

2020

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

The Parliamentary Review

■ FOREWORDS

The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP
Amanda Nevill CBE

■ REPRESENTATIVES

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Letter from Lord Pickles & Lord Blunkett
Commentary from Andrew Neil

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The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP

Secretary of State for International Trade, President of the Board of Trade and Minister for Women and Equalities

Even by the standards of the day – 2019 was one of the most exciting and unpredictable years in British politics.

The election we've just seen marks a huge moment in our country's history. This government is taking a decisive new direction, embracing the opportunities of Brexit and preparing our country to flourish outside the EU.

As international trade secretary, I'll be driving forward work on the free trade agreements that are going to be a priority for the government. Free trade isn't just an abstract concept bandied around by technocrats. It is crucial for a strong economy and for the ability of families to make ends meet. Free trade benefits people in every part of our country, as British firms export to new markets and people doing the weekly shop have access to a wider choice of goods at lower prices.

The essence of free trade is in the title – freedom. It's about giving people the power to exchange their goods without heavy government taxation or interference. Commerce and free exchange are the engine room of prosperity and social mobility. I'm determined to tackle the forces who want to hold that back.

One of my priorities is agreeing an exciting new free trade deal with the US, building on the great relationship between our two countries and the Prime Minister and US President. But I'll also be talking to other partners including New Zealand, Australia and fast-growing Asian markets.

And with the EU too, we want a friendly and constructive relationship, as constitutional equals, and as friends and partners in facing the challenges that lie ahead – a relationship based on a deep free trade agreement.

Our country produces some of the world's most successful exports, and the opportunity to bring these to the rest of the world should make us all excited about the future.

It is this excitement, optimism and ambition which I believe will come to define this government.

For too long now, we have been told Britain isn't big or important enough to survive outside the EU – that we have to accept a deal that reflects our reduced circumstances. I say that's rubbish. With the right policies in place, we can be the most competitive, free-thinking, prosperous nation on Earth exporting to the world and leading in new developments like AI.

To do that, we'll give the brilliant next generation of entrepreneurs the tools they need to succeed. Since 2015, there has been a staggering 85 per cent rise in the number of businesses set up by 18 to 24 year olds – twice the level set up by the same age group in France and Germany. We'll help them flourish by championing enterprise, cutting taxes and making regulation flexible and responsive to their needs.

As we do that, we'll level up and unite all parts of the UK with great transport links, fibre to every home and proper school funding, so everyone shares in our country's success.

2019 was a year of brewing economic and political revolution. 2020 will be the year when a revitalised Conservative government turbocharges the economy, boosts prospects for people across the country, and catapults Britain back to the forefront of the world stage.

“With the right policies in place, we can be the most competitive, free-thinking, prosperous nation on Earth”

Amanda Nevill CBE

CEO, British Film Institute



I often wonder at the foresight of the founders of the BFI and whether they could ever have imagined just how significant the great art of film, television and the moving image has become to our lives. Today, so much of the information we get is through the moving image. It is the most enjoyable and potent way to understand the world and our own place within it – like everything else, art, film and the moving image serve as an expression of the time. And, today in the UK, it is an industry worth over £7 billion and growing.

When I am travelling internationally, the vibrancy of the screen industry in the UK is a subject of envy and I am often called to explain why it should be. The reason, I say, is that we have a well-rehearsed ecosystem in the UK.

We are steeped in a wonderful cultural environment which is the bedrock of creativity, from our great museums, galleries and theatres, and the ingrained, rich storytelling culture of Shakespeare, the Brontës, Dickens and JK Rowling, to the internationally renowned programmes of global cinema presented in venues and online by the BFI, the keeper of your cultural screen heritage. This magic is combined with a strong and professional fiscal environment, solidly supported by government with competitive financial incentives, and a world-class skilled workforce, all finally wrapped up with the benefit of the English language.

Pumping away at the centre of this wonderful industry is the BFI. We are R&D for the industry, an incubator of talent. The rapid economic growth we are experiencing right now across the screen industries relies on a strong pipeline of creative talent and skills. While on the surface this is a dynamic picture, the fault line that threatens its future is simple: it is not very inclusive, and never has been.

For example, exploring data from the BFI National Archive we discover that until 2017, 93 per cent of films were directed by men. And looking at race, the story is equally lopsided, with a further study showing that

59 per cent of films released in the last 10 years did not include a single black actor.

The picture is similar in our workforce. Women account for just 40 per cent of screen sector jobs, with very few in key roles. Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups make up just three per cent of the film production and post-production workforce.

With so much inequality, we must be overlooking great swathes of British talent and missing the creation of diverse stories that reflect the whole of life in the UK today, stories that would resonate with and excite audiences everywhere.

This called for positive action. We introduced the BFI Diversity Standards to provide an easy framework with the aim that every film production in the UK should involve people from different backgrounds behind and in front of the camera, to tell different stories and to reach different audiences. There is strong industry buy-in, with 49 per cent of productions adopting them in the last 12 months, but there is still a long way to go.

Film and TV is the superfood of employment; every imaginable skill is needed in the sector, from carpentry and electrics, to accounting and marketing, catering and driving... I could go on. The next time you watch a film, make sure you look at the credits to see for yourself the vast army of people who have worked on it.

“The rapid economic growth we are experiencing right now across the screen industries relies on a strong pipeline of creative talent”

The Parliamentary Review

A message from Lord Pickles and Lord Blunkett

The ability to listen to and learn from one another has always been vital in parliament, in business and in most aspects of daily life. But at this particular moment in time, as national and global events continue to reiterate, it is uncommonly crucial that we forge new channels of communication and reinforce existing ones.

As Westminster looks ahead to a future after Brexit, it is essential that politicians have a firm understanding of the challenges with which British organisations must contend; and that leaders in both the public and private sectors are aware of the difficulties faced by those working in all levels of politics, from local government to the national arena.

This is why *The Parliamentary Review* combines political content with stories from a wide range of organisations – small and large; new and old; those at the peak of their powers and those who have peaks to surmount. It is why these stories seek to inspire and challenge all who read them.

And it is why we, as former Labour and Conservative cabinet ministers and current members of the House of Lords, feel it is important to put aside our political differences and work together to ensure these stories are given the platform they deserve.

In this publication, you will find an insightful take on the past year in politics from the BBC's Andrew Neil and a concise rundown of the key events in industry and parliament. Most importantly, you will be able to read in-depth accounts from the individuals and organisations who make *The Parliamentary Review* what it is.

It is our great honour and pleasure to have helped provide the platform for their insights to be aired. We hope that you find these articles – which begin on page 11 with a piece from Verto UK – as thought-provoking and informative as we do.



Rt Hon The Lord Blunkett
Co-Chairman, *The Parliamentary Review*



Rt Hon The Lord Pickles
Co-Chairman, *The Parliamentary Review*

British politics turned upside-down

It was a watershed election, up there with the Attlee Labour landslide of 1945 and the dawn of Thatcherism in 1979 as a general election that changes the course of British politics. The trends had been apparent for some time – and I've alluded to them in previous pieces for *The Parliamentary Review* – but the general election of December 2019 saw them come to fruition.

For the first time ever, the Conservatives became the party not just of the non-metropolitan working class but of the poorest voters, among whom it enjoyed a double-digit lead, while Labour became the party of the well-off and the well-educated. Thus was British politics stood on its head.

This is of more than psephological significance. It has huge import for the course of Conservative policy. Those who think the Johnson government heralds a new Age of Thatcherism for the 21st century are mistaken. Those who pine for a return to limited government, tax cuts and free market economics will be disappointed. The Tories need policies that will cement their new provincial voter-base with a blue-collar conservatism.

So instead of tax cuts for the affluent, we will have low-earners taken out of national insurance. Instead of the free market, we will have the highest national minimum wage in Europe covering 25 per cent of the labour force (that would have given Mrs Thatcher the vapours!). Instead of cuts in government spending there will be more money for schools, hospitals and the police. Instead of bearing down on the national debt and the budget deficit, there will be a borrowing binge to finance £100 billion investment in

infrastructure, most of it designated for the Midlands and the North.

These are not traditional Tory policies. The Labour party likes to paint Boris Johnson and his government as hard-right Brexiteers. But when the dust settles on its leadership contest, it may discover that Mr Johnson has parked his tanks not just on the centre-ground of British politics but on the centre-left too, leaving the new Labour leader with room to be distinctive only on the further left. Broadly, Corbynism without Mr Corbyn, as one Labour shadow minister said to me.

For business, the election has removed two major uncertainties: Brexit and a Corbyn government. The first is happening, the second will not. So there will be a modest economic bounce in 2020 as confidence returns. The UK economy ended 2019 limping along at one per cent growth; Brexit uncertainty had taken its toll. Now even the IMF, congenitally gloomy about Brexit Britain, expects 2020 UK growth to be closer to 1.5 per cent, faster than the Eurozone and slower only than the US and Canada among the G7 advanced economies.

I say “modest” bounce because, of course, all the uncertainty has not gone away. The UK now has to negotiate its future

relationship with the EU and until that is clear business investment, domestic and foreign, will not return in huge strength. But 2020 should be a more appealing climate for UK businesses, big and small.

Government ministers speak privately about a wall of money ready to come into Britain now that the Brexit and Corbyn uncertainties have been resolved. But much of this will be hot money going into existing assets, whether property or equities. It can leave as easily as it enters. Real investment in new machines, plant and capacity will grow only gradually until it sees the shape of future UK-EU relations.

The talks will be rocky. The UK wants trade to remain friction-free. The EU will say, fine, as long as you remained aligned to EU rules and regulations. This, the Johnson government is making clear, is not acceptable. When I asked a senior minister how the government would deal with this friction-free/continued alignment trade off, he answered without hesitation – we would rather have more friction than remain aligned with Brussels.

The government knows the private sector remains wary, which is why it will use its own balance sheet to boost the economy in 2020 until remaining uncertainties are resolved and business investment returns in volume and with confidence.

This should be a good year for business: major uncertainties resolved, continued cheap money as far as the eye can see, expansive fiscal policy, increased growth, a new appetite for investment. And if the government screws it up, it will have nobody to blame but itself.



Neil believes that the Conservatives will appeal to their new voter base through “blue-collar conservatism”

Review of the Year

Netflix announce new UK production hub



Netflix plans to construct 16 new stages, supplementing the 14 already constructed, at the recently-acquired Shepperton Studios

In July 2019, streaming giant Netflix announced it was acquiring the historic Shepperton Studios in a permanent move to create its UK “production hub”.

Roughly the size of the Westfield shopping centre in Shepherd’s Bush, the site encompasses about 435,000 square feet of space and is being leased from landlord Pinewood Group.

Ted Sarandos, Netflix’s chief content officer, said that the studio had been “synonymous with world-class film for nearly a century.”

He continued: “This investment will ensure that British creators and producers have first-rate production facilities and a world stage for their work.”

Pinewood Group, who had previously obtained planning for a £500 million expansion to the studio, also owns Pinewood Studios in Buckinghamshire, where the Star Wars and James Bond franchises are produced.

Group Chairman Paul Golding said the decision was a “real vote of confidence” and would help to “secure the ongoing success of the UK film and TV industry”.

Netflix plan to invest significantly in the studio, located near Heathrow, to add some 16 new sound stages to its existing 14, alongside workshops and offices.

The expansion is due to be finalised in 2021.

It had previously been used to film such blockbusters as *Gladiator* and *Alien*. Ridley Scott, who directed both, is a former joint owner of the studio, and lauded Netflix in unveiling the expansion.

“[It] is a wonderful historic place,” Mr Scott said. “And one of the most efficient I can think of in the world today.”

The media firm, which has around ten million UK subscribers, released more than 40 productions in the UK over the last 12 months.

While some of these are original programming from the California-based streaming company, such as *The Crown* and *Sex Education*, it has also been responsible for breathing new life into UK series where production has previously been somewhat stagnant, such as Charlie Brooker’s award-winning *Black Mirror* series.

To support the move, Netflix has boosted the number of European productions it will roll out over the next 12 months.

It timetabled 221 projects, including 153 originals, with a net budget of over \$1 billion – figures that indicated a more than 50 per cent increase on 2018’s timetable.

The move comes after Netflix made clear the space limitations on UK production in 2018, where they said: “In 2018, [we plan] to spend approximately \$8 billion on content worldwide, across more than 700 television and film productions.

