



2019

in-cumbria
Business Awards

RECOGNISING & REWARDING
THE BEST OF CUMBRIAN BUSINESS

**MEET THE
FINALISTS**

Awards evening
Thursday, November 14, 2019, The Halston, Carlisle
Hosted by Cathy Newman

www.in-cumbria.com/awards



Celebrating Cumbria's thriving businesses



The shortlist for the in-Cumbria Business Awards 2019 has been revealed.

A record number of entries were made for Cumbria's premier celebration of its thriving business community, as hundreds of companies and entrepreneurs threw their hat in the ring.

The awards boast a bumper 17 categories – including three new ones – which recognise

the impact and success of individuals and companies spanning all sizes and industry sectors.

The in-Cumbria team locked itself away to shortlist the finalists. They will now hand over the tough decision of choosing a winner to a high-profile roster of expert judges, which, for 2019, include nine new names.

Expert judges, along with representatives from Newsquest Cumbria – the

publisher of in-Cumbria – will hit the road during July and August to grill the finalists and decide who will be victorious.

The winners will be announced at a glittering awards ceremony hosted by news presenter, journalist and author Cathy Newman at The Halston, in Carlisle, on Thursday, November 14.

Luke Diccio, editor of in-Cumbria magazine and group business editor for Newsquest Cumbria, admitted to being “bowled over” by the response to the awards.

“Yet again, me and the in-Cumbria team have been overwhelmed by both the quantity, but most important of all, the quality of entries this year,” he said.

“Businesses from across the entire county have yet again

done themselves proud.

“It has been a real honour to go through them all. The effort put in, and the amazing achievements of those who have entered, has been really inspirational. Cumbria's business community is in fantastic health.

“The response just demonstrates the growing popularity of the awards, and the high value businesses place on them.

“Me and members of the Newsquest Cumbria team are looking forward to going out to see the finalists, along with our expert judges, to learn more about the stories behind the applications and bring them to life.”

The Lifetime Contribution Award, decided by the in-Cumbria team, will be announced on the night.

‘Yet again, me and the in-Cumbria team have been overwhelmed by both the quantity, but most important of all, the quality of entries’

Meet the judges

For 2019, nine new expert judges have been enlisted alongside others who have been involved from the start such as outspoken and inspirational in-Cumbria columnist Kevin Roberts. They include Henri Murison, director of the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, the newly appointed chair of the Cumbria branch of the Institute of Directors and managing director of Playdale Playgrounds, Barry Leahey MBE; and Claire Benson, marketing manager of training and development organisation Inspira.

in-Cumbria editor Luke Diccio added: "I'm absolutely delighted to welcome our new expert judges this year, and warmly welcome those who have returned. We really do have a perfect mix with judges who are experts in their fields and will not only decide the ultimate winner, but also be able to offer extremely valuable advice and insight to our finalists. The judging process is intense, but we also aim for it to be enjoyable and inspirational. The toughest part of always deciding the winner. And, yet again, businesses will make it really hard for our judges."

BARRY LEAHEY MBE

BEST BUSINESSPERSON OF THE YEAR



The managing director of playground manufacturer Playdale Playgrounds and chair of the Cumbria branch of the Institute of Directors is one of the new expert judges for this year's award, with the extremely tough task of separating the big-hitting finalists in the category he won in 2018.

GRAHAM LAMONT

YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR



Having built up Lamont Pridmore over the past 25 years into one of the region's leading accountancy firms, its chief executive – and new expert judge – Graham knows all about creating great things from small beginnings, which is what this new category is all about.

CLAIRE BENSON

BEST APPRENTICE/TRAINEE

As marketing manager of training and development organisation Inspira, new judge Claire has a passion for helping young people broaden their experiences, so



his fifteenth year as chief executive of Enterprise Answers, which provides start-ups and existing businesses alike with finance, supporting small businesses is something very close to his heart.

RICHARD FLETCHER

BEST NEW BUSINESS



Former Businessperson of the Year, Richard knows a thing or two about winning awards – and also new business. Having built up Caterite Food and Wine Service into one of the county's best food suppliers, he will celebrate the first-year anniversary of his new venture, Foodservice Online, in 2019.

SUE HOWORTH

BEST FAMILY BUSINESS



With her Family Business Network constantly expanding – both geographically and in the ways it helps family businesses to collaborate and learn from each other – Sue returns to judge one of the in-Cumbria Business Awards' most popular and hotly contested categories.

they reach their full potential, both in work and life, and is the perfect fit for a category that celebrates the county's ambitious young people.

RAY MCCREADIE

BEST LARGE BUSINESS



Lean business coach and in-Cumbria columnist Ray is another new name on the judging roster. A chartered engineer, director of bag manufacturer John Chapman Limited and all-round business expert, Ray has decades of experience of getting under the skin of businesses and what makes them tick.

GRAHAME LATUS

BEST SME BUSINESS



Grahame returns to the fold, swapping the Best New Business with Best SME. Now into





MARIA RAMSDALE
BEST MANUFACTURING BUSINESS
 Maria helps Cumbrian SMEs secure support through the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund's debt and finance funds as investment executive at FW Capital. Her passion for manufacturing businesses makes her the ideal choice to judge a category that celebrates the best in Cumbria's biggest industry sector.

CAROL FISH
BEST TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY BUSINESS



Carol is director at Cartmell Shepherd – the reigning Best Professional Services Company, with over 30 years' experience handling personal injury claims and litigation disputes. Finalists in the category can expect a meticulous attention to detail and tough questioning from another new judge to join the team in 2019.

STEPHEN LANCASTER
BEST PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COMPANY

PFK has undergone a dramatic transformation under the leadership of managing director Stephen, and recently



unveiled exciting plans for the Eden Forty One Business Park, near Penrith. The keen rugby fan – whose brother is former England coach Stuart Lancaster – will roll his sleeves as another new judge.

