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BUSINESSWORKS

Issue 3 February 2023 North East

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it's important to get
children involved in
STEM at a young age

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during her varied career

DANCE FOR ALL

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WELCOME

What a privilege to be reporting on the North East business community again after a two-year hiatus.

Since I last edited a North East business magazine, the region has endured one of its most challenging economic periods thanks to COVID.

The pandemic undoubtedly battered us, and the region remains at the head or foot of several unfortunate league tables – the top for unemployment and the bottom for number of businesses per capita, to name a disappointing couple.

But editing this latest issue of BW North East magazine has taught me that the entrepreneurial spirit still burns bright, and you can read about four very different but equally impressive business owners in the coming pages.

Meanwhile, there's been recent cause for celebration with the signing of a £1.4 billion devolution deal for the North East, with new powers over skills, transport and housing promised for local leaders.

I remember when the former North East devolution deal fell apart in 2016. Speaking to the region's business leaders at the time, there was a distinct air of despondency at the news, and the resulting North of Tyne deal felt more like a consolation prize, and an opportunity missed.

Let's hope this latest bid fares better and enables the North East to compete better on a national and international stage by working as one.

In the meantime, BW North East will be on hand to sing the praises of the extraordinary people doing amazing things in our region – deal or no deal.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

Alison Cowie, BW Editor



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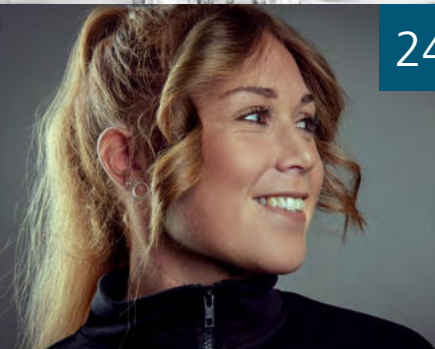
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North East Expo reaches 15th year

The acclaimed regional business show will celebrate its landmark anniversary on April 27, 2023

The North East Expo, one of the region's most prominent business shows, started life in 2008 at Ramside Hall before moving to a larger site at Newcastle Racecourse and then to its current home at Newcastle Falcons' Rugby Club at Kingston Park in 2012.

The free-to-attend business event has established itself as a must-attend for the North East business community, and has welcomed more than 20,000 delegates, 1500 exhibitors and 250 expert speakers over the years.

The expo features a wide range of exhibitors and a programme of seminars and workshops, presenting an excellent networking opportunity and a much-valued source of information for those living and working in the region.

A strong alliance with the North East England Chamber of Commerce also gives added kudos to the annual business show.

North East Expo 2023 will take place on April 27 and once again boast a vast and varied line-up of exhibitors, seminars and presenters that will showcase the best of the local business landscape.

Rico Liverani, managing director of DCS Payroll in Sunderland, has been exhibiting at the show since its inception. He reflects: "The Expo is the place to be seen; not being there would be a missed opportunity. We have lost count of the number of connections, introductions, referrals and business we have generated over the last 15



years from exhibiting and being seen at the event. It's a key element of our marketing strategy and a great event to be part of."



For more information on the North East Expo, visit www.northeastexpo.co.uk

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Invest Stockton-on-Tees



The Borough of Stockton-on-Tees is already home to more than 5,500 businesses collectively contributing to around a third of the entire Tees Valley's economic output. With Leeds to the south and Newcastle to the north, direct rail links to London and Teesside International Airport on the doorstep, there is excellent connectivity for business whether it be by road, rail, air or sea. Combine this with easy access to the UK's largest freeport, over 500 hectares of available land and competitively priced premises, businesses looking to establish a new base would struggle to find a more convenient location.

Stockton-on-Tees boasts a working population of 121,500, increasing to over 400,000 across the Tees Valley region, so there's a vast pool of labour and talent to tap into too – all within an hour's drive. The people here have a real pride in the Borough and a desire for it to succeed. Over a third of residents currently work in

high value professions, and almost a third are qualified to degree level or above.

The Council is proactively upskilling the workforce too, supporting apprenticeships and in-work training as well as running an Employment and Training Hub which aligns employment and training opportunities for local residents with local business needs.

It's not all-work-and-no-play though. It's a great place to live with quality housing and excellent schools. The Borough has six unique towns that are undergoing exciting

“Home to more than 5,500 businesses collectively contributing to around a third of the entire Tees Valley's economic output.”



transformations to provide shopping, theatre, museums, entertainment and leisure attractions in amongst beautiful countryside and parks. And of course, running through all of this is the beautiful River Tees. There's always something going on in the Borough with a packed programme of events and festivals throughout the year, so you'll never be stuck for something to do.

The Invest Stockton-on-Tees team can provide you with guidance and information on starting, growing, or relocating your business here. They can help you to find well-connected, competitively priced premises where you can develop and grow your idea or business. Visit www.investstocktonontees.co.uk to find out more about what's waiting for you. You can take a bird's-eye-tour around some of the strategic business locations available and read about how different industries are thriving. ●

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Belasis Business Park in Billingham is at the heart of the UK's petrochemical industry and renewable technology sector. One of the site's key advantages is its proximity to the largest integrated chemical complex in the UK, and the second largest in Western Europe in terms of its manufacturing capacity.

This world-class, industry leading site is home to industries such as petrochemicals, energy, bioresources research, and advanced manufacturing, and is becoming a major focus on the national and international stage. You'd be joining the likes of ABB Ltd, Johnson Matthey, Tracerco, and Cambridge Research Biochemicals, all of which call Belasis Business Park their home.

Billingham is supported by high-quality infrastructure and university-led research programmes. It is at the forefront of evolving new sectors such as renewable technology, life sciences and biotechnology.

There are opportunities for business of all sizes at Belasis Business Park. The Belasis Business Centre offers a flexible space for offices, laboratories, research and development, or technology. Available plots of development land range from small, individual plots to larger ones of over 8 acres.

Invest Stockton-on-Tees are keen to speak with interested parties who wish to locate here and explore opportunities for land or design and build on a leasehold or freehold basis. Visit www.investstocktonontees.co.uk for more information on available space. Or you can get in touch and we can help you find the perfect location, provide planning advice, or show you other suitable spaces in the Borough.





NEVER AFRAID TO SAY NO

Medical tattooist and business woman **Ann Oliver Harvey** reflects on her varied career, and explains to *Alison Cowie* why the aesthetics industry is not the best place for entrepreneurs

I've been writing entrepreneurial profiles for more than 15 years and almost without exception, the primary drivers of those running private businesses are profit and growth.

But this isn't the case for Ann Oliver Harvey. This is not because Ann - who has established several companies - isn't business savvy or driven. But prioritising profit and growth in the industry she's dedicated much of her life to is simply too big a risk.

Ann is a qualified and fully certified medical micropigmentation technician and corrective tattooist, offering a range of services such as areola reconstruction to clients across the North East.

She currently works as a freelance consultant at Absolute Image, a Newcastle city centre-based clinic that specialises in advanced aesthetic treatments. ►

Prioritising profit and growth in the aesthetics industry is a mistake, Ann maintains.

"As an entrepreneur, you're looking for a profit from everyone who enters your door. But in this business, you can't do that," she says.

"You have to be prepared to say no to potential clients, even if it means they go to someone else, who might be offering cut-price deals to get their business."

