



ONE

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Sole Trader

Lisa Kay talks about her journey
from accountant to designer and entrepreneur

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“Everywhere I look, there are examples of people showing previously unimaginable levels of resilience.”

Welcome

As 2020 draws to a close, we should take time to recognise that we have just come through the most socially and economically challenging twelve months that I hope any of us will ever experience. As a business community we need to highlight the success stories but also take time to reflect on lessons learnt and consider how this experience will shape the future of business across the UK.

A message from Michael Davidson...



In this issue of One Magazine we are celebrating resilience. Everywhere I look, there are examples of people showing previously unimaginable levels of fortitude, both personally and professionally. They have drawn on reserves of determination and positivity, and shown adaptability and creativity, that is truly inspirational.

We have taken the time to speak to three very different business leaders on how they have navigated 2020, discussing how they have leveraged digital opportunities, the challenges they've faced and why demonstrating a social conscience just makes good business sense.

This year has been a time of uncertainty across the board, and the resilience and adaptivity our community has shown will stand us in good stead for what lies ahead. While formal terms of Brexit are still to be decided, we share what you can do to prepare when it comes to VAT, Customs duty and Border Control changes. We don't know what 2021 will bring, spring and summer may raise more challenges as the government support ends which is why it is important to investigate whether your business could unlock trapped cash or access grants and funding to help with cashflow anxiety.

2021 will be my 30th year at Haines Watts, and whatever the year brings, remember that we are here for you – over a cup of tea, a walk or a Zoom call we're here to offer support, advice or simply be a sounding board as we take on the year together.

The festive season might be a little different this year, but however you are spending the holidays, we hope you have time to rest, recuperate and relax and we wish you a happy and healthy 2021.

Michael Davidson
Group Managing Partner

[in](#) Connect with Michael

Tech Thoughts...



Why there can't be a one-size-fits-all approach to digital transformation

[in](#) Connect with Stephen

Digital transformation has taken on a heightened importance in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic and is now a key strategic initiative for every business. But what does it mean and how should it be approached to deliver value to customers? Stephen Matthews, Director of Haines Watts Norwich reveals why there can't be a one-size-fits-all approach.

What is digital transformation and why is it important?

There are many definitions of digital transformation and it means a lot of things to a lot of people. Say digital to one person and they think of going paperless, someone else might think it refers to Artificial Intelligence (AI), while to another, they might think it's about data analytics.

Ultimately, in business it is about using technology to change a process, operation or replace a manual process that will make your business more efficient, solve problems and add value for customers.

Of course, there are things you need to consider before embarking on a digital journey because a lack of direction, a failure to loop staff in on change, a divide between the IT department and your business, as well as insufficient operations is a recipe for disaster.

So, while we all know a successful digital transformation can bring substantial rewards for companies, there are some common misconceptions that could undermine your ability to achieve results.

[in](#) Connect with Stephen

Wealth and Safety

Protecting your wealth in uncertain times

Protecting your business from unforeseen risks

Successful business owners are well-versed in protecting a company from sales and operational risks, but there are other risks that are often forgotten about. For example, have you considered what would happen to the business in the event of your or another key member of staff's death or incapacity? For many businesses, the results would be catastrophic. If 2020 has taught us anything, it's to expect the unexpected.



