Welcome to re:connect

A warm welcome to the new edition of re:connect. The months since our last edition have flown by and I am delighted that we are building a real momentum for our Former Pupils’ Society with more events and news coming in. A record number of former pupils have got back in touch with us this year – the more the merrier as this means we can build a stronger network.

We have had several former pupils visiting the school. Some still live locally whilst others have travelled from around the world and took the opportunity to visit whilst in the area. Many have been intrigued by the new facilities and hoped to meet their former teachers. Others have offered their time and skills to support our current pupils with on-going advice in their careers and studies.

The achievements of our former pupils are a constant source of pride and admiration for our school community. They are also, of course, a real inspiration for our current pupils who can see, through their success and journeys, the breadth of opportunity out there after school.

In this edition we feature Sam Pearce’s superb victory in the World Blacksmithing Competition. We also have an interview with Jane Bradley who works on ‘The Scotsman’, one of many former pupils who have found success following a career in journalism. Jane was one of our pioneering girls at Yarm School – one of the first to join us.

If sport is your thing we have a calendar of former pupil fixtures and all are welcome to take part or spectate. Many other departments such as Art and Politics also have some relaxed, informal gatherings in the pipeline so look out for further information on these.

We are a young school so our Former Pupil Society is new – but this counts in our favour – we can be enthusiastic and vibrant and shape a network that suits us and meets your needs!

If you have news that you would like to share, further questions on the former pupils’ society here at Yarm or would like to arrange a visit back to school, please email sms@yarmschool.org.

New boathouse opening

Olympic gold medallist Kat Copeland returned to School to open our new boathouse and floodlit astroturf pitch last September. Kat started her rowing career here at Yarm and went on to take gold in the lightweight women’s double sculls final at the London 2012 Olympics.

Now on course to be part of the GB team at Rio in 2016, Kat took time out of her busy training schedule to open the futuristic boathouse and catch up with friends as other former pupils took to the river to compete against our current rowers.

Our headmaster David Dunn said: “We’re absolutely thrilled Kat opened our new boathouse and astroturf, we are so proud of all she has achieved.” “Our rowing coaches predicted Kat was destined for big things as soon as she took to the water. So, it’s only fitting that she should be the one to launch the start of a new chapter of sport at Yarm, with new facilities we hope will help the Kat Copeland’s of the future to begin their own love affair with the sport.”
Former Pupil events

It was a sociable summer for our Former Pupils:

**Art in the Attic – Friday 19th June**

June saw our first Former Pupil art event. It was lovely to see so many former art students taking time to come back and visit us. They were invited back to explore the exciting new art space in the attic, take a look at the current A level work and to share their experiences since leaving school. There was a very relaxed and warm atmosphere and it was delightful to hear about all their plans for the future. Many are pursuing careers in design or art. We look forward to seeing them again soon. We hope that this will be an annual summer event, so if you studied art and would like to be involved in the future please contact sms@yarmschool.org.

**Former Pupil picnic at Henley Royal Regatta – Thursday 2nd July**

What a delightful way to spend a sunny summer’s day – sitting on the banks of the River Thames at the Henley Royal Regatta and catching up with Yarm School Former Pupils. Thank you to everyone who came along to our first Former Pupils’ Henley picnic. We look forward to seeing you again next year! Keep in touch! The Yarm School Boat Club have their own former pupils’ club. If you are interested in finding out more about this please contact na@yarmschool.org.

Christmas Drinks & Sporting events

Christmas is a busy time of year for reunions. Back by popular demand was the Christmas drinks for recent leavers which we hosted at the end of term. This time, following feedback from former pupils, we extended the invite to leavers from the last 5 years. The event was well attended with about 150 former pupils coming. It was a very relaxed event and the joy at catching-up with old friends and teachers was evident.

December 27th usually sees the annual former pupil rugby match between Yarm School and local rivals Barnard Castle but disappointingly this year the fixture had to be cancelled due to the relentless rain.

Thank you to all those who came back to school for our New Year’s hockey fixtures between the school current first teams and the former pupils’ teams. It was the first time we had played this, now annual and hotly contested, fixture at school on the new AstroTurf and it was super to see so many familiar faces.