Ann continues: "This is not like buying curtains, getting a new bathroom suite or booking a holiday. It's changing your face or your body, and that's a completely different ballgame."

"If a builder botches your new windows, it's terrible, but what if someone botches your face? The ramifications are huge and that's why you can't come to it from a business perspective."

"In this industry, integrity is paramount."

Ann established her first business, Corrective Colour, when she left college after studying traditional and advanced beauty and cosmetics for four years.

From her base in Durham, Ann worked with people who had facial birthmarks or scarring suffered through trauma.

"I would show them how they could use cosmetics to camouflage and disguise," she explains.

A few years on and Ann embarked on a dramatic career change when she moved to Spain and spent 10 years working as a translator for the Thomson Travel Group.

When she returned to the UK, Ann got a job in recruitment where she travelled the globe headhunting mostly engineers.

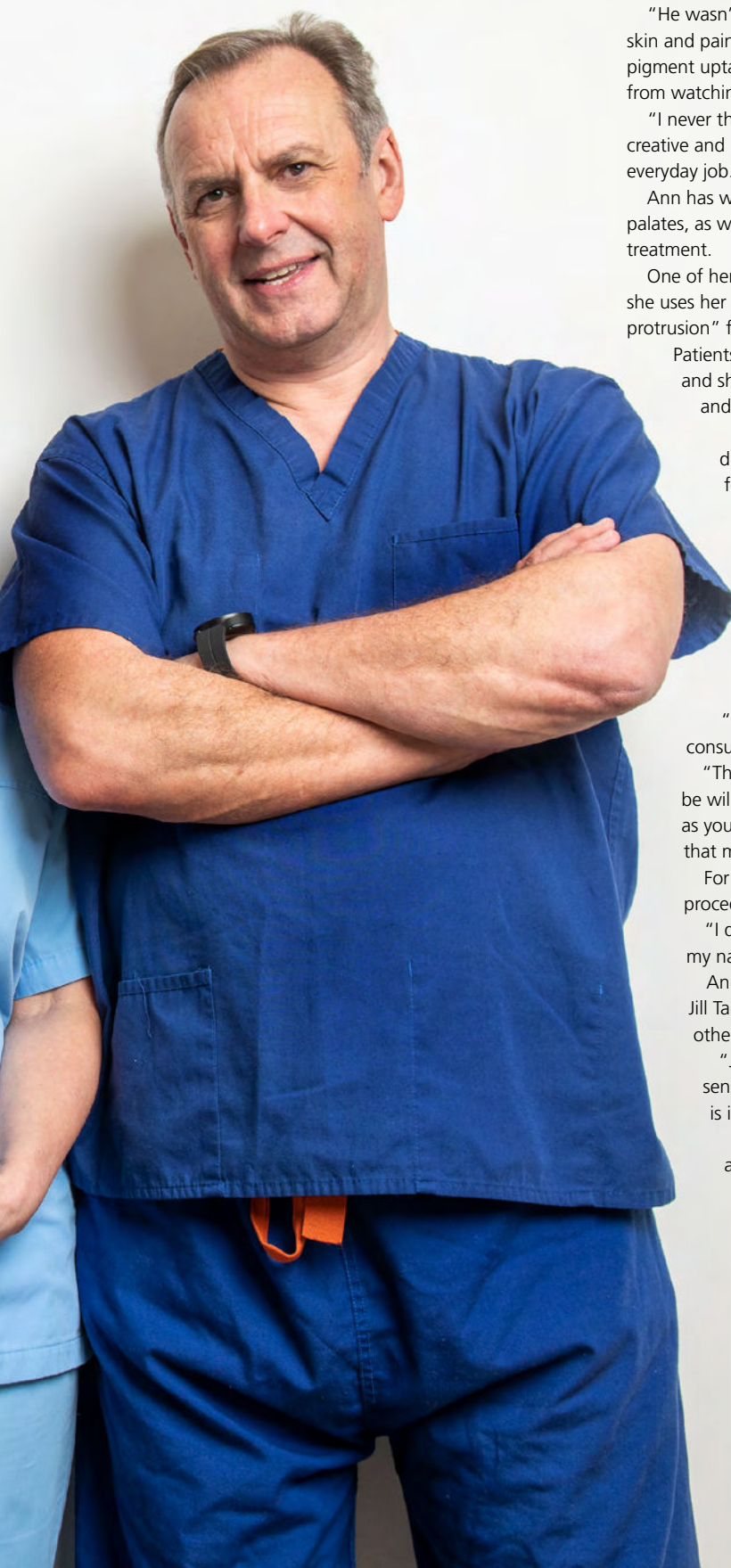
This led to her establishing her second company specialising in recruiting architectural engineers with design knowledge around extreme events and terrorism.

"This was pre 9-11 and such skills were thin on the ground," Ann reflects. "You could find pockets of people in India and France, and so this is where I spent a lot of my time."

After becoming a mother, Ann felt the jet-set lifestyle of recruitment was no longer for her and she returned to the aesthetics industry, training to be a medical tattooist.

Her inspiration, Ann reveals, came from her dad.





"He wasn't a tattooist by trade but my dad always had an interest in skin and paints," she explains. "A lot of what I learned about blending and pigment uptake, and how to get a good return on the skin, definitely came from watching him when I was young."

"I never thought that it would be my end career but I've always been creative and I feel very fortunate to be able to use my creativity in my everyday job."

Ann has worked with people who have experienced alopecia and cleft palates, as well as with women whose bodies have changed due to cancer treatment.

One of her specialisms is 3D nipple and areola reconstruction where she uses her skills in tattooing and pigmentation to create "the illusion of protrusion" for women who have undergone mastectomies.

Patients are often referred to Ann by their medical team in hospital, and she works closely with oncologists to ensure any procedure is safe and appropriate.

"I may meet a female before she goes through treatment, during or afterwards, and there's a set of protocols I must follow," Ann explains.

"An oncologist will write to the clinic saying they're happy for a patient to proceed and that their blood counts are at the right level to go ahead."

Ann knows her medical and corrective tattooing is not right for everyone, and she first conducts in-depth consultations with all her clients.

"Consultation tells you everything and often I consult more than once," she explains.

"A person should come out of any aesthetic treatment consultation feeling excited, confident and comfortable."

"There shouldn't be a question you can't answer, and you should be willing to give answers the person might not want to hear - such as you're not ready or not right for what they're asking for. Even if that means losing them as a client."

For those for whom it is agreed they would benefit from a procedure, Ann delivers her medical or corrective tattooing herself.

"I don't want to sound arrogant but I wouldn't be prepared to put my name against anyone else's needle," she says.

Ann's partnership with Absolute Image began after she and owner Jill Tait began discussing how their services complemented each other.

"Jill is a qualified nurse who specialises in injectables and it made sense to join her," Ann reflects. "The synergy of the two industries is incredibly complementary to the end user."

In working with Absolute Image - which celebrated its 15th anniversary last year - Ann found a business owner that mirrored her own ethos.

"I will only work with people who have a similar ethic," Ann explains. "Jill fits that. She's good at what she does but she's not afraid to say no, but in a nice way so that people go away still feeling good about themselves."

Both Ann and Jill are well aware of the challenges the rapidly growing aesthetics industry face, and is often dismayed that so many people are entering the industry offering injectables, fillers and botox, with minimal training and experience.

