



where
digital
happens

Hambleton Group

Established: 1950s

Owner: **Bryan Goodall, Georgina Goodall,
Jonathan Goodall, Kathryn Robson**

Based: **Thornaby**

Staff: **85**

Principal products: **Collectable toys auctions and market place;
Caravan and motorhome sales, service and storage; Warehousing**

Case Study



“The connections DigitalCity has made for us with the University and Tees Valley Business Compass, and the funding it led to, has expedited the whole project.” **Jonathan Goodall – Managing Director, Hambleton Group**

Innovation and entrepreneurship is in the DNA of the Hambleton Group, a true family business now in its third generation.

Jonathan Goodall runs the business alongside his father, Bryan, whose own father began a credit company and then established a successful hamper club, Heritage Hampers, which was sold in 1994. Today the group comprises three apparently disparate businesses – Teesside Warehousing, Teesside Caravans and Vectis Auctions – but all sharing a need for the space the group owns at Thornaby, a quarter of a million square feet in warehousing on an 18-acre site.

“We had all this space and have spent the last 20 years finding interesting ways to fill it,” says Jonathan. The result is three substantial businesses that share the risk.

Vectis came about when keen toy collector Bryan offered to buy his favourite auction house. He moved it from Surrey to Teesside and began to grow it to what is now the biggest toy auction house in the world.

A decade ago Vectis was the first UK auction house to offer real-time bidding. That commitment to both technology and innovation is driving their next major investment.

“We try to make it simple recognising that the auction experience can be off-putting for some, even scary and intimidating. Yet, there is a lot of demand for access to buyers and sellers,” explains Jonathan.

The answer has been to develop their own online toy collecting market place, used by third party sellers and buyers and administered by Vectis.

Stockton Council’s business development team introduced them to DigitalCity’s David Dixon. “David was really keen because he could see our vision and how it married with what we all want for the area,” says

Jonathan. DigitalCity was able to provide the support to review Vectis’s systems and potential for integrating the online market place into their front end auction system. A second analysis was carried out by Teesside University, who also identified a mature IT graduate to work full time with Vectis.

DigitalCity then also connected Vectis with Tees Valley Business Compass, which has provided a grant towards a portion of the development of the site. “This has allowed us to free-up money to invest in more members of staff and more marketing to push the whole project along much faster,” explains Jonathan.

It has led to five new jobs and Vectis is working with the university with regard to taking on more students under the university apprenticeship scheme, where undergraduates receive a salary and one day tuition per week.

Jonathan adds: “The connections DigitalCity has made for us with the University and Tees Valley Business Compass, and the funding it led to, has expedited the whole project.

“I am very, very excited about what the market place could bring to Vectis as a company, Hambleton as a group and Teesside as an area with regard to another IT success story providing highly skilled jobs for the next generation.”

David Dixon, of DigitalCity, added: “The more established a business is the less likely it can be to accept change, something new or the chance to work with the public sector. Jonathan, however, was very open minded to learning and was willing to discuss new ways of operating, especially when we demonstrated how we were in it for the long haul. The connections we have helped him make are just the start of the journey.”



For further information, please call:

01642 738 694 or

Email: info@thedigitalcity.com