“We would like to be able to produce more in the UK. However, we are limited by the lack of available space.”

Shepperton will be the second European production hub for Netflix, after 22,000-square metre campus Ciudad de la Tele – or TV City – was opened in Madrid, Spain.

The firm has announced that their first original production at the historic site will be comic book adaptation *The Old Guard*, starring *Mad Max: Fury Road* and *Prometheus*' Charlize Theron alongside BAFTA-winning English actor Chiwetel Ejiofor, who portrayed Solomon Northrup in 2013 Oscar winner *12 Years a Slave*.

DCMS announce new apprenticeship scheme

In order to encourage diversity in the UK's creative industries, July saw Jeremy Wright, who was culture secretary at the time, announce a new apprenticeship pilot scheme to encourage and enable underrepresented groups to work on some of the leading films and TV programmes made in the UK.

The announcement came during a visit to Pinewood Studios and the set of the upcoming James Bond film. Alongside the launch of this new scheme, Mr Wright also stated his support for a new Creative Industries Council Charter which would drive diversity across the broader industry.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport pledged £100,000 to support this pilot scheme. The new initiative will enable 25 apprentices to gain first-hand experience of working on sets of prominent TV and film productions. Prior to DCMS committing to the pilot, it had been championed by both ScreenSkills and the Creative Industries Council.

Launching in late 2019, the scheme will focus on young people from a variety of backgrounds and with no former qualifications relevant to the sector.

The pilot will also serve as a test for a new model of delivering high-quality apprenticeships which serve to fill placements across a variety of productions as well as address skill shortages.



The new apprenticeship scheme aims to “encourage diversity in the UK's creative industries”

The new charter for the CIC calls for the industry to commit to take action in eight key areas with the goal of creating a more diverse workforce and productions which appeal to people from all over the UK, regardless of background.

The charter has now been formally adopted by the council, the representatives of which cover a variety of sectors within the creative industries including fashion, publishing and computer games.

Announcing the new scheme, Mr Wright said: “The UK is a powerhouse for award-winning creativity enjoyed by millions globally. But our creative industries cannot remain the preserve of the privileged, which is why we are helping to create new opportunities to develop a more diverse workforce.”

“I welcome the Creative Industries Council’s Diversity Charter and also call for firm commitments from major studios, both in the UK and worldwide, to adopt the BFI’s pioneering Diversity Standards.

“Companies must provide opportunities for young people from all backgrounds to go as far as their talents take them in this thriving sector.”

In 2018, just over two million people were employed in the creative industries, an increase of 1.6 per cent on the previous year, accounting for six

per cent of all UK jobs. Since 2011, this figure has increased by 30.6 per cent, triple the speed of overall employment in the UK.

The new scheme was also welcomed by Damian Hinds, who was education secretary at the time, who said:

“Apprenticeships give people of all backgrounds the chance to learn the skills they need to get a great job,” adding, “I would urge anyone who is thinking of a career in the sector to visit our apprenticeships website and kick-start their apprenticeship journey today.”

Social media’s “duty of care”



In April 2019, a white paper was announced with the aim of creating a “duty of care towards users” for social media companies

Over the last year, the legal status of social media has been among Britain’s most publicly discussed issues – not least because the answer to this question will determine to what extent the government can censor online material. Alarming statistics over teenage depression and suicide resulted in campaigns for government intervention.

After Theresa May’s attempt to do so with a “voluntary code of conduct” in 2016, many campaigners remained unsatisfied.

Among them was Emily Cherry, strategic adviser at children’s charity Barnardo’s. In January 2019,

Mrs Cherry told a Commons committee that, although she welcomes government’s increased interest in legislating in this area, what she and others really want to see is “a statutory code of practice ... and an independent regulator with the teeth to hold social media companies to account.”

This, she added, “means bringing them to the table, issuing fines if they are unable to comply with the code.”

Despite the committee recommending accountability measures for social media companies, it cautioned that “unambiguous answers to our questions [were] hindered by the limited quantity and quality of academic evidence available.”

It is on this basis that the debate continues. A white paper, announced in April 2019, will aim to place a legally binding “duty of care towards users” on social media companies, which will be overseen by an independent regulator.

More specifically, proposals demand that social media companies provide annual progress reports on tackling harmful content, and that they co-operate seamlessly with law enforcement.

Such legislation would mark a radical and decisive shift from the current option of voluntary codes of conduct and self-governance. Among other things, it would mean that company executives, rather than individual users, could be held accountable for harmful online activity.

Sajid Javid, who was home secretary at the time, said: “Despite our repeated calls to action, harmful and illegal content is still too readily available online. I made it my mission to protect our young people – and we are now delivering on that promise.”

Mr Javid’s concerns were echoed by Tom Watson, Labour’s deputy leader at the time, who said: “The concern with these plans is that they could take years to implement. We need action immediately to protect children and others vulnerable to harm.”

He said that the white paper was “a start”, but that it was still “a long way from truly reclaiming the web and rooting out [sources of online harm].”

The UK government is not the first to announce legislation regarding harmful online content. Germany’s 2018 “NetzDG law” is based on similar principles. Execution, however, has been a contentious issue, with the German justice ministry reporting hundreds of complaints over slow action in the first year.

The recommendations of the white paper resurfaced in October 2019, when Nicky Morgan, the culture secretary, announced the abandonment of the government’s internet age verification system for certain sites. Ms Morgan announced that the government would follow the white paper’s conclusions as an alternative.

Nicky Morgan remains as culture secretary until February reshuffle

Despite standing down as an MP, Nicky Morgan retained her role as Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport until February’s reshuffle.

Before December’s general election, in October, Morgan announced she would not be standing in her Loughborough constituency. In a letter announcing her decision, Morgan stated that the “the clear impact on my family and the other sacrifices involved in, and the abuse for, doing the job of a modern MP” was one of the key reasons why she stepped down.

However, during the election campaign, Morgan acted as one of the most visible Conservative figures, regularly conducting media appearances to defend the Johnson campaign.

In order to keep her role in the Cabinet, Morgan was made a life peer and



was given the title Baroness Morgan of Cotes.

Announcing her retention of the role, Morgan quipped: “Well it turns out that leaving the Cabinet is harder than leaving the EU!”

The decision attracted criticism from opposition parties. Layla Moran,

Despite announcing she would not stand in December’s election, Nicky Morgan remained in post as culture secretary

the then Liberal Democrat culture spokesperson, described Morgan's re-appointment as a reward for "sycophancy" and Jo Stevens, the Labour MP for Cardiff Central, labelled the decision "absolutely disgraceful."

As rumoured at the time however, Mrs Morgan only held the post until Boris Johnson's first post-election reshuffle. On February 13, it was announced that Mrs Morgan would be replaced by Oliver Dowden, MP for Hertsmere, who had previously served as Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General.

Following the announcement of the change, Mrs Morgan tweeted: "I've loved being DCMS Secretary of State & being part of Boris Johnson's government but it was no secret that I still intended to step back from the Cabinet. So I wish Oliver Dowden all the very best in a brilliant role."

While it is not common for unelected individuals to hold Cabinet positions, it is not without precedent.

Under Theresa May's 2017 government, excluding the Leader of the House of Lords, there were no peers in the Cabinet.

For all ministers more widely, many of whom do not attend Cabinet meetings, 21 per cent came from the House of Lords. This marked a decrease from 23 per cent at the start of the Cameron government but an increase from the beginning of the coalition government where the percentage of ministers stood at 20 per cent.

Under the last Labour government, Gordon Brown appointed two Secretaries of State from the House of Lords: Lord Adonis as Transport Secretary and Lord Mandelson as First Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Since 1979, the number of peers in the Cabinet has been steadily decreasing from a high of three to just one: the leader of the House of Lords.

Glastonbury 2019 – the greenest festival ever?



At last year's festival, single-use plastics were banned entirely and were replaced with 37 WaterAid kiosks and 850 water

Sustainability and the environment were key themes of 2019's Glastonbury festival. For the first time in the event's history, single-use plastics were banned and replaced by 850 water

points across the 900-acre site and 37 WaterAid kiosks.

Alongside performances from Stormzy, The Killers and Kylie Minogue, Sir David Attenborough made a surprise appearance on the final day of the festival, congratulating the crowd for going plastic-free.

According to statistics from Glastonbury, one million plastic water bottles were sold at the festival in 2017; a figure which, in 2019, fell to zero.

Organiser Emily Eavis, daughter of the original founder Michael Eavis, said: "We've made so many positive strides with our green campaigns this year. It's incredible to think that there will



At the end of this year's festival, Glastonbury reported that 99.3 per cent of tents had been taken home by revellers

be one million fewer plastic bottles for the planet to deal with because we've stopped selling them.

"The most eye-opening part of the weekend for me was not seeing any plastic bottles in the bins or on the ground.

"I think people are really starting to understand how important it is to treat the land with respect, and to stop living a disposable lifestyle."

Festival organisers also urged all festivalgoers to take their tents home as, in previous years, many had simply left disposable tents at the site.

The "Love the Farm, Leave no Trace" pledge, which was introduced in 2017, saw a reported 81 per cent reduction in the number of abandoned tents compared to the previous year.

Following this year's festival concluding, Ms Eavis tweeted that 99.3 per cent of tents had been taken home, a significant improvement on previous years.

After the festival ends, a massive clean-up operation is organised to return the site, which was home to 200,000, to a dairy farm.

On the Monday following the festival's conclusion, a team of 1,300 volunteers began to clean the area. Each volunteer

carries bin bags made from recycled plastic, which is later recycled after the clean-up is completed, to collect rubbish left on the ground and in the 15,000 bins that are scattered across the site. This process usually takes six weeks.

In 2017, more than 60 tonnes of card and paper, 32 tonnes of glasses, 45 tonnes of cans and 40 tonnes of plastic bottles were recycled. Alongside this, 132 tonnes of food waste was converted into compost and 4,500 litres of cooking oil was turned into biofuel.

Roughly 40 per cent of revellers attend Glastonbury via public transport, and since the turn of the century, 10,000 trees have been planted in the local area.

Next year will see the 50th anniversary of Glastonbury. Ms Eavis vowed: "We won't be slowing down for very long. We have already started working on next year's 50th anniversary.

"Trust me when I say we are planning a huge celebration."

As *The Parliamentary Review* goes to print, three headline acts have been announced for Ms Eavis' "huge celebration": former Beatle Paul McCartney, American singer-songwriter Taylor Swift and Diana Ross, who is celebrating her 60th year in the spotlight.

Verto UK



Our office in Kettering



CEO David Hummel-Newell

CEO David Hummel-Newell describes Verto as the East Midlands' "foremost creative agency". With a team of 40 and more than 20 years' experience in the sector, the agency works across design, development and copywriting to provide a comprehensive creative solution that satisfies businesses' needs. Verto's mission, David says, is to help each customer become more successful by "projecting an image that sets them apart from the competition".

We were founded nearly 20 years ago in Kettering, Northamptonshire. Coming from the Latin *vertere*, meaning to turn around or change, the name Verto was chosen to reflect our innovation, values and commitment to developing the perfect creative strategy for each and every client, providing them with the changes they need. At the time, our company consisted of just five employees, and offered a simple website and brochure design service.

We have since grown to become a full digital and print marketing agency, with teams specialising in website design and development, SEO, social media, branding, photography and video, copywriting and marketing consultancy. Our now 40-strong team consists of employees with years of industry experience as well as recent graduates, providing us with a range of knowledge and insight that is invaluable in creative environments. Our growth over the years has also seen the company expand to establish our sister company Verto London, allowing us to offer an even more dedicated service for our London-based clients.

FACTS ABOUT VERTO UK

- » CEO: David Hummel-Newell
- » Established in 1999
- » Based in Kettering, Northamptonshire
- » Services: Creative agency specialising in web and print services
- » No. of employees: 40
- » Foremost creative agency in the East Midlands
- » www.vertouk.com



Two members of our social media team presenting our seminar

“We are committed to maintaining close client contact”

A team effort

While we have expanded substantially since our inception, we are still a relatively small team and strive to maintain an intimate community feel both in and out of the workplace. Company-wide events are organised throughout the year, and smaller groups such as a football team and film club are actively encouraged. Our open-plan office fosters a sense of collaboration across all levels of the company, allowing our teams to work together, overlapping seamlessly to create multifaceted, individualised solutions for our clients.

