



RESEARCH & BUSINESS

ISSUE 1 – JULY 2013

A Teesside University Magazine



ALASTAIR WAITE

Meet the man who doesn't wait for opportunity to knock

SEARCHCAMP

Entrepreneurs invest in intensive incubator programme for technology start-ups

STUDY OF FASCISM

A new research centre to investigate right-wing extremism

BUILDING QATAR

Teesside's leading role in Qatar construction

Welcome from the Vice-Chancellor

As Vice-Chancellor of Teesside University, I lead an institution that has widespread recognition for its excellent work with business, one that invests in and capitalises upon its applied research.

I am delighted to share with you our vision, our work and our successes in this new publication detailing the projects and research we are currently working on with some of our partners.

Over the last few years Teesside University has stood out from the crowd with its own flexible and distinctive approach to working with business. We have responded to challenging economic times with a 'can do' approach in the way we deliver services.

Recognising our achievements, the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, Dr Vince Cable, described Teesside University as 'Britain's best university for working with business'.

How we accomplish this is by behaving like a business ourselves. If a business comes to us for help, then they can expect a business-focused service from us.

Working with commercial organisations is central to our teaching, research, enterprise and employability agendas. These relationships deliver mutual benefits, from increasing business competitiveness through research and development, innovation or professional workforce training, to keeping academics right at the forefront of industry needs and priorities.

Over the last two decades Teesside University has grown in size, stature and maturity. It is now well known as an institution widely valued for its regional, national and international contributions and has increasingly become the partner of choice for business.

I hope that R&B will give you a real flavour of the work we do here at Teesside University and will inspire you to discover new ways of working with us. We certainly look forward to working with you.



Professor Graham Henderson CBE DL
Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive

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Global entrepreneurs attracted to business camp

By David Roberts

Teesside University has joined forces with leading entrepreneurs from across the region to invest in a unique project for technology start-ups. Searchcamp is a 12-week intensive incubator programme that has attracted interest from around the world. Teams of entrepreneurs are living and working on campus while they develop their product or service using 'lean start-up' principles.

Each business has received up to £15,000 of seed capital – in return Searchcamp Ltd received a small stake in their equity.

Searchcamp is a partnership between Teesside University, entrepreneurs Alastair Waite and Andy Preston and programme director Bobby Paterson. Stephen Lusty, the former European Director of Operations for Google, has also joined the board of directors.

Professor Cliff Hardcastle, Teesside University's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Business Engagement), says, 'We're absolutely delighted to be a part of this initiative. This is exactly the sort of spirit of enterprise we try to engender in our graduates. What makes this unique is not just the close-knit bond between the University and business but also the one between the University and North-East entrepreneurs.'

He adds, 'Teesside University has a rich history of working with business and helping budding entrepreneurs to start businesses and Searchcamp will strengthen those links even more. Additionally we hope that this will more establish Teesside and the North East as a hub of innovation.'

Searchcamp was officially launched in May and attracted 84 entries from 14 different countries including Brazil,



Left to right are Andy Preston, Stephen Lusty, Bobby Paterson, Professor Cliff Hardcastle and Alastair Waite.

Canada, the USA, Russia, Belgium and Italy. The successful companies began the 12-week programme at the start of June.

Over the course of the accelerator programme, internationally renowned business leaders, authors and experts are visiting Teesside to give advice and mentoring to the participants.

At the end of the project businesses will be invited to pitch their product or service to leading venture capitalists and angel investors at special events in London and Middlesbrough. They will also be invited to move into the incubator at Boho 4 in Middlesbrough, which will be known as Searchcampus.

Bobby Paterson, an entrepreneur who has founded four startups, says, 'It's fantastic to be able to bring this programme to the region and work with an organisation like Teesside University. It has never been easier to build an internet startup, but equally it is also now much harder to make them successful, and more

than 75% of start-ups fail. This is a brilliant opportunity to de-risk the whole process.'

Former hedge fund manager and now founder and chair of Middlesbrough Philanthropic Foundation, Andy Preston adds, 'I've been involved in many projects and all kinds of businesses but this is the best.'

'Creating an intensive, fast and furious boot camp for entrepreneurs in Middlesbrough is a winner because there are talented teams of start-up entrepreneurs here – ready for that first helping hand.'

Alastair Waite, director of Onyx, a leading internet services company in the North East, says, 'Sometimes in business it can be easy to find detractors and it can be very difficult to find those that support you. We've got some excellent people on board with some really good experience.'

Visit www.searchcamp.co

BUSINESS FOCUS

with Professor Cliff Hardcastle

Professor Cliff Hardcastle is Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research & Business Engagement at Teesside University. He directs the use of University skills and expertise in support of business and industry, leads the University's work on the regional DigitalCity regeneration project, and grows and develops the institution's research strategy.

There is no disputing we are living in difficult economic times but what is abundantly clear is that it is now that businesses need to concentrate even harder on growing and developing.

The Government recognises that research and innovation, and the skills to exploit them, are the essential drivers of growth and prosperity for the UK economy. They are of critical importance for a successful SME sector.

This is backed by the CBI which recognises that expanding business-university collaboration should be a core part of the UK's strategy for growth.

Embedding knowledge, technology and skills, improving competitiveness, increasing productivity and profitability, securing longer-term sustainability – all these are central to business growth and success.

At Teesside we place enormous importance on addressing these issues, working hard to add value through relevant research, development, expertise and innovation – by responding directly to needs. We work in partnership with organisations to unlock the knowledge and skills the University can offer.

In the field of business start-up we have supported the creation of 430 new businesses and more than 600 professional positions through our graduate enterprise and DigitalCity Innovation initiatives. We are currently working with and supporting some 450 businesses.

Added to that is a strong track record in skills development. In recent years we have

provided over 5,000 employees with new skills and qualifications in the workplace, helping to increase performance and productivity.

A recent report by the KSA Partnership demonstrated that Teesside University's business and enterprise activities provide an ongoing contribution of £20m per year to the GVA in the North East with an average cost per job that is £2,000 cheaper than the national average – a return on investment of 10:1 compared to 9:1 nationally.

Our five research institutes are making a significant impact on the lives of people in the Tees Valley and beyond. From areas as diverse as health and social care, technology, society, design, culture, history and digital innovation, Teesside is carrying out research applied to real world problems to help transform industry, change policy and create new strands of employment.