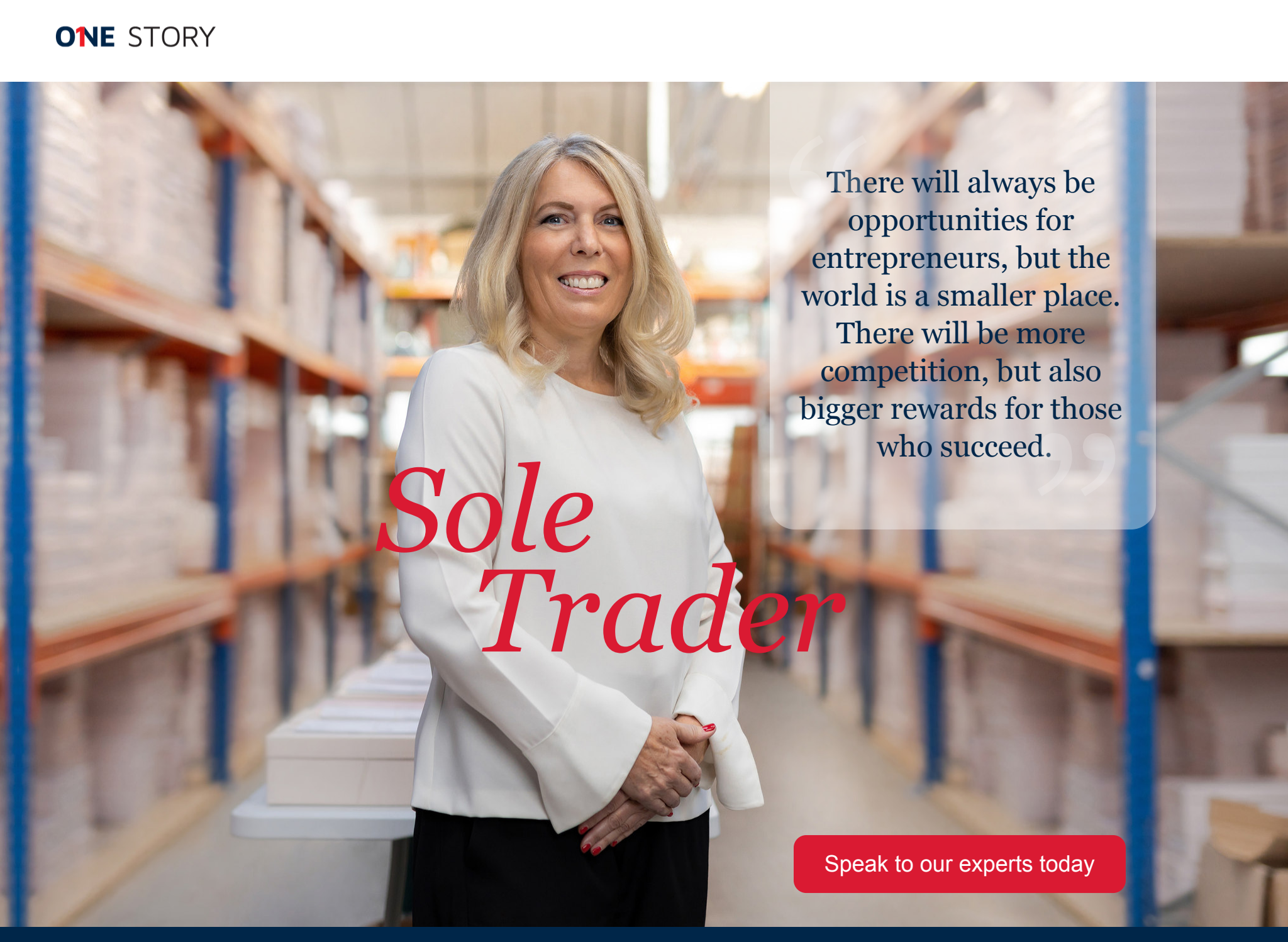
Richard Dawes



Protecting the business and your family

If you or any other co-owners die, their shares in the company could automatically be passed on to their next of kin. Without protection, the remaining shareholders cannot stop the recipient from becoming involved in the business. They may not have the required skills or knowledge and they could even sell their shares to a competitor. There is a risk to the next of kin too. If they choose to sell their shares, there is no guarantee that they will receive the full market value.

To find out more about business protection, contact Tilney on 020 3131 6183 or visit [tilney.co.uk](https://www.tilney.co.uk).



There will always be opportunities for entrepreneurs, but the world is a smaller place. There will be more competition, but also bigger rewards for those who succeed.