"Often, the public doesn't know the difference. They see people who are registered, certified and are advertising ►

these procedures but without a level of experience, that's when things go wrong. The lack of rule regulation is creating huge issues, which we see all the time," Ann says.

The pair's desire to bring about reform in the industry they love led Ann and Jill to contribute to a parliamentary review in 2019.

"We received a letter from an MP asking if we would help create a set of standards for the industry. They wanted credible clinics like Absolute Image to get involved, and so we jumped at the chance," Ann reports.

In the statement Ann wrote on behalf of Absolute Image for the review,

she outlined current problems in the industry.

She wrote: "Sadly, many of today's aesthetic clinics are run solely with profit and an exit strategy in mind... a fundamental change of perception from a professional service to a price-led commodity has been a key failure in a high percentage of clinics," adding: "The idea of effective regulation in order to filter out unqualified practitioners and subsequently improve overall industry standard is well overdue."

Ann reveals that she and Jill were on the verge of visiting then prime minister Boris Johnson and his team to further their cause, when COVID hit.

The pandemic has subsequently put the review on hold but the medical tattooist is confident it will be picked up again soon.

In the meantime, Ann continues to offer her high-quality services at Absolute Image, which recently announced a further partnership with Dr Philip Lamballe who will provide a range of new advanced aesthetics services, including vein work, at the clinic.

"We'd been speaking to Philip for a while so it's great that he'd decided to join the team," Ann enthuses.

"Philip was originally a surgeon before going into general practice. He's been doing private aesthetic work for many years and is very well-known and incredibly well respected."

Ann is clearly excited and proud of Absolute Image's latest appointment, and the potential of working with a GP-qualified practitioner. But ask her about future plans for the clinic and she returns to her cautionary tone.

"When most businesses talk about the future, they're talking about profit-driven growth. But at Absolute Image, we prefer to talk about maintenance.

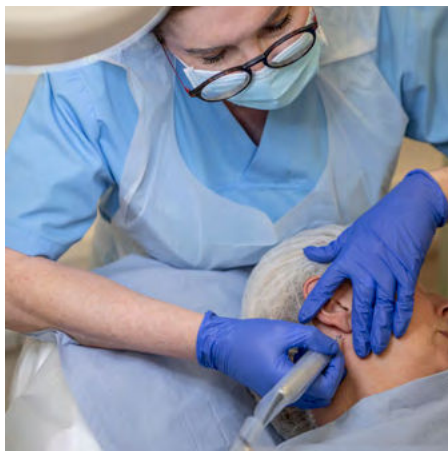
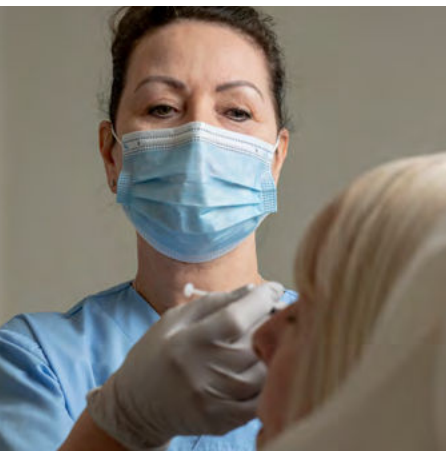
The freelance consultant continues: "Could Jill use the model as a blueprint and expand it? Of course. But the reason the business is a success is because she has a finger on the pulse of the front line. You can't pull away from that or you're diluting the whole ethos of the company."

Ann has been managing risk her whole career. Whether that's weighing up the benefits of ending her first business to follow her Spanish dream, or managing the risk in the ultra-competitive world of international recruitment, finding specialists who, in turn, are dealing with the construction risks from such extremes as a terrorist attack.

In her latest work, Ann knows it's essential to avoid all unnecessary risks in aesthetics, even if that negatively impacts the bottom line.

Of course, in taking this resolute approach, this highly experienced business woman knows that growth will come. But it will be long-term organic growth that she, and the similarly minded people she chooses to work with, will manage in their own way. ●

For more information on Ann and Absolute Image visit www.absolute-image.co.uk





From cradle to a career in STEM

It's perhaps one of the biggest conundrums in education – how to get more kids interested in STEM? One answer has been to involve industry, and a North East figurehead who has contributed considerable time, knowledge and expertise to the cause is **David Land** – an advocate of the current thinking to 'start 'em young' ►





David Land is in no doubt about the benefits of an engineering career. After all, he only has to look at his own trajectory as compelling evidence.

The North East-native started as an apprentice at Cummins Engines in Darlington and steadily worked his way through the ranks before moving to Tallent Engineering in Newton Aycliffe, which makes components for the automotive industry.

He became business development director at Tallent and helped grow profits from £8 million to £200 million, and extend operations to North America, India, China and Turkey. After Gestamp acquired Tallent, David was appointed UK engineering director of the international group.

While David was as Gestamp Tallent Ltd, he was asked if he'd get involved in the first university technical college (UTC) in the North East.

UTC South Durham would be a new state-funded, purpose-built school for 14 to 19-year-olds that specialised in STEM subjects, with a focus on engineering and advanced manufacturing.

Its aim was to better prepare students for work by providing them with academic and technical education as well as building their professional skills with the involvement of local industry.

David had seen skills gaps starting to appear in the automotive industry and had already worked with a secondary school to offer several apprenticeships to its pupils.

However, he was dismayed at the reluctance of uptake for the fully funded traineeships, which he saw as a golden opportunity to start a career in engineering that had provided him so much.

Recognising the UTC as a fresh approach, he accepted the invitation to get involved.

"I liked the UTC concept because it was more about industry influencing the curriculum. There was the opportunity for students to be more business ready. We now describe it as 'work-life ready'. That really appealed to me."

Gestamp joined Hitachi and the University of Sunderland as founding partners of UTC South Durham, which opened in September 2016.

“*We set up the charitable foundation so that it could raise money to help support the UTC and transport some of its special projects to children in schools across the North East.***”**



Instead of the traditional 25-hour week, students at the technical college study for 31 hours, with the extra six hours dedicated to industry led, problem-based learning.

"The college has a huge engineering hall at its heart with tools that you'd see in industry, and around 150 businesses are actively involved in helping its students," David adds.

Over the last six years, UTC South Durham has seen the yearly intake of students swell from 140 students to over 450, and David reports that all 600+ graduated students - recruited across 14 political constituencies in the North East - have gone on to a job, an apprenticeship or to further education.

David has continued to play a pivotal part in the development of the Newton Aycliffe-based UTC and he is now chair of its governing body.

The former apprentice explains that recent discussions have moved to how UTC South Durham can extend its influence beyond the school gates.

One answer has been to establish the North East STEM Foundation in January 2020.

"We set up the charitable foundation so that it could raise money to help support the UTC and transport some of its special projects to children in schools across the North East," David reveals.

In the two years since the foundation began, it has awarded two significant donations to help UTC South Durham action its outreach programmes.

"We're currently speaking to a school in Gateshead about helping its robotics. And we're about to launch Future Makers," David explains.

The Future Makers project will pilot this year and will see 'STEM stars' visiting primary schools across the region to teach children more about the possibilities of engineering and advanced manufacturing.

"Everything you touch in your daily life has had to be designed and manufactured and so the earlier we get kids excited about that, the better," David enthuses. ►



The ambitious project aims to work with primary school children over a three-year period (years four, five and six), providing them with practical STEM-based learning.

