It’s bringing back the incomprehensibility of the animals, so we don’t understand any more what they’re saying.

Filipa Ramos

Don’t allow our tech revolution to be destroyed

Paul Benneworth

I am back in the North East for a conference on enterprise and business. We are in Newcastle’s Stephenson Quarter, and I am highly impressed at the transformation of this dilapidated railway district into an dynamic and attractive location.

Our opening lecture was delivered in a theatre that once housed Robert Stephenson’s railway company, the builder of the famous Rocket. It is a beautifully preserved monument to Newcastle’s innovative efforts in delving complex innovation.

The conference has been fascinating, exploring the role of small business in economic growth. I presented my own work on the rise of microbreweries in the Netherlands and took the opportunity for some local fieldwork, retiring to the nearby Box Social for some well-deserved refreshment.

I get a real kick hearing about successful small businesses in the North East, because it’s where my Ph.D began. In 1995, I was sick of hearing the North East would be saved by inward investment, so I tracked down entrepreneurs building a new knowledge economy in the region.

I found high-technology businesses in the most unexpected places, in Consett, Tanfield Lea, Ashington and Bishop Auckland. All of them small, all of them incredibly innovative, all of them well-deserved.

Flying back to Newcastle this week I was sitting next to someone who worked for a familiar company from my Ph.D. Their office logo is familiar to a generation of Blyth workers, but there’s a host of unlikely technology revival into the most unexpected places.

Don’t allow our tech revolution to be destroyed.

Paul Benneworth

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