ADRIAN DAVIS-JOHNSTON
BEST INNOVATION



'Mr innovation' and in-Cumbria columnist returns as expert judge in 2019. Currently head of research, development and innovation, Nuvia, Adrian was the driving force behind the Innovus programme, which helped scores of businesses to commercialise their innovative products.

KEVIN ROBERTS
BEST MARKETING STRATEGY



Finalists in the Best Marketing Strategy will be in for a treat when the former boss of advertising agency Saatchi and Saatchi, Kevin, drops in. A true global leader in his field the popular in-Cumbria columnist will not just grill those who have been shortlisted – he'll be giving advice that could be worth millions.

JOANNE HOLBORN
BEST CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE



Partner and Head of Employment Law and Training at law firm Baines Wilson, Joanne has a long and distinguished career working closely with clients in the public and private sector on bespoke training programmes to help get them ahead.

HENRI MURISON
FLYING THE FLAG FOR CUMBRIA AWARD



As director of the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, Henri's role is all about singing the virtues of the North and pressing those in power for the financial backing to transform

the region's economy. A new and very high-profile judge, he is passionate about Cumbria's playing a full and active role in the North's push for more.

PHIL DAVIES
BEST GREEN/ ETHICAL BUSINESS



Phil works with both businesses and communities to develop and deliver projects ranging from small hydroelectric schemes to energy-efficient refurbishments, as low carbon development manager at Cumbria Action for Sustainability. Another new judge for a brand-new category, the two make the perfect match.

KATE GARRATT
BEST COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



Kate is passionate about fairness and that communities' benefit from energy developments around them. A former member of the senior management team of profit-for-purpose property company BEC, she now runs her own specialist energy advisory firm, The Herringbone Consultancy, and joins the refreshed judging roster for 2019.

Best Businessperson of the Year

This award is for a businessperson who has made an outstanding contribution to their company in the last year



▶ JOHN COUGHLAN, TSP ENGINEERING

John Coughlan was given the task of leading TSP Engineering that had repeatedly underperformed, making losses of £2 million a year.

He was determined to turn it into a high-profile, successful company and, since his arrival, TSP Engineering has seen three years of continuous profit for the first time since 1970.

It says he was instrumental in the company becoming the first in the world to be awarded a nuclear safety standard and integral in winning contracts worth millions of pounds.

He currently serves on the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership board.

One of his business objectives is to procure, as a minimum, 35 per cent of the contract value via SMEs and the culture of buying locally has been embedded in TSP Engineering.

He has won several awards for leadership and, as TSP faces an uncertain future as a wholly owned subsidiary of British Steel, which is in liquidation, the firm says: "He is fundamental in securing TSP Engineering's future."

"With the combination of the structure in which TSP Engineering had and the expert guidance in which John had provided resulted in the business staying independent and trading as normal when its parent company British Steel went into enforced insolvency."

TSP Engineering continues to trade as normal.



▶ ANAND PUTHRAN, MCMENON ENGINEERING SERVICES

Anand Puthran is founder and chief executive of McMenon Engineering Services, a manufacturer and global distributor of flow and temperature measurement products for a number of industrial sectors. He led the seven-figure acquisition of the Workington manufacturing facility from ABB last year. Today, the firm says, a business with a 70-year engineering heritage and staff of 60 people is going from strength to strength.

Originally from India, he graduated with an MBA from Aberdeen Business School at Robert Gordon University in 2003. His first role was within the education sector, encouraging students from across the world to study in the UK.

He then joined an SME in the oil and gas sector, Online Electronics, and worked with the managing director over seven years to develop and pursue its business growth ambitions.

He joined ABB as general manager at its Workington site. Although he had a career plan, the loss of his father prompted him to look at his options and, specifically, to consider a call to take the MD role at EFC Group in Aberdeen, where he spent two years.

When he left, he contacted ABB about acquiring the Workington manufacturing unit, despite it not being available for an acquisition.

Anand had always believed the operation had significant development potential as a standalone entity.



▶ MICHAEL PEMBERTON, BEC

Michael Pemberton arrived at BEC in 2015 to take up the post of programmes director, alongside two other directors. Less than six months later, the financial director and the managing director had left, leaving Michael as a reluctant chief executive.

His first task was a frank engagement with team members about how hard the road ahead might be, but how worthwhile the journey would be.

His previous experience includes implementing large projects for the National Trust and National Car Parks.

The profit-for-purpose company said he had been the lynchpin of BEC's survival through difficult times and has galvanised a senior leadership team and delivery team to believe in the company and inspired them to keep going as they faced the daunting task of business survival against the odds.

BEC is not only still standing, but it is stronger than ever and punching well above its weight. It manages Westlakes Science and Technology Park, near Whitehaven, and is spearheading the £55 million North Shore project in Whitehaven, which includes the revamp of the vacant bus station into the Buzz Station. He has had a significant impact on improving the performance of the business, BEC said, increasing its portfolio to include an acquisition at Lillyhall, near Workington, which now houses PaR Systems' European Handling Solutions Centre of Excellence.

Young Entrepreneur of the Year

This award recognises an entrepreneur aged between 18 and 35 who has started a business in the last three years

▶ **VANESSA LANA BROWN, VL AESTHETICS**

Vanessa took over the family business – Vibralife – in 2017, aged just 21, after gaining an international business with management degree.

But she has always had an entrepreneurial streak – starting a business on online auction site eBay when she was 10.

After taking over Vibralife, she rebranded it as VL Aesthetics and undertook work experience in Dubai and New York so she could bring what she learnt back home to Cumbria.