Save the date - former pupils’ 5-a-side rugby: Saturday 11th June
- Henley Royal Regatta event: Thursday 30th June
You have organised rugby tours all over the world, do you have a favourite destination?
That is difficult to say, but if pushed I would say the tours to Africa. We went to South Africa and Namibia in 2006 and South Africa and Botswana in 2013. I have also been to Zimbabwe twice with the Independent Schools Lambs RFC (formerly known as the Barbarians). I have always found the people in these countries to be so friendly and welcoming and so appreciative that we have brought teams to their countries. I have enjoyed exploring these beautiful places and relish the totally different culture and pace of life. It is refreshing to see and feel the sense of community. Some of the people we have visited have very little but they are always very generous in their hospitality. It is in such a contrast to the hectic lifestyle that we have become used to in the west which is largely driven by competition and wealth.
The old saying goes “what goes on tour stays on tour”, but are there any rugby tour highlights from over the years that you can share with us?!
There have been many memorable moments, many of which include Mr Foggett! Such as him telling the boys to be quiet on a remote Queensland hillside so that they did not scare the wallabies away at a volume which sure enough scared all the wallabies away!
Mr Foggett and his titanium knees finally making it to the top of Table Mountain after a long and arduous climb to find everyone else ready to descend back down.
One of the first FP's Nigel Bowley flying up to Pretoria from Cape Town to watch us play. The 1st XV were captained by Josh Jones, and Nigel had played with Josh’s dad when they were at Yarm.
How have you seen the school change over the years?
Physically I have seen many changes as the facilities have been developed over the years. But perhaps the most significant change was the introduction of girls! For the better of course, but it would be true to say that most significant change was the introduction of girls!
For the better of course, but it would be true to say that with it came a change in dynamics and atmosphere and a period of transition.
The essence of teaching and playing rugby has not changed and we are still very competitive and successful with dedicated teams. But what has changed over the years is the number and range of extra-curricular activities on offer. This, combined with the school becoming more academic and strengthening its musical and performing arts facilities, means that rugby now has to compete with a whole host of other opportunities and clubs. Inevitably this has altered the way rugby is viewed and we have had to adapt the way we teach and fit rugby into school life.
You have been an integral part of building the schools’ relationships with its Former Pupils. What motivates you?
Essentially because we have a good laugh! It is a real privilege to see the Former Pupils develop and find out what people are up to. So many fond memories are made at school and it is great to have the opportunity to reminisce and share these. Many of them have become friends over the years and it is a great honour to still be a part of their lives – being invited to weddings, christenings, writing references or being able to put them in touch with other FP’s who might be able to help them in their lives. I think the latter element is very important for them to maintain and develop the relationships that they have through school and help them to keep in touch amongst themselves.
What have been your fondest memories of the work you do to support charities through rugby?
Well there is the pleasure of what I call the ‘instant hit’ – we have had the privileged opportunity to be the ones to deliver the clothes, sports kit or money donated to a whole host of very worthy charities. But, for me, the real pleasure and fondest memories are derived from the really sustainable, long term projects that we are involved in. It is wonderful to hear reports from the students that we sponsor through school in Zimbabwe. Some of them are now starting Sixth Form and studying for A levels and planning their own future. This more sustainable development, particularly when invested in education, feels so positive and hopeful for changing futures. Many of our children take their education for granted but to these children it is a real privilege and it does us all good to remember that from time to time.
What is special about Yarm School that has made you want to stay?
It’s a combination of all of this! I have built some strong, supportive friendships with my colleagues and FP’s over the years. Some of those colleagues such as John Logan and Peter Hudson have been very influential and supportive in helping me to develop professionally. I also feel very lucky to have had the opportunity to travel with the Rugby tours and get involved in some very worthwhile charitable projects. My son, Sam, is now in Fourth Year (that’s the Remove for the really old timers) which adds an extra dimension seeing his involvement in a wide variety of school life.
And a Yarm School highlight?
It would be easy to say winning the Daily Mail Vase in 2013, which was obviously a tremendous occasion. But it hasn’t really all been about big highlights or achievements. For me it comes down to instilling in young people a love of sport. Not just whilst they are at school, but a passion that will keep going throughout their lives. I love to hear of students that have left school and are continuing to play sport at whatever level. Sometimes it is the pupils that you least expect and it is great to see them participate and glean such pleasure from it. Some of the older former pupils are also now coaching and knowing that their love of sport started here at school gives me tremendous satisfaction.
Brothers following their dreams

