

In brief

HutanBio welcomes new board chair

Dr Peter Collins, former CEO of Permasense, has been appointed as chair of the board by HutanBio.

Dr Collins is known for scaling technology-based engineering businesses including in chemical technology, oil and gas pipeline inspection, oilfield services, and water utility sensor solutions.

“Thanks to the brilliance of the founding team, we now know that algae biofuel can be produced at



Dr Peter Collins, chair, HutanBio

scale and without competing with food supplies or causing deforestation,” said Dr Collins. “This breakthrough is hugely significant and holds enormous potential.”

As chair, Dr Collins will steer the leadership team to refine its commercial strategy and establish HutanBio as a leader in sustainable biofuels.

Syplex introduces fresh Azure service

Stow cum Quy-based Syplex has introduced a new Azure Advice service to help businesses optimise their Azure spending without compromising on performance or functionality.

Syplex’s consultants will work with clients to analyse current Microsoft Azure usage, identify areas of inefficiency, and suggest (or implement) tailored solutions that reduce costs.

For details email marketing@syplex.co.uk.

Howes Percival appoints partner

Leading law firm Howes Percival has appointed well-respected family law partner Chris Allen-Jones to its Cambridge team.

Chris has nearly 30 years’ experience in family law, particularly in high-net-worth



Partner Justine Flack with new partner Chris Allen-Jones

divorce and financial matters, as well as advising on strategies for wealth preservation.

“It is great to be able to bring someone in with so much valuable experience,” said Justine Flack, partner and head of family law at Howes Percival.

At the cusp of change, is DNA Ascendancy set up to triumph?

By Mike Scialom
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One of the founders of DNA Ascendancy has made a passionate appeal for more awareness of DNA computing as an alternative to traditional silicon-based computing – and urged investors and venture capitalists to get involved.

DNA Ascendancy was incorporated in 2023 with the vision of transforming computing through DNA technology. It has designed computers to use DNA instead of silicon as the medium for computation – far surpassing the limits of traditional silicon-based systems.

The company’s computers are based on Nondeterministic Universal Turing Machines (NUTMs), and their processors can literally replicate themselves to solve problems by searching all paths in parallel.

The start-up is working towards a desktop DNA-based computer – a computer “with DNA swimming around in it”.

Founder and ‘chief visionary’ Prof Ross King says: “On a desktop you could have much more power than the world’s biggest supercomputer – and also use far less energy. Our computer can in principle solve much more complicated problems than quantum computers.”

Prof King is a professor of biotechnology at the University of Cambridge, where he specialises in automation, and is developing the idea of ‘robot scientists’. Back in 2017 he was at the University of Manchester where he was working on creating the first molecular Universal Turing machine when he met Konstantin Korovin – DNA Ascendancy’s chief technologist – who was a reader at the Department of Computer Science. Together, they worked on the theory of DNA computing.

Prof King has a joint appointment as professor of machine intelligence at Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg, Sweden. At Chalmers he met Bengt Nordén, a professor of chemistry, and former chair of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry.

“We got talking about DNA computing and the company came out of the conversations I had with him in 2020 that was when it really started,” said Prof King, a softly-spoken Scotsman. “We moved the company to Cambridge from Sweden as Cambridge is so much better placed for biotech start-ups.”

Irina Gostimskaya came on board as co-founder and chief scientist in 2021 – “we’re all chiefs at DNA Ascendancy” she notes with a smile.

A postdoctoral researcher at the

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Prof Ross King
Founder, DNAAscendancy

university’s Department of Chemistry, Dr Gostimskaya is an authority on CRISPR/DNA editing. The fifth founder is Sweden-based entrepreneur Johan Borendal.

Together, they have demonstrated the design in the lab, and this plus computational simulations demonstrate the potential of DNA computing. The simulations work “only up to a certain size as no electronic computer has enough memory to do the calculations”, Prof King says during a visit to the Bradfield Centre with Dr Gostimskaya.



DNA Ascendancy co-founder and chief scientist Dr Irina Gostimskaya, and founder and chief visionary Prof Ross King
Picture: Keith Heppell

He adds: “We’ve shown that all the independent steps work and in a simulation have shown we can solve problems better than the world’s fastest supercomputer.

“If we got funding today we could be up and running in five years and that would solve many of the current computer issues, especially related to energy use.”

In investment terms, Prof King describes DNA-based computing as being roughly where AI or quantum computing were in 2017 – that is, very niche, and very speculative.

“Our computer is in principle much more powerful than a quantum computer,” notes Prof King.

“It’s taken trillions of dollars to make silicon good at computing, and that’s hard to compete with – but we have DNA which has had millions of years to evolve, plus modern biotech.”

DNA Ascendancy has started

fundraising.

“It could become a multi-billion-dollar industry. We’re looking for £2-3million. It’s a slower process than we would have wanted.”

Prof King suggests that the venture capital model in the UK “isn’t fully optimised”.

“I’ve seen this before,” he adds. “In 2017 there was no money for quantum... I’ve been in AI all my career and you find sometimes it’s popular, sometimes not – it’s not a rational process.

“With angels it’s their money so they can quite rightly go with their gut instincts. But with venture capital they mostly want to play it safe.”

One thing you can say – switching from silicon to DNA to develop a new era of compute would undoubtedly be a revolutionary outcome – and full marks to DNA Ascendancy for being the first to get the ball rolling.

Tom Juggins wins wedding videographer award

Soham-based Tom Juggins UK has been named the Most Unique Videographer at the Quirky Wedding Awards.

The national awards celebrate alternative, inclusive, accessible and unique wedding suppliers.

Industry experts used a secret shopper method to judge nominees, examining their websites, social media profiles and reviews from the perspective of a potential client, then

assessing them on four criteria – inclusivity and accessibility, sustainability, customer service and uniqueness.

Tom, pictured, says he fell in love with turning memories into motion after filming special milestones shared with his family.

His goal when creating wedding videos is “always to create something that each couple will want to relive over and over”.

Covering the Eastern region, but also willing to travel throughout England, Wales and Scotland, Tom won the award from Quirky Weddings, which also run the Quirky Wedding Fayre and Quirky Weddings Magazine. The aim is to showcase the alternative wedding community, championing inclusivity and accessibility, and aiming to create a zero-judgment wedding industry.

