

# LEISURE management

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**Fiona Reynolds**

On modernising the National Trust



ARTS &  
CULTURE  
SPECIAL

**The iconic venues  
of the future**



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## THE POWER TO REBUILD

Policymakers are lining up to convince those in power that our industries have the ability to help rebuild the UK economy, with leaders in both the tourism and cultural sectors launching consultations and initiatives to get the message across.

The UK has the largest cultural economy in the world relative to GDP, according to a new report, *Cultural Capital: A Manifesto for the Future*, which argues that "investing in culture will build Britain's social and economic recovery." Seventeen organisations, representing thousands of facilities, were involved in its creation, including the Museums Association, AIM, lottery awarding bodies, the Cultural Learning Alliance and tourism, heritage, library and arts quangos.

The authors make a powerful case for the arts and culture as both catalysts for change and a source of inspiration and wealth creation, saying: "As the economy begins to move again, the cultural sector is ready to contribute to the upturn. We are ready to give our ideas and energy to help with the restructuring that will be needed as the country renews itself."

The manifesto shows how arts and culture are a pivotal part of the national life of Britain, arguing for continued funding and explaining the positive impact fifteen years of investment has had on engagement, with record attendances and the highest ever levels of participation.

*Cultural Capital* gives a stack of useful numbers to make its case, reporting that the sector "Accounts for 10 per cent of GDP...tourism is our fifth largest industry, with a spend of £86bn

**Given our industry's dismal record of collaboration and penchant for rivalry and infighting, this initiative is a glorious thing. It's so heartening to see a sector united in a common purpose with the drive to prepare and present such a compelling argument in such an eloquent way**

and directly [employs] 1.4m people. Heritage tourism contributes over £20bn to GDP, more than advertising or the motor industry... the economic benefits of the UK's major museums and galleries are estimated to be £1.5bn per annum... music contributes nearly £5bn to the economy, with £1.3bn as export earnings. The economic impact of theatre is £2.6bn a year."

Regional impact is also considered, and Liverpool's year as European Capital of Culture is estimated to have "generated £800m for the local economy and attracted 27 per cent more visitors to the city. The economic impact of the 2009 Manchester International Festival was £35.7m."

The manifesto also says that "during a decade of investment in public sector arts and heritage, the creative and cultural industries have grown faster than the rest of the economy, and account for 6.2 per cent of Gross Value Added."

*Cultural Capital* argues against budget cuts, making the point that around £770m has already been sacrificed by the organisations in question – some of it to pay for the London Olympics. The focus is on explaining how the cultural sector can make a powerful contribution in vital areas such as training, learning, job creation and volunteering.

Given our industry's dismal record of collaboration and penchant for rivalry and infighting, this initiative is a glorