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Insight

AUTUMN 2015

Strong and proud

Meet the woman taking fitness to another level



WIN!

AN IPAD MINI



GLASGOW

Find out more about the escape games craze



NEWCASTLE

Behind the scenes with the city's tenants



OUT&ABOUT

WITH
INSIGHT
EDITOR
CIARA
O'CONNOR



Ciara, left, hears about styling the stars (read more on page 6)

This month's tour brought us to Newcastle where we visited five neighbouring tenants to talk business.

We were treated to a diverse and exciting mix including two very different restaurants, a celebrity hair salon, gym studio and micro pub. Read more on pages 4-6.

On pages 2-3, catch up on the latest small business news as well an update on how Network Rail plans to deal with the influx of travellers during the Rugby World Cup.

We speak to a credit control expert on pages 8-9 and share some useful tips and advice from the Federation of Small Businesses.

The entrepreneur behind Evac, a new escape game in Glasgow, reveals all on page 7, where you'll also find your free fridge magnet with a list of useful contact numbers.

This issue's cover features strongwoman Mayyah Shaichi. Turn to page 10 to learn more about her journey to compete in Britain's Strongest Woman competition and the gym she runs with her partner.

Find out more from lettings negotiator Daniella French on the back page, where you will also see our competition. Love it or loathe it, the Rugby World Cup is here, so see how you fare with identifying the participating nations.

Don't forget to follow us on Twitter – @Insight_NR – for all the latest news.

CONTACT US

If you have a story to tell or a question about the magazine

Email: drop us a line at insight@abcomm.co.uk

Twitter: Join the conversation using our new Twitter handle @Insight_NR

Call the editor: 020 7922 5687



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WHEELS IN MOTION

Spinning into town after running an award-winning gym in China for three years, BPM Bike Lab is the brainchild of husband-and-wife team Jen and Jon Robinson.

Starting a family has led the couple to swap Shanghai for Leeds city centre. They offer fitness with a difference in a part of the world that's passionate about cycling.

Offering a variety of specialised spin classes and physiotherapy, Jen and Jon have transformed a Network Rail arch just off Leeds train station into a modern and unique fitness studio.

"First of all there's the Bike Lab, which has the top-of-the-range Wattbike used

for training by Team Sky," said Jen.

"Then there's the Physio Lab, which is where my husband's 20 years of experience in sports science comes strongly into play.

"What we offer is pretty unique and special which is why the funky arch is such a perfect fit. We love the space.

"The arch itself is very authentic and a little bit different from anything else out there."

Jen now has plans to include yoga and a bespoke Slim Lab weight-loss centre across two floors of fitness, throwing everything into making a new love affair with Leeds a success.



TACKLING DEMAND

Network Rail has stepped up plans to accommodate more than one million extra people in London during six scrum-filled weeks of the Rugby World Cup.

London is at the heart of 2015's biggest sporting event, with clashes at Twickenham, Wembley Stadium and Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

Significantly enhanced South West Trains services will operate on matchdays alongside 50% more District Line tubes.

A dedicated online spectator guide has also been produced with tips and advice. Visit www.rugbyworldcup.com/travel for more information.

BANGWOK TUK TUK-ING INTO THE ARCHES

Sovereign Place in Leeds is home to a little bit of Bangkok, with Thai street food on offer from Bangwok.

Chef Dong Chuaibamrung and his wife Sarah began with a tuk tuk, serving authentic Thai food at festivals, parties, markets and events around the country. They always dreamed of having a more permanent base.

"We chose Leeds because we had a lot of people visiting us when we set up in Trinity Kitchen, which is just around the corner. It became clear that people in the city really liked what we were offering," said Sarah.

"The arch was a great starting point for us. It's affordable and in a good location."



NEWS

CROWDFUNDING POPULARITY

Start-ups and small businesses are turning to crowdfunding to boost their finances.

Mouldable glue business Sugru's founder Jane Ni Dhulchaintigh raised £3.5million on equity crowdfunding platform Crowdcube, while a London-based illustrator known as Mr Bingo has raised £111,000 so far to support his Hate Mail postcard project.

Crowdfunders cite events, addressing the customer needs and research of the demographic as crucial to a successful campaign.



NEW CHIEF FOR NETWORK RAIL



Sir Peter Hendy CBE has joined Network Rail as chairman.

He was previously commissioner for Transport for London, and served as its managing

director of surface transport from 2001.

