

LEEDS BUSINESS REVIEW

ISSUE 44
FEBRUARY 2022

SELL YOURSELF
THE MAN USING
MARKETING TO
HELP EMPLOYMENT

GASSED OUT
UTILITY BILLS HIT
AN ALL-TIME HIGH

OFF THE LADDER
ARE WE PRICED
OUT OF PROPERTY?

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MEDIA | LAW | EDUCATION | DEVELOPMENT | HEALTH | TRANSPORT



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UNNOTICED. GET TESTED.

HEPATITIS: THINK AGAIN
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World Hepatitis
Alliance
.....
This is hepatitis...

WORLD
HEPATITIS
DAY:
JULY 28

EDITOR'S LETTER



Hadiyah Ilyas
Editor

AS COVID-19 restrictions have lifted, the British economy has been left devastated, with a number of businesses suffering from ongoing financial problems.

Unemployment has had a particularly negative affect on people, with consistent rates of employment deterioration in the past two years. The British public has had an unlucky few months it seems, as increased energy prices and rising inflation has blunted the motivation of individuals who have worked hard on recovering from their pandemic losses (as writers Finlay Green and Alyssa Brown discuss on pages 14-16).

Evidently, this month's edition presents a variety of serious news stories.

Therefore, at Leeds Business Review, we believe you may find solace in hearing the opinions of experts who outline the possible solutions to the issues you have been confronted with.

This edition also provides a lighter side to Leeds' atmosphere. As the days become longer and spring begins to provide a feeling of re-birth, we can see that being reflected into the openings of new businesses too.

We look into the new Blue Pavilion restaurant and bar, set to open in summer 2022 (pages 12-13). Also included are details of the opening of Roxy Lanes; the much-alluded Leeds' new skyscraper; as well as the progress of the fairly controversial Leeds-Bradford airport expansion (pages 5-7).

With the hopeful lifting of all COVID-19 restrictions later on this year, the public can look towards recuperating the economy in small steps.

Hadiyah Ilyas

CONTENTS

5 Notebook

8 Climbing the housing ladder as a young adult

11 An inside scoop into Deb Hetherington

12 Leeds upcoming must go restaurant: Finer China

14 Gas and electricity bills increasing by 54%

16 Two years of rising rates of unemployment amid COVID-19

18 Exit Plan with Sloane Caetano



MIND FUL NESS...

Mental Health Foundation
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Notebook

Social Enterprise Amy Gilligan used her business to not only help with lockdown boredom, but to help her friends in need. This is how Amy Gilligan started her now TikTok famous jewellery company- EarringsByAmy.

“EarringsByAmy was created on my shared Uni kitchen table in Hyde Park as a distraction from the typical university stresses in December 2019 as a silly little hobby.”

The store became a hit success for young people across the UK, selling affordable and trendy handmade earrings. Gilligan, with the help and her friends and family, have fulfilled over 12,000 orders for earrings and estimates she has made over 100,000 pairs of earrings. Her styles vary from farm animals to pride flags.

Her business has not only helped herself, but other people. In October 2020 she used her shop to help her friend Isaac pay for subcutaneous mastectomy, more commonly known as top surgery. People waiting for this gender reassignment surgery are often on the waiting list for years and seeking private treatment is often extremely costly.

This is not all that Gilligan has done for others, in March 2020 she also donated some of her earnings to Leeds Women's Aid, a charity that aids victims of domestic abuse. This is a charity she plans to contribute to again in March 2022.

Emmie Penkett

Employment Family-owned communications specialist Bailie Group has boosted headcounts by 30% after hitting a milestone of £50m turnover.

The organisation places the people at the centre of its plans to continue growth by 60% in the next three years.

They hope to open up career prospects through the organisation with the learning and development manager, Andy Tupman.

After the latest recruitment drive of 95 new members of staff over a two-year period, they hope to promote further and communicate why Bailie Group is the place to build a career.

Alyssa Brown

Development HG construction have secured the contract for a new 32-storey tower that will house 693 students upon completion. The two-tower block, will be situated on Merion Street, Leeds and will become one of the tallest skyscrapers in the Leeds Skyline.

The completion of the new dual tower will be the second built student accommodation site in the past decade, following the completion of the Vita Student site next to Leeds Beckett University campus.

The skyscraper will become one of the tallest buildings in Leeds, behind Bridgewater Place despite also having 32-storesys.

SCAPE named HG Construction as the developers and promised a range of facilities including cinemas, gymnasium, and study spaces.

Adam Quinn, managing director of HG Construction said, “We are proud to be involved in this significant new development in Leeds- our first project in the city, and we look forward to working with SCAPE and the wider team to bring the scheme to life.”

Brett Poskett



Technology and Media

Leeds Digital Festival returns for its seventh year in a row, with a three-day programme of events set to take place between the 25th-27th April. Following the success of the 2021 Digital Festival, there will also be a two-week line-up of tech content in September.

The Leeds Digital Festival aims to invite the tech world's best and brightest to come together and showcase Leeds' dynamic digital sector. The Festival is described as an open, collaborative celebration of digital culture in all its forms. With the Festival covering areas such as, coding, fintech, social media, healthtech, digital music, cyber security or AR/VR.

The focus will be to highlight the ways that the tech sector in the Leeds City region, and beyond, is aiding in the fight against climate change.

Stuart Clarke, Festival Director explains that: “The decision to introduce the theme of sustainability to the Spring Festival was made in order to highlight the incredible work being done by companies in the city region, and to stress the importance of developing and utilising tech that can help us to build a sustainable future for both people and planet.”

Kaveen Dhesi

Food and Drink Husband-and-wife team, Cat and Mark Barrett launched the app, Pronto in Ilkley, March 2020 and has seen unprecedented success allowing it to now arrive in Leeds, adding independent restaurants to their service.

