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BUSINESSWOMAN

Autumn 2019

BLADES, TRAINS AND AMBITIOUS SCHEMES

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Siemens' Finbarr Dowling

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Enterprising Spirit

Back to 'school' with the innovative owners of Hotham's Gin



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WELCOME

Welcome to the autumn 2019 edition of BW – our sixth, for those who are keeping count, and we certainly are! We have another great mix of inspiring entrepreneurial tales and business news for you this time and, as always, I've really enjoyed talking to the people behind the stories. I say this many times but, as a small business owner myself, hearing about their successes, challenges and, of course, the odd failure too, tends to give me a big kick up my sizeable behind, drives me to keep on going and perhaps also look at things in different ways – and I hope it has the same effect on you. And I keep saying that it doesn't really matter whether they're one-man-bands or in charge of £200m projects – the issues they face day to day are usually not all that dissimilar.

In my summer 2019 editorial I mentioned our first-year celebration at the Hallmark Hotel – this took place on June 14, and it was a great night. It was really well-attended, and the speakers (Marketing Humber's Diana Taylor, our very own columnist Norman Court and Gary Finch of Regus) were great, as was the food, plus wonderful music by Hull legend Mad Dog and his Sophisticats. Despite the iffy weather we did manage to get out and have a go at the archery (I and BW designer Craig are still not sure which hand we were best with... we're both left-handed but swapping to our right hands didn't seem to make a difference to our marksmanship, which was, er, mediocre at best...) We hope to organise more events like this in the future, so watch this space.

One of the critically important issues at the moment is, of course, climate change, and as a magazine covering the Humber region – the estuary is one of the world's most at-risk coastal regions due to rising sea levels – we want to play a key role in giving businesses a platform to contribute to the debate. We're backing Marketing Humber's Waterline campaign and planning a special edition of BW and live round-table debate in early 2020, which will include numerous partnership and advertising opportunities. For more information, please do get in touch.

Sam Hawcroft, BW Editor



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bw CONTENTS

AUTUMN 2019

Embracing entrepreneurship in Hull and East Yorkshire

www.bw-magazine.co.uk

34



10



46



22



14



FEATURES

10

BACK TO (GIN) SCHOOL

Phil Ascough meets the owners of Hotham's

14

AMBITIOUS SCHEMES

Finbarr Dowling talks to Sam Hawcroft about heading up another huge project

22

TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS

Daniel Usifoh and Joe Oughtred on how to get the best from your supply network

34

KOOL CUSTOMER

Sam Hawcroft talks to Airkool's Richard Dawson

REGULARS

- 06. THE COURT FILES
- 08. QUICK Q&A
- 28. LEGAL MATTERS
- 32. FOCUS ON FINANCE
- 40. OPINION
- 50. EVENTS DIARY

LS LIFESTYLE

41



A background image of three wolves in a misty, forested landscape. One wolf in the center is howling upwards, while two others are positioned to its left and right, looking forward. The scene is shrouded in a thick, green-tinted mist.

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The Court Files

Norman Court reports on lessons learned in a lifetime of making big business decisions...

KILLING YOUR CHILDREN!

Some time ago, working in the toy and hobby market, I was party to developing a strategy that, even today, stands up as a smart piece of thinking. At the time we made paints and glues that youngsters, mainly boys, as well as serious modelling enthusiasts and professionals, used to construct and finish their models.

We considered our product range a "secondary market" range, as the need for our items only occurred after the primary item (usually a plastic construction kit) had been purchased. We were the world's second or third-biggest producer of modelling paints, behind a couple of huge American companies, and our sales were truly global.

Our strategy was twofold. Firstly, it was to get into the primary product through the acquisition of a plastic kit maker, which would enable us to direct the customer to use our secondary products and boost our current sales of about 50 million pieces per year to closer to 90 million. The second element was then to look at reducing production costs, possibly by introducing a "plastic tinlet" of paint to replace our current metal one and thus create the opportunity to create a largely automated "end to end" production facility.

The first stage was to acquire the plastic kit manufacturer. We were in the happy position of belonging to a rich USA parent company where cash was not an issue, and thus comfortably bought the old Airfix company in the UK out of receivership, giving us that primary product strength in British and Commonwealth markets. We then targeted a French manufacturer, Heller, which held prominence in the old French Protectorate.

Heller itself was privately owned by a short, rotund Frenchman. He was a lovely man who had created and grown the business from start-up. Plastic kits were an injection-moulded item, with the moulds being hugely expensive and thus only committed to where a large demand for the subject matter could be anticipated. My job at the negotiation was therefore to denigrate the value of each subject area/item to bring the notional value of the business down to our target level.

I started at the first item that we discussed, a model of a 1930s French bus. In a stage whisper to my MD alongside me, I made the exasperated-sounding comments, "Useless! Who the hell wants something as parochial as that, there's no major market for it at all..." and so on. This continued with each item until after about five or six had been looked at in this way, and then the French businessman shouted "Stop!" He pointed his finger at me and shouted, "You are killing my children!"

Now, his response caught us out, and halted the tactical approach that we were using. It also highlighted a problem we all need to beware of – falling in love with our products. Of course, we need to love them and nurture them, but we need to be careful that we don't fall IN love with them. As the saying goes, "Love is blind", and if we become blind to the objective evaluation of where our products stand, we are in serious danger of failing. It's a lesson that in this case cost the Frenchman dear, because he had unwittingly exposed his own subjectivity. We were able to complete a deal to our satisfaction, thanks to that one moment of exposure that his outburst indicated.

It wasn't me who ended up killing his children – it turned out to be him! Keep your objectivity to the fore with YOUR business. Cherish it, but never fall IN love with it!

Yum! Festival pulls the crowds and provides a platform for businesses

Food fans and businesses braved the elements in August to ensure another strong turnout at a festival that has been tempting the taste buds for 10 years.

Kathryn Shillito, executive director of HullBID, said the Yum! Festival of Food and Drink once again clearly demonstrated the wider benefits for city centre businesses.

She said: "All the businesses which took part were pleased with the crowds, but we know the value extends beyond that. If all the people who come to the festival spend even a few pounds elsewhere in the city you get the bigger economic picture."

Kathryn's comments were echoed by two city centre businesses that shared a stage in the food and drink demo arena.

Emma Kinton, of Hotham's Distillery, said: "Our Gin School has been a huge success for us, and events like Yum! are a big help in promoting this. People who come to the Gin School often become regular customers and we have quite a following now."

Allan Rice of Atom Brewing Co added: "This was our first time exhibiting at Yum! and the big aspect for us was building recognition that the bar is in the city centre and has become a fixture on the Old Town circuit, adding to the quality of the beer and the staff service."

The first Yum! Festival took place in King Edward Street in 2010. Even with the forecast of downpours this year's event attracted about 20,000 people and was also supported enthusiastically by traders and sponsors with St Stephen's Shopping Centre, Hull College and Iguana Developments all investing.

Kathryn added: "We know from speaking to our contacts in hotels that Yum! helps to attract people from outside the city but it also has a huge local following, giving city centre traders the chance to secure repeat business by raising awareness of where they are and what they do." Hotham's exhibited at Yum! in 2018 within days of opening their gin school in Hepworth's Arcade and Emma said the impact was instant – and lasting.

She said: "It was a big help in raising awareness of what we were doing in Hull, and it was a good springboard for launching our two gins, Hotham's Original and Hotham's Cardamom Gin. During our first year we noticed a big difference in the number of people seeking us out at events like the HullBID Street Food Nights and the Farmers' Markets. "That's why it was great this year at Yum! to have the opportunity to take part in the return of the cookery demonstrations, which were well organised and compered. We were delighted to pair up with Allan for a double act on stage. We share similar company values, and they're another local company with a great back story."

Allan added: "It was great to meet people who we don't often get the chance to talk to directly, send them to try our products at our bar and in Trinity Market and hopefully encourage them to come into the city centre more often." ●



INTERNATIONAL FISHING FIRM SHOWCASES MARINE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

A newly Hull-registered British freezer-trawler welcomed prospective apprentices and employers as it showcased exciting new marine engineering opportunities on a two-day visit to Hull.

North Atlantic Fishing Company, owner of the Frank Bonefaas (H-72), confirmed that the training courses set up in partnership with organisations including Humberside Engineering Training Association (HETA) and Hull Trinity House Academy, were already attracting interest from other maritime businesses in the region.

Charlotte Hogben, training and development adviser at HETA's Hull site, said the rising demand would result in setting up a dedicated marine engineering team for the new academic year starting next month. HETA ended the last academic year by securing places for five engineering apprentices with North Atlantic, and none of the three young men and two young women had a career at sea on their radar when they began training in September 2018.

Charlotte said: "They began in the same way as all our apprentices, working on electrical and mechanical, and on fabrication and welding, and they all had their own dreams and ambitions. "That changed when discussions progressed with North Atlantic and the marine engineering apprenticeship came together. We had a lot of initial interest among our learners and we made them

complete a lot of independent research so they would know what they were committing to. They have had to prove themselves and now they are excited about going to sea.

"We already have two from a major Hull-based company who will become marine apprentices in September and by then we will have a dedicated team of marine learners. It is a new development which has come from this project."

North Atlantic, a subsidiary of the Dutch Cornelis Vrolijk Holding BV, recruits the crew for its fishing vessels from the Humber region. At least half of the crew on the H-72 is British.

Helen Clynes, crewing manager at North Atlantic, said: "We could recruit from anywhere but it makes sense logistically to focus on the Humber area because there are strong maritime and fishing traditions here and good links between our operation and other companies in the area.

"Our vessel is very advanced and we needed a technical training centre that both we and Trinity House could rely on. We visited HETA and were very impressed. We will take five apprentices from HETA in September and in readiness for that they have been undergoing obligatory medical examinations and basic safety training.

"They will work for a trip on and a trip off and they won't know when they set off how long they will be

away. Most trips, however, take between two-and-a-half and three weeks. After two years they will apply for their Certificate of Competency from the Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA)."

Jo Lawson, deputy chief executive at HETA, said: "This project is putting HETA into another sector which is a new area for us but a traditional one for the Humber. For young people to step into this career not only as engineers but as officers is a fantastic opportunity. Charlotte has excelled with the speed of developing this project and this opportunity, and it shows how flexible and responsive we are as a business." ●



(From left) Charlotte Hogben and Jo Lawson of HETA aboard the Frank Bonefaas with Helen Clynes.

An opportunity for business

Apprenticeships: the route to growing your business.

East Riding College and the wider region is bucking national trends to see strong apprenticeship employment in the area - despite a downturn in the number of those signing up nationally since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy. The region should be proud of this outcome, it reflects the strategic and positive approach of our employers, both large and small.

Since 2017, employers with a payroll bill of £3m or more have been paying a 0.5% apprenticeship levy to the Government to fund new apprenticeships. Non-levy paying employers who offer apprenticeships to 16 to 18 year olds can also receive 100% of the training costs from

government, up to maximum funding bands. Employers do have to pay 5% of apprenticeship training costs for employees aged 19 and over with the government paying the remaining 95%, again up to maximum funding bands. All of which represents an opportunity for employers to access training to upskill their workforce, providing employees with opportunities to learn on the job or to create progression routes which help retain skilled staff.

Forward-thinking large employers have turned the levy into an opportunity to build in succession planning, skills development of their workforce and innovation into their strategy for growth. ●



Richard Sellick, Director of Business Programmes at East Riding College and Chair of the Humber LEP Apprenticeship Working Group



For help and advice with anything to do with apprenticeships speak to East Riding College's business development team on 01482 390888

Q&A

Neil Bateman, MD
Camouflage + Workwear



What's your passion?

I've a passion for my product, offering extensive ranges of great-quality workwear and military gear at value-for-money prices. Having gained years of previous valuable retail experience I have a thorough knowledge of the sector.

How long have you been in business?

I established C+W in 2017, and am able to offer local businesses a unique personalised service.

What are the advantages of your small company?

The good thing about being a one-man concern is that I keep an overview of everything. When an order is placed I see it through to completion - no being passed around. You're dealing with the same person every time - me! I enjoy keeping a client up-to-date in a friendly, efficient manner - aiming to offer the best service possible to a business, no matter its size.