"We want people from industry going into the schools and invigorating the kids' enthusiasm so they'll take that into the early part of secondary school. By the time they're choosing their GCSE options, they're at least thinking about a job in engineering and manufacturing. We like to think of it as supporting 'from cradle to career'."

The foundation is talking to a number of companies and individuals about getting involved, and it has held several fundraising dinners and events at the technical college.

"People who come to UTC South Durham have the wow factor in two ways," David explains. "Firstly, the space. It's not

like a school. It's halfway between school and industry.

"Then there are the students. They do a far better job at selling the school as they have the confidence and the tools to talk passionately about their journey."

David left Gestamp in 2014 and has since been involved in setting up several consulting companies – including IA Growth Ltd and Drive 2 Business – which provide strategic support to small and medium-sized engineering and manufacturing businesses.

He has also established the Engineering Manufacturing Network as a way of bringing the local community together.

These latter roles have enabled David to better appreciate the challenges smaller engineers and manufacturers face, but he maintains they have just as vital a role in

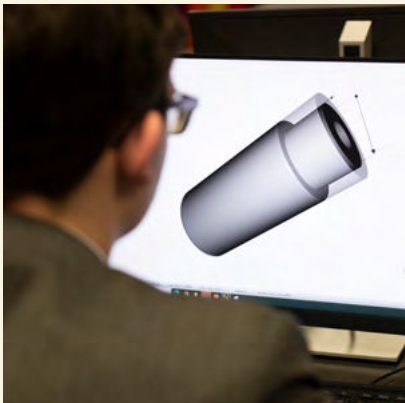
supporting the next generation as larger corporates.

"By getting SMEs involved in the UTC, the students see somebody that's prepared to have a go and who's got confidence in their own ability," David reflects. "In return, they get a fresh pair of eyes on things."

Reducing skills gaps in the UK's economy is a tall order, and David appreciates that closing the disconnect between education and industry will take work. But as long as we have people like him who are willing to share his experience and passion, we can ensure there is a new generation who appreciate the importance of STEM and the benefits of forging a path in engineering and manufacturing. ●

For further information on UTC South Durham visit www.utcsouthdurham.org

“*“Everything you touch in your daily life has had to be designed and manufactured and so the earlier we get kids excited about that, the better.”*







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Sunderland Engineering Training Association (SETA) is a not-for-profit Group Training Association, which delivers apprenticeships and both standard and bespoke commercial training courses

Whether your business is up-skilling, cross-skilling or both – You need SETA



It's well been known that SETA (Sunderland Engineering Training Association) is renowned in the region for delivering accredited, industry-recognised training for over 40 years, but what is probably lesser-known is that it is part of a regional consortium, that works seamlessly in collaboration with other training providers under the ESF (NE) Workforce Skills Programme supplying fully funded training.

If you're a business owner and this is news to your ears, then read on. The aim of ESF is to upskill the workforces of the businesses in the Northumberland and Tyne and Wear regions. Even if you're outside of

those regions, SETA can work with you, with their commercial rates for training offering business competitive value for money and the very best in expertise.

Working with industry giants such as Leibherr, Egger and Rolls Royce, the team at SETA are committed to supplying quality training by highly-skilled staff, with a vast knowledge of expertise in their chosen industries, with one aim; To Train, Transform, Develop and Improve the individuals that learn with them, so they, in turn, can become part of a better workforce for the companies that they represent.





SETA is a company with a conscience too. As a not-for-profit organisation, their intention is to offer SME's, sole traders, and multi-national businesses with the training required in the engineering, manufacturing, and related industries, with all profits ploughed back into the company to do more of the same!

Companies that wish to take up the ESF programme can take full advantage of the no cash match, which many schemes offer. These training courses are fully funded until the end of December 2023 and provide the individuals and business with professional accreditations at the end of it.

On top of that, SETA's Washington-based headquarters are the largest in the North East and offer its students state-of-the-art equipment and workshops.

Robin Lockwood - CEO of SETA said: "We all know that a happy workforce is a productive one, so at SETA we aim to offer hands-on learning and practical skills for real life, whether that be in an office or an industrial environment. Business growth has never been required more than it is now, so what better example to set your workforce than your faith in their ability to grow with your business."

SETA are also suppliers of a selection of apprentice schemes, and by working closely with employers and employees, are able to create a learning culture that benefits everyone concerned. ●

For further information on ESF programme or SETA's services in general, call 0191 416 2860 or email enquiries@seta.co.uk – www.seta.co.uk



DANCE FOR ALL

Lucy Erskine recently celebrated Dance Envy's tenth anniversary with a spectacular showcase that demonstrated how far her dance school and 120-plus dancers had come. But, as she explains to *Alison Cowie*, there's no need to feel envious at the school, which specialises in freestyle, as it's open to everyone

Lucy Erskine has been dancing since she was three years old, and entered her first competition a few years later.

"My mum always says that I entered myself into a competition at the age of seven. I've always been determined and I just told my mum I was doing it," the dancer recalls with a smile.

Specialising in ballet, tap and stage, Lucy spent her youth participating in local shows and pantomimes which, she says, helped her develop strong friendships and build fitness and focus.

After graduating with a degree in musical theatre from Newcastle Performance Academy and Hull, and spending four months in Cyprus performing at a holiday village, Lucy returned to her native North East. She began

teaching at the school she trained at but dreamt of establishing her own dance school one day.

The qualified dance teacher took the plunge 10 years ago when she hired a space at King Edward Primary School in North Tyneside and held her first class with just four youngsters.

Since then, Lucy has grown Dance Envy to 20 classes a week with more than 120 dancers studying a mixture of freestyle, lyrical, slow dance, gymnastics and commercial.

Lucy, who grew up in Whitley Bay, is incredibly proud of how her dance school has developed and the impact it's made on children spanning a range of ages and abilities.

The ethos behind the school, she explains, is about bringing the "fun factor" to dance. ►



"I understand that some children want to come to one or two classes a week for fun, and then there are the kids who want more. My school offers both so there's something for everyone."

"The school helps develop important life skills and build good friendships, while still being fun. The result is a very strong 'team' spirit at the school."

Lucy now runs a packed schedule of classes at St Thomas' More in North Shields and Sport at Kenton in Newcastle, while she teaches herself alongside Hope Blythe, who Lucy trained as a youngster, and a specialist gymnastics coach from Newcastle Gymnastics Academy.

In addition, Lucy runs several after-school clubs in primary schools across the region that provide a chance to engage even more children – particularly boys – in dance.

"It's a shame that dance is still seen as a girls' thing when there are lots of boys that are interested in it," Lucy reflects. "But working in schools is great. The kids have had a hard day at school and then they can have an hour of fun and good exercise, and let their characters out."

Lucy is also regularly asked to host dance sessions as part of schools' wellbeing weeks, and is in no doubt about the benefits dance can bring.

"Exercise is extremely important when it comes to good mental health but some parents can struggle to get their children involved," she says.

"Dance can be a good way to get kids moving as there are so many fun elements."

"Once you put the music on, they almost forget they're exercising – they're too busy having fun."

The Dance Envy founder recognises primetime television shows such as *Strictly Come Dancing* has increased dance's profile.

"Dance is taken much more seriously now because of these shows and people are more dedicated to it," she explains.

