



FORMER DRIVER OF THE NORTH EAST MOTORING SCENE LOOKS FOR NEW TALENT

When you've been a senior figure at former North East motoring giants like Reg Vardy and Benfield Motors, you know that Nigel McMinn knows how the motor trade operates. It was no surprise that when Benfield was sold by the Squires family to Lookers, that Nigel was sat in the Lookers driving seat.

He was a regional director for Reg Vardy, looking after their dealers in the east of Scotland...he became Managing Director and CEO of Benfield Motors before becoming MD of the Motor Division of Lookers and eventually the company's Chief Operating Officer.

He then worked in the same role in Scotland for Fleet Alliance, heading-up a company that manages over 70,000 vehicles, until he eventually wanted to return to the North East teaming up with a former colleague who'd formed a recruitment agency. The agency, which McMinn now owns...Pybus Recruitment...is the UK's leading agency for any type of automotive recruitment. He's the MD...naturally.

And, let's face it, when you got a CV like that, it's obvious to say that Nigel McMinn knows what a suitable candidate looks like.

"I have to give massive thanks here to Sir Peter Vardy," said Nigel. "I certainly wouldn't have got to where I am without his guidance and vision. The Reg Vardy operation was

years ahead of its time...the way they operated, the way they did business, how they treated their staff and customers...it was the most wonderful learning environment for a fresh faced, newly qualified accountant. It may sound odd to say that working for Vardy's was fun, but the work was enjoyable...long hours but hugely rewarding...and Sir Peter, even though he was plainly a tough negotiator, made a complicated job seem simple and filled you with confidence. It's also why I can guarantee that if you wander into any of the established car dealers in the North East that there is a very good chance you will end up talking to someone who came from Vardy's.

"Eventually, Sir Peter felt he couldn't take the business any further and sold it to Pendragon. From then on, it wasn't the same...the culture changed. Thankfully, the Squires family at Benfield had been following my career...and the rest is history, although it just goes to show how a well run, family business can be successful...and don't forget, here in the North East we had Sir Tom Cowie who established the Cowie Group

which became what is now known as Arriva; as well as Gateshead based Vertu Motors, the only remaining UK dealer group who's shares are traded on the stock exchange. They are led by Robert Forrester...another Vardy colleague and friend of mine. There's something about the North...we like businesses which have good old family values."



So, via Lookers and the Fleet Alliance, Nigel is now MD of Pybus Recruitment.

"Over the course of my career I will have interviewed, recruited and worked with thousands of talented people. I've also met and made some of the best contacts in the motor trade that other automotive recruitment agencies can only dream about. And I love it because there's nothing better than either finding the ideal candidate for a company or, vice versa, ensuring that we place an individual into the ideal position and know that they and the company they join will be successful together."

But what about the state of the motor industry? Nigel is ideally placed to comment on current trends and what the future may hold, bearing in mind it's been his lifeblood for 30 years.

"I think one of the biggest changes isn't to do with the manufacturers or the dealerships. It's down to the fact that customers are becoming less loyal to a particular brand and are really looking for the best possible deals. Those customers are also fully clued-up on the car they want and the sort of price they should be paying because there is so much information out there which can guide them to make a decision that is right for them. It's got to the state that

it needs a sharp salesperson to know more than the customer sat on the other side of the desk.

"It's also why the Chinese brands are so successful...they tick the boxes for a lot of buyers who want a car with the right sort of kit, a decent warranty and a good price. Many of the Chinese firms now available in the UK were an unknown quantity 3 years ago. In that short space of time, they've effectively gone from zero sales to accounting for approaching 17 per cent of all UK car sales. Staggering. They dominate the PHEV market with almost 44 per cent of the market and account for over a quarter of all EV sales. Those sales have come from the traditional manufacturers.

"There's also less choice in terms of dealerships you can visit. Not too long ago, a city the size of Newcastle for example, would have 2 or 3 dealers of the same brand. Nowadays, there will only be one. We've gone from 10,000 franchised car dealerships to around 4,000 during my career...and many of them are foreign owned with some groups, like Stellantis or VAG, having a host of brands under their wing.

"But even now, here at Pybus Recruitment, the influence of North East family firms like Reg Vardy and Benfield, can be felt. Several of us, including founder Colin Pybus, Commercial Director Michael Scott and I, came through the Vardy and Benfield network."

In other words, if you want to advertise to fill a position within the automotive industry or you are looking for to further or change your career and would like to be involved with vehicles, the Pybus Recruitment is the ideal place to go because you're dealing with people who know the automotive business inside out.

Interested? You should be. For more information, go onto their excellent website www.pybusrecruitment.co.uk ... that's where you'll find contact details and how to both advertise or search for positions within the motor trade.

And you never know, you could be like Nigel McMinn and go on to great things and make a mark in the industry.