How does C+W offer a competitive service?

By keeping an eye on larger competitors' rates I can adjust prices accordingly. What's more, I'm able to offer businesses great discounts from 10% (with business accounts, terms are by calendar month to C+W's bank account).

What else can you offer?

With a comprehensive range of stock, nothing is 'off limits' and if I haven't got a product I'll do my best to get it in for you - to your requirements - wherever possible. Since there is no head office to go through (unlike some larger companies locally) orders can be placed, processed and received rapidly - often in a few days. Conveniently located, with easy parking close by, doing business with C+W couldn't be easier.

Sum up your business?

If you're looking for quality, range, value and convenience in workwear (I'm also an agent for Alexandra Workwear for more specific industry items) or camouflage gear, C+W is a 'no-brainer' for local business.



So join the growing number of companies happy to get into gear with C+W!

For a 15% company discount just quote BWCAW1!

ONG FOOD LAUNCHES PURR-FECT ADDITION TO THE SLUSH MARKET



Nad Gilani of ONG Food with the Meow Slush van at the Deep Business Centre.

A family firm from Hull is bidding to add to the city's famous foods with a new product that it claims is the cat's whiskers.

ONG Food, based at the Deep Business Centre, has unveiled Meow Slush in response to customer demand after the company ended its relationship with Slush Puppie.

Nad Gilani, a director of ONG, said it wanted to follow in the footsteps of such delights as the Hull pattie, Hull Pie, Aunt Bessie's Yorkshire puds, American Chip Spice and more.

He said: "We're already selling Meow Slush at locations in Hull and much further afield, partnering with leisure and tourism businesses and talking to major wholesalers. We hope Meow Slush can become the next big food brand from Hull!"

ONG was a reseller for Slush Puppie for eight years until the deal ended in 2017. The company continues to supply other products including Rollover hot dogs, Pizza Cones, Eat Square pies and Magic Corn, as well as coffee machines from some of the top brands.

But with customers still eager to buy slush from ONG the company began to explore making its own. They researched ingredients, equipment and prices and worked towards a spring 2019 launch, with Nad's six-year-old daughter Rose making the most important contribution.

Nad said: "I was dropping her off at school one morning and told her we needed a name for the new product. A ginger cat walked past and was meowing, so Rose meowed and said we should call it Meow Slush. You can't ignore advice like that!"

The ginger cat has become the face of Meow Slush, which is now on sale at shops, fast food restaurants, leisure centres and other sites including Hornsea Freeport and the Deep tourist attraction.

ONG's commitment to low-sugar and no-sugar Meow Slush as well as to eco-friendly packaging helped the company secure the deal at the Deep, where it works closely with neighbours in the Business Centre.

Freya Cross, head of business and corporate at the Deep, said: "It's great that ONG, as one of our Business Centre clients, is selling its products through the Deep because we are committed to working with sustainable suppliers and it is important for us to offer low and no-sugar options.

"ONG has generously donated food to one of our Business Centre clients who prepares meals weekly for Hull Homeless Outreach in our kitchen. They also engage with many of our clients when they are ready to trial new products and flavours. That's made them very popular, and the van has brightened up our car park!" ●

Northeast remains a buy-to-let landlord's dream.

Bob Stones, Northeast Regional Development Director, Together



together.[®]

According to reports in the media, the property market paints a gloomy picture at the moment, with Brexit apparently to blame for a market that's hesitating. But, as often happens, what's happening in London and the Southeast isn't what's happening everywhere.

Nationwide, lots offered at property auctions are down by almost 15%¹, and totals raised at auction have fallen even more sharply: over 24%. We can see from this that the average value of transactions has fallen; that is, there isn't so many large transactions. And this may be a sign that risk-averse investors are holding their breath until November 1st, or hedging their bets on lower-value properties.

Many of these lower-value properties are residential investments here in the Northeast. After all, Brexit doesn't change the nature of our housing crisis; people need homes. So the enduring appeal of tangible bricks-and-mortar investments means they remain a popular way to invest.

Of course, it's not just Brexit that's making our lower-value property appealing; changes to mortgage interest relief and Stamp Duty on investment property are starting to bite, but have less of an effect on cheaper properties. Then there's property prices themselves.

With the London and surrounding market stuttering, investors also know they can't rely on the properties in the Southeast to increase in value 'just because it's the Southeast'. Instead, they're looking at strong ongoing rental yields away from the capital. Wages have risen nationwide² – the minimum wage is the same no matter where you are in the country, after all – and so have rents. But purchase prices haven't risen uniformly.

The result is that regenerating northern cities³, and particularly those home to a large student population – Newcastle obviously springs to mind – offer buy-to-let yields creeping towards double figures.

All of which could make the urban Northeast irresistible for property investors and developers. Of particular appeal may be lower-value commercial and semi-commercial properties; these often offer more square footage per pound, and local authorities are often open to change-of-use applications to ease local housing shortfalls.

We regularly provide bridging loans to help developers convert properties, as well as longer-term buy-to-let mortgages for landlords, whether they're buying at auction or not. And, perhaps unusually, we work with portfolio landlords regardless of the size or value of their existing portfolio; over the years, we've helped several entrepreneurial landlords to grow property empires worth millions.

For more information, visit togethermoney.com

¹ <https://www.eigpropertyauctions.co.uk/news/newsletter/2019/june>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/aug/03/soaring-rents-rose-60-faster-than-pay-since-2011-shelter>

³ <https://www.which.co.uk/news/2018/12/revealed-the-uks-top-buy-to-let-hotspots/>



Enterprising spirit

Phil Ascough goes back to school – gin school, that is – and enjoys a tipples or two with the innovative owners of **Hotham's**.

You could think of it as Emma Kinton's new library – shelves climbing from just above floor level all the way to the ceiling, packed with treats to fire the imagination.

But rather than the books that you would normally associate with an accomplished teacher of English, the contents of these shelves are bottles and jars all brimming with the herbs and spices that form part of the curriculum at Hotham's Gin School.

The school opened during summer 2018 in Hepworth's Arcade, Hull, taking its place alongside other quirky and quality independent outlets such as Dinsdale's joke shop, Beasley's Clothing and Fanthorpes HiFi.

"Head teacher" Emma instructs eager students in the art and science of making their own gin. She has a blackboard for chalking up recipes, a mortar board for use in graduation photographs, and a cane that – so far – has only been deployed for pointing out ingredients on the top shelves.

It's a simple concept, which very quickly proved so successful that the spin-offs have been spiralling. Emma gave up teaching English and her partner Simon Pownall left his post as IT services manager at the University of Hull. Instead they've been making gin, building their brand and planning expansion.

Simon said: "We have potential franchisees interested up and down the country who are very keen to replicate what we have done here. That was part of the plan when we started. We took a 'build it and they will come' approach.' A lot of people said we were mad and it would never work in Hull, but we have proved otherwise."

“*I guess we're the best non-rhubarb-flavoured gin! We made it in our kitchen and it's one of the best in the world!"*



“A lot of people said we were mad and it would never work in Hull, but we have proved otherwise.”

Hard work is a key factor behind the growth of the business, but what really makes the difference is the combination of creativity and personality, the sort of attributes that build networks and make things happen.

A conversation with Deborah Spicer, director of 1884 Wine & Tapas Bar, at one of the HullBID Farmers' Markets in 2018, led to a commission to produce a bespoke gin for the restaurant. A chat at the Yum! Festival of Food and Drink in the same year started a longer conversation which culminated in the launch of the Viola gin in support of the campaign to bring the Viola trawler back to Hull.

There are plans for other versions of Viola gin. The Millhouse at Skidby became the second restaurant to order its own gin. The organisers of Pride in Hull appointed Hotham's to make their festival gin. All from an allergy.

Simon revealed: “Three years ago I was diagnosed as being allergic to many things including yeast. The only things I could drink were champagne, which gives me a massive hangover, vodka and gin.”

We'll come back to the champagne, but Simon had been drinking gin for years; one of the couple's earliest dates was a visit to a gin school and so they made some in their kitchen.

The key question: “Was it any good?”

The instant reply: “You drink it regularly!”

When a major distiller offered to help Emma and Simon take the gin to market they knew they were on to something. In addition to the basic product, they worked on developing the experience – students at the gin school find themselves in a museum-like environment, surrounded by copper stills all named after celebrities with a strong Hull connection, including Sir Tom Courtenay, Reece Shearsmith, John Godber and Paul Heaton.

Simon said: “From an allergy to yeast we now find ourselves running one of the biggest food and drink tourism destinations in East Yorkshire.” ▶



The explosion in the popularity of gin, which has driven the success of Hotham's, also ensures there is plenty of competition, with Simon counting 45 distilleries across Yorkshire and two opening in the Hull area in the past couple of months. But versatility is a big part of the Hotham's offer – you can only sell a bottle of gin once, but there are also peripherals such as books, bar ware and glasses and you can do so much more with the fascinating story of gin as told by Emma at the Viola trawler events at 1884 Wine & Tapas Bar.

Simon said: “We have done corporate events at the rate of about one a month and they have usually involved people coming to the distillery, but we haven’t pushed that side of the business properly yet and I’m sure we can take our gin wherever people want it.”

The order book indicates that people

want the gin worldwide, with bottles being purchased by visitors from the States, China and Australia and the commemorative Viola gin likely to be heading to Grytviken.

The other spirit – the entrepreneurial kind – is gaining recognition with a series of awards including the Remarkable East Yorkshire Tourism Awards (REYTAs), the International Wine and Spirit Competition and a decision due soon in the White Rose Awards. It’s a glittering schedule that is giving Simon a healthy return on his investment in a dinner suit – and testing his aversion to champagne.

He said: “We’re a year in and have only recently started working on the business full-time so to win a REYTA blew us away.

“The international awards attracted more than 700 gins which were blind-tasted by a panel of 400 spirits experts. Our cardamom gin in the flavoured category won a silver

medal with 91 points. The winner was a rhubarb gin with 95 points, so I guess we’re the best non-rhubarb-flavoured gin! We made it in our kitchen and it’s one of the best in the world!”

Inevitably there is resistance among some people who can’t come to terms with the price of about £40 a bottle – with the Viola and Pride versions costing an extra £10 to support the respective funds – for something that is hand-crafted rather than mass-produced and which surrenders 40 per cent to the Government.

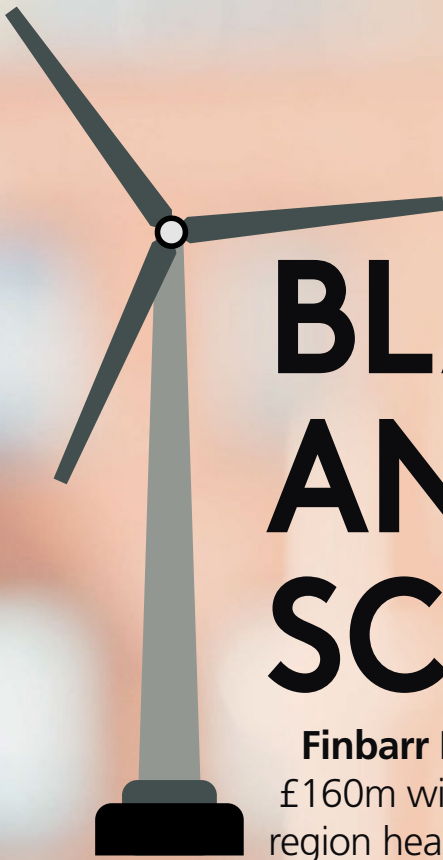
There are also unusual requests for additions to Emma’s library of ingredients, with one prospective customer suggesting his favourite onion sandwich recipe – with the skins on – and another implying that he might like to bring in some of the marijuana grown by his neighbour.

Emma said: “You can put all sorts of things into gin, but we are not willing to distil anything illegal! On those shelves we’ve got dried fruits, flower petals, bird’s eye chillies, cloves, star anise, orange blossom, elderflower, thyme, marjoram... We tell people if you don’t like gin it’s because you haven’t found the right one yet.” ●

“On our shelves we’ve got dried fruits, flower petals, bird’s eye chillies, cloves, star anise, orange blossom, elderflower, thyme, marjoram... We tell people if you don’t like gin it’s because you haven’t found the right one yet.”