Through a £2m project to help over 150 regional businesses improve their resource efficiencies, businesses are increasing turnover, winning major contracts and using University expertise to save significant costs.

One company, Deepdale Solutions, which provides world class building envelope solutions, used the visual planning and management expertise of the University's Technology Futures Institute to reduce time on site by 30% when working on a major project for the Olympic Games.

Our track record of working with industry is excellent and based on strong research – research which has led to winning funds from the Technology Strategy Board for



projects with Rolls Royce (High-Value High-Temperature Materials for Electrical Machines) and Sainsbury's (Increasing Efficiency in Food Production: oil take-up, energy use and shelf-life).

Of course, entrepreneurial skills are essential to the creation and application of new ideas, and adapting to technological change. They transform ideas into new businesses, products, processes and organisational structures.

As you will read in this first edition of R&B, an exciting 12-week 'bootcamp' on our Middlesbrough campus is supporting eight internet start-ups with investment and intensive mentoring. Searchcamp is a partnership between ourselves and North East entrepreneurs Alastair Waite, Andy Preston and Bobby Paterson.

Putting business at the heart of everything we do is central to Teesside University. I hope you find something in this first issue to inspire you with ideas of how working with a university can bring real benefit to your business.

Visit tees.ac.uk/business
tees.ac.uk/research

Building the future in Qatar

A Teesside University professor has been given a grant of \$900,000 to lead pioneering research which could save the Qatari economy billions of dollars in building costs.

Professor Nashwan Dawood (Lead Principal Investigator) and Dr Mohamad Kassem (co-investigator) have been given the grant by the Qatar Foundation from the Qatar National Research Fund, for research work into Building Information Modelling (BIM) and how it can be used to improve construction processes in the Middle East state.

Professor Dawood's Centre for Construction Research and Innovation is leading the field in BIM which uses a whole life cycle approach to information flow integrated to 3D visualisation to track the cost, time, use of materials and space utilisation of building projects.

Professor Dawood's team has collaborated on projects all over the world to rehearse builds on major projects including bridges and gas rigs. By analysing where problems and delays may occur before construction has even started, Professor Dawood says BIM can cut the cost of building projects by up to 10%.

This could potentially save billions of

dollars in Qatar which is predicted to spend \$100 billion on construction over the next 10 years, including on stadia for the 2022 Football World Cup.

The research grant has been awarded to Professor Dawood's team as part of the Qatar National Priorities Research Program which is the flagship funding programme of the National Research Fund.

Professor Dawood says, 'We're very privileged to be part of this particular programme. There is a lot of international competition for grants for research in this area.'

'Qatar only works with elite institutions and this proves that the work that we are doing is internationally recognised.'

The research will be a partnership between Teesside University and Qatar University, with 60% of the funding spent in the gulf state and the remaining 40% spent in Middlesbrough.

It is part of Teesside University's work with Qatar University and German construction firm Hochtief-VICON to create a knowledge hub in the Middle East for BIM technology.



Qatar only works with elite institutions and this proves that the work that we are doing is internationally recognised

Business top brass gathered for annual Teesside University conference

Michelle Ruane reports

British Airways chief executive Keith Williams was one of the top guest speakers at Teesside University Business School's annual conference.

Keith, an honorary graduate and originally from Guisborough, was joined by Teesside alumnus Peter Atherton, now Head of Utility Sector at Liberum Capital.

The conference is one of the key events in

the region's business calendar and Alastair Thomson, Dean of Teesside University Business School says, 'Our annual conference offers businesses an opportunity to share ideas to make their organisations more profitable, more stable and more sustainable.'

Keith adds, 'The University has become a flagship for the region. I was very proud to be invited back to talk here.'



A NEW FAR-RIGHT RESEARCH CENTRE FOR TEESSIDE UNIVERSITY

Alison Ferst

A ground-breaking new research centre, which will investigate historic and contemporary forms of right-wing extremism, has been launched at the University.



A recent Europol report has claimed the threat of far-right extremism has reached new levels in Europe. And the incident of what Teesside University's new Centre for Fascist, Anti-Fascist and Post-Fascist Studies has called 'tit-for-tat' extremism occurred when a jihadi Islamist gang plotted to blow up an English Defence League (EDL) demonstration in Dewsbury in June 2012.

The barbaric killing of a serving British soldier in Woolwich in May 2013 and the subsequent rally on the streets of London by the EDL demonstrates the need for more in-depth understanding of the political violence that baffles the majority of people living in Britain and Europe today.

The world watched in horror when Anders Behring Breivik embarked on a vicious killing spree in Norway on 22 July 2011. He killed 77 people, mostly teenagers, when he bombed a government building and then carried out a mass shooting at a camp of the Workers' Youth League on the island of Utoya.

What became clear after the atrocity was Breivik's far-right militant beliefs, which he communicated electronically on the day of the attacks. He set out his Islamophobia, support of Zionism and argued for the violent annihilation of multiculturalism.

Just weeks ago the world watched the news in sheer disbelief when a serving British soldier was hacked to death on the streets of London in broad daylight. Among the many issues raised by Woolwich, this tit-for-tat extremism should not be underestimated.

These cases prove the need to understand the development of far-right politics and culture. A new research centre at Teesside University will examine new as well as historic forms of far-right extremism, including the dissemination of far-right ideologies across the web.

Led by Professor Nigel Copsey and Dr Matthew Feldman, the Centre for Fascist, Anti-Fascist and Post-Fascist Studies builds upon their reputations as two of the leading UK experts on historical and contemporary manifestations of fascism and (radical) anti-fascism.

It is the first centre of its kind in Britain and is already gaining momentum as a focal point for those wishing to examine far-right extremism. They believe that the turn from anti-Semitism towards anti-Muslim politics is a notable development in radical-right activism this century and the aftermath of mass-casualty terrorist attacks by Islamist militants in the USA on 11 September 2001, Madrid on 11 March 2004 and the UK on 7 July 2005. The emergence of potent anti-Muslim politics has offered a crucial hook for a new generation of radical-right activists to hang an extremist agenda on.

One of the first pieces of research by the centre will be a quantifiable analysis of far-right participation in anti-Muslim attacks, particularly online attacks.

