

# Business/Commercial property

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## How Neil took control of his destiny

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A former 3-D designer has quit his job with a Bath marketing firm to launch his own photography business in the city.

Neil Griffiths spent around four years creating designs for shopfitting, merchandising and retail units but decided to leave the company after it started to make redundancies as work dried up.

The 32-year-old had always had a passion for photography and after a chance invitation to cover a friend's wedding, he decided to use his skills to launch his own business.

Mr Griffiths runs Bath Weddings from his home in Camden and said starting a business and embarking on a new career was a big step to take during difficult economic times.

He said: "It's proving to be one of the best decisions I've ever made. Having control of my own destiny was one of the driving factors behind my decision."

Mr Griffiths took inspiration from his father Dennis, who was an award-winning photographer.

The entrepreneur has also been able to benefit from the level of forward planning involved in booking wedding photography.



IN CHARGE: wedding photographer Neil Griffiths

PICTURE: Kevin Bates

He said: "You get such great feedback in this job, whereas with a lot of jobs you don't get good feedback from employers or clients."

"This hasn't been a financially scary decision to take because the benefit I have is people book in advance."

"Rather than freelance design work taken week by week, at the moment I know what weddings I have got until December so I can plan financially."

Mr Griffiths said the priority within the business was providing a personal level of service and securing future bookings through referrals.

He said: "Bath is a fantastic place for wedding photography. There are genuinely good people here and from my point of view you get varied business with local people getting married and people from London getting married in Bath that may have family in the city."

## Finance advisers in buyout

A Bath-based finance firm has bought an established financial advisory business in Cambridge.

Money Wise Financial Advisers took over Lee and Co earlier this month in a move designed to expand services for its existing clients and attract new customers by offering extended services.

The sale means Money Wise, which was launched in Bath in 1997, now operates from headquarters at Chapel Row with a staff of around 30 in a network of around four offices across the country.

The firm employs 17 people in Bath and the purchase of Lee and Co has added a further nine new faces to the fold.

Money Wise founder and managing director Malcolm Courty started the company with his wife Halena and

said the team in Cambridge had demonstrated a proven track record of providing a high level of customer care and professionalism.

Mr Courty said: "We are very excited about acquiring this well-respected firm and, in particular, being able to grow the existing relationships with both private clients and many of Cambridge's best known employers."

Lee & Co was founded in 1962 and long-time partner Phillip Bowden-Pickstock said he was keen to move the business forward.

Money Wise is now one of the UK's top 100 fastest-growing independent financial advisers.

Mr Courty said: "We are swimming against the current economic tide and this acquisition makes us stronger going forward."

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