The app charges a low 10% commission instead of the 30-35% charged by bigger national takeaway brands, and focuses on restaurants as well as customer service leading to lots of happy customers. Restaurants are also able to change their menu whenever they like through the backend system, allowing them to have control of the prices, add specials and tweak the settings to their own standards.

The expansion of the app into Leeds means that customers can access food from places such as Doh'hut, Slap and Pickle, Humpit and Crowd of Favors, along with many other popular independent places.

Sonya Dyne

Employment The leading Yorkshire law firm, LCF Law and recruitment experts, Hays hosted a free 60-minute webinar on Wednesday 16th February 2022.

Lawyer and senior associate of LCF Law, Gemma Sherbourne highlighted key factors of managing sickness absence, focusing on mental health and wellbeing.

Claire McManus, from Hays also touched on the latest salary and employment trends alongside Brexit and Covid-19 and how they have changed the world of work. The latest webinar follows a successful event that the pair hosted 12 months ago which saw an audience of more than 60 business owners and HR professionals.

There are hopes for the webinar to return in the next 12 months as employers and HR teams are constantly facing challenges and hope to gain further insight into what the future of work looks like.

Alyssa Keene

Retail With all retail businesses forced to close during lockdown, industries faced a number of challenges.

Harvey Nichols was just one of the major retail companies that was significantly impacted. It saw an increased amount of tax loss due to the pandemic. However, since opening back up, they are now focused on controlling their financial concerns.

CEO of Harvey Nichols, Manju Malhotra explained: "While market conditions remain extremely challenging, we believe we have the right strategy in place to achieve our ambition of delivering sustainable profitable growth over the long-term."

Isobel Howard



Finance Pensioners with annuity are set to receive a 20% pay rise, adding up to a whopping £20,000 over the course of a 20-year retirement.

The positive surge is due to annuity rates partly being based off of interest rates, which are rebounding as the Bank of England increases base rates to avoid rampant inflation. Annuity is the income you buy with your pension at retirement which offers lifelong financial security.

This link between inflation and pensions has led to Rishi Sunak highlighting that pension funds and insurers could invest up to £190 billion in UK infrastructure over the next decade, the National Infrastructure Bank in Leeds will work with the private sector to unlock at least £40 billion worth of projects across the UK.

Although this sounds like a positive, the news has left pensioners furious as the pay rise will only start with people retiring this year, and only apply to people who have an annuity.

70-year-old pensioner Carol Waites from Yorkshire, explains: "This only benefits people with annuity, when 12 million pensioners live off state pension including me, we end up with nothing."

"Even if I did have annuity this is only going to apply to people who are due to retire, not the people who are already retired, I'm so disappointed." Finlay Green

Mental Health In attempt to boost productivity in the workplace, numerous businesses have decided that working four days instead of five, while refusing to cut any pay, will motivate their employees all the while prioritising their mental health.

The initial idea is attributed to 4 Day Week Global who are now supported by many companies that recognise how a working environment can drastically change and be quickly accommodated due to the impacts Covid-19 had on a workplace.

Thrive Law Firm located on King St in Leeds City Centre, is one Yorkshire company who took part in this trial back in 2019. With initial planning, they were extremely optimistic and hopeful that the flexible approach could be implemented to their team.

Jodie Hill, Managing Director of Thrive Law said: "Overall the four-day week went well and was a positive move for us. Employer's considering a four-day week should do so by asking the staff what they think they would like to do, consider disabilities and sticking to one day a week off for each employee rather than rotating each week." Sloane Caetano

Law Leeds legal powerhouse, Walker Morris LLP, has appointed three new Senior Associates to its Banking and Finance Litigation team this month. Ashley Neville, Isabel Clough and Georgina Davis have been named as those joining the team which boasts a full spectrum of commercial legal expertise, including specialist practice areas such as competition law, financial services and consumer finance.

Walker Morris LLP is a distinctive law firm, valued by clients for consistently delivering excellent results. The team showcase an impressive record of successes in High Court and Court of Appeal.

Their litigation department proved to be one of the largest and most successful outside of London in 2017, after they received The Legal 500 'Litigation Firm of the Year' (outside London) Award. Amelia Canty

Agriculture

According to new figures, livestock theft, also known as livestock rustling, is on the decline.

It is estimated that animals worth approximately £2.1m were stolen in 2021 which was a 5.5% fall on the preceding year.

During the pandemic, rural theft took a decline in many areas of the country, with the cost of livestock rustling falling by 25.5%.

However, the National Farmers' Union has expressed its concerns that criminals are once again back at it again. In line with increased general living costs as well as a soar in prices of meat, the Union urges farmers to be observant and remain vigilant.

For years it has been tricky for farmers to prosecute thieves due to the complexity of tracking down stolen animals. However more sophisticated technology, marking systems and DNA testing is now commonplace, making it harder for criminals to evade prosecution.

Rural affairs specialist Rebecca Davidson said: "Livestock rustling remains one of the costliest crimes after machinery theft. It is a crime which attacks the roots of farming life and causes huge anxiety for farmers. It also causes suffering to stolen animals which are transported and slaughtered without concern for their welfare."

Louisa Trussell



Food and Drink Yorkshire's largest gaming destination and bar, Roxy Lanes has now opened for the public following their relocation to The Light on The Headrow. The venue is now three times the size of its previous location and has a number of new games that have never been seen in Leeds.

The ground floor will host a large bar where customers can choose from a variety of drinks from craft beers to cocktails and spirits. There is also a 10-lane bowling alley. **Sonya Dyne**

Education A Leeds based school has teamed up with The Leeds United Foundation to offer literacy programs to vulnerable students in Leeds.