Peter organised and led the operation of London's transport for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and started his career as a graduate trainee for the capital's transport authority in 1975.

"I am looking forward to helping CEO Mark Carne and his executive team take the organisation forward," he said.

NEW BUSINESS MINISTERS

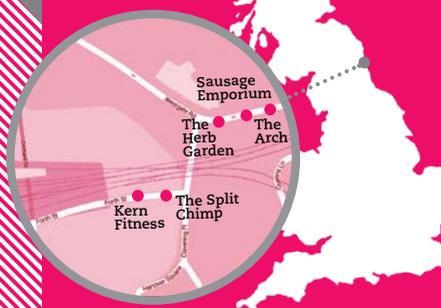
The cabinet reshuffle saw Sajid Javid named as Secretary of State for Business and Anna Soubry as Minister for Small Businesses.

Since the election, Sajid has supported new reforms to strengthen strike laws and launched a plan to boost Britain's productivity, including investing £100 billion into transport infrastructure over the next five years.



Insight TOUR

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE



COVERED: 1 MILE

The population of the North East is 2.6 million

Tyne Bridge was modelled on Sydney Harbour Bridge

The first ever Greggs bakery opened in Gosforth in 1951

2011

The year Newcastle hosted the Turner Prize

The Herb Garden



Be prepared to work hard, have self-belief, be imaginative and most importantly, enjoy it



In conversation with owners Lucy Clinch, Ryan Darrington and Richard Marks

Tell us about your business:

We specialise in stonebaked pizza and rustic Mediterranean food. We saw there was potential in pizza and the need for fresh ingredients. Our hydroponic herb wall makes us unique. It allows us to grow our own herbs. It's really clean as there is no soil and it makes a great conversation starter.

Who are your customers?

It's a real variety of people, but about 70% of our customers are aged between 18 and 45. The hydroponic wall has generated coverage in Europe, so we get quite a few Scandinavian visitors.

What are you most proud of?

We're now known in Newcastle and we've grown a lot since we opened in 2013. It's nice to be recognised as an established



restaurant and not just a flash in the pan business. We're hoping to roll out more restaurants in the coming years.

What is your business philosophy?

To be successful, you need fresh ingredients, exciting flavours, make your dishes in-house and enjoy going to work.

What do you like about your Network Rail property?

We saw the arch three years ago and thought it would make a great location. From a design perspective, we recognised the potential. This area is really up and coming now with a steady flow of people visiting weekly. www.theherbgardenuk.com

Twitter: @theherbgardenuk



The Split Chimp



After 20 years working as a paramedic, Mark Hall decided it was time for a change. He applied his knowledge of beer to a new business venture – Newcastle's first micro pub.

The pint-sized pub named after the wedge placed at the back of an ale cask to tip it, is a place where beer enthusiasts can enjoy a drink in unassuming surroundings.

Mark said: "I'd heard a lot about micro pubs on the radio and I've been to quite a few. They're all about the beer and real conversation. I don't have blaring jukeboxes or fruit machines,

we cater for the more mature drinker."

The Split Chimp offers a range of craft ales and wine Mark produces himself. "I don't serve spirits or pints of Foster's. The wines I serve are my Wine Bar Pouches."

With lots of new building development popping up in the area, Mark wanted to create a space that felt welcoming. "I wanted somewhere that looked and felt like a local pub. My aim was to create a comfortable environment for sensible drinkers."

www.winebarpouch.co.uk

Twitter: @splitchimp



Choose your location wisely and be prepared to put in some hard work



Kern Fitness



Owner German Gonzalez shares his story...

"Our mission at Kern Fitness is to improve

the wellbeing of our customers by combining personal training with electro-muscular-stimulation (EMS) technology. This gives customers a highly effective workout so it's perfect for those who are time-starved, or anyone who doesn't like the gym.

"In a nutshell, clients do an intensive 20-minute workout wearing a special vest connected to the EMS device while being guided by a personal trainer. The device sends low frequency current to your muscles while you train. By training large and small muscle groups, you're getting a much more effective workout.

"My background is engineering but I've always had a strong interest in fitness. I was intrigued when I found out that around 40% of people in the UK don't exercise because they don't have the time, so I decided to open a business to cater for these needs. We offer a discreet service and a more tailored approach.

