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Former player joins coaching staff

Coach & Bus Week's Gareth Evans talks to Stanley Travel's Gavin Scott, who aged 19, gained his CPC – and has ambitions to drive the well-known family-run North East of England operator forward

Young and enthusiastic – yes, we've heard those words countless times before, but some individuals take things to the next level.

After all, how many 19-year olds can boast of gaining their National Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC), having sat four hours of examinations and passing three modules – thus enabling them legally to run a transport business? It's safe to say not many – and therefore Gavin Scott, the energetic son of Andrew, partner in Stanley Travel, is surely set for a bright future in our industry. What's perhaps all the more remarkable, is that Gavin admits to not having held a life-long interest in transport. His route to success has been more about scoring goals rather than enthusiastically documenting transport history.

"I've been a keen footballer from a young age," said Gavin, who has now just turned 20. "I started playing at the age of seven. I loved it. I progressed from the local team to district and county level, before a short spell at Newcastle United.

"I went for a six-week trial at Sunderland and they signed me on." Gavin's time at Sunderland was not all football however.

"I got 12 out of 12 distinctions in a sports-based college course provided by Sunderland College for two years. They do that so you've got an alternative career to fall back on in case you don't make it in football.

"As a result I'm a qualified football coach and I've also got my refereeing badge. Obviously they

want you to be a professional footballer, yet in reality they've got to prepare you in case you don't make it.

"After four years at Sunderland I was released. While I was considering my next move, I found there were other opportunities for me out there in the football world but I was at something of a crossroads in life.

"It was mid-term in the education calendar, so I worked in the family business to fill the time in essence. I asked dad if he'd employ me on a short-term basis until I decided what to do. I've always considered myself to be fortunate to have the family business to fall back on.

"Despite only considering it a temporary role, I found myself enjoying it here."

Perhaps providing a hint of how Gavin's level of academic ability, attitude and determination to get on in life differs from some of his peers, he said: "I like school and I enjoy learning. All the lads I played with hated learning – everyone thought I was mad.

"Dare I say it, but some of the lads I played football with were football through and through – they lived and breathed the game and would have struggled doing anything else.

"Growing up with my family, I've not turned a blind eye to what's going in. I've always had an interest in business and felt I've got a business mind.

"I can honestly say I see my future in the business. I've ruled out going to University. Unless things change dramatically, I don't see the need to go there."

Asked what had put him off the idea, Gavin replied: "If I had to go

to Uni to further this career path, then I would but there's no need right now. I've got my National CPC and I'm also considering sitting my International CPC."

Life at Stanley Travel

Stressing the bond that exists between father and son, Gavin said: "Dad and I get on really well. We've always seen each other as mates. My friends say they're surprised I can work with my father. I've been here 18 months now. I can honestly say I can't recall any sort of business-related argument. There have been no fall outs.

"I can see myself developing the business with his help. I believe Dad is also grateful for help and input, which includes fresh ideas.

"I've come out with suggestions on how to improve the business."

Asked to elaborate, Gavin replied: "Even simple things like changing systems in the office – such as the way in which records are kept.

"We've also started a reward scheme for our regular travellers.

"It's about coming up with little ideas – such as applying those that have worked in other sectors to our business."

Asked what a typical day comprises, Gavin replied: "As much as I like working, I love to keep fit. Dad's the same – we always need to make time for exercise. I go for a run at around 0700hrs, exercise for half an hour and I start work at 0900hrs. I nip to my gran's for a short lunch break. I usually finish work at 1730hrs and go to the gym – I'm currently into weight lifting.

"If I don't exercise, I feel rubbish. It helps to clear your mind."

Gavin said not all his work is



office-based. "I try and get involved in all the aspects of the business.

"I've got my Durham County Council taxi drivers licence – I drive contracts in an eight-seater Ford Transit Torneo. In fact I was out earlier today. I came back and washed, refuelled and cleaned the vehicle – I have to set an example.