The inaugural sessions included a visit to the Elland Road Stadium, in which IQ tests were taken, alongside other exercises.

The group is led by Nigel Thewlis, head of secondary education at the Leeds United club and included input from ex-player Ben Parker.



Parker, who played for Leeds United from 2005-2012 now works as a pundit on LUTV and works for other media outlets.

Thewlis shared: "We have been doing it for about 18 months. It is inspiring and engaging in a way that makes a little bit more sense."

Vice-principal of Southway, Carl Miller, said the work with Leeds United was another way of tackling the "chronic" gap in the reading abilities of some Southway pupils compared to their peers. **Mia Eden**

Storm Eunice Travel was heavily disrupted by the torrid weather caused by Storm Eunice. Trains, buses and the aviation sector suffered the most - with cancellations and delays causing a significant backlog and great expenditure for repairs.

Similarly, travel companies such as Northern Rail and Transpennine Express are obliged to offer refunds to those affected. In order to avoid the gross expense that refunds would cause, Transpennine and London North Eastern Railway have encouraged customers to use the roll over system, with tickets valid on trains for the next few days.

The financial impact of Storm Eunice is yet to be seen, as there has not been much let up in the weather's onslaught. The Association of British Insurers (ABI) offered a ballpark figure of £360m for the cost of repairs. An ABI spokesperson said: "It is too early to estimate the likely insured cost of Storm Eunice."

Dan Flynn



Debenhams In May 2021, Leeds Debenhams superstore was unfortunately closed down.

Leeds City Council have decided to use the space on Briggate for student flats saying, "The scheme would bring active use to an important historic building and would add to the vibrancy and vitality to the area and furthering its regeneration."

The plans for the student flats include 107 student flats, with 124 bed spaces, but out of these 107 flats, 90 will be studios.

Development has not yet begun, and it is not clear when it will. The council have not yet made a statement on the developments and it is unclear if the planning is still going ahead.

It is speculated that the halt in any plans was due to certain covid restrictions. With all restrictions being eased, construction may be going soon.

Caitlin Bardsley

Social Network

A strong legal footing has been embedded into the city of Leeds ever since 1805, when the Leeds Law Society was first founded. Since then, Leeds' legal sector has transcended into the second biggest law hub in the country, behind London. Listed below are Leeds most powerful law firms.

Addleshaw Goddard

Addleshaw Goddard is a firm built on successful delivery across national and international markets. Their Leeds' offices are at the heart of the legal hub within the city. They have offices in London, Leeds and Manchester, with an international presence in Dubai, Qatar, Singapore and Hong Kong to name a few.

DLA Piper are recognised as being a multinational law firm, with offices in over 40 different countries. In 2020, it was reported their total revenue for that financial year was a whopping £2111.50m, the largest in the UK. As well as being an impressive firm, last year DLA Piper managed to scoop up two Lex 100 Winner awards for their international secondments and vacation scheme.

Eversheds Sutherland

is another major player Leeds, with sterling offices sitting right in the centre of the city. According to The Lawyer, Eversheds Sutherland places 10th on the top 200 UK law firms by revenue list in 2020, with a total revenue of £954.7m.

Squire Patton Boggs

attracts high-level work from the local market and corporations in the UK and overseas. They serve approximately 25% of the public companies headquartered in Yorkshire and the North East, awarding them with a leading presence in the regional business market.

Legal 500 recognise it as one of the world's strongest integrated law firms, providing a clear point where law business and government meet.

Walker Morris LLP is the only single site firm ranked amongst the top 5 in Leeds.

With 46 partners and 500 staff, they are the largest single site full service law firm outside of London. **Amelia Canty**

THROUGH THE ROOF

Britain's financial crisis prevents millions from accessing their dream home



Hadiyeh Ilyas
Finance

FIRST-TIME buyers and those moving on from their primary-bought homes are the most disadvantaged. A report by the government indicated that less than 10% of 20-24-year-olds managed to buy a home in the past decade, compared to 39% in 1990.

Inflation and increased energy prices have caused so much anxiety in young adults who have been planning on renting properties.

In 1990, the average house price had reached £57,683. In 2021, the average was £231,000*.

Thus, it could be said that the deterioration of ability to buy by both groups of people is directly proportional to the incline in housing prices, with a rough 25% decrease in youth uptake of buying homes,

to a rough 25% increase in housing costs.

Why is it so difficult to climb up the property ladder?

It is increasingly difficult to climb up the property ladder because of a number of bureaucratic restrictions as well as increased financial costs. Though these are quite complex in nature, the lists below provide the few basic hurdles of buying a home.

One will need to have a good credit score which takes several years to improve. However, not anyone can have a credit card.

Graduates wanting to buy their own property will need to have a set amount of paid working hours per week to be eligible for a credit card which further postpones a buyer from purchasing their first property.

Inayah Ahmed studies graphic design at Leeds Arts University and said that studying full-time left her little time for paid work.

Inayah expressed frustration at the fact that, despite deeming herself a responsible candidate, she would not be able to get a credit card until she graduates with a job.

Rules surrounding mortgage costs demand lenders to look more closely at whether a buyer can afford monthly instalment rates.

Some lenders may also require you to

provide a mortgage guarantor. This is someone who is willing and able to pay for one's mortgage repayments should one's situation fall through.

This will often be a parent or guardian who satisfies this demand. According to a 2018 report by the Lloyds Banking Group, nearly 60% of those buying their second home said it would have been impossible to do so without financial support from parents, grandparents and even friends.

For first-time buyers who are estranged from family, this may be yet another seemingly unsurpassable feat.

