your business and are compliant.

**7 Thu**  
7am-9am  
Ardoe Hotel & Spa

**Business Breakfast - Leadership in disruptive times**  
In times of uncertainty, how do leaders maintain their vision for the business and continue to inspire others whilst constantly planning and adapting in today's business world?

**20 Wed**  
9am-4pm  
Music Hall Aberdeen

**VisitAberdeenshire's Tourism Conference 2019**  
We are delighted to deliver VisitAberdeenshire's third annual tourism conference. Book your place at this sell out, full day conference and gain insight into key movements and the future of our budding tourism industry.



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**Steph Smith**

Activpayroll has expanded its global mobility team with the appointment of Steph Smith as global tax manager. Based in the central belt, she has a background in law and has developed a wide knowledge of key issues and concerns for companies with a global footprint while working for a Big Four company.



**Julie Tait**

Grant Thornton has appointed Julie Tait as associate director in its restructuring team as part of a long-term growth strategy for its Edinburgh office. With more than 18 years' experience in the Scottish market, Julie specialises in corporate restructuring and insolvency, providing support and advice to distressed companies and their stakeholders.



**Stuart Oswald**

Stuart Oswald has joined Lloyd's Register from Maersk Oil (now Total) where he was operations manager for the Quad 9 and Gryphon Alpha FPSO. He brings extensive operator experience in his new role as UK operations director of asset integrity and maintenance optimisation services.



**David Lamont**

ROVOP has appointed David Lamont as a non-executive director. David has over 35 years of industry experience in the oil and gas sector. After starting his career at Schlumberger where he worked for 18 years, he has held a number of senior management roles, most recently as the CEO of global energy services company Proserv.



**Nicola Lomax**

TEMS International has appointed Nicola Lomax to the newly created role of QHSE manager as it continues to expand its workforce in response to growing demand for its services. She will be responsible for developing and managing the firm's health, safety, environmental and quality systems and procedures.



**Norman Thow**

ANM Group has appointed Norman Thow to its board. With more than 40 years' experience of farming in Denside, Auchenblae, near Stonehaven, he brings a wealth of knowledge and experience across the agricultural sector, complementing the strength and diversity of the group's board.



**Joe Sczurko**

Wood has appointed Joe Sczurko as executive president for strategy and development. He has more than three decades of diverse industry experience and moved into the role from his position as president - strategy and development for Wood's environment and infrastructure services.



**Jane Setter**

MG Search has celebrated its third month in business with an Aberdeen expansion. Executive search consultant Jane Setter, who has more than 10 years' experience in the UK and Australia, is heading the company's Aberdeen operations with immediate effect. Jane most recently established and headed Page Group's Aberdeen office.



**Alice Butler**

Alice Butler has joined RGU's School of Applied Social Studies as research assistant. After completing undergraduate degrees in Middle Eastern Studies and French at Hood College in Maryland, she returned to the UK to complete an MA in Politics at Lancaster University. She has now submitted her PhD in Human Geography at the University of Leeds.



**Caroline Muir**

Deloitte has appointed Caroline Muir as a partner in Aberdeen as the firm continues to experience significant growth in the city. Caroline has more than 20 years' experience in advising large corporates, high growth, family-owned and private equity-backed businesses and has been promoted from her role as Aberdeen head of business tax.



**Jack Haggerty, Mark Turner and Neil McKechnie pictured with senior producer Jamie Baikie**

Aberdeen-based digital media production company SIGNAL2NOISE has made three appointments.

Jack Haggerty, who has worked around the UK for The Sunday Times, FLY Open Air, AQUA-UK and PRS for Music, has taken on the role of editor and cameraman. Mark Turner, is an award-winning producer who started his career in producing screen content for live events, including the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games opening and closing ceremonies, which were watched by a global audience of 1.4 billion. Mark is S2N's new creative director. Neil McKechnie, currently with Clydesdale and Yorkshire Bank has been appointed as a non-executive director.



**Danny Anderson, Jamie Guyan, Megan Hannah, Stevie Kelman, Paul Flecher-Herd, Amy Brown, Hazel MacGregor, Laura McMillan, Sophie Brown, Scott Bell and Sarah Lambert**

Aberdeen Considine has appointed four newly qualified solicitors and hired seven new trainees as part of its wider investment programme in 2018. The newly appointed solicitors have completed their two year traineeships, specialising in a range of disciplines, including corporate and commercial, dispute resolution, employment law, family law, conveyancing and banking litigation. They include Danny Anderson and Jamie Guyan (both in the Aberdeen office) and Stevie Kelman (Stonehaven and Banchory offices).

The trainees include Hazel MacGregor, Laura McMillan, Sophie Brown (all Aberdeen) and Scott Bell (Stonehaven).



**Katy Gifford and Paddy Collins**

Aubin, the chemical solutions provider to the energy industry, has realigned its senior management team to enhance the company's technology development and support its continued business growth.

Chief financial officer Katy Gifford has been appointed chief executive officer, allowing former CEO Paddy Collins to take up the newly created post of chief technology officer. Aubin's finance team will be restructured in line with the change. Mr Collins, who has been CEO for 13 years, remains Aubin's major shareholder. The change supports his long-held desire to move into a more technology-focused role to enhance Aubin's portfolio of innovative chemical solutions for its customers.

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