From reducing wrinkles and fine lines, removing fat and cellulite, to clearing acne, the clinic's tagline is "where science meets beauty".

Vanessa has just opened a medical aesthetics lounge so the clinic can offer minor medical procedures.



▶ **LISA DYKES, iCAN HEALTH AND FITNESS**



Julia Clifford, who runs iCan, says the health and fitness business would not be here without the dedication of Lisa, 31, who is managing director.

iCan is a not-for-profit, community-interest company aimed at increasing the life expectancy of women in and around Carlisle and offers all-round support.

She always wanted to own her own business and, five years ago, bought a third of iCan and has worked long hours to help make the business sustainable. Lisa also taught herself accountancy, marketing and social media skills.

Julia adds that, thanks to Lisa's applications, iCan has won £180,000 of Big Lottery funding to help grow the business.

▶ **NICKY GORDON, GENESIS HOMES**

Nicky Gordon, 35, is managing director of Genesis Homes. He joined his family's groundworks firm in 2004 and over the 12 years he worked there, he spent a large amount of time contracting for large housebuilders and was frustrated that the process was not perfect, often disorganised, and produced an uninspiring product. He set up Genesis Homes to create quality, vibrant and welcoming housing developments.

A former professional rugby player, he earned an England Schoolboys cap, but retired from the professional game after injuries. As a sportsman he learnt important lessons, he said, which he applies every day in his business role.

Resilience is number one – it's not about how you succeed, but how you fail and learn.



Best Apprentice/Trainee

This award will go to the apprentice or trainee who in the view of both the employer and the judges has demonstrated dedication, enthusiasm and skill



► DANIEL JACKSON

Daniel Jackson, 24, is completing his level four IT, web, software and telecoms apprenticeship with Carlisle College, based at Innovia Films in Wigton.

As part of his apprenticeship, Daniel has studied for his UCLan foundation degree in computing and NVQ level four in IT, web, software and telecoms at Carlisle College. He has constantly been praised by tutors and managers within the workplace, who have identified his hard work and dedication.

He began his apprenticeship after completing A-levels at The Nelson Thomlinson School, but felt university wasn't the right path for him.

Daniel has promoted apprenticeships at skills fairs and in colleges and has also been filmed as part of the Hello Fresh campaign.

His tutors say he takes his education seriously, is an enthusiastic learner and has a bright future ahead of him in his career.

Daniel has been a high achiever throughout his apprenticeship, completing high-quality coursework and practical assessments and gaining outstanding results on his UCLan foundation degree at Carlisle College, achieving a distinction overall.

One of Daniel's outstanding pieces of work during his apprenticeship was the project he implemented and researched a new meeting system for Innovia, which will be used in the business globally.



► JASMINE SCAIFE

Jasmine Scaife joined contractor Kaefer last year as a level three business administration apprentice, working from the firm's base at Westlakes Science and Technology Park, near Whitehaven, and has excelled since her arrival, proving to be a dynamic and valuable member of the team. Her apprenticeship is fully work based, in conjunction with Lakes College.

The company says she has displayed maturity beyond her years and a positive enthusiastic attitude towards her work, learning and development. She is always keen to learn new skills and exhibited willingness to take on responsibility. After initially carrying out only front-of-house and general administration duties, it became apparent that she was extremely dedicated and capable. Her ability to learn quickly and efficiently has led to her supporting other departments.

She regularly performs tasks for the training, payroll, commercial and social impact departments, which are giving her an insight into the wider business needs and vital learning experiences.

Her capability and strong work ethic has also caught the attention of senior management. She was asked to attend the Sellafield Directors Forum in March to support the UK purchasing department in representing Kaefer to clients, suppliers and potential customers by setting up and manning a stand. Jasmine was confident and professional, demonstrating her knowledge of the company.



► ALEX DAWSON

Alex Dawson, 20, has been on an eight-month assignment to support the i3 Decommissioning Partners team on the Sellafield site.

i3 is a collaboration between Altrad Services, Wood plc and Shepley Engineers to provide services at the West Cumbrian nuclear complex.

He recently won Wood's Cumbria Apprentice Programme Special Achievement Award.

i3 says he has also excelled in his placement on the Sellafield site, setting a great example to so many other apprentices as he is smart and eager to deliver multiple tasks in a complex project environment.

He began his engineering design and draughtsperson apprenticeship in 2017 after doing work experience with Wood under the Dream Placement scheme, run by the Centre for Leadership Performance.

At i3, Alex has supported its senior management team, project managers, engineers, planners and the safety team during his placement.

The team says: "His good manners and positive can-do attitude have made him a well known and popular member of the 250 strong i3 joint venture.

"He has a collaborative attitude that will help him develop a long and successful career in engineering and management."

Best Large Business

This award recognises a business with 51 employees or more which can demonstrate strong leadership and vision, sustained growth and sound financial performance



▶ BENDER UK

Electrical safety and monitoring specialist Bender UK is a leader within the UK.

Since 2010, the business has seen consistent year-on-year growth, extending its stake in existing markets and breaking into new areas of business. Its turnover is set to exceed £15 million this year.

It says it has two strategies for the success of the business – to extend its share in existing markets and find new applications for bespoke applications of its technology.

The company also works closely with original equipment manufacturers in the medical, industrial, energy and oil and gas sectors to develop applications of Bender technology that protect installations against sudden power loss and maintain availability of critical no-fail systems.

The company offers maintenance support to more than 500 hospitals across the UK.

Bender technology is widely used in hybrid and electric public transport including almost 2,000 London hybrid-powered electric buses. It is also a key component in the Formula E electric race car, and in the new all-electric and hybrid delivery vans.

