

EASTERN AIRWAYS IN-FLIGHT

MAGAZINE

46 | New Year 2014



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legendary Welsh poet's birth

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Welcome on board your Eastern Airways flight and welcome to this issue of Eastern Airways Magazine, spanning Christmas and seeing in the New Year.



We hope 2014 will be a good one for all our customers and that you'll take your magazine home and enjoy it at your leisure.

The new year looks like being an exciting one, not least in Yorkshire, which will host the start of the Tour de France in early summer. As our own curtain-raiser to this momentous event, we bring you an interview with Olympic cycling heroine, Victorian Pendleton.

Someone who may be on the move in 2014 is King Richard III, whose remains were recovered from beneath a car park in Leicester. We talk to Philippa Langley, the woman who drove that remarkable discovery, about how England might have looked had Richard not lost his life at the Battle of Bosworth Field, and about her own thoughts on whether he should be reburied in Leicester or in his beloved York.

Our Essential Guide takes a look at some of our less well-known country views, while Exploration Express takes a

different angle on that old favourite, Royal Deeside. While there, we sample the best of Scotland's Romantic Hotel of the Year and of its new Executive Chef, a lady currently on our TV screens in Masterchef: The Professionals. We get into a seasonal frame of mind, with visits to a distillery and an aquavit tasting.

Our special supplement in this issue takes a good look at the investment opportunities in the Tees Valley.

We have two great competitions this time: two nights at the five-star St Andrews Resort, with complimentary golf or spa treatments and Europcar hire car; and the chance to win a bottle of award-winning Chapter 6 English whisky on our Puzzle Page.

So let's raise a glass to 2014. May it bring you health, success and prosperity and – of course – your continued enjoyment of our service on board Eastern Airways.

THE EASTERN TEAM

FÀILTE

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Eastern Airways magasinet ønsker våre kunder i Storbritannia og Europa velkommen.

Eastern Airways er et av Storbritannias ledende ruteflyselskap. Vi håper at du vil være fornøyd med servicen vår – og at den tilbyr deg det lille ekstra som er prikken over i-en. Vi setter alltid pris på å motta dine kommentarer om både servicen og magasinet.

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Eastern Airways in-flight magazine is published for Eastern Airways by Gravity Magazines, Abbey Business Centre, Abbey Road, Pity Me, Durham, DH1 5JZ
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Tel: +44 (0)191 383 2838

Publisher: Stan Abbott
Design: Barbara Allen
Print: Buxton Press

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ISSN: 2044-7124

Previously known as e-magazine, ISSN 1477-3031.

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NEWS



The five-star Marcliffe at Pitfodels



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PROFITABLE MARCLIFFE TO CLOSE

Twenty-one years after it was opened by former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, Aberdeen's only five-star hotel, the Marcliffe at Pitfodels, is set to close.

After more than half a century in the hospitality trade, owner Stewart Spence is to retire and plans are being submitted by developer Gibson McArtney Ltd to replace the North Deeside Road venue with a £90 million development including an office complex, which could house the headquarters of a major international firm.

The existing 41-bedroom Marcliffe Hotel and Spa will be demolished and Statoil is widely tipped as favourite to occupy the 200,000 sq ft building that will replace it. The plans also include the retention of a restaurant and spa on the site.

A three month consultation, including

a public exhibition, is currently underway.

Stewart Spence said it would be business as usual, with all bookings honoured until November 30, 2014, with "a year of celebration ahead".

The past 12 months have been the most successful in the hotel's history, with pre-tax profits for Pitfodels Holdings rising to £7.8 million.

The hotel was close to being sold to in 2009 for a reported £17million, when it was planned to add 200 luxury bedrooms and a conference centre, but the funding could not be raised and it has remained on the market since.

It will be a significant loss to Aberdeen but the blow will be softened by the opening in January of The Chester Hotel, on Queen's Road, which aims to replicate the award-winning five-star luxury of Gillian and Graham Wood's The Chester Residence, in Edinburgh.

AIRPORT SUCCESS

Humbly Grove International Airport – acquired in 2012 by the Eastern Group, which also owns Eastern Airways – is celebrating the launch in October of a new five times weekly direct service to Copenhagen, operated by Scandinavian Airlines.

Hans Dyhrfort, SAS's Regional General Manager Western Europe, said: "With more than three million people living within reach of the airport, the Humber region is an important northern hub and area of development for SAS. And with the area on its way to becoming the renewable energy capital of the UK, now is the perfect time to strengthen ties with Denmark and the Nordic region."

Paul Litten, the airport's Commercial Director, added: "A new high-profile route to Copenhagen is great news for Humbly Grove International Airport as we will be providing the only non-stop, direct service to Scandinavia from the Humber, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire region."



Simon's son Sam at the cartoon's unveiling

FLYING ROCK STAR SIMON REMEMBERED

Passengers on Eastern Airways flights may have noticed a striking caricature on the side of one of the airline's Jetstream 41 aircraft. The graphic design is in memory of Simon Rawcliffe, who was the airline's Head of Training and one of the industry's most respected pilots.

Away from his day job, however, Simon was the drummer in an AC/DC tribute band, Riff Raff, and it is in this role that he is remembered in the caricature, which was the idea of colleagues at the airline.

The caricature was unveiled on the apron at Newcastle Airport, watched by Simon's colleagues among Eastern Airways air crew and engineers.

EASTERN AIRWAYS FUN RUN RAISES £14,000

The Eastern Airways Runway Run, featured in our last issue gave 50 runners the opportunity to run the length of Aberdeen airport's runway and back again. The event raised £14,000 for CLIC Sargent, the national cancer charity for children and young people and their families. The fundraiser was organised by George Walker Event Management and sponsored by Eastern Airways, which operates more aircraft movements from Aberdeen International Airport's runway than any other carrier. CLIC Sargent provides a range of clinical, practical, financial and emotional support.

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NEW CONFERENCE CENTRE FOR ABERDEEN

Aberdeen has announced ambitious plans for a new conference and exhibition centre to replace the existing facilities at Bridge of Don.

The £200m development would be on land near Aberdeen Airport and developer Henry Boot has been selected to drive the project forward.

A key factor in the decision is understood to be the fact that the

Offshore Europe conference and exhibition has now outgrown the AECC site and a new fit-for-purpose venue is needed in time for the next but one event in 2017.

AECC has received a diminishing subsidy from Aberdeen City Council and the council is now lobbying for support for a new venue from the Scottish Government, in line with that enjoyed by Glasgow and Edinburgh.

EASTERN AIRWAYS WINS NEW FRENCH CONTRACT

Eastern Airways has been awarded an important new contract in France to provide scheduled services between Lorient, in southern Brittany, and Lyon.

The airline offers two flights each weekday and a Sunday service, adding to its existing network in France, where it operates from its Dijon base to Bordeaux and Toulouse.

Lorient is located in the heart of southern Brittany, an important agricultural and fishing region. The region and Lorient have strong industrial links with Lyon in the electronics, telecoms, automobile and food processing sectors. The coast attracts many visitors, and the area offers numerous leisure activities, including sailing, golf and thalasso spas.

Lorient is also the country's main naval base for construction and repairs and is "the town of five ports" with its military port, yachting marina, fishing port, industrial port and passenger port.

Lyon is the capital of the Rhone-Alps region in east-central France, and the country's second largest city.

Flights are bookable at www.easternairways.fr



GOURMET FOOD TO THE DOOR

Durham-based restaurateur and food writer Bill Oldfield has come up with a 21st century answer to a question that worries thousands of busy executives who may have elderly relatives living alone. "Are they eating properly?"

Celebrated North East England restaurant, Oldfields Eating House, will deliver high quality meals direct to the door to anywhere in the UK in return for a simple monthly subscription.

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Eastern Airways customers can enjoy their first month's meals at half price by visiting www.oldfieldseatinghouse.com/oldfields-pantry and quoting code EA50.

■ Aberdeen-based family law practice Patience and Buchan has won a prestigious accolade at one of the Scottish legal profession's top award events. Iain Patience and Lorna Buchan, founders and partners at the firm, are pictured left receiving the Family Law Firm of the Year honour at the Law Awards of Scotland 2013.

■ NOF Energy – the business development organisation for the oil, gas, nuclear and offshore renewables sectors – has revealed that the oil and gas market is still seen by its members as by far the most important sector for their businesses.



NOF Energy's Annual Survey charts the activities of its 440 UK and international members and their opinions on the organisation's business development services, reports Clare Weirs, Director Business Services.

According to the survey, almost 70 per cent of members say that oil and gas will be their main priority for the next five years. Offshore wind and nuclear, however, also remain important in the longer term. The emerging shale gas market has also generated a lot of interest from members, with more than 60 per cent indicating that this is a potential future market.

The annual survey tracks NOF Energy members' export activities and highlights the top international markets served by supply chain companies.

Norway has reclaimed its place at the top of the list of current export markets, although it is Brazil that members are looking to for future export opportunities – along with the USA, Russia, Qatar, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Norway and Canada. Confidence in the Libyan market is also returning, but members are aware of the challenges.

■ Paul Callaghan, CBE, is the new Chair of destination and inward investment agency, NewcastleGateshead Initiative.



The Sunderland-based entrepreneur and lifelong fan of the city's football team said: "NewcastleGateshead is the region's capital and its most important conurbation. If the North East is to be successful, then NewcastleGateshead must be successful and NewcastleGateshead Initiative's role is fundamental in helping to shape and drive that success."

Callaghan is Chairman of the Leighton software group, which he founded in 1979. He also founded the successful Entrepreneurs' Forum and chaired regional development agency One North East until its abolition.

Eastern Airways Magazine issue 45 competition winners: two-night break at Norfolk Mead Hotel, near Norwich – Stanley Fraser, Cults, Aberdeen; two-night golfing break courtesy of VisitAberdeen – Amie Gonzalez, Sutton, Norfolk; bottles of Chapter 6 award-winning English whisky – James Barrowman, Bo'ness and Kyle Gibson, Bathgate.

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PEOPLE POWER *by Margo Maxwell, Regional HR Executive at Intertek*

Intertek is a leading quality solutions provider to industries worldwide, working across sectors from food to oil and gas. Responding to the demands of the many ever-changing industries it serves around the globe, Intertek is a constantly evolving organisation. This applies particularly to the multifaceted energy industry, in which Intertek continually strives to nurture talent and skills and retain key personnel.

Our Aberdeen base is central to the oil and gas expertise, which is exported to our other labs, and to clients, all over the world. We have harnessed a wealth of knowledge in the sector. There are a number of employees who have extensive expertise; in fact, we have 13 people who have clocked up 298 years at Intertek.

The strength of any business comes down to people and passion. To get the best out of your organisation, you have to get the best out of your people and attain their buy-in. At Intertek, the quality of our people is integral to the quality of our business. In the energy sector in particular, the employment market is very buoyant, adding an additional element in the drive to attract and retain the best talent. Employee engagement is crucial and the basics of personnel development are simple: treat staff fairly; foster two-way communication; develop and train staff; and give them opportunities for career development.

There is a need for visible succession planning for those who wish to move up the career ladder and for those who don't, they still aspire to be developed in their current jobs by enhancing their roles to keep them varied and interesting.

Annual appraisals help people get to the next steps in their careers and the skills gaps can be filled by identifying training needs. Moves can be vertical or horizontal into different departments, in line with employee ambitions for their long-term futures. Moving people to other departments

means that different career ambitions can be met without losing that vital talent in the company.

Staff retention is a huge challenge in Aberdeen's energy sector, therefore employee engagement is vital. This means an organisational culture in which employees are fully involved in and enthusiastic about their work and really want to play a part in the success of their organisation. Much of this is also down to a compatible workforce, because a cohesive team makes a credible, strong team. Last year, Intertek in Aberdeen merged from seven teams and different companies to come together under one name and one roof, which posed challenges in the creation of a unified team.

Standardising procedures and processes – such as appraisals and performance management workshops – was essential and helped staff engage with the new structure and understand where their career aspirations could fit within the organisation. It is vital to bring management together to share ideas and experiences for people development. Training is also key, from development programmes and online learning, to supporting employees in obtaining further education qualifications to advance their careers.

While transition and changes in corporate cultures and people development are a continual process, there are key themes in making the most of a company's most important asset – its people. Holding on to expertise is vital and at Intertek, 14 per cent of our team have been with us for more than ten years. All of the elements of employee engagement need to come together to make cohesive and committed teams. When it comes down to business, all the power is in the people, so investment in them is key for future success.

Margo Maxwell is Regional HR Executive at Intertek, the leading quality solutions provider to industries worldwide. Email: margo.maxwell@intertek.com; www.intertek.com/careers

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PUZZLE PAGE *by Yves Du Sault*



Welcome to the Eastern Airways puzzle page and your chance to win one of two bottles of Chapter 6, England's award-winning finest single malt whisky (also on sale in Norwich airport duty free shop).

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Lance Fairwind could not believe he had been named Adventurer of the year by the London Explorers Club. The ceremony ended with yet another puzzle distributed to all the attendants. Geography would be tested and frequent travellers would have an edge!



15 cities to help you find the meeting point for the next Journey. No time to be jet lagged!
 CLUE: A knowledge of time zones is useful.

- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---------|------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|
| 1. Phoenix, USA | _____ | 6. Vanuatu, VUT | _____ | 11. Kiribati, KIR | _____ |
| 2. Anchorage, USA | _____ | 7. Astana, KAZ | _____ | 12. Managua, NIC | _____ |
| 3. London, GBR | _____ A | 8. Porto, PRT | _____ | 13. Accra, GHA | _____ |
| 4. Karachi, PAK | _____ | 9. Kodiak, USA | _____ | 14. King Cove, USA | _____ |
| 5. Niamey, MLI | _____ | 10. Tijuana, MEX | _____ | 15. Mascate, OMN | _____ |



So where should Lance go next? Submit your answer (along with your contact details) no later than February 28 to competitions@gravity-consulting.com. First two correct entries chosen at random win bottles of Chapter 6 whisky.

The Editor's decision is final. Contestants must be over 18 (UK) or 20 (Norway).

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A DRINK THAT TRAVELS WELL

Graeme Smith joins the Norwegian-British Chamber of Commerce to raise a glass of Norway's favourite spirit ...



This Christmas, as they have done for centuries as, part of the traditional celebrations, many Norwegians will toast the season with a glass or two of aquavit – the “water of life”.

Several countries have their own “aqua vitae” – distilled spirit – but none as well travelled as some of those from Norway.

This much I learned from Paul Lithun, manager of the Holmen Bar at the Stavanger's Victoria Hotel, who visited Aberdeen to lead an aquavit seminar and tasting for members of the Chamber.

As a golf and whisky enthusiast he enjoys visiting Scotland, a short hop by air compared with the long sea journey that every bottle of Norway's famous Aquavit Linie makes.

Like vodka, aquavit is distilled from either grain or potatoes. The latter choice prevails in Norway and dates back to the widespread famine in the early 19th century, when grain was considered more valuable than potatoes.

He told us how the rich flavour of Linie Aquavit was discovered by accident: in 1805, a cargo vessel laden with fish, hams, cheeses and five casks of Norwegian aqua vita headed for Australia. However the captain failed to sell his cargo of spirit and the barrels were brought back to Trondheim. When they were opened in December 1807 it was discovered the aquavit was better than had ever been tasted before and Linie Aquavit was born.

Efforts to replicate the effect of the journey by scientific means have never been successful so, two centuries on, at any given time, there will be 1,000 barrels of aquavit somewhere in the world on the decks of ships at sea.

Linie, so called because it crosses “the line” (equator) twice on its four-month journey, differs from other aquavits because it is matured in sherry casks, which gives it a golden hue and hint of vanilla flavour.

Paul explained that caraway is a mandatory ingredient of aquavit but that many other herbs are added, including cumin, aniseed and dill, giving different brands their individual flavour. In the Faroe Islands, they add angelica, the herb whose presence is a sure indicator of Viking settlement.

“Almost every aquavit has something slightly different in the recipe, which makes it special and a lot of our aquavits are made for individual types of food,” he said. “I counted more than 20 aquavits that are made for a special dish, even kumla – Norwegian ham dumplings.”

During the long sea journey, the temperature and humidity variations, along with the salty sea air and the motion of the ship swirling the barrels, all work their magic to smooth and enhance the drink, which, as the Chamber members discovered, leaves a long warm aftertaste.

The reverse of the label of each 80 per cent proof bottle bears a log of its individual sea journey.

Although aquavit is enjoyed year-round as a digestif, more than half of the annual total is sold in the run-up to Christmas.

As well as the famous Lysolm Linie Aquavit, Chamber members were given the opportunity to try Loitens Sommer Aquavit, a lighter tasting brand, and a Fjellbekk cocktail mixed by the top barman.

The refreshing mix, which means “mountain stream”, is made from 1 oz of Lysholmer Linie, 1 oz of vodka, 1 oz of Limejuice and 3 oz of Sprite.

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It may be the coldest place in Britain, but *Stan Abbott* warms to Royal Deeside – with a little help from an award-winning hotel and a fine old malt

I'd travelled to Raemoir House with three tasks in mind: to experience this multi-award winning country house hotel; to sample the culinary delights of its chef, recently named Scotland's Chef of the Year; and to test the theory that this might just provide a home-from-home for visiting executives wanting a quick and easy escape each evening from the bustle of downtown Aberdeen.

The best laid schemes of mice and men, however, oft gang agley, as the Scottish Bard put it, and I learned on arrival that said chef, David Littlewood, had departed a month previously for another Deeside establishment.

But the aptly-named hotel owner, Neil Rae, was quick to dismiss my concerns, with his fulsome praise for Mr Littlewood's successor. Indeed, not only is Alexandria (Alex) Hay among the country's leading female chefs, but she has also enjoyed some success on BBC TV's *Masterchef: The Professionals*.

So let's begin, then, with the food: when Neil and his wife Julie acquired the then down-at-heel hotel a little over three years ago, they immediately made it their mission to focus on the restaurant,



Raemoir owner, Neil Rae, with chef Alex Hay

while progressively bringing the accommodation up to scratch.

And why not? Neil's background was in oil engineering, but the couple had successfully launched the Milton Brasserie, just outside nearby Banchory. Raemoir duly added Gramplan Restaurant of the Year to its AA two rosette and Michelin accreditations.

David Littlewood was named Scottish

Chef of the Year at third time of asking, having been a finalist in both 2009 and 2011, and – as Neil and Julie got to grips with their refurbishment programme – Raemoir was crowned Scotland's Country House Hotel of the Year in 2011 and 2012, and, in this year's revamped awards, won the regional and Romantic Hotel of the Year awards.

With that, Neil decided, it was time to stop "chasing bits of paper" and sharpen the focus on continually raising Raemoir's game, and building both reputation and business in a way that would make it less susceptible to the fluctuations of the offshore oil and gas cycle.

That translates into exclusive-use weddings, using the large single-span marquee, and growth in exclusive-use corporate bookings from the oil majors. It also struck me that Raemoir's roaring log fires, friendly service, and wide choice of single malts must appeal to business people away from home.

"Yes, we have a lot of regulars through the week, and Westhill is only minutes away," says Neil. Aberdeen Airport, too, is only 30 minutes cross-country >>





on quiet roads: compare that with 30 minutes through traffic to the city centre. With rack rates starting at £120 for a single, to £230 for a superior double, it surely makes sense.