BLADES, TRAINS AND AMBITIOUS SCHEMES

Finbarr Dowling was the man entrusted with bringing Siemens' £160m wind power factory to fruition in Hull – now he's back in the region heading up another huge project. He talks to *Sam Hawcroft*...

One of the many endorsements on Finbarr Dowling's LinkedIn profile hails him as a "truly inspirational leader who gets the very best out of a team". His credentials speak for themselves – 30 years working for Siemens around the world on a list of projects as long as your arm – and one of his latest can be seen from miles around.

The huge turbine towers made at the Green Port Hull factory, which has been fully operational since late 2016, have forever changed the city's skyline and are a daily reminder of its changing fortunes.

"The ebullient Irishman" is perhaps an over-used term when discussing personable characters from the emerald isle, but it really is an apt description of Dowling. When interviewing people for this magazine, my biggest fear is that they'll be reticent; no such worries here. From the off, Dowling's passion for his work and for our region shines through. "I love my job," he says many times throughout our chat, and the words "blessed" and "privileged" crop up time and time again.

Being named project director for Siemens' planned new £200m train manufacturing plant just outside Goole was "kind of like winning

the lottery", Dowling says. The luck of the Irish, you could say. Except, as I point out, he's surely being modest here, and a track record for successfully delivering a raft of ambitious projects probably has something to do with it, too.

Dowling grew up in Co Cork, where the effects of recession were particularly keenly felt in the late 1980s; youth unemployment was running at over 20 per cent after numerous factory closures in the automotive industry, one of the main employers in the area at the time. Dowling did what a lot of his peers did – he got out. After leaving school at 17 with minimal qualifications, he spent some time in the US before arriving in London in 1988. "I chanced my arm," he says. "I got working in a factory as a progress chaser, which was good fun; my job every day was to track down where things were in the factory and report back to management."

A year later, in 1989, Dowling started his long career with Siemens, at a factory making electricity meters. "Since then," he says, "I've had the great honour and privilege to do any amount of different interesting things for Siemens in the UK, but also all over the world."

In 2014, Dowling was working as managing ►

“*“There was never a doubt that were we going to stay committed to the project. We were very focused on delivery – we weren’t worrying in the bigger sense about what was happening politically.”***”**

director for a Siemens business in Cheshire, where he still lives, when he received the call to lead the turbine factory project in Hull. “They said, ‘Tomorrow the prime minister will rock up on to the Humber, walk around and announce that Siemens is arriving, and after he leaves, someone’s got to have the job of turning all of that into a reality. Would you like to do it?’ I kind of hesitated for about 30 seconds, and then said yes, I’ll do it.”

After David Cameron and the media circus had left town, the following day Dowling drove down to “Vicky Dock”. “I looked across at my ‘field of dreams’ and thought, what have I let myself in for?”

At that stage, Dowling was not at all familiar with Hull and the surrounding area, except for the lazy “Crap Towns” stereotype. “It seemed that in the media for many years Hull was a bit of a standing joke. It was always described as some kind of place you wouldn’t want to go, and actually, I found completely the opposite, of course, and I was there to witness everything that went on around City of Culture, the Siemens investment and the rebirth of the area.”

One of his first tasks was establishing who was who – not just the major players, from local politicians to council officials,

but there were thousands of requests from people wanting to get involved, right down to the catering van outside the factory. Then there was the matter of picking a team, bringing together experts from a vast range of areas including construction, commerce and real estate.

“We started from nothing – I and my colleague at the time, Ross Dean, conducted our first four weeks of business from a small meeting room in the Holiday Inn on the marina. It was a great starting point, to have that ‘coalition of the willing’, as it were, where everybody wants to help you and support you. At the same time, it was quite intrusive because everybody wanted a part of you. You couldn’t pick up the Hull Daily Mail or watch the news without something on Siemens being mentioned, and the first 12 months, living as I did on the marina there, was like living in a goldfish bowl!”

Two years into the project, the country voted to leave the EU, with nearly 70% of Hull people in favour of Brexit, but the drive behind the project didn’t waver. “There was never a doubt that were we going to stay committed to the project. We were very focused on delivery – we weren’t worrying in the bigger sense about what was happening politically.”

In 2017, Dowling was at the forefront of quite possibly one of the most unusual, and memorable, projects of his career – the artist Nayan Kulkarni’s Blade installation for City of Culture. This saw a 250ft rotor blade, newly manufactured in Hull, driven from Alexandra Dock to Queen Victoria Square in the small hours of January 8; there had been a media blackout and the general public were unaware of the plans right up until the meticulously planned operation was put into action.

“I think it was a great success,” says Dowling. “It wasn’t everybody’s cup of tea and people were arguing over whether it was art, but for us, it was fantastic. I’d go into town and privately observe people as they touched it, and had their photographs taken with it. To me it was a symbol of what we were doing. It was something bold, novel and new and it symbolised hope and it symbolised a new industry.”

The collaboration between Siemens, the city council and City of Culture sums up, for Dowling, how the city is “blessed with some magnificent people”. Again and again during our conversation he heaps praise on some of the key local players – or unsung heroes, as he calls them. Dowling singles out Hull City Council’s director of



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regeneration, Mark Jones, for particular praise, calling him a “wonderful character”. “Mark was the constant throughout for me,” he adds. “He was all about what we could do, what was possible.” Jones’s East Riding Council counterpart, Alan Menzies, had “exactly the same fantastic enthusiasm”. “Both Mark and Alan’s teams are just tremendous. It’s such a pleasure to do business in East Yorkshire because politically and at the council levels the people are so enthusiastic, so passionate, and so proud.” Stephen Brady, Lord Haskins, Alan Johnson, Karl Turner, Andrew Percy, the names keep coming – a host of people from all sorts of political hues coming together to “get things done”.

Dowling may have been around the world in his career, but he says he feels a particular affinity with this region due to its similarities to his hometown of Cork; after his work in Hull was done, he remained close to the area. “I found Hull intoxicating because it was very like Cork City. It was a small port city that had hard times, but the people had a very strong sense of belonging, and they were very self-deprecating. And Siemens was heavily

involved in the creation of the Ron Dearing University Technical College, where I served as vice-chairman under Charlie Spencer for a number of years.”

And then came the opportunity to return and do it all again – this time on the 67-acre train manufacturing plant at Goole, for which East Riding Council has already granted outline planning permission. “It’s a long journey and we’re at the start of the process,” says Dowling. “I want to have a factory open in 2023 that’s successfully producing trains, and I’m very confident we will achieve that, and hopefully even have a similar impact on Goole then we had in Hull.”

Dowling believes Siemens played a “small” part in the regeneration of Hull’s Fruit Market and Old Town areas. Again, I think he’s being modest here, but the parallels between Hull and Goole are interesting; both areas have their social problems, and both have had their fair share of knocks in the media. This new train factory could employ up to 700 people in skilled engineering and manufacturing roles, plus an additional 250 during the construction phase, and about 1,700

indirect jobs are expected to be created throughout the UK supply chain. The impact this could have on Goole and the surrounding area has the potential to be tremendous.

And it’s this bigger picture that drives Dowling, and Siemens as a company – and what they learned from the windfarm factory will inform the trains project. “Very much at the heart of what we in Siemens are about is about business and community,” he says. “While we are selling power stations, and turbines and trains, we have a responsibility, which we readily accept, that when we’re in a community, there has to be more to it and that means reaching out and taking a lead on things like education.

“There are several social things that we tried in the factory, which were not being tried before and we shone a light on, which I think other companies have subsequently picked up. It’s the difference we can make, which is why we’re really in this. This is a chance to do it all over again, and this time, do it even better, and make more of a statement in terms of the business-to-social side of it.” ●

Equipping Charity Trustees

Academy brings vital skills to local charity boards.

For the past 25 years David Foulds has been working in the Third Sector, managing and running charities and working with Trustees on strategy planning and delivery. At the beginning of 2018 David set up Bedale Consulting to provide management and governance support to Third Sector organisations and now works with the HEY Smile Foundation running the Smile Trustee Academy in Hull.

David says "I have worked with some excellent Trustee boards and seen how they can enable their charity to reach and surpass strategic goals. Equally I've experienced charities whose governance has been more challenged, and seen how that can curtail the efforts of the operational team in attempting to best meet the needs of beneficiaries."

"Last year I started talking with Andy Barber at Smile about some of the governance challenges faced by charities across Hull and East Yorkshire. We decided that some form of training for potential new Trustees would only serve to strengthen the sector, and the idea for the Trustee Academy was

born! We've been really lucky to secure sponsorship from Smailes Goldie Accountants and Jelf Insurance which means we're able to offer the Academy free to delegates."

Delegates attend nine sessions hosted by Gosschalks Solicitors, Rollitts Solicitors, Smailes Goldie and CatZero where experts from across the sector present on a range of topics that will prepare people to serve on a charity Trustee board. Subjects covered include the history of charities in the UK, legal models for charities, legal responsibilities of Trustees, the relationship between Trustees and the management team, fundraising best practice, reading charity accounts, assessing and mitigating risk and managing HR issues.

People can find themselves Trustees of a charity for a host of reasons, and often they are ill-prepared for the challenges they face. David says "The Trustee Academy equips new Trustees with the skills to govern effectively, to set strategies that are challenging but achievable, and to spot the warning signs before things start to go wrong."

We have had delegates going on to be Trustees



in local charities and existing Trustees whose skills have been significantly increased. Our aim is to properly prepare delegates for the demands of being a charity Trustee, and in doing so strengthen the Third Sector across Hull and East Yorkshire. ●

If you are interested in becoming a Trustee or if you are already sitting on a charity Trustee board and want further information about the Academy, please contact

Tessa Wray at Smile on 01482 590270 or email tw@heysmilefoundation.org.

For help and advice concerning charity management and governance generally contact David on 07467 948546 or email david@bedaleconsulting.co.uk.

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Reaching for the stars



We are blessed with some of the best views of the Humber from our rooftop terrace, come and see for yourself when you stay with us. We also have local guest artists play live music up there and it is also a great place to work from with free Wi-Fi throughout.

We offer free wristbands for all guests who book and stay with us for the famous Humber Street Sesh. Jules even buys a bottle of fizz to get your stay off to a cracking start. Every year we have a full house for the Sesh and the Freedom festival as these are right on our doorstep, which creates a great vibe.

We cater for people with allergies, special dietary requirements, (vegan milk,

chocolates etc upon request) provide discount vouchers for our friends down Humber Street, Poorboy Boutique, have complimentary hair and shower products from Hull's Legendary 'Air' salon, and even have complimentary artisan chocolates hand made by our friends at Cocoa Chocolatier.

Work is due to commence soon on Phase 2 of the We♥HU journey after recently being granted planning permission. This latest development will be next door to our 5* Apartments on Wellington Street, however this will blow your minds. A 6* property the like of which Hull has never seen before! So watch this space...our story is to be continued.

We are happy to announce that a new store has opened close by. The store on Pier Street offers local food and drink produce, cash-back, and a dry cleaning service making this a really handy place for your essentials during your stay in Hull.

It is an exciting time here at We♥HU and we are pleased to announce that the team has expanded. We have appointed Sharon to the head office team. Sharon is redeveloping our operations on Princes Dock Street. She has made a massive contribution to our small team and works alongside our director Kenny and our guest excellence champion and social media influencer Jules. Heading up the apartment excellence are Ria, Yas and Vikki. ●



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Here are just some of our fabulous reviews on Facebook.

My partner and I finally had the chance to have a night out along the marina and when we saw the photos of these apartments right in the middle of Fruit Market and the idea of not having to worry about taxis or long waits to get home it was a no brainer. We really couldn't believe how gorgeous every little detail of the apartment was from the unique chairs and cushions to the hand painted feature walls. The bed was probably the most comfortable bed I have ever laid in and the fact the TVs all had Netflix built in meant we could get comfy and really relax once we returned back. I would highly recommend anybody visiting Hull to stay in one of these apartments, as you will be made to feel like it's a second home. Anybody from Hull wanting a perfect end to an evening, do the same.