When it comes to choosing a career, people frequently offer the advice to “follow your dreams or find a job that you are passionate about.” For most, this is easier said than done. Discovering what it is you are passionate about is tricky enough, but then pursuing a career in that area is even harder! However, brothers Justin and Marcus Ramsden (Oswald House leaving in 2007 and 2004 respectively) have bucked the trend and both have followed their hearts and found success in unusual and inspiring careers since leaving Yarm School. Justin recently featured in the Channel 4 documentary ‘The Secret World of LEGO’ which goes behind the doors of LEGO’s headquarters in Denmark. Justin, shown right putting the finishing touches to LEGO models that he made of Prince William and Kate Middleton (for ITV’s ‘This Morning’), now works as a designer of LEGO models.

Justin, who excelled at Design and Technology whilst he was at Yarm School, went on to graduate with a BA First Class Honours degree in Design from Goldsmiths, University of London; renowned as one of the world’s most prestigious institutions for producing creative talent.

Speaking about his job Justin said “For me, working for LEGO is a dream. I feel incredibly lucky to have a job which I feel so passionate about. I am also really grateful for the opportunity it has given me to experience living in a different country. Denmark is a fabulous place to live. I am enjoying exploring the beautiful landscape and getting to know the culture - as well as learning the language!”

Justin's Design and Technology teacher Mr D V Dunn, who still teaches at Yarm School, said “We were delighted to share in Justin's success and follow his career with interest. He always demonstrated a creative flair and of course a love of LEGO!”

Justin’s older brother Marcus is equally passionate about his chosen career in the Royal Air Force as a Engineering Officer. Marcus currently is the Junior Engineering Officer for the RAF Aerobatic Team, the Red Arrows where he is responsible for the day to day engineering and leading 80 engineering technicians. He also holds a prestigious position within the Red Arrows – chosen to lead a team known as the Circus. Circus are a team of 10 engineers who fly in the passenger seat of the Hawk aircraft during the Display Season and are responsible for the aircraft preparation before each display. This is one of the most sought-after engineering jobs in the RAF thanks to the unique experience and exhilaration of regularly flying with the world’s premier aerobatic display team!

After leaving school he studied for a Bachelors Degree in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Northumbria where he was a member of Northumbrian University Air Squadron. After his Initial Officer Training and a brief stint overseas, Marcus was appointed as a Junior Engineering Officer on XI Squadron – a frontline operational Typhoon squadron responsible for maintaining the United Kingdom’s Quick Reaction Alert response as well as other operational commitments.

Last year when the Yarm School Former Pupils were enjoying a catch up at the Henley-on-Thames Royal Regatta they were delighted to hear that another FP was flying high above them in the Red Arrow’s display - former pupils literally all around us!

A tale of two very different brothers, with different passions, but with a mutual confidence to pursue careers in what interests them and have demonstrated that dreams can come true!
Earlier this year, we were delighted to hear news of Sam Pearce’s success in a world blacksmithing competition. We caught up with Sam to discover more about the contest and his chosen creative career.

What is the process for the competition?
It is held over three days. There is a team event and single male and female categories. You have three hours to make your own design based on a given theme. The theme is announced a month in advance to give participants the chance to practice. There are no rounds as such, all the work is judged side by side at the end of the three days.

Who enters?
It is open to all Blacksmiths from across the world. There are approximately 200 blacksmiths from 20 different countries, Australia, USA and all across Europe.

What did you have to do?
The theme was “Masks and Puppets”. You have a fire, anvil and a selection of hand tools to make a piece of work relating to the theme with the stock steel provided. When working on your own, as I did, you are allowed a helper to hold the work but not to directly work on the piece.

What did you create?
I designed my piece on the morning of my allocated slot. Competing is a challenging situation to put yourself in, but the adrenaline helps me with inspiration for the design. I made a push-along waddling duck, much like a wooden toy, but translated into a steel design with a few technical forge work tricks. I didn’t expect to win! During the first day of competing I noticed a lot of the entries were very serious so I decided I just wanted to make a fun piece with a bit of character, like a puppet should be.

Where was the competition held?
The competition was held in a small town in Tuscany called Stia, where it is held every two years.

How was it judged?
It was judged by five noted blacksmiths from across the globe.