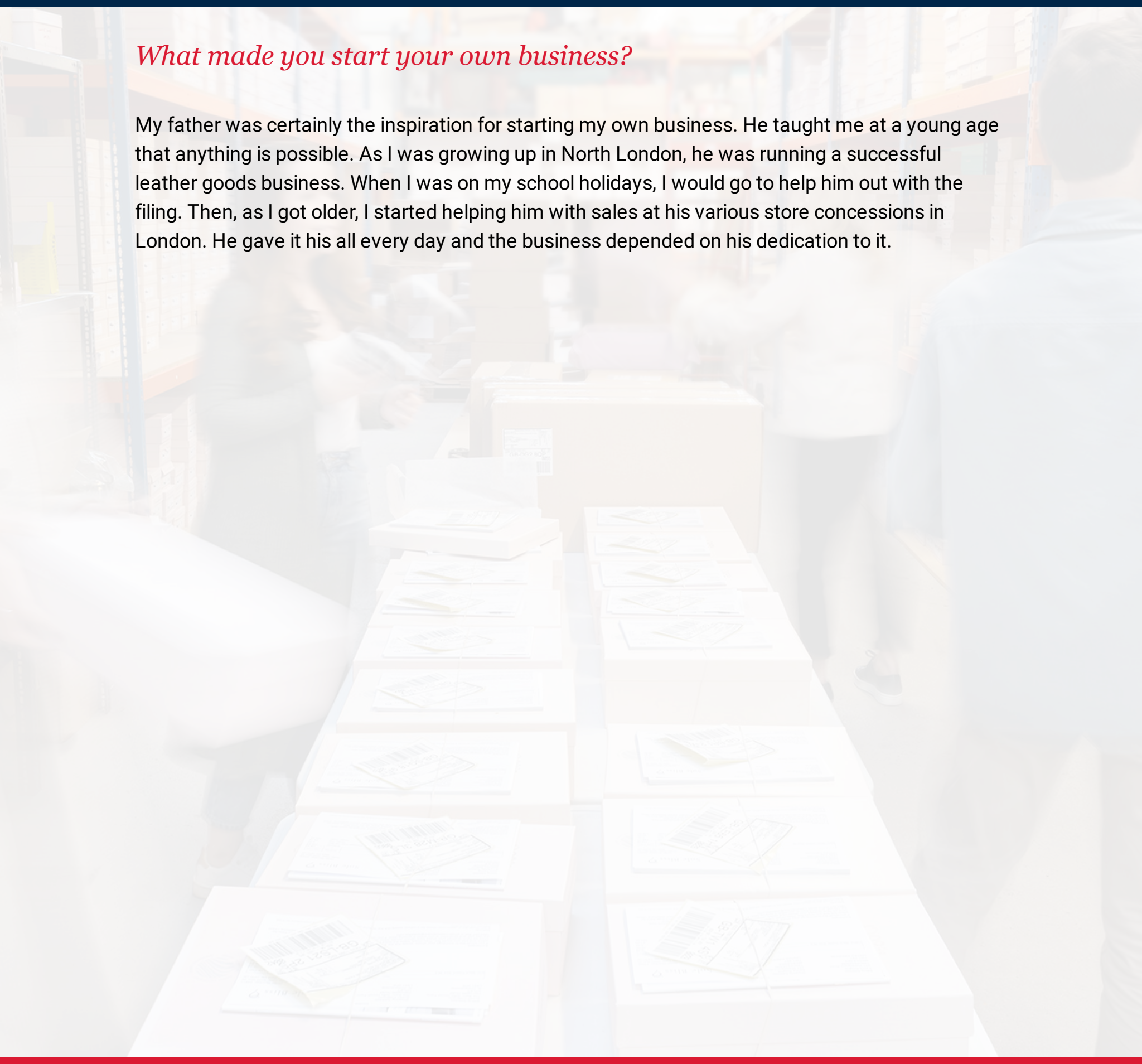
Sole Trader

Speak to our experts today

Lisa Kay, founder of shoe brands Sole Bliss and Lisa Kay London, has had a long and established career as an accountant, shoe designer and entrepreneur. Here she talks about her journey in business.

What made you start your own business?

My father was certainly the inspiration for starting my own business. He taught me at a young age that anything is possible. As I was growing up in North London, he was running a successful leather goods business. When I was on my school holidays, I would go to help him out with the filing. Then, as I got older, I started helping him with sales at his various store concessions in London. He gave it his all every day and the business depended on his dedication to it.



A good business is built on good relationships and it's really important in today's professional world to have your client's back, get personal and plan something fun together.

I've known Lisa and her husband, Roger for around a decade now. However, it was my love of football that initially helped kick off the business relationship. Roger and I had been chatting about the business at a game and that led to me joining forces with them on a professional level.