(January 2019)

We stayed in one of your stunning apartments this weekend and have to say we had a fabulous time ♥ right on the doorstep you have the gorgeous marina and loads of gorgeous quaint and quirky bars and restaurants. You guys couldn't have made us feel any more welcome than you did... right down to the chilled Prosecco and chocolates. Will definitely be back again. Can highly recommend staying in these stunning apartments.

Thanks x

(April 2019)

Amazing suites and the team are outstanding. Best in Hull.

(July 2019)

PROCUREMENT 'HAS THE POWER TO TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS'

Daniel Usifoh and **Joe Oughtred** tell *Sam Hawcroft* how they can help firms of all sizes get the best value from their supply network.

Engaging external procurement support is often perceived as a negative step. But what if that external support could become an indispensable part of your business, one that would actually save you time and money by securing you the most competitive goods and services?

Joe Oughtred and Daniel Usifoh of Hesse-based Gateway Procurement want to demystify procurement, saying it has the power to transform businesses of all types and sizes. Effective procurement promotes collaboration and close supplier relationships, which in turn reduces costs and supply chain risks. It also increases profit and drives innovation and growth.

Businesses spend between 50-70% of their turnover on external resources, and it is increasingly recognised that optimising this cost base is key to being one step ahead of the competition. This is where Daniel and Joe come in – they can analyse every aspect of a business spend to see whether it is getting the best possible value for money. At the highest corporate level (they've worked at large firms including Asda, Reckitt Benckiser, NHS Supply

Chain, FCC environment and William Jackson Food Group), tendering is part and parcel of procurement operations, and Daniel and Joe have extensive experience as practitioners in various industries, having tendered lots of categories.

For smaller companies, meanwhile, it's often the case that there aren't enough hours in the day or resources to focus on getting the best deals on goods and services. Daniel and Joe can objectively review spend data, processes, procedures and contracts, and pinpoint where savings and efficiencies can be made. In other words, they can help time-pressed business owners see the wood for the trees, and save them money.

But why procurement as a career? Nigerian-born Daniel, 41, started out in sales, but soon decided he wanted to do something different. "I was torn between being going into accounting or something else, but after talking to a friend of mine who was working in procurement, I chose procurement because I like to meet new people. I like to engage with people, and I like to build friendships and relationships. I'm not knocking accounting, ►



but if I'd done that, then I'd have been unlikely to do those things. So, being given the opportunity to meet new people, new suppliers, new cultures, and to get to know different things, that's the reason I went down the route of procurement. Most importantly, it's about helping businesses grow."

Like Daniel, Joe, 34, had started out in marketing, but soon realised it wasn't really for him. "I switched over to procurement because it suited my personality. I think in sales and marketing you have to be quite extroverted, and while there's a bit of that in procurement, it's not all the time. Business-wise, I'm part of the family business, William Jacksons food group, of which I'm one of the sixth generation so I've always grown up with that passion for business – and particularly Hull."

Indeed, Jacksons was where Daniel and Joe met; Daniel was heading up the group indirect procurement team there, which Joe later joined. (In procurement,

by the way, you have what are called 'directs' and 'indirects' – the former relate to acquiring materials and goods that go into the business's core products, such as ingredients, raw materials, chemicals, etc., while the latter are the so-called GNFR costs – goods not for resale – such as energy, IT, travel and waste management. These are required to support day-to-day business operations.)

After a couple of years of working together at William Jacksons in Hull, Daniel and Joe decided to join forces to start their own procurement support business. "We thought we could help family businesses and SMEs drive value from their supply chain; having worked in this space, we know there is so much value to be unlocked so we thought other businesses of similar ilk could benefit from effective procurement," says Daniel.

"Most businesses don't recognise the power of procurement," adds Joe. "There's so much innovation that comes

from the supply base, but people just don't talk to suppliers. So as a function, I think it's underutilised, and people don't really recognise what it can bring to the company."

Like a lot of start-ups, for Joe and Daniel it was a case of tapping up contacts from their extensive list built up over the years; they targeted family businesses in particular, and among those they've worked for are Lincoln & York, and Hull's own Hider Foods. "They take the long-term view," says Joe. "I understand how family businesses work, which helps, and we've been going to a lot of family business conferences. Our values are aligned with them, and when you can talk to the decision-makers, the business owners, things often happen a lot quicker than going to the larger organisations. We do work with large companies, and we're geared up to do it, but a lot of them have their own procurement teams, and while some of them see us as an extension of ►

“*“Being given the opportunity to meet new people, new suppliers, new cultures, and to get to know different things, that's the reason I went down the route of procurement. Most importantly, it's about helping businesses grow.”*





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their team, others are quite anti-external support.”

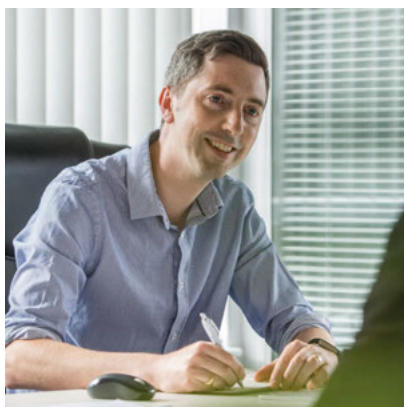
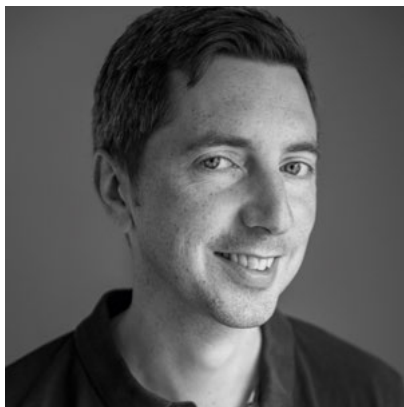
But do they also encounter resistance from the SMEs who may be reluctant to engage external support?

“With some of our clients, it can be a long road to convince them that it’s worth engaging with us, and I think people perceive that we’re just going to slash costs and run off,” concedes Joe, “but we’re not going to do that. It’s going to be a sustainable price that suppliers can manage and is right for everyone, because everyone needs to make money at the end of the day.”

“Some businesses don’t quite understand procurement – they don’t get it,” Daniel adds. “But it’s about changing the narrative from being reactive to proactive in terms of your cost management. There are only two ways businesses can increase profits – they can sell more, or they can reduce their cost base. The latter doesn’t cost you anything, but to sell more you have to advertise and you have to drive more sales – what we’re saying is, why get into financial difficulties before looking at your cost base? That’s the idea, is to educate people about the benefits of procurement.”

At the heart of their work is the building of relationships. Procurement isn’t like some faceless energy-switching service – although Daniel makes the point that if your home energy bills were rising, you’d look at moving suppliers, so why wouldn’t you take the same approach to your business? But there’s no one-size-fits-all procedure, and Daniel and Joe tackle each situation with tact and sensitivity. Joe says: “We find a lot of our clients have had suppliers for maybe 10 to 15 years; they’re doing a fantastic job for them, they really like them, but they’ve never benchmarked the supplier to see if they’re still competitive, and obviously we can come in and do that without damaging any operational relationships.”

It’s not all about costs, though – a client may have been with a supplier that long because they value its service and relationships, all of which Daniel and Joe take into account. “If we run a tender, we have a scoring system,” says Joe, “which we agree with the client. So, you might say 40% of the scoring is on price, or if it’s compliance and quality that are really



important, we’d score more on those – it depends on the nature of what you’re buying. So the price is not always the key factor, and there’s a proper process in place.

“Because we’ve come from procurement roles within industry, we know that if you appoint a particular supplier or put a contract in place, that then needs to work within the business. You’ve got to get stakeholders on board, you’ve got to get your operations team on board and everyone to accept that new agreement. If you go for the cheapest, it could be a real pain to you because the quality is going to be wrong.”

Daniel sums it up. “For us, it’s not about delivering cost, it’s about delivering value.”

The pair, who have saved more than £20 million for companies in their careers, are clearly passionate about procurement. In March, Daniel addressed a large audience of local business leaders at the Bank of England – Bondholder and IoD event at Hull’s DoubleTree by Hilton.

They are also keen to promote procurement as a career choice, too. They run training courses for people



hoping to follow them into the industry, with classroom-based courses (either at Gateway’s offices or within the workplace of your choice), plus bespoke mentoring and coaching on both an individual and team basis, led by practitioners certified by the Member of the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply.

They also have ambitions to develop the company further. “We have a three-pronged strategy and a five-year plan,” says Daniel. “Firstly, we want to be known locally as the go-to resource for procurement support. In the next two to three years we will move on to our regional strategy, and in four or five years’ time we want to take it nationally.” When I ask if this involves a chain of offices around the country, or even moving out of the area entirely, Daniel quickly responds, “Oh, no. We want to stay close to our roots, because we’re passionate about Hull and want to operate from here.”

Daniel and Joe have achieved an enormous amount in barely 18 months; why not get in touch with them to see what they could do for your business? ●

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The Hull 4 Heroes Celebration Dinner will celebrate the 3rd anniversary of our charity and will take place at the Mercure Hotel, Willerby on 30th November. The celebration dinner will include a three course meal and an evening of entertainment that will include live music, an auction, raffle and more.

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Mark Daubney
explores the issues
surrounding
shareholder
agreements.

EVERYTHING YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT COMPANY SHAREHOLDERS

Most limited companies are set up in a similar way; the directors run it, employees work for it, and the shareholders own it. Each of these roles comes with their rights and responsibilities, and sometimes a person can fit more than one description. We find that issues surrounding shareholders are often misunderstood or overlooked.

Increasingly we see investors, senior managers and long-serving employees being given shares in well established businesses; doing so can introduce working capital, incentivise staff, and save on tax & NI.

Thought should be given early-on as to how the company ownership will be structured and what will happen if things don't work out as planned. This will help to avoid expensive and time-consuming problems in future.

So, what are the things you should think about?

Minority Shareholders

Incentivising staff with shares has become increasingly common practice, it can make valuable staff feel more invested in a business and give them motivation to go above and beyond to help it grow.

It is worth ensuring that you can get shares back at a price you are happy to pay if the need arises. It is important to make provisions for this in the company's 'Articles of Association' (effectively the rules of the company) or in a separate shareholders' agreement. Failure to do so can lead to expensive negotiations and/or a risk of the shareholder looking to sell their shares to a third party or even to a competitor.

Salaries vs Dividends

Paying staff by way of dividends instead of salary can be a good way of saving tax and national insurance. There are rules on when dividends can be paid, and these differ from those surrounding standard payroll. Unlawful dividends can be challenged, and liquidators can seek their repayment if they have not been properly declared (e.g. where the company did not have sufficient profits to do so).



All payments of dividends should be properly documented to help avoid problems in future.

Future sale of your business

Any buyer of your company will want to make sure that they are buying shares from the correct people so the company must have an up-to-date set of 'statutory books', recording the current shareholders and all past share transactions. Failure to record this information can lead to buyers using this as a way to reduce the share price or hold back until they are satisfied nothing will come out of the woodwork.

Deadlocked Companies

Any company that has two shareholders, each holding half of the company's shares, is at risk should there be a falling out between those shareholders. Without an agreement behind the scenes covering off what will happen in this scenario, successful trading businesses can effectively be forced to cease trading.

All businesses are different, and there are many ways to deal with potential issues. If you would like any further information about shareholders then get in touch with the Commercial team at Bridge McFarland LLP. ●



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fruit market

HULL



INVEST IN A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE LOVE TO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY

It's a unique area, rich in history and heritage making it close to the hearts of so many.

Nostalgic memories of the Fruit Market when it was the bustling heart of Hull's wholesale fruit and vegetable trade remain strong.

But only a few years ago the Fruit Market's best days looked to be very much in the past. With the fruit and veg traders relocated to the edge of the city, the area fell into decline. The warehouses in and around Humber Street were

disused and derelict; the cobbled streets silent.

Today the Fruit Market could not be more different. Now it's once again buzzing with life, having found a new purpose as a place where people live, work and play.

The Fruit Market's remarkable rebirth is luring people with their hearts in Hull back to the city's characterful waterfront quarter. It's the place to be, not least for businesspeople who owe their personal success largely to their home city and region.