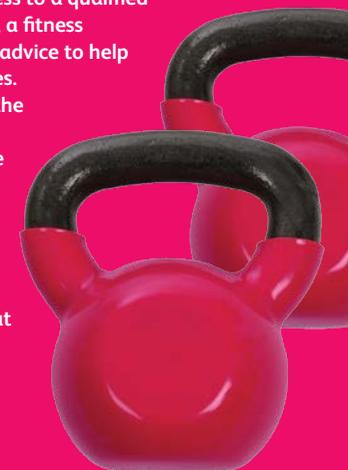
"Our customers have access to a qualified trainer, the best technology, a fitness programme and nutritional advice to help them achieve their objectives.

We concentrate heavily on the personal training side to make sure the EMS adds the right kind of value.

"The biggest highlight since we opened in June is seeing how the team interacts with people, we're really passionate about what we do, and it shows."

www.kernfitnessuk.com

Twitter: @kernfitnessuk



The Sausage Emporium



Quality sausages, a passion for customer service and Hannah, the resident wire-haired dachshund, give customers more banger for their buck at food haven The Sausage Emporium.

Specialising in handcrafted sausages, the restaurant run by husband and wife, John and Briony Holliday, opened in November 2013 to cater for those wanting high quality, locally sourced produce in a relaxed yet quirky environment.

"I was a third generation butcher," said chef John. "People in the area loved our sausages so that's where the idea came from. We have a unique set-up and make good food accessible to everyone."

The couple has put their own stamp on the space with astroturf wall panels and a Brat Haus feel.

"We knew we wanted an arch," said Briony. "The space is so unique and people love how they can hear the trains going by. We're really proud of the loyal customer base we've built up."

I get real satisfaction out of seeing customers happy and with a smile on their face."

www.thesausageemporium.com

Twitter:

[@sausageemporium](https://twitter.com/sausageemporium)



The Arch



Pianos used for styling tables, antique luggage and vintage photos give The Arch more of a Hollywood movie set feel than that of a hair and beauty salon.

The salon is owned and managed by stylist to the stars Michelle Fowler. It has fast become the go-to choice for Newcastle's celeb circuit since it opened in 2014.

"The cast members from *Geordie Shore* are regular clients. They filmed in the salon recently," said Michelle. "We do a lot of styling for catwalk shows and magazine shoots."

The Arch's quirky interior attracts a wide customer base. "We're different to other salons," said Michelle. "Being in an arch makes it a less formal experience and our clients like that. I wanted to have a salon

that was unique in town."

Before turning her hand to hair and beauty, Michelle worked in financial services. So why such a drastic change?

"After I had my daughter, I wanted a career change," she said. "I went back to study and retrained. I can now teach hairdressing. I love the creativity and challenge. Having a good team around me has helped the business go from strength to strength."

www.thearchnewcastle.co.uk

Twitter: [@TheArchNCL](https://twitter.com/TheArchNCL)

Persevere and be prepared to put the effort in

MY INSIGHT



UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL

The ambience of a Network Rail arch has inspired businessman Daniel Hill's latest foray into the escape games craze.

Voluntarily locking yourself in a room alongside friends, family or colleagues, with just an hour to crack cryptic clues and escape, is one of the fastest-growing markets in the entertainment industry.

The popularity of the escape rooms concept has snowballed, and it's now among the most popular attractions worldwide.

In Glasgow, businessman Daniel Hill has opened a new escape game - called Evac - based in a Network Rail arch on Commerce Street. However, this is an escape game with a twist.

"The idea is that you've been summoned to a mysterious arch and, as soon as you arrive, the clock starts clicking and you're straight into the game with no prior human interaction," explained Daniel.

He originally opened Escape in Edinburgh, before adding centres in Glasgow, Newcastle and Dublin. "We're consciously trying to

keep it separate to Escape. There, it's a big office building, with a discussion on health and safety beforehand, and all of the rooms are bright and spacious."

While Escape has success with the corporate market, Evac targets those aged 18-34 and students in particular. For Daniel, the Network Rail arch is the perfect setting.

"You already get a feel of the atmosphere as you approach the arch," he said. "It has a spooky quality that adds to the experience - it's the perfect ambience for what we're doing."

Evac has four rooms from which a group has an hour to escape. One of the rooms is in darkness but each contains fun elements.

"Escape has been fantastic," said Daniel. "This is a new experiment for us but I'm excited by it."

www.evacglasgow.co.uk

Twitter: [@EvacGlasgow](https://twitter.com/EvacGlasgow)



It started as just my brother and me in May, and we now have more than 20 employees.