For Neil and Julie, investment is a perpetual imperative: “We have a few bedrooms to be upgraded to four-star,” says Neil. The hotel currently enjoys a three-star rating and the couple face a dilemma, with six rooms across the yard in the 18th century Ha’Hoose. Neil is unsure Historic Scottish Heritage would share his views on the merits of a glazed link that might also replace the marquee.

That, of course is for the future. Right now, in the kitchen, Alex – who moved from the Milton as sous-chef when Raemoir was acquired – has taken to her Executive Chef role like a duck to water. Readers may have seen her on TV, where she was tasked with interpreting “old school” for a panel comprising Michel Roux Junior, Monica Galetti and Gregg Wallace.

Born in Fettercairn and a graduate Angus College, in Arbroath, Alex’s influence is evident across the simple but exquisite menu.

I selected kidneys with red onion jam and Merlot jus to start: the kidneys were light years from what you’d find in a traditional steak and kidney pie – soft and succulent, rather than tough and dry. A butternut squash and Parmesan soup amuse-bouche proved an enjoyable interlude before locally sourced lamb chump, perfectly presented with braised red cabbage. To complete the experience, I chose a brulée, with warm almond tart, berry compôte and Cassis sorbet: heaven on a plate.

With a Fettercairn malt – which I chose in the chef’s honour – sipped on the deep sofa by the log fire, what more could a man (or woman) want?



FROM TOP Raemoir exterior, bar, bedroom and lounge

A crisp early November frost coated the lawn at Raemoir as the mist hung low over the River Dee beneath a fresh, clear sky.

A dusting of snow on the high Cairngorms completed the reminder that – besides boasting some of the country’s cleanest, freshest air – it also has, in Braemar, the UK’s coldest place. This is in part because, heading west up the river from Aberdeen, the road rises steadily for nearly 60 miles to more than 1,000ft at Braemar.

My whistle-stop day was set to begin with a date – a date with a calendar to be precise. I headed for Crathes Castle, where – I had just read – archaeologists had recently uncovered said 10,000-year-old Mesolithic calendar.

The imposing turreted castle itself stays open through winter, but not on this particular Monday. Its walled garden, however, was a hive of activity, as staff pruned and tidied for winter. One of them knew quite a lot about the luni-solar calendar, which might just be the place where measurement of time itself was invented. She shared my disappointment that there is, just weeks after its discovery, precisely nothing to see of this hugely important find, it having been no sooner dug up than reburied, in line with current archaeological practice. There is not so much as plaque to look at...

At nearby Milton of Crathes, 17th century stone farm steadings have been restored to provide accommodation for a variety of small businesses, including the uplifting Milton Art Gallery (I particularly enjoyed Kathleen Buchan’s multi-coloured landscapes), Rustiques home décor, Wee Boorachie crafts and the Milton Brasserie, which was initially established by Neil and Julie Rae, now owners of the Raemoir Hotel.

It is Deeside’s popularity with both tourists and Aberdeen’s well-heeled day-trippers that ensures there’s business for arty-crafty outlets, even through Winter.

Eastern Airways flies to Aberdeen from Stavanger, Scatsta, Sumburgh, Stornoway, Wick John O’Groats, Newcastle, Durham Tees Valley, Leeds Bradford, Humberside, East Midlands, Norwich, Southampton and Cardiff.



Crathes Castle

Milton of Crathes is also the terminus of the Royal Deeside Railway, whose dedicated volunteers have been working for a decade to restore part of the old line from Aberdeen to Ballater. It currently runs part of the way to nearby Banchory on weekends (winter excluded, except Santa specials).

Now, if this line had not been axed by the infamous Dr Beeching back in 1966, just imagine the price that Deeside properties would be fetching nowadays!

Banchory bears the epithet, Gateway to Royal Deeside, and is a thriving town of some 8,000, where I was impressed by the Woodend Barn arts centre, bistro and cinema, run by a collective from converted buildings on the edge of town.

West of Banchory, I crossed the river, forsaking the A93 for the much quieter road that winds its way through the forests on the southern side of the Dee. First stop was the Butterworth Gallery, formerly the old Ballogie village shop and post office, complete with rustic petrol pump and telephone box. It's now home to the prolific output of artist Howard Butterworth and his daughter Mary Louise.

Thence to the Royal Lochnagar Distillery, to which I was inexorably drawn, following a wee dram of its fine 12-year-old single malt



Butterworth Gallery

IT IS DEESIDE'S POPULARITY WITH BOTH TOURISTS AND ABERDEEN'S WEL-HEELED DAY-TRIPPERS THAT ENSURES THERE'S BUSINESS FOR ARTY-CRAFTY OUTLETS, EVEN THROUGH WINTER.

at Raemoir the previous evening.

Although part of the vast Diageo drinks empire, Royal Lochnagar remains a small and traditional distillery. Just in time for the 2pm tour, I learned that its specialities include a long (110 hours) fermentation process, designed to deliver a "grassy" rather than a "nutty" finish. Aficionados will also note the open mash tubs and drool at vapours from the aged casks in the dark store room.

Royal Lochnagar's pride is its Select Reserve, created on September 12 each year, on the anniversary of the visit by Queen Victoria that led to its Royal Charter. The Select Reserve is a blend of whisky from casks carefully selected by a team of top tasters. It retails at £150 and tasting notes



describe: "A rich nose of Christmas pudding, dried fruit, nuts and antique furniture polish. The palate is both sweet and dry with treacle toffee, Brazil nuts and chocolate orange." An extra £3 on your tour fee will permit you to share these enticing flavours!

The distillery is not only just down the road from the Royal Balmoral Castle, but is also overlooked by one of the very many memorials to Victoria's beloved Albert, the hilltop to the west being a favourite picnic spot of the Queen and her consort. Beneath that hill we can imagine the home of the hermit, the Old Man of Lochnagar, a creation of the imagination of Victoria's great grandson, Prince Charles.

The valley and its many castles and gardens are as enduring today as Victoria's love of the landscape and, indeed, of the monument itself.

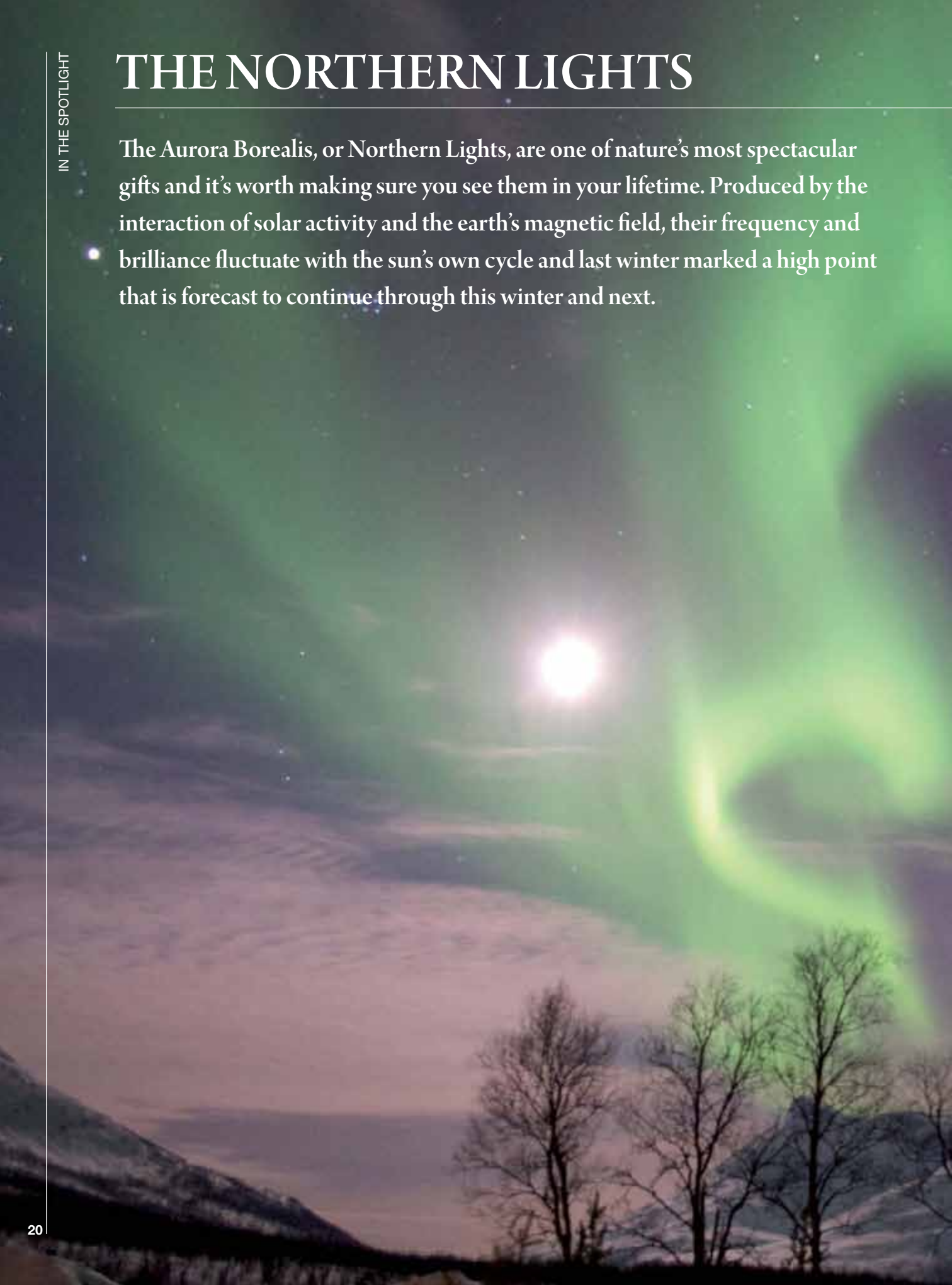
Crathes Castle: tinyurl.com/po5752x
Royal Lochnagar Distillery: tinyurl.com/29loud




Mist over the lawn at Raemoir

THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

The Aurora Borealis, or Northern Lights, are one of nature's most spectacular gifts and it's worth making sure you see them in your lifetime. Produced by the interaction of solar activity and the earth's magnetic field, their frequency and brilliance fluctuate with the sun's own cycle and last winter marked a high point that is forecast to continue through this winter and next.





Although sometimes witnessed in the UK, northern Norway is currently top of the Northern Lights pops.

Recording nature's firework display on their own camera is everyone's ambition. Here are some tips:

- Learn how to set your digital SLR camera manually and practise before travelling
- Use a tripod
- Use your shutter delay setting to eliminate camera-shake
- Learn where the infinity setting on your camera is during daylight – it may not be simply the furthest you can turn the lens
- Set the ISO to 400 or even 800
- Take off your UV filter
- Choose a wide angle zoom lens – f/2.8
- Experiment with exposures of at least 15 seconds

This picture was taken by Stan Abbott at Camp Tamok, in Norwegian Lapland, two hours' drive from Tromsø.

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THE ORIGINAL BEAT POET

Victoria Trott anticipates the 2014 centenary of the birth of Dylan Thomas, the iconic figure of Welsh literature ...

Mention Swansea and what immediately springs to mind? A Premier League football team? A Hollywood actress? A stunningly-located university? In 2014 it is hoped that the main association will be with a short, pudgy, whisky-slugging, womanising, former local newspaper journalist who has been dead for 60 years – but who also happens to be Wales’s greatest ever (and most controversial) poet.

Dylan Marlais Thomas was born in the Uplands area of Swansea on October 27 1914. The schoolmaster’s son, whose colourful private life was arguably better known to most people than his works (which included the poem *Do Not Go Gentle* and the “play for voices” *Under Milk Wood*), will have the centenary of his birth celebrated with a year-long festival of events in Wales, England and abroad.

>>



Dylan by John Doubleday



Clockwise from top left: Front room at 5 Cwmdonkin Drive, Swansea Marina, front bedroom where Thomas was born, Cwmdonkin Park.

Says Professor Peter Stead, founder of the annual Dylan Thomas Prize for writers under 30: "People are mainly aware of Dylan Thomas because of his infamy, but he was underestimated, not least in Wales. However, a group of scholars at Swansea University have shown him to be a major poet and a great influence. With the Dylan Thomas 100 festival, we want to make sure that the world appreciates his work."

"But 2014 is also aimed at producing new Dylans. In post-industrial Wales we need to focus on individual fulfilment more than ever. We are a country of writers and artists and the creative arts are a very important part of our economy."

"Dylan wrote most of his poems before the age of 20, so along with Literature Wales – the agency that promotes Welsh and English-language literature in Wales – we have created a schools programme called Developing Dylan, in which selected writers will run workshops with children to introduce them to Thomas's characters, poetry and prose."

Highlights of Dylan Thomas 100 include: an exhibition of Sir Peter Blake's illustrations of Under Milk Wood at the National Museum of Wales, in Cardiff (until March 16) – see *Essential Goings On*, page 39; an exhibition of the writer's personal items and Notebook Poems, at the National Library of Wales, in Aberystwyth (June 28–December 20); and the world premiere of Karl Jenkins's Three Images from Dylan Thomas, with the Russian National Philharmonic Orchestra, at Swansea's Brangwyn Hall on October 18.

Literature Wales has developed a series of literary tours, A Dylan Odyssey, ranging from one to six days, in Wales, Oxford, London and New York – where the writer died in 1953. Dylan's granddaughter, Hannah Ellis, will be accompanying tours in Laugharne – where Dylan spent the last four years of his life – (The Thomas Children's Laugharne: The Rats and Mably the Dog) on May 17 and Swansea (Dylan Thomas's Swansea Uplands: The Boy and the Young Dog) on July 12. While National Poet of Wales Gillian Clarke will be exploring the Aeron Valley, in Ceredigion, on horseback in the tracks of

Dylan's fiery wife (Caitlin Thomas's Aeron Valley: The Ponies and The Red Lion) on July 5. Dr Bronwen Price, Senior Project Manager at Literature Wales, says: "Dylan's life created his works and we want to show how connected his work is with the landscapes of his life: little pubs, childhood fights, those kinds of day-to-day things."

"We are striving to give people an understanding of that by engaging with them in an interesting way, which is why we are offering some tours on horseback and in canoes. There is something to interest most people, not just staunch fans."

Dylan's Swansea landscapes have changed considerably since he lived there: much of Wales's second city was flattened by German bombs during a three-night blitz in 1941. The Kardomah café, where he used to meet friends, including the poet Vernon Watkins, the artist Alfred Janes, and the composer Daniel Jones, has moved from Castle Street to Portland Street. His first (and only) employer, the South Wales Daily Post, which became the South Wales Evening Post, moved from Wind Street (now famous

" MOST PEOPLE BUY BOOKS ABOUT DYLAN RATHER THAN HIS WORKS, AS THEY ARE ATTRACTED TO HIM AS THIS BOHEMIAN ARTIST. "



Dylan Thomas Theatre, Dylan Thomas Centre (top), the “Boathouse” at Laugharne, Carmarthenshire where Thomas spent his last years.

for its pubs and bars) to Adelaide Street, and recently to modern premises in regenerated High Street. The docks have been turned into a smart marina lined by apartments, including Wales’s tallest building (Meridian Tower), cafés and the National Waterfront Museum, where visitors can learn about the maritime and industrial history of Swansea and Wales.

But traces of Dylan abound here. From the Dylan Thomas Theatre, home of Swansea Little Theatre, of which he was a member, and the bronze statue of a seated Dylan, by John Doubleday, just outside, to the Dylan Thomas Centre, home of the annual Dylan Thomas Festival, and a permanent exhibition on Thomas’s life and work. The Queens in Gloucester Place, the last of the old docks pubs, one of Dylan’s favourite watering holes, is still open for a drink.

Two places that Dylan would definitely recognise are Cwmdonkin Park, where he used to play as a boy, and which features in his poem *The Hunchback in the Park* and, nearby, 5 Cwmdonkin Drive, his childhood home. The house was rescued from near-dereliction in 2005 by local businessman Geoff Haden, who spent three years returning it to its Edwardian origins, before opening it to the public in 2008.

“As a lifelong fan of Dylan I was very sorry to see the state the house was in when I visited during the Dylan Thomas Festival one year, then when the lease came up I was the only person who was interested in taking it!” says Geoff.

“The first task was to research the house. The Thomas family lived here from 1914 to 1937; then another teacher owned it until the 1970s. Afterwards it was briefly used as a B&B, then as student bedsits. We actually found a maid who had worked here when Dylan was a teenager so she could tell us all about the house, such as what belonged where. We also read Dylan’s letters and stories for clues as to how the house looked.

“Amazingly, all the original features were still intact, even the original wall colours were underneath the wallpaper, so we had those copied. The Edwardian furniture came from charity shops, car boot sales and auctions. Now, we offer guided tours, musical and literary events; we organise Edwardian-themed dinners and people can also stay here on a B&B or self-catering basis.”

So just why is it that people are so fascinated with Dylan Thomas? The best person to ask is Jeff Towns, one of the world’s leading Dylan Thomas experts, antiquarian book

dealer, Chairman of The Dylan Thomas Society of Great Britain, and author of the recently published *Dylan Thomas: The Pubs*.

He says: “There are two aspects to Dylan: the writer and the legend. Most people buy books *about* Dylan rather than his works, as they are attracted to him as this bohemian artist. He only lived for 39 years but he hung out with so many writers, artists and celebrities, especially on his hugely successful lecture tours of America. He was ‘cool’ – he stayed at The Chelsea Hotel in New York and he died young after a drinking session. He paved the way for the Beat Generation. Then a Jewish American folk singer called Robert Zimmerman changed his name to Bob Dylan around 1959 and the legend lived on.”

Who needs footballers and film stars when Swansea spawned the original Beat Poet?

www.dylanthomas100.org
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A trolley, a trolley, my kingdom for a trolley! The remains of King Richard III were famously found beneath a car park in Leicester. *Stan Abbott* meets the woman whose uncanny hunch led to the remarkable discovery...



It's a familiar story: attractive, solvent, intelligent woman – to the dismay of friends and colleagues – announces she's to wed the lazy, feckless young man who can't hold down a job and who was written off by everyone years ago.

We all remember the collective I-told-you-so's and tut-tuts when friends and family survey a trail of mutual destruction when Mr Feckless behaves true to type.

Philippa Langley bristles at the unfairness of some suggestions that her interest in "rescuing" Richard III has been obsessive.

"Some people like to think I'm 'obsessed'," she says. "It puts me in an easier box, but the reality is that I am passionate about this period of history. My interest in the reputation of Richard III began in 1998 when I read Paul Murray Kendall's biography. Kendall's work challenged negative views of Richard."

Richard's death in battle seems, in hindsight, to have been no more than the start of his troubles. But Philippa's own research confirmed a better side to the monarch remembered by history as the evil slayer of the young Princes in the Tower. For that, she maintains, we can blame the propaganda machine of the House of

Tudor, whose monarchs assumed the crown after Richard. However, it was Shakespeare who really did for Richard, creating of him one of his vilest characters: a power-crazed despot, and "foule hunch-backt toade".

Like fellow members of the Richard III Society, Philippa always maintained that there were two great untruths about Richard: he was not the evil demon of Shakespearian drama; and his remains were never, as claimed by most accounts, tossed unceremoniously into the River Soar, at Leicester, at the time of the dissolution of the Monasteries.

Having spent a significant period of my life not far from Richard's northern headquarters, at Middleham, in Wensleydale, I was intrigued when news broke in 2012 that someone was digging up a car park to try and find his remains. It conjured up visions of a Tesco wasteland. I couldn't imagine Richard having shopped at Tesco, much less having died in battle under its car park.