Dr Feldman says, 'The most violent voice yet in this process of 'cumulative extremism' has been Anders Behring Breivik, whose attempt to start a European Civil War, culminating with the end of Islam in Europe, led to the deaths of 77 Norwegian innocents, mostly children. I believe that far-right activists make no attempt to separate jihadi Islamists from the overwhelming majority of peaceful, law-abiding Muslim citizens in Europe.'

Professor Copsey adds, 'The electoral decline of the British National Party and the splintering of street-based protest organisations such as the EDL have created a potentially dangerous political vacuum on the far right. The relative success of extreme-right groups in recent years has potentially radicalised people online. These people could seek new and more violent ways to express their opposition to Islam, immigration and economic stagnation.'

With disturbing levels of hate crime in the UK which get under reported, Professor Copsey and Dr Feldman will investigate the level to which the far right is involved. 'This fragmentation and disintegration of the far right could increase the potential for political violence from small aggressive groups or lone-wolf, sole-actor terrorism. Our research is important as we can't afford to be complacent. We ignore



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The most violent voice yet in this process of 'cumulative extremism' has been Anders Behring Breivik

this at our peril because the demand for and the causes of the far right are still with us,' says Professor Copsey.

Dr Feldman concludes, 'The turn towards cultural intolerance by the far right, in both Britain and abroad, has been noticeable over the last decade. A great deal of the centre's work will therefore be dedicated to considering many of these key changes – whether in terms of online activism, non-biological forms of racism, or other attempts to update an ideology that is still, at bottom, based on exclusion and prejudice.'

The centre will also assess the risk of an attack fuelled by web-based ideologies, as in the Breivik case, and study the phenomenon of tit-for-tat extremism.

Visit tees.ac.uk/designculture&arts

MEET THE DIGITALCITY FELLOWS

David Roberts looks at the current round of DigitalCity Fellows.

Visit www.digitalcityinnovation.com



Lalya Gayle: Attaya Projects

Born in Switzerland, Lalya is a Swedish and Senegalese-Malian digital media artist and interaction design researcher. She has set up Attaya Projects, which combines digital creativity and innovation. Attaya is a West African tea-drinking tradition and the name was chosen to reflect the projects' spicy, social and collective nature.

Attaya Projects has been developed to work in three different areas: making interactive installations for public spaces and events; community engagement and empowerment through DIY creative technologies; and consulting and product development for the creative industries.

The eclectic nature of Lalya's work is reflected in her commissions. She is developing an interactive public artwork for a Senegalese festival. The artwork is based upon traditional West African ear-rings, which transmit live and recorded sounds to the listener about life in that region.

Lalya has also been invited to take part in expert panels on project innovation for the European Commission in Brussels and she has consulted with University of Geneva's School of Art and Design.



Victoria Rees: Lithe Sport

Victoria, who has a degree and postgraduate certificate in History from Teesside University, has set up Lithe Sport to produce high-end women's sportswear. The designs use digital printing to display original artwork.

Victoria, a qualified Pilates instructor who owns Studio 21 in Yarm, set up the business in response to what she saw was a growing need for sports clothing for fashion conscious, professional women who use gyms and fitness studios regularly.

The clothing will use high quality materials specifically designed for the sportswear market; Victoria is looking into the possibility of using home grown suppliers and organic materials.

The Fellowship allows Victoria to concentrate on getting her supply chain into place so she can be confident that everything works as it should when she approaches big buyers with her designs. She has carried out research on her intended market of women aged between 23 and 45. She is also working with the Fellowship mentors – including a fashion designer.



Caed Parker: Class4 Studios

Caed has transformed a disused classroom and dining room into a state-of-the-art photographic studio. The rooms are part of the Saltburn School community facility – a former school which has been disused since 2009 and has now been transferred back to the local community.

The studio will feature high quality digital printing facilities for local artists to reproduce their work. There will also be a darkroom where professional and amateur photographers can use traditional methods to print photographs.

Caed is keen that, as well as being a commercial photographic studio, Class4 can be used by the community. He has been working with local residents' groups to train them in photographic techniques, enabling amateur photographers to feel confident to use the studio equipment. He also plans to make the studio available for use as an educational facility by schools, colleges and universities.

The Fellowship has enabled Caed to develop the direction he takes the business in; it has also provided him with invaluable advice from mentors.



Garry Cosgrove: Music Box

Garry applied for a Fellowship with the idea of setting up his own music studio for recording music, voiceovers and sound effects. Through a contact in the music industry, he discovered that the owner of the popular Music Box in Gateshead was taking on another position and so he was able to take over the studio.

Taking on an existing studio meant that Garry has been able to save considerable amounts of money which might have been spent on setup costs. The facilities include two acoustically treated live rooms, a vocal booth and a control room.

Music Box is situated just over the river from Ouseburn in Newcastle, and Garry hopes to tap into the musical and artistic community based there to drive the business forward.

The studio already has a strong reputation regionally, particularly for the quality of its drum recordings, and Garry plans to build on this. As well as being hired by private individuals, he hopes to attract corporate clients who wish to record adverts and jingles and also record labels who want to record material by North-East bands.



Dan Riley and Paul Li: Spearhead Interactive

Spearhead Interactive creates bespoke interactive 3D services for business, education and public sector markets. Their innovative technology can deliver the 3D models to all computers and mobile devices.

For organisations that require restricted access to the 3D model, Dan and Paul have also developed an 'offline box' to store on the software and help keep it confidential.

They are using the Fellowship to produce eight different demonstrators to showcase the range of their work. These include an intensely detailed 3D interactive model of Teesside University's Phoenix Building, which users can walk through and change their view to strip away elements and see individual parts of the structure, such as the architecture and even the heating system.

Spearhead foresee that their work can be used to help visualise data in a more interesting and interactive way rather than traditional methods such as bar charts and graphs. Because they are working right at the cutting edge of 3D technology, they believe that one of the main challenges ahead of them is educating the market about what their work can do to help businesses and organisations.



Mark Parham: The Tunnel Gallery

Mark is using the subway connecting the platforms at Middlesbrough Railway Station as an unusual exhibition space to display the work of contemporary and emerging artists. Each artist has their work digitally scanned and then printed on to paper, which is then posted on the tiled wall in the tunnel.