ON THE SOCIAL

The best tweets from @Insight_NR

KEEP YOUR CONTACTS CLOSE WITH THIS FRIDGE MAGNET



Insight_NetworkRail @Insight_... 27/07/2015
Great to see @trackbrewco will be opening on Saturdays to sell beers directly to the public bit.ly/1S6DG5m



Insight_NetworkRail @Insight_... 26/06/2015
This is exactly what we're after. This is a magazine for tenants and we want your stories! We'll be in touch Jen!

BPM Bike Lab @BPMBikeLab
@psmithyjourn @Insight_NR
@abthinks Hi there, this is Jen from BPM Arch 4 in Leeds. Received the mag yet, great read! May we connect

Insight_NetworkRail @Insight_NR 23h
@TheHerbGardenUK explains hydroponics to Insight's @Ciara_in_London. Intrigued? Find out more in our next issue



SMALL BUSINESSES IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The UK's third annual Small Business Saturday takes place on 5 December to highlight the success of small businesses and encourage people to shop locally.

Although the focus is on one specific day, the campaign strives to have a lasting positive impact by improving public awareness of small businesses.

Last year, 16.5 million people supported a local business on the day, making the event the most successful small business campaign in the UK.

National campaign director Michelle Ovens said: "Most people in this country own a small business, work for a small business or know somebody who does."

"The campaign plays a valuable role in focusing the minds of consumers and business people on what small businesses in any sector or line of business can offer in terms of products, services and levels of customer service."

American Express originally founded the campaign in the US in 2010 and remains a UK supporter. If you would like to take part in Small Business Saturday or download logos, digital banners, a social media guide and much more, visit: www.smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com.

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY
5TH DECEMBER

Owner of Intense Records, Jonathan



1. Local newspapers, posters and social media are good starting places to promote your business
2. Be careful with your money and have a good think before investing it
3. Be prepared to persevere, it's not easy and things don't happen quickly

Intense Records



Business owner Jonathan Smith moved into his arch a decade ago in Chelmsford and opened record shop Intense Records.

The store stocks music-based items such as CDs, speakers and clothing, attracting a wide range of customers including local visitors and vinyl collectors who travel from afar.

"I love music, so I decided to turn my hobby into a business. Being near the train station helps customers further away to come visit us here in

the store," said Jonathan.

He is a strong believer in advertising, attending events in the community, getting involved with DJs and producers, and promoting Intense Records in the local newspaper.

"Making your business known on the internet is really important too. The shop has its own website and also uses Facebook and Twitter to expand its presence, reaching out to people in the music industry such as musicians."

www.intenserecords.co.uk
Twitter: @intenserecords

spread the word

Promoting your brand is essential for any small business, be it through social media, local media or leafleting.

Jonathan Smith and Chris Harding both help run a business from arches at opposite ends of the country. They share their top tips for bringing out the best in your business.

1. Crowdfunding can often help grow your business
2. Skillful use of social media can drive up your visibility on the internet, leading to more enquiries.
3. If you think something might work, try it out and track your progress. If you don't try, you won't discover



The team at Jasper's Catering

Jasper's Catering



Jasper's Catering opened in a Manchester arch four years ago, supplying business-to-business food services.

The company has provided catering for anywhere between five to 300 people in professional services, marketing, PR and charities, including breakfasts, dinners and barbecues.

"Consistency is one of the most

important things when making a small business work," said business development manager Chris Harding.

"This can be applied to anything, especially clients. New business is always great but if you look after your existing customers, they are more likely to come back to you and spread the word about your service."

Communication is key for any business. Chris recommends networking, PR

to broaden awareness and ongoing investment in your brand with consistent marketing activity.

"Without clear communication, it would be a struggle to keep the business afloat," he said.

"We're always going that extra mile to help our customers," added unit manager Simon Johnson.

www.jaspersonline.co.uk
Twitter: @jaspersfood

Mayyah and Rob are Deptford's strongest duo



STRONG SET

Mayyah Shalchi from the Commando Temple, a multi-purpose gym in Deptford, has gone from personal trainer to a podium finish at Britain's Strongest Woman in the space of 12 months.



The Commando Temple in south-east London is managed by Mayyah with her boyfriend and gym owner Rob Blair, who is taking on a fitness challenge of his own.

Rob is competing in the 'World's Strongest Hands' event but has his work cut out to match Mayyah, who admits that her strongwoman success came as a surprise.