When, just a day or two later (or so it seemed) the announcement came that bones, believed to be those of Richard, had indeed been unearthed in Leicester, the nation and I wiped the collective smirk off our faces.

And when, in February 2013, the whole story of Philippa and her quest for the truth about Richard was told in a TV documentary, it proved to be the most compelling viewing. I was gripped as Philippa's earnest blue eyes turned to camera and spoke of the overwhelming sensation that Richard would be found here, near the letter R (for "Reserved") in the Leicester Social Services car park. And then came the tears of anticipation after her seven-year quest, when human remains were unearthed; of excitement when the skeleton showed evidence of the scoliosis (curvature of the spine) with which Richard had been afflicted; and finally of joy, relief and vindication when proof came that these were, beyond reasonable doubt, the bones of the last Plantagenet king.

Much has been written about Philippa and colleagues' extraordinary discovery, not least her own book – *The King's Grave: The Search for Richard III* – co-authored with military historian and Richard III expert, Michael Jones.

So I travelled to Edinburgh, where Philippa is Secretary of the Scottish branch of the Richard III Society, intent on exploring other themes: what was it that had made her sure she was digging in the right place? what was it that so drove her in her quest to have Richard seen in a better light? how might a Richard victory at Bosworth have altered history and the very shape of the England we now know? and what were her views on the York challenge to a Leicester reburial for the king's remains?

Philippa Langley was born in Kenya and moved to England with her parents, settling in Darlington aged two. She attended Hummersknott School, choosing a busy career in marketing and advertising over going to university, and eventually settling in Edinburgh.

But in late 1992, aged 30, she became seriously ill and subsequently chose to slow down: "It changed my perspective on life," she reflects. "I had always been fascinated by history and the stories that history gives us."

But, she adds: "So many of the stories are never told. We repeat stories all the time and don't tell original stories. I started reading more because I was ill and it was through starting to work as a screenwriter and coming across Richard's story, that it all started to gel." >>



PASSIONATE ABOUT HISTORY
Philippa Langley



Philippa and John Ashdown-Hill remove the remains

Thus began a compulsion to bring Richard's "alternative story" into the daylight and reverse the wrongs done to him by history in general and Shakespeare in particular.

What was it, I wondered, that had moved her to tell the world, on camera, that she was standing right above the remains of Richard?

"I suppose it was really a strong intuitive feeling. I really felt I was standing on his grave in this particular place, and it did become the driver and the catalyst."

Of course, Philippa can not explain her powerful intuition through the laws of science as we understand them, but points instead to evidence that she is not, as they say, "alone". She invites me to examine the discovery of the Sutton Hoo Treasure, dubbed "one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of all time". It was only because of the conviction of the landowner, Edith Pretty, that the mounds near Sutton Hoo House, in Suffolk, contained some kind of treasure, that archaeologists were persuaded to conduct a dig in the 1930s.

Then, as in Leicester, the archaeologists were initially sure they knew better precisely where to dig than Mrs Pretty, who claimed to have dreamed of a funeral procession and a vision of an armed warrior before commissioning a dowser, who is said to have located gold.

In her endeavours to find an explanation for her own and Mrs Pretty's intuition, Philippa also cites the work of John William Dunne, the Irish aeronautical engineer and parapsychologist whose published work before his death in 1949 suggested that our experience of time as "linear" is actually an illusion. He argued that past, present and future were in fact simultaneous and sleep, he suggested, could release the mind to experience events in the past or the future.

But we digress: what, I wondered, had been the effect for Philippa of the peculiar feeling she experienced in the car park of Leicester Social Services?

"I was a screenwriter: I was interested in Richard's life, not his death. I did a 180° from being fascinated by his life to being fascinated by his death because of the visit to the car park. What then followed from that moment in 2004 was four years of research."

That research increasingly began to persuade Philippa of the possibility that the king's remains might indeed lie here, but it was a discovery soon afterwards by another Richard III Society member, historian Dr John Ashdown-Hill, that would prove the real game-changer. Having traced an all-female line of descent from Richard's sister, Anne of York, to Joy Ibsen, an elderly lady living in Canada, Dr Ashdown-Hill was able to identify a rare mitochondrial DNA sequence.

This meant that, in the event that Richard's remains could be found, DNA sequencing could be used to identify them with near certainty.

"I just thought this is a discovery that could be huge, if Richard was indeed buried there."

Philippa encouraged Dr Ashdown-Hill to write to Channel 4's Time Team with a view to their filming an excavation of the Greyfriars area beneath the social services car park. For Time Team, it turned out to be the one that got away as the dig was turned down on the basis that the car park area was simply too big.

"If they had dug where I asked them they would have found Richard on the first day," says Philippa, ruefully.

That left Philippa to raise the funds to sponsor her own excavation. But with just a few weeks to go, the funds pledged were thousands short of the £35,000 needed.

Naturally, she turned to her colleagues in the Richard III Society, whose purpose is summed up by the Duke of Gloucester, its Patron: "The purpose – and indeed the strength – of the Richard III Society derives from the belief that the truth is more powerful than lies; a faith that even after all these centuries the truth is important. It is proof of our sense of civilised values that something as esoteric and as fragile as reputation is worth campaigning for."

Some £17,000 flooded in from Society members, many of them in America, and the dig duly started in August 2012.

When human remains were soon discovered beside the letter R, the possibility they belonged to the former monarch became more real as the curvature of the skeleton's spine became evident. DNA testing confirmed that ownership with as near as damn it absolute certainty. But what does all this tell us?

"With the discovery, we now know a lot more about Richard's last minutes, his last day and how he was buried," says Philippa. "It does not look like they gave him much in the way of a service or anything and they certainly didn't prepare his body for reburial properly, because it looks like he was placed in a grave that was too short for him and with his hands possibly tied as well."

The numerous wounds to Richard's head – initially delivered from behind – confirmed some contemporary accounts of his courageous death.

Now Philippa believes the extraordinary discovery has already swung the pendulum of history in Richard's favour: she speaks of a "paradigm shift" in Richard's reputation, with the journalistic shorthand for the last Plantagenet no longer "evil villain" but the neutral "Medieval King".

"People can see there is a lot more to this man than we currently know," she says. "Everyone now knows about Richard III and that's very interesting in terms of future research that will now be done."

Philippa herself hopes to sponsor research that might delve into the countless family and other archives that still exist, both in England and in countries including France, the Low Countries and the Vatican.

"I am absolutely confident that there is a major discovery to be made about Richard III." There might even exist evidence that could exonerate him for the supposed killing of the Princes in the Tower.

Meanwhile, with the identification of the bones from Greyfriars, came moves to deliver to Richard what he didn't enjoy after Bosworth: a proper burial befitting a monarch.

When Leicester City Council first granted Philippa permission for her dig, it was on the understanding that – were Richard to be found – his final resting place would be in a suitable shrine in the city's Cathedral.

But that was to reckon without the passion with which Richard is

“RICHARD BROUGHT ORDER AND PEACE AND PEOPLE RESPECTED HIM. YOU GET A CLEAR SENSE THAT HE WAS VERY WELL RESPECTED AND LOVED THE NORTH, SO HE CHANGED IT IN MANY WAYS.”

still remembered in his Yorkist heartland. The Plantagenet Alliance – a group of supporters claiming descent from the monarch – challenged the plans to re-bury him in Leicester and won a judicial review on the grounds that the correct consultation procedures had not been followed. As we went to press, the court battle that will decide whether the remains of the king are buried in Leicester or York had been deferred. The High Court in London in November granted Leicester City Council more time to prepare its case before the full Judicial Review is heard.

I wondered where Philippa’s sympathies lay: “The landowner, Leicester City Council, gave me permission to dig the car park on the basis that, if found, Richard would be buried in Leicester,” she stresses. “But I am from Richard III country,” she adds a little wistfully, before adding: “I really don’t have an issue with where Richard is buried – it’s how he is buried that I have the issue with because I want him to have what he didn’t get in 1485.”

So much for events in Leicester. But what if Richard, deprived of his horse, had not been slain at Bosworth Field? How might the history of England played out if he had kept the throne? Philippa believes we could now be living in a quite different England had this been the case.

“It could have switched the whole of the country,” she says. “The North could have been the South and the South could have been the North.

“He went to Middleham as a young boy and did some of his knightly training under the tutelage of the Earl of Warwick. So he got to know it when he was quite young. Clearly he decided to make his home there.

“One of the things that staggers me is that the North had been pretty much Lancastrian in its loyalties but with the Earl of Warwick and then Richard going to live there, loyalties switched. Also, it was a very lawless place – a deep, dark lawless place – and people were very frightened to travel on their own, but Richard brought order and peace and people respected him. You get a clear sense that he was very well respected and loved the North, so he changed it in many ways.”

Indeed, far from being the despot depicted by Shakespeare, there is evidence that Richard was remarkably enlightened for his times.

“Richard formed a large collegiate church at Middleham and had big plans for it. He also loved music and reading and was very much for making books open to everybody so people could read more. So he was clearly very interested in people being able to access books and the law.

“The sense I get of Richard is that he did want to level the playing field a bit, which – for the feudal age and feudal system – is actually quite something.

“Quite a few writers on the period have discussed whether York would have become the capital of England. We certainly know that he had plans for York and was going to look after the city in a good way. From his own written information it says ‘I am going to make sure that York is taken care of’. He had ideas for York and he had helped its citizens in many ways by cutting their taxes under Edward IV. He was a great proponent of York and the North. It was his ‘faire city’.”

What next then for Philippa, whose teenage sons, she says, generally indulge her research into Richard? “Richard III cost me a lot of money but it was worth it,” she confesses. “There are more projects I want to do.”

Chief among these is securing backing in Los Angeles or London for a cinematic feature: “We could telescope it and give it the ‘Lincoln treatment’ and deal with four or five months of his life, or make it a big, big film.”

Philippa has even identified the Leicestershire actor Richard Armitage – of *The Hobbit*, *Robin Hood* and *Spooks* fame – to play the lead. “But he thinks he might be too old now,” she sighs.

Knowing Philippa’s determination, it’s a project that anyone would write off at their peril.

The King’s Grave: The Search for Richard III, published by John Murray, £20
Richard III Society, www.richardiii.net
Middleham Castle, tinyurl.com/p5lc23w

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Middleham Castle





With the 2014 Tour De France heading to Yorkshire next summer, *Nick McGrath* talks to one of Britain's most celebrated cyclists, double Olympic champion, *Victoria Pendleton* ...

In an Olympic Games rich in emotional moments, one of the most enduring is surely the memory of British track cycling's golden girl, Victoria Pendleton, tearfully waving goodbye to a packed London Velodrome after narrowly failing to add another gold medal to her tally, in what was to prove the final race of a long and distinguished career.

With her London heroics now a fading memory – followed by an eventful stint on 2012's *Strictly Come Dancing* and her recent wedding to coach and long term fiancé Scott Gardener – I caught up with the Cheshire-based 33-year-old to talk sexism in cycling, sacrifice and why she hates losing.

NM: When Anna Meares beat you in your final race at the 2012 Games to take the sprint gold, she took away your chance to be Britain's most successful ever female Olympian. Do you still rue that missed opportunity?

VP: It just wasn't meant to be. To be honest after getting relegated for something that totally wasn't my fault I thought: "What can I do? I've been disqualified in the team sprint – Jess Varnish and I were disqualified – I've just been relegated – something is not in my favour at the moment." But I guess it wasn't meant to be.

NM: Do you think that will niggle you in the future?

VP: No. Do you know what, I'm so over it. And the sooner I stop talking about it probably the better I'll feel about it. It's going to follow me for a long time but not many people are talking about the Silver anyway as everyone wants to talk about Gold.

NM: Your rivalry with Anna Meares was well documented. Did you ever secretly wish she'd got a puncture?

VP: No, nothing like that. I'm tired of talking about Anna Meares to be honest. We just happen to have met up in so many race situations that people have constructed this bitter rivalry and there's really none of that going on. It just is an interesting story. While I was at a press conference at the Olympics an Australian journalist very comically asked me: "Is Anna Meares a cow?" I kid you not. That's what he asked me. I just laughed because I thought I'd misheard him. But the thing is I find that quite insulting. It's quite condescending about the female race. You wouldn't ask Bradley Wiggins or Chris Hoy such a stupid ridiculous question. What do they expect me to say?

NM: You've very emotional. Has that always been the case?

VP: I've always worn my heart on my sleeve. It means a lot to me and when something means that much to you, you can't help but be fully involved with it on an emotional level. For me it was such a huge relief to win that Gold Medal because it was a difficult four years for me and the team, and people said I'm too



Pendleton celebrates victory at the London Olympics

old and past it and all this sort of stuff and I'm just sort of glad I managed to prove them wrong. It was all worth it.

NM: The British riders in 2014's Tour De France will have home advantage. How much of a boost was that for you at the London Olympics?

VP: It gave everyone a huge lift. It was deafening in the Velodrome. It was absolutely incredible. I'm never going to experience that again. That kind of level of support from the crowd around me. It would be really difficult to top that.

NM: How will you ever match that serotonin rush for the rest of your life?

VP: You don't need to. In order to feel that kind of adrenaline rush and that kind of response from the crowd you have to put yourself through a hell of a lot and I'm quite happy to sacrifice that – I really am for what it takes to get there.

NM: You recently tied the knot with your coach, Scott Gardener. Are you enjoying not having to focus 100 per cent on cycling for a change?

VP: Oh definitely. It will be nice not to feel like we're forced to talk about work. When you live and breathe a sport and you're >>

VICTORIA PENDLETON – MARRIAGE, MOTIVATION AND GOING NAKED

going for the same goal it's hard not to come home and talk about times and data and sprints and all those kinds of things, so I'm really looking forward to having normal conversations with Scott without having that kind of pressure and expectation between us.

NM: Are you talking about Eastenders storylines already then?

VP: I've never felt this relaxed. I feel so happy that I've made the right decision and it's exciting. It's exciting to think that we can do whatever we want now. We don't have to worry about anything. He was only working for British Cycling because of working with me. As soon as I left he was finished too. He's still working in sports science but as a consultant for various different sports.

NM: You said recently that Scott had more emotional intelligence than you...

VP: Scott has got more emotional intelligence than most. From my experience a lot of sports, including cycling, are not very well equipped to deal with women in general. The women have to fit into a male-orientated environment and behave more like a man, and people feel comfortable with how they coach men. But they're not necessarily as comfortable with how they coach women. It's all run by men and men make the decisions and it's difficult because sometimes they do miss something vital. They don't realise that they are hindering, not helping. Scott is an emotionally intelligent guy. He does read people very well and he does get on with people very well, and generally he's very good at catering his behaviour to get on in an environment. I'm not so good at that and a lot of people within sport are not good at that. It's not something that Alpha males are generally blessed with.

NM: Do you think you've got more alpha male in you than most women?

VP: I think I've had to learn to behave more like that, which I don't like. I also resent the fact that I have had to become a little bit more like that in order to survive in there. But that's not really me actually.

NM: Why did people say that about you?

VP: They thought that I'm too girly and too kind of soft to survive in the environment and that I should toughen up. Something that I've always found very motivating is people telling me I can't do it, or I haven't got the qualities to succeed – that I'm not mentally equipped to survive in an elite sport. I'm too small. I'm too girly, blah blah blah; I need to cut my hair off. Those things are all superficial in my opinion.

NM: It's results that count...

VP: Exactly. It's how much you're willing to give to get there.

And I am willing to do everything to the best of my abilities and I'm very tenacious and determined and if you say I can't, that just inspires me to do it more.

NM: So those naked photoshoots on a bike must have gone down very badly with the male cycling establishment...

VP: I got more stick from females – from feminists basically feeling sorry for me for being reduced to doing such demeaning things and whatnot. And I was like, "well I chose to do it actually and I'm very proud of the pictures" but you're never going to please everybody are you? I'm going to have those pictures for the rest of my life as a record of what I wanted to look like. I think they're cool.

NM: Do you worry that physique will be a thing of the past...

VP: Obviously I understand that I will not be able to maintain that body shape without the training I was putting in, but I'm willing to compromise on some things. I think I'll become a bit softer and a bit rounder in places but I'm quite happy to accept that.

NM: How do you feel about being a positive role model?

VP: I find it quite embarrassing that people view me as a role model. It sounds really weird and if I had to say that out loud I'd feel really embarrassed. I really would. Me? I just ride round in a circle. That's all I do. I feel quite embarrassed by it and I don't feel deserving of it. It's very flattering. Probably more flattering than anything you could possibly say to me.

NM: What does the future hold for you?

VP: It would be nice to work in a more creative role, whatever that may be. Who knows? I'd really like to go into design.

NM: I hear you fancy yourself as a dress designer?

VP: Just as a hobby: I love that sort of stuff. I'd love to do more dressmaking. I've got cupboards full of fabric in my house and sewing machines and all the bits and pieces. It's something that I enjoy doing but I really haven't had the time or the space to get involved. My mum and I are talking about going on a pattern-cutting course as she has always made her own clothes.

NM: It'll be two years this summer since you retired from being a professional cyclist. Do you miss the competition?

VP: No. I would have retired after Beijing if it hadn't been for the Games in London. If it had been any other city in the world I would have retired in September 2008 but as I continued for another four years I feel like I've definitely, definitely made the right choice.

NM: In 50 years when they're writing the Olympic history books what would you like your entry to say?

VP: She might have been slight, but blimey she was fast.

“I find it quite embarrassing that people view me as a role model. It sounds really weird ... Me? I just ride round in a circle.”

COMPETITION

WIN an exclusive break at the home of golf – St Andrews

Eastern Airways Magazine has teamed up with the exclusive five-star Fairmont St Andrews Resort and our hire car partner, Europcar, to offer one lucky reader and guest an exclusive two-night break at this leading golf venue on the Fife coast.



The prize includes two nights (Saturday excluded) in a Deluxe Seaview guestroom, full Scottish breakfast in the Squire restaurant, and 18 holes of golf for two on either of two championship courses, or a 60-minute spa treatment per person

The 520-acre resort encapsulates luxury, elegance and truly breathtaking surroundings in the "Home of Golf". With its lavish and peaceful setting, offering commanding cliff top views of St Andrews and the North Sea, the resort prides itself on its fabulous facilities, including The Kittocks and The Torrance golf courses, and excellent dining – including the two AA Rosette Esperante restaurant or golfers' fayre and magnificent views at The Clubhouse.

All 209 luxury guestrooms are spacious and well proportioned with thoughtful Scottish touches. The sumptuous Signature Spa offers a range of treatments including locally-themed massages, facial and relaxation therapies using exclusive Aromatherapy Associates and Pure Lochside products in 12 chic treatment rooms. The 16-metre swimming pool, sauna, steam room, Jacuzzi and relaxation room complete the experience.

The resort is 84 miles – a two-hour drive – from Aberdeen Airport and our prizewinner will also enjoy a complimentary hire car courtesy of Europcar if required.

To enter our exclusive competition, just answer the following question:

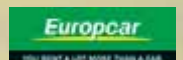
What are the names of the Fairmont St Andrews Resort's two championship golf courses?

The first correct entry drawn at random will win two nights' bed and breakfast for two people, plus golf or spa treatments. Also included are Eastern Airways flights to and from Aberdeen if required. Eastern Airways car hire partner will provide a car for the duration of the winner's stay. Note that the car offer is only available in conjunction with flights to Aberdeen, and flights to Newcastle, only if the winner is flying from Birmingham.