The success of that strategy laid the foundations for a £3 million milestone investment in a new head office in Ulverston. Established for just over two decades, Bender UK's staff has risen from seven to 55 in the last 15 years.



▶ i3 DECOMMISSIONING PARTNERS

i3 Decommissioning Partners is a joint venture between Wood plc, Altrad Services and Shepley Engineers, delivering more than £35 million-worth of projects a year.

The companies joined forces three years ago to work at the Sellafield site under the DDP framework.

Clean-up, retrievals and management of the nuclear legacy is one of the most demanding challenges facing the nuclear industry today and i3 is now a primary provider of safe solutions and offers a full spectrum of project services.

It says i3 has a carefully constructed, skilled and professional team which integrates the best of the personnel and systems of the three parent companies.

The team draws on local and global expertise in practically any technical area of project management, engineering and decommissioning, it adds.

The i3 team has also been active with multiple socio-economic activities, contributing more than £47,000 to the local community, as well as being committed to removing the stigma around mental health.

It has also won awards which recognise its continuing commitment to safety.



▶ THEIDOL.COM

theidol.com has been comparing insurance products for nearly 20 years, developing cutting-edge technology solutions for major market-leading comparison brands, including comparethemarket.com; GoCompare; Confused.com; Money.co.uk; and uSwitch. It also carries out IT project work for Legal & General, as well as its own innovative product development and services.

Set up in 1999 by current managing director Paul Tyson, theidol.com has sold more than 13 million travel insurance policies since 2005 and enabled over 235,000 customers to purchase over £36 billion-worth of life insurance cover since 1999.

It says: "We are passionately people-first and we work hard to look after everyone from our customers and partners through to our own brilliant teams who make it all possible."

It is an active member of Penrith Industrial BID and says it is engaging with Eden District Council and Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership to support strategic economic growth plans.

It has been highlighted in Cumbria's Local Industrial Strategy as a case study of a successful digital company operating in the region. It also employs apprentices and is now investing in degree-level apprenticeships for its staff.

theidol.com also takes its commitment to the community seriously – it sponsors Penrith' Winter Driving Festival and several local sportspeople.

Best SME Business

This award will recognise a business with 1-50 employees which can demonstrate strong leadership and vision, good sales growth and sound financial performance

► MORE HANDLES LIMITED

More Handles was set up in 2007 by Paul and Carolyn Rheinbach and Michael and Stephanie Hunt as a small lifestyle business, trading as a specialist internet retailer of door hardware, based at Harker, Carlisle.

In December 2010 the business model was changed when the decision was made to expand the business to include a full trade counter and retail showroom.

The shareholder structure changed in 2014, with ownership split between investors Top Notch Contractors and

Paul, with Paul as managing director.

It opened a new branch in 2016 and, in 2018, a complete rebrand was implemented, plus a marketing team was created.

It continues to expand its physical footprint and responds to changes in the market in its stride, expanding internationally and now employs 43 people.

It says it is bucking the trend in the competitive ironmongery market and has a clear and ambitious strategy for growth.



► FLEXMR

FlexMR has been at the forefront of developing practical innovations in online market research for over a decade.

It has worked with some of the world's most innovative brands, including iHeartMedia, Virgin Atlantic, Formula One, Skybet, British Gas and Avery.

It says it aims to embed agile insight generation at the heart of its clients' decision-making processes by combining a cutting-edge online platform with the expertise offered by our team of experienced researchers.

It offers a customised, flexible service that blends qualitative and quantitative tools to maximise return on investment. It says: "Our aim is to act as an extension of our clients' insight teams, delivering a full roster of services that extend capacity and help embed insight across entire organisations. Our qualitative and quantitative researchers are passionate about turning data into actionable, relevant results. We are confident in our ability to deliver quality insight every time."

► TAYLOR & BRAITHWAITE

Family-run Taylor & Braithwaite is a company which, it says, punches above its weight. It supplies, services and maintains agriculture and construction equipment across the North of England and Scotland.

Employing more than 20 local people, it says its success is down to providing the best possible service to our customers throughout the lifetime of the equipment they buy. Established over 50 years ago, its business has developed from a machine dealer into

diversifying into quarrying, recycling and waste-handling industries and it is aiming to expand further.

It said: "We pride ourselves on being able to provide expert advice on equipment that is fit for purpose and cost effective. We aim to build strong relationships with our customers, enabling them to feel secure in the knowledge that we are fully supporting in them for the lifetime of their machines."

It has added several manufacturers to its portfolio, and has had a good



sales growth and sound financial performance, plus, it says, a robust plan for sustained growth is in place, including the formation of a sister company in the south of the country.

Best New Business

This award recognises a successful company that has been in operation for less than three years

► GENESIS HOMES

Genesis Homes was formed in 2017, initially to build on two parcels of land at Wigton and Brigham, that the company owned.

In the spring of that year, managing director Nicky Gordon presented a business plan to the Cumberland Building Society for development funding.

This was agreed and work started on the Wigton site five months later.

Its second scheme at Brigham launched at the end of August 2018 and its site at Armathwaite in the Eden

Valley is half sold off plan, three months since its launch.

It says it has a customer satisfaction rating of 98.6 per cent and it is confidently breaking into a market dominated by large-scale regional and national development companies.

It has invested over £10 million into the construction of St Cuthbert's in Wigton, employing 15 different trades and over 60 local contractors. In May, it announced it had acquired five new sites, investing a further £43.5m into the region.



► LAKELAND FLEET MANAGEMENT LIMITED

Two years ago Michael Seggie launched Lakeland Fleet Management. He had nine months-worth of savings in the bank and a gut feeling that a new type of car sales firm would be a success.

He ran it initially from his kitchen table.

In his first month, Michael had secured his first sale. In his second month, he arranged two.