The transformation of the Fruit Market is being driven forward by Wykeland Beal, the joint venture

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company formed by two long-established local businesses, commercial developer Wykeland Group and housebuilder Beal Homes, working in partnership with Hull City Council.

Beal is renowned for delivering unrivalled design and build quality, combined with exceptional customer service, and for creating communities where people love to live. Now those credentials are being stamped on the Fruit Market in the form of a residential development that has brought modern city living to Hull.

An exciting new community is being formed where residents can enjoy the contemporary lifestyle and vibrant atmosphere offered by Hull's first urban village, with independent shops, restaurants, bars and galleries all in one place.

The Fruit Market has become a place of energy, creativity and opportunity, alive with activity morning, noon and night – a place people aspire to be part of.

The Fruit Market development features 105 mews-style homes around four private courtyards, all with secure parking. The properties are mostly townhouses, arranged over two and three storeys, as well as varying types of apartments, with a blend of waterside and contemporary styles creating an attractive community and highly desirable new neighbourhood amid the cobbled streets of the Fruit Market.

Prices range from £154,995 for a one bedroom apartment overlooking Humber Street, to £264,995 for a large, three bedroom townhouse, with car port.

Every property is designed for modern living, boasting open, contemporary living spaces and the unique opportunity Beal offers to all buyers to customise every aspect of their property, even the internal layout.

The lifestyle offered by the Fruit Market has proven alluring to people who want to be part of a community unlike anything seen previously in Hull, in an area where old and new blend seamlessly.

That appeal has proven especially strong for entrepreneurs and executives keen to connect with the city's history and be part of its exciting present and future.



Business owner Steve Copeman and wife Claire Bell are typical of buyers who couldn't resist the opportunity to secure their own waterfront bolthole.

Steve and Claire bought a stylish, two bedroom apartment and are enjoying having their own home from home in the ever-evolving community.

"It was an opportunity not to be missed," said Steve. "We're getting pleasure from seeing the area develop, literally around us. You can really see and feel the potential of the place being realised."

The Fruit Market Sales Centre is open daily 11am-6pm. Potential buyers can also call Dan Rodwell on 01482 323182 or 0800 612 1216; or e-mail sales@beal-homes.co.uk

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Dutton Moore is one of the largest independent firms of Chartered Accountants and Business Advisers in Yorkshire, offering a complete range of services, which includes Wills, Probates and Lasting Powers of Attorney.

Planning ahead and placing your affairs in order has never been more important and many people do not know that it is no longer necessary to utilise the services of a law firm to prepare a Will or to deal with Lasting Powers of Attorney.

Dutton Moore is one of the few accountancy firms registered as a licensed probate firm. This means that not only can we assist you in drafting your Will, but also, when the time comes, we can undertake all aspects of the probate process.

We all know that we should have a Will, but few of us realise the true importance of effecting Lasting Powers of Attorney.

Wills are self-explanatory; it is always important to have an up-to-date Will to ensure your wishes are carried out on your death, but it is just as important to effect Lasting Powers of Attorney.

There are two types of Lasting Powers of Attorney as reflected below;

A "Property and Financial Affairs" Lasting Power of Attorney allows your attorney to deal with paying your bills, buying and selling your property and managing your bank accounts and investments.

A "Health and Welfare" Lasting Power of Attorney covers decisions about health

and care and allows decisions to be made regarding your living arrangements. Without this, Social Services may well become involved with care home needs and housing requirements and take priority over your own or your family's wishes.

Both Lasting Powers of Attorney can only be brought into use with the agreement of the donor if they have mental capacity; but can be effected immediately should the donor become incapable of dealing with their own affairs.

The Lasting Power of Attorney for your property and financial affairs is important but it is imperative that a Lasting Power of Attorney is effected for your health and welfare given that it covers decisions regarding your health, care and living arrangements.

Giving another person the legal authority to look after specific aspects of your financial affairs or health and welfare must be given to someone you trust; this could be a family member, a close friend or a professional adviser.

These documents are not just for the elderly; younger people may become incapacitated through accident or illness.

We are here to help and assist you to ensure your affairs are in order and make you feel completely comfortable with any events which might occur in the future. It is a very personal service tailored to your needs and requirements and ensures the right protection is in place, for you, your family and your assets. ●

A TASTE OF ITALIA

Gino D'Acampo brings Italian flair to Hull.

Vitor Martins, Head Chef –

I started my career aged 15 as a kitchen assistant. I have always been a food lover and wanted to follow in my father's footsteps. In this industry - you name it, I did it – from barman to waiter I have done it all.

At the age of 18 I had the opportunity to work as a chef apprentice in one of the best restaurants in Portugal. I had finished serving in the army and this was my first real experience of what it is like to be a chef; high pressure, long hours, being shouted at - but the hard work is worth it when you see the smile you can create with a beautiful dish. In 2008 I moved to the UK and worked in various places including Nando's, P&O Cruises and a handful of Italian and Moroccan restaurants. In 2018 the opportunity to work for a celebrity chef came out of nowhere. I started as a Chef de Partie in Gino D'Acampo My Restaurant Hull and 2 years later I am the Head Chef. Never say you can't fight for your dreams and sooner or later what is rightfully yours will come to you.

Gino D'Acampo

I was born and raised in Italy and my homeland has always shaped the way I cook and eat, so it's a pleasure to create dishes that reflect this.

Every season I sit with my Executive Chefs to create a menu of crowd pleasing classics, that have been inspired by my travels and what's in season. My Head Executive Chef handpicks our suppliers to ensure we are getting the finest meat, vegetables, herbs and fruits from here in the UK and Italia, full of delicious flavours.

I'm dedicating my menus to my late father, Ciro D'Acampo, who always said to me; "Stop dreaming and get on with it."



Sarah Pretty, Events Sales Manager –

My journey with Gino D'Acampo began in May this year taking on the role of events sales manager at the restaurant in Hull. While supporting the sites in Hull, Harrogate and Leeds – I've been hopping all over the country working closely with the team at Gino's and Club Individual to promote the restaurants and the membership scheme. I'm very proactive, I thrive on meeting people, getting creative with social media and planning unique events. I am bursting with ideas and the team at Gino's fully embrace that.

It is clear to see Gino truly cares about his product and the guest experience. This passion shines through the quality in all his restaurants. You can meet the man himself and enjoy the VIP dining experience during one of his Gino nights. I plan on hosting a variety of events at the restaurant on Kingswood Retail Park including Prosecco and cocktail masterclasses, pizza-making parties, wine tastings, ladies lunches, baby brunches and make up masterclasses in collaboration with Charlotte Tilbury. We want to provide a unique experience, making memories not just meals.

The Gino's brand is working on 'seven ways to spend seven days', offering special promotions every day of the week including; Organic Wine Wednesdays, Cocktail Club Thursdays and Family Sundays. I am eager to host corporate events as well as social ones, and my Business Building Lunches will be a fantastic opportunity to grow my network in Hull and provide a platform for local businesses to showcase their companies. ●

THE RESTAURANT:

To book: 01482 820 666

hull@ginodacamporestaurants.com

EVENT ENQUIRIES:

sarah.pretty@ginodacamporestaurants.com

FOLLOW US:

www.GinoD'AcampoRestaurants.com

Instagram - @ginomyrestaurant

Facebook - @ginodacampomyrestauranthull

SLOW ROAST PORK BELLY WITH SPINACH, ROCKET, WATERCRESS & HAZELNUTS

This classic Piedmontese recipe uses pork belly that needs slow-roasting to get the best flavour from it. It is well worth the wait though! The pepperiness of the rocket is perfect with the rich meat and the hazelnuts add extra crunch.

Serves 4

(414 calories per serving)

INGREDIENTS

500g pork belly, cut into 4 strips
1 red onion, peeled and cut into 4 slices
1tbsp vegetable oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
500ml boiling water
80g blanched hazelnuts
80g mixed spinach, rocket and watercress
1tbsp red wine vinegar

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 220°C/fan 210°C/gas 7.

Score the skin of the pork belly with several slits.

Place the red onion slices in a roasting tin and sit the pork on top with the skin facing upwards. Brush the pork skin with the vegetable oil, then season well with salt and roast in the oven for 30 minutes.

Reduce the oven temperature to 160°C/fan 140°C/gas 3.

Pour the water into the roasting tin and continue to cook for 1 hour.

Remove the tin from the oven and rest at room temperature for 15 minutes.

Increase the oven temperature to 180°C/fan 160°C/gas 4.

Roast the hazelnuts on baking tray for 8 minutes until slightly browned.

Remove from the oven and leave to cool, then roughly chop them and set aside.

Arrange the spinach, rocket and watercress on a large serving platter. Scatter the nuts over and drizzle with the vinegar and 4tbsp of the pork cooking liquid. Place the pork on top, season with salt and pepper to serve.

KOOL





CUSTOMER

Sam Hawcroft talks to **Richard Dawson**, who's at the helm of one of Hull's longest-established air-conditioning companies.

Only the most hardened climate change deniers, or Donald Trump, would deny the world isn't becoming a warmer place, so being in the air-conditioning industry would seem to be a fairly safe bet for a future-proof business.

With last year being the joint-hottest summer on record, UK air-conditioning firms must surely have done a roaring trade. This summer hasn't quite matched up, admittedly, but there's no doubt that air-conditioning units will become increasingly commonplace in homes and businesses in the coming years. By 2050, about two-thirds of the world's households are expected to have them, according to a report in late 2018 by the International Energy Agency.

However, the need to keep cool as the world heats up will put even more pressure on our energy resources; the use of air-con and electric fans already accounts for about a fifth of the total electricity in buildings around the world – or 10% of all global electricity consumption – and this is expected to more than triple in the next 30 years. A lot of the cooling devices currently in use are not as energy-efficient as they could be (I'm reminded of my last villa holiday in Spain and the ancient, noisy unit in the bedroom that was little better than a desk fan), and the IEA is calling for governments to implement new efficiency standards for cooling devices, which would reduce the need to build new electricity infrastructure to meet rising demand.

On a smaller scale, companies such as Hull's Airkool have a part to play in this, too. By keeping on top of the latest developments in the industry they can ensure homes and workplaces are fitted with the most energy-efficient devices currently available. And while the firm's name may suggest a focus on air-conditioning, there's far more to its services than that. Britain, after all, may be getting warmer in summer, and even though our winters seem to be getting milder, too, it's still pretty cold for much of the year – so energy-efficient heating is another key arm of the business, which was established in 1982 when the words "climate change" were hardly on everyone's lips. Indeed, the name "Airkool" derives from the company's origins as a refrigeration firm, and, with hindsight, it now seems quite visionary.

Richard Dawson started work at the company as an apprentice in 1990, when it was still owned and headed up by his father; he worked his way up to being responsible for installing, servicing and maintaining refrigeration systems. During the 1990s, demand for air-conditioning installations began to grow, and Airkool started to move further into that area. "I think we were probably one of the first companies in the Hull area to really push the air-conditioning market," says Richard.

As the millennium approached, Richard gravitated towards a semi-office-based ►

position, becoming a project engineer and splitting his time 50-50 between management duties and engineering jobs, and eventually moving solely to the office and becoming a director. And, while going straight from school into the family business was something Richard had always expected he would do, it was another five years before his younger brother Wayne came into the fold to look after the financial side. But they both have their father, who is now retired, to thank for how the company has evolved, Richard says. "He built me up into where I am today, really – it wasn't just a case of handing me the keys and saying, right, there you go; I'd built up all that experience, all that knowledge over the years of clients, design, and how systems operated."

Airkool has recently taken on four more apprentices, and training is a big part of the business, says Richard. Finding good-quality staff will always be a challenge, he adds, but they have a sound approach to recruitment. "We employ apprentices, and put them through college, but we also have an in-house training manager who gives the apprentices extra opportunities, with more of an on-site, hands-on approach." One of Airkool's young employees is Richard's son, who has followed his father, and his father before him, into the firm, having completed his apprenticeship and again elevating within the company. "He's hands-on, like I am, and wanted to learn the trade," Richard says.