We believe this approach is what sets us apart from other agencies,

allowing us to be there for our clients every step of the way, from initial briefs and design concepts to social media launch campaigns and ongoing monthly SEO and content management. Throughout any project, we are committed to maintaining close client contact, ensuring their best interests and specifications are at the forefront of everything we do.

Although we strive to approach everything we do with an innovative attitude, we are careful not to follow short-term fads, instead encouraging our customers to think long term about their digital marketing strategies. By working with our clients to anticipate their future needs as well as their current ones, we can ensure we are providing them with a suitable solution for the years to come.

This forward-thinking outlook does not finish at the creative stages, however. Throughout the development process, our skilled web team builds our clients' sites using our very own CMS, making it easily adaptable to the requirements of each individual project. This also allows future adjustments to be made faster and more simply than if using a third-party service.

Helping every customer to become more successful



Our mission is to help every customer become more successful by projecting an image that sets them apart from their competition



Our SEO and social media seminars are held monthly at our office

A helping hand

In such a rapidly developing industry, businesses can easily fall behind the times with their approach to digital marketing. Therefore, in addition to our paid services, over four years ago we began to offer free social media and SEO seminars every month, inviting current and potential clients to our office to give them insight into not only the services we provide but also strategies they can employ and benefit from themselves.

We have also found these seminars to be a great way to engage in conversation not only about the basics of social media and SEO but also new and innovative techniques, with discussions on the latest updates and features. While our SEO and social media teams are knowledgeable and experienced, we believe there is always something more to learn and this allows us to test our knowledge in developing areas.

A secure network

Producing work for a digital environment comes with its own unique set of challenges. We have a great responsibility to protect our clients and ourselves from ever-more sophisticated cybercrime, in order

to continue providing a safe and trustworthy service.

Inspired by the government's own committee, our COBRA team meets regularly to discuss all aspects of cybersecurity and the impact on both ourselves and our clients. From these meetings, we produce new security policies and procedures for the company to follow, ensuring we are protected against a wide range of possible threats. This team also works with external security professionals to provide new insights to help us stay up to date.

The future of Verto

We have always responded to our customers' requirements, shaping the business to meet their wishes and increase their sales. Looking to the future, we hope to continue expanding and offering our services to an increasing number of clients, while still providing each one with the high-quality service we currently offer. Living up to our name, we hope to never become complacent or stuck in our ways, but to continue to be results driven and put our customers first, adapting to the ever-changing digital marketing industry and our clients' subsequent needs.

“We hope to never become complacent, adapting to the ever-changing digital marketing industry and our clients' subsequent needs”

Aurora Media Worldwide



Founder and Managing Director
Lawrence Duffy



Mark Cavendish and Olympic gold medallist Elia Viviani battle it out at Six Day London, 2019

Established in 2012, Aurora Media Worldwide is an award-winning, fully integrated content agency that works in over 40 countries. The firm has grown to collaborate on many of the largest sporting events on the planet with some of the biggest names in broadcasting. Founder and Managing Director Lawrence Duffy explains to *The Parliamentary Review* that a young and passionate team has helped the firm to grow rapidly and achieve a global presence.

We are a broadcast media agency, specialising in the production of major live sporting events for TV as well as the creation of digital and social content. The majority of our customers can be grouped into three major categories: broadcasters, sports rightsholders and brands.

Global presence

The company has grown every year since our launch seven years ago and although our office is in London, our client base has seen us produce programmes and events in over 40 countries, from Greenland to Australia and China to Chile. Our output and position is truly global.

Our programmes are regularly seen by audiences of millions across the globe as we are often a “host broadcaster” for various events. This means our shows are taken by multiple channels across the world at the same time, including FOX, Eurosport, ARD Germany, CCTV China and the BBC. We hire all the technical, camera and production staff and develop, produce and deliver the shows.

FACTS ABOUT AURORA MEDIA WORLDWIDE

- » Founder and Managing Director: Lawrence Duffy
- » Founded in 2012
- » Based in Farringdon, London
- » Services: Broadcast media agency
- » No. of employees: 40
- » Specialising in sports TV and digital production
- » www.auroramedia.com

International live sports television at the highest level is an exciting place to be. It often drives weekly conversations in the workplace or on the bus, and can lead news bulletins. Editorial accuracy, rigorous technical planning and entertainment creation are all vital.

A dynamic culture

Our company culture is very young and dynamic. We work in an extremely fast-moving and often high-pressure sector and therefore agility, efficiency and gold-standard production value is at the heart of the company ethos.

We take advantage of advancements in technology to enhance creativity and storytelling. As in other entertainment sectors, we make use of augmented and virtual reality, as well as machine learning, as we continually strive to create hyper-modern broadcast output.

The UK sports TV industry is a Great British export. Across the country, we have world-leading production talent that is regularly employed to produce and consult on international and global sports events. Much of this experience is gained “hands-on” and we feel a responsibility to offer opportunities for the next generation to learn and move up in our industry.

We are privileged to work with some very progressive and prestigious organisations. We produce The Goodwood Festival of Speed, Revival and Members meetings for The Duke of Richmond, with ITV, Sky and the BBC all acting as live broadcast partners in the UK.

We have also worked as broadcast partner with the hugely innovative and rapidly growing Formula E Championship since its first race in 2013, which is also shown on BBC Sport in the UK. We are now in the sixth season of this championship, with the sport having already witnessed the seismic changes in the motor industry and the move to electrification.



Classic style at The Goodwood Revival

We are also live production partner to the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships and international Six Day track cycling series. It is a privilege to film each day with world-renowned athletes like Roger Federer, Simona Halep, Mark Cavendish and Laura Kenny. It's impossible to avoid the influence of their pursuit of excellence and dedication on our own work and business ethos.

We are very motivated by our clients, who all share a common goal: to create world-class events. Like anyone else, we are content consumers, and our consumption habits are changing day by day. Live sport still has the power to command a true “appointment to view” TV moment and the Rugby World Cup Final from

“We take advantage of advancements in technology to enhance creativity and storytelling”



Street racing at the Paris Formula E-Prix



Roger Federer en route to his 100th ATP Tour Final win at the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships, 2019



The Extreme E series – electric SUV racing in remote landscapes. Dakar Rally, 2020

“We are privileged to work with some very progressive and prestigious organisations”

Japan was a good example of this. The final was watched on ITV by a peak UK audience of 12.8 million, making it one of the most watched programmes of 2019 on British television.

Adapting to the digital market

As audiences consolidate habits around on-demand services and viewing content on mobile devices, our clients require different types of content and business models.

The adoption of digital platforms continues to grow rapidly and, as such, we have been producing a raft of original short form content for rightsholders and brands like JP Morgan, Jaguar and Nissan. This trend will continue as our clients speak directly to their fan and consumer base. In sport at least, so called “disintermediation” is here to stay.

We have been lucky to win several coveted industry awards with our clients, including broadcast digital, sports business and BT Sports industry accolades. In late 2018, we continued our upward trajectory when the company was acquired by All3Media, the UK’s leading independent television, film and digital production and distribution group, whose 40 companies across Europe, North

America and Asia produce high profile, award-winning content including *1917*, *Fleabag*, *Gogglebox* and *Drowning in Plastic*. This new ownership allows us to truly consider our next phase of growth.

As we travel the world, we see many common challenges, with climate change being the most dominant global issue. Like others, the TV and sports industry is starting to pay attention. The radical Extreme E racing series launches in 2021, drawing attention to climate change and we have a number of projects where technological advancement allows remote production to be a genuine alternative to flying live production teams to foreign locations.

We have a young staff and we want their careers to flourish in a brilliant, bold industry, capturing live talked-about moments for many years to come. Our intention is to grow and move into the non-sport space, primarily focusing on events and brands. Our learnings and skills, we think, are quite transferable.

Finally, it’s important to have fun and to make sure our team members have a proper work-life balance. And then, like the athletes we cover, we get up, and go again.

Access



Access' That Counts! campaign is empowering Greater Manchester to get moving



Co-Owner and Managing Director Simon Landi

Access is an independent digital development and marketing communications agency based in Manchester. The agency helps brands and businesses to engage with their customers more effectively through a blend of strategic understanding, creativity and technological expertise, delivered with an end-to-end approach. Managing Director Simon Landi says clients trust Access to make things happen – and that it is the company's ability to listen, understand, anticipate and create award-winning work that drives its success.

Central to what we do is our ambition to support the whole customer journey, online and offline. We do this by combining rigorous insight-led strategy and powerful creative ideas and designs with innovative technology. This is led by our ethos to be "Genuinely Effective" – this means we approach everything in a down-to-earth, pragmatic way to deliver the best commercial results for our clients. We're unique in our experience set, and ensuring we match our talent and capabilities to the ever-changing needs of clients has delivered continued growth, with this year delivering a 115 per cent increase in profit and a 42 per cent increase in turnover.

Our clients span global corporations, SMEs, charities and the public sector. They include: WaterAid, the National Grid, Co-op Insurance, Northumbrian Water, the University of Central Lancashire – or UCLan – Autovista, Edrington, Stagecoach Bus, BAFTA, the National Youth Theatre, Sentinel and Greater Manchester Moving.

Proudly independent

We were founded 20 years ago, and our independence, and the flexibility that comes with it, is at the heart of our success.

FACTS ABOUT ACCESS

- » Co-Owner: Simon Landi
- » Co-Owner: Mark Hope
- » Established in 1999
- » Based in Manchester
- » Services: Digital development and marketing communications
- » No. of employees: 31
- » www.weareaccess.co.uk

“A uniquely balanced agency that combines the heritage and insight-driven approach of a marketing and communication agency with the innovation and technical know-how of a world-class digital agency”

Led by two directors with a combined industry experience of 50 years, decision-making at senior level is fast and responsive. This, coupled with our evolutionary outlook, means that we have created a uniquely balanced agency that combines the heritage and insight-driven approach of a marketing and communication agency with the innovation and technical know-how of a world-class digital agency. This year alone, we have added more than £1 million worth of new business and won five new major clients.

Excelling in development and digital experience

In a competitive marketplace, our digital delivery team is among the best in the UK. As one of only a small number of agencies with Acquia Preferred Partner status in northern Europe, and the only one in the north of England, we have a successful track record in delivering industry-leading solutions for some of the world's leading organisations.

Specialising in the open-source web content management platform Drupal and the Acquia open digital experience platform, we are experts in leveraging this technology to transform business operations and create engaging digital experiences.

We are global web development partners for a number of organisations, including WaterAid. We are responsible

for the development, governance and deployment of all websites and microsites across WaterAid's entire global operation. This partnership has already delivered a 244 per cent increase in website conversion from mobile and tablet devices.

A similar global platform brief has also been undertaken for leading independent premium spirits company Edrington, and we are now providing the business with the capabilities to build, update and centrally manage numerous Drupal websites on a global scale.

Perfect partners

In an industry where networked agencies are seemingly taking over the world, we have created a strategy which enables us to compete with big multidisciplinary agency supergroups and win.

We have developed close relationships with other best-in-class agencies in the region, allowing us to collaborate on new business briefs that require a multidisciplinary approach. By carefully seeking out like-minded businesses that offer experts with complementary skill sets, we can shape highly specialised teams based specifically on a client's needs.

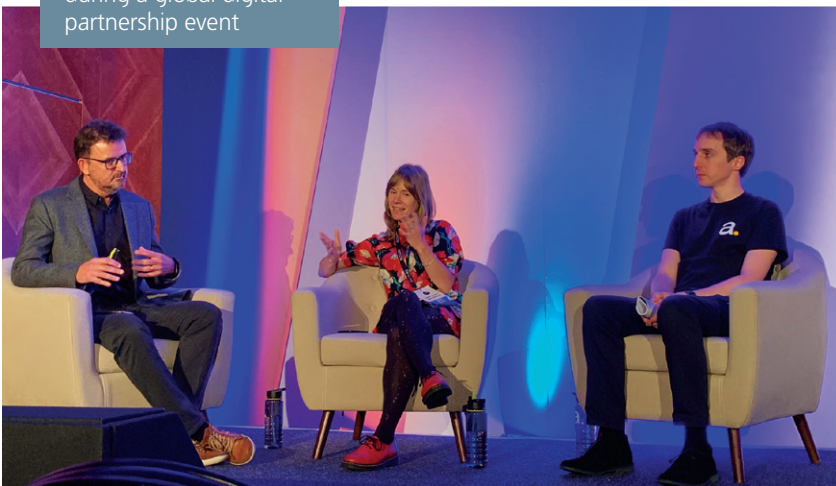
Using this approach, bringing together four specialist agencies with working relationships spanning 20 years, we recently won a major health campaign run by Greater Sport, involving the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the NHS in Greater Manchester and Sport England.

