

## CREATING A EUROPEAN CENTRE OF BUSINESS CULTURE

Wibke Baumann, a German national who graduated with a Masters degree in Cultural Studies and History at the University of Bremen in Germany, joined the FBC team in September 2002. Having organised cultural events in Bremen during her studies, Wibke added a course in International Project Management to her qualifications shortly before moving to the UK.

Wibke is currently involved in a major project with the Regional Language Network North East and is assisting One NorthEast with their inward investment strategy for the German market. As the FBC is gradually branching out to cover a wider European market through a joint initiative with the German-British Chamber of Commerce and the Italian Chamber of Commerce, Wibke has also started to manage German projects. She has taken on a secretariat role for the German-British Chamber in the North East and has recently launched the 'German Circle', an opportunity for Germans in the region to meet regularly. The Circle is similar to the highly successful French Club 'Bienvenue en France'. Wibke is looking forward to creating and strengthening commercial, cultural and social links between the North East and Germany.

Pierre Scotto Di Freca, a French graduate from Marseille, joined the FBC team in October 2002 and recently completed his Masters degree in International Business Administration at the University of Northumbria.

Although Pierre's expertise is in e-commerce and web-research, he recently helped to organise South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council's second trade mission to Paris and provided interpreting services to participating South Tyneside companies during business meetings. Pierre is also a member of the Regional Language Network North East team and is providing consultancy services to North East SMEs trading with the French market.