When did you first become interested in blacksmithing?
While I was in the Lower Sixth I became interested in becoming a blacksmith.
Redevelopment Project at Yarm School

If it is a while since you have been back to school, there have been some significant additions to the school campus in recent years. Whilst keen to retain the friendly and warm atmosphere that hopefully you will recall, the school has set about an ambitious redevelopment project.

The new music school, which opened in September, sits next to the Friarage building and is linked to the existing school with a three-storey glass stairwell. It is a contemporary building which blends beautifully with the historic Friarage, which many of you will remember fondly. It was designed by Associated Architects, the same firm behind the school’s Princess Alexandria Auditorium. The music school houses specialist classrooms, 10 instrumental tuition rooms, a drumming suite and a high-tech recording studio. In addition, there is a 140-seat lecture theatre with cutting-edge designed retractable seating, making it a flexible performance venue. It’s much better than the old lecture theatre! The auditorium was constructed as part of the previous phase of redevelopment in 2013 and was built to the standards of a professional concert hall. There is an orchestra pit which accommodates a full orchestra, a bespoke 4-tier digital organ, and high-tech sound and lighting equipment. The school continues to hold regular concerts and productions in here. Indeed if you are a former pupil who lives locally you may like to look at the varied programme of events coming up: www.the paaonline.org

It is not only the performing arts facilities which have been enhanced as we have also benefited from new sports facilities including a state-of-the-art boathouse. As many of you will remember, rowing is extremely popular here at Yarm and these days there are well over 100 pupils involved in the sport. They are not short of inspiration with role models like Kat Copeland amongst you former pupils!

With floor to ceiling windows it affords stunning views over the river and surrounding countryside. This space can also double up as a treat of a venue, and it was former pupils who were first to be invited back when we held our opening ceremony here.

The stunning, ultra-modern boathouse sits on stilts, projecting towards the banks of the River Tees. It provides a training facility for rowers, changing rooms, offices and, with floor to ceiling windows, a viewing gallery for events on the river and the adjacent Astroturf pitch. This provides a full-sized artificial hockey pitch with the facility to accommodate 12 tennis courts in the summer months. Some former pupils have already had the opportunity to play on the new surface in the recent, hotly contested Former Pupil v current school team hockey match held on the 2nd January.

If you live in the area, return to see family or are just passing through you are very welcome to come for a tour and see for yourself how the site has evolved.

We have recently launched a whole school aerial video which features these new facilities and will remind you of some of the more familiar buildings too. Click here to take a look.
It is always a pleasure and a privilege to welcome back former pupils and over the past few months we have had a flurry of visitors returning to the school. The Politics Society is always keen to invite FPs. Their calendar of events for this year began with a visit from Emma Sisk. Emma is in her final year studying Politics and Parliamentary Studies at Leeds University. The course is a highly selective one, with only a few chosen students accepted onto the programme each year. Of those an even smaller number compete for the opportunity to work at the heart of the American political system on Capitol Hill in Washington DC, as Emma did.

Upon returning to the UK Emma began her next chapter working in the House of Commons. It was General Election season and her assigned MP was the Shadow Attorney General, Emily Thornberry. Working long hours and tasked with all manner of activities, from speechwriting to media briefing, and numerous meetings with Party MPs including newly elected leader, Jeremy Corbyn, Emma gained an unparalleled insight into the public working life and pressured private life of this senior politician.

The crowd of Politics students was captivated by Emma’s tales of political life on both sides of the Atlantic. Fiercely intelligent, quick-witted and insightful, yet sufficiently grounded to make every member of the audience feel that they too could forge such experiences if they wanted it enough, Emma was a refreshing reminder of the sort of experiences that can be secured through industry, effort and integrity.

Later in the term an assembled crowd of pupils and staff delighted in the company of Andrew Clarke and Danny-Coleman Clarke who came in to discuss their careers and offer advice to our current students. Andrew Clarke (pictured on the left) has recently secured a position advising the Cabinet Office, working on aspects of foreign policy. His class mate Danny (pictured right), who has featured on our ‘Spotlight on a former pupil page’ now operates as a ‘writer for hire’, with a vast array of commissions behind him; scripting the Olivier Awards for theatre, including writing speeches for Kevin Spacey, Lenny Henry and Judi Dench and speeches for various corporate CEOs and current politicians.