A few years ago, air-conditioning would have been seen as more of a seasonal business, and indeed Richard says there used to be peaks and troughs as hot summers came and went, but the drive towards reducing carbon emissions has in recent times seen an increase in demand for more sustainable heating systems. Earlier this year, the then-chancellor Philip Hammond announced that all new homes built after 2025 could no longer be fitted with gas boilers, with alternative low-carbon systems such as heat pumps needing to be installed as standard. "Years ago, in the colder months – December to February – it would have been more of a quieter period for us so we'd concentrate more on maintenance work; nowadays we're as busy in winter as we are in summer," says Richard.

With a boom in any industry comes increased competition, of course – there are quite a number of air-conditioning firms in Hull and the surrounding area now. How has Airkool stayed ahead of the game? "We've diversified," says Richard. "We took a decision a few years ago to look at other parts of the business, and promote more the electrical, ventilation and plumbing side of things, and pull them together to offer a full turnkey package. So we can offer a mechanical, electrical, refrigeration service to any client, and

you'll find a lot of people nowadays just want to pick up the phone and deal with one contact rather than trying to organise three or four different companies themselves."

One of the biggest challenges for the business in the future is keeping abreast of the speed at which technology is changing, coupled with the urgent need to reduce carbon emissions. "A priority for us at the moment," says Richard, "is that we educate our clients on the type of refrigerants in their air-conditioning and refrigeration systems. The industry is always looking to new refrigerants that have less impact on the environment. There really is a big drive to become as neutral as we can, so the CO emissions aren't polluting the atmosphere."

The economic climate is the elephant in the room for practically every business

“*I think we were probably one of the first companies in the Hull area to really push the air-conditioning market.*”



at the moment, too, and Richard is certainly noticing an increased air of caution among some of his national and regional suppliers and clients. Businesses are looking at things differently, and holding on to see what's going to happen. But Richard remains optimistic, not only because Airkool is at the forefront of advances in low-carbon heating technology, but because it offers services that are, and always will be, essential to everyone's daily life.

"Offices and businesses still need power," he adds, "and people are still going to need running water, heating and air-conditioning. There's still going to be a market out there. Is it going to be more competitive? Yes, I would say so. But it's about making sure Airkool is at the top of everyone's list when they need any of the services we provide." ●

“There really is a big drive to become as neutral as we can, so the CO emissions aren't polluting the atmosphere.”



The Humber can show the rest of the world how it's done

The Humber is among a number of coastal regions around the world officially listed as at high risk due to rising sea levels and increasing flood threat – yet the area's reputation is growing as the UK's leading centre for renewable energy generation.

Marketing Humber has partnered with the University of Hull to deliver a new long-term ambitious campaign, The Waterline, which combines industry, academic expertise and R&D activity and aims to demonstrate how decarbonisation can deliver both environmental sustainability and economic growth. The Waterline will position the Humber as a global demonstrator and centre of excellence tackling the challenges of climate change and build on the assets and advantages, the skills and capabilities we have here in the region.

The Waterline Think Tank will bring together the voice of business, industry and government, and develop concepts, ideas and feasibilities to deliver the strategic and transformational projects that will secure the future of the Humber. Meanwhile, BusinessWorks is planning a special report on The Waterline campaign, for distribution in March 2020, which will include a live round-table debate.

Earlier this year the UK Government became the first major economy in the world to pass laws to end its contribution to global warming by 2050. The target will require the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, compared with the previous target of at least 80% reduction from 1990 levels. "There's some great work already under way – but it's not enough, and we need to do more. As a region, our biggest threat is now our biggest opportunity," says Marketing Humber chairman Andy Parkinson.

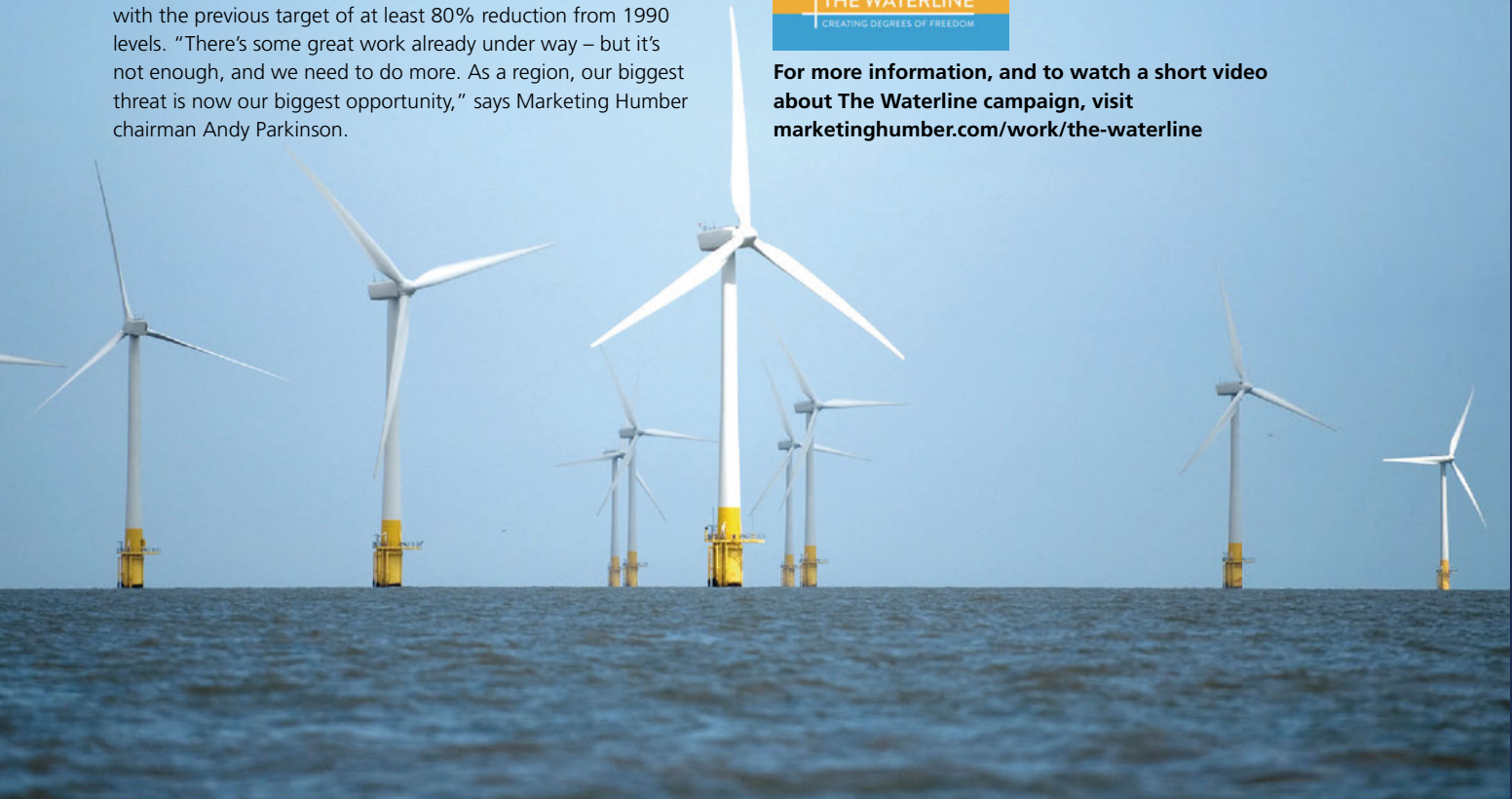
"The Humber right now emits the most carbon in the UK by far," says Andy, pointing out that power only makes up 25% of carbon emissions. The rest comes from agriculture, manufacturing, transport and buildings – all of which the Humber has in spades. North and south of the river lie vast swathes of agriculture, while the region is also home to the UK's second-largest chemicals cluster, two of the big six oil refineries, the busiest port complex, and one of the country's largest areas of public-sector housing.

"These five areas make the Humber the perfect global demonstrator to be able to justify how we can do this transition and show the world how it can be done," says Andy. "We think we have all the ingredients to attract companies from around the world who want to crack decarbonisation in these different areas – we want them to base those investments here.

"What we're trying to do is promote the region in a different way. Yes, we're the UK's energy estuary, but what does that actually mean in the context of the legislation on net zero? We're offering ourselves up as a 'living lab' for how to decarbonise." ●



For more information, and to watch a short video about The Waterline campaign, visit marketinghumber.com/work/the-waterline





For more information about the Cobus Communications Groups products and services please visit www.cobus.co.uk or call the sales team for their latest offers on Hull (01482) 225666

Telecoms and technology firm Cobus Communications Group are setting their sights on ambitious expansion plans which will see the business grow extensively over the next financial year.

Ambitious plans to connect customers on a national scale

With clients throughout the UK, the company has implemented a revised growth strategy and restructuring of the business, enhancing the customer experience and delivery of services heading into 2020.

Having introduced new and experienced members to the Sales and Technical Support teams, they have implemented new KPI and bonus structures to drive team goals and invested £50,000 in a new internal CRM system that brings all business tools onto a single platform, maximising customer delivery and satisfaction, whilst adding efficiency and providing the opportunity for growth.

Cobus are creating new partnerships and exploring potential acquisitions with an innovative strategic plan. Having won the 'First Class Service Award' at the recent Hull and East Yorkshire People in Business awards and seeing an increase of almost 25% on quarterly sales figures compared with the previous period, the commitment and hard work is coming to fruition.

Cobus managing director, Michael Smith, commented "A lot of time has been spent making sure that everything is right for us to grow, we are building on our strong foundations as our plan for the coming year is to drive growth exponentially with acquisitions being one area of serious consideration".

"We are an ambitious business and have a robust, strategic plan set out. Investing heavily in the business operations and quality staffing has been key, and I now feel our position and structure is better than ever before. Our products and services are unrivalled and we are well-placed to achieve our goals".



Emma Waudby, sales and marketing manager at Cobus, said: "When I joined Cobus nearly four years ago, 82 per cent of our business was done in and around Hull, today that number is 75 per cent and changing all the time. Most of our business will of course be here in Hull, but there is a big market out there and we are making the most of our opportunities by expanding our reach and connections and creating new partnerships to continue to drive the business forward".

As one of the UK's leading independent providers of communications services, Cobus Communications has seen many changes over time in telephony provision. Specialising in telephony and internet connectivity, business mobiles, CCTV, access control systems and IT support services, the company has worked alongside KCOM as a strategic wholesale partner for many years and Emma says "the partnership between the two businesses has reaped rewards for both firms".

"We worked with KCOM during its highly successful fibre broadband rollout. Changes to technology and the telecoms landscape over the years has been enormous, and we have had to continually adapt to keep up with the changing market. However, it has allowed us to research and introduce new and exciting technologies, all designed with the customer in mind. This technology has also seen an increase in the availability and successful implementation of telephony services such as VoIP, Hosted and SIP, which has brought significant savings and options for the savvy business owner. Cobus has seen substantial migration to these platforms, which has been the main area of growth, and with reported savings of over 50% on many telephone bills, this is set to continue". ●



Work. Business. Projects. Side projects. Your family and friends. There's so much to fit in – so how can we make sense of it all, writes *Mal Williamson*.

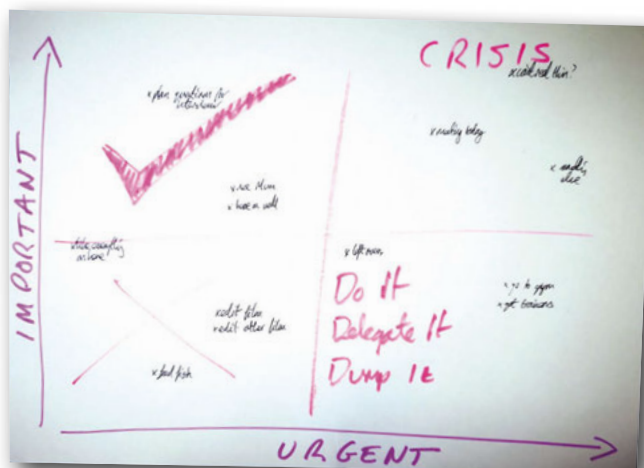
Someone clever once said, "Excellence is the enemy of the good." In my game of media we know this well, because although we run on deadlines we firstly run on having something finished – anything. The excellence we crave only happens when everything around you is flourishing. Is the problem that your project solves a classy affair? Or is it a bit meh? If you have a client – are they excellent? And your team? The suppliers? The customers, even? Because you therefore have to control and influence so much more than you, striving for excellence will get in the way of doing something good. We all love excellence but note that good is good enough and award-winning brilliance will not ever be down to you alone.