He said: "It felt amazing to be going into business on my own, but at the same time it was nerve-wracking."

In December 2017 Michael had 12 sales, by March the monthly sale was 45 and he had been joined in the business by Gary Burns.

Lakeland Fleet Management now has a team of six, with the company's main office in Warwick Road, Carlisle, and another satellite operation in Leeds.

Its Lease My New Car brand provides cars to non-business customers and it is also able to offer used cars and short term leases.



► 32 WEST



32 West was established by former editor James Higgins to help businesses tell their stories and for them to achieve business growth as a direct result.

The business was officially incorporated on May 23, 2018. Since then it has grown in size, in terms of the team, client base and services offered, with more directors coming on board and senior account managers employed.

It delivers services in PR, marketing, creative design, business consultancy, photography and videography, social

media management and media buying.

With 12 clients across several sectors, including law, finance, property, hospitality and health, 32 West represents 21 businesses. Cartmell Shepherd, Holker Group, Alertacall, the Centre for Leadership Performance and Lakeland Inns are among the businesses which work with 32 West.

It says: "32 West started in a box-room and in just 12 months has grown into a business with a client base - and team - of which we are very proud."

Best Family Business

This award recognises a family-owned or family-managed business which has at least two members of a family involved in running it

► SCALLYWAGS

Emma Jane and Ian Sanderson are spearheading a pet food revolution in Carlisle. They expanded their successful pet grooming business – begun by Emma Jane in a garden shed – to include a raw food business and, earlier this year, moved to new premises on John Street to help them keep up with demand.

Emma’s mum Sue works with Ian in the raw food business and Krystal Flannery, the couple’s daughter-in-law, is a dog groomer with Emma.

Ian, a former broadband engineer, says the business is a vocation rather than a job.

Ian says: “We are here to offer help and advice to people. We offer a support network. I will weigh the dogs who come in and work out the best mix for them.”



► WOODWARD SAFETY HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT LTD



Set up by Tom and Christine Duggan, the health and safety consultancy is truly a family affair, as sons Tom and James also work for the firm.

It moved from its Carlisle base to Energus in Workington earlier this year after it outgrew its premises and offers health and safety training across the country. It has trained hundreds of people since the firm began in 1993, offering courses to military personnel coming out of the armed forces to help them find new careers once they leave the service.

The firm also works with Sellafield Ltd and has just been awarded a new safety contract via the LINC framework for the nuclear complex’s workers. It has also just opened a new training suite in Southern Scotland.

► STAN SHERLOCK ASSOCIATES LTD

The financial planning consultants was set up in 1989 by Stan and Sandra Sherlock and is now run by their son Bobby and his wife Emma. Stan and Sandra’s daughter Kath is celebrating her 15th year with the company this year.

They say the family business ethos runs through the company, which employs 16 people, and they aim to build long-term relationships built on trust. The firm says: “Although not everyone in the business is a Sherlock, the longevity of the staff working within the business and having advisors who have worked here since the business was established cultivates the family environment we all enjoy being part of.”

Last year the firm achieved its highest turnover to date and secured more than 850 mortgages for people in Cumbria.



Best Manufacturing Business

This award recognises a manufacturing business which can clearly demonstrate excellent results

▶ CLARK DOOR

Founded in 1973, Clark Door is the market leader in the design, installation and service of special-purpose door systems. It has exported its bespoke products to more than 44 countries.

Led by managing director Andrew Ashley, it has just announced a £3 million extension to its Kingmoor Park site, which will allow it to carry out research and development.

It says a critical part of its success was its ability to develop innovative door products, like its Clark Coldmaster Door for the frozen food industry, which includes an air curtain which acts as a barrier to air loss. Its soundproof doors are installed in TV and film studios across the globe. It was recently named as an Export Champion by the Government. It says it has grown from an SME with a good reputation to one that has consistently increased its sales to significant levels.



▶ MCMENON ENGINEERING SERVICES



Workington-based McMenon Engineering Services is a manufacturer and global distributor of flow and temperature measurement products for a number of industrial sectors.

Chief executive Anand Puthran led the seven-figure acquisition of the facility, which employs 60 people, from ABB in 2018. McMenon specialises in differential pressure flow meters. As part of its diversification strategy, McMenon now also has ultrasonic flow meters and Coriolis flow meters among its offerings.

Within the first year of acquisition, McMenon was awarded a technically challenging project for a global client involving the design, machining and fabrication of flow metering pipe spools for metering streams, which it successfully completed.

It has launched manufacturing operations in Saudi Arabia and sales operations in India and set up over 15 distributor agreements with firms around the world – McMenon products are used in more than 50 countries – plus added a new product for the offshore oil and gas market through a collaborative agreement. It has also invested a six-figure sum in its Workington manufacturing facility and certification improvements.

▶ TSP ENGINEERING



TSP Engineering offers technical solutions to complex problems, delivering heavy engineering to Swiss watch tolerances. Operating from one of the largest and most compressively equipped facilities in the UK, its services are tailored to individual business needs for its key markets, which include nuclear, defence, oil and gas, steelmaking and construction. It became the first company in the world to gain the ISO 19443 standard, which focuses on safety of the nuclear sector.

TSP Engineering has just been awarded the contract to manufacture and commission 13 high-integrity lead-lined packages for a major local nuclear client, a deal worth just under £30 million.

It says: “Chief executive John Coughlan and the management team have an exceptional vision for TSP Engineering. Their drive and passion has resulted in a successful negotiation for it to become an independent standalone business.

“The independence has allowed us to be in full control over the future direction of the business rather than us being reliant on others who may not share the passion that we have for our company and industry.”

