

## **BACK TO THE FUTURE: CELEBRATING FIVE DECADES OF ENTERPRISE**

### **The Durham Symposium on Small Business & Enterprise Development**

St Aidan's College and Durham Castle

15th and 16th September 2015

#### **INVITATION**

Dear Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Colleagues:

It is our great pleasure to invite you to the **Durham Symposium on Small Business & Enterprise Development**. We are a group of ex-members of Durham University's Small Business Centre, interested in understanding and supporting enterprise and entrepreneurship. We are organising and hosting this event to provide a platform for practitioners, entrepreneurs, policy-makers and academics who share our passion for enterprise and small business development to come together and exchange experiences, build on them to imagine future scenarios and debate the challenges that face us.

#### **From start-up to today**

Forty five years ago Enterprise was put firmly on the map by Professor Allan Gibb and his colleagues at the Small Business Centre, Durham University. In the intervening period thousands of academics, students, policy makers, practitioners and entrepreneurs have been involved in the Durham experience, and have taken the ever evolving concepts, philosophy and practice of enterprise to all corners of the world. People have worked in and with the Small Business Centre, and latterly the Foundation for SME Development, participated in training programmes, undertaken academic qualifications, visited Durham, attended events and workshops and contributed as role models sharing their own unique experience for the benefit and enlightenment of other members of the enterprise community. Allan and his colleagues pioneered a range of interventions including: Primary and Secondary Enterprise Education; Training of Business Counsellors and Advisers; New Venture and Growth Programmes; The Shell Step Programme; Graduate and Young Enterprise Programmes; Banker training in SME Relationship banking, and establishing the Small Business Research Association (UKEMRA, now ISBE).

In the process the Small Business Centre/Foundation for SME Development has influenced the development of enterprise and entrepreneurship at all levels: helping shape policy at national, regional and local levels; embedding an enterprise culture in the education structure; stimulating ideas and debate amongst the academic community and – most important of all - exchanging know-how with businesses both large and small.

Moreover, as members of the Small Business Centre/Foundation community have moved, travelled and collaborated widely both nationally and abroad they have helped to develop the shape of enterprise in the UK and on the international stage.

## **The Symposium**

Although the Centre closed many years ago many of us wish to commemorate this truly remarkable achievement, and the evolution of an impressive enterprise knowledge base and range of enterprise activities and associates. In order to do this, a two-day celebratory event will be held on 15th and 16th September, bringing together those who once worked in and with the Small Business Centre and the Foundation for SME Development over the years, together with entrepreneurs, policy makers, academics and practitioners currently active in the enterprise and entrepreneurship debate.

With such an incredibly rich set of experience, knowledge and talent, the event will provide a powerful forum for discussion, knowledge development and – as important – a social occasion with an opportunity to catch up with old friends and colleagues and have a lot of fun!

The Symposium, on Tuesday and Wednesday 15th and 16th September will take the form of a structured series of discussion sessions, led by members of the SBC community, that will examine core themes of enterprise (enterprise in education; enterprise policy; enterprise and business development; internationalisation of enterprise; enterprise practice and professional development and the entrepreneurial university). Each of the core themes will enable us to:

- Assess the achievements over the past forty five years – just how far have we come in our enterprise knowledge, expertise and impact?
- Examine the current debates, issues and challenges – what are the big enterprise themes of today?
- Identify the implications for the future – at the levels of policy and practice!

## **The Challenge**

Many of the norms and assumptions around economic growth, and by extension wealth creation by entrepreneurs and owner-managers, have changed or no longer hold. This is particularly relevant now because recovery in the mature economies of Europe, America and Japan will need entrepreneurs to rejuvenate them. Similarly, reversing the slowdown in China and stimulating the take-off of sub-Saharan Africa will be driven by entrepreneurs starting and growing their own businesses. This is a very different context to the global expansion seen in the late 1990s and 2000s.

At this point, in this new economic context, it makes sense to reflect on what we know that we can use, and also what we need to learn about and know anew because of these changes. So, our aims for the Symposium are two-fold:

- a) To reflect on what we've learnt from the past, with a particular concern for what still holds or what can be applied within the new parameters in which we operate; and
- b) To explore what this means for the future, i.e. what do we need to know, or learn afresh or differently?

The Symposium will be structured around these two themes. Starting with a Plenary session with Allan Gibb, Day 1 will be dedicated to reflecting critically on what we've learnt, and what this means. Day 2 will consider what this learning means for the future and what are our new 'need-to-knows'?

## **More than just a conference! Call for Contributions**

The debate starts now. This invitation marks the beginning of a process leading up to the event in September and which will continue beyond the two days that we will spend together.