For me this is a large part of business resilience, because when the chips are down you get your head down and work... not look around for help. Work harder, not smarter, is always my practical approach. Pay attention to what needs to be done. When working with coaching clients we often notice that what is resisted gets stronger. And what we accept fades away.

...does not exist. The actual process of putting things off is not a thing. For me it is about not knowing what to do. Operationally, I find with clients that a stuck state is broken down by examining what needs to be done. People are stuck because they do not yet have enough detail about the task. So you need to sort the lunch for next week's conference? Call a caterer? But you keep putting it off. Because you need to do a survey of dietary needs. And then you need to assess the likelihood of walk-ups on the day, etc. My point is that if you

And finally – take a piece of A4 or A3 paper. Turn it horizontally and on the left-hand vertical edge write Important. Along the bottom edge write Urgent. Now put little crosses for everything you have to do right now. All of it... work, loves, family, home, holiday, health, hobbies. Because today's life is about a mix of work and home, colleagues and friends, we need to mix things up to sort them. Place these crosses on the page so that the more important something is the higher up it goes. And the more urgent it is the further to the right-hand side it goes. It is very useful to get your life's tasks out of your head and measured like this. This calibrated map shows you your world. And

Top right is very important and very urgent – this is crisis management. Eeeek! You stop things getting into this quadrant by doing the things in the top-left corner – very important but not urgent so you have the time to do them properly. This is where you want your life to be. Bottom left-hand corner – things that are not urgent and not important... you know what? Forget about them. Life is too short. The final corner is bottom right. Here we do one of the three Ds. Do It Now. Delegate It. Or Dump It. After this exercise I expect your mind will automatically sort the tasks as they come in. Have fun. ●





harley-davidson

LS | LIFESTYLE

— AUTUMN 2019 —

MOTORING ■ DINING



THE SOUND OF SUCCESS?

Will the roar of the eco-supercar be silenced? Writes *Josh Sims*.

This is a Maserati," ended a radio advertisement from the Italian sports car manufacturer just few years ago. What preceded, however, was not the usual litany of product benefits. Rather, what was conspicuous about this ad was that it gave so few details about the car in question. Rather - aptly enough for the radio - it reduced all of the usual sales pitch to just 30 or so seconds of its engine sound. This distinctive throaty roar is, the ad implied, all you need to know.

But Maserati - among other prestige carmakers - may be too late. The thrill of

the acceleration, the smell of the petrol, the gentle, almost inaudible hum of the battery - if boy racers love to rev their engines, if the thrill of a live Formula One experience is dominated by the guttural scream of all that horsepower, the future of the car, in indisputably being electric, is set to be much, much quieter.

That, in the decades to come, is going to make a profound difference to our cityscapes; after all, much of the noise that defines the urban environment comes from our vehicles, most of which will be hushed. Ironically, electric engines - and their lack

of noise - are going to allow for the creation of temporary inner-city tracks for Formula E racing too.

But the quiet is posing all sorts of problems before then, not least, it's argued, for pedestrians. One 2015 study by the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association concluded that people are 40 percent more likely to be hit by an electric or hybrid-engined vehicle than a conventionally-engined one; another study, by the University of California, found that subjects had to be 74 percent closer to a car to hear it if it had an electric engine rather than a



“Every brand will respond in a way that's right for it, but we don't want to provide a fake experience - there can't be some V12 rumble when there's no V12 there.”

combustion one. So don't enjoy the silence just yet.

Last year the European Union - the legislative body overseeing one of the world's biggest single car markets - introduced new rules that stated traditional engines must make 25 percent less noise, around four decibels' worth. But also that - from this summer - new silent electric cars must also be fitted with some kind of sound generator that kicks in below 12 mph, basically to prevent pedestrians from walking out in front of them. Perplexingly, legislators argue that above this speed even electric cars will make enough noise - through their tyres, wind resistance and the like - to warn of their coming.

So get ready to talk a lot about the AVAS in your car. That's the acoustic vehicle alerting system, also known as waterproof speakers fixed behind the grill of your car - and not to play some booming bass music. These may play a part in ushering in what might be considered a profound societal good - quiet streets. Yet, since there's no

industry-wide agreement on what AVAS should sound like, at least not yet, there's a possibility that the generic engine noise we're all familiar with will be replaced by a cacophony of chirrups, beeps, buzzes, whirs and whines.

The issue is compounded by the fact that - as that Maserati ad suggested - each car brand still wants its own distinctive sound. “It's a fundamental aspect of the character of every Ferrari,” as Nicola Boari, Ferrari's chief brand diversification officer, puts it. “It's vital in expressing the company's emphasis on performance and represents its racing heritage. Each model is individually engineered to give it a recognisable sound, just like a musical instrument. The sound is taken into consideration from the moment we start to engineer a new engine.”

Likewise, at Aston Martin the marketing department will suggest the kind of sound it wants from a proposed car, independent juries are used to assess preferred sounds ‘blind’ - including those of competitor companies - and advanced computer

simulation tools are used to work out if such a sound can be achieved with the engine. Most customers want what they feel to be an Aston Martin sound - put a Ferrari sound in an Aston Martin and it would just be wrong.

Certainly, while Boari argues that customers are unlikely to buy a specific car for its engine sound - this is more something the driver learns to love as expressive of performance - sports car manufacturers are increasingly taking every step to make sure that sound is transmitted to the driver, while having to find the right balance with keeping the cabin environment comfortable to be in.

In developing its LFA Lexus, for example, worked with Yamaha - the instrument maker, not the engine-builder - to help develop components that directed engine sound to the cabin. Porsche's ‘Sound Symposer’ is a tube housing a diaphragm and a valve which, in sport mode, opens to amplify the engine sound. With Ferrari's front-engined cars - in which the engine ►



is relatively more distant from the cabin and isolated by the front bulkhead - special tubes are used to channel a small amount of sound from the intake plenum to the cabin.

Ferrari stresses that the sound of its engines are never enhanced. Yet this is not always the case for other manufacturers, such is the emphasis on engine sound as a crucial aspect to the driving experience. In recent years BMW, for example, has found that the chassis of its M5 was so effective at isolating the cabin from outside noise that it chose to play an exterior recording of the engine through the car's stereo, the precise sample played selected according to RPM. For some of its models Volkswagon too has used what it calls a 'Soundaktor', a dedicated speaker located near the engine's throttle body.

But now we face an electric future in which all engine sound will, in effect, have

to be enhanced, if there's any sound at all. Certainly John Caress's job has taken a turn. He's vehicle line director for the Rapide E, Aston Martin's flagship electric vehicle. And, like other auto engineers, while placing considerable emphasis on the particular quality of the sound of the engine, he also does all he can to minimise cabin sound in almost every other aspect of our experience of a car.

"Silence is what you normally want, in a luxury saloon, for example," he says. "But [with the advent of the electric engine] now we have a question we've not had to ask ourselves in the 106 years of our history". The question: what does an Aston Martin electric engine sound like? Can it sound anything like its distinctive combustion engines? And his tough answer? It sounds like nothing at all.

"Drivers of performance cars do connect

with the sound of the vehicle - the exhaust note, the engine - and not having that feature anymore means we just have to encourage them to connect to the other senses," he argues. "I'm a huge petrolhead and I'm not regretful of the loss of the engine sound because there are other pay-offs. Technology evolves. It's like the shift between having buttons on your mobile phone and then a touch screen. The user adapts. And I don't miss my old Nokia either. Every brand will respond in a way that's right for it, but we don't want to provide a fake experience - there can't be some V12 rumble when there's no V12 there."

Aston Martin isn't, of course, the only company looking to find a new acoustic means of expressing who they are - a sound signature in a world of silent vehicles, or, conversely, one legally obliged to make



some kind of sound even if near silence is technically feasible. Harley-Davidson - for the legislation applies to motorcycles too - has gone for a straight electronic replication of the distinctive muscular 'hog' sound for its LiveWire electric model. Bizarrely, this spring Mercedes-AMG hired the American rock band Linkin Park to help develop the right sound for its electric super-cars.

But this isn't all just about protecting pedestrians. Nor, Jaguar and other makers argue, is some kind of engine sound just for drivers' pleasure. That's part of it. But it's crucial to their safety too. It has given its new I-Pace car - its first all electric model - an AVAS, like a gently rising

generator-style hum, but also what it calls Active Sound Design, which, as with a conventional engine, makes more cabin sound the more the vehicle accelerates. There's silence if you want it; in 'calm' mode the 'engine' can barely be heard; in 'dynamic' mode it's full-on race track - but such modes are designed to give drivers a form of auditory feedback about the state of the vehicle, one we're entirely used to getting. Acoustic engineers will now, in effect, have to score an electric car much like a composer scores a movie.

"It's a matter of looking at the level of interaction between the driver and the car and whether a sound that reflects what

the car is about adds to that interaction," explains Iain Suffied, NVH technical specialist for Jaguar and the man who led the development of its Active Sound Design. "We're using technology to extend the bandwidth of what the car can do, from silent to a sound that gives the kind of engagement that, without it, means you just don't drive the car in the same way. As humans we like experiences - and silence tends to be uninspiring."

Indeed, silence isn't golden for all. The future looks set to embody a pay-off: more relaxing urban living, but perhaps less exciting driving. Listen closely for your preference. ●

“It’s a matter of looking at the level of interaction between the driver and the car and whether a sound that reflects what the car is about adds to that interaction.”



ITALY... FROM HEAD TO TOE

Sam Hawcroft visits **Cucina 1884** in Hesse, which aims to showcase the best of every region in the country, from Piedmont to Puglia.

This visit to Cucina 1884 was actually my second in about three months. My first was for Phil Ascough's popular supper club in April, when the place was packed with businesspeople who'd pre-ordered from a set three-course menu that the staff were busily ferrying to each table in quick succession; the "so, what do you do?" and "good to see you again" chat made for a loud, but cheery, hubbub.

On the Tuesday night in August that I and BW's MD Helen arrived at Cucina, the ambience was rather more subdued. It was early evening and there were only a couple of other diners at that point, and although we sat by the window there was little people-watching to be had. It's a different story at weekends on the Weir, but once the nearby shops have shut, this is a fairly quiet corner of Hessle, which is itself quite removed from the popular dining areas of central Hull, and, indeed, the other restaurants under the 1884 brand.

But Cucina soon filled up nicely and we remarked on the fact that it did also have the affluent west Hull villages to draw on for its customer base; its fine dining offering, which aims to showcase the food and wine from all 20 Italian regions, is sure to go down well with such an audience.

There's a perception, sometimes

well-founded, that fine food means a) meagre portions and b) an overly formal atmosphere. Thankfully, Cucina wasn't anything of the sort, but the sheer quality of the food – a carefully curated combination of locally sourced and imported ingredients – and the innovative twists set it far apart from your average trattoria.

Even the hearty antipasti were a sign of things to come; at first glance they looked like the usual suspects of cured meats, sundried tomatoes, olives and bread, and these were all present and correct, but for me it was the cheeses that elevated it into something a bit special. One was the Oro Rosso, a creamy blue steeped in raboso wine; the other was Nero Fume', a smoked blue flavoured with black tea. I've since discovered that these cheeses are made by the Italian company Valsana; I'm tempted to check out its online shop, as I found it difficult not to scoff the lot, especially when this was supposedly a sharing platter between Helen and photographer Leo, who had also joined us.