Dance Envy's competition team comprise a select number of dancers who Lucy recognises as having the flare and dedication to take their dancing to the next level.

Over the last 12 months, the team has competed in London, Sheffield, Glasgow, Bridlington, and the spiritual home of dance, Blackpool, winning numerous titles and trophies along the way.

Lucy knows first-hand the commitment this level of dancing requires, not only from the dancers but from their families too, so she doesn't take this lightly when selecting who will join the elite team.

"A lot of the school kids aspire to be in the comp team but I'm quite selective on who joins. It's a lot of time and can be an expensive hobby. The circuit we dance in is really hard and there is a lot of travel so I don't want to bring kids in only for them to become disheartened."

But Lucy is keen to emphasise that Dance Envy is not just for elite dancers and is accessible to everyone.

"I'm always trying different ideas to keep things fun and fresh and I run dance camps during the school holidays, so there's something for everyone to enjoy," Lucy explains.

Dance Envy even started an adult class last year after parents asked Lucy if she would put one on.

"It's a fun mix of dance and fitness and a lot of parents whose children come to the school attend."

"I've had loads of lovely messages about how much people have enjoyed the class and how much better they feel for it," Lucy adds. ▶



Lucy Erskine and Hope Blythe



As with so many other businesses, Dance Envy was hugely impacted by the pandemic and the resulting lockdowns, but Lucy continued to hold dance classes and host regular quizzes and themed parties online.

"Lockdown was a very uncertain time for everyone but I kept my classes going on Zoom. If anything, I've probably got more kids now but it's still good to be back to some normality," she reflects.

Dance shows are the pinnacle of any school's calendar and Dance Envy is no exception.

"Full school shows that involve everyone are great because they boost morale but with all the planning, music and costumes, they are a huge amount of work," Lucy explains.

Dance Envy has put on five "big shows" since its inception - the posters of which

proudly adorn Lucy's hallway at home.

The first show, aptly named 'Breakthrough', took place at The Exchange in North Shields and featured around 20 people. The school's latest offering, which marked the tenth anniversary, took place at Kings Primary School in Tynemouth in April 2022. It was the biggest show to date and featured more than 120 dancers who performed in front of an audience of around 750 family, friends and supporters over a weekend.

"It was a huge success," Lucy enthuses. "We put on a bar and did a tombola and a raffle. Everyone was happy and had a great time. People are already asking me when the next one will be!"

Looking to the future, Lucy has ambitious plans for Dance Envy.

As a qualified judge, Lucy is planning to hold the school's first competition in 2023.

"It'll be an in-house competition involving the whole school to start, but if it works well, I'll look to involve other schools," Lucy explains.

The dance school owner also aspires to have her own studio one day. And she is keen to support some of the older girls become dance teachers.

"I've currently got three girls who help me and Hope and they're all brilliant and great choreographers. I'm hoping to put them through their teaching qualifications at some point."

In the meantime, Lucy remains very much a hands-on teacher and is keeping her dancing feet on the ground so that she can develop her school at a pace that ensures the fun at Dance Envy is never lost. ●

Find more information on Dance Envy on its Facebook and Instagram pages.

“*"I understand that some children want to come to one or two classes a week for fun, and then there are the kids who want more. My school offers both."***”**



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MAGPYE SHINES thanks to plant-powered pies

A desire to take control of their careers was almost scuppered by the pandemic but thanks to a quick pivot and a national marketing campaign, **Sarah and Chris Fryers'** plant-based pie business, Magpye, has taken flight in a big way, as the couple tell *Alison Cowie*

After years working in teaching and admin respectively, Chris and Sarah Fryer were in search of a career change that would give them more freedom.

The husband-and-wife team wanted to start their own business and discussed several options. But it was after a visit to a local food market that the pair struck on the idea of plant-powered pies.

Sarah, who had always been vegetarian and Chris, who became vegan in his early twenties, felt there was a gap in the market for hearty comfort food without meat or dairy.

The couple, who are from the North East and have previously lived in London and the Middle East, set about developing a range of plant-based pies to fill the void,

despite neither having any prior professional catering experience.

"We spent about a year researching, finding suppliers and doing taste tests with family and friends," Chris reveals. "We wanted to make sure we had a product we'd be happy selling."

Sarah and Chris decided to call their new business Magpye, to reflect them 'stealing' ►

traditional pie fillings – such as steak and ale, mince and onion, and chicken, leek and bacon – and ‘veganising’ them.

“We felt many people were looking for meat-free alternatives but still wanted the hearty, traditional flavours that they’d grown up with,” Sarah explains.

It was essential to Magpye’s creators that their luxury vegan products were made using traditional artisan pastry methods, and were also free from palm oil – the production of which is notorious for causing wide-spread environmental damage.

“Pastry is traditionally used using butter and, if not, contains palm oil that helps speed up production,” Chris explains. “We had to develop our own pastry recipe that avoided both of these.”

Sarah adds: “We’ve worked hard to find high-quality ingredients from producers who echo our own ethics.”

In addition, the pie boxes are made from recyclable kraft paper and biodegradable plant based film.

The initial plan was to sell the pies at food markets and festivals across the UK, and the couple spent months converting an old horse box into a quirky artisan food truck.

But on the verge of taking to the road, the pandemic hit and the dream of travelling the UK selling their pies disintegrated.

Recognising the need for an immediate change to the business model, Chris and Sarah decided their best bet was to start delivering their freshly prepared pies directly to customers’ homes in the local area.

Their next challenge was how to get the Magpye name out there.

The solution, Chris reveals, took just one afternoon as the former computer science teacher set about building an e-commerce website using the GoDaddy platform.

“In early March 2020, it became clear that COVID was incredibly serious, and things weren’t going to change quickly,” he explains. “It took about a half day to pivot the business. We had our domain registered with GoDaddy and I used its tools to set up a website.

“We set up for local delivery and started advertising that we could bake pies fresh and drop them off at people’s doors.”

Within days, the hastily produced website was gaining traction as people bought into Magpye’s plant-powered pies amid

lockdowns, supermarket queues and a greater push to buy local.

Sarah and Chris were soon in charge of a thriving business delivering their nostalgic pies to homes across Tyne and Wear.

The rapid success of Magpye was not lost on the UK team at GoDaddy who saw the site rocket up their platform’s rankings.

The internet domain and web-hosting company got in touch with Chris and Sarah to ask if they were interested in taking part in some mutually beneficial PR.

A few media articles turned into a national television advert that told their story, which led to even greater demand for Magpye’s plant-based offering.

Sarah and Chris moved from their tiny kitchen at home to a purpose-built facility in North Shields to keep up with the burgeoning orders.

In the three-and-a-half years since Chris and Sarah established Magpye, the couple have experienced growing appreciation for good quality, meat-free alternatives from vegans and meat eaters alike.

“Attitudes have change hugely,” Chris reports. “When we were developing the pies, we did a few food markets and you would sometimes get people coming up saying, ‘I can’t believe you’re selling this’. That doesn’t happen now; people are really receptive to what we’re doing.”

“We’ve worked hard to find high-quality ingredients from producers who echo our own ethics.”



With the growing popularity for vegan products and the increased profile achieved from the GoDaddy marketing campaign, Magpye's founders made the decision to roll their deluxe pies out nationally via mail order.