Megan Bennett currently rents a flat in Leeds with her boyfriend, whilst studying full-time at Leeds Beckett University.

"I feel at a disadvantage for buying a home at the moment. I don't have time to work, earn money and save. Even if I was working, I'd be renting whilst trying to save for a home, which is a common situation."

With rising inflation and energy costs, some people are finding themselves in positions where they are compensating heating for

food.

The Times recently investigated the life of a 79-year-old pensioner choosing between 'heating or eating.'

What is the government doing to help?

The government speaks continuously of the housing issues in the UK. They have reflected on the following aspects of house purchases:

First-time buyers are relieved of additional bureaucratic costs created by the mandated stamp duty. Higher prices of the chosen property equate to higher tax underneath this bracket.

They are also attempting to work closely with both private and non-private housing companies to provide affordable and social housing.

Housing programmes delivered by Homes England results in 13-14,000 new affordable-classed houses being completed between 1 st April - 30th September 2021.

Experts maintained that the figure was 90,000 fewer than what was needed to keep up with the demands of the population.

However, non-private housing companies initiated by the government were also not conclusive of an affordable-homes outcome.

One example of this is council-run Brierley Homes, which was launched in 2017 by the North Yorkshire County Council to provide 'a more socially responsible approach' to its home-building operations.

Despite being council owned, the majority of the group's planned housing is classed as 'unaffordable.'

Councillor Bryn Griffiths, North Yorkshire County, urged that "more affordable homes were needed," saying "the current housing situation does not match the needs of the population in Stokesley."

The Main Take-away

It feels that the issue of housing has become a looming and unresolved issue in the past 20 years, starting from 2008 when the UK experienced a housing market crash.

Since then, housing prices have soared



I feel at a disadvantage for buying a home at the moment. I don't have time to work, earn money and save. Even if I was working, i'd be renting whilst trying to save for a home"

four-fold, and certain economic events as well as social trends have made owning a home even more inaccessible.

Importantly, sufficing the issue of housing can have a very positive ripple on, not only the immediate health of affected parties but also the state of the economy at large.

Data on North Yorkshire says that 'good-quality housing has a critical role to play in creating and supporting economic growth and helping to prevent illness, injury or the deterioration of existing conditions.'

To fulfil demands in one of the basic human necessities, creates a social drive for employment and enhanced work ethic.

Accessible housing allows enhanced work performance and employment, greater tax generation, and a wealth of opportunities for those in possession of said home.

Though the government is attempting to provide a solution to the housing demand, the lack of achievement in meeting criteria points towards a probable lack of realisation as to how critical homes truly are to the economy.

Positively, there has been an increased amount of money invested into the affordable homes budget, though it is yet to be seen if this criteria will be met.

*Michael Jones & company data

YORKSHIRE'S PRICE TO PAY

North Yorkshire:

- Overall average house price: £277, 057
- Most expensive area: Sandsend, with an average house price of £580, 000
- Cheapest area: Kottingley, with an average house price of £134, 083
- Up or down? - House prices in North Yorkshire increased by 6% compared to last year

East Yorkshire:

- Overall average house price: £205, 891
- Most expensive area: Etton, with an average house price of £544, 000
- Cheapest area: Withernsea, with an average house price of £123, 925
- Up or down? - House prices remained stagnant compared to last year but did increase by 11% in 2019

South Yorkshire:

- Overall average house price: £198, 411
- Most expensive area: Cawthorne, with an average house price of £771, 723
- Cheapest area: Edlington, with an average house price of £111, 867
- Up or down? - House prices in South Yorkshire increased by 8% compared to last year

West Yorkshire:

- Overall average house price: £222, 619
- Most expensive area: Wolley, with an average house price of £907, 833
- Cheapest area: Fagley, with an average house price of £116, 132
- Up or down? - House prices in West Yorkshire increased by 8% compared to last year



Sharpen your pencil.

DECEMBER 8TH, WRITING MARATHON
AMVESTV.CA



BOTH SIDES DEB HETHERINGTON

From sweeping up hair to becoming one of the best tech figures in Leeds

I ACTUALLY had no idea I was going to work in tech, and my first ever job was as a hairdresser's assistant at the age of 14.

At 19, I studied history at York St John University. I then went on to receive my masters in law from the University of Leeds in 2010. I went on to teach English as a foreign language in South Africa and helped build a school in Malawi in 2011.

By 29, I took on a role at a forward-thinking Law Firm in Leeds and wound up working with digital tech companies on their commercial and IP requirements.

I did not stop there though. My friend, Sarah Tulip approached me with a bee in her bonnet about the lack of diversity within the tech sector. We built WILD Digital; a community led not-for-profit that aims to encourage more diverse roles within the digital world.