"I also drive airport runs. I'd say it's probably 75% office and 25% driving. At the moment, being the run up to Christmas, I'm driving more.

"I've recently taken over the

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management of the tachographs from operations manager Bobby Hindson and I also help with pre-planning and vehicle/driver allocation.

"I assisted in putting the 2011 brochure together, including managing the production – supplying the designer with photographs and text."

Gavin liaises with the the firm's key clients on a daily basis. "I deal with our two main clients. When bookings come in from them, I personally take care of them.

"Gavin has only been actively involved in the business for 18 months but during this time he has shown a great deal of commitment and drive."

Andrew Scott *Gavin's father*

"We use Distinctive Systems' Coach Manager System."

Right on course

Gavin gained his CPC qualification with Braintree-based training provider and regular *CBW* advertiser Novadata.

Asked about his experience at Novadata, Gavin replied: "Obviously Essex was quite a drive from here, but they're very good people at Novadata. Peter was my trainer. He's a great teacher.

"They certainly feed you well at Novadata! I was more than happy during the week I spent there. The working environment was very pleasant and comfortable.

"I couldn't have been happier with Novadata."

Novadata managing director, Derek Broomfield said: "We were all delighted to hear that Gavin passed all three modules necessary to gain his CPC National PCV.

"Despite being used to successful outcomes with this qualification, the fact that the young man concerned is only 19 years of age really added lustre. This is a very rigorous course. It's tough. The content is challenging, even for candidates with years of experience, let alone a young man of his age. However, it was clear from the outset that his commitment was 100%.

"To attain his National Management CPC with us and obtain a Passenger (Bus and Coach) Operator's Licence, Gavin had to attend a demanding five day course and pass the CPC examinations set by the OCR Examinations Board. This involves almost 4 hours of formal examinations all sat on the same day."

Derek said the course content covers: civil, commercial and fiscal law; industrial relations – social security, discrimination in employment, Health and Safety at Work Act; technical standards of operation; hours of work and keeping of records for drivers; road safety; social Legislation, financial management techniques, general Insurance, vehicle maintenance; PCV conduct, taxation, drivers' hours & records, driving licences, speed limits, traffic accident procedure; route planning.

Derek continued: "Gavin is obviously an ambitious young man with his heart set on a career within the passenger vehicle sector. I am sure he will go far and wish him well in the future. However, I hear

that we may be seeing him back again very soon as he is now contemplating doing his International Management CPC with us."

Father gives thumbs up

Gavin's father, Andrew, who is a partner at Stanley Travel, is rightly delighted with Gavin's achievement.

"Gavin has only been actively involved in the business for 18 months but during this time he has shown a great deal of commitment and drive. Long may it continue!

"He interacts very well with our key clients. He also draws up travel plans for them.

"My brother Ian and I never got directed into the business – we were not forced to get involved. We did different things in life and then came into the firm. As a father, to see your son in business is great – but I wanted him to see the world with his own eyes first.

"Stanley Travel is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2011, and it's very fulfilling to see the younger members of the family coming through.

"He's a revenue generator rather than a bus enthusiast. In contrast to my brother Ian I've not got a passion for vehicles. Yes, there's nothing better than to see a well-presented vehicle and driver turn out for a hire, but I see the vehicle as a necessary tool of the trade. I don't collect models and so on – and I think Gavin will be the same."

Next step?

Asked what his next step in life will be Gavin replied: "I'm planning to gain my PCV licence early in 2011."

Looking ahead to the future, he said: "I want to help maximise the earnings potential of the business despite difficult trading conditions. I want us to be successful and a well respected operator and to be able to continue for another 50 years into our centenary year.

"Obviously things are tough at the moment but I am sure we can weather the storm."

As is apparent, Gavin benefits from never-ending enthusiasm, drive, and ambition. Perhaps that is in part due to the competitive culture of sport – something that the politically correct could do well to remember. Make no mistake, Gavin's determination coupled with his academic ability mean he's got his eye on the ball and he's sure to score for Stanley Travel. That indeed, is his goal in life. 