In this manner, work which might be damaged by the thousands of people who use the tunnel each day can be replaced quickly. As the tunnel is listed, pasting paper rather than hanging works of art also helps to maintain the structural integrity of the gallery.

Information about each exhibition is presented on a website to help people understand what the work is about.

Mark aims to showcase art that people are able to comprehend but also challenges them and creates debate. He has already exhibited a collection of his own work – Castles – which shows intimate photographs of furniture in people's homes on Teesside.

The next exhibition will showcase a set of illustrations by Teesside author Richard Milward inspired by his latest novel, *Kimberly's Capital Punishment*. Other artists lined up for exhibitions include Sara Ogilvie and Tim Etchells.

Mark eventually hopes to replicate The Tunnel Gallery with exhibitions in other public spaces.

DIGITAL FELLOWS

**Mark Burrell:** digitalTrust

Mark plans to use his years of experience gained as an IT security manager at Northumbria University to provide IT security and information governance to SMEs in the North East.

Rather than straightforward IT security, he will provide information security to ensure that the data vital to the smooth running of a business is properly protected and managed in a safe way.

Mark originally joined the Fellowship aiming to develop software for mobile devices. He decided to concentrate on information security while still maintaining an interest in working with mobile devices. He is tailoring his business towards new companies that are beginning to grow in size. Mark will devise ways to protect their information and also work out how they would cope if they lost their information.

As well as their computers, Mark will also look at how businesses are using their mobile devices and cloud computing to help keep them safe and prevent them from becoming a threat to the security of the company.

He anticipates that businesses can use his services as a one-off consultancy or can use him on a regular basis to ensure that their systems are properly protected.

**Bob Makin and Darren Cuthbert:** SockMonkey Studios

Bob and Darren joined the Fellowship having spent several years working at some of the UK's biggest game studios including Team 17, Jagex, Iguana Entertainment and Atomic Planet.

They originally intended to design digital board games and interactive story books. However, they have since adapted their business model to create Freemium mobile games instead – the games are initially free but users can choose to pay for optional extras such as more levels and power-ups.

The duo has already met with success and were instrumental in helping design an educational app which combined gameplay with learning maths. The app made it to the final four in a national competition to develop a digital learning tool.

Bob and Darren are also hoping to win contracts to design games for other companies and aim to hire a 2D artist and programmer in the near future. As well as gaining more experience and industry contacts they are using the Fellowship to develop a press and PR plan.

**Wentong Fang:** Pandacraft Studios

Wentong Fang is originally from China where he graduated in industrial design before coming to Teesside University to study for an MA in Computer Games Art.

The aim of Pandacraft Studios is to produce a mobile application for the collection and display of digital/virtual antiques. Wentong uses state-of-the-art laser scanning techniques to produce a 3D highly detailed image of the antique. The user can then manipulate and interact with the 3D antique by rotating it or zooming in closer.

Wentong is aiming his product at the Chinese antiques market with its estimated ten million collectors.

The programme could have a variety of uses from auction houses and museums to antique lovers who want to build up a virtual 'collection' of objects. The programme could also be used to map historical buildings and archaeological sites.

**Ben Wilson:** freelance film-maker

Ben joined the Fellowship to develop his skills as a film-maker. He is working as an assistant editor on the film *Bypass*, which is being made by Newcastle-based Third Films and began shooting earlier this year.

His duties on *Bypass* have included syncing the rushes, getting things ready for the editors, helping with schedules, and making sure the post-production is working and delivering. He was asked to stay on after the completion of the filming schedule to help with the film's post-production process.

Ben hopes to go on to work in TV and film, particularly on new productions and releases. He has been using the Fellowship to make new contacts and also develop new skills to give him a wider portfolio when looking for further opportunities in the film industry.

**Luke Jackson:** Protohype

Luke is a web developer who set up Protohype to try and develop and monetise a highly original portfolio of concepts. He has a wide range of different prototype websites, which he is marketing at designers and developers, and he is also keen to work with startups and students to look at how they can maximise their web potential.

Some of the concepts he has worked on include Youfube, a YouTube player which allows users to build playlists and then play them on a full screen. People can use Youfube to search for videos on YouTube and then drag and drop them into the order they want to hear them played.

Luke has also collaborated with SockMonkey to produce a word game for the mobile app market. Other concepts include icanhelp, a community problem-solving website. He also designed a website for pop star Amelia Lily to document her tour and aggregate social media about it.

**Tobias Wilkins:** freelance website designer

Tobias is a Computer Animation graduate from Teesside University who also has skills as a graphic artist and front-end web designer. He hopes to establish a creative web design and development company to design websites to help his clients establish greater communication with their audience.

Tobias is using the Fellowship to make a comprehensive portfolio site to showcase his work. He is taking the opportunity to access advice and mentoring about the financial and legal sides of running his own business.

As a result of making contact through the Fellowship, Victoria Rees commissioned Luke to design the logo for her business, Lithe Sport. He is also working on a series of online tutorials which he hopes will eventually generate revenue for his business.

INSIDER INTERVIEW

ALASTAIR IS NOT A MAN TO WAIT FOR OPPORTUNITY

Alastair Waite is a risk taker – he has left high-flying positions with no new job to go to, invested in more companies than most of us have had hot dinners, and is now leaving his role as director of successful IT company Onyx for pastures new and unknown.

Alison Ferst meets one of the region's top entrepreneurs who is passionate about the region, passionate about business and is bringing that passion into a new project with Teesside University.

Five years ago Alastair stood down as chief executive officer of IT company Onyx so he could work 'on' the business and not 'in' it – a decision he felt was pivotal for growing the company. Having completed numerous acquisitions and major projects he will leave his office in November after 14 years at the helm.

He has no new position to go to and the thought, which would horrify most people, simply thrills him with the possibilities. For Alastair is no stranger to taking risks.

He began his career in accountancy, but with no formal qualifications, for what was then the supermarket chain, Safeway. At just 19 he was preparing financial budgets for 126 stores, and that was using pencil, paper and calculator. Within just three years Alastair was part of a small team based in London looking after 650 stores.