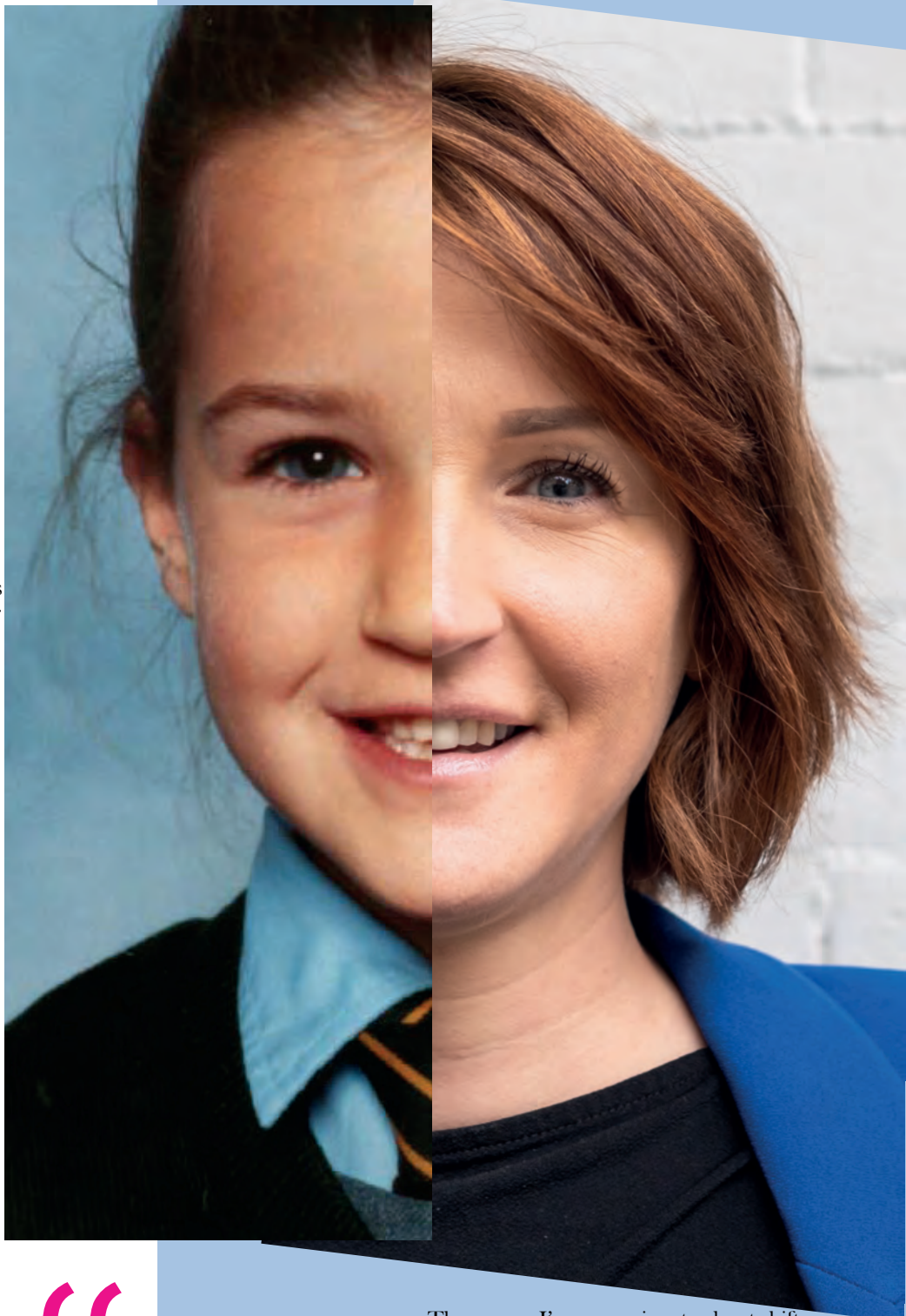
We now run events, conferences, speak publicly and have recently commissioned an integral report on the digital workforce in Leeds.

I was also given the opportunity to work at Leeds Beckett University as an innovation manager. I got to specialise in connecting high growth organisations with the wide range of research and enterprise capabilities at the university. I still do contracted work with the university on specific digital and innovation projects.

In May 2020 I was approached by Bruntwood SciTech. I now get to work with hundreds of different digital and tech businesses who are based on Bruntwood SciTech's campuses and help them to access new markets, innovate, and grow.

The network I've built, and the 360-commercial understanding of what a tech company needs to grow.

It's also not easy being a woman in tech. It is statistically proven, by quite a large deficit, that there is a lack of females in the tech sector.



“

It is proven that there is a lack of females in the tech sector

The reason I'm so passionate about shifting towards increased female representation is that those building, designing and promoting technology, need to be fully representative of who they are building the technology for.

If you want to kick-start your career as a woman in tech, the advice I would give is to gain a wide range of experience, expand your network, and keep learning.

Interviewed by Kaveen Dhesi

FINER CHINA

Blue Pavillon brings you everything that is luxury Asian dining



Sonya Dyne
Food & Drink

THE WELL-KNOWN Japanese all-you-can-eat restaurant Blue Sakura is investing in a Chinese re-make of its eatery in Leeds City Centre.

Blue Sakura lovers may also delight in a wide variety of oriental cuisine originating from its East Asian neighbour. They may be particularly pleased to hear that the owners of the award-winning brand are investing a close to £2M for the luxury Chinese a la carte restaurant.

Named Blue Pavilion to continue with the theme of its main branch, the restaurant is due to be situated at 82-90 Merrion Street and will be beneficial for those looking for employment as it will create 50 new jobs in the area.

Blue Pavilion will occupy more than 7,100

sq. ft of space on the first floor of the busy junction of Merrion Street, Woodhouse Lane, and Albion Street. It will seat around 130 guests and will also offer an exclusive VIP private dining room.

Guests are set to enjoy live entertainment (singing, music, and dancing), alongside oriental fine dining.

If this isn't getting you excited then maybe the addition of an adjoining karaoke venue, 'K-Kube', will intrigue your senses.

Lavished with perimeter-long, deep purple booths, the karaoke room boasts a simple yet sleek design which aligns with the company colours.

It is said to accommodate an additional 40 customers over several rooms, offering private entertainment for a large group.

Tong Huang, Director at Blue Pavilion, said:

"Following the success of Blue Sakura, we are confident that Blue Pavilion will prove a huge hit with discerning diners looking for innovative Chinese cuisine and first-class entertainment facilities.

"Our prime position within the Arena Quarter, coupled with stunning contemporary surroundings, will ensure Blue Pavilion is firmly on the map as a memorable dining destination for Leeds and the wider Yorkshire region."