Send your answer to competitions@gravity-consulting.com with "Fairmont St Andrews competition" in the subject field. Please provide name, address and 'phone number and the flight number and date of your last flight with Eastern Airways. There is no postal option. Closing date, Friday March 22, 2014.

Prize to be taken by December 14, 2014, subject to availability of accommodation and flights. Saturday nights are excluded.

www.standrewsbay.com
www.europcar.com



Eastern Airways flies to Aberdeen from Cardiff, Durham Tees Valley, East Midlands, Humberside, Leeds Bradford, Newcastle, Norwich, Southampton, Stavanger, Stornoway and Wick.

BASQUEING IN GLORY

Chin up, chest out and wink! Platform shoes, barely-there costumes and a little slap and tickle. Welcome to the dance that's once again making waves. From can-can to can-do, might the burlesque revival challenge salsa as the social dance of the moment? *Victoria Gibson* finds out what the fuss is about...

"Bring your high-heeled shoes! X"

Normally, I might put this text message down to a wrong number or something, but it's from my instructor Penny, and isn't necessarily an unusual request if you are trying burlesque for the first time.

Think Cabaret and Chicago. Yes, there is an element of taking your clothes off but the aim of the game is to entertain and seduce. The word burlesque translates as "a parody or comically exaggerated imitation of something, especially in a literary or dramatic work". So, with that in mind, there's only one thing left to do...

I've headed to the Bodybarre burlesque studio to meet Penny, a member of the studio's troupe, the Bombshells. I'll admit I was worried about the dress code, but a vest and leggings seemed to suffice at this level. Phew!

The first five minutes of my lesson is spent learning the basic but essential moves, such as the bump and grind, wiggle, body wave and a pose. There are two major struts to master. One involves almost kicking your bottom and taking a tiny step forward, the other a step and drag style. As Penny says: "You're not going anywhere it's just a way of strutting to or from the audience."



The Headline Honeys

Certain burlesque rules apply that must be adhered to, for example, if you're standing still, one part of your body must be exaggerated while maintaining your modesty, so either push either your bottom or your chest out.

Traditionally this style of performance includes cabaret dances, risqué costumes with feathers and tassels and props of all kinds, topped off with an element of humour and an emphasis on the "tease" rather than the strip itself, hence winking or sticking the tongue out.

The routines have strong historical ties to the can-can, for which women wore large petticoats and black suspenders, while dancing musical theatre to high-paced music, as often seen in Westerns.

However it is Paris's celebrated Moulin Rouge, which opened its doors in 1889, that is hailed the true birthplace of the can-can. Then there were The Minsky Brothers' burlesque shows, featuring wannabe actress Gypsy Rose Lee, who – during one of her shows – suffered a purely innocent and accidental wardrobe malfunction when one of her shoulder straps fell down. From then on, with a little encouragement from the crowd she developed it into a striptease, often being arrested during raids on the clubs.

During the 1930s there was outrage at the "obscenity" of the shows and the clubs were closed down, but by the '50s it was something of a curiosity to the media, and burlesque enjoyed a revival as a dark "underground" art form.

However, the last few years have seen what might be termed a post-feminist revival, with women (and men) enjoying performing in amateur groups and professional burlesque now on the corporate entertainment agenda.

It has been brought to the public's attention by the immaculate Dita Von Teese, who famously writhes around in an oversized Martini glass during one of her performances.

Someone with plenty of experience in the field is the fabulous Frankii Wilde, a North East-based burlesque performer who started off as a model and from there developed her passion for the '40s and '50s pin-up girl.

"I was already aware of burlesque and the chance to become the local resident burlesque performer came up which completely changed my life," says Frankii.

That was in 2006, since when Frankii's career has gone from strength to strength taking her as far as Milan. "As a performer, the adrenaline and exhilaration on stage is contagious. I love that Burlesque gives women the confidence to be glamorous beyond what is considered normal."

Dedicated dance groups all over the world are determined to resurrect the glamour of the good old days and in 2009, Frankii formed the Headline Honeys, a group of like-minded established performers and the region's only professional all-girl burlesque troupe, who are constantly in demand.

Frankii continues: "What I really enjoy about producing burlesque shows is that I get to meet so many wonderful and inspiring people. We have our Caribbean temptress Ebony Silk, assistant event coordinator for the London Burlesque Festival Betty D'Light, singing sensation Lola Rainbows, Lulu Roxx and Amber von Tassel."

Professionals tend to create an alter ego for themselves as Headline Honey member Ebony Silk explains: "Ebony

Silk is an enhanced version of my normal self, but not a totally different character – she’s a little more risqué and confident. Ebony is because of my ethnicity and Silk is because in my mind silk is a tactile, elegant and sensual fabric.”

Ebony, who is one of just half a dozen professional black performers in the UK, started dancing in 2008 and even though she loved being on stage and getting a good reaction from the crowd, in the beginning she didn’t feel confident enough – partly owing to not having found her stage persona at that point.

Once she found her current signature act, Little Brown Gal, she was proposed to by The Headline Honeys with a hat. She of course said yes. “It’s like having a little family and support network, they are my best friends as well as the best colleagues ever. And it’s an honour to be one of a few, I love being different. It gives a me a USP and I love that I can combine the other side of my culture and heritage with my creativity.”

Back in the studio, we’re half way through the routine and within no time I’ve earned my feather boa, plus I’m starting to feel muscles I didn’t realise were there. With a few sensual clicks of the fingers and a shimmy to the front, my hour has come to an end. I’ve mastered an easy but effective burlesque routine.

“Burlesque is a fabulous way to express yourself but you must always remember if you are performing on a stage, people have bought tickets and expect to be entertained,” says Ebony, as she recommends doing a lot of research into acts, names, workshops and different performers.

“The first show I ever saw was The Flash Monkey Cabaret at Café De Paris, in London, and it was fantastic, glamorous and professional. As long as you keep these things in mind it doesn’t matter what shape, size, race, gender or sexual orientation you are. Give it your all, be professional and most of all enjoy yourself!”

Fun, sassy and empowering. I’d recommend it to anyone, especially with a group of your best friends to strut your stuff with.

For more details about Frankii Wilde, the Headline Honeys and available workshops www.headlinehoneys.co.uk

Victoria took a one-to-one class at Bodybarre, in Manchester. www.bodybarre.co.uk



WELCOME TO OUR BARE ESSENTIALS

Here you can find information on our routes, fleet, passenger experience and a host of suggestions for what to do when you arrive at your destination.

OUR DESTINATIONS

— Scheduled Routes

— Charter Routes



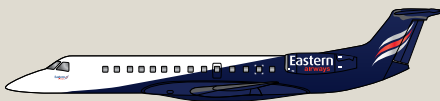
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Two aircraft
Seats 50 passengers
Two turbofan engines
Wingspan, 20m (65ft)

Length 30m (98ft)
Typical cruising speed,
450 knots, at 35,000ft



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Two aircraft
Seats 37 passengers
Two turbofan engines
Wingspan, 20m (65ft)

Length 26m (86ft)
Typical cruising speed,
450 knots, at 35,000ft



JETSTREAM 41

Eighteen aircraft
Seats 29 passengers
Two turboprop engines
Wingspan 19m (60ft)

Length 20m (63ft)
Typical cruising speed,
280 knots, at 20,000ft



SAAB 2000

Eight aircraft
Seats 50 passengers
Two jetprop engines
Wingspan 24.3m (81ft)

Length 26.7m (89ft)
Typical cruising speed,
370 knots, at 28,000ft

ESSENTIAL TRAVEL

PASSENGER EXPERIENCE



After booking your Eastern Airways flight via a travel agent, the airline's website or in-house reservations call centre, you will have noticed that Eastern Airways uses e-tickets. It was in fact one of the airlines to pioneer ticketless travel over nine years ago.

Queues at check-in are short and the process is swift as is the experience through the security channels. This is possible thanks to a ground-breaking initiative called Fast Track, which is available at Aberdeen, Birmingham, Leeds Bradford, Southampton, East Midlands, Newcastle, and is a dedicated security channel for Eastern Airways passengers to use and avoid busy airport terminal security queues.

With Eastern Airways operating the largest number of scheduled services from Aberdeen, a dedicated business lounge is available for all its customers flying from the airport and is located next to its departure gates. Executive lounge access is also offered at Birmingham, Leeds Bradford, Norwich, Southampton and Cardiff for passengers travelling on fully flexible tickets.

As you board your aircraft you will notice we have a fleet of liveried valet baggage carts for you to place larger

items of hand luggage by the aircraft steps. Your hand luggage will be awaiting you on the valet baggage cart at your destination airport.

Once on board, our highly trained cabin attendants offer a friendly and personalised in-flight service including complimentary drinks and branded snacks. On arrival our aircraft allow for quick disembarkation, enabling passengers to make their way swiftly onwards through the terminals.

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While the vast majority of passengers flying globally behave impeccably, there is a greater awareness of isolated incidents of disruptive behaviour, also known as "air rage". While this isn't a major problem for Eastern Airways, the safety and security of our passengers and crew is our number one priority.

We don't want our customers to experience any behaviour that makes them feel uncomfortable, or be put in a situation that compromises safety. Disruptive behaviour can include smoking, drunkenness, aggressive behaviour or abusive language towards a customer or a member of crew. Our crews are fully trained to deal with any incident of this type.

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ESSENTIAL GOINGS ON...



100 Harvest gold, Etienne Francey Switzerland

WINNING WILDLIFE CAUGHT ON CAMERA

Winning entries from the world's most prestigious photographic showcase of wildlife photography are on show at Life Science Centre, Newcastle, until March 2.

Now in its 49th year, the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition, owned by the Natural

History Museum and BBC Worldwide, aims to showcase outstanding creativity and photographic skills, inspiring wonder at the natural world, and highlighting the need for wildlife conservation in audiences of all ages.

www.life.org.uk

WHAT THE ROMANS THOUGHT OF US...



Copper alloy and enamel dragonesque brooch. Romano-British, AD 43-200 © The Trustees of the British Museum

Roman Empire: Power and People brings together over 160 pieces from the British Museum to explore the story of one of the most powerful empires the world has ever seen.

The exhibition, developed by the British Museum in partnership with Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, explores the wealth, power and organisation of the Empire, but also how the Romans viewed their provinces and other peoples. Highlights include sculpture from the villas of the Emperors Tiberius and Hadrian, coins from the famous Hoxne treasure, beautiful jewellery and near-perfectly preserved children's clothing from Roman Egypt.

The exhibition debuts at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery until January 12 before touring the UK. Venues near Eastern Airways destinations include Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery (February 1–April 27), The Herbert Museum and Art Gallery, Coventry (May 17–August 31), Leeds City Museum (September 20–January 4, 2015) and Segedunum Roman Fort and Baths, North Shields (May 30–September 13, 2015).

www.britishmuseum.org

FROM BEDSIDE TO BATTLEFIELD

An exhibition exploring the many different nursing organisations that served during the First World War, and the experiences of the nurses themselves, takes place at the Mansfield Museum in Nottinghamshire from February 8 to March 29.

During the First World War thousands of women served as nurses. While many assisted in hospitals at home, others worked close to the battlefields. In fact nurses were closer to the front-line than in any previous conflict. Many risked and sometimes lost their lives. Their contribution, however, has often been overshadowed by the events on the battlefields themselves.

The exhibition, Everybody's Darling - The First World War Nurse, is part of Trent to Trenches a major programme of events and activities taking place across Nottingham city and county in 2014 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War.

It includes an exhibition at Nottingham Castle to honour the memory of local people affected by the conflict and will highlight how the war was a catalyst for huge social and economic change in the communities of Nottinghamshire.

www.mansfield.gov.uk
www.experiencenottinghamshire.com





Self portrait by Ewan McClure, 2013
© Ewan McClure

ABERDEEN HOSTS BP PORTRAIT AWARD

Aberdeen Art Gallery is hosting the only Scottish showing of the BP Portrait Award, the prestigious international portrait painting competition.

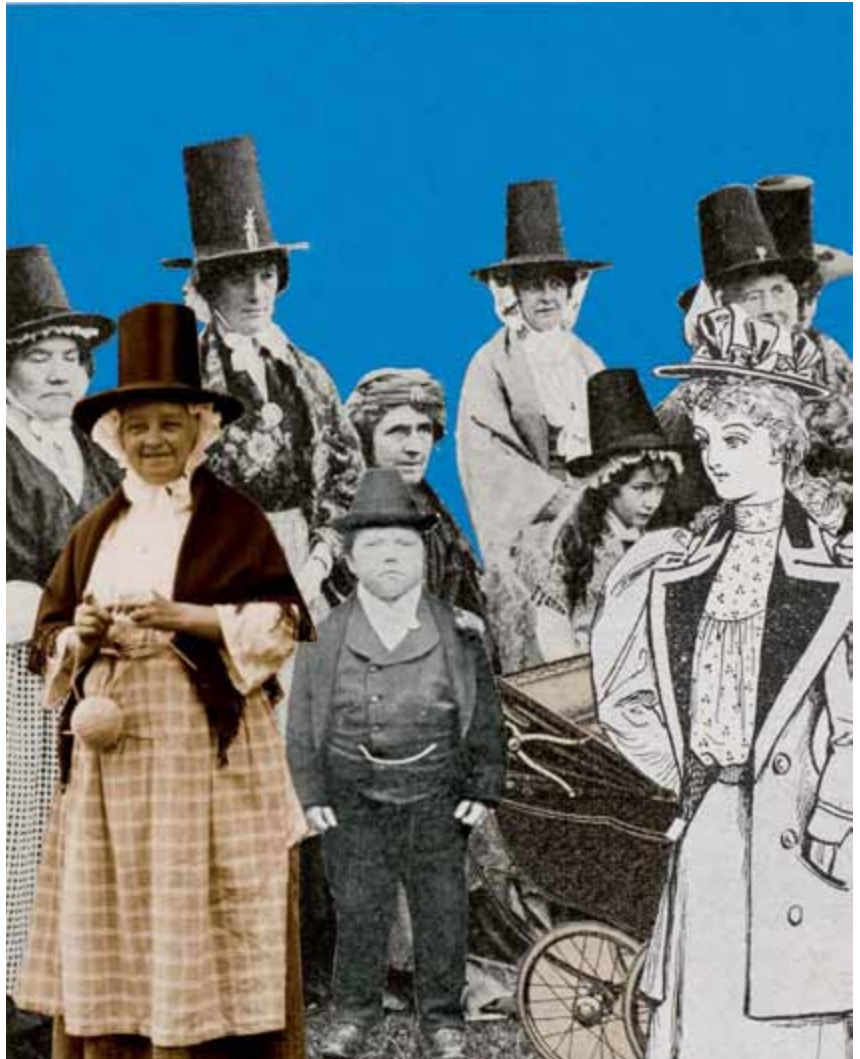
One of the most popular exhibitions in the calendar it features 55 of the most outstanding and innovative new portraits from around the world. From informal and personal studies of friends and family to revealing paintings of famous faces, the exhibition presents a variety of styles and approaches to the contemporary painted portrait.

The featured works were selected from 1,969 entries from 77 different countries and include the winner of the £30,000 first prize winner, Susanne du Toit, plus the work of the BP Young Artist 2013, Owen Normand and the BP Travel Award 2012 winner, Carl Randall who visited Japan.

For the second year running the BP Portrait Award: Next Generation will give young local people aged 14-19 the opportunity to get creative through portraiture and connect with BP Portrait Award artists.

The exhibition, which runs until February 1, is organised by the National Portrait Gallery, London, and supported by BP.

www.aagm.co.uk



And when you think of all those babies she's got. (c) Courtesy of Sir Peter Blake

BLAKE PUTS FACES TO 'PLAY FOR VOICES'

As part of the year-long celebration of the birth of Dylan Thomas, the exhibition *Llareggub: Peter Blake* illustrates Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood*, runs at the National Museum Cardiff until March 16.

This major body of work of Thomas's "play for voices" is the culmination of a 25-year project by the artist and is being exhibited for the very first time.

A longtime admirer of Dylan Thomas, Blake has always been fascinated by the radio play and remembers first hearing it while at the Royal College.

The show includes portraits of each of the characters in the cast, drawn in black and white pencil on tinted paper; watercolors illustrating the dream sequences in the play;

"narratives and locations" in a mix of media including collage; and photographs that Blake took himself in the 1970s in Laugharne – the village where the poet lived for the last years of his life and on which the play is based.

Sir Peter Blake – perhaps best known for his coverwork for the Beatles Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band – emerged as a key figure of the Pop Art movement of the late 1950s and his early paintings include imagery from advertisements, music hall, entertainment, and wrestlers, often including collaged elements.

www.museumwales.ac.uk

See Dylan Thomas feature pages 23-25

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www.grand-dijon.fr



BARE ESSENTIALS

Destinations

Your guide to Eastern Airways destinations – how to get there and where to go and what to do when you get there...



River Saône, Lyon

FRENCH CONNECTIONS

Besides the airline's scheduled service network in the UK and Norway, Eastern Airways also operates domestic services within France.

Eastern Airways' French hub is at Dijon Bourgogne Airport, in the east of the country, from where it operates regular services to Bordeaux and Toulouse.

Dijon is the capital of the Côte-d'Or department and of the wider Burgundy region, famed for its wines, including the celebrated Beaujolais. The Dijon conurbation is home to more than 250,000 people.

Bordeaux and Toulouse are respectively the seventh and fifth largest metropolitan areas in France, the former famed for its fine wines and maritime importance and the latter, a major centre for the aviation industry and among the fastest growing cities in France.

Flights between Lorient, in southern Brittany, and France's second city, Lyon, began in January 2014. See news story page 9

STAVANGER



Stavanger

WHERE

Norway's fourth largest city lies on the country's south-west coast. The airport is just nine miles out of town and is served by a regular shuttle bus. For car hire see Europcar info on back page.

VISIT

Pulpit Rock – a natural rock formation that overlooks the Lysefjord; Norwegian Petroleum Museum, Kjerfingholmen, 4001 Stavanger.

STAY AT

The Clarion, Myrhegaarden, Skagen Brygge, all in the city centre; Sola Strand Hotel, on the beach, near the airport.

SHOP AT

Kvadrat, Norway's biggest shopping centre is just seven miles south of Stavanger.

DRINK AT

Dickens, Skagenkaian; Newsman, Skagen 14.

EAT AT

Sjøhuset Skagen – specialises in traditional Norwegian food; Tango, Nedre Strandgate.

WHAT'S ON

Energy – Problem or Solution? Norwegian Petroleum Museum, until May 31; Les Misérables, Sandnes Kulturhus, Feb 7-16; Joy of Life Festival, Fritz Røed Sculpture Park in Bryne Centre, Mar 7-9.

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SHETLAND



Fire festival

WHERE

Eastern Airways operates under contract for the oil industry to both Scatsta and Sumburgh Airports. Scatsta is 24 miles north-west of Lerwick, a few miles from the Sullom Voe oil terminal. Sumburgh is the islands' commercial airport, at the southern tip of Mainland, and also 24 miles from Lerwick. For hire car visit www.boltscahire.co.uk or call 01595 693 636 (note that there are no on-airport facilities at Scatsta).

VISIT

Mareel, Lerwick; Muckle Flugga, Unst, the northernmost tip of Britain; Shetland Museum, Lerwick; Jarlshof, Grutness (both Mainland).