Best Tourism & Hospitality Business

This award recognises a business that can demonstrate how innovation, commitment and leadership have resulted in success

► **HOLBECK GHYLL**

The family-owned Holbeck Ghyll has a great reputation for food and recently secured its third AA rosette for culinary excellence, under the tenure of head chef Will DiMartino.

It says that it has attempted to ensure the hotel reflects its relationship with the landscape around it and is developing a responsible business framework to guide its corporate social responsibility strategy. It uses the local supply chain to reduce food miles and increase economic flow among the local farming community; provides opportunities for students at Lakes School and Kendal College, as well as wider employment opportunities. It says: "Our core values revolve around mutual respect, integrity, support for our local community, an emphasis on quality, a culture of hard work and are also centred around a family atmosphere."



► **PURE COTTAGES GROUP**



The Pure Cottages Group was established this year, bringing together two of the largest holiday letting agencies in Cumbria, Lakelovers and Heart of the Lakes. The portfolio has more than 1,000 cottages in Cumbria, which are set to welcome over 75,000 holidaymakers to the region this year. Pure Cottages is a business founded on an understanding of Cumbria's tourism sector, it says, and the company added that it recognised its experienced staff were central to delivering the very best in local expertise. The merger, it says, meant it was better able to service customers with its brands, which also includes Lake District Lodge Holidays, Underscar and Lakelovers Gold. Pure Cottages covers more regions in Cumbria than any other cottage letting agency, it said.

► **TULLIE HOUSE MUSEUM & ART GALLERY**

Celebrating its 125th anniversary, over the last 12 months, Tullie House has welcomed over 244,000 visitors through its doors. Over half of all primary schools in Cumbria – equating to 15,668 pupils – visited the museum.

One of the UK's leading independent museums, Tullie House cares for a collection of over 400,000 items.

It says it was vital community asset, using its world-class collections, exhibitions and learning programmes to develop active participants, inspire learning and be inclusive.

It strives to encourage more people to interact with the museum – with an ever-growing online presence, plus the setting up of a digital task group to investigate how it can incorporate live streaming and interactivity as the norm for its exhibitions.



It is also redeveloping its internal spaces, and has been awarded £250,000 by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, to create a costume gallery, set to open in 2020.

Best Professional Services Company

This award recognises a business that can demonstrate an outstanding level of professional service delivery

► BENDLES LLP

Founded in 1805, Bendles has spent the last 18 months transforming its business.

Modernisation, reorganisation and introducing new systems have been instrumental in its transformation, which has seen it move to new purpose-built premises at Kingstown after more than 50 years in Carlisle city centre.

It has also acquired estate agency Tiffen & Co and Wigton legal firm Beaty & Co.

It has doubled in size and now employs around 65 people. It says: "We may be a long-established business but we are also clearly a 21st century business with real ambition and drive.

"We fully anticipate we will continue with our ambitions to expand and diversify over the coming years."



► RESPONSIVE LTD



Set up in 2011 as a non-destructive testing and inspection service for the nuclear sector, Responsive has grown from a team of five to 12 and expanded to include a mechanical testing service and training service, plus a business in Manchester.

Its turnover tripled in its first four years of operation, and the firm says it has doubled every year since then.

It works across several industries and customers include Rolls-Royce, Sellafield and BAE Systems.

The firm says it is on a constant journey, as it believes redesigning services and adapting to customers' needs and wants allow it to run a sustainable business for the long-term.

► PROSPUS GROUP

Prospus advises clients across the UK on how to maximise the value of their assets and diversify portfolios across a range of sectors.

It has several sub brands, including for marketing, energy, architecture, property and planning consultancy, which it says, allows it to offer a holistic approach to clients working on a project and was its unique selling point.

It says it is focused on nurturing long-term strategic relationships with clients. Clients include Kingmoor Park, Edwin Thompson and The Alpine Club.

It says a lot of its work is via referrals and repeat business, but it still actively tenders for work, as it is aware it is important to remain visible in a saturated market.



Best Innovation

This award is for a business which has developed the most innovative product, process, service or business method within the last three years

▶ **ACTIVF-ET-PARAGON VETERINARY GROUP**

This advanced breeding service for cattle farmers has been developed and refined in Cumbria, and led to what is believed to be the first calf born in Europe following laser biopsy techniques. It also carries out cutting-edge research which, it says, is making a difference both in the UK and abroad.

Specialising in in vitro fertilisation and production of cattle embryos, it is one of only a handful of companies in the UK carrying out such work. It is currently using female donors from Cumbria to create IVF embryos to be implanted in native Zimbabwean cattle to support the growing need for self-sufficient milk production in the African country.

It says the technology could supersede the use of artificial insemination in the future and its implication for commercial cattle farmers is huge.



▶ **INNOVIA FILMS LTD**



Innovia's Wigton plant is a global leader for the manufacture of films used in packaging, and its films wrap some of the best-known products on the planet.

Five years ago, it recognised that there was a need to extend shelf life of products to reduce food waste and allow the consumer to see the product they were buying.

It embarked on a research and development programme to develop transparent materials with a higher barrier level to moisture and gases.

It invested in new equipment and its engineers set to work to create the new films, which would also help with recycling.

Its target markets are cereal bars, biscuits, snacks, dried fruit and nuts, tea and coffee.

▶ **BENDER UK**

Bender UK has supported Network Rail for more than a decade, providing monitoring for rail signalling power systems. Last year, changes to its requirements led to new standards for performance, which meant new monitoring systems had to be developed to become more sensitive and be tracked more accurately. It has to be IT-led as an earthed system would lead to major disruptions in the signalling system. Earthed systems are also vulnerable to rodent damage, water ingress, cable strikes and ageing. Bender is regarded as an expert in IT systems and its monitoring systems are more tolerant to earth faults and does not cut power when a fault first occurs.