What's interesting is that Lisa is not only a shoe designer and runs the business, she is also an accountant. So, this is an unusual business advisory role for me because it brings a whole new dimension to the way we interact with each other. I have to admit, there are times when we just fall into jargon, but engagement is essential in business!

The jargon just means that conceptually we understand each other more easily because we are talking accountant to accountant and have that trusted connection. Our relationship is authentic and we have been able to develop a mutual respect for one another over the years. Of course, we're all human and that means we've shared some vulnerabilities too. I have supported Lisa and Roger through both challenges and change within their business.

When we started working together, the business was a traditional one, selling their wholesale collections to stores and independent retailers.

What has been really interesting for me has been to work with them as the business has become more agile in recent years. It's been great to watch them in action as they have developed their online presence for Sole Bliss. They have transformed their wholesale warehouse into a hive of activity for their online business, with multiple daily courier collections for Sole Bliss.

With my accountancy hat on, my role is very much about compliance work at the year end, but it's the relationship we have built over the years that is important. It has helped me to understand from a financial point of view, where they want to be as a business, but also in their personal lives. As a result, I have also been someone to lean on when they have needed to talk things through.

A year ago, they started to think about how they might break into the US market. Through my connections in the Geneva Group International (GGI) network, we were able to set up a meeting with a US accountant to help them establish the business overseas. It's now a very exciting time to see the business go global and I wish them every success with it.

Speak to our experts today

Fail to prepare, prepare to fail

VAT prep for business owners ahead of Brexit

While the formal terms of Brexit still remain uncertain and communication from central Government has been slow, there are preparations businesses can undertake to prepare. Steve McCrindle of Haines Watts provides a set of pointers to help businesses facing VAT, Customs duty and Border Control changes.

Supplies of goods and services and value added tax (VAT)

The movement of goods between Great Britain (GB) and the EU is to change from 1 January, 2021. We use GB because if the Northern Ireland Protocol is executed it will mean Northern Ireland will be treated differently to the rest of the UK.

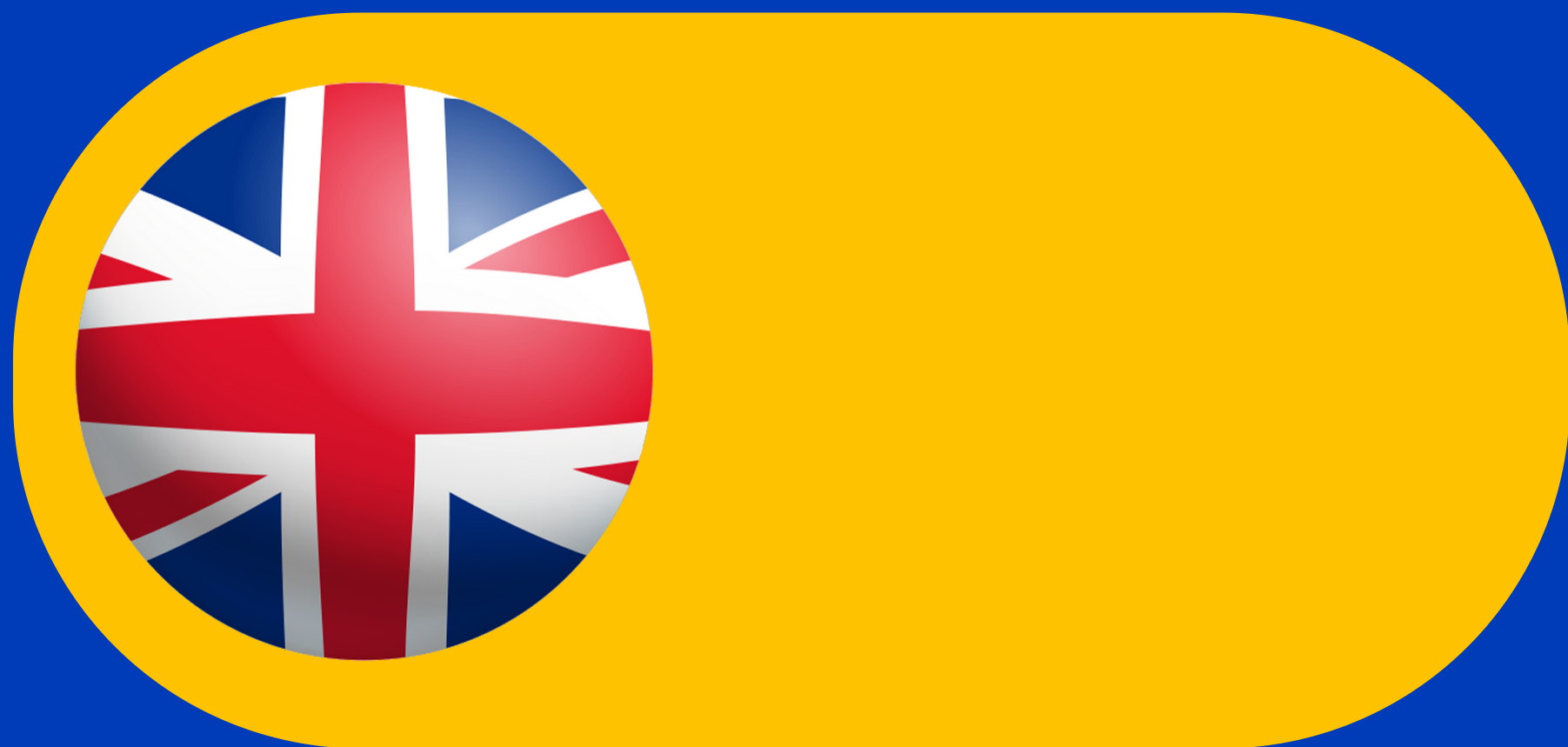
Exports and imports will replace EU dispatches and acquisitions, zero-rating for the export of goods will still exist if the relevant conditions are met and any goods that are imported are liable for import VAT and potentially Customs duty.