Leading in insights

Planning and insights are ingrained in our DNA, so much so that last year we created The Thinkery: our award-winning insight, strategy and planning services division.

This specialist division has provided the strategic insight responsible for

Access and WaterAid co-presented a discussion on digital innovation during a global digital partnership event





the success of many high-profile and award-winning UK and global campaigns, including an in-depth study on Generation Z, which helped us deliver UCLan's most successful student recruitment campaign to date.

The Thinkery truly sets us apart from other digital agencies. The insights that we offer are vital in shaping both integrated offline and online campaigns, as well as digital design. What is more, our insight and planning credentials have secured us new business and cemented us as one of the region's leading strategic insight consultancies in our own right.

An employee-centric culture

As the industry moves at pace, one of the biggest challenges facing agencies, both in the region and beyond, is the fierce competition to attract and retain leading digital marketing talent.

With this in mind, we have developed a culture of putting our employees at the very heart of everything that we do. As a result, we are bucking this trend by attracting the region's best digital and marketing talent, from experienced developers to ambitious graduates and apprentices.

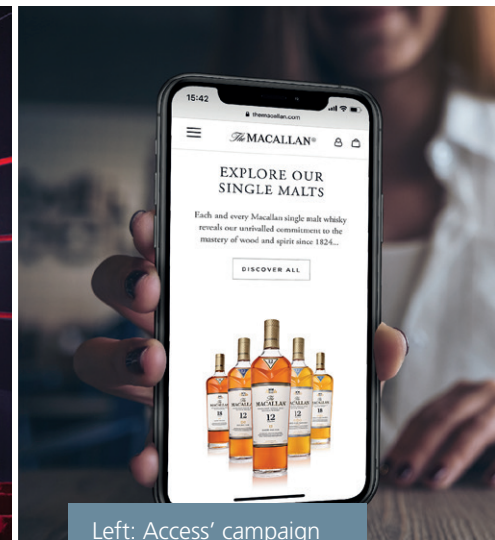
Our 30-strong team of developers, creatives and planning specialists are the lifeblood of the agency, and we

invest considerably in nurturing and developing this talent.

We are proud of the open structure that we have cultivated, in which the whole team is galvanised to help shape the future direction of the agency. Everyone is kept up to date on all aspects of the business, and we regularly communicate what is happening and why, helping everyone see the bigger picture as to how the agency is adapting and evolving.

We understand that staff want stability. Set against a backdrop of natural evolution, this can be challenging; however, our open and genuine culture and clear lines of communication mean that any changes are clearly explained and everyone understands their role and value to the agency now and in the future.

We feel we're in the strongest position in our history for fast-paced growth, and winning Marketing Agency of the Year at the 2019 UK Agency Awards is testament to this. To capitalise on our ambition for growth, we are looking at establishing a presence in other cities and are developing skills in high-demand technologies including voice and AI. As we enter our third decade, we are hugely optimistic about what we can achieve.



Left: Access' campaign for UCLan generated unprecedented results

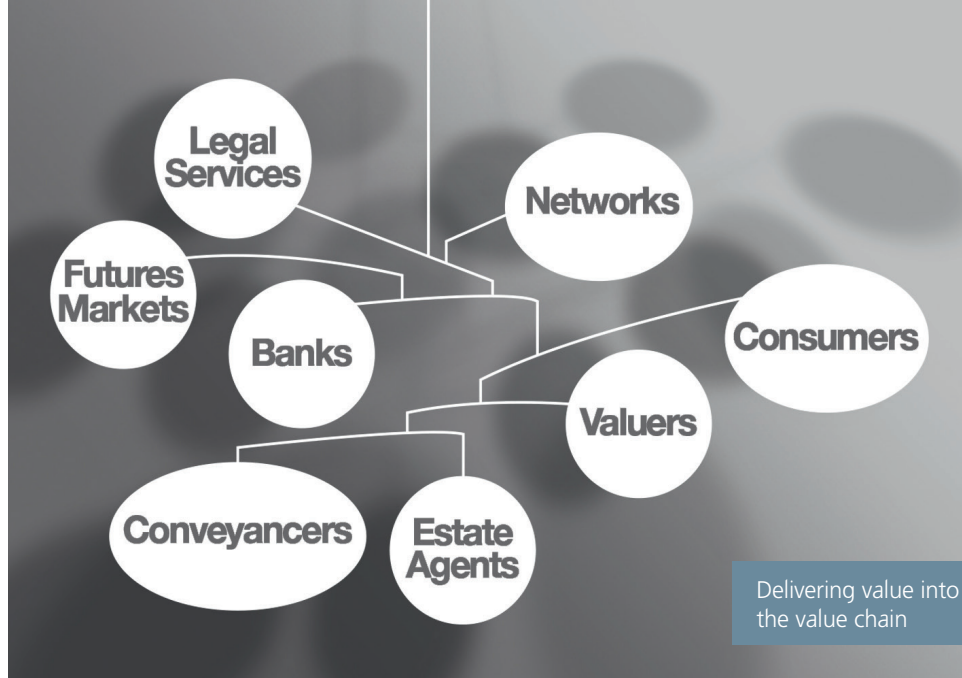
Right: Ongoing global web development for spirits company Edrington

“We're in the strongest position in our history for fast-paced growth, and winning Marketing Agency of the Year at the 2019 UK Agency Awards is testament to this”

WPB



Owner Matt Smith



“We know your industry, we know your clients; all we need to do is get to know you,” says WPB owner Matt Smith. Matt and his specialist team have been delivering brand consultancy services for more than 25 years. Their services have evolved from identity and campaign work to media consultancy and now business strategy. Their success, he says, is down to intelligence, expertise and talent.

FACTS ABOUT WPB

- » Owner: Matt Smith
- » Founded in 1992
- » Located in London
- » Services: Financial services and property brand advisory
- » No. of employees: 7
- » www.wpb.co.uk

As a communications business, we have seen through the experiences of our clients how organisations are facing more complexity than ever before. Our tumultuous political environment is accompanying longer term trends of change such as our ageing population and rapid technological innovation that is shaping the commercial landscape for businesses not only internally in terms of employment but also externally in terms of customers’ and shareholders’ expectations.

Often these issues reside in what Charles Clarke calls in his book of the same name, “The Too Difficult Box”. Increasingly, however, there is a recognition that simply hoping these things will go away is no longer a feasible approach.

WPB recognised that companies in financial markets are asking themselves not just how they should navigate these issues but what they should do in the first place. These issues are bringing to bear, in some cases, existential questions about the viability of current business models.

Take a seat

One response has been to harness the talents of wiser heads in a new business. The Chair consultancy, launched in May 2019, in the Home Room in the House of Lords. It offers a new model for accessing the kind of expertise and experience previously only available through the big consulting houses.

Our gig economy has created many one-man band advisory businesses but nothing comprehensive that can offer the breadth of insight of the bigger firms. The consultancy market remains full of companies that can help with how to achieve certain ends but far fewer that can help decide what you should be doing in the first place.

The Chair's contingent experts bring to boardrooms a unique perspective on a company's business through a bespoke boardroom away-day experience for executive and non-executive directors, designed around that institution's particular areas of concern. Ideal for building societies as well as networks and other providers, the Chair offers a level of insight previously inaccessible to many organisations. Our contingent experts include significant industry "big hitters" with their own track records of leading successful enterprises, and holding high profile positions. The Chair has already made a successful start and there is clearly a demand for this type of service. Its next step is to develop its own events programme to support broader innovative thinking in its core markets.

Understand and enlighten

This year also saw WPB move fully into the research arena. Market sentiment surveys in property valuations, legal markets and banking have informed clients' new product developments and sales strategies. Our work in understanding the real impact of

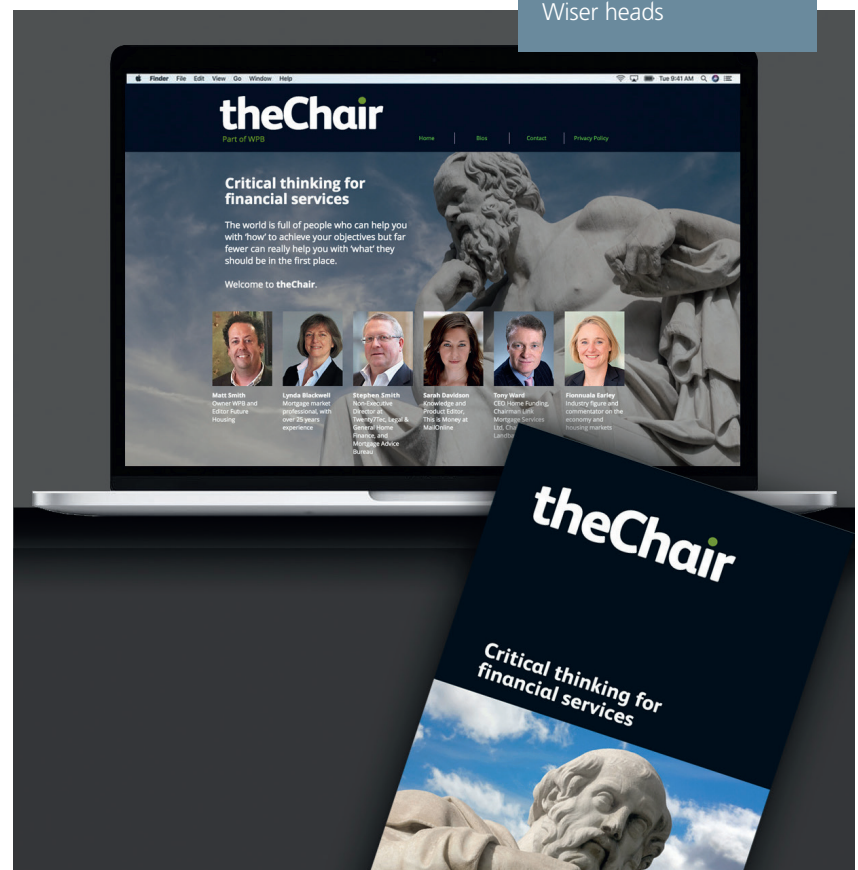
digital technologies in banks, building societies, lending entities such as peer to peer and wholesale market funded lenders, means we are better placed than most to see the strategic challenges facing companies, regulators and the markets.

The insights WPB has gleaned from this kind of work have underpinned its output in other markets meaning the company has been able to make a real difference to the thinking in UK boardrooms. The issues facing all banks and building societies when it comes to digitalisation are broadly the same but the balance sheets, funding mechanisms, legacy system issues and strategic objectives mean few have the same approach or goals.

Technology is a real challenge for the UK's boardrooms. Very few executives and far fewer non-executives have ever written a line of computing code, the digital deficit in knowledge facing boardrooms and regulators across the UK is not being sufficiently well addressed.