Future plans are to expand the product range to include sweet pies, tarts and quiches - and sell more business-to-business, such as to ethical food stores, independent retailers and chain pubs.

The company recently signed a contract to supply pies to Forest Green Rover, the world's first vegan football club.

But fully realising their B2B dream will require a large injection of capital

and so Chris and Sarah have turned their attention to raising the required investment.

The pair's initial plan was to use crowdfunding but they soon realised it would be more beneficial to follow traditional investment routes at first.

This year will see the couple receive their first round of seed funding as they join an accelerator programme that provides a programme of mentoring and capital investment.

The couple, who currently run every element of the business themselves - with Sarah overseeing the operational side of things while Chris focuses on business

development - also recognise that more 'people power' will be required in the coming months.

"We know we will have to take people on at some point," Chris says. "We've also been looking at wholesalers and distributors who can help us manage larger orders."

For a couple who has never previously run a business, Magpye's journey to date has been impressive. And Sarah and Chris remain committed to growing the business in a sustainable way so that their future ambition is not 'pie in the sky'. ●

For more information visit
www.magpye.co.uk

“*“When we were developing the pies, you would sometimes get people saying, ‘I can’t believe you’re selling this’. That doesn’t happen now; people are really receptive to what we’re doing.”***”**



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LS | LIFESTYLE

ISSUE 3

DINING ■ MOTORING ■ PROPERTY



Timeless elegance

Alison Cowie visits
Jesmond Dene House,
 where she finds ample
 reasons to choose the
 luxury boutique hotel's
 Fern Dining Room

Every time I visit Newcastle these days, a new hotel or eatery is vying for visitors' and locals' attention with the promise of upmarket cuisine and decadent surroundings.

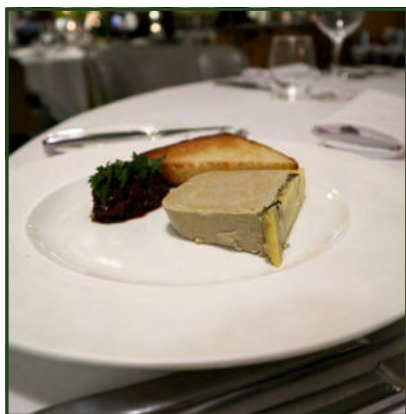
Discovering something new is appealing; but it can come with a heightened chance of disappointment. And so, in the middle of a cost of living crisis, sometimes it's more prudent to choose somewhere with a proven track record.

Jesmond Dene House has been at the vanguard of the region's hospitality scene for almost 20 years. Sitting at the top of the scenic Jesmond Dene, the Grade II, John Dobson-designed building has been a go-to since 2005, when it was converted into a luxury boutique hotel, bar and restaurant.

I visited the hotel's Fern Dining Room on a chilly January evening but was warmed by the welcome received as soon as I crossed the hotel's threshold.

My dining partner and I decided against an aperitif in the bar area and instead went straight through to Fern - an elegant dining space with crisp white tablecloths, a sumptuous cream décor and low, ambient lighting.

Often, the menu in such an establishment is a simple page comprising a limited number of starters, mains and desserts, but I was pleasantly surprised to find an abundance of choice on Fern's a la carte



menu. The eatery also offers a monthly set menu from Wednesday to Friday evenings, with two courses costing just £20 and three courses for £26, including a glass of Prosecco.

Before we made our dining choices, a cocktail was in order, and while my dining partner opted for the 'nojito' – an alcohol-free mojito (£7), I chose the Hugo Spritz with St Germain, Prosecco, mint, lime and soda (£9.50), which proved a wonderfully refreshing accompaniment to my meal.

For starters, we picked the chicken and duck liver parfait, with onion jam and toasted brioche (£14.50), and the tomato and avocado cocktail with iceberg lettuce, pomegranate and harissa (£14).

As we waited for them to arrive, we staved off the hunger with generous slices of herby focaccia bread and salted butter.

Tiny portions is another bugbear of upmarket dining, so I was again cheered when a generous slab of parfait arrived in front of me. The rich and creamy pâté

balanced perfectly with the tangy onion jam and the crisp golden brioche, and was much enjoyed.

The tomato and avocado cocktail was served in a large coupe – just like a 1970s prawn cocktail – but this modern vegetarian version provided a myriad of clean flavours and just the right amount of Middle Eastern warmth thanks to the harissa.

For my main course, I opted for the sizable hunk of beautifully cooked pan-fried North Sea cod (£28), adorned with fried chorizo and served on a piperade of sweet onions and peppers. The accompanying dollop of tasty olive oil mash helped bulk out the dish.

Meanwhile, my fellow diner enjoyed the succulent pork ribeye (£28), which came with hefty cubes of crumbly Stornoway black pudding, creamy pomme puree and a sharp yet creamy Dijon mustard sauce.

Our first two courses would have been ample, but we couldn't resist finishing off our meal with dessert. The sizable

Tomlinson's Yorkshire forced rhubarb with Chantilly cream, meringue and pistachio, and the smoked caramel, date and pecan delice with mango sorbet (£7.50 each) were well presented and tasty. The lack of finishing only confirmed our eyes were bigger than our stomachs.

The service throughout our visit was attentive without being overbearing and recommendations from the menu were welcomed, albeit not followed on this occasion; perhaps next time.

All-in-all, Fern Dining Room provides upmarket dining that's perfect for a special occasion, with good portions and a wide variety of options meaning everyone – from the tentative diner to the more adventurous gastronome – will leave happy.

I can, of course, see the appeal of the new. But sometimes, only reliable, timeless elegance will do. And Jesmond Dene House delivers this in spades. ●

For more information and bookings, visit www.jesmonddenehouse.co.uk



IMPROVED EFFICIENCY AND REFINED DESIGN

Audi entered the age of electromobility in 2018, and the launch of the new **Audi Q8 e-tron** is set to build on the success of this electric pioneer. The revamped flagship electric SUV and Sportback boast an optimised drivetrain, improved aerodynamics, higher charging performance, and an increased range of up to 343 miles

Since the introduction of the Audi e-tron around four years ago and sales of 150,000 units, Audi has been following a systematic electric roadmap. Its electric portfolio now comprises eight models, and by 2026, it will have more than 20.

At that point, Audi will only be releasing fully electric models on the global market.

The Audi Q8 e-tron is the flagship model among the car maker's electric SUVs and Coupe SUVs. The Audi Q8 e-tron and Q8 Sportback e-tron - which went on sale in November, with first deliveries set for

April - are immediately identifiable as fully electric models, marked out by the new front and rear designs that includes a new two-dimensional version of Audi's iconic four-ring logo. Here, we look at some of the key new features.

Maximum space and comfort

With a vehicle length of 4915mm, a width of 1937mm, and a height of 1619mm for the Sportback and 1633mm for the SUV, the new Q8 e-tron offers a maximum amount of space and comfort. The SQ8 e-tron

and SQ8 Sportback e-tron are each two millimetres lower and 39 millimetres wider. Its wheelbase of 2928mm allows for plenty of legroom in the back seats too. It has a generous storage volume of 569 litres for the SUV and 528 litres for the Sportback. There are also 62 litres available in the front storage area, the so-called 'frunk'.