Postponed VAT Accounting for Imports to be introduced

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) is going to scrap the current physical charging of import VAT and instead, import VAT will be accounted for by adjustments on VAT returns under a new process called postponed VAT accounting (PVA). PVA is an automatic process (meaning it does not require an application or permission) that can help minimise cash outflow for business owners. It will apply to all imports, both from the EU and countries outside the EU. There may be different regulations and process for goods arriving into the UK where the value doesn't exceed £135.



[in](#) Steve McCrindle



[in](#) Connect with Steve McCrindle

Meet Niel Nicholson, co-owner of Nicholsons, an Oxfordshire-based, high-end landscaping business and plant centre. Niel runs the family-owned business with his wife, Liz. Here he talks about how they have navigated 2020 and why demonstrating a social conscience has made good business sense.



Socially conscious?

Find out more about how you can improve your business

Niel Nicholson is a man of his word. He's a firm believer that the more successful his business becomes, the more profit he will be able to invest in doing the things he wants from an environmental perspective.

Nicholsons was founded by Niel's father, Roderick in 1979 to tackle the growing problem of Dutch elm disease which arrived in the UK after being accidentally imported from overseas.

"It's quite interesting really because today we've got even more tree diseases to confront and we also need to plant more trees for carbon sequestration," said Niel.

The businessman joined his father in the company in 1992. His wife, Liz, then joined as a co-owner in the latter part of the Nineties. The husband and wife team have run the business ever since – Liz as MD and Niel as FD.

Niel said: "I have always been interested in the great outdoors, the environment and trees. I studied Ecological Sciences with an Honours in Forestry at Edinburgh University which is also where I met my wife, who was studying Soil Science. So, joining my father in the business was a logical progression for us."

As joint business owners, the pair are committed to employee welfare and even share a percentage of the company's profits with their team each year. While the business has traded well over the summer, protecting staff and customers has thrown up more than a few challenges.

"On a personal level, we have both worked harder this year than we have for a very long time. It's been a challenge to work out what we could and couldn't do within the restrictions," said Niel.

 Connect with George

Find out more about how I can improve my business

The events of 2020 have catalysed digital transformation for many businesses, but Haines Watts client, SOS Group, has been at the forefront of digitising office systems for 18 years. We caught up with John Behan, director at the company, to discuss tech trends, community work and 2021 planning.



Answering the digital SOS

[Find out more](#)

Can you tell us a bit more about your company?