“Its next step is to develop its own events programme to support broader innovative thinking in its core markets”

Wiser heads





Insightful

“The core philosophy of WPB is the willingness to think and do things differently”

The right thing at the right time for the right reason

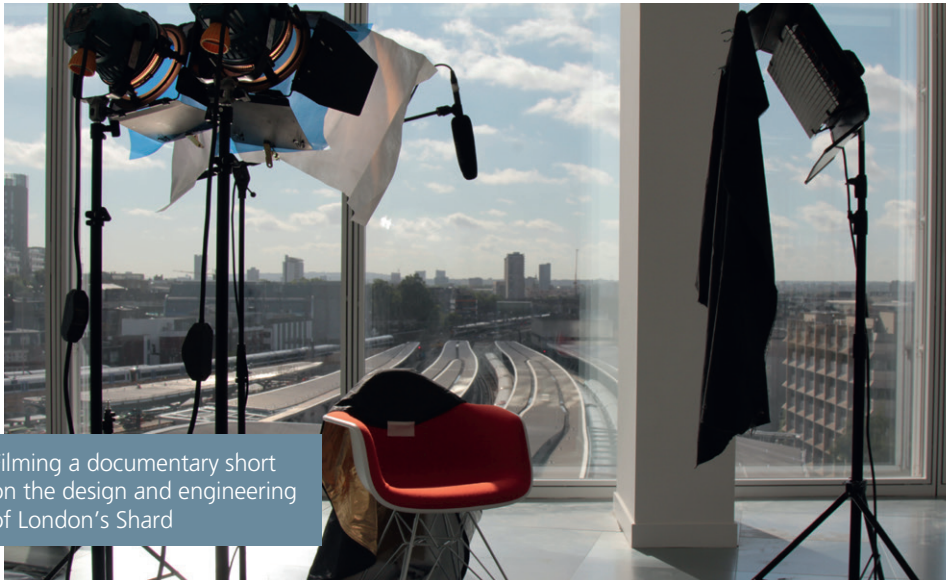
The core philosophy of WPB is the willingness to think and do things differently, to shoulder some responsibility and influence and attempt to nudge along some of the more progressive thinking - particularly around a core market like housing. Whether this is in the space of modern methods of construction, addressing the skills shortage, the cost of materials, ideas to help under-resourced planning departments, or innovations needed in home finance, we are trying to achieve small incremental changes that can deliver an improved bigger picture. WPB works within entire value chains, meaning their insights can further the understanding of policy makers.

Future housing is an example of WPB's intent to meet the changing strategic and communication challenges of the housing market, and subsequently influence the policy makers whilst doing so. Among our causes has been

our call for a rethink on issues such as stamp duty, rethinking rebates on empty buy to let properties and planning support and reform. Our call for an NHS2 – a national housing service – seeks to depoliticise the housing agenda. Of course, the concerns go beyond housing and extend to related topics that affect where and how we live such as transport, health and finance.

WPB has come a long way in over the last five years. From a graphic design business, it has grown to be a successful independent, financial services and property brand advisory business whose clients conduct business across the world. From magazine content to virtual reality films, it has innovated wherever possible to stay ahead of client expectations. It's a model that illustrates you can grow a business built upon intellectual property but you must “walk that talk” yourself before you advise others to do so.

Spiked Media



Filming a documentary short on the design and engineering of London's Shard



Managing Director
Christian Young

After working in broadcasting, where he created shows for the UK, US and Japan, Christian Young switched to corporate video production for a multinational firm. Hoping to further develop content around the people that drove the stories, he founded Spiked Media in 2009. A decade on, he tells *The Parliamentary Review* about the importance of having an imagination, the value of giving your best and the joy of building a team for the future.

November 2019 sees us mark ten years since we were founded from a small desk in the corner of my living room in Brixton, right next to the TV that inspired much of my passion for great content as a child. Our company roots didn't come from a wealth of family connections or experience running businesses; I grew up in a wonderfully generous family with grandparents who'd worked hard to buy their council house in the 1970s and a mum who worked hard as an administrator for the fire brigade while raising me single-handed, but no-one had ever run a business or even a department.

What I did learn from them was how to value people and to give your best, what hard work and commitment could get you. The shows I loved on that TV taught me how my thoughts could be challenged and changed, how great creative work inspires the imagination and how you can lead people to places they may otherwise never get to go.

Founding Spiked Media was a leap of faith into leading. We launched in a recession, but it focused clients' minds on the value that a particular agency brought to each project. By putting our clients' identity at the heart of our work,

FACTS ABOUT SPIKED MEDIA

- » Managing Director: Christian Young
- » Founded in 2009
- » Located in London
- » Services: Creative agency and digital media provider
- » No. of employees: 4
- » www.spiked.media

“Founding Spiked Media was a leap of faith into leading”

we beat competitors who were more interested in their bottom line than developing a deep understanding of what they were commissioned to present. It's a core principle we've grown on, knowing our clients better than our competitors and focusing on bringing an effective creative voice to their message.

Because it's not just a video, it's your voice

In an environment where people have more access to data than ever before, quickly sharing their experiences and opinions with the world, authenticity has become core to building a favourable following. If audience's experience doesn't align with what they're told, they are quick to point it out publicly, and criticism spirals. Making sure a message is an authentic representation of who you are and what you deliver builds trust whether you are talking to an internal audience, consumers or viewers.

This year we began using “Because it's not just a video, it's your voice” as the business strapline to highlight the importance of how the message you present should reflect your identity to connect effectively with viewers. Our expertise in this area was tested by

one of our international clients, Syska Hennessy, who were preparing for their 90th anniversary and wanted to create a video that celebrated their company's history but that also excited the staff and clients who will lead the business through the next 90 years.

There was a sense Syska's millennial staff felt their brand was dated and didn't present a company they had opportunity to thrive in; in contrast many of the staff that had been with the business longer term had much of their professional identity tied up in traditional communication. We needed to express the traditional core while taking everyone forward together into a future of opportunity. It needed to be clear success has always driven Syska forward, anticipating an even brighter future ahead.

The video went live for our client's 90th anniversary launch, and the reception was even better than expected. Leaders embraced video as a communications medium for the first time, excitedly playing the video at client and team meetings to set the tone. Early-career staff felt the brand reflected an exciting future they could be part of, and the piece won a host of awards including “Best Motion Graphic” at the MarCom Awards.

One of our SIA-awarded security training videos



Anthology London's Green Man in Deptford Foundry





Building a team fit for the future

As a business we have learnt to speak for a wide range of voices. It's critical that as we grow our team we embed our knowledge and experience, and that means continuing to recruit diverse people that can work together to understand and communicate to all of our clients and their audiences.

Diversity has been a hot topic for many years, but recently we've seen the conversation progress. We've seen big corporates form senior teams that are more gender and ethnically diverse but then realise that everyone's predominantly upper middle class and thinks very similarly. We've also seen societal social mobility reduce and people embracing more populist narratives that claim to present the answer to inequality. The diversity discussion is now moving to how to increase socio-economic diversity as well the visible areas of focus to promote diversity of thought within organisations and provide answers to today's challenges.

Although we've traditionally done well for diversity, recruiting is often a challenge. Most applying talent is university educated. Universities impressed with the importance of showing their value to students have industry teams to help place students to businesses, and this has been great. To reach non-university educated talent, we've had to contact charities

and youth groups, and advertise online. It's a lot more work to find what is often equally good talent, often with more drive. To help, we're exploring a programme with a UK youth charity to provide soft-skills training for those who wouldn't get the advantages that other socio-economic backgrounds naturally provide, lowering the barrier to our industry.

Just getting started

We have spent the last ten years producing video and animated content for some of the world's biggest and best names; at the centre of it all is a passion to tell stories in a way that will inspire and move audiences. Along the way we've had to learn how to do business, embrace new platforms, new channels and new technology, and expand our services into consultancy, branding and campaign direction.

As we enter 2020, the next ten years look full of promise as we start originating our own content alongside our client projects and expand our team to bring in diverse new creatives. For broadcast and social channels we have shows and series that we hope will both entertain and help change the way that people think, much the way the TV in my living room did for me at the start. The future is exciting, and we never stop being grateful for the impact we get to have on the world through our stories.

“This year we began using “Because it's not just a video, it's your voice” as the business strapline to highlight the importance of how the message you present should reflect your identity to connect effectively with viewers”

The Word



Principal Librarian Julia Robinson



The Word, National Centre for the Written Word

The Word, National Centre for the Written Word, is a cultural venue and modern library. It hosts space for conferences and museum exhibitions and it is also a cultural hub. At its heart the building remains a public library, albeit tailored to a different clientele than one might conventionally expect. Principal Librarian Julia Robinson tells *The Parliamentary Review* that The Word's team seeks to provide a different feeling and aesthetic to the usual library building – one that welcomes and champions diversity.

FACTS ABOUT THE WORD

- » Principal Librarian: Julia Robinson
- » Founded in 2016
- » Located in South Shields
- » Services: State-of-the-art cultural venue
- » No. of frontline staff: 27
- » www.theworduk.org

Our building replaced the former Central Library for South Shields, which had opened in 1976. Over the decades changes in technology and in library services meant the building needed further investment, and South Tyneside Council recognised the value of a modern public library.

Read all about it

The council has been focusing on reinvigorating South Shields town centre through its recent 365 regeneration campaign. The investment in The Word has been followed by a new transport interchange with plans for additional retail and leisure facilities in due course. The council has made a bold commitment to libraries not only through opening The Word, but also by investing in new libraries in Jarrow Focus and Hebburn Central.

We opened in 2016, with a renewed commitment to education and to our community. During the planning process we consulted with the public and plans

were extended to include a café, visitor centre, Fablab and exhibition space as well as the library. The input from the local community and existing library users was exceptional, allowing us to create a truly unique space that is free to use.

All welcome

It is essential to act as a space in which everyone feels welcome. We believe that all our visitors complement each other well, and we are visited by a diverse range of people. Through expanding our audience, we are able to encourage people to visit us who, for example, may not feel so comfortable in spaces such as art galleries.

Our venue has a café, which is always busy and provides a welcome background noise and buzz around the building. We believe that when coupled with our light and welcoming glass building, we offer a comfortable environment for any and all who wish to visit us. The space we work within has been referred to as a town square, and

with the atrium-like space on the ground floor, the comparison works well.

While we value areas where people are free to make noise, we also understand the importance of peace and quiet in a library there are quiet spaces available throughout the building and generally Sunday is a much quieter day. Through combining planning and architecture, we can offer space for everyone.

The write kind of staff

We recognise that our staff have been fundamental to the success of our venture. They have actively sought opportunities and been committed to providing the best possible library service. Our location, in the South Shields Market Square so close to the River Tyne has also encouraged a wide range of visitors, many coming from North Shields and Tynemouth. As a library with historical records, we also find that a number of visitors come to research their family history, with some coming from as far afield as Australia and America.

“We believe that all our visitors complement each other well, and we are visited by a diverse range of people”

Extensive IT facilities with staff on-hand to give advice





Over 70,000 books to browse and borrow

“We believe it is essential to act as a space in which everyone feels welcome”

We have a number of exhibitions taking place at present and have worked hard to ensure a range of groups are comfortable visiting us. We worked hard to bring the existing groups we had at our old library, like our choir, with us to The Word, and we have also added chess, Lego and fiction writing groups, plus a writing group aimed at young people.

We have also founded a literary festival, known as the Write! festival, which has grown year on year. We began as a week-long festival and this year we will be hosting events over three weeks. We have moved the festival to coincide with school holidays, which will allow more children to be involved. We have had speakers ranging from Val McDermid, David Baldacci and Michael Rosen to Kevin Maguire and Ann Cleeves.

Moving forward

Much like any transition, we faced a number of challenges in the way in which we operate. When we reopened in 2016 to meet the needs

of customers, we worked new hours and seven days a week.

Since opening we have seen huge increases in library use, with around 19,500 people actively borrowing books. We have seen a dramatic rise in the number of children's books being borrowed, and in the numbers of preschool children attending events.

We have 48 PCs available for public use, with staff around to help those who are less confident – demand for the computers is high.

Reading the future

In the coming years we are confident that we will continue to be able to engage with the local community and to see members of our community become more involved in the planning process.

We also hope to be able to keep up with the ever-evolving technology we are faced with. If we can continue as we have gone before, we will remain an invaluable resource to the people of South Tyneside and beyond.

Fox Silver



State dining room cruets



Right: Middlesex University mace

Centre: FIA F1 Constructors' World Championship trophy

Richard Fox, managing director of Fox Silver, has created work for a variety of corporate, public sector, private and motorsports clients, including Downing Street, KPMG, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, Pernod Ricard and F1, to name a very select few. According to Richard, his love of silversmithing began as an addition to his school timetable but quickly became an all-consuming interest. More than 40 years on, he runs a highly motivated design-led manufacturing company that provides silverware and jewellery to a variety of prestigious global clients. Richard explains what sets Fox Silver apart from the competition.

While studying for my A levels, I chose to embark on a jewellery-making course because it complemented my other subjects. This soon became an all-consuming interest. As a result, I embarked on an art foundation course in 1973 and went on to study 3D design the following year at Middlesex Polytechnic, where my passion for silverware evolved. After working in the silversmithing industry for a year, I applied to the Royal College of Art. I gained my master's of design in 1981, and after leaving the college with a basic toolkit and a lot of enthusiasm, set up my own business.