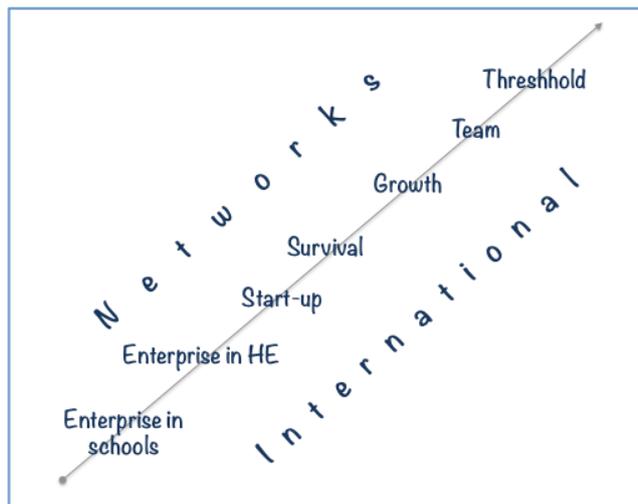
To make the Symposium a success, we hope as many of you as possible will contribute and influence the focus and evolution of the debate. We encourage you to use a variety and flexible range of media, including conference papers, thought pieces, polemics, green/white papers, discussion notes, videos, animations, and so on.

If you have something to say, we'd like to hear it, either by just coming along and participating, or by submitting a contribution. For those of you who wish to, **PLEASE SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS BY 30th JUNE 2015 TO LYNDA ANDERSON AT: [info@consult-ice.com](mailto:info@consult-ice.com)**. Or contact us earlier if you have questions or want to discuss your proposed contribution.

## Some Key Themes

Contributors may focus on the **research and development** of new solutions and models, or equally they may highlight the results of the **testing or dissemination phase** or offer **reflections and perspective** on models from past practice. We invite contributors to use their experiences and to draw conclusions that can help determine the future agenda for enterprise and small business development. Contributions may focus on any issue you consider relevant to the debate, but to get you started we invite you to draw inspiration from the Small Business Centre model:

- **Enterprise education:** How can we ensure that young people leave school with a strong enterprising spirit, a need even greater in today's challenging world?
- **Academe:** What is the role of academe in developing an enterprising spirit in the young, in encouraging spinouts and academic entrepreneurship, in creating partnerships between universities and business for joint research? Which models work and which pose more challenges than they solve?
- **Pre-start and Start-up:** How should we encourage entrepreneurship and facilitate start-ups in order to address the challenges of today and tomorrow?
- **Survival and turnaround:** This concept has never been more relevant than during the recent economic crisis. Are the models for financial restructuring solely about the physical assets or do they truly attempt to leverage the human capital and the ideas of the business to secure a turnaround?
- **Growth:** Policy makers and practitioners still struggle to find the best ways to help small companies grow. What do we mean by growth and how do we foster it?
- **Internationalisation:** Few companies are immune to international competition and the Internet has made it much easier for companies to operate beyond national borders, although many challenges remain for small businesses.
- **Networks:** Trainers, educators, counsellors and bankers – all have a key role to play in supporting the small business, but how to make sure that they really add value where it is most needed? How should the provision of support be structured?
- **International development:** In the past, many models developed in the UK were found to have equal relevance elsewhere, but it is likely that solutions developed internationally will also contain useful lessons for the UK.
- **Enabling environments:** Although often the subject of debate, do we really have the answers? To what extent do reality and policy coincide?



## Registration and Fees

The Symposium comprises a variety of activities spread over Tuesday 15th September and the morning of Wednesday 16th September, finishing with lunch on the Wednesday.

Time and space will also be made available for those who wish to stay longer on Wednesday to network, discuss collaboration, and catch up. There will also be the option of an informal dinner on Wednesday evening, for which there will be a separate charge for those choosing to stay.

You can attend all events or 'pick and choose'.

Fees are set out below:

	Event	Dates and Time	Cost
1	'Back to the Future' Symposium, including the dinner at Durham Castle (Tuesday 15th September)	Tuesday 15th September - Wednesday 16th September 2015:  09.30 - 17.30 hours on Tuesday; 19.30 – 0.00 hours on Tuesday 09.30 - 14.30 hours on Wednesday	£225 per person
2	Dinner at Durham Castle (without attending the main body of the Symposium)	Tuesday 15th September: 19.30 - 00.00 hours	£65 per person
3	Optional Wednesday afternoon networking session and optional informal dinner on Wednesday evening		To be advised

**Note that a 5% discount on the Symposium fee of £225 is offered if you book your place before 31st May 2015.**

**To secure your place at all or any of the events please complete the attached Registration Form.**

We very much hope to see you in Durham in September to celebrate all things Enterprise!

With best wishes,

***The Symposium Organising Team***