After being drafted in to give a budget presentation to the main board directors when his boss was ill, Alastair was asked if he was 'chartered' or 'certified'. 'I said chartered or certified what?' he laughs. That led to six years of evening classes to study accountancy. 'Holding down a senior role while studying was a real challenge but one I knew would provide security for the future.'

The pressure was immense and long

hours took their toll so he decided to take his first big risk and he quit his job to move back to the North East (he is originally from Spennymoor). 'I decided to focus on my studies full time for a year to get it over with,' he explains.

However, opportunity knocked and Alastair got involved with two companies – engineering company Altec, of which he remains a major shareholder, and Bede plc, a designer and manufacturer of instruments for the semiconductor industry.

'I get my work ethic from my dad who was a tool maker while he and my mum ran a pub together in Tow Law. My dad is 76 now and still goes to the gym four times a week. I do not know of a better role model,' the father-of-four smiles.

After qualifying he worked for Bede full time, brought in three rounds of venture capital funding, helped the business grow to 100 staff and scooped a number of Queen's Awards for export and business. Then after ten years and for the second time in his career, he decided to look for a new opportunity and resigned.

'No, I didn't have anything to go to. But I was ready to do something different,' he says.

Then he got a call from Middlesbrough-based IT company Onyx. 'The parent company Trade Zone wanted me for both my financial and business development experience.'

Six months after joining Onyx, the parent company got into difficulties and Onyx was

sold to an American business – 15 months later it went bust. Alastair describes himself as a 'glass half full' person and immediately saw an opportunity. 'I led a management buy-out. We had to raise the money over the Christmas period so it was an interesting time. It was also a humbling time for me as over 50% of the staff invested in the company. That was people's savings, their holiday fund, car fund but they trusted us. It was a huge responsibility.'

It was a trust that was well placed. Onyx, which is a specialist in data centres, business continuity and systems disaster recovery, now has six data centres across the UK. Clients include Sky, Tesco and numerous businesses for which IT is mission critical because of their compliance and regulation needs. Onyx attracted the interests of private equity and a deal worth £42m in 2011 and the business has ambitious plans. True to form, Alastair is leaving and remains the largest individual shareholder.

There will be no pipe and slippers for Alastair, 52. He has an energetic home life with his two younger children, Ella and Lily, his spaniel Sandy, who needs regular walks around the Hambleton Hills near their Osmotherley home, a role as governor at Yarm School and his wife Tracey, 'who has already told me that while she loves me very much there is no way she wants me to work from home and be under her feet...'

It's likely that where Alastair chooses to go is where there will be investment



I get my work ethic from my dad who was a tool maker while he and my mum ran a pub together in Tow Law

opportunities – he rarely misses one. He has even invested in his next-door neighbour. 'He invited us round for a fireworks party. I had no idea what he did for a living so I asked him and he told me that he delivered analytic software for call centres to help improve performance of teams but was looking to set up his own business. He needed help with a business plan and funding so I offered my help. He has now won a contract that gives him certainty of revenue until 2015.'

Alastair also invests in a wide variety of businesses such as You Gossip (also backed by reality star Katie Price and former footballer Ian Wright), which shares social media content and rewards contributors with money for their chosen charity, and a business that provides literacy training in secondary schools, helping youngsters achieve their full potential. 'And I still like more traditional businesses like engineering and manufacturing – something with a tangible product,' he says.

He offers mentoring and is a board member of the Entrepreneurs' Forum, set up to help and inspire new entrepreneurs in the North East. He is also an enthusiastic fundraiser for the Prince's Trust, Middlesbrough and Teesside Philanthropic Foundation and the Tyneside Cyrenians – all charities who support some of the North East's most disadvantaged members of society.

It seems safe to say that for the foreseeable future Alastair Waite will continue to be a very busy man.

Alastair is working on the Searchcamp project with Teesside University – see page 3.

'This is a fantastic project for me,' Alastair explains. 'I was involved in getting DigitalCity up and running and have invested in a lot of businesses through that. I think it is important that new

startup companies have access to money, mentors and University resources.

'Too often businesses embark on some kind of accelerator programme but at the end of it they fall off a cliff. With this scheme they should have a better developed business plan, a product and some funding.

They will then be invited to move into the incubator at Boho 4 in Middlesbrough, which will be called Searchcampus.

'It's important to us to keep business on Teesside to create jobs, regenerate the economy and the area, and have fun.'

BloomStudio

Having blossomed from incubation premises at Teesside University, Bloom Studio explain to Michelle Ruane how they are laying secure foundations for the future.

Bloom Studio, which specialises in animation and graphics for film, television and websites, was initially based in the University's business incubation premises in Victoria Road, before moving into its current home in the Phoenix Building.

Founded by Teesside University animation graduates Martin Davies and Albin Nilsen, the business was among the region's first recipients of funding from the Start-Up Loans scheme for young entrepreneurs.



Albin Nilsen

Martin Davies



Left to right, Jamie Blyth, Kristian Egge, Albin Nilsen, seated, Tom Didymus, Martin Davies, seated and Katie Goode.



We're aiming to help play a part in retaining talent in the region by offering work experience to students

And now Bloom Studio has secured Sir Tom Shebbeare, director of The Prince's Charities and non-executive director of Virgin Money Giving, as mentor for the fledgling business.

Start-Up Loans are delivered in the North East and Cumbria through Project North East, supported by a consortium including Virgin Money, Virgin Unite and The Northern Rock Foundation. Sir Tom chairs the consortium supporting the scheme and is involved in numerous good causes. He was appointed by the Prince of Wales as the first director of The Prince's Trust before taking up his current position as director of The Prince's Charities, the largest multi-cause charitable enterprise in the UK.

Martin says, 'Sir Tom initially visited our office when we were in the incubation

premises with other Start-Up Loans representatives. He was really impressed with the work we were doing. He is also chairman of a film documentary company, so really understood our business and was enthused by our show reel.'

Martin and Albin were later invited to meet Richard Branson at Virgin Money's Gosforth offices, along with other young entrepreneurs who received a Start-Up Loans. They were also among a handful of young entrepreneurs invited to Richard Branson's home in Oxfordshire for a breakfast networking event.

Martin says, 'It was a great event, a lot more informal than our first meeting with him at the Start-Up Loans launch. It was great for networking and we established contact with Richard's son, Sam, who runs independent film company Sundog Pictures.'