Three drivetrain variants

For both body shapes, three drivetrain variants with electric all-wheel drive are available. Driven by two motors, the base

models of the Audi Q8 50 e-tron and the Audi Q8 Sportback 50 e-tron generate 250kW (340PS) in boost mode and 664Nm of torque, and they get a WLTP range of up to 281 miles (SUV) and up to 290 miles (Sportback) in UK versions.

Sitting above in the lineup is the Audi Q8 55 e-tron and Audi Q8 Sportback 55 e-tron, which are also driven by two electric motors. The models generate 300kW (408PS) in boost mode and 664Nm of torque. Their ranges are up to 330 miles for the SUV and up to 343 miles for the Sportback in the UK. The top speed, and that of the Q8 50 e-tron, is limited to 124mph.

The top-end Audi SQ8 e-tron and Audi SQ8 Sportback e-tron are driven by three motors. Their boost performance amounts to 370 kW (503PS) and 973 Nm of torque. The range of the S models is up to 284 miles for the SUV and up to 295 miles for the Sportback. Top speed is limited to 130mph.

Higher charging performance

The battery of the Q8 50 e-tron has a storage capacity of 89kWh (95kWh gross), while the more powerful versions of the Q8 55 e-tron and SQ8 e-tron boast a battery storage capacity of 106kWh (114kWh gross). Thanks to an adjustment to the battery management system, the battery capacity usable for customers has increased as well.

At a high-powered charging station, the Audi Q8 50 e-tron reaches a maximum charging performance of 150kW. With the Q8 55 e-tron and SQ8 e-tron, the maximum charging performance increases to up to 170kW. The larger battery can be charged from 10 to 80 percent during a 31-minute charging stop – under ideal conditions, this corresponds to a range of up to 240 miles.

At an AC charging station or wallbox, the Audi Q8 e-tron charges at up to 11kW. Audi offers an optional AC charging upgrade of up to 22kW. Under ideal conditions, the Audi Q8 50 e-tron can completely charge in around nine hours and 15 minutes on a 11kW power source and in around four hours and 45 minutes on a 22kW power source. The Q8 55 e-tron's larger battery will charge in around 11 hours and 30 minutes at 11 kW and six hours at 22 kW. ►





Further improved aerodynamics

Aerodynamics was a top priority when revamping the Audi Q8. A focus on this aspect resulted in a reduction of the drag coefficient from 0.26 to 0.24 cw for the Q8 Sportback e-tron and from 0.28 to 0.26 cw for the Q8 e-tron. The wheel spoilers mounted on the underbody help divert airflow around the wheels. Meanwhile, the spoilers on the front axle were enlarged, and the Audi Q8 Sportback e-tron now has spoilers on the rear wheels as well. With the SQ8 Sportback e-tron, spoilers are only mounted on the rear axle.

In the area around the grille, this is the first time an Audi model has had a self-sealing system in addition to the electric shutters that automatically close the radiator. This system further optimizes the airflow at the front of the car and prevents undesired losses.

Convenient parking with remote park assist plus

There are around 40 driver assistance systems available in the Audi Q8 e-tron. Up to five radar sensors, five cameras and 12 ultrasonic sensors provide environmental

information that's then analysed by the central driver assistance control unit. Remote park assist plus is a new feature, which will be available to order later in 2023.

Customers can control the parking procedure through the myAudi app on their smartphones. When the car reaches its final position in the parking space, it automatically switches off, puts on the parking brake, and locks the doors. To leave the parking space, the Q8 e-tron is powered on through the myAudi app, and then the vehicle moves out enough for comfortable entry.



High-resolution touch displays and voice control

Like all luxury-class Audi models, the Q8 e-tron uses the MMI touch response operating system. Its two large high-resolution displays – the upper 10.1-inch display and the lower 8.6-inch display – replace nearly all conventional switches and knobs. However, a lot of features can be activated through natural voice control. The digital display and operating concept in the Audi Q8 e-tron is rounded out by the standard Audi virtual cockpit with full HD resolution. Specific graphics show all the important aspects of electric driving, from charging performance to range.

Green credentials

The Audi Q8 e-tron will be certified as net-carbon- neutral for customers in Europe and the USA. Audi also uses recycled materials for some components in the Audi Q8 e-tron. These materials, treated

through a recycling process, reduce the number of resources used and ensure a closed, efficient and sustainable material loop. In the interior of the Audi Q8 e-tron, Audi uses recycled materials for insulation and damping, as well as for carpeting. The decorative inlay above the display, called the Tech Layer, is available with a new anthracite-coloured technical material that's partially composed of recycled PET bottles. On certain specifications, the sport seats are upholstered in synthetic leather and the microfiber material Dinamica. Dinamica is made from up to 45 percent polyester fibres that are manufactured from recycled PET bottles, used textiles and fibre residue.

In contrast to previous microfiber quality, the production of Dinamica is also solvent-free – another contribution to environmental protection.

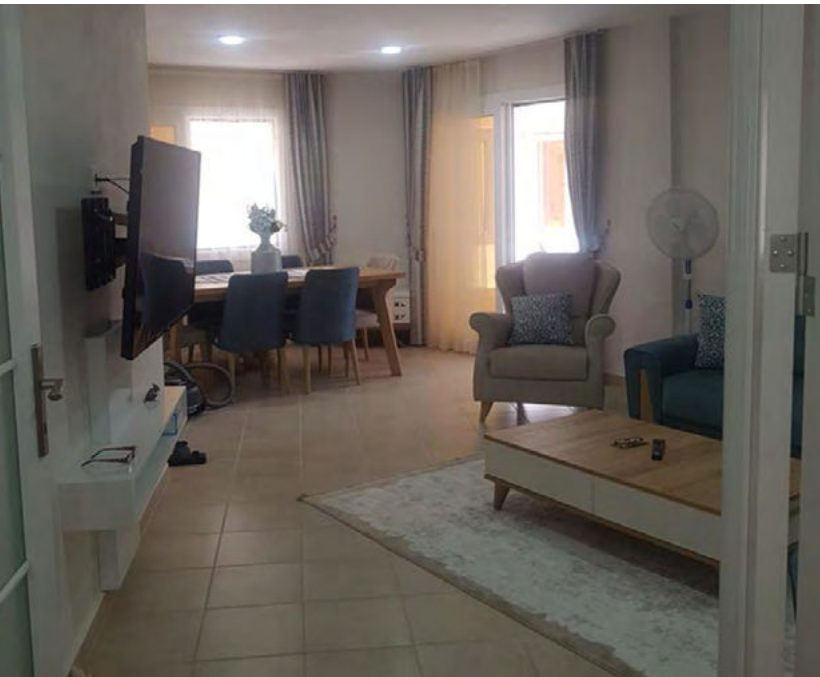
Furthermore, some safety-related components that partially comprise mixed

automotive plastic waste treated through a chemical recycling process are used for the first time – specifically, the plastic covers for the seatbelt buckles. As part of the PlasticLoop project, Audi worked with the plastics manufacturer LyondellBasell to establish a process in which chemical recycling will be used for the first time to reuse mixed automotive plastic waste in the series production of the Audi Q8 e-tron. In this process, jointly implemented with LyondellBasell, plastic components from customer vehicles that can no longer be repaired are dismantled and separated from foreign materials such as metal clips before being shredded and processed into pyrolysis oil through chemical recycling. This pyrolysis oil is then used as a raw material in the production of new plastics in a mass-balance approach. ●

With prices starting from £68,595, for more information visit www.audi.co.uk

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A newly renovated 3-bedroom Apartment located on the 3rd floor on the seaside in Tuzla near Fethiye. This apartment also comes with a large lounge area, 2 bathrooms and a lovely sea view.