STAY AT

Busta House Hotel, Brae; Saxa Vord Resort, Unst; Orca Country Inn, Sandwick.

SHOP AT

Shetland Fudge, Lerwick; Jamieson & Son Knitwear, Lerwick; Valhalla Brewery, Saxa Vord.

DRINK AT

Mid Brae Inn, Brae; The Lounge Bar, Lerwick; Kiln Bar, Scalloway.

EAT AT

Busta House Hotel, Brae; Monty's Bistro, Lerwick; Saxa Vord Resort, Unst.

WHAT'S ON

Up Helly Aa Viking fire festival, Lerwick, Jan 28; Shetland jazz festival, Feb 1-28; Shetland folk festival, May 1-4.

Airport 01806 244900
Frequent daily charter services to Aberdeen, operated by Eastern Airways for the oil industry.
Tourist/Local Info 01595 98 98 98
visit.shetland.org

STORNOWAY



Beach at Uig

WHERE

To the east of the town. Taxis and car hire are available at the airport. No weekend flights. Mackinnon Self Drive: 01851 702984.

VISIT

Stornoway Museum, Francis St; Stornoway Fish Smokers, Shell St; Woodlands Centre, Lews Castle grounds; An Lanntair Arts Centre, Kenneth Street, Stornoway.

STAY AT

Hotel Hebrides, Tarbert; Royal Hotel, Cromwell St; Scarista House, west Harris; Auberge Carnish, Uig.

SHOP AT

Callanish Jewellery, Point St; This 'n That, Cromwell St; Borgh Pottery, Borgh (20 miles).

DRINK AT

Clachan Bar, North Beach; Hebridean Bar, South Beach; Whalers Rest, Francis St.

EAT AT

Digby Chick, Bank St; Golden Ocean, Cromwell St; Thai, Church St.

WHAT'S ON

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz Panto, An Lanntair, Stornoway, Jan 15-18; Donald Macleod Memorial Piping Competition, Caladh Inn, Stornoway, Mar 28 (tbc).

Airport 01851 702256
www.hial.co.uk/stornoway-airport
Eastern Airways flights direct to Aberdeen. Onward connections to Durham Tees Valley, East Midlands, Humberside, Leeds Bradford, Newcastle, Norwich, Southampton, Wick
 Tourist/Local Info 01851 703088
www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk

WICK/JOHN O'GROATS



Ackergill Tower

WHERE

One mile from the centre of Wick, half an hour's drive from Thurso. Main bus and rail stations are near to Wick centre serving most places in Caithness. Trains to Thurso and Inverness. Post bus operates Thurso-Wick-Airport. Car hire: Dunnets offers airport pick-up and drop-off, 01955 602103.

VISIT

Wick Heritage Museum; St Fergus Gallery, Sinclair Terr; Pulteney Distillery, Huddart St.

STAY AT

Ackergill Tower, Wick; Mackays Hotel, Wick; The Brown Trout Hotel, Station Rd, Watten, near Wick.

SHOP AT

John O'Groats (pottery, knitwear); Rotterdam St, Thurso (20 miles).

DRINK AT

Ebenezer's, Mackay's Hotel, Wick; Wetherspoons and Camps Bar, Wick.

EAT AT

Bord de l'Eau, Market St, Wick; Le Bistro, Thurso; Captain's Galley, Scrabster (22 miles).

WHAT'S ON

Millennium Collection for Bute House and Silver of the Stars exhibition, showcasing the best of contemporary silversmithing in Scotland, St Fergus Gallery, Wick, until Jan 4.

Airport 01955 602215
www.hial.co.uk/wick-airport.html
Eastern Airways flights direct to Aberdeen. Onward connections to Durham Tees Valley, East Midlands, Humberside, Leeds Bradford, Newcastle, Norwich, Southampton, Stavanger, Stornoway
 Tourist/Local Info 0845 22 55 121
www.wicktown.co.uk

ABERDEEN



Scotland's Best Outdoors

WHERE

Seven miles north-west of the city centre, off the A96. Regular buses into the city centre. For car hire see Europcar info back page.

VISIT

Aberdeen Maritime Museum, Shiprow; Tolbooth Museum, Castle St; Rendezvous Gallery, Forest Ave.

STAY AT

Rox Hotel, Market St; Skene House Hotel suites, various locations; Malmaison; Park Inn by Radisson; Raemoir House Hotel, Banchory.

SHOP AT

Juniper (gifts, jewellery), Belmont St; Aberdeen Antique Centre, South College St.

DRINK AT

The Monkey House, Union Terr; Pearl Lounge, Dee St; The Globe, North Silver St; Tiger Tiger, Ship Row; Balaclava Bar, Loch St.

EAT AT

Prohibition, Langstane Pl; Stage Door Restaurant, North Silver St; Cinnamon, Union St; Manzil, King St; Paula McEwen, Great Western Rd.

WHAT'S ON

BP Portrait Award, Aberdeen Art Gallery, until Feb 1; Aberdeen Jazz Festival, Mar 12-16; Scotland's Best Outdoors exhibition, Aberdeen Conference Centre, Mar 29-30.

Airport 0870 040 0006
www.aberdeenaairport.com
Eastern Airways flights direct to Cardiff, Durham Tees Valley, East Midlands, Humberside, Leeds Bradford, Newcastle, Norwich, Southampton, Stavanger, Stornoway, Wick
 Tourist/Local Info 01224 900490
www.visitaberdeen.com

NEWCASTLE



Skating@Life

WHERE

Seven miles north-west of the city centre. Metro rail link every few minutes to the city, Gateshead, the coast and Sunderland. Half-hourly bus service. Taxi fare to city, approx £12. For car hire see Europcar info on back page.

VISIT

Great North Museum, Centre for Life, Newcastle; Gateshead Quays for the Baltic and Sage Gateshead.

STAY AT

Sandman Signature, Hotel Indigo, Jesmond Dene House, all Newcastle; Hilton Newcastle Gateshead.

SHOP AT

Jules B, Jesmond; Cruise, Princess Square, Newcastle; Van Mildert, MetroCentre and Durham.

DRINK AT

Crown Posada, Side and The Forth, Pink Lane – both Newcastle; Tap & Spile, Pity Me.

EAT AT

Blackfriars, Caffè Vivo (Live Theatre), Red Mezze, Leazes Park Rd – all Newcastle; Le Raaj, Chester Moor.

WHAT'S ON

Skating@Life, Life Science Centre, Newcastle, until Feb 23; Magic Words, V&A Museum of Childhood touring exhibition, Great North Museum: Hancock, Newcastle, Mar 22- Jun 22.

Airport 0871 882 1121
www.newcastleinternational.co.uk
Eastern Airways flights direct to Aberdeen, Birmingham, Cardiff, Stavanger. Onward connections to Stornoway, Wick
 Tourist/Local Info
 0191 277 8000 / 0191 478 4222
www.visitnewcastlegateshead.com

DURHAM TEES VALLEY



Headlam Hall

WHERE

Five miles east of Darlington and ten miles west of Middlesbrough. Taxi fare to Darlington approx £8. For car hire see Europcar info back page.

VISIT

mima (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art) Centre Square; Locomotion, the National Railway Museum at Shildon; Hartlepool's Maritime Experience, Historic Quay.

STAY AT

Rockcliffe Hall, Hurworth on Tees; Holiday Inn, Scotch Corner; Headlam Hall, near Darlington; Crathorne Hall Hotel, Yarm.

SHOP AT

Psyche, Linthorpe Rd, Middlesbrough; The House, Yarm High Street; Leggs, Skinnergate, Darlington.

DRINK AT

George and Dragon, Yarm; Black Bull, Frosterley.

EAT AT

Sardis, Northgate, Darlington; Dun Cow Inn, Sedgfield; The Orangery, Rockcliffe Hall.

WHAT'S ON

William Tillyer Exhibition, Platform A Gallery, Middlesbrough, until Feb 9; Art and Optimism in 1950's Britain, mima, Feb 21-Jun 29; Stockton Calling music festival, Apr 19.

Airport 01325 332811
www.durhamteesvalleyairport.com

Eastern Airways flights direct to Aberdeen. Onward connections to Stavanger, Stormoway, Wick

Tourist/Local Info
01642 729700 / 264957
www.visitmiddlesbrough.com

HUMBERSIDE



The Deep

WHERE

Fifteen miles east of Scunthorpe, 20 miles south of Hull, 16 miles west of Grimsby, 30 miles north of Lincoln. Regular bus services to major towns. Barnetby Station three miles from airport with Intercity connections via Doncaster. Approx taxi fare to Hull £26. For car hire see Europcar info, back page.

VISIT

Museums Quarter, Hull's Old Town; The Deep, Hull; Lincoln Cathedral; Ferens Art Gallery, Hull.

STAY AT

Forest Pines Hotel, Broughton; Cave Castle Hotel, Brough; Willerby Manor, Willerby; The White Hart, Lincoln.

SHOP AT

Bailgate and Steep Hill area, Lincoln; Henri Beene, Abbeygate, Grimsby.

DRINK AT

The Wig & Mitre, Steep Hill, Lincoln; Ye Olde Black Boy, High St, Hull.

EAT AT

Figs Restaurant, Cleethorpes; Brackenborough Hotel & Restaurant, Louth; Winteringham Field, Winteringham; Pipe and Glass, South Dalton.

WHAT'S ON

Hull and the Low Countries, Ferens Art Gallery, until Jan 5; Discover Lincolnshire Weekend, Lincoln Castle, Apr 5-6.

Airport 01652 688456
www.humbersideairport.com

Eastern Airways flights direct to Aberdeen. Onward connections to Stavanger, Stormoway, Wick

Tourist/Local Info 01482 486600
www.visithullandeastyorkshire.com
www.visitlincolnshire.com
www.yorkshire.com

LEEDS BRADFORD



International Film Festival

WHERE

Nine miles north-west of Leeds centre, seven miles from Bradford. Regular Airlink 757 bus from bus and rail stations to terminal. Taxi time 25 mins. For car hire see Europcar info on back page.

VISIT

Royal Armouries, Leeds; Leeds City Museum, Millennium Square; National Media Museum, Bradford; Salts Mill, Saltaire.

STAY AT

Double Tree by Hilton, Leeds; Radisson Blu, The Headrow, Leeds; the New Ellington, Leeds; Dubrovnik boutique hotel, Oak Avenue, Bradford.

SHOP AT

Retro Boutique, Headingley Lane, Leeds; Harvey Nichols, Briggate, Leeds; Victoria Quarter, Leeds.

DRINK AT

Baby Jupiter, York Place, Leeds; Fudge Bar, Assembly St, Leeds; Haigys, Lumb Lane, Bradford.

EAT AT

Mumtaz, Clarence Dock, Leeds; Brasserie Blanc, Sovereign St, Leeds; Ujala Tandoori, Manville Terrace, Bradford.

WHAT'S ON

Nature and Figure Study: Sculpture from Japan, The Henry Moore Institute, Jan 22-Apr 20; Bradford International Film Festival, National Media Museum, Mar 27-Apr 6.

Airport 0113 250 9696
www.leedsbradfordairport.co.uk

Eastern Airways flights direct to Aberdeen. Onward connections to Stavanger, Stormoway, Wick

Tourist/Local Info 0113 242 5242
www.visitleeds.co.uk
www.yorkshire.com

EAST MIDLANDS



Cresswell Crags

WHERE

Twelve miles from both Derby and Nottingham, just off the M1 junction 24. Rail stations Loughborough, Long Eaton, Nottingham and Derby are a short bus/taxi ride from EMA. For car hire see Europcar info on back page.

VISIT

Nottingham Contemporary, Weekday Cross; Tales of Robin Hood, Maid Marian Way; Cresswell Crags, Workshop; QUAD, Cathedral Quarter, Derby.

STAY AT

Lace Market Hotel, High Pavement, Nottingham; Radisson Blu at airport; Cathedral Quarter Hotel, St Mary's Gate, Derby.

SHOP AT

Paul Smith, Middle Pavement, Nottingham; The Artisan's Studio, Arnold, Nottingham.

DRINK AT

Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem, below Nottingham Castle; The Waterfront, Canal St, Nottingham.

EAT AT

Lech Fyne, King St, Nottingham; Rod Hot Buffet, Goose Gate, Nottingham.

WHAT'S ON

Everybody's Darling – The First World War Nurse Exhibition, Mansfield Museum, Feb 8-Mar 29; National Winter Ales Festival 2014, Derby Roundhouse, Feb 19-22.

Airport 0871 919 9000
www.eastmidlandsairport.com

Eastern Airways flights direct to Aberdeen. Onward connections to Stavanger, Stormoway, Wick

Tourist/Local Info
01332 255802 / 08444 775678
www.visitderby.co.uk
www.experiencenottinghamshire.com

BIRMINGHAM



Jewellery Quarter

WHERE

Six miles east of the city, off Junction 6 of the M42. Connected by free Air-Rail Link monorail system to Birmingham International Station for trains to Birmingham and Coventry. For car hire see Europcar info on back page.

VISIT

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Chamberlain Sq; Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Vyse St, Hockley; Birmingham Library, Centenary Square.

STAY AT

Hotel Indigo, The Cube; Radisson Blu, Holloway Circus, Queensway; Marriott, Hagley Rd; Staying Cool, Rotunda.

SHOP AT

Selfridges (Bullring); Harvey Nichols (Mailbox).

DRINK AT

Bank, Brindley Pl; The Tap and Spile, Gas St; The Medicine Bar, Custard Factory; The Boiler Room, Vyse St.

EAT AT

San Carlo, Temple St; Peppers Restaurant, Bishopsgate St; Opus, Cornwall St.

WHAT'S ON

Millet To Manet, The Barber Institute, Edgbaston, until Jan 12; Photorealism, Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery, until Mar 30; Performance Car Show, NEC, Jan 1-12.

Airport 0871 282 7117
www.bhx.co.uk

Eastern Airways flights direct to Newcastle

Tourist/Local Info 0844 888 3883
www.visitbirmingham.com

CARDIFF



Norwegian Church

WHERE

Twelve miles west of Cardiff, ten miles from Junction 33 on M4. Rail link, every hour, connects airport to Cardiff Central and Bridgend. For car hire see Europcar info on back page.

VISIT

Cardiff Castle; Cardiff Bay Visitor Centre, Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff Bay; Norwegian Church Arts Centre, Cardiff Bay.

STAY AT

Peterstone Court, in the Usk Valley; St David's Hotel & Spa, Havannah St, Cardiff Bay.

SHOP AT

St Mary Street for specialist shops; Splott Market (weekends), SE of city centre.

DRINK AT

Pen and Wig, Park Grove; Park Vaults, Park Place.

EAT AT

The Potted Pig, High St; ffresh, Wales Millennium Centre; Purple Poppadom, Cowbridge Rd East.

WHAT'S ON

Cardiff's Winter Wonderland, City Hall Lawn, until Jan 5; RBS Six Nations 2014: Wales v Italy, Feb 1, Wales v France, Feb 21, Wales v Scotland, Mar 15, Millennium Stadium; St David's Day 2014 Gala BBC NOW, St David's Hall, Mar 1.

Airport 01446 711111
www.cwifly.com

Eastern Airways flights direct to Aberdeen, Newcastle.

Tourist/Local Info 0870 121 1258
www.visitcardiff.com
www.southernwales.com

NORWICH



Norfolk Mead Hotel

WHERE

Three miles north of the city. Hourly bus service into the city centre. Approx taxi fare to Norwich £7. For car hire see Europcar info on back page.

VISIT

Norwich Cathedral, The Close; Norwich Castle, Elm Hill; Sandringham Estate, Norfolk; Norwich Puppet Theatre, Whitefriars, Norwich.

STAY AT

The Maids Head Hotel, Tombland; De Vere Dunston Hall Hotel & Golf Club, Ipswich Rd; Marriott Sprowston Manor Hotel & Country Club; Barnham Broom Hotel & Spa, Honingham Rd. Norfolk Mead Hotel, Coltishall.

SHOP AT

Jarrold's, London Street; Soho Hip, Pottergate; Ginger Ladies Wear, Timberhill.

DRINK AT

The Fat Cat, West End St; The Adam & Eve, Bishopgate; The Wine Press, Woburn Court, Guildhall Hill; The Last Wine Bar, St Georges St.

EAT AT

Tatlers, Tombland; Mambo Jambo, Lower Goat Lane; Umberto's Trattoria Italia, St Benedicts St.

WHAT'S ON

Roman Empire: Power and People, Norwich Castle, until Apr 27; Norwich Dragon Festival 2014, Feb 10-23.

Airport 01603 411923
www.norwichairport.co.uk

Eastern Airways flights direct to Aberdeen. Onward connections to Stavanger, Stormoway, Wick

Tourist/Local Info 01603 213999
www.visitnorwich.co.uk

SOUTHAMPTON



The First Cut

WHERE

Five miles north of city. Parkway Station beside terminal, three trains hourly to Southampton and London Waterloo. Buses hourly to the city. For car hire see Europcar info on back page.

VISIT

Solent Sky, Hall of Aviation, Gilbert Rd South; Maritime Museum, Town Quay Rd; Spinnaker Tower, Portsmouth, National Motor Museum, Beaulieu.

STAY AT

The White Star Tavern and Dining Rooms, Oxford St; De Vere Grand Harbour Hotel, West Quay Rd; Montagu Arms, Beaulieu; Chilworth Manor, Chilworth; Carey's Manor, Brockenhurst.

SHOP AT

WestQuay, city centre; Bargate Centre, East Bargate; Antiques quarter, Old Northern Rd; Gunwharf Quays, Portsmouth.

DRINK AT

The Dolphin, Osborne Road South; The Frog and Frigate, Canute Rd; Ocean & Collins, Vincent's Walk.

EAT AT

Olive Tree, Oxford St; P.O.S.H. Queensway; The Purbani, Botley.

WHAT'S ON

The First Cut – Paper at the Cutting Edge, SeaCity Museum, until Jan 12; Sustainable Moto Expo, Beaulieu, Apr 5-6 (tbc).

Airport 0870 040 0009
www.southamptonairport.com

Eastern Airways flights direct to Aberdeen. Onward connections to Stavanger, Stormoway, Wick

Tourist/Local Info 023 8083 3333
www.discoversouthampton.co.uk

DIJON: A CITY ON THE MOVE

There's a lot more to Dijon than mustard...

Dijon, the capital of Burgundy, has been recognised as a city of gastronomy and is preparing to open its 26,000m² International Gastronomy Exhibition Centre entirely dedicated to the "French gastronomic meal", which is registered on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

But there's more to Dijon than food. It's a city of art and history, with one of the largest historical centres in France. Its Fine Arts Museum, currently undergoing renovation, is located in the prestigious former palace of the Dukes and the Estates of Burgundy and is among the oldest in France with one of the most extensive collections.

The city is home to six museums and two renowned contemporary art centres. With everything from opera, theatre and music to famous shows and exhibitions on offer, Dijon has gained a reputation as a cultural capital with top-of-the-range facilities – such as the 1,600 seat auditorium acclaimed around the world for its superb acoustics.

Located at the start of the "grands crus" wine road, Dijon is the ideal place to discover some of the world's greatest wines. In 2015, the "climats" of the Burgundy vineyards hope to



be granted World Heritage status by UNESCO. Dijon has been a major player in this process which will honour 2,000 years of wine-making traditions in Burgundy.