'It is great to be involved in events such as the Start-Up Loans launch as we were able to meet so many influential people and also speak again to Sir Tom. We kept in contact with him, which led us to approach him to suggest he became our mentor.'

'We see Sir Tom when he's in the region and we've also travelled to London to meet him at the Virgin offices in Jermyn Street. We're more than happy to travel to London to meet him, as he's been able to introduce us to many of his own contacts in the industry we work in.'

'We've also started working with a former CEO from Fujitsu for South China. It's a massive company and opens us to a whole new world of connections and networks. The support we've received from Teesside University has been fantastic and the facilities open to us are phenomenal. We have a green screen studio and soundstage in the same building where our office is based,' he adds.

'We're aiming to help play a part in retaining talent in the region by offering work experience to students, to give them real experience of dealing with clients and working to deadlines, and we've also employed Teesside University graduates.'

Bloom Studio's work was recently seen by a massive television audience during a live televised Newcastle United match at St James' Park, when they produced the animated LED hoardings around the pitch as part of a competition for Start-Up Loans recipients.

Bloom Studio initially blossomed from Teesside University's DigitalCity Fellowship programme in 2010. Their work unites technical skill with creative artistry, with clients and collaborators in the UK, Norway, France and Italy.

Visit www.bloom-studio.com

Research has a real impact

The rich array of research undertaken by academics at Teesside University not only contributes to discussion and knowledge into specialist and niche areas of expertise but also feeds directly into teaching. The work of prominent researchers often hits the headlines featuring in a range of national publications including *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and *The Daily Telegraph*, examining diverse subjects such as digital innovation, forensics, science, technology, social policy, public health, art and history.

Comic book to help children understand chronic pain

Cartoon superheroes are being used in an innovative way to help children understand more about older relatives suffering from chronic pain. Professor Denis Martin has been working with Medikidz to use comics to help children understand what the older adult with chronic pain is experiencing.

Medikidz is an international company which produces award-winning comics featuring Marvel-inspired superheroes to put medical information into plain words that children can understand.

Professor Martin, from the School of Health & Social Care, says, 'In the story the child is taken on a journey through the human body, with the Medikidz superheroes explaining about chronic pain and how it impacts on someone's life. The happy conclusion shows the child with a better understanding of their grandparent's situation.'

Professor Martin travelled to New Orleans in May, where he presented the comic at a conference organised by the American Pain Society.



Exposing the myth of the welfare scrounger

The idea there are three generations of families who have never worked has been rebuffed following extensive research by two eminent Teesside academics.

Professors Robert MacDonald and Tracy Shildrick found that cultures of worklessness simply don't exist and families experiencing long-term unemployment remained committed to the value of work.

The pair worked alongside Andy Furlong, from the University of Glasgow, and researchers Johann Roden and Robert Crow to carry out intensive fieldwork with families in Middlesbrough and Glasgow. They were unable to find families with three generations in which no-one had ever worked.

Professor MacDonald, from the School of Social Sciences & Law, says, 'Exposing the myth of the 'welfare scrounger' is the first step towards better informed debate and policy.'

Their report, published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and titled *Are cultures of worklessness passed down the generations?*, found that even two generations of complete worklessness in the same family is a very rare phenomenon.

In addition both professors have published a new book, *Life in Low-pay, No-pay Britain*, which aims to prove that people living in poverty are not like the prejudiced portraits of benefit scroungers as depicted in popular culture.



More to human identity than fingerprints and DNA

A renowned forensic anthropologist uses his new book to examine tried and tested human identification methods.

Dr Tim Thompson, Reader in Biological and Forensic Anthropology in the School of Science & Engineering, is a co-author of *Human Identity and Identification*.

Written with Dr Rebecca Gowland from Durham University, the book examines how the social world – what we experience, how we live, what we eat – affects the human body. The authors piece together the link between the body, environment and society.

'There is more to the identification of the human body than fingerprints and DNA,' explains Dr Thompson. 'The body is influenced by society and the way you are treated and how you live affects how the skeleton looks. We take the traditional techniques for granted but identification is not just black and white – there is a huge grey area.'



Simon McKeown with Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson DBE

Motion Disabled Unlimited secures Prague residency

Simon McKeown has taken his stunning Motion Disabled Unlimited exhibition to the largest contemporary arts centre in the Czech Republic. The Reader in Post-production and Animation in the School of Computing is showing his work at DOX Centre in Prague until mid-September.

Motion Disabled Unlimited uses animation to show how disabled athletes move. Viewers are given the opportunity to watch a series of motion-capture-based work featuring Paralympians demonstrating their sport. It gives people the chance to reflect and see what it is like to walk and jump without legs or sail with one arm.

Coalition Government policy raises questions about social justice and social exclusion

This year's Social Futures Institute Conference enabled social policy researchers to reflect on decisions made by the Coalition Government. The event attracted sociologists, criminologists, social geographers and other social scientists, who examine contemporary trends in policies and politics.

The conference provides a platform to discuss current social policy. Top of the agenda is how cuts in welfare spending and general austerity measures raise questions of social justice, social inclusion and exclusion.

Dr Paul Crawshaw, Director of the Social Futures Institute, says, 'The decisions made by the coalition government over recent years have raised a lot of important questions in terms of social justice and social inclusion. The conference allows us to reflect on those decisions, take stock of where we are now and think about how we move forward for the future.'

Fuse celebrates five-year funding renewal success

North East research centre Fuse will expand its activities after successfully securing funding for a further five years. Fuse, the Centre for Translational Research in Public Health, brings together expertise from Teesside, Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria and Sunderland Universities to conduct world-class research into public health issues such as obesity, smoking, drinking and health inequalities.

The centre will receive more than £4m over the next five years as part of the UK Clinical Research Collaboration initiative that supports five Public Health Research Centres of Excellence.

Millions risk leaving it too late to discuss dying wishes

New research has revealed that, although people are more confident about discussing death and planning end-of-life care, millions are risking leaving it too late to do anything about it.

Professor Janet Shucksmith, Director of the Health and Social Care Research Institute, Vicki Whittaker, Senior Lecturer in Research Methods, and Research Fellow Sarit Carlebach were chosen to analyse data compiled within the British Social Attitudes Survey, which asked specific questions about death and end-of-life care.