Detached Villa in Ortaca

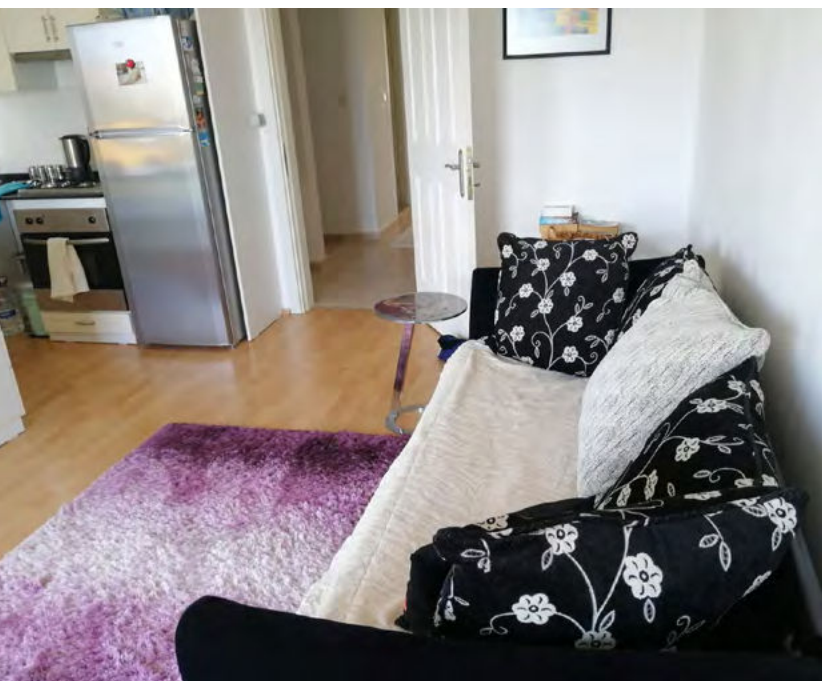
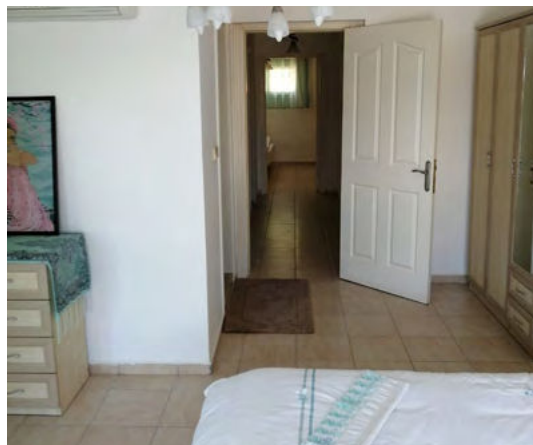
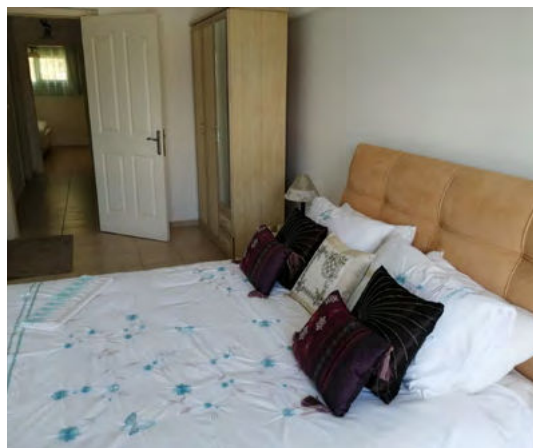
£280,000



Detached Villa in Ortaca – a 400 sqm detached villa located in Ortaca next to Dalaman airport with only a 45-minute car journey to Fethiye. This detached villa comes with 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, a lounge area, and a kitchen.

Beautiful house in Deliktas

£170,000



A beautiful 3-bedroom house located in Deliktas, Tasyaka. This house comes with a lounge room, pool area and garden at the entrance of the house. Barbeque and fireplace available.

Sea view apartment in Tasyaka

£145,000



An amazing 2-bedroom apartment in Tasyaka with a beautiful view overlooking the Aegean Sea. The apartment also includes an open-planned kitchen and lounge. Also, a spacious bathroom.

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EVENTS DIARY



FEBRUARY

- 16** 10 Ways to Build your Business Confidence – Bewick Hall, Level 2 Newcastle City Library New Bridge Street West Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8AX
- 16** Newcastle Helix presents... CULTURE SHOCK – The Catalyst 3 Science Square Newcastle Helix, Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 5TG
- 22** Start Up Day 2023 - Inspiring Entrepreneurs – Bewick Hall, Level 2, Newcastle City Library, 33 New Bridge Street West, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8AX
- 28** An Introduction to the Process Sector with NEPIC – The Wilton Centre, Wilton, Redcar TS10 4RF

MARCH

- 3** Durham Business Networking Event – Chester Le Street Cricket Club, Ropery Lane, Chester-le-Street DH3 3PF
- 8** Business Networking in Jesmond – Northumberland Tennis Club, North Jesmond Avenue, Newcastle NE2 3JU
- 10** Business Networking Morning Meeting – Northern Football Club, Great North Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 2DT
- 16** Drum Business Park Group – iTEC Packaging Ltd, 1 Drum Rd, Chester-le-Street DH2 1AE
- 23** ASSIST: Just Networking in Redcar & Cleveland – Redcar and Cleveland College, Corporation Road, Redcar TS10 1NY
- 23** CEO Sleepout Newcastle – St. James' Park, Barrack Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4ST
- 24** ABP News and Networking – The Work Place, Aycliffe Business Park, Heighington Lane, Newton Aycliffe DL5 6AH

- 30** CEO Sleepout Middlesbrough 2023 – Riverside Stadium, Middlesbrough TS3 6RS
- 30** Professionals Meetup – Floe, 27 Grainger Street, Floor 3, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 5JE
- 31** #LoveHexham Last Friday Networking – Beaumont Hotel, Beaumont Street, Hexham NE46 3LT

APRIL

- 4** Washington Business Networking Event – Mercure Newcastle, George Washington Hotel Golf and Spa, High Usworth, Newcastle upon Tyne NE37 1PH
- 7** Business Networking in Team Valley – Valley Farm Dining & Carvery, First Avenue, Gateshead NE11 0NU
- 13** Face to Face Networking at North Bar, Networking and Co-Working – North Bar, Cheltenham Parade #2D, Harrogate HG1 1DA
- 17** Harrogate Coffee & Coworking – Manahatta, Off Parliament Street, Harrogate HG1 2RB
- 18** City Ladies Networking April Meeting – Hilton Newcastle, Gateshead Bottle Bank, Gateshead NE8 2AR
- 19** ASSIST: Just Networking in Hartlepool – The BIS, 13-17 Whitby Street, Hartlepool TS24 7AD
- 20** Stockton MET – Hampton by Hilton, Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1TW

To have your event listed here, please email dominic@bw-magazine.co.uk.

Please note, while we make every effort to ensure these listings are correct, we cannot be held responsible for changes or cancellations – always contact the venue beforehand to check.

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