But this city of 250,000 inhabitants, within an urban area of more than 400,000, is also a regional capital and one which continues to develop. Over the past ten years, over a billion euros have been invested in major infrastructure. This includes: two tramway lines, a Zenith concert hall with 9,000 seats, an Olympic size swimming pool, a new hospital, a new sports stadium, completion

of the city bypass, 400 hectares of business parks, an expanded regional mall, redevelopment of the university campus (with 30,000 students), and twelve eco-friendly districts. With its pedestrianised town centre and the development of public and green transport, including 250km of cycle tracks, the city is a model of urban ecology.

Dijon is ideally located in Eastern France. The Rhine-Rhône TGV rail service has improved accessibility by linking it to Alsace, Switzerland and Germany, as has the arrival of Eastern Airways linking Dijon to the two major cities of Bordeaux and Toulouse in south-west France. Dijon is now one of the most important high speed rail hubs in the country; it also lies at the junction of several motorways. So there isn't the slightest excuse not to visit, or, indeed, revisit!

Going to Dijon with Eastern Airways: daily flights (except Saturdays) to Bordeaux and Toulouse.

Dijon-Bourgogne Airport is located in Longvic in the south of the city and can be reached from the city-centre and the train station by the city bus network.



SECRET SIGHTS

ESSENTIAL GUIDE

Roly Smith invites you to discover some less visited but special places ...

Sometimes it's good just to get away from the crowds and find a place where you don't have to queue for tickets or jostle with camera-clicking tour parties, ticking off the sights before being whisked off to the next honeypot.

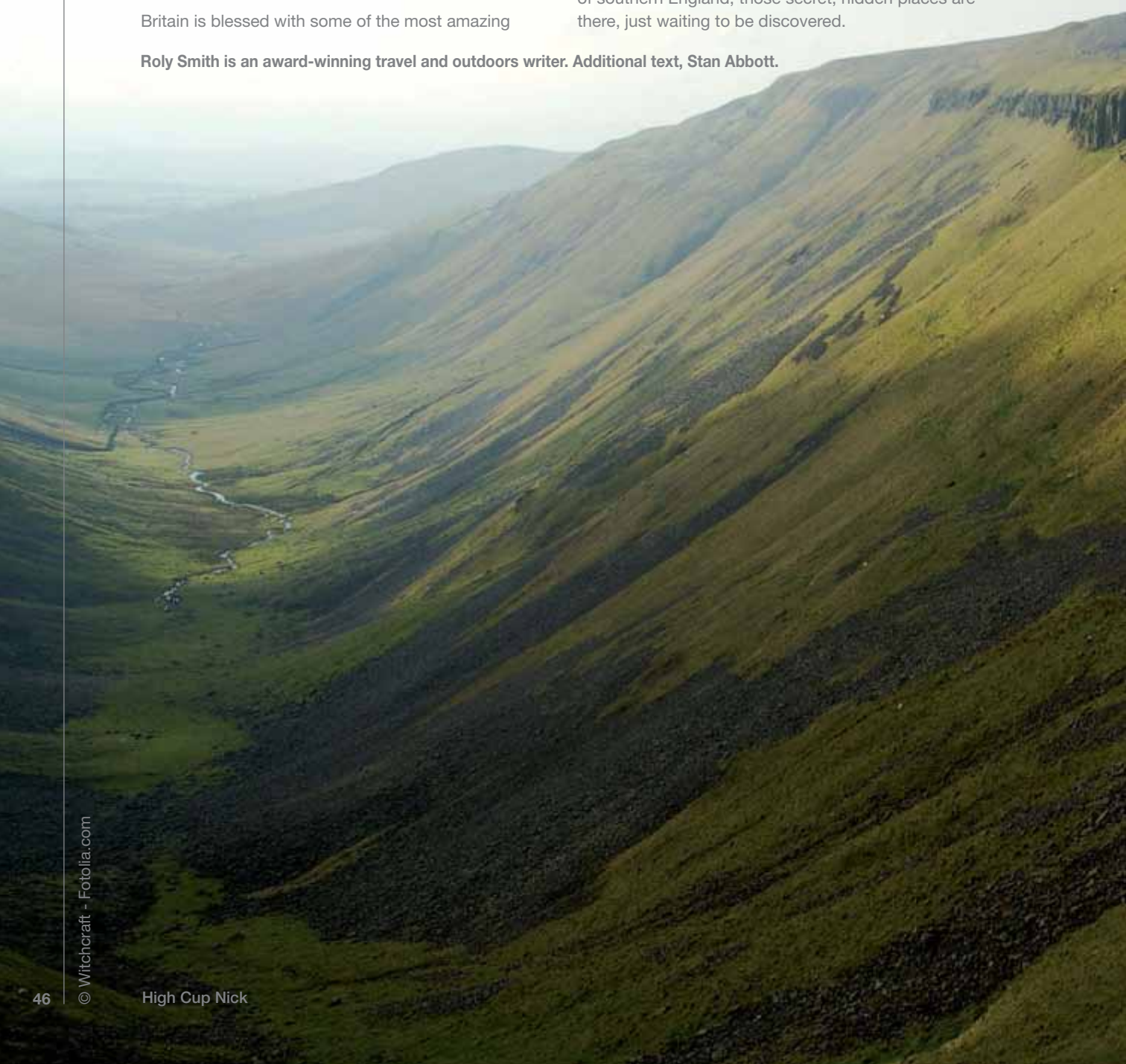
If you're one of those discerning people who prefer to find places you can have to yourself, with time and space to absorb the atmosphere and appreciate their spirit, then this is the guide for you.

Britain is blessed with some of the most amazing

natural features in the world, often laced with a tasty soupçon of myth, legend and history. Despite being a relatively crowded country, there are still many secret, fascinating places to be found, if you are prepared to look hard enough. Norway too, has its secret spots among the towering mountains and meandering fjords.

From the stern granite peaks of Norway and the Scottish Highlands to the soft, rolling chalk Downlands of southern England, those secret, hidden places are there, just waiting to be discovered.

Roly Smith is an award-winning travel and outdoors writer. Additional text, Stan Abbott.





Scotland

FAIR ISLE

Britain's most remote inhabited island is no more than a woolly jumper or a line in the Shipping Forecast to most, but the challenge of getting there brings its own rewards. The recently rebuilt Bird Observatory serves as hotel and bar and is the place to catch up with the avian waifs and strays blown onto the craggy isle that's home to about 70 people. The Good Shepherd rolls across the choppy seas from Sumburgh, or take the short flight from Tingwall.

Nearest Eastern Airways airport – Scatsta

UIG BEACH

It was close to the vast expanse of golden sand that is Uig Bay that the celebrated Viking Chessmen were discovered. Stand in the dunes and be mesmerised by the advance and retreat of the Atlantic rollers.

Nearest Eastern Airways airport – Stornoway

MITHER TAP, BENNACHIE

The small but magnificently-sited hill fort – which crowns Mither Tap, the eastern summit of Bennachie, near Inverurie about 20 miles north west of Aberdeen – may have witnessed the last epic battle of imperial Rome against the Britons. It has been claimed that the battle of Mons Graupius between the forces of Calgacus and Agricola took place on its northern slopes in AD 83. Whatever the truth, the view from the 1,698ft summit is one of the best in eastern Scotland.

Nearest Eastern Airways airport – Aberdeen

COIRE GABHAIL, GLENCOE

Coire Gabhail (pronounced “Corry Gale”) is also known as the Lost Valley of Glencoe. It is situated between the first and second Sisters of the famed Three Sisters of Glencoe – the triple buttresses of Beinn Fhada, Gear Aonach and Aonach Dubh, which thrust menacingly over the A82 like a clenched fist. This hidden valley was apparently where the Macdonalds hid their cattle when cattle-rustling was a something of a croft industry in the Highlands.

Nearest Eastern Airways airport – Aberdeen

>>

Northern England

GUILE POINT

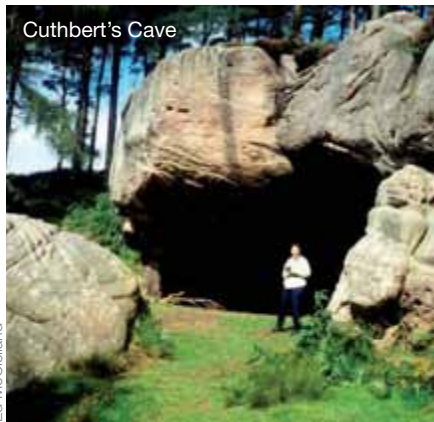
Perhaps the loneliest spot on the wild Northumberland coast, Guile Point stands sentry at the northernmost extremity of Ross Sands at the tricky entry to Holy Island harbour, marked by two guiding towers. Two brick obelisks are built in the shape of elongated pyramids and originally had a wrought iron triangle on a metal staff on the top of each. To the north, across the water, stands Lindisfarne Castle and, to the south, the dramatic Bamburgh Castle.

Nearest Eastern Airways airport – Newcastle

HIGH CUP NICK

High Cup Nick has been dubbed the Grand Canyon of the Pennines. This huge bite out of the western scarp of the range, above Dufton, has also been called the most glorious landscape feature in northern England. The result of glacial action, the vast amphitheatre drops away beneath your feet, with the tiny silver thread of High Cup Gill winding hundreds of feet below and the western views extending far out across the Vale of Eden to the distant blue outline of the Lakeland hills.

Nearest Eastern Airways airport – Durham Tees Valley



Ed McClelland

CUTHBERT'S CAVE

According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, when the Viking Danes ravaged the holy abbey of Lindisfarne in AD 875, the monks took the body of St Cuthbert (locally known as "Cuddy") away and "wandered about for seven years". One of the legendary places in which the monks took shelter with their holy relic was Cuthbert's Cave, in the Kyloe Hills, between Belford and Lowick. The cave, hidden away in a conifer plantation, is formed by an overhanging sandstone rock supported by a natural stone pillar, and is an easy walk from the National Trust car park at Holburn Grange.

Nearest Eastern Airways airport – Newcastle

SPURN POINT

Spurn Point, the so-called "tail of Yorkshire" hanging down into the jaw of the mighty Humber, is one of the strangest places in England. When you eventually reach it, after a 20-mile drive from Hull, you feel as if you have arrived at the end of the Earth, with nothing between you and the rolling waters of the North Sea on one side and the Humber Estuary on the other. Spurn is a thin, constantly shifting four-mile spit of land, which has a constant air of danger and impermanency.

Nearest Eastern Airways airport – Humberside

Midlands

LUD'S CHURCH

Hidden away, deep in the oaks and beeches of Back Forest, north of the dramatic gritstone outcrop of The Roaches, on the Staffordshire moorlands, lies the secluded chasm known as Lud's Church. This 60ft deep defile, dripping with green mosses, lichens and ferns, is the purported Green Chapel, scene of the beheading ritual in the climax of the early 15th century Arthurian alliterative poem Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. The "church" was also the site of secret services held by 14th century Lollards.

Nearest Eastern Airways airports – East Midlands and Birmingham

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St Govan's Chapel

ALPORT CASTLES

Alport Castles – just off the A57 Snake Road in one of the Peak District's most remote dales, on the southern slopes of Bleaklow – is claimed to be Britain's largest landslip. Its tottering towers and castellated piles would seem to be more at home in the red rock deserts of Arizona than the green recesses of Alport Dale, in Derbyshire. Here the unstable shales of Birchin Hat have slumped away from the hillside to create this crazy pile of gritstone blocks, dominated by the castle-like Tower.

Nearest Eastern Airways airports – East Midlands or Birmingham

Southern England

BACONSTHORPE CASTLE

Although close to Sheringham, this 15th century moated Norfolk house, is quite challenging to find, but – surrounded by a moat that still holds water, it has an atmosphere all its own.

Nearest Eastern Airways airport – Norwich

KINGLEY BOTTOM

Kingley Bottom (or Vale, as officialdom likes to call it) lies tucked away, hardly signposted, in a chalky fold of Stoke Down and Bow Hill, near the village of West Stoke, about three miles north west of Chichester. It's worth the effort to find it because the walk to the airy summit of the Downs takes you through what is claimed to be the largest yew forest in Europe – a landscape of tortured, gnarled and twisted trunks and dark, cave-like clearings, where you half expect to see fairies or gnomes pop up at every turn.

Nearest Eastern Airways airport – Southampton



Preikestolen

Terje Rakke/Nordic Life 2011

WISTMAN'S WOOD

The wizened, lichen-encrusted oaks of Wistman's Wood, hidden away in the desolate valley of the West Dart River in the moorland heart of Dartmoor near Two Bridges, represent the spirit of the moor every bit as much as the windswept tors above. It is thought to take its name from the old West Country word "wist", which means sad or uncanny, so the wood may be named after a local, other-worldly spirit. As you peep into the stunted, twisted, fern-decked branches of the oaks, you can easily believe in those teashop souvenirs that feature the celebrated Dartmoor pixies.

Nearest Eastern Airways airport – Southampton

Wales

ST GOVAN'S CHAPEL

As you descend the steep, allegedly uncountable, steps through the cliffs to visit the tiny, 13th century Chapel of St Govan, west of St Govan's Head on the Pembrokeshire Coast, you will see a cleft in the rocks. This is where the shy hermit is said to have disappeared when visitors called, and nearby is his well, which is supposed to have curative properties.

Nearest Eastern Airways airport – Cardiff

TRE'R CEIRI HILL FORT

Many people believe the view from this isolated eastern summit of Yr Eifl, on the Lleyn Peninsula, near Llanaelhaearn, to be one of the finest viewpoints in Wales. The all-encompassing view extends southwards across the shimmering waters of Cardigan Bay to Mynydd Preseli (source of the Stonehenge bluestones), to the dim blue outline of Ireland's Wicklow Hills.

Nearest Eastern Airways airports – Cardiff and Birmingham

Norway

PREIKESTOLEN

OK, you may find a queue of people winding up the strenuous, rocky, two-mile trail up to the Preikestolen (Pulpit) rock from the Preikestolen Fjellstue mountain lodge, high in the Rogaland hills north east of Stavanger. But it's undoubtedly one of Norway's finest natural attractions, and the tough, two-hour, 1,150ft slog to the extraordinary 80ft square table rock, rising sheer above the Lysefjord by 2,000ft, ensures that those you find on arrival will be like-minded wilderness seekers.

Nearest Eastern Airways airport – Stavanger



DON'T GIVE PIGEONS THE BIRD

When I heard Dame Vera Lynn speaking on the radio recently about the “utter cruelty” of pigeon racing and calling for the sport to be banned, I must admit I felt a sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach that was more than just a reaction to the Gregg’s cheese-and-onion pasty I was eating.

It is fair to say that so far this has not been a good century for pigeon racing. The number of participants has been falling, more and more birds have been getting lost. Confused by mobile-phone signals, picked off by falcons – the explanations vary – though perhaps the most persuasive was aired to me by a veteran birdman a few years back: “One time when a bird got old you put it in a pie, but these days the young lads just let them go on indefinitely.”

Part of pigeon-racing’s appeal in tougher times was that it was – like champion leek growing – a hobby you could eat. These days people go to Tesco.

Those pigeons that do find their way back home are coming under increased scrutiny. Pigeons are sometimes called “the racehorses of the skies”, but given their habit of attracting scandal these days, they seem more like “the racing cyclists of the clouds”.

Doping scandals have proliferated since Belgian police raided lofts in 2001. The difficulty of drug-testing pigeons – how do you get them to pee into a flask? – is exacerbated in the UK by the fact that until relatively recently the Royal Pigeon Racing Association had to send samples to South Africa to be tested.

Not that drug use is new to the sport. The hope of finding a winning potion means pigeon racing has never been without quacks. The great Belgian writer George Simenon recalled how, in the 1920s, a chemist in his home city of Liège had perfected a particularly potent pigeon purgative that literally lightened a bird’s load during races. Local fanciers used to queue round the block to buy it. Presumably it was less



“IF THE BLOKE REALLY WANTED TO IMPORT ILLEGAL PIGEON DOPE, HE COULD GET THE BIRDS TO BRING IT IN THEMSELVES.”

popular with everybody else in Liège, with the possible exception of the laundry firms.

Belgium was where pigeon racing was invented (the sport was once so popular they used to show races on television) and it is well known as the centre for what British enthusiasts tend to refer to as “continental practices”. This state of affairs was brought to my attention back in the 1990s when a North East England pigeon-fancier of my acquaintance asked if I would pick up some “stuff for the birds” for him while I was visiting Flanders.

He knew a Belgian lad, he explained, who had something that could fix the vexed problem of moulting. The trouble with pigeons, he said, is that they shed their feathers during the prime racing months of the season and the fewer feathers they have the slower they fly, but if you just give them a little dose of this stuff...

I envisaged a scene at the customs desk at Newcastle Airport, in which packets of anabolics and corticosteroids were laid out in front of me by stern-faced officials, and I was forced to confess that I was acting as mule for a bird. I told the pigeon-fancier I didn’t think I could oblige.

Later it crossed my mind that if the bloke really wanted to import illegal pigeon dope, he could get the birds to bring it in themselves. A notion that might be dismissed as whimsical were it not for the fact that in Bosnia a few years ago prison warders recently apprehended a pigeon bringing heroin into a jail near Srebrenica.

“We do not know what to do with the pigeon,” the deputy warden, Josip Pojavnik, said. “But for the time being it will remain behind bars.”

Sometimes it’s a dog’s life being a pigeon.



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INVEST IN TEES VALLEY

AN EASTERN AIRWAYS MAGAZINE SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT IN ASSOCIATION WITH TEES VALLEY UNLIMITED | NEW YEAR 2014



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WELCOME

Eastern Airways Magazine is delighted to work in partnership with Tees Valley Unlimited, and with the support of NOF energy, to bring you this special supplement, highlighting the investment opportunities available in the Tees Valley.

Eastern Airways prides itself on serving the needs of the offshore energy sector by providing fast, frequent connections from important regional centres to Aberdeen, the UK's energy capital.

With four return flights daily, Monday to Friday, Durham Tees Valley is a key part of that network, with the Tees Valley also providing an increasingly attractive option for Aberdeen companies looking to outsource parts of their operations.

But of course the Tees Valley is more than just a business location: as this supplement shows, it's also a great place to live and enjoy life and we're pleased to share some of its secrets with you!

THE EASTERN AIRWAYS TEAM

Tees Valley Unlimited is delighted to be supporting this Eastern Airways offshore industry and investment supplement.

We are the Local Enterprise Partnership for the Tees Valley in the North East of England, a public-private partnership working to develop and promote the Tees Valley economy.

We have a dedicated Business Investment Team who have more than 20 years of experience and knowledge and are on hand to give support to companies looking to invest and grow in the area.

The services we offer include pre-investment support; advising on sites, recruitment and skills, financial support and post-investment assistance; helping companies contact potential customers and suppliers and helping grow their business. With strong links with both public and private organisations in the area we can provide introductions to people who offer specialist assistance and advice.

Our hands-on approach has resulted in numerous investments over recent years, despite the challenging global economic

environment, resulting in £600 million of private sector investments since April 2011. Projects have included major investments in the oil and gas and offshore wind sectors.

With a rich industrial heritage, Tees Valley has a long track record of delivering large scale projects in oil and gas, fabrication and decommissioning. In addition, over 200 companies based in the Tees Valley already operate in the emerging offshore wind sector.

In this supplement you will find information about why so many companies in the offshore industries have chosen Tees Valley to locate and why the area continues to see considerable investment both from the companies who are already here and new companies who are looking for a UK base.