They found that, although 70% of people say they feel comfortable talking about death, only 5% report having a living will or advance care plan, while just 11% have made written plans for their funeral.

Professor Shucksmith says, 'Unfortunately it's only a minority who are translating their thoughts and feelings about end of life into actual discussions or actions.'

Academic on board to prevent procurement fraud

Teesside University's expertise in risk assessment and governance has been recognised in helping to tackle multi-billion pound fraud. Rob McCusker, Reader in Fraud and Financial Crime, is part of the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply and British Standards Institute team putting together the first British standard designed to mitigate procurement fraud. The six-strong panel of experts from organisations across the country will pool together their knowledge over an intensive 12-month period in order to produce the standard.

Exhibition marks 40-year milestone

This year we celebrate 40 years of history being taught at Teesside University. To mark this landmark, a special exhibition was held to showcase Teesside's industrial heritage. The Memories of Industrial Teesside exhibition was a collaboration between Teesside University's History Department, the Teesside Industrial Memories Project, the North East Film Archive and Python Properties. It featured photographs and archive footage of industrial Teesside.

Teesside boosts international reputation for forensic excellence

Brian Rankin, from the School of Science & Engineering, contributed to the accreditation chapter in the latest edition of the *Encyclopedia of Forensic Sciences*.

The accreditation chapter demonstrates the international industry standard at which forensic science practice needs to be delivered to the justice system.

University experts lead clean up agenda

By Gary Martin



Garry Evans

Experts at Teesside University are spearheading a £2m project to help over 150 regional businesses improve their resource efficiencies. Resource Efficiency Pathways to Sustainable Growth (REPS) will draw on the considerable expertise within the University's School of Science & Engineering and will provide a wide range of specialist consultancy and support to regional SMEs.

The project, supported by the European Regional Development Fund, aims to work with 156 companies over three years, leading to improvements in efficiency, sustainability, cost savings and a reduction in carbon production.

Garry Evans, REPS Project Manager, says the project will utilise the experience of the CLEMANCE and Teesside Manufacturing Centre teams. He adds, 'There is a wealth of experience at the University and we plan to use all the knowledge and expertise in a positive way to deliver a tangible impact to regional SMEs.'

The REPS project represents over £2m of investment, £1m of which is through the European Regional Development Fund with match funding from the University.



Leading entrepreneur takes charge at DigitalCity Innovation

By David Roberts

One of the North East's foremost entrepreneurs has joined DigitalCity Innovation at Teesside University to help develop the next generation of businesses.

David Jeffries, who founded the Mere Mortals group of companies, has taken charge as Head of DigitalCity Innovation and Graduate Enterprise. His role will see him using his contacts within industry and his business knowledge to drive forward and expand the work of DigitalCity Innovation and help create new companies, jobs and business opportunities in the digital media industries.

David says, 'One of the key things I'll be doing is raiding my address book to make full use of all the contacts I've developed over the years and connecting Teesside to key people within industry to help further business opportunity.'

'I'll continue to work on my businesses outside of my new role as I feel it's vitally important to keep a presence within the industry, since only by doing so and being at the 'coal face' do I stay in touch with what's happening in commerce.'

'When I left university there was no logical connection between graduates and industry and I had to find my own way. Things are very different now, and I want to help define the relationships we have with employers, find the best graduates and postgraduates for business, and make sure that we are encouraging the right kind of businesses and bringing value to those we support in start-up.'

Over the past 15 years, David has grown a series of digital media companies, at one point employing more than 50 people in four businesses and turning over several million pounds annually.

After leaving Cardiff University with a Fine Arts degree, he worked as a 3D animator before founding Mere Mortals in 1999. The Newcastle-based company grew from a two-man operation to a leading group of companies in the North East digital media sector, working on several major films including 28 Weeks Later, Sunshine and Slumdog Millionaire as well as several leading computer games for clients such as Sony and Ubisoft.

David moved to New Zealand in 2007 to set up an arm of Mere Mortals in Auckland before moving back to the UK in 2010. A year later, he launched Spitfire in Dubai, a digital media company specialising in moving image, which has gone on to work for global brands including McDonalds and Toyota as well as a host of ad agencies and film companies based in the Middle East.

David says, 'DigitalCity Innovation is a very different challenge to running an SME and I'm really looking forward to helping new businesses to succeed. I think one of the key things to a successful start-up is the speed at which you can react to change and given the current speed of change in the digital world it's important to remain agile. Additionally, watching and being aware of trends both current and future can define whether you are first to market or become a 'me too' company.'

'Our fellowship programme at DigitalCity Innovation is a good example of a short programme that can have significant impact on the success of a start-up business. Quarterly we choose a number of graduate-submitted, digital-related start-up ideas and assist them with funding for a period of up to six months, offering incubator space, mentoring and workshops along the way to help them to succeed.'



'At the end of the fellowship programme we can offer the businesses space in our Graduate Enterprise Centre, where both digital and non-digital businesses are housed, and connect them with partner project DigitalCity Business, as well as signposting to accelerators such as Searchcamp.'

Laura Woods, Teesside University's Director of Academic Enterprise, says, 'DigitalCity Innovation has an excellent reputation for helping to create new businesses, which will only be strengthened by having somebody of David's calibre on board.'

'He brings with him a wealth of experience of entrepreneurship and digital media which will be of enormous benefit to our graduates and DigitalCity Fellows. We are delighted to welcome David to Teesside University and are looking forward to working with him.'

Visit www.digitalcityinnovation.com

A perfect partnership

A long-running partnership between Teesside University and Darlington-based engineering firm Cummins helps graduates gain experience while also delivering added value to the company.

Barry Moore, who graduated with a BEng (Hons) Mechanical Engineering, has worked in Cummins as part of a short Knowledge Transfer Partnership (sKTP). He is also completing his PhD at Teesside University, with ongoing support from Cummins.

Cummins, who manufacture, supply and service engines and related technologies, has previously collaborated with the University on student and graduate placement projects and there are plans to continue working together on future projects.

The company expects to benefit in a number of ways from this current project, including cost and time savings and improved processes which ultimately will lead to better customer service.