SOS Group actually comprises three companies: we started in 2002 as Smart Office Systems Ltd, selling printers, scanners and copiers. We have added SOS IT, which offers a range of managed IT services, as well as hardware and cloud-based solutions, and SOS Can-Do Communications, which provides unified comms services such as VOIP and data cabling, to complete the line-up. The communications arm is rapidly being merged into the IT services division as these areas have become seamless in recent years.

We're not a huge company but have a great reputation for service which means we can punch above our weight a little: we work with organisations such as Jurys Inn, Hitachi and Haines Watts!

[Talk to our experts today](#)

It's the continuous
development and evolution
of the sector that excites
me.

A Virtual Lunch

...with Daley Tyndale

[in](#) Connect with Daley

We sat down over Zoom with Daley Tyndale, associate partner at Haines Watts London, to discuss his journey and how he is breaking boundaries for other young accountants.

[in](#) Connect with Daley

ESSENTIAL TACTICS
TO IMPROVE
YOUR BUSINESS
CASHFLOW

UNLOCK
TRAPPED
CASH

I need help on how to manage cash flow

Tactics to improve business cash flow

Of all the daily conversations that we have with our clients, two major concerns are recurring: uncertainty and cash flow. And whilst it's not all doom and gloom, businesses are now keen to be able to start planning for the coming 12 months and beyond, yet they are faced with continued uncertainty and a lack of clarity when it comes to tiered lockdown systems and Government support.

In its Q3 bulletin, the Bank of England said the pandemic was, unsurprisingly, the major factor behind business uncertainty, with 25 per cent of surveyed businesses saying they didn't believe the current challenges would be resolved until 2022. The challenges around the pandemic led the Chancellor Rishi Sunak to cancel his Autumn budget statement, and, at the time of writing, it's still unknown what shape the UK's long-term departure from the EU will take.

I need help on how to manage cash flow

Exit ahead

Retiring with purpose

When you're looking to sell a business, the priority is usually to realise the highest value you possibly can. However, there are other considerations too. There are a lot of routes to exit and one which is increasingly gaining interest is that of Employee Ownership Trusts. Matthew Thorpe of Haines Watts Hornchurch explains.

Employee Ownership Trusts provide a retiring owner with different options to exit a business. They allow someone over time to extract value for the business they have built whilst ensuring it remains independent when they retire or leave. It's an approach that also protects employees, who have helped you build the business, from radical change or upheaval that comes with a sale.

[Tell me more on how to exit my business](#)



[in](#) Matthew Thorpe

Continue your legacy

As a business owner, setting up an Employee Ownership Trust offers a very good way of continuing your legacy, which is something that doesn't get talked about a lot, but is crucially important. If you have a certain style or approach to doing business, it can be protected and prevent your culture from being diluted, more than it would be if you sold to a third party.

After all, it's natural that if you've put your blood, sweat and tears into growing a business, you want to feel like someone is going to take it on and keep it heading in the direction you had planned.

[Tell me more on how to exit my business](#)

HOW I UNWIND

... with Ben de Cruz



As the managing partner of a large regional office, 2020 has been quite a challenging year to be in business. From business planning, re-organising remote procedures and practices that working from home and social distancing dictate, to motivating my team and supporting clients, it can be gruelling. I find that taking time out and unwinding by doing something completely unrelated helps me to manage the pressure and clear my mind.



[in](#) Connect with Ben

There's something hugely relaxing and rewarding in building, assembling and painting model kits. Airfix models are a throwback to my childhood as the house was always full of models that I'd built and painted growing up. There was just something very satisfying about building and painting increasingly intricate kits. Ever since then I have had a deep interest in military history and putting rose-tinted memories of Airfix aside, there is something quite wonderful about perfecting the fine detail on beautiful model kits.

Of course, in the current climate, I now just need to find somewhere to put them together because working from home has meant my desk has been commandeered for other purposes. I just clear it off at weekends so I can continue with my modelling and painting.

I also paint small metal soldiers of between 6mm and 25mm in size. I'm currently involved in a large project that involves painting a French battalion of about 400 soldiers to be included on a large diorama of the Battle of Waterloo.