We are delighted to announce Blue Pavilion as the latest high-end restaurant to join our international dining offer

Charles Newman, Associate Director of Estates at Town Centre Securities (TCS), and owners of the Merrion Centre said:

"We are delighted to announce Blue Pavilion as the latest high-end restaurant to join our international dining offer.

"Whilst customers have a fantastic existing range of venues to choose from at the Merrion Centre, the addition of Blue Pavilion is set to bring something unique by combining top class Oriental cuisine with cool karaoke and live entertainment under one roof."

The latest restaurant also adds to the Merrion Centre's growing international dining



options. These saw the opening of the Korean/Japanese fusion restaurant, Oba Kitchen and Bar and the authentic Chinese noodle bar MI's Noodles.

The addition of Blue Pavilion will also add to the plethora of the city's most popular independent international dining options in the Arena Quarter including - but not limited to - Bulgogi Grill, My Thai, Fuji Hiro and Bengal Brasserie.

The location of these restaurants satisfies the prospects of student-populated area, which means that a steady stream of customers, (as well as workers) are always around to fulfil the demands of the new Blue Pavilion restaurant.

“

Lavished with perimeter-long, deep purple booths, the karaoke room boasts a simple yet sleek design



IT'S HOT, HOT, HOT!

Gas and electric prices on the rise as OFGEM offer route out of old suppliers



**FIN GREEN
FINANCE**

AROUND 18 million houses are set to get a 54% increase in their gas and electric bills, amid a sharp demand in the winter period. The public have seen a drastic fluctuation in prices, from £1277 to £1971

per year.

Around 4.5 million prepayment customers will see an increase of £708 a year, from £1309 to £2017.

Rising wholesale gas prices have led to a huge rise on consumer bills.

According to trade association Oil & Gas UK, the price has increased by 250% since the beginning of January. This offers no consolation to struggling customers who will face the 'eat or heat' conundrum during those difficult winter months.

Energy companies are struggling themselves. Many of them have been forced to shut in the last few months, particularly those that are offering customers a 'Standard Variable Tariff,' as they have fixed their rates for the foreseeable future.

Energy regulator OFGEM, who work closely with the government, are attempting

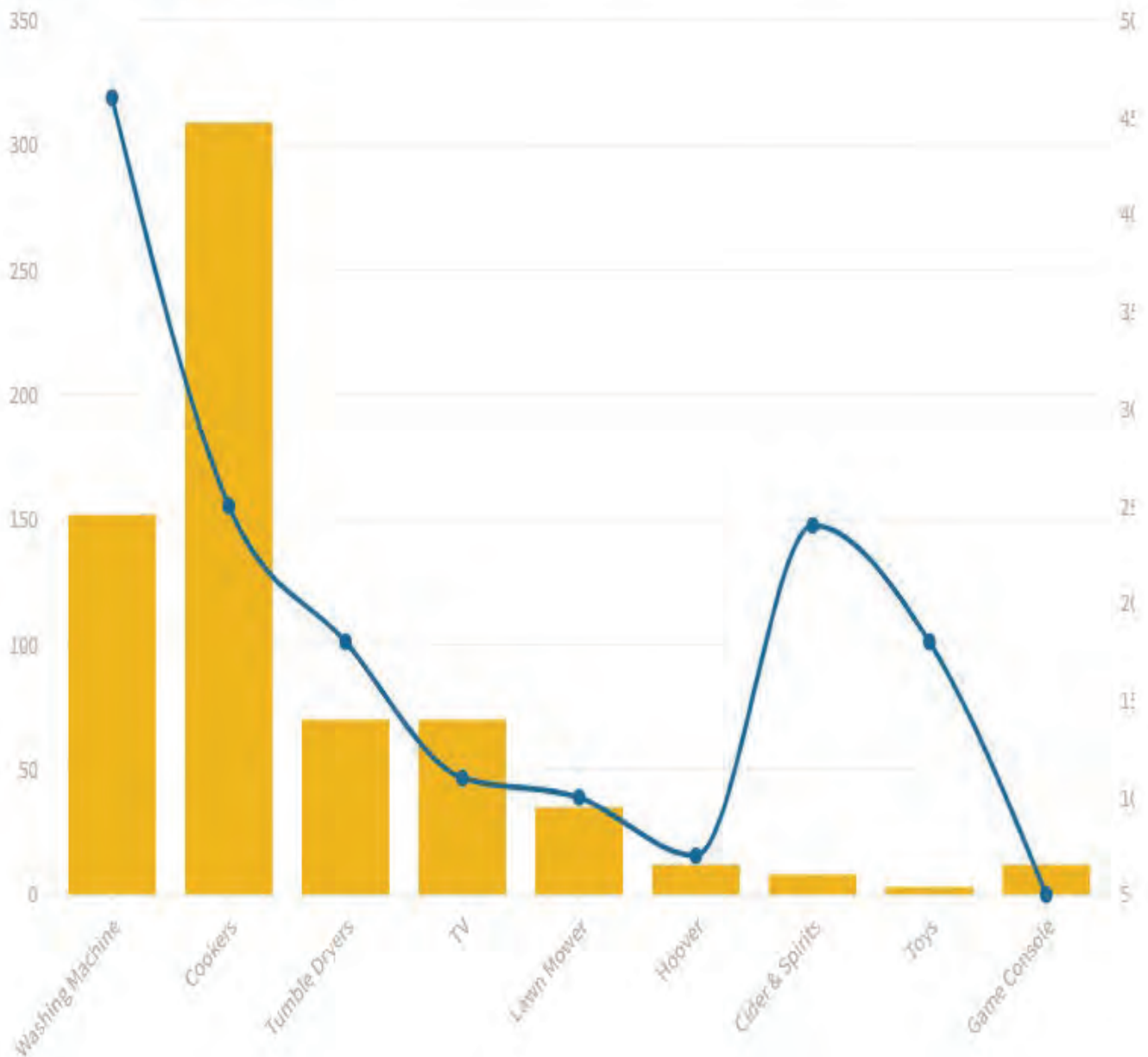
to ensure that all customers are connected to a supplier. They have done this by creating the 'Supplier of Last Resort' scheme where customers will be diverted to a new supplier, with their credit unable to change.