Manufacturing Engineering Manager Steve Morley, who is Barry's sponsor during his time at Cummins, says, 'It has been a really successful collaboration between us and the University. These schemes bring in new sets of skills and ideas which we didn't have before.'

Barry, who lives in Marske-by-the-Sea, relished the opportunity to put his knowledge into practice at Cummins, while also studying for his PhD part time.



Steve Morley and Barry Moore

He says, 'It is demanding, but it is thanks to the links between the University and the company that people like me are able to develop.'

The knowledge transfer model is a business-University partnership, aimed at improving productivity and performance through a strategic project. The company gets access to academic skills and expertise, along with a graduate recruited specially to work on the project.

Vahid Askari, a Senior Lecturer in Engineering/Automotive Design at Teesside

University is the academic who supported Barry's work at Cummins.

He says, 'Working with industry allows us to better prepare our students to enter the industrial workforce and the success helps us to forge further collaborations with industry.'

For more information about how Teesside University works with business, and the range of schemes on offer visit tees.ac.uk/business

Celebrating digital expertise, ExpoTees is an annual showcase of outstanding work by final year students from the School of Computing.

Scores of creative and talented students have their work on display and are able to talk directly with people from industry who attend the event to source potential employees.

Teesside games company Double Eleven, which specialises in video game development exclusively for the PlayStation

network, was the new lead sponsor at this year's ExpoTees.

Chief of Operations Mark South said, 'This is a really positive event which helps to showcase students' work and enables talented students to meet directly with people from the industry.'

ExpoTees 2014 will be an enhanced two-day event Wednesday 14 and Thursday 15 May.



Enterprise Clinic

WITH STEVE DOUGAN

Steve Dougan is Teesside University's Graduate Business Consultant. He coaches and supports graduate entrepreneurs as part of an award-winning business incubation project funded by the European Regional Development Fund.



After more than 12 years as a development specialist and coach working in the mobile telecoms sector with Orange and Vodafone, Steve joined leading business consultancy firm Develop Solutions to support businesses across the North East. He now combines his University role with running his consultancy business TeamSmart and photography studio Shootportraits.com.

In each edition of R&B Steve will be on hand to answer any queries on enterprise and starting a business.

If you have any questions for Steve, please email s.dougan@tees.ac.uk with your name, your query, the name of your business (if you have one) and include your contact details.

Q We are in the middle of a 'double dip' recession. Is this a great time to start a business?

A Whether the economy is in recession or growing, businesses need solutions and services. The key is to have a crystal clear understanding of the 'problem' that your product or service fixes and how this impacts on your customers' businesses positively. In the incubation centre here on campus we have new businesses that are thriving in these challenging times. Why? Because they help the clients they serve to engage and win new customers with innovative mobile applications, or they drive efficiency savings by implementing lean working methodologies. If you can clearly demonstrate return on investment then a recession can be a great time to start a new business.

TIP: We help our start-up businesses to create a library of benefit statements that clearly communicate the impact of their solutions and services. We then use this powerful, outcome-focused language across all communication channels. This helps customers to understand the value that is being offered.

Think about your accountant and ask yourself 'What does my accountant sell?' The answer seems obvious – accountancy services! But if you ask 'What do I pay my accountant for?' the answer is 'To save money through tax efficiency'. So when we communicate with our customers we have to talk about the benefits we deliver, not just the services we offer. In difficult times customers are looking for demonstrable value and measurable return, so we have to work hard on our communication to ensure we deliver the right messages.

Here are just two of over 20 businesses we support that are delivering recession-busting outcomes for their clients.

> Pixel Brawl Studio deliver engaging and entertaining experience on web and mobile platforms that help businesses engage and amaze their customers. www.pixelbrawlstudio.co.uk

> Julia Wood Associates deliver lean thinking, identity development and community engagement services that transform the way that businesses work, driving efficiency savings while increasing customer delight. www.juliawood.net

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Digital Futures Institute

Teesside University's Digital Futures Institute team presented four papers at the 12th annual Autonomous Agent and Multi-Agent Systems (AAMAS) conference in the USA – and one of them won the Best Paper award.



Mechanisms for Multi-Unit Combinatorial Auctions with a Few Distinct Goods, jointly authored by Dr Carmine Ventre and colleagues from the University of Liverpool and Athens University of Economics, took the title Best Paper at AAMAS 2013.

Research at Teesside encompasses several areas of agent technologies, from virtual agents used in computer games to rational agent behaviour. Receiving

the award, Dr Ventre describes the work as addressing an important real-world problem to do with incentivising, which also has many theoretical ramifications.

In addition, Dr Julie Porteous, who is also from the Institute, gave a public demonstration of the latest interactive storytelling system, showing how it is able to generate multiple episodes of computer animated medical dramas from

a description of the relationships between feature characters.

The team at Teesside have created a baseline interactive narrative based on a medical drama which features a junior female doctor facing a variety of challenges in her work – both personal and professional. The evolution of generated stories then depends on the user intervention.

EVENTS & NETWORKING

The Business EXCHANGE

Share your knowledge – grow your business
Teesside University Darlington

> Peter Barron

Editor, *The Northern Echo*
Wednesday 21 August, 5.00pm - 6.30pm



> Don Randall MBE

Head of Security, The Bank of England
Tuesday 24 September, 5.00pm - 6.30pm



Book your place: tees.ac.uk/exchange

Diary dates

For more information and to book on these events visit tees.ac.uk/events; or call 01642 384068 or email business@tees.ac.uk.

10 July Think Wednesday - think problem solving, leadership and management taster session

Appreciate the challenge of creative thinking at work, discover the phenomenon of 'social loafing' in group problem solving and understand why brainstorming may fail and how to improve results.

15 July Part-time study open day

Find out how to upskill your staff and funding opportunities to support this, including the 50% saving on course fees on selected postgraduate programmes

25 July Teesside University Business Network

Find out how to turn a social enterprise into a profitable business, Kate Welch, Acumen

12 September Part-time study open day

Find out how to upskill your staff and funding opportunities to support this, including the 50% saving on course fees on selected postgraduate programmes

26 September Teesside University Business Network

Does your business have resilience? Fiona Yorke, Ultimate U

29 October Teesside University Business Network

Speaker to be confirmed

Doing business @ Tees

Wednesday 18 September • 9.00am - 4.30pm • Teesside University

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