With port facilities, fantastic infrastructure and logistics and a ready skilled workforce the Tees Valley is well placed to offer your company the solutions to success in your sector.

NEIL KENLEY

Director of Business Investment
Tees Valley Unlimited

This publication is produced as a supplement to Eastern Airways Magazine. Eastern Airways is one of the UK's leading independent airlines and, thanks to its strategic connections from Aberdeen and Stavanger, an important player in the offshore energy sector.

Copies of this supplement have been produced as a stand-alone publication and distributed by NOF Energy, the leading business development organisation for companies involved in the UK oil, gas and energy sectors.

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Published for Eastern Airways by Gravity Magazines, Abbey Business Centre, Pity Me, Durham, DH1 5JZ.
www.gravity-consulting.com Tel: +44 (0)191 383 2838.
Publisher: Stan Abbott Design: Barbara Allen

Advertising: Liz Reekie Tel: +44 (0) 7563 796103 / +44 (0) 1434 240947
e-mail: advertising@gravitymagazines.com

Print: Buxton Press

ISSN: 1477-3031 © December 2013

NOF ENERGY MEMBERS FLY THE FLAG FOR TEES VALLEY INDUSTRY



JOANNE LENG MBE
Deputy Chief Executive
of NOF Energy

ability to build on its engineering heritage to deliver innovative and technology-led solutions – an ability that is building its reputation in the global market.

“We work closely with our members to deliver business development solutions that enable them to access new opportunities and markets,” says Joanne Leng MBE, Deputy Chief Executive of NOF Energy. “Our members in the Tees Valley are particularly active and are very effective at flying the flag for the expert supply chain that exists in the area,” she added.

“The area has a wealth of quality companies serving different areas of the energy industry,” said Joanne. “From its excellent subsea sector, which includes companies such as Modus and Deep Ocean, to its high-quality specialist software solution-providers – including the current NOF Energy Company of the Year award winner, Phusion – the Tees Valley is rich with innovative, technology-led companies.”

While oil and gas remain at the core of the UK’s energy mix, there is an increasing requirement for new and emerging energy resources, such as offshore renewables, which are creating opportunities for Tees Valley suppliers.

“TAG Energy Solutions, Wilton Engineering and Falck Safety Services, which are all located on the River Tees, are just a trio of the area’s businesses that have transferred expertise from oil and gas to also serve offshore renewables,” said Joanne.

“All of these companies exemplify the evolution of Tees Valley industry that has built on its heritage to become globally recognised for its skills, innovation and technology.”

For more information about NOF Energy visit www.nofenergy.co.uk or call 0191 384 6464

The Tees Valley is one of the UK’s key locations for energy sector supply chain activity, says business development organisation, NOF Energy.

NOF Energy, which represents more than 440 companies in the oil, gas, nuclear and offshore renewables supply chain, highlights the area’s

TEES VALLEY

A great quality of life

Each of the five authorities that make up Tees Valley has its own special attributes and attractions, including impressive museums and galleries. Stockton’s Preston Park features some fine collections of art and artefacts, as well as a Victorian Street and Butterfly World, where the pretty creatures flutter among tropical trees and waterfalls.

Redcar and Cleveland’s Kirkleatham Hall is another good family local history venue, which also boasts an owl centre in its grounds.

Then there’s Darlington’s railway museum, Hartlepool’s historic Quay – where the magnificent HMS Trincomalee is berthed – and the magnificent Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, mima, home to an extensive collection and venue for the best touring exhibitions.

For a more active day out, there are few more exciting experiences than white water rafting on the Tees Barrage, at Stockton – surely the most accessible location for enjoying an activity more commonly associated with the Colorado Rapids.

For a more leisurely river experience, the Teesside Princess departs from Stockton’s Castlegate Quay, beside the replica HMS Bark Endeavour for evening cruises or party nights.

Some of the North of England’s most spectacular scenery is on the doorstep of Tees Valley, with the escarpment of the Cleveland Hills, including the “mini-Matterhorn of Roseberry Topping, fringing the southern edge of conurbation and marking the start of the North York Moors National Park.

At the edge of the conurbation itself is the Victorian resort of Saltburn, standing proud on its hilltop, which can be reached by an original Victorian cliff lift.

The conurbation is also surrounded by attractive market towns, such as Yarm, Stokesley and Sedgfield, which offer great living, with vibrant high streets and excellent eateries.

West of Darlington takes you into the Pennine foothills of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Roseberry Topping

NORTECH SHOWS COMMITMENT WITH NEW APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME

Nortech, the award winning engineering design and procurement service provider, based at Wynyard, Tees Valley, has demonstrated its commitment to the area’s future by launching an internal apprenticeship programme.

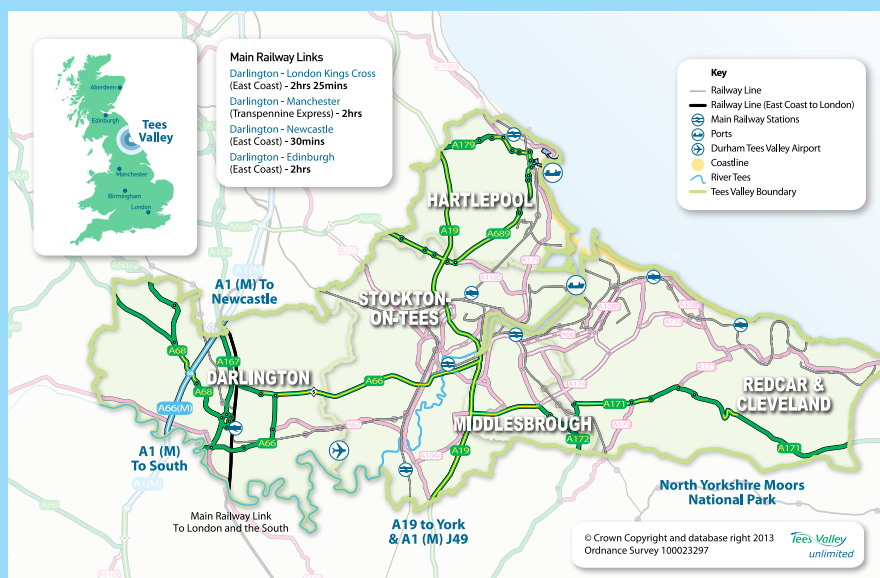
Nortech serves the onshore and offshore oil and gas, process, petrochemical and iron and steel industries and has expanded rapidly after securing a number of significant contracts with clients in the

burgeoning oil and gas sector.

Recent statistics have revealed that, despite an 88 per cent increase in adult engineering apprenticeships, there has been an eight per cent fall in young engineering apprenticeships (16-18), as well as a nine per cent decrease in engineering apprenticeships overall (16-25), leading to an increasingly older engineering workforce as well as lack of new talent entering the industry.

Bryan Bunn, of Nortech, has set up a number of schemes to tackle the issue, including an internal apprenticeship programme, which will take at least two new apprentices every year, supporting young people through technical training organisations, college or university. Nortech also provides work-based learning for their apprenticeships, as well as local campaigns for the promotion of engineering in secondary schools.

www.nortech-group.com



A great place to invest

Tees Valley has built a world class reputation over many years for delivering large-scale projects in oil and gas, ship building, fabrication and decommissioning.

Tees Valley is a key centre for the offshore sector in North East England, which has produced more than 70 per cent of the oil platforms and heavy engineering for the North Sea.

Tees Valley's other main strengths lie in its deep water ports, ideally located for servicing the North Sea and working offshore; expert offshore fabrication facilities; prime land availability; as well as 12 Enterprise Zone sites and excellent supply chain, boasting the world's largest cluster of subsea cabling and trenching companies.

Opportunities include all areas of the oil and gas and energy market but the area's expertise and experience is not only still supporting and developing oil and gas production, but is now also increasingly being used to build renewable energy assets, particularly offshore wind. Little wonder then that Tees Valley has been awarded UK Government CORE status as a Centre for Offshore Renewable Engineering – in recognition of the existing port infrastructure, skills, supply chain and local government support – to enable rapid growth in the offshore wind sector.

Tees Valley has built a worldwide reputation on its history of always being at the forefront of engineering and manufacturing developments, but it has never rested on its laurels and today it continues its proud tradition of pioneering and innovation.

One of the largest oil and gas clusters in the UK: The oil and gas supply chain in Tees Valley is made up of more than 400 direct, and 3,000 indirect companies, employing more than 4,250 people, including leading industry names such as BP Cats, Conoco Phillips, SABIC, Lotte, Huntsman, Wilton Engineering and Heerema.

Engineering heritage: Apart from offshore and renewables, Tees Valley also has a rich engineering and manufacturing heritage ranging from automotive, ship building, chemicals and pharmaceuticals to steel, construction and power generation.

Cost competitive location: Tees Valley has some of the lowest operating costs in the UK, with rents and rates about half those of major UK cities and a quarter of those in London and the South East.

Location to outsource and split production from Aberdeen: Rents and rates are up to four times cheaper than Aberdeen, and Tees Valley also has the skilled and affordable workforce required by today's demanding market.

Growing digital sector: many digital companies operating also serve the oil and gas sector. These include Unasys, Datum360, Faithful & Gould and K Home International.

One of the largest integrated chemical complex in the UK in terms of manufacturing capacity and the second largest in Western Europe in terms of manufacturing capacity: It is home to a range of key clusters in the chemical sector including refining, petrochemicals, speciality and fine chemicals, plastics, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals.

A growing reputation as a renewable energy location: It is at the cutting edge of developments, exploring opportunities in multiple sectors, including offshore wind; industrial symbiosis; developing new feedstock technologies for the process sector; district heating; and anaerobic digestion. It also boasts a growing cluster of biomass, biofuel and bioethanol plants.

New fund is the catalyst Tees Valley firms need to win new contracts

An innovative new fund launched by Tees Valley Unlimited at the end of June, 2013 is set to provide a significant boost for small, medium and large businesses in the Tees Valley. It aims to help them unlock additional contracts valued at £700 million over the next ten years.

The Local Enterprise Partnership established the £10 million Tees Valley Catalyst Fund having identified financing bonds as a barrier to growth. A UK first, the fund helps businesses secure new contracts by providing short-term finance to fund performance and warranty bonds. Such funding is often required for relatively short periods (typically 12 – 24 months).

Leading UK SME investor, FW Capital is managing the 'evergreen' fund for Tees Valley Unlimited which will see interest and repayments ploughed back into future lending. Since launch, businesses have shown significant interest in the fund. FW Capital has established a Billingham office and recruited two investment executives who are already working on a pipeline of proposals.

Winning new contracts could significantly boost many businesses' prospects, enabling them to expand and recruit new staff. *Joanne Pratt*, FW Capital's Fund Manager in the North East explains how the Tees Valley Catalyst Fund can help.



New FW Capital team: Joanne Pratt, Fund Manager, Nicky Atkinson and Chris Johnson, Investment Executives

With more and more companies insisting on performance and warranty bonds when awarding contracts, the launch of the Tees Valley Catalyst Fund at the end of June, 2013 has been welcomed by many Tees Valley businesses. The bonds, which can be a drain on a supplier's cash reserves, provide a financial guarantee that the supplier will deliver on time and to an agreed specification.

Open to businesses in Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees, the £10

million Catalyst Fund can now provide short-term finance of between £100,000 and £2 million to fund the cash security often required for these bonds.

Tees Valley Unlimited, the Local Enterprise Partnership for Tees Valley highlighted the need for the innovative fund in the region and secured the capital from the Regional Growth Fund.

Managed by FW Capital, the leading UK SME investor, the Catalyst Fund is the first of its kind anywhere in the UK

and uniquely available to Tees Valley businesses.

"The Tees Valley Catalyst Fund is an innovative fund focused on providing ambitious local businesses with the backing they need to win new contracts," explained Joanne Pratt, FW Capital's Fund Manager in the North East. "Many established Tees Valley businesses have the capacity and technical know-how to beat the competition and win new contracts. Indeed, they're often shortlisted at tender stage, but lack the cash



reserves to set up any bond facilities required. We hope that the Catalyst Fund's backing will enable them to overcome this obstacle."

Funding is often only required for a relatively short period (typically 12 – 24 months) and FW Capital can adopt

**“THE CATALYST
FUND IS THE
FIRST OF ITS KIND
ANYWHERE IN THE
UK AND UNIQUELY
AVAILABLE TO TEES
VALLEY BUSINESSES.”**

a flexible approach that recognises businesses' individual requirements.

Companies can also access the Catalyst Fund to extend existing facilities, giving them the confidence to bid for further contracts they may have struggled to fund.

Since launch, FW Capital has opened its Billingham office and Pratt has recruited investment executives Nicky Atkinson and Chris Johnson to make investments from the fund.

“The Catalyst Fund has encouraged a lot of interest from local businesses and our Tees Valley team is already working on an interesting pipeline of proposals,” Pratt explained. “The

Tees Valley has a concentration of businesses supplying the energy sector, for instance, particularly in the oil and gas and renewables sectors. Many of them have opportunities to expand in their domestic markets with the fund's backing. I hope they'll also be looking to consider potential export opportunities and continue to build the region's reputation as a strong performer when it comes to exports.”

The Catalyst Fund can back businesses in a wide range of sectors to bid for new contracts. They must be investment-ready, revenue-earning and have a clear business plan demonstrating a strong case for investment.

Overall, the Catalyst Fund is aiming high – it hopes to strengthen the local economy by helping the region's businesses win additional contracts valued at £700 million and to support around 1,440 jobs in Tees Valley over the next ten years. Added to this, it's set up to be an 'evergreen' fund with interest and repayments ploughed back into future lending.

Pratt believes that the Catalyst Fund has the potential to boost the confidence of businesses in the region and also transform their prospects.

“The Tees Valley Catalyst Fund has been created specifically for ambitious Tees Valley businesses. It can make a significant contribution to both their future prosperity as well as to the region as a whole. Ultimately, I hope its impact will be much greater than £700 million,” she concludes.

Businesses wishing to apply for funding should contact Chris Johnson on 01642 343 495 or Nicky Atkinson on 01642 343 494 or visit www.fwcapital.co.uk/catalystfund

Excellent logistics, infrastructure and connectivity

With fast-flowing roads, excellent rail connections, two airports on the doorstep and one of the UK's largest ports, Tees Valley is easy to get to and around.

The area is particularly well connected to the main arterial road network of the UK. The A1(M) and the A19 run north-south through the region and the A66 runs east-west. These roads connect Tees Valley to other major manufacturing centres and major sea ports.

The rail network provides both fast passenger connections and rail freight options with both the East Coast Main Line and Grand Central offering direct passenger routes to London. For rail freight facilities, Tees Valley is provided for by a number of operators, including EWS and Freightliner. Providers operate modern rolling stock and offer connections to all parts of the UK and – via the Channel Tunnel – to the rest of Europe.

Tees Valley is connected to national and international locations via two international airports, Durham Tees Valley and Newcastle International. Durham Tees Valley offers frequent scheduled services, by Eastern Airways, to Aberdeen, as well as KLM services to Amsterdam, while Newcastle Airport is approximately 40 minutes from Tees Valley, from where frequent links offer services to key destinations, including Dubai, Stavanger, Paris, Düsseldorf, Copenhagen, Barcelona and Dublin, as well as a range of UK domestic routes.

PD Ports owns and operates the Ports of Tees and Hartlepool (known as Teesport), a major deep-sea complex at the heart of the industrial Tees Valley. The port is the UK's fourth largest by tonnage and covers an area of 200 hectares (490 acres) along the southern bank of the River Tees.

At its heart is Tees Dock, a deepwater facility some five miles from the sea. Teesport handles more than 6,000 ships a year and is strongly associated with petrochemicals, manufacturing and engineering. The estate is rail-connected and close to the A66 trans-Pennine route, and to other major trunk roads. Facilities include two container quays and roll-on-roll-off facilities.





THE SKILLS ARE HERE..

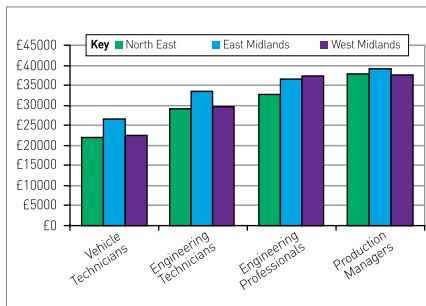
Tees Valley's industrial heritage means it has a skilled and available manufacturing and engineering workforce

Tees Valley's location and transport connections give it a wide catchment area of labour and, with wage rates for engineering and technician roles lower than other manufacturing centres, it offers a cost-competitive location.

In addition, the area has low labour turnover rates and high productivity, ensuring companies locating in the area have a secure and highly efficient workforce.

Tees Valley is home to several high-ranking Further Education Colleges and two world-class award-winning universities. All provide excellent bespoke training, both full-time and in tailored units, to provide business with skilled employees.

These providers are flexible, allowing employers to get the most out of training their staff, and they have a



particular emphasis upon engineering and manufacturing.

The network of industry-recognised providers in Tees Valley offers the widest possible range of apprenticeships (at both Level 2 and Level 3) for the engineering industry, as well as work-based learning and bespoke training packages.

As a consequence, Tees Valley has more than 7,000 students enrolling on engineering courses each year, many

doing specialist electrical and electronic, mechanical, manufacturing, process, instrumentation, fabrication and welding courses in purpose-built engineering facilities offered by the colleges in the area.

Indeed, Tees Valley has more trade apprenticeships and employees undertaking training than the UK average.

Tees Valley is also within one hour's drive of six first-class universities, where more than 9,000 students read engineering each year. North East universities have a reputation for engineering excellence, with a higher proportion of students in the region studying engineering and technology than the national average. The subject has experienced the greatest increase in student numbers of any subject in the North East over recent years – a growth much higher than the national average.

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THE SITES ARE HERE...

There is a wide range of sites and premises available across Tees Valley...

These include edge-of-town, business and industrial park locations, and sites suitable for large-scale projects. A number of key industrial sites are classified EU "Objective 2" regional status. This enables investors to take advantage of incentives, such as enhanced capital allowances on Enterprise Zone sites, and investment aid.

Companies locating in Tees Valley can apply for Regional Growth Fund grants. The Regional Growth Fund is a £3.2bn pot for the purpose of helping companies throughout England to create jobs between now and the mid-2020s.

A number of the sites are part of the Tees Valley Enterprise Zone. The Enterprise Zone is made up of 12 sites, with a total area of 423.8 hectares and it is one of only 24 such locations across England. It encompasses a range of sites, including a number with existing office and industrial units ready for occupation. Each Enterprise Zone, or EZ, offers a combination of reduced taxes, simpler planning rules and a package of financial incentives to encourage businesses.

Companies setting up on the four larger industrial EZ sites in the Tees Valley will be eligible for enhanced capital allowances if they invest in qualifying plant and machinery. They receive first-year capital allowances at 100 per cent on qualifying expenditure to a maximum of £100m, to offset against corporation tax, if the investment is made before April 2017.

Where the company makes a trading loss – and the loss is not offset against other group profits or carried back – it can be carried forward indefinitely to be set against taxable profits from the same trade in future accounting periods.

Companies moving to eight of the Tees Valley Enterprise Zone areas may qualify for business rate relief of up to £55,000 per year for five years. Existing Tees Valley companies and those from further afield can qualify for the rate relief, although Tees Valley companies will also be required to demonstrate that they are growing.