Bender's system shows real-time status of the power system and makes it easier for faults to be identified and repaired.



Best Marketing Strategy

This award is for a successful marketing strategy undertaken in the last 12 months

► THE OLD VICARAGE

The family-run care home experienced a steady fall in its occupancy rate and enquiries in 2018, so owner Kamal Siddiqi embarked on a five-part marketing strategy to raise the home's profile.

The firm decided to use social media, create a database of local influencers to send relevant information to, make Kamal a vlogger to use his knowledge of dementia care and target the local press for stories about the care home.

It has been a great success for the Old Vicarage – enquiries have increased and its visibility has risen both across the care home sector and the wider community. A video of staff wearing dressing gowns at night – to help residents with dementia more comfortable if they woke up – went viral and was shared 500,000 times on social media platforms.



► LAKELAND LEATHER



Lakeland Leather invited online influencers to an event to help it change the perception of its brand. The women visited the chain's Bowness store, marking the start of its marketing plan to create the connection between its physical stores, website and social media. Zoë Dawes, Emma Hill, Simone Oaks, Lily Kate France, Lou Kneath, Hannah Jackson, Jade Hodgson and Rhoya were introduced to the chain's new spring/summer collection by managing director Martin Foster, who also explained the history of the brand. Their photos have been used by the brand to promote itself online.

It wants to change the perception of leather and create awareness of the brand and says the influencer event has seen its social media profile and website visits rocket.

► JAMES CROPPER

The paper mill has been making paper on the site since 1845, but prides itself on never standing still. Renowned for its expertise and innovation, one of its key product innovations is CupCycling, the world's first recycling process dedicated to upcycling takeaway cups into beautiful papers. It is at the heart of its marketing strategy to grow its share in the higher value segments of the speciality paper business.

As people become more aware of single-use plastics and the need to recycle, James Cropper has positioned itself nationally as a trailblazer. It works with leading coffee chains and is their preferred partner, with over 60 million coffee cups recycled. CupCycling has reached 25 million TV viewers, 12 million radio listeners and had more than 100 articles written about it.



Customer Service Excellence

This award recognises a business that can demonstrate an outstanding level of professional service delivery

▶ DAVID ALLEN IT SOLUTIONS



David Allen IT Solutions acts as the IT department for more than 80 businesses in Cumbria.

It said it was committed to putting customer service and client experience at the forefront of everything it does, and supports some businesses 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Its Cumbrian datacentre is used by the majority of its clients, which allows them to have enterprise-grade server infrastructure at a fraction of the cost of them investing themselves.

It says: "Our mission is to enhance businesses using technology and provide comprehensive IT support to enable that business to focus on its goals.

"Our dedicated and qualified team are here to give businesses peace of mind that their systems are secure, reliable and ready to support their objectives."

In the last five years, it has grown to employ a team of 10 and has a 96 per cent customer satisfaction rating from over 1,000 requests for help.

▶ BENDER UK



More than 500 hospitals in the UK and Ireland have more than 8,000 pieces of equipment provided by Bender UK for clinical use and electrical power systems for critical care. It is essential that its customer care is world-class as it could be the difference between life and death.

Bender UK has a team of 20 in its service department, available 365 days a year so hospitals can maintain capacity and avoid disruption to planned medical procedures. The service team delivers a 95 per cent rate of first-time fix, preventing failure and shut-down and saving hospitals thousands of pounds in penalty fines and cancellations and typically processes more than 200 emergency callouts annually.

Since 2012, Bender UK has invested in a cloud-based customer management system and developed a unique world-class, paperless service organisation.

The system holds data on every asset, its history and its location, which is sent to the iPads used by engineers on site. It sends notifications of inspections, repairs and parts replaced, which is transferred instantly so records are always up to date and every hospital client also has a dedicated service co-ordinator.

▶ THEIDOL.COM



theidol.com has been comparing insurance products for nearly 20 years, developing cutting-edge technology solutions for major market-leading comparison brands, including comparthemarket.com, GoCompare, Confused.com, Money.co.uk and uSwitch.

It has sold more than 13 million travel insurance policies since 2005 and enabled more than 235,000 customers to purchase more than £36 billion of life insurance cover since 1999.

It says it averages less than two customer complaints a year in relation to the services it provides and has never had a complaint upheld.

Its six-strong customer care team has 71 years of combined professional experience and the firm says it has a clear customer care policy.

It adds: "Given the nature of our business and the very real threats of cybercrime, we naturally take data protection very seriously and we are committed to protecting personal information by investing in the latest internet security standards, including systems hosted in secure locations, multiple firewalls and application filters."

Flying the Flag for Cumbria

This new award is for a company which has put Cumbria firmly on the map with the products and services it offers

► ENGLISH LAKE DISTRICT CHINA FORUM

After a noticeable increase in Chinese visitors during 2014 and early 2015, Windermere Lake Cruises and English Lake Hotels Resorts & Venues met to see how they could work together.

The aim was to enhance the exposure of the Lake District to the inbound Chinese tourism market. It resulted in the creation of a marketing consortium, which is now the China forum.

The forum has carried out research to discover what Chinese visitors expect from destinations, attractions and accommodation. It also appointed a Chinese-speaking representative to set up and manage its Chinese social media platforms.

As a group of businesses working together, they attend events in the UK and China, promoting Cumbria and the North of England and train smaller businesses to make their prod-



ucts 'China-ready'. Windermere Lake Cruises has seen a huge increase in Chinese visitors, while English Lakes Hotels has seen a year-on-year rise.