We also received an impromptu visit from former pupil Dr Vijay Shyam-Sundar who was spending some time locally with his family and was keen to take a look at the new redevelopment on our school site. Vijay has just started his first year as a junior doctor at a hospital in Oxford having finished his studies in Cambridge. Vijay was delighted to catch up with his old teachers and was impressed with the new facilities, in particular the new Music School as he is also a talented violinist. It was an added bonus for Vijay to also discover his peer, Adam Bridges, who joined our teaching staff at the start of this school year. Adam works in our Modern Languages Department and has joined a growing number of Former Pupils who have returned to school to teach.

Vijay was the second doctor to have returned to school this term. We were grateful to Dr Mobolaji Ajekigbe (known to all as Bola) who came back to talk to our current Sixth Form students about a career in medicine. Leaving in 2009, Bola is currently working as an FY1 doctor at the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle. He studied medicine at Imperial College London for 6 years, including a 1 year BSc in Management at Imperial College Business School.

Whilst all of our FPs were excited to see the physical changes on the school campus, it was reassuring to hear that the warm atmosphere that they had remembered so fondly from their school days remained the same.

If you would like to visit the school please contact us at sms@yarmschool.org to arrange an appointment. Please do also get in touch if you would like to offer to talk to our current students about your chosen career. Support and contacts of this nature are invaluable to them as they make decisions about their futures.
Pupil Catch-up

Jane Bradley  
Journalist at The Scotsman

Q) What did you do after you left Yarm School?
I went to St Andrews University where I technically studied English, but actually spent most of my time working as news editor on the student paper, The Saint. After I graduated in 2002, I went to Romania for a year to teach English in a high school in Cluj in Transylvania - an experience which had a huge impact on my life. I still regard the city (and country) as my second home, still have friends there and go back as often as I can. I’m also currently writing a book about my time there. After I graduated in 2002, I went to Romania for a year to teach English in a high school in Cluj in Transylvania - an experience which had a huge impact on my life. I still regard the city (and country) as my second home, still have friends there and go back as often as I can. I’m also currently writing a book about my time there.

Q) Can you tell us about the journey to where you are now?
I did my first work experience placement on The Northern Echo in Darlington when I was 15 and doing my GCSEs. I went back whenever I could and eventually got paid for shifts when a staffing crisis meant a one day a week work experience stint in the summer holidays became a full time job for a few weeks. I spent my student days getting as much work experience as possible. My break came when I interviewed the principal of St Andrews at the time, who let slip that students could be expelled if they were found talking to the press about Prince William when he studied there. I sold it to The Scotsman’s sister paper, Scotland on Sunday, while I was on work experience there and started to get regular reporting shifts. After my journalism course, I got a job on the Edinburgh Evening News - helped by the fact a reporter from my Echo days was by then the news editor there. I’ve since worked on The Scotsman and Scotland on Sunday in a variety of different roles and also spent about a year as Scottish business editor at The Sunday Times in 2009.

Q) Journalism is a notoriously competitive and difficult industry to break in to. What have been some of the unexpected hurdles?
The main hurdle, to be honest, is that there are very few jobs left in newspapers. I’ve been lucky to get into it at a time when there were still a few jobs around on local papers and an obvious path to work my way up. That has dried up a lot over the past decade.

Q) What motivates you to do what you do?
It sounds cheesy, but when you get a good story, there’s a sort of fizzy feeling in your stomach. I think all journalists do it for that buzz. Plus, I get paid for being nosey!

Q) What advice would you give to any current Yarm students looking to pursue a career in journalism?
Acquire a knack for being in the right place at the right time. I’ve never got a job in journalism by seeing it advertised, sending in my CV and going through an interview process. Either people read your stories and know how you work and decide to hire you that way or you get a job by already essentially being in it. If you can get your foot in the door of a newsroom - either on paid shifts or work experience which might turn into paid shifts - and make yourself indispensable, they often find a way of keeping you.

Q) When you reflect on your time at Yarm, what are your fondest memories?
If one of my good friends from Yarm, David Boddy, now a senior teacher at Yarm, hadn’t suggested I apply to St Andrews University, my life would have been very different! I knew nothing about the place, but had a gap on my UCAS form. He told me it was good for English, so I stuck it down at the last minute. I’ve since spent most of my adult life in Scotland - I met my husband at St Andrews and we now have a three year old daughter. I also remember a lot of happy times in the music department and on choir trips to Germany - as well as some very memorable English lessons taught in Strickland and Holt’s coffee shop by George Thomson! I have a few good friends from my Yarm days (including David!) who will be friends for life. I also enjoyed editing the annual Yarm School magazine and founded a (I think monthly) newspaper called The Phoenix.