My workshop was based in Mount Pleasant in London; however, the opportunity to team up with a friend and fellow student arose, and we took on larger premises in Kennington, where I grew my business. In 1982, I was invited to lecture at Middlesex, and at the start of the new academic year I took over as an associate lecturer, running the first-year silversmithing course. I taught there for seven years before leaving to concentrate on my own business. I participated in exhibitions in London and the UK with my livery company, the Goldsmiths' Company, which remains highly active in the promotion of contemporary silver to this day.

FACTS ABOUT FOX SILVER

- » Managing Director: Richard Fox
- » Founded in 1981
- » Located in Croydon
- » Services: Design and manufacture, specialising in precious metals and gemstones
- » No. of employees: 14
- » www.foxsilver.net

“I participated in exhibitions in London and the UK with my livery company, the Goldsmiths’, which remains proactive in the promotion of contemporary silver to this day”

F1

In 1984 I was commissioned to make the Bernie Ecclestone Trophy and, soon after, the F1 TV Trophy, kickstarting my career designing trophies, medals and models, which I enjoy to this day.

One of the biggest commissions came in 1995 for the FIA Formula One Drivers’, Constructors’ and Manufacturers’ World Rally Championship trophies. I had nine weeks from phone call to delivery, and there were just three of us in the workshop – some late nights ensued. The latest commissions for F1 in 2019 were for Azerbaijan, Belgium, Abu Dhabi and soon Bahrain 2020, for whom we have made trophies for 15 years.

Diversity

In 1984, the Goldsmiths’ Company commissioned a pair of candelabra, which led me to design tableware for Bulgari, while the Goldsmiths’ Company has a number of silver pieces designed by me spread over four decades of my career. I was commissioned by Lichfield Cathedral for a chalice and paten, which led directly to a commission for a chalice by the Archbishop of Canterbury at the time, George Carey, to be presented to His Holiness Pope John Paul II. The Vatican has three pieces in its collection that I have made; other notable recipients have been Archbishops Desmond Tutu and John Sentamu.

Lewis Hamilton USA
Grand Prix trophy 2016



Seventeen years ago, I was commissioned to work on a special release of 50-year-old whiskey for Chivas Regal to commemorate the Queen’s 50 years on the throne. This has led to further commissions from Pernod Ricard brands such as Ballantine’s and Glenlivet alongside a William Grant project and Johnnie Walker for the Belgian F1 Grand Prix trophies.

10 Downing Street

In 1991 I designed four sets of cruets for The Silver Trust, set up to commission silverware for the State Dining Room at No. 10. A further commission followed in 2005 to complete the 20 sets required to fully dress the table.

In the same year, I collaborated with the sculptress Angela Connor to create Principia, an imposing silver and gold water feature table time centrepiece, which was two years in the making and weighed 22 kilos.

Force majeure

A few years after setting up business, I was introduced to Serena Milton, a jeweller who was looking for a silversmith to assist with the production of her larger commissions. I landed the job. We are now a husband-and-wife team and have built up a diverse and highly eclectic client base, which allows us to encompass a broad spectrum of designing commissions in both jewellery and silversmithing.

In the start-up years we travelled extensively throughout the UK and Europe and as far as the US to exhibit our work; however, as the business grew, we employed more staff to cope with the increasing demand for our work. In 2005, Fox Silver Limited relocated from Kennington to a factory in Croydon, Surrey. We are now a highly skilled 14-strong team – small by any measure, but extremely efficient and with a global reach.



Rolls-Royce Motor Cars
Celestial Phantom

Rock and Rolls-Royce

We are currently tier-one suppliers to Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Limited and work alongside the design team to create stunning interiors for different models. I am probably best known for the Channel 4 programme Inside Rolls Royce, which followed me for nine months on the interior build of a Phantom set with over 440 diamonds. Moving forward, I am currently involved with a new dashboard concept called "Astrum".

Going from strength to strength, we have invested in CAD design, CAM, 3D printing and lasers; and by matching this technology with the craft of gold and silversmithing, we are able to manufacture technically complex work and compete on a global scale.

The Goldsmiths' Company

In 1996, I co-founded the Association of British Designer Silversmiths, which is now known as Contemporary British Silversmiths. Initially, I was the vice chairman; later, I became the chairman and then treasurer. The aim was to promote designer silverware with exhibitions and seminars in the UK, Europe, Scandinavia and the US. The organisation has grown in stature and now works with many international organisations and museums, including the V&A and the Goldsmiths' Company.

I became a Freeman of the Goldsmiths' Company and City of London in 1989, a Liveryman in 2005 and a Member of the Court of Assistants in 2011. I am passionate about my profession and craft. I have chaired various industry committees, am a Trustee of the Goldsmiths' Company and Centre, and promote education and outreach beyond the traditional London and South East catchment areas. I am looking forward to being elected as Prime Warden of the Goldsmiths' Company starting in May 2020 and to working alongside my fellow members as we move towards the celebration of 700 years since the granting of the Royal Charter in 1327.

One thing is for sure: life is never dull. There are always new challenges, and it's about how you surmount them to achieve your goal in efficient, ethical and ecological ways. I truly believe our industry is world-class.

“I truly believe our industry is world-class”

Left: Primacial crosses
Centre: Etihad Abu Dhabi F1 race trophy
Right: Riviera collection



Marketing Humber



Chair Andy Parkinson



The Humber has powered the UK economy for decades

Marketing Humber provides a “clear, consistent and powerful voice” for Yorkshire and the Humber, seeking to raise the region’s profile on both the national and international stage. Chair Andy Parkinson says the organisation focuses on “economic place marketing” to attract investment, support the growth of local businesses and act as a catalyst for sustainable growth in the area. Andy tells *The Parliamentary Review* about Marketing Humber’s vision, and how his team seek to promote the area as a great place to live, work, study, invest and visit.

FACTS ABOUT MARKETING HUMBER

- » Chair: Andy Parkinson
- » Established in 1995
- » Based in Hull
- » Services: Economic place marketing for the Humber
- » No. of employees: 4
- » www.marketinghumber.com
- » www.thewaterline.global

We were established in the mid-1990s as the Bondholder Scheme, representing a group of businesses in the local region who had come together with the aim of promoting the area and improving its image. Over time, we have developed and adapted, becoming a powerful network of 300 businesses and public sector organisations, all with the aim of marketing the Humber on the national and international stage. We aim to attract investment into the area and help companies to recruit the best talent for their workforces.

Our provision is comprised of a number of different elements and objectives. We work to build and support ambassadors for our region and support local businesses by promoting the Humber through marketing campaigns. We host and run a vast number of events regionally and nationally, all forwarding and strengthening our core message. To help support this work, we liaise closely with local authorities, the local chamber of commerce and key partners such as The Northern Powerhouse Partnership, the CBI, Make UK and the Institute of Directors.

The development of the Humber

Some 200 years ago, the Humber was a wealthy port economy, mass-producing and distributing goods across the world. The area was a global leader in its field and hosted the biggest shipping line companies in the world, becoming an essential part of the global Industrial Revolution.

Over the last 200 years, these industries have changed and adapted. The area's cluster industries tend to focus on traditional manufacturing, and we also have a high proportion of businesses within the chemical sector, largely because of the estuary. A huge cluster of energy-intensive industries has built up, leading to a growth in the local fossil fuel sector, as businesses and manufacturing processes require extensive energy input. The Humber economy has been built on this foundation. Nine years ago, we launched a campaign embracing this profile, championing the Humber, UK's Energy Estuary, as a core region for the energy industry.

Transitioning to renewable sources

The area's energy output, however, is not only tied to fossil fuels. Over the last few years, we have also seen a massive rise in the renewable industry in the Humber, driven by big investments from companies such as Ørsted UK and Siemens Gamesa for the production of wind farms. Potential energy sources are now truly diverse – we are home to the world's largest wind farms. Hornsea Project Two alone, once operational in 2022, will produce enough green energy to power 1.3 million homes.

In order to champion all the benefits of the Humber, we must also assess the challenges it faces and take steps to address them. Many investors are

reticent about investing in areas that are flood plains, and because of the estuary, the Humber is at a significant risk of flooding. In order to address this, we launched a campaign in partnership with the University of Hull called The Waterline with the aim of getting everyone focused on the waterline of the Humber. As well as drawing attention to climate issues, particularly rising sea levels, the campaign also forced businesses to come together to come up with new ways to improve local defences and protection against flooding.

The answer was to improve both our energy and flood resilience. We studied reports from the UN which projected planetary temperature increases and the effect this will have on estuaries. To avoid an increase of 1.5C, and the accompanying devastation this would bring to flood plains and other flood-prone areas, we only have a window of 12 years. This issue is particularly important for the Humber, with 90 per cent of all households in Hull being below the tideline and even a metre of sea-level rise leading to the city being completely submerged.

“In order to champion all the benefits of the Humber, we must also assess the challenges it faces and take steps to address them ”

Three of the world's largest wind farms are on our doorstep and will attract up to £100 billion of investment





The Waterline campaign has huge support and is driving the message of why the world needs the Humber

“We are creating a living laboratory, using our geography to incubate technology which can tackle these climate challenges”

The importance of estuaries

As mentioned above, in order to raise awareness of the impacts of this on the Humber and estuaries around the world, we launched a campaign, The Waterline, to show why the world needs the Humber. We have been working alongside Lord Prescott, who has been working with the Council of Europe, looking at the role that estuaries play in climate change. As 60 per cent of the world’s population live within a half an hour drive from an estuary, if global climate change is to be tackled, estuaries are a good place to start. We are now using our experience to help other estuarial regions around the world, assisting them to make the transition to more renewable forms of energy. Local councils have declared a climate emergency, and we are working hard to contribute to the fight against rising sea levels.

Estuaries can act as a testbed for new innovations and technology in this field. Because of this, our Waterline campaign is receiving significant global attention. We are creating a living laboratory, using our geography to incubate technology which can tackle these climate challenges. To support this, our key strategic partner, the University of Hull, organised a

Universities of the North conference, bringing together 30 northern universities, and pitching the idea of the Humber being a living laboratory. This was extremely well-received, and we are developing a project, which will champion these aims, to support it further. We have also recently held The Waterline Summit 2019, which to date is the biggest business event the region has ever seen. The purpose of this annual event is to get even more businesses and organisations to commit to our cause.

One of the challenges we have had to overcome is the economic structure of the Humber. As we are quite disconnected from other large economic regions, and as government investment focuses on core cities, we have had to develop new models to achieve economic scale. By focusing on the Humber’s key attributes, namely our energy production, we have been able to turn this issue into a strength.

We also have to adapt to changing market objectives, especially around the decline of traditional industries. If these businesses don’t reinvent themselves, they will fail. Our goal going forward will be to support these businesses to grow our local economy while embracing this energy transition.

Love Brands



A look inside the Love Brands showroom



Founders Hugo Deane (right) and Michael Shalders (left)

With over 25 years' combined experience in sales, Hugo Deane and Michael Shalders founded Love Brands almost a decade ago to act as both a "champion of the independent retailer and an ambassador for brand partners". Operating in a turbulent time for the fashion industry, the pair have pushed to act in a more sustainable manner in recent years. Hugo tells *The Parliamentary Review* about the ecommerce sector and how the UK is moving towards a service-based economy.

When we founded Love Brands in 2010, our aim was to create a unique fashion distribution company that offered our clients and brand partners a holistic service. More than just a sales organisation, we wanted to create a company drawing on our 25 years' experience to include sales, marketing, retail and franchise consultancy. We launched with the iconic brand Custo Barcelona and helped them open their first company retail store in Westfield Stratford prior to the Olympic Games.

As the exclusive distributors for European and American fashion apparel brands selling to the UK and Irish retailers across women and men's apparel, bags and accessories, footwear and underwear, our client base includes some 450 independent boutiques, department stores, retail store groups and online pure ecommerce players. Our key brand is Guess, owned by Los Angeles based Guess? Inc., which has its European HQ in Lugano, Switzerland. The brand has over \$2.6 billion in sales worldwide, with over \$1.1 billion of sales in Europe – for the brand, the UK is a fast-growing market.