So, our taste buds had already been surprised well before our starters arrived. Bearing in mind we were filling up on the antipasti, both Helen and I thought the soup might be a good light choice, while Leo, who'd initially said he wasn't stopping as

he was having tea with his family later, decided to throw caution to the wind and order the deep-fried calamari and whitebait in a red pepper and chilli sauce (as those who will have read the team profiles on the BW website will know, Leo is an active lad, so he needs to keep his energy levels topped up). As I'm compiling in my head an entirely unscientific league table of the best calamari in Hull, I really should have nicked a bit of his starter, and I'm almost kicking myself for not doing so. That wouldn't have been polite, though, so I'll just say it looked divine. The soup of the day (tomato with gorgonzola and basil) was everything I'd hoped it would be, meanwhile.

Helen ordered the chicken supreme for her main course, and she did allow me to try a bit for research purposes – I can report it was beautifully soft, and the garlic, lemon and white wine sauce delicate yet punchy. I love a good steak, so I ordered the hearty steak pizzaiola, which was a marinated 8oz rump with fries, vine-roasted tomatoes, and beans with basil and oregano. I liked the addition of the mixed beans, and the fries were lovely, with a generous dusting of paprika and herbs.

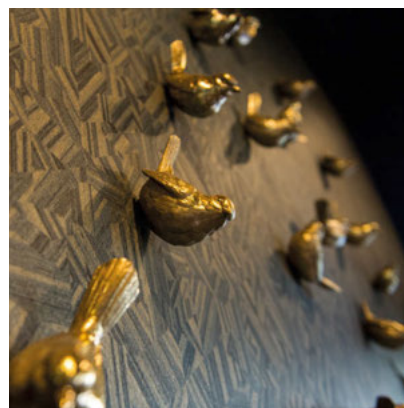
We rather overestimated the amount of fries needed, I'm sorry to say. I think we were still erring on the "fine dining" side ►



of caution and making sure we had enough to fill us up – and, even though I'm the sort of person who can eat a chip at any time of the day or night, there were, it was true, far too many for both of us. However, I have no shame whatsoever, and I asked if I could take them home, to which the friendly staff happily obliged. Although I enjoyed a few warmed up the next day, there were still so many left that when I reluctantly had to admit that they were now past their best, my local bird population were in for a rare treat.

This was another of those situations where, had this been an ordinary outing and not for the purposes of this feature, I probably would have foregone dessert, having been very much on the stuffed side. But, yet again, dear readers, just for you, we struggled through to the sweet, rather than the bitter, end. Helen chose the tiramisu, which, after I was offered a quick bite, seemed to me to be a beautifully deep-flavoured example of the Italian classic – no twists here, just superb flavour. My vanilla panna cotta, on the other hand, was rather more 'out there', being served with crunchy bits of candied orange, which offset the softness well, plus slices of red chilli. I'm not sure I've ever had a dessert with fresh chilli in it before; I've had chilli chocolate, but that's different. While I didn't dislike it, the jury was out, for me. I like a bit of heat, but fortunately these chillies weren't hot; had they been, I think it could have spoiled the dish. But I have to commend the chefs for throwing a bit of a curveball here. Sometimes it's about when to take risks, and when to leave well alone, and I think the balance is perfect here.

We were both driving, so didn't have chance to do the very extensive wine list justice, although we sampled a glass each of the Vinuva organic pinot grigio (£22 a bottle) and the Feudi Salentini 125 Primitivo del Salento (£28); again, a lot of thought has clearly gone into sourcing these vinos, which, along with the food, are a geographical tour of Italy from Piedmont to Puglia. The unusual layout of the restaurant, with a 16-seat counter set around the open kitchen, lends itself to just popping in for a glass or two and a quick bite as well as the traditional table service. I think you'd have to return quite a number of times before you could sample all of the wines and seasonal dishes – and on this evidence, this is a course of action I'd recommend. ●



Do you remember your first Walkman?

While Phil Ascough was sunning himself on holiday, a chance poolside encounter brought back some fond memories...

Passport, packing, pre-record... It might not make any sense now but memories came flooding back while listening to a few tracks by the brilliant Scottish band Danny Wilson.

Memories, specifically, of my first Sony Walkman. A gift 30 years ago, the summer of 1989, the year that Danny Wilson released their second and final original album. And now stashed away in a box somewhere. Rendered redundant by CDs, minidisks and the iPhone. Maybe.

As if by magic, a couple of days after my Walkman reminiscences, a Panasonic version appeared in all its battered glory just a couple of sunbeds away. The proud owner, Dave, 55, from Warrington, also unveiled a micro-transistor radio and two cassette tapes. Cue sighs from wives who could sense their poolside bliss being shattered by endless ramblings about old tech and even older bands.

But the discussion also took us to ways in which technology and other factors have changed how we travel. If you were old enough to go on holiday alone 30 or 40 years ago it doesn't seem that distant, but for the younger breed it must come across as almost Stone Age. Certainly, Dave's weathered Walkman looks as though it was hewn rather than crafted!

The most important change has been to security, with Daifuku Logan on Sutton Fields Industrial Estate adding X-ray screening and other features to the baggage handling systems that it supplies to airports worldwide.

We've got earlier check-in times, giving us longer to browse the shelves on which genuine duty-free bargains are things of the past. The product range is endless and includes many of the items that you're not allowed to take through security. It's moved on so much from booze and fags, and it's interesting – and a little unsettling – to note that smoking on flights wasn't banned until the 1980s.



There's a much wider choice of destinations, but no longer with Club 18-30! The adoption of the euro removed the pressure of having to get rid of all those unused pesetas and drachmas and you can organise every aspect of your trip online, which isn't to belittle the efforts, experience and expertise of the dwindling number of travel professionals.

But back to the tech. Kindle clobbered book sales and the iPod/iPhone revolution that changed music on the move so dramatically also put paid to demand for cameras.

Given hassles around holiday snaps, maybe that was no bad thing. Who remembers agonising over those big decisions about whether to take a 24-exposure film, or maybe a 36, or maybe two rolls of 24? And then there was the cost of actually getting the pictures, dropping off the film at a shop or maybe sending it away and having to wait two weeks. Sometimes with surprises in store. Someone I know was on holiday with the girls and they left their camera in the care of a male friend while they went off nightclubbing. A few weeks later they found "selfies" of his manhood among their holiday snaps!

Mobile phones alone didn't do away with the need for pockets and purses full of coins and queues for phone boxes all along the Costas. The scrapping of roaming charges in the EU did that.

And nor have mobiles quite finished off Walkmans. Sony is still going strong with the brand in MP3 and other formats 40 years after it launched the product. You can still pick up the cassette versions online and the guys at Stuf – Hull's ultimate gadget buy, sell and repair specialists – confirm that they still see them passing over their counter in South Street.

Top tips from a couple of veterans are to keep your Walkman clean – sand and dust are not good for it – and to select your tapes carefully. Dave is in full agreement that C90 is best because most albums will fit on one side. C60 is too short and C120, tempting with its offer of an hour of music on each side, is too thin and prone to snapping.

We'll leave the choice of music to you. Disciplined Dave limited himself to two tapes, the greatest hits of the Eagles, and a home compilation featuring Kelly Marie, Dolly Parton, Kris Kristofferson, Billy Ocean, Elvis, Abba, Four Tops, and Bon Jovi. Hmm.

Most of my tapes have been replaced by CDs and digital files, but there are some treasures from the old days at the Adelphi with demos by bands including Tombstone Graffiti – who evolved into Kingmaker – and a brilliant compilation produced by the guys behind the Hull, Hell & Happiness fanzine – "There's Something Stirring in King Billy's Bogs". But that's another story. ●

Forward plan with our helpful

EVENTS DIARY



SEPTEMBER

- 10 Human Iceberg Masterclass – Self-Awareness, by Trans2 Performance, the Deep Business Centre, Hull
- 11 James Legal Inspiring Business lecture, with Leon McQuade of Think Cloud and Christina Colmer McHugh of Moodbeam, Hallmark Hotel, Hull
- 12 WT@1 - Doing Business in Egypt, Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce, Hull
- 13 Reality Solutions anniversary event, DoubleTree by Hilton Hull
- 18 Techy Breaky at The Temple, Humber Street, Hull
- 19 Turner Price's XL Food And Drink Show, Bonus Arena, Hull
- 25 Build Your Business Bootcamp, Regus, Hull
- 27 Be Your Own Boss Workshop, The Enterprise Village, Grimsby
- 27 Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce Members' Networking Lunch & Speed Networking, Cave Castle Hotel & Country Club
- 28 The #beYOUty Show, Bonus Arena, Hull
- 30 Hull and East Yorkshire Landlord Forum, East Riding Theatre, Beverley

OCTOBER

- 1-2 Tech Expo Humber, Bonus Arena, Hull
- 4 Business Hive Live, DoubleTree by Hilton Forest Pines Hotel, Broughton
- 8 Make UK North East, Yorkshire & Humber Dinner, National Railway Museum, York

- 8 Michelangelo – A Different View official launch, Hull Minster
- 9 East Yorkshire Business Expo, Mercure Grange Park Hotel, Willerby
- 10 Health Expo, DoubleTree by Hilton Hull
- 16 Women in Business Lunch & Learn: What makes a good PR story? With Fiona Dwyer, venue TBC
- 16 UK Seafood Summit, DoubleTree by Hilton Forest Pines Hotel, Broughton
- 18 Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce Speaker Networking Lunch with Melanie Onn MP and Speed Networking, The Ashbourne Hotel, North Killingholme
- 19 CASE Gala Dinner, DoubleTree by Hilton Hull
- 24 CBI Yorkshire and the Humber Annual Dinner, University of Leeds

NOVEMBER

- 5-7 Northern Powerhouse energy conference, Bonus Arena, Hull
- 7 Creative Point: Winning With Influencer Marketing, C4DI, Hull
- 21 Resilience Masterclass - leadership development, by Trans2 Performance, the Deep Business Centre, Hull
- 22 Women in Business Charity Lunch at the Village, Hull
- 26 Speaking and Presenting Masterclass, by Trans2 Performance, the Deep Business Centre, Hull

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

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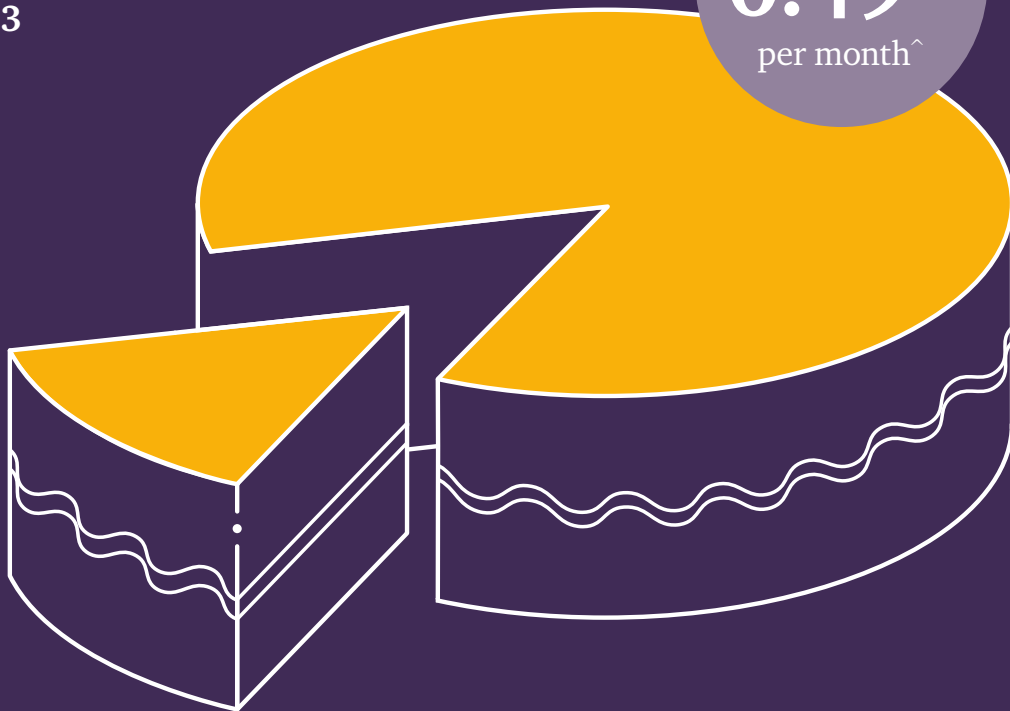
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