Omni Energy, previously operating in Chapel Allerton, was amongst the many energy companies who have had to close. Omni had 6,000 customers receiving energy from them prior to their closure this year.

Lauren Morgan, an employee and customer of Omni Energy, said: "OFGEM have transferred all of our customers to Utilia Energy Limited since the 7th November 2021, but most are unhappy as Omni Energy were a company that focused on creating more affordable and greener prepayment options for our users.

"We all also either got made redundant or were able to move to other companies

■ Percentage Increase ■ Price Increase



which is devastating as the whole company and everyone in it has been split up. Now employees and consumers have to turn to big corporate companies with no other choice.”

The domino effect created by such price increases will only see more and more companies forced into closure in the coming months.

As the price of gas increases, supplies are becoming harder to secure. This coupled with a reduction in custom caused by consumers shopping around for a better deal, it seems the problem is only getting worse for all parties involved.

Customers are being reassured by OFGEM that they are working to fix the huge worry that is hanging over the heads of consumers.

OFGEM provided support to people, asserting that customers’ energy suppliers

“Customers who were with failed suppliers who have been forced into switching to new suppliers will be protected by the Energy Price Cap.”

who had ‘failed’ would be protected by their company, explaining, “any customers who were with failed suppliers who have been forced into switching to new suppliers will be protected by the Energy Price Cap.”

The Energy Price Cap was setup originally to protect customers at times of economic unease or sector instability.

For example, unexpected increases in global gas prices are covered by the Energy Price Cap.

The company went on to state that customer credit balances would remain protected.

The government are attempting to address the issue through legislation and guidelines aiming to protect customers. They have promised a £200 discount where customers will be required to payback, to help them during the winter.

**DON'T
LET
ANOTHER**

**GET AWAY
WITH
MURDER**

MAN

Two women
a week die at
the hands of
their partners.
This hasn't
changed in
over a decade.
Too often police
and state
agencies fail to
protect women
and prevent
these crimes.
Join Refuge's
call for a
public inquiry
and sign the
petition at
[refuge.org.uk/
publicinquiry](http://refuge.org.uk/publicinquiry)

Refuge


For women and children.
Against domestic violence.

MARKETING MATCHMAKER

Meet Daniel Latto, the man who works with the unemployed to help start their business



Alyssa Keane
Employment

EMPLOYMENT WITHIN the UK is at an estimated 75.5% in December 2021 according to the Office of National Statistics which was up by 0.2% from the previous quarter.

Daniel Latto, 49 is now managing his own digital marketing company where he helps the self-employed grow their business. However, it wasn't always this way.

After several years of working for people and not reaping the benefits, he decided he wanted to work for himself.

"I get so much out of helping people, it's really key where they've struggled with marketing before and now, they are able to pay their bills. It makes a massive difference."

In one case, Latto raised £2000 for

someone who was struggling with their new move expenses. The efforts made by Latto allowed the gentlemen to feel as though his new space was more of a home.

Priding himself as a passionate advocate for making Leeds a better place for the unemployed, Latto believes that Leeds City Council should be doing much more.

"The benefits system penalises harder



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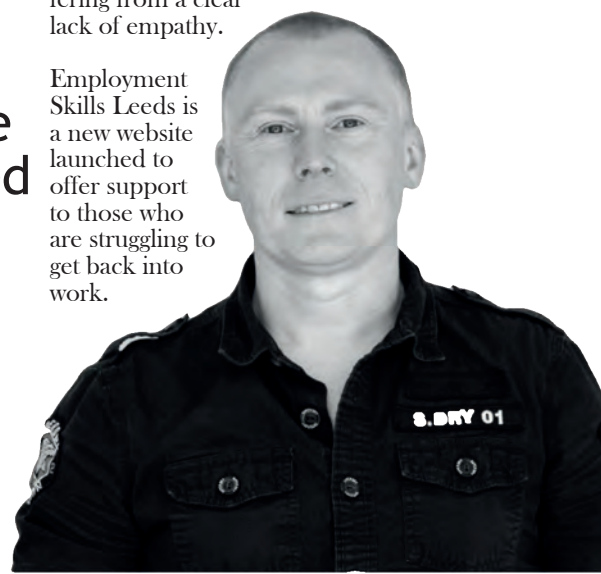
work so having one job that's low paid, no one should be working part-time and have to get universal credit to top it off.

Why is this society even letting this happen, it's just a box ticking exercise instead of having empathy and solving the issue."

For instance, by offering free training for members of the public out of work, he says: "They could go to inspirational training without being so utterly judged and I think that's part of the problem, this level of judgement just shouldn't be there."

Latto addresses that the 0.4% unemployment increase does not seem like a lot, however the person stuck at home is suffering from a clear lack of empathy.

Employment Skills Leeds is a new website launched to offer support to those who are struggling to get back into work.



EXIT PLAN

Sloane Caetano talks womanhood in the workplace

THERE IS always a sense of competition in the workplace. However, working hard for a promotion as a woman has the obvious conflict: do you stand firm at wanting to progress in your career, thus delaying starting a family, or do you take a step back from a possible job breakthrough?