It's likely to take me well into next year to finish painting them. Once complete and assembled, the diorama will be the size of a tennis court and it will be displayed at the National Army Museum hopefully. In total, it will hold around 130,000 soldiers, so I'm just doing a fraction of it! There are contributions from all over the world and regular Zoom meetings are held to discuss progress and iron out technical difficulties. There is even a WhatsApp group to share painting techniques.

I have always enjoyed painting soldiers – I have about 4,000 of them mainly now in the loft – as well as building model kits, because you have to undertake detailed research as to the correct colours to use, and it requires a lot of concentrating on what you are doing. It also takes my mind off work and I get a huge sense of achievement from it. Just like the day job, attention to detail is everything!

Podcast – TED Radio Hour

The TED Radio Hour is a journey through fascinating ideas, new approaches to old problems, and new ways to think. It features TED Talks given by riveting speakers on the world's most important issues. Each episode examines how ideas make their way into our heads.

Album – Music for Airports by Mr Eno

Our working patterns have changed a lot in 2020, but whatever your workspace music is a perfect for getting you motivated or calming the deadline doom feeling. When it comes to work place albums there are few better than Music for Airports by Mr Eno. The Music For Airports album is probably the best ambient album of all time and is perfect for some stay-at-home or office based stress relief. The music was composed with the intention of defusing any tensions among travellers in an airport, so it should do the trick for getting you through the work day.

News from the regions

Our big Christmas challenge 2020

The team at Haines Watts Wirral and Liverpool are supporting Wirral Ark and fund raising with a virtual Christmas Quiz and a 'Guess Who' Baby Face competition.

This is a donation drive designed to support their work with homeless people during the winter season and beyond and is a fantastic opportunity for the organisation to raise vital funds to continue their work with vulnerable people.

The fundraising campaign has 5 Aims which will provide various provisions throughout the year, ranging from practical support like cold weather gear to more sustainable help via computer learning and job searches.

1. Xmas Dinner for all our 78 homeless clients.
2. Budget for 10 independent tenancy deposits for moving on clients.
3. Budget for 10 Starter Packs - essential furniture and white goods items needed for clients taking on new tenancies.
4. Two laptops for Job searches, CV creation, IT skills etc. for our vulnerable clients.
5. Cold Weather Gear Packs for rough sleepers. Helping to keep them safe and warm throughout winter.



[in Stay connected](#)



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CITY SPOTLIGHT ON.. CARDIFF

Think that there's not much going on in Cardiff? Think again. The city has a growing energy and a great community vibe with culture, shopping and sport at its core. It's also very easy to get around on foot, says Stephen Lucey, managing partner of Haines Watts Cardiff.

How to get around

Walk. Cardiff centre is really compact and everywhere is within easy walking distance. If it's raining (it can happen) there's never a shortage of taxis. If it's sunny (that can happen too!), it's a great city to walk around, and you're guaranteed to bump into someone that you know.

Shopping

Cardiff has all of the usual national chains, but is really a city of great arcades and these have lots of independently owned shops which are all worth a visit. You can always venture to Penarth or Cowbridge for unusual gifts and owner-managed stores.

A business lunch

The Park Plaza is very central, has great food, plenty of space around the tables and excellent, efficient service. At the Penarth end of Cardiff Bay Barrage is El Puerto, which always has a buzzing atmosphere, really friendly staff and a nice view over Cardiff Bay.

Networking

In normal times, networking revolves around coffee houses (of which there are loads), restaurants and bars. Working from home, we have continued to network using video conferencing – but it's not the same and we're looking forward to returning to meetings "in person".

Afterwork drinks

The Botanist and the Alchemist for cocktails and drama. Gin & Juice and Rum & Fizz in the Castle Arcade have a cool vibe. St. Mary Street and Mill Lane will provide anything else that you might fancy. Mermaid Quay also has numerous venues with views of the water. You'll certainly never run out of options in Cardiff!

Weekend digital detox

My hobby is sailing and luckily Cardiff has three yacht clubs within easy reach. For something different, try stand up paddle-boarding or white-water rafting within the Bay. And there are fantastic walking and cycle trails along the Taff trail and the coastal path.

[in](#) Connect with Stephen

“If there is no
struggle,
there is no
progress.”