► TRADE COPIERS



Founded by Stephen Armistead in 2002, Trade Copiers is one of Europe's leading brokers of used photocopiers, printers and other multifunction devices. Its core business is working with photocopier manufacturers and dealers based in the UK and Europe and it also has a thriving consumable department that purchases and exports consumables to countries including China, Hong Kong, USA, Malaysia, UAE, Nigeria, Egypt, Spain and Italy. In 2018, two extensions to its premises saw a large increase in warehouse space and, this April, it has taken on another warehouse which has doubled the company's capacity to distribute more copiers, printers and toners worldwide.

The last financial year saw sales grow by 20 per cent and the firm is predicting double-digit growth this financial year.

► CLARK DOOR

A market leader in specialist doors, Clark Door products can be found across the world. It said it had established an excellent reputation over the last 46 years, thanks to its full design, manufacture, installation and aftersales servicing.

It says: "We are often the go-to company when our clients require technical advice for specialist doors."

Its markets are primarily soundproof and fireproof doors for TV studios, film studios and theatres and innovative cold storage doors for the frozen food industry, which have been installed from Iceland to the Antarctic. It is a Government Export Champion and has worked hard to make sure the Clark Door name is known internationally, changing its focus from the domestic market to worldwide clients.



Best Green/Ethical Business

This new award recognises a company that has demonstrated a successful commitment to managing its environmental obligations and take an ethical stance



H&H REEDS

Established in 1878, H&H Reeds is Cumbria's largest commercial print company. Committed to protecting the environment, it is in the top one per cent of environmentally friendly commercial print firms in the UK.

It became part of the Woodland Trust's carbon capture programme in 2015 and has planted more than 260,000 trees, capturing more than 52,287 tonnes of CO₂.

Its other green initiatives include energy-efficient lighting, the use of vegetable-based inks and a cycle to work scheme for staff.

It recycles over 95 per cent of all waste materials, and by installing recycling bins around the sites, has reduced landfill waste by over 80 per cent.

An environmental manager oversees its environmental systems and implementing new procedures has reduced the use of plastics. It uses waste board to produce packaging for business cards and other items.

NEWLANDS ADVENTURE CENTRE



Newlands Adventure Centre is a residential outdoor activity centre, which has been operating since 1905. A management buyout in 2013 has seen it develop and grow as a green business.

It said it believed sustainability should be at the heart of every business and should always be considered when making changes or business choices. It has a far-reaching environment management system and is committed to being as

environmentally aware as possible, from energy-efficient lightbulbs and recycled toilet paper to driver training. It said, as a result of its changes, its energy costs had decreased, it had saved money by recycling more and it has had bookings purely because it is a green business. There had been a consistent development involving the whole team and it would not have achieved national recognition without the support and dedication of the staff.

ULLSWATER 'STEAMERS'



The family-owned cruise company Ullswater 'Steamers' operates one of the largest heritage vessel fleets in the world. Its core business is to provide a sustainable transport service that allows passengers to hop on and off without using a car.

Since 1995, it has supported local conservation projects via the Lake District Foundation through visitor donation schemes on fares, raising £60,000.

It has achieved Green Tourism Business Scheme Gold accreditation and

Gold Green at Heart for best environmental practice, plus won numerous awards for sustainable practices over the years.

There is a rolling replacement programme on board the fleet's LED lighting. Last year saw Ullswater 'Steamers' start replacing engines with more modern efficient models. It has various environmentally friendly practices, including no longer stocking 500ml plastic bottles of soft drinks, installing two filtered water taps at its main pier houses for customers and removing single-use plastics.

Best Community Involvement

This award recognises a business that has shown its productive commitment to putting something back into the local community

► OneAIM

OneAIM, a joint venture between Inter-serve and Wood, delivers the operations site works framework for Sellafield Limited and employs 360 people.

As part of its contract with Sellafield, it developed a social impact plan to outline how it would deliver social value.

It created the Primary Business Partnership, a brokerage service in West Cumbria which connects 63 primary schools and businesses to support career-related learning in classrooms. It supports the operation and delivery of the service for primary schools and has



committed three years of funding to it.

It has so far engaged with 5,318 pupils. This learning is focused on helping children to understand who they could become and help them to develop a healthy sense of self.

The service is about exploration, development and helping children to have high aspirations.

OneAIM hopes it will be rolled out to all 103 primary schools in Allerdale and Copeland next year.

► OXLEY GROUP



The world-leading designer and manufacturer of LED lighting systems and high-specification electronic components is committed to inspiring the next generation. It has been involved with the Bright Stars primary school scheme for four years. Oxley staff are business mentors, helping the youngsters develop their ideas and have worked with more than 300 pupils.

For five years, it has been involved in the Building My Skills programme, working with eight primary schools to give

young people an insight into the world of work. It is also a founder of UlverSTEM, aimed at encouraging children's interest in STEM subjects and is a key part of the Furness Future Leaders Academy programme.

Staff are encouraged to sign up as STEM ambassadors and a member of the Oxley team is a trustee of Furness Education & Skills Partnership and a member of the Inspiring Barrow Working Group. It is a signatory to the Women in Aviation & Aerospace Charter.

► SEALY UK

Sealy UK, which employs 330 people at its Aspatria plant, set up its charity committee in 2016.

Members meet monthly to review donation requests and plan fundraising activities and social events. So far, they have provided support and given donations worth £20,000 to local charities, organisations, schools and events.

Sealy has supported Hospice at Home Carlisle and North Lakeland, West Cumbria Carers, Jack's Journey and Jigsaw Children's Hospice, among

dozens of other groups, organisations and schools, plus for Aspatria Community Transport Group.

The firm said: "Supporting local charities is something that we are very passionate about."

Sealy UK staff are involved in Maryport's Hug a Mug service, an innovative health and well-being service and the firm sponsors local sports teams. It also gives 10 mattresses a month to Riverside Housing Association and Impact to be donated to social housing tenants.



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