Female representation in the workplace has vastly shifted as more businesses are supporting this focus. According to a report on gender and small businesses published by UENI in 2020, the number of UK businesses owned at that point by women was 32.37%, showcasing a shift from four years ago, when only 17% of founders were female.

2018 research carried out by law firm Slater and Gordon revealed that nearly one in three UK bosses admit they have or would reject a female job applicant because she 'might want to start a family soon'. This goes against the Equality Act 2010, section 18 states that it is pregnancy discrimination to treat a woman unfavourably because of her pregnancy or pregnancy-related illness.

Employers are still discriminating against women of childbearing age, and according to Helen Letchfield from People Management, the number of working mothers has soared to 74% of women with children who choose to stay in work. This just highlights that the assumption made by employers concerned that women only have the option to stay home after giving birth is outdated.

Danna Greenberg, author of *Maternal Optimism: Forging Positive Paths through Work and Motherhood* reminds all aspiring mothers how easy or difficult it is to integrate work/family will depend more on the organisation you are working for, your direct work colleagues, and your boss – not on the industry you are in.

Local initiatives and research projects in Leeds aim to empower and support women in the workplace. Led by Leeds Beckett University and working with a network of partners – including Edge Hill University and Social Enterprise Yorkshire and Humber, the #WECAN project does just that.

Vanity Fair reported that according to a 2020 survey, three out of five millennials were willing to delay life milestones until they reached a certain job title or level within their career. Establishing yourself within your career path before you embark on motherhood will then create a circle of support from your boss/superior at this phase.

If the company you work for doesn't support your desire to progress in your career whilst pursuing motherhood, understanding your worth to the industry you work for creates the healthy boundaries you can establish with your employers.

The world wants to see more women business leaders, and as they say, "In the future, there will be no female leaders. There will just be leaders."



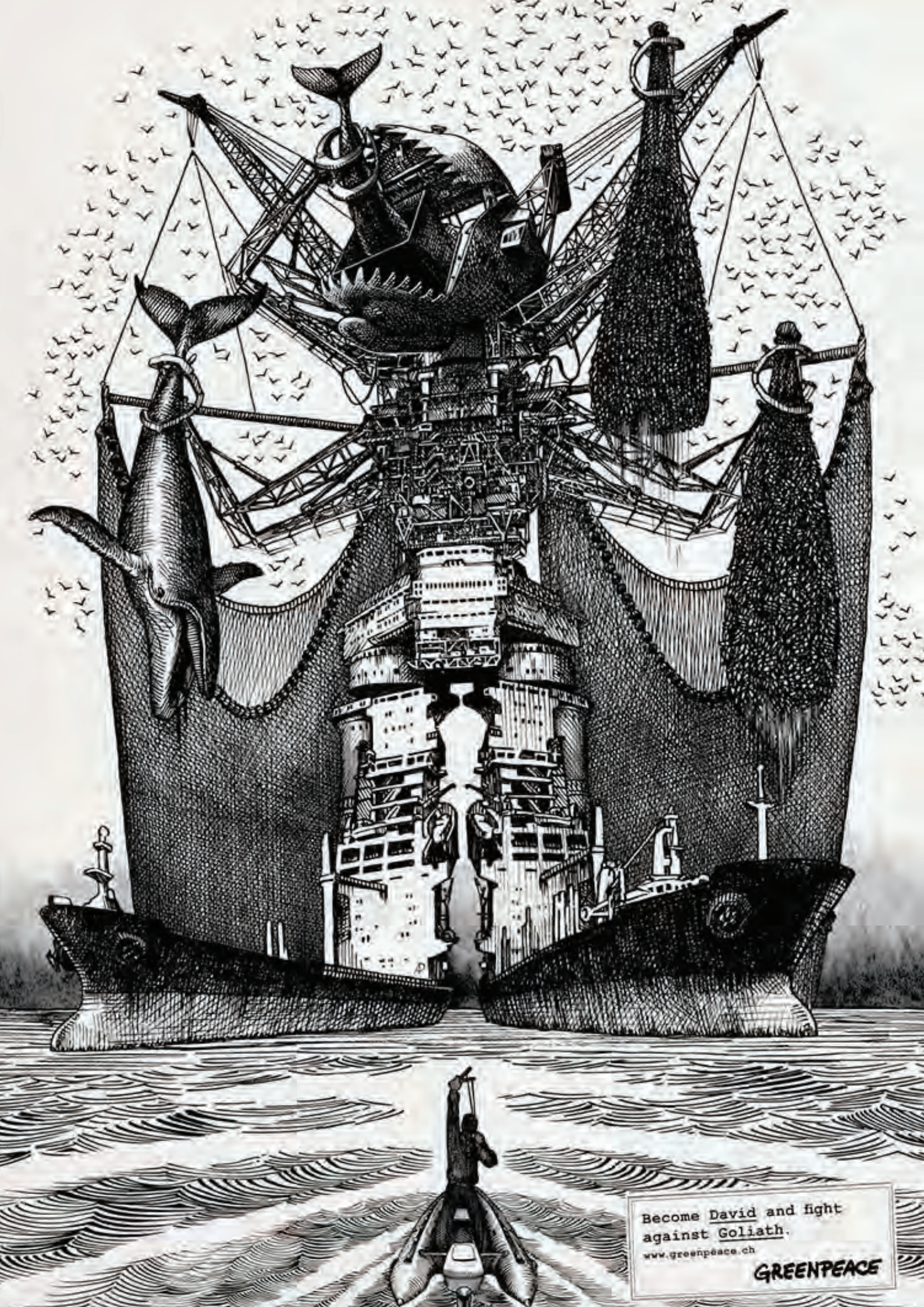


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