FACTS ABOUT LOVE BRANDS

- » Joint Managing Directors and Owners: Hugo Deane and Michael Shalders
- » Founded in 2010
- » Located in London
- » Services: Fashion distribution company
- » No. of employees: 17
- » www.lovebrandsuk.com

“Although we are a small company, we are also fast growing and firmly believe in investing in our staff’s development and education”

Non-stop one-stop shop

We want to both champion the independent retailer and serve as an ambassador for our brand partners in an ever-complex retail environment. We aim to be a one-stop shop, where we can show the latest fashion trends, support our clients with store staff training and marketing, and provide attractive commercial margins and superb customer service. We are focused on ethical and sustainable fashion which means not only product and environment, but also in terms of supplier and staff welfare. We like to ensure we have a rewarding workplace and we have excellent staff retention.

Although we are a small company, we are also fast growing and firmly believe in investing in our staff’s development and education. We have hired a specialist training coach to help us develop industry-winning company standards, sales techniques and customer service. We have decided to be flexible in terms of staff working patterns and supportive of training needs. Where requested or required we will sponsor membership of professional bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Management.

An ambassador for our brand partners



Love brands, hate waste

Sustainability is becoming more and more important and our brand partners are working hard to consciously create sustainable products wherever possible. It is our job to educate our retail partners and help develop a more sustainable fashion industry. REPREEVE is a project using recycled polyester made from discarded water bottles and is the world’s leading recycled fibre. Guess currently uses over 50 per cent of this for its denim and is looking to reach 100 per cent as soon as possible. We are pioneers and are not waiting for legislation to catch up. Further initiatives include using organic cotton and sustainable viscous, such as Tencel made from sustainable forests, and using less water in the dyeing process. This is going to become a huge issue and key to future success of the industry.

Access to finance has been a major challenge for us over the years and for SMEs in general since the 2008 banking crisis. We have found that high street banks have become paralysed and simply stopped lending, forcing business to seek alternatives, from using their own funding through to innovative new finance players such as crowdfunding platforms and non-bank finance partners. SMEs literally receive no support or help from government, and it is incredibly difficult to access support, grants etc.

Given SMEs are the biggest single employer in the UK, these huge barriers to trade and growth need urgently addressing. The government tends to mainly listen to big players such as the CBI or car industry, which actually only employ around 10 per cent of the British workforce. What needs to happen is a new approach. SMEs need better representation and support and to be taken seriously as drivers of innovation and growth and experienced practitioners.



The Love Brands team

Brexit has been a direct threat for us as importers, considering the massive devaluation of the currency affecting margins and the lack of clarity in the marketplace as a result of the political stalemate – this affects consumer confidence and business investment. As an industry, we simply need clarity, and now with a stable government that can pass legislation, we are looking for a pragmatic and sensible free trade agreement with the EU that supports the needs of our economy, so we know the legal framework and trading rules. Our industry will adapt and this certainty will allow businesses to plan, invest and move forward.

More than end products

In future we see shopping moving increasingly towards an experiential endeavour as opposed to one solely focused on the acquisition of an end product. With community centres clearly suffering, we find that anything we can do to discourage such

downturn is in our best interests in addition to those of the community.

We hope to encourage people to support their high street, through thinking outside of the box, and to continue working with local retailers who understand their customers on a far more personal level than we see on an online platform. Indeed, we couple this with an understanding that the retail model as a whole demands reform and feel that our current position in the market well equips us to fill this role.

Moving towards a service-based economy in the coming years demands a great deal of thought and patience, as well as getting to know the people who work in the industry and those who shop in it. Overall, we are confident that while our future is not entirely certain, our industry will innovate, adapt and be able to meet tomorrow's challenges.

“Sustainability is becoming more and more important and our brand partners are working hard to consciously create sustainable products wherever possible”

ABG Design



Managing Director Howard Miles (left) and Creative Director Chris Hubert (right)



Auckland Tower at The Auckland Project, County Durham

Specialising in brand identity, interpretation design, exhibitions and signage, ABG Design was founded over 20 years ago in Truro. The firm has since delivered campaigns for clients that include the RAF Museum, the Houses of Parliament and the University of East Anglia. Jointly owned by Howard Miles and Chris Hubert, Howard took over as Managing Director seven years ago. Howard tells *The Parliamentary Review* that after taking the reins, he had to change his way of working to deliver a renewed focus on collaboration.

FACTS ABOUT ABG DESIGN

- » Managing Director: Howard Miles
- » Creative Director: Chris Hubert
- » Founded in 1999
- » Located in Truro
- » Services: Brand and media, wayfinding and signage, interpretation and exhibitions and publications
- » No. of employees: 5 with further consultants
- » www.abgdesign.uk.com

When I needed advice on the best way to run a thriving design practice, I approached Oxford Innovation, who allocated a great mentor who coached me for two years, helping our company to act more strategically. Within a year collaboration started to deliver tangible results with press releases and advertorials written about the company and our first Design Effectiveness Award won through the Design Business Association. The two-year mentoring programme proved to be invaluable and has taught me that you never stop learning and diversifying how you look at your business model.

Since that time, I have ensured we are part of the right types of associations for our business. We are currently members of the Sign Design Society and Association of Heritage Interpretation here in the UK and the Society for Experiential Graphic Design in the USA, which has recently launched a London chapter. It was great when we were asked by the Sign Design Society if they could use ABG's work for the RAF Museum, London to launch the case study section of their new website.

We believe that the best endorsement is when an industry body wants to share your creative work.

Creating a sense of place

The number of overseas visitors to the UK has grown by over three billion since 2013 and is estimated to keep growing, so ensuring all these visitors get the best possible experience is key.

We are proud to have delivered focused, creative solutions for some of the top UK visitor destinations. In the words of my fellow director, Chris: "Unlocking our heritage and making it accessible to a broad range of audiences is our passion." We have delivered a wide range of services, from signage and wayfinding schemes for the Houses of Parliament and National Army Museum and visitor guidebooks for Edinburgh Castle through to visitor orientation maps for The Tower of London and Hampton Court Palace. The quality of a visitor's journey is key and if done creatively adds to continued footfall and a memorable experience.

The effectiveness of our design work is often substantiated by user research, feedback and sales at these venues, showing that it really is working and enabling our clients to generate income while providing a better sense of place.

We also help a number of universities here in the UK and Europe to deliver a better student experience through our signage and wayfinding and brand identity projects for clients such as the University of East Anglia, University of Liverpool, University of West of England, School of Oriental and African Studies and Université Du Luxembourg.

Our changing towns

The collapse of a number of large retailers in recent years means that the landscape of our towns and cities is at a point of change. We are currently engaged in two great projects in Bishop Auckland and Doncaster in the north of England, which are working to reposition their respective town centres.

The Auckland Project is an ambitious one that will help turn Bishop Auckland into a heritage and cultural destination. We are the appointed signage and wayfinding consultant alongside a number of other experts such as architects, lighting designers and landscape architects.

“We were asked by the Sign Design Society if they could use ABG’s work for the RAF Museum, London to launch the case study section of their new website”

Houses of Parliament visitor signage across the whole estate





Brand identity for
Telegraph Museum,
Porthcurno, Cornwall

“The effectiveness of our design work is substantiated by user research, feedback and sales”

» THE IMPORTANCE OF FEEDBACK

Sometimes when we gain a new project or win a tender, we ask, “why did you choose us?”

It’s good to be told the reason is because you presented with a passion and have a genuine interest in the project. People want to know you can deliver but also that you truly understand their project and the desired outcomes that our creativity has to deliver.

Challenges for change

We work with a range of European projects, which has proven particularly challenging of late due to Brexit. The current political climate does not lend itself to the certainty we need in order to be able to work with a range of institutions.

We also note that companies are delaying making decisions until they know what is happening. While tourist destinations conventionally commence their marketing at the beginning of the year, recently we have noted moves to market in the spring instead. Things are moving far slower than usual when compared with previous years.

This air of tension has also meant that clients are unwilling to commit to long-term projects. In times of downturn, we note the importance of finding other ways to make money and have made a considered effort to tender new clients. Indeed, at times our reputation precedes us, and we have been approached by a number of high-profile clients in order to work with them in the future.

Changing dynamics

In future we hope to change our dynamic a little. We will take on graduates who bring a different perspective to our team; our current student programme, run in conjunction with Falmouth University, has proven to be so successful that we currently work with between three and four graduates each year.

We will also follow through on the suggestions of our team. In previous years an intern wrote a compelling argument for the importance of social media, a policy we swiftly adopted. We hope to continue to provide an exceptional quality of service, while also growing further.

Fashion-Enter Ltd



Fashion-Enter's multicultural workforce includes 12 different nationalities as well as people who are differently-abled



Costa, our apprentice of the year – one of a new generation of skilled workers

A social enterprise striving to be a “centre of excellence”, Fashion-Enter provides sampling, grading, production and accredited training services in the fashion and textiles industry. CEO Jenny Holloway tells *The Parliamentary Review* that she started Fashion-Enter in 2006, but she says that in the years since it has become so much more. She talks about Fashion-Enter's history and discusses the challenges that CEOs face.

In 2006, after over 20 years in the fashion industry as a buyer, I opened Fashion-Enter as a social enterprise. For the first two years I supported new and emerging brands but it was clear that there was a huge issue with designers finding quality manufacturing units for sampling and production. In 2008, I started to create a production unit with the help of a £230,000 grant from ASOS. Both generous and perceptive, ASOS recognised the importance of developing a sustainable and ethical production that is consumer driven and manufactured in the UK.

I was already working with ASOS focusing on their sample requirements with their press department and during a visit I had a fortuitous conversation with the former CEO, Nick Robertson, and then-CFO Nick Beighton. We discussed the necessity of a factory for creating consumer-driven sales, and he enquired how much this would cost. I estimated around £250,000 – soon, £230,000 was in the company bank account.

FACTS ABOUT FASHION-ENTER LTD

- » CEO: Jenny Holloway
- » Founded in 2006
- » Located in London
- » Services: Centre of excellence for sampling, grading, production and for learning and development of skills within the fashion and textiles industry
- » No. of employees: 49
- » www.fashion-enter.com

“I do believe that every decision has a degree of calculated risk and that as CEO it is essential to prove your decision was the right one”

Rolling up our sleeves

As a CEO, it is essential to lead from the front; you roll up your sleeves and make decisions work with an ethos that no job is too small or too large. I do not believe there is a particular right or wrong decision, but I do believe that every decision has a degree of calculated risk and that as CEO it is your responsibility to make that decision work. You need to earn the respect of your team and lead – then they will support you. It is essential that you demonstrate your own perseverance and commitment not only to the company aims but to each member of your team too. A company is only as good as its team.

When we first opened the factory, I had a clear understanding of my own values. I would not subcontract, I was going to be as ethical as possible and I would always be completely transparent with ASOS. In spite of initial teething problems, we grew month by month and continue to do so.

Our ethical factory is the only of its kind in the UK that has a leading status in the Fast Forward audit



Teething problems

After months of dedication, the factory began to work. We had orders pouring in from ASOS, and we had excellent quality staff and most importantly the factory was beginning to flow. Then, unexpectedly, our weekly production units started getting lower and lower. We had maintained the same talented team, the same type of garments and even the same management team. It was a complete mystery.

We realised what was happening by studying the workforce. Conventionally, you pay a machinist for their speed and accuracy. The faster the speed and accuracy the more they are paid by the hour. We had three bands for speed as our staff were all excellent machinists: slow, medium and fast. We paid the faster machinists more. However, they soon realised that they were guaranteed their money, so it didn't matter how fast they went – consequently the machinists all started to produce garments more slowly.

We made the decision to be even more attentive to our workers and provided workbooks in order to chart who was making what. We increased supervision, but the production figures continued to ebb away. We started to make a loss, and that loss started growing week by week.

I started to view other factories and came across a factory in Hinckley that used a simplistic software system. I tracked the programmer who did the critical path and asked him to come and visit us. Thus, Galaxius was born.

In another Galaxius

Galaxius is an online system that allows our machinists to scan in a bar code when they begin working on a bundle of garments. The system is totally transparent and confirms the number of hours worked and what the operators are paid. Now, everyone has

the chance to earn as much as they wanted, because they were operating on a performance-based pay scale.

Quality control is never compromised because we know who sewed every single stitch on a garment. Indeed, if there is a problem, the machinist has to amend the piece in their own time. Since the introduction of Galaxius, our quality assurance has gone through the roof.