Q) What do you think is the most important thing that your time at Yarm taught you?
It gave me a broader education outside of the curriculum than I would otherwise have had, giving me the confidence to hold my own no matter who I am with. In my job, I could be interviewing the chief executive of a bank one minute, then the next, answering the phone to an elderly reader who is complaining about how her gas bill has gone up, so I can’t afford to be intimidated by anyone.

Q) Who is your role model and why?
Kate Adie is amazing and I would love to be able to do what she has done - but the truth is I can’t - I once had the opportunity to go to Afghanistan to try my hand at war reporting and bottled out!

Q) In the time that you have been in journalism, how has the profession changed?
When I started out, no-one had any idea what the internet would mean for newspapers. I remember suggesting that I email a freelance piece over to the Echo in 2001 (rather than dictate it over the phone) but no-one in the office knew how to pick up the emails! Now, just 14 years later, the mantra is digital first, which is a very different ethos. You also need to have a strong presence on Twitter and other social media, which I probably need to work on more.

Q) How are the skills required for print and online journalism different?
You have to be first with getting a story online before any other paper, whereas in the past, everyone published in the morning and it was more about what the story was rather than how fast it was written. You also have to be able to work across all types of media - after doing
an all-night shift, filing the final copy for the paper in
the recent General Election at 4.45am, my colleague
and I had to do an online analysis discussion, which
was videoed and posted to the Scotsman website. I’ve
never been trained in TV (or radio, which I end up doing
occasionally too) but you just have to get on with it!
Q) In your opinion, will there always be a place for
printed media?
I hope so! I’m still a bit of a traditionalist when it comes
to newspapers, but equally I recognise that fewer and
fewer people want to buy a printed copy. If we can work
out some way of making digital pay, hopefully we can
keep print alive too.
Q) What has been the biggest or most influential
news event that you have covered?
Without a doubt, covering politics over the Scottish
referendum. From the day itself, which was electric,
to the build-up, when I was out shadowing both
campaigns on the doorsteps, it was a once in a lifetime
experience - unless Nicola Sturgeon gets her way on an
independence referendum II, of course!

Q) Are there any news events that you wish you had
been able to cover?
The fall of Communism - especially the Romanian
revolution. Granted, I would have been nine at the time,
but I’m sure I could have given it a go!
Q) What is the best compliment you have ever
received?
That’s a really difficult one! I don’t do compliments
well...I think when people say something nice about my
daughter - that she is happy, funny and interested in
everything - I take that as a major compliment that we
must be doing at least something right as parents...

Congratulations

We were delighted to hear of Former Pupils getting married. Former pupils featured in the wedding
party and on the guest lists at both celebrations – further evidence of what we know – that friendships
made here are for life!

The Scotsman, which included interviewing Barack
Obama’s chief climate change advisor in the White
House, touring Google HQ and finally interviewing Arnold
Schwarzenegger in his role as Governor of California.
Most importantly, however, it was a group trip for a
team of environment journalists from all over Europe,
many of whom I’m still good friends with. It’s interesting
sharing experiences and seeing how newspapers work in
different countries. You’d be surprised how different they
are.

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independence referendum II, of course!

Another career highlight would have to be a trip to
America when I was environment correspondent on

Congratulations to Chris Waters and Stephanie Foy
(both leavers from 2003) who were married at St
Mary’s Church, Thorpe and had their reception at Great
Fosters. You might be able to spot some FPs in the
congregation!

Konrad Harandon (left in 2002) who now works in the
Prep School married Kate Moran, a Reception teacher
here at school, in a ceremony at Saint Osmund’s
Catholic Church in Gainford, hosting guests at a
reception at Headlam Hall.

Congratulations also go to former pupil James Wharton who, since our last edition, was successful in
holding on to his seat of Stockton South in May’s General Election. James was first elected to the seat
in 2010 as one of the youngest members of Parliament. He benefited from an upward shift of 7.8% in his
vote, and thus increased his majority from a slim 332 to 5,046 votes. James has also been promoted as
such, receiving a government position as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Communities and
Local Government with responsibility for the Northern Powerhouse.