A number of companies have already taken advantage of the incentives on offer, including Air Products, Lotte Chemicals UK and Tracerco (owned by Johnson Matthey).

HARTLEPOOL PORT ESTATES, PD PORTS

Hartlepool Dock, 6.3 kms north of the River Tees, enjoys lock-free access. The total site is 300 acres, with 100 acres of developable land, and there are 192,000 sq ft of existing units, with the option to design and build premises. Enterprise Zone incentives are available on Hartlepool Port Estate.

The site is home to Heerema Group, which fabricates large modules for the North Sea, and large offshore umbilicals fabricators – JDR Cables.

ABLE SEATON PORT, HARTLEPOOL

Able Seaton Port is adjacent to the mouth of the River Tees and is fully licensed with all permissions for fabrication and decommissioning. It is more than 2kms away from residential areas and has no operational restrictions.

The total site offers 126 acres of available land, with the addition of 24.7 acres of the largest dry dock/wet basin in Europe, with a 125m gate.

ABLE MIDDLESBROUGH PORT, MIDDLESBROUGH

This fabrication facility was developed in the 1970s. Previous operators include Davy Offshore, SLP, and Odebrecht, and the site has been owned by Able UK since 2000.

Work completed includes offshore jacket assembly, accommodation modules assembly, sub-sea facility fabrication and maintenance and berthing of various vessels and Floating Production Storage and Offloading (FPSOs)

SOUTH BANK WHARF

At 80.7 hectares South Bank Wharf is one of the prime freehold opportunities with deep water access in Europe. Perfect for investment in offshore wind or oil and gas decommissioning, the site already has 10.4m water depth with the ability to dredge. It is located next to Teesport, the UK's largest exporting port, has 350m river frontage and is close to the integrated chemical site at Wilton International. South Bank Wharf is a Tees Valley Enterprise Zone which enables companies locating at the site access to Enhanced Capital Allowances.

AV DAWSON, MIDDLESBROUGH – North Sea Supply Base (NSSB)

NSSB is a fabrication and multimodal logistics centre, incorporating a range of integrated added value activities.

Services include fabrication, haulage, shipping, warehousing and railhead facilities handling every type of cargo and rail freight, from consumer products to steel beams.

The NSSB is heavily active in offshore wind for vessel loading and fit-out, operations and maintenance, installation and logistics.



TEES VALLEY OFFSHORE

Here we look at some of the many operators in the offshore sector who are based in the Tees Valley

Tees Valley boasts one of the world's greatest concentrations of companies operating in the offshore oil and gas, subsea, decommissioning, offshore wind, engineering and support sectors.

In addition, research commissioned by Tees Valley Unlimited reveals the area has the potential for an offshore wind supply chain of more than 400 companies, employing more than 20,000 people. Given the engineering heritage and world-class manufacturing skills in Tees Valley, it is no surprise that its resident companies are playing a key role in supplying offshore wind projects around the globe.

OIL AND GAS FABRICATION

With its long history of offshore engineering, the Tees Valley has many expert fabrication companies in the offshore sector. Providing a full supply chain solution from conception to delivery (including operations and maintenance, skills and training) some companies already located and operating in the sector are:

- Able UK
- A&P Group
- Cordell Group
- Francis Brown
- Hereema
- Hertel
- MTE
- SBV Fabrications
- TAG Energy Solutions
- Whessoe
- Wilton Group

SUBSEA

All the UK's major sub-sea services providers are resident in the Tees Valley, which they chose for its prime geographic location and the support services within the region. This has created a hub of expertise, including sub-sea ROV (remotely operated vehicles), cable-laying and cable-trenching capability, operating globally in the renewables, oil and gas and telecommunication sectors. Companies include:

- A&P Group
- Deep Ocean
- Global Marine Systems
- Hertel
- IHC Engineering Business
- JDR Cables
- Modus Subsea Intervention
- Reef Subsea
- VCMC
- Wilton Group

DECOMMISSIONING

Decommissioning North Sea oil and gas facilities is projected to cost between £30 - 35 billion between 2010 and 2040. Tees Valley is ideal for this type of activity with specialist sites available for decommissioning work including four belonging to Able UK, of which the Teesside Environmental Reclamation and Recycling Centre is the largest.

Hertel, based at Middlehaven, Middlesbrough, is another major player and counts nuclear decommissioning, alongside its wide range of activities in the offshore and other sectors.

OFFSHORE WIND

Offshore wind presents a wide range of exciting opportunities in the Tees Valley, with real potential for growth. The region already boasts a potential supply-chain of more than 400 companies, employing over 20,000 people and there are 160 Tees Valley firms already directly involved (or actively interested) in the sector, including:

- Able UK
- A&P Group
- Hertel
- MPI
- PD Ports
- TAG Energy Solutions





ENGINEERING AND SUPPORT

Tees Valley is home to a large successful cluster of advanced manufacturing and engineering businesses operating across all industries, from aerospace and automotive to renewable energy and chemicals. The strength of manufacturing in Tees Valley is due to the process, steel, offshore and energy sectors, which form the heavy industrial economic base of the area. Engineering companies working in the offshore sectors include:

- Aker Solutions
- Amec
- Faithful and Gould
- K Home International
- Wilton Group

SPECIALIST TRAINING

The Tees Valley is home to a number of companies and institutions, offering specialist training in safety and other areas, geared to the needs of the region's diverse industries. They include:

- Falck Safety Services
- The Faraday Centre Limited
- NETA
- Teesside University
- TTE
- TWI

Here we look at some of major operators, recent worldwide activity and success stories from around the globe...

Tees Valley based **Reef Subsea Integrated Projects** has secured a major oil and gas trenching contract on the Bøyla Development Project in the North Sea. The work, for leading Tier 1 client Technip Norge AS, is recognition of the progress the 18-month-old company has made, amid plans to grow its workforce by a quarter next year.

Hartlepool firm **Seatechs**, which supplies specialised staff to the offshore oil industry, expects to increase annual turnover to £10m after winning a major contract. The company has won a nine-month deal from Wellstream, worth just under £3m, to send about 30 workers to Campus Basin in Brazil. They will install the pipeline that runs from the FPSO – a floating rig used to extract crude oil.

Hartlepool based engineering and fabrication specialist **Heerema Fabrication Group** is to create 350 jobs in the North East to assist in the build of four gas platforms for the Cygnus gas field project in the southern North Sea.

Middlesbrough-based **Hertel** was recently awarded a long-term maintenance contract on one of the UK's largest oil refineries. The multi-disciplinary construction and maintenance services company, which employs more than 1,000 in Tees Valley, will carry out maintenance services for

the Total UK-owned Lindsay Oil Refinery at Immingham, on Humberise, the third largest facility of its kind in the UK.

TAG Energy Solutions increased its direct workforce fourfold, to 130, after winning a contract to provide components for the Humber Gateway offshore wind farm. Production of 16 monopiles and transition pieces for the E.ON development is underway at TAG Energy Solutions' River Tees facility.

Billingham based **Phusion**, formerly Pearson-Harper, has started work on a contract worth more than £11m as data management contractor for the Ichthys gas project, run by INPEX.

Following the designation of engineering company **AMEC's** Darlington office as the firm's international centre for global engineering operations, the company will employ a further 40 staff at its Tees Valley office, on top of the 420 workers already based at the site.

Hartlepool-based subsea cable company **JDR Cables** has won a contract for an oil field off the coast of West Africa. The company will design and manufacture two five-kilometre power cables for the Total Ofon Phase 2 project, on behalf of global subsea contractor Subsea 7.



WHO'S HERE

Tees Valley hosts many of the major global players in the manufacturing, engineering and process industries

A&P GROUP

A&P is a leading engineering services and fabrication group providing, tailor-made solutions for customers in the global marine and energy sectors.

A&P owns and operates a five-acre yard on the banks of the Tees, consisting of two dry docks and 240m of jetty frontage. With extensive workshop facilities, cranes up to 40 tonnes and a secure tank-washing facility, the Tees yard is considered a centre of excellence for offshore vessels, dredgers and tankers.

ABLE UK

Able is the market leader in the field of demolition and marine decommissioning and is now a significant land developer and port operator. Able owns five port sites in Tees Valley, offering a range of land and facilities options to companies. Port facilities include dry dock, marine decommissioning, operation and development, rig upgrade and maintenance.

AKER SOLUTIONS

A global provider of engineering and construction services, technology products and integrated solutions, Aker Solutions is one of the top two global suppliers of deepwater drilling packages for offshore drilling rigs and drill ships. Aker Solutions' drilling technologies business is based in Tees Valley, with product engineers working on a wide range of topside drilling equipment from the company's Stockton office.

AMEC

AMEC provides consultancy, engineering and project management services to the world's energy, power and process industries. With over 40 years of experience in the challenging North Sea means the company are experts in areas such as business consulting, operational readiness, hook-up and commissioning, and maintenance integration.

CORDELL GROUP

Cordell Group offers a comprehensive range of multi-disciplined engineering services that include engineering design, manufacture, electrical, control and instrumentation disciplines. The company

can engineer and deliver anything from a machined component to a complete process plant, connecting in-house services from concept to completion.

DEEP OCEAN

DeepOcean is an integrated provider of safe, high quality, innovative services and technologies for the subsea industry. Demonstrating an extensive track record, DeepOcean offers a breadth of subsea services including Survey and Seabed-mapping, Subsea Installation, Seabed Intervention, Inspection, Maintenance and Repair (IMR), and Decommissioning. Teesside Offshore Base (TOB) is DeepOcean's large-scale UK Marine Base, providing integrated services for heavy lifting, mobilisation, storage and logistics conveniently at one site with priority access.

FAITHFUL AND GOULD

Faithful and Gould provides project management, cost management and consultancy services for construction and engineering projects.

FALCK SAFETY SERVICES

Falck Safety Services is a world leading offshore health, safety and offshore survival training company. At the companies facility in Teesside they have state of the art equipment and simulators provide delegates with a realistic training experience, in a safe and controlled environment. Expertly trained and experienced instructors.

THE FARADAY CENTRE LIMITED

With headquarters in Tees Valley, The Faraday Centre Limited specialises in high and low voltage training. The company's 8,000sq foot facility is equipped with a wide range of operational high/low voltage electrical training equipment.

FRANCIS BROWN

Francis Brown is a leading provider of fabrications and engineering to a range of industrial markets worldwide. Francis Brown has been involved with the oil and gas industry for decades, supplying bespoke as well as multiple-supply items, as well as providing design, fabrication, welding, machining, assembly and installation services.

HEREEMA

Hereema is a fabricator of offshore and subsea installations, supplying the likes of Shell and BP.

HERTEL

Hertel is a global industrial services company, which has its headquarters in Middlesbrough. The company has many years' experience providing repair and maintenance services to the energy, chemical, power generation, marine and process industries.

IHC ENGINEERING BUSINESS

IHC Engineering Business (IHC EB) delivers bespoke engineering solutions for complex offshore applications. IHC EB works with clients across the offshore oil and gas, submarine telecoms and renewable offshore power industries, from concept development and product delivery, through to life cycle support. IHC EB's core expertise includes pipe and cable lay, subsea trenching and offshore handling.

JDR CABLES

JDR is a leading provider of technology connecting the global offshore energy industry. Its products and services enable vital control and power delivery to offshore oil, gas and renewable energy systems. JDR is a leader in subsea production umbilicals, subsea power cables and intervention workover control systems for the offshore oil and gas industry. Its products and services are an essential element of the subsea infrastructure that enables energy to reach end-users in a cost-effective, safe and environmentally responsible way.

JDR is also a global pioneer in the development of inter-array power cables for offshore wind, wave and tidal energy projects. JDR's Hartlepool location positions it ideally to provide, engineering, manufacturing and installation support services for the evolving renewable energy sector, which is particularly strong in Europe.



KHOME INTERNATIONAL

K Home International is an engineering design, project and construction management company. It provides multi-discipline design engineering and project management services to oil and gas clients around the world and its expertise has been gained in locations including the North Sea, Middle East, Gulf of Mexico, Caspian Sea and the Caribbean.

MODUS SEABED INTERVENTION

Modus provides comprehensive support to the offshore construction industry for seabed intervention services. Operating a fleet of state-of-the-art trenching and work class ROV spreads and equipment, Modus aims to provide technical and operational excellence through professional, safe, innovative and cost-effective services for oil and gas, renewable energy, telecommunications and hydrographic survey.

Specialist services include marine trenching for cable and pipeline protection and stabilisation, construction survey, ROV (remotely operated vehicle) services, construction support and consultancy services.

MPI

MPI provides a single-vessel solution for wind installation operations and services, including offshore wind installation and oil and gas installation and decommissioning. The company is a world leader in offshore wind turbine installation, operating the world's largest and most powerful wind turbine installation vessels, MPI Adventure, MPI Discovery and MPI Resolution.

MTE

MTE offers Design Consultancy, Modular Solutions, Fire and Blast Wall Solutions and Heat Shield Solutions for a range of high hazard industries worldwide, from Offshore and Onshore Oil & Gas, Nuclear, Renewable, to Chemical and Petrochemical. Based in Darlington in the North East of England, with additional quayside manufacturing and assembly facilities in nearby Middlesbrough, the company offers an end-to-end service

or 'one-stop shop': design, engineering fabrication, project management, supply and installation.

NETA

NETA has one of the largest vocational learning resources in the country. NETA has two training centres in Tees Valley both containing industry standard equipment. The integration of working rigs and simulated site activity into the learning process maximises the effective use of resources and creates a realistic learning experience.

REEF SUBSEA

Reef Subsea is an international group, providing specialist subsea services to the oil and gas and renewables industries. With operations in the UK, Norway, Europe, Singapore, the Middle East and the USA, Reef Subsea's experienced and knowledgeable team provides a range of integrated services, including subsea construction, inspection maintenance and repair, installation and trenching of cables and umbilicals, seabed dredging and excavation and ROV and survey services.

SBV FABRICATIONS

SBV is a highly-regarded provider of heavy industrial steel fabrication and pipework (carbon and stainless), equipment packages, machining, site services, and project management to the energy, nuclear, oil and gas, marine, heavy industrial, and process industry sectors. Including trades, engineering and management, the company has two sites in Tees Valley.

TAG ENERGY SOLUTIONS

TAG Energy Solutions has vast experience in the oil and gas sector and its project management team has been responsible for engineering, procurement, construction and commissioning of more than 100 topsides for the UK North Sea Continental Shelf and beyond. Recognised as some of the best industry experts, TAG Energy Solutions' management team has experience of most categories of oil and gas projects.

TEESSIDE UNIVERSITY

Boasting the accolade of 2009 University of the Year, Teesside University has a strong reputation for working with business and industry, providing training and consultancy to hundreds of companies every year.

TTE

TTE is the UK's largest technical training organisation in the engineering, process and oil and gas sectors.

TWI

TWI is a global leader in technology engineering, providing research and consultancy. Respected for its expertise, professionalism, impartiality and confidentiality, TWI works with the most influential companies worldwide across all industry sectors.

WHESOE

Whessoe is a market leader in designing and building low temperature and cryogenic storage and handling facilities. The company is renowned for providing technically and commercially strong project solutions, from concept, scoping studies and front-end engineering and design, through to full engineering procurement and construction, commissioning and project completion.

VSMC

VSMC (Visser & Smit Marine Contracting) has established a trusted and experienced position as an international submarine power cables installation contractor, specialising in inter-tidal and offshore markets. VSMC has an engineering office in Darlington, responsible for all UK wind farm operations.

WILTON GROUP

Wilton Engineering Services is a multi-discipline Engineering Services provider based on a 50-acre site by the River Tees. The company specialises in engineering design, fabrication and construction, analysis, and coatings and services for the onshore and offshore energy industry. It boasts a strong and diverse portfolio of successfully completed projects.

WHERE THE WIND BLOWS

The Tees Valley is in the ideal location for the European offshore wind sector

Tees Valley has serviced the North Sea oil and gas markets for many decades and is now using its experience in offshore engineering, specialist fabrication, ship building, sub-sea cabling and Remote Operated Vehicles (ROVs) in the offshore wind market.

The region benefits from good access to supply chains – and from 16.5GW of wind farm development within easy reach of port sites and makes the most of the advantage it has over rival locations, namely its proximity to the northern North Sea. The northern North Sea experiences wind speeds that are higher on average than can be found anywhere else in Europe. This presents Tees Valley with the long-term potential for Round 3 UK Offshore Wind Developments.

Supply chains in the area are comprehensive and highly developed, with Tees Valley's proximity to Tyneside, Humber and Scottish wind sector supply centres. Tees Valley also provides an excellent base for exporting to the continent as well as accessing UK markets.

Ideal location to access multiple Round 3 sites:

Dogger Bank (9GW) 60 miles
Hornsea (4GW) 67 miles
Firth of Forth (3.5GW) 86 miles

TEES VALLEY: CENTRE FOR OFFSHORE RENEWABLE ENGINEERING (CORE)

Tees Valley has been awarded CORE status in recognition of its existing port infrastructure, skills and supply chain to enable rapid growth within the offshore wind sector.

CORE brings together the relevant expertise from UK Central Government and the six major investment hubs in England to support business growth and showcase opportunities for foreign direct investment in the offshore wind sector.

This joint working alliance strengthens the complete England offer and highlights it as a connected, credible and exciting place to invest.

CORE areas provide:

- Excellent infrastructure and logistics
- Large areas of available land for development, including deep water access
- Skilled and available local workforce
- Experienced supply chain
- Easy access to Round 1, 2 and 3 offshore wind farms
- Extensive business support
- Local government support providing free location-finding services and assistance on skills, premises and grant applications.

LOCAL SUPPORT

TEES VALLEY UNLIMITED



Tees Valley Unlimited has a dedicated Business Investment Team on hand to give lifelong investor support, starting with the pre-investment phase, then advising on sites, recruitment and skills availability, and moving on to post-investment assistance, matching investors up with potential customers and suppliers and helping to grow their businesses.

We have excellent links with both public and private organisations in the area and can provide introductions to people who offer the specialist help you need. We can steer you through the assistance available to companies locating here and help you build your business case, with information from labour market statistics to local supplier networks at our fingertips.

In short, we can show you exactly why Tees Valley is the ideal location for your business.

For further information contact the business Investment Team at Tees Valley Unlimited

Tel: 01642 524400

Email: info@teesvalleyunlimited.gov.uk

Web: www.teesvalleyunlimited.gov.uk

Tees Valley Unlimited works with public and private sector organisations across the offshore, subsea and renewables sectors to provide comprehensive support for companies, below are details of some of the organisations working in the Tees Valley to support these sectors.

UKTI

UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) works to encourage the best overseas companies to look to the UK as their global location of choice.

UKTI has professional advisers both within the UK and across more than 100 international markets. UKTI helps international businesses looking to locate in the UK by providing a range of services and support through the process, from initial enquiry to project completion.

www.ukti.gov.uk



NOF ENERGY

NOF Energy is a highly proactive business development organisation working on behalf of companies within the oil, gas, nuclear and offshore renewable sectors.

www.nofenergy.co.uk



SUBSEA NORTH EAST

Sub Sea North East is the regional wing of Subsea UK, the champion for the UK subsea industry, which acts for the entire supply chain to bring together operators, contractors, suppliers and people in the industry.

www.subseauk.com



ENERGI COAST

Energi Coast is the representative group for the North East of England's offshore renewables sector, promoting the extensive offshore renewable energy sector expertise from the region.

www.energi.coast.co.uk



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