It took four years to perfect Galaxius, and by that time we had racked up debts of almost £250,000. Management did not agree with Galaxius, and there were times where it felt as if I was fighting a losing battle. On the day I announced the changes in the style of payment, there were protests from management as well as from the machinists.

I responded to all the comments I received and ensured staff were aware this was the only option. Two machinists gathered up their coats and bags and walked out, and I was unsure of the factory's future.

I allowed for a bedding-in period of three weeks to prove that the new system would work. In the first week they had to scan in but would be paid their standard wage. The second week they would be paid whatever was highest – Galaxius pay, or their standard wage. By the third week everyone was on Galaxius. This decision saved the factory; it saved jobs and made us leaner. We have never looked back since.

Fashion for the future

When we first started our production run, a typical production was 4,000 units. One of our garments sold over 48,000 units. These times have long gone. Today we have a typical quantity of 600 to 800 units with a repeat being no more than 1,200. This is good for fashion. It means that we are producing garments closer to the season, so the trends are consumer orientated.



The FTA provides outstanding high-quality training from levels 1 to 5

We are listening to what the consumer wants – we are pulling sales, rather than pushing huge stocks on to the consumer that do not sell. This means that the retailer can sell out of a particular garment at full price and the net overall margin is higher as there are no discounts to take into consideration. If a consumer pays full price, their propensity to keep that garment longer is higher.

The dawn of the UK manufacturer is here, and it is here to stay. Manufacturers are leaner today than ever before, and retailers are now realising that localised production creates major positives in less transportation and quicker reactions to sales. As well as this, if the factory is on their doorstep, buyers can drop in to confirm it's totally ethical and not subcontracting. It's now time for retailers to be joined at the hip with their manufacturers and capitalise on sales. Good times lie ahead.

“Quality control is never compromised because we know who sewed every single stitch on a garment”

The Story of *The Parliamentary Review* and the UK

Each of the articles you have just read is an individual story. It has fascinating characters. It has an exposition that could fill several articles of its own. It has a beginning that was characterised by difficulty and doubt. It has a middle, filled with sinew-straining victories and didactic defeats. And it has an ending, with its cast of characters dreaming of the stories to come.

Taken together, these articles tell an even bigger story. Of a nation who, despite uncertain political times, keeps on working, creating and developing.

This story provides the perfect context for what follows in these final pages: a concise summary of the key events from the past 12 months in parliament. Speak to any parliamentarian and they will tell you how vital it is, when hauled up in the cloisters of SW1, to keep a keen eye on the world outside, on the business owners and employees who will be directly affected by the legislation they pass. For almost every bill approved or rejected parliament, there is a business that is invigorated or stymied as a result.

The final pages of *The Parliamentary Review* will give you a solid overview of recent legislation and debates but, to truly understand this country, it is essential to read the best practice articles first. Any MP who finds themselves as this point would be well served by flicking back through the publication and taking a closer look at those articles before venturing on. The Review of Parliament will remind you of what you already know but the best



practice articles will show you what the United Kingdom is.

A country divided by many political issues but firmly united by a sense of duty and that all-encompassing, liberating force called innovation. Whatever challenges are thrown up by the political forces of the day, the organisations, whose articles you have just read, will need to respond to them every bit as much as any parliamentarian.

The best practice representatives are not, on the whole, household names. They are the organisations and individuals who quietly keep the country going.

As you read the following pages, and as you encounter the familiar characters of ministers and other politicians, ask yourself if it is really them, or if it is the daring entrepreneur, the considerate manager and the dedicated, self-sacrificing worker who are the true protagonists of this country's story.

“We’re out”



Thousands gathered in Parliament Square to celebrate the UK's departure from the EU

“The British people have spoken,” said the affable BBC anchorman, David Dimbleby, “and the answer is: we’re out.”

This was just after 5am on the morning of Friday, June 24, 2016.

In the end, it took three years, seven months, seven days and eighteen hours. It took three prime ministers. Two general elections. It took, shock-of-shocks, *two* hosts of the BBC’s Question Time. Yes, dear old Dimbleby himself, who had chaired that veritable feast of Thursday-night verbal flagellation since 1994, left the hotseat a full year before Britain finally left the European Union. But it did happen.

At 11pm on January 31, 2020, Britain ceased to be an EU country. The EU was now comprised of 27 member states rather than 28. And although, with a transition period in place, little else of substance had changed, there was no doubting the historic significance of the moment.

Addressing the nation from Downing Street, the prime minister spoke of the dawn of a new era and the potential for meaningful and far reaching change: “This is not an end but a beginning. This is the moment the dawn breaks and the curtain goes up on a new act in our great national drama.”

He spoke about the opportunities this moment would provide, such as controlling immigration, creating free ports, “liberating” our fishing industry, doing free trade deals or “simply making our rules and laws for the benefit of the people of this country.”

A cricket ball’s throw away in Parliament Square, thousands gathered for a Brexit party, fronted by The Brexit Party. This nascent political grouping, not yet a year old, appeared pretty pleased with themselves as they swayed and crooned with the crowd. In winning May’s European elections, they had precipitated Theresa May’s departure, ensured her successor was a paid-up Leave supporter, and had helped make Brexit a reality.

In a statement, Mrs May declared that “after more than three years, we can finally say we have delivered on the result of the 2016 referendum and have kept faith with the British people.”

Outgoing Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said: “Britain’s place in the world will change. The question is what direction we now take. We can build a truly internationalist, diverse and outward-looking Britain. Or we can turn inwards, and trade our principles, rights and standards to secure hastily arranged, one-sided, race-to-the-bottom trade deals with Donald Trump and others.”

Speaking for the EU, Michel Barnier expressed his sadness, while Donald Tusk said: “My dear British friends. We were, we are, and we will always be a community. And no Brexit will ever change that.”

And so with a mix of jubilation, apprehension and sadness, the words spoken by David Dimbleby in the early hours of June 24, 2016 were now a reality. We were out.

The Christmas election

The UK's January 31 departure would not have been possible without a Conservative victory in the previous month's general election.

Mr Johnson's Brexit deal, and his stance on Brexit in general, meant that the Tories were susceptible to losing seats in Remain-supporting areas, particularly in the cities. To win a majority, therefore, they would have to win in places where the Labour vote was traditionally weighed rather than counted, Blyth Valley, Bolsover, Bassetlaw and the like. Despite the ten-point lead, this was not a foregone conclusion, with many pundits predicting another hung parliament.

Labour's manifesto signalled a clear evolution from their 2017 effort, with even more spending promised. The health budget would increase by 4.3 per cent per annum, university tuition would be covered entirely by the taxpayer and 100,000 council houses would be built every year. The national minimum wage would jump within a year to £10 an hour, even for 16-year-olds. The party would nationalise the big six energy providers, as well as National Grid, the water industry, Royal Mail, all the railways and the broadband arm of BT, which they would use to provide taxpayer-funded broadband for all. And, of course, there would be a second referendum on leaving the European Union, with the option to stay in the EU put up against a new deal that Labour would negotiate. In such a referendum, Mr Corbyn would remain neutral.

The Tory manifesto was far more, well, conservative. It came in at only 60 pages, compared with Labour's colossal 105, and promised one pound of extra spending for every 28 pledged by Labour. Policies included 50,000 extra nurses; no income tax, national insurance or VAT increases; a rebuttal of the so-called "Dementia Tax" in Mrs May's 2017 manifesto; a points-



The election was the Conservative Party's biggest win since 1987

based immigration system; and new infrastructure projects, particularly in the north. The key message, as Mr Johnson and practically all the Tory campaign literature never tired of repeating, was to "Get Brexit Done".

In keeping with the recent trend, this campaign was dominated by social media, with promoted posts and viral videos holding more sway with some voters than the traditional newspapers and television channels.

The election was also hit by tragedy when, on November 29, an Islamist terrorist attacked innocent civilians on London Bridge, injuring five people and murdering two Cambridge University students.

After six weeks of campaigning, both main parties had made gains in the polls, but the gap was nine points, almost exactly as it had been at the start. Predictions of a hung parliament were abundant and, even among the pundits who expected a Tory majority, very few expected it to be anything other than slender. Then the exit poll hit.

At 10pm on December 12, the nation was rocked by the news that Mr Johnson's Conservative Party was on course for a significant majority. As the night progressed, seat after seat, from Stoke North to Blyth Valley, went blue for the first time in living memory.

With a majority of 80, Mr Johnson's Brexit deal sailed through the Commons and the Lords, gaining royal assent and becoming

law on January 23. A week later, Britain left the European Union. The prime minister's huge gamble had paid off.

New leader, new Labour?



Mr Corbyn announced he would not lead Labour into the next election

For Labour, a great deal of soul searching was in order. So too was a leadership contest.

By January 21, four candidates had received the required backing from MPs and constituency Labour parties: Ms Nandy, Ms Long-Bailey, Ms Thornberry and Mr Starmer.

Mr Starmer outlined his vision of "moral socialism" in his announcement article. Despite being widely viewed as a more moderate option, he stressed his socialist credentials and argued that "a radical Labour government is needed now more than ever".

Mr Starmer laid out three key priorities: "economic justice, social justice and climate justice". While he may certainly be closer to the centre than some of his opponents, and certainly less of a Corbynite, it is becoming apparent that his vision is by no means centrist.

Ms Long-Bailey, on the other hand, is widely seen as the Corbyn continuity candidate. Popularly described as John McDonnell's protégé, she has long been positioned to take over the helm after Mr Corbyn's departure.

Her continuity status was cemented in early January, when she described Mr Corbyn's leadership as "10 out of 10", a bold claim after the party's worst election result since 1935.

Ms Long-Bailey described the need for the party to become an "insurgent force" which will "go to war with the political establishment".

Ms Thornberry, the shadow foreign secretary under Mr Corbyn and rank outsider in the contest, with some bookmakers offering odds of 100/1 on her becoming the next leader, has criticised Labour's election manifesto for being unrealistic.

Ms Nandy, the MP for Wigan, has grounded her election campaign on the need to win back Labour's heartlands. Alongside a strong commitment to environmental action, her campaign has focused on empowering regional communities.

The result of the leadership election will be announced on April 4 and with it, the nature of the opposition in the years to come.

Bercow's controversial tenure comes to an end

The nature of parliament itself has been fundamentally altered already, with the departure of one John Bercow.

First elected Speaker in 2009, and despite early controversies and his consistent, and often exhaustive,

loquacity, it was the Brexit process that truly thrust him into the limelight. Key to these disputes was his interpretation of parliamentary convention.

His actions heightened Conservative criticism towards him for a lack of impartiality, while others, especially Remain-supporting MPs, championed him as a defender of parliamentary

sovereignty against an overbearing executive.

These contradictory judgments were most stark after Mr Bercow announced he would step down as Speaker on October 31. He was replaced as Speaker by Lindsay Hoyle, a veteran Labour MP widely viewed as a more moderate choice.

The last word

Quite possibly, 2019 was the most chaotic year in British political history since, well, 2018.

Before that, in your quest for chaos, you might have to go as far back as 2017's snap election. Prior to that, it would have to be 2016, the year of the EU referendum itself; yes, things were pretty chaotic then as well.

In last year's last word, we expressed our relief that it was our job to review the year in parliament, rather than make predictions. But now, we will break the habit and confidently forecast that 2020 will be the least chaotic year in British history for aeons.

Brexit will by no means go away, with negotiations aplenty, but the backdrop of potential referendum reversal will avert, at least temporarily. There will no doubt be drama and intrigue, but there will almost certainly not be an election.

For the first time in a long while, we can look ahead to a political year that might on the whole, whisper it, be quite dull. Remember 2006? Remember 2013? Exactly. Here's hoping that British politics in 2020 follows their example.

And yet, even if it does not, this period of political strife has shown us that businesses and organisations, such

as those you have read about in this publication, will carry on regardless.

For over three years we have had politicians who were so hamstrung by Brexit that they had little time for much else. And yet, the economy continued to grow. Jobs were created. New products were brought to market. And the country ploughed on.

Throughout this time, it is our hope that the middle pages of *The Parliamentary Review* have served to remind MPs and all policymakers who it is who really keeps the country running.



Lord Pickles addresses
The Parliamentary Review
gala

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