She said: "I went to my first event with a friend and didn't realise it was actually the Britain's Strongest Woman qualifier. I got a podium position and it all snowballed. "The finals were really intensive. There were five events with everything from a 150kg deadlift to a carrying medley with kegs and sandbags. It was all quite varied but I'm really pleased with how it went." Mayyah finished third in the under-63kg category but is now taking a break from



The Temple has grown in strength since it opened in 2013

strongwoman competitions to focus on a passion for sprinting and a gym that continues to grow. She said: "We initially took on two empty arches, but we've since expanded to three. "It's been a long journey but one she's proud of: "We've now got a 7ft-long climbing structure, a whole fight club area and a powerlifting club full of strength facilities." www.bestronger.co.uk Twitter: @commandotemple



Ricky has turned his vision into reality



I've always had a strong vision of where my business should go and that's definitely helped make it happen

RICKY'S VISION

Right under Glasgow city station is martial arts academy Gracie Barra Glasgow, and it's transformed an unused arch into a vibrant club with 250 members and more than 1,000 users a week.



For eight years, franchise owner Ricky Gillon has built up the business after discovering the arch and negotiating a deal with Network Rail. "As soon as I saw the arch, I had a vision of how it could look and how the business could progress in the future.

"Following that vision has made us successful and we're creating an unbelievable facility that customers love coming to."

Ricky and his team run standard martial arts classes for all ages, as well as anti-bullying workshops and sessions for disabled athletes. They also hire the space to personal trainers and events organisers.

"We're keen to help other small businesses," said Ricky.

As well as the large mat area and a welcoming reception area, there are changing rooms and a smaller gym.

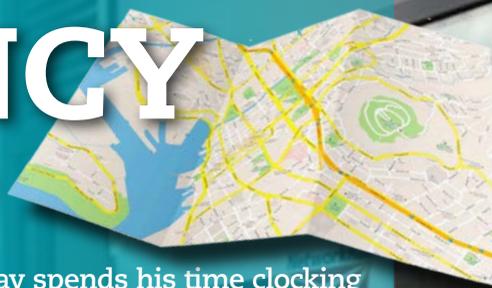
"Other businesses have seen what we've done here in the arch and have been inspired to investigate similar facilities with Network Rail. It's great if that helps them to build their businesses."

www.graciebarrascotland.com
Twitter: @gbglasgowbjj

All age groups are welcome at Gracie Barra Glasgow



VACANCY FILLED



Lettings negotiator Graham Mackay spends his time clocking up miles across the North East partnering tenants with vacant properties and understands it's important to be knowledgeable

What does your job entail?

I find tenants for our vacant properties and try to create a good tenant mix in my areas. I advertise vacancies with 'To Let' boards and on our website, arrange viewings, negotiate with customers, prepare the tenancy agreements and hand over keys.

What skills are important to your role?

You should be a knowledgeable responder to enquires, arrange viewings quickly and be methodical in your approach to applications. It's important to be a good negotiator to agree a deal quickly that is suitable for both parties and arrange a swift sign up and hand over the keys.

How do you aid tenants?

I help all potential tenants through the application process and explain what is required of them. On property handover, I ensure everything is working and all the keys and locks are there so they

can move in and start trading as soon as possible.

What's your biggest challenge?

The huge geographical area I cover and the high mileage each day to get to meetings on time without getting a speeding ticket!

Describe a recent tenant success?

The introduction of Bangwok Thai Street Food Café in Leeds (featured on page 3) has been a huge success. It's a new concept for the city and had customers queuing around the block on opening day.

QUICK-FIRE GRAHAM

Hobby: Cycling along old converted railway lines around Cheshire and Derbyshire. I recently cycled the Big Skyride route all around Bolton.

TV show: I love period dramas like Downton Abbey

and Paradise on a Sunday evening.

Food: Fish and chips with mushy peas and gravy

Holiday: I love New Zealand and enjoy touring the islands in a campervan. The lakes and mountains are stunning and I loved the open roads.



CAN YOU WING IT? TRY TO NAME THE NATIONALITIES IN THIS ISSUE'S RUGBY WORLD CUP COMPETITION

Send your answers, with your name, place of work and contact number via email to insight@abcomm.co.uk or tweet us @Insight_NR. You can also post your answer to Insight, AB Publishing, Unit B, Gemini House, 180-182 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3TQ. Shelly Leonard of Nightingale Service Centre won last issue's iPad Mini.



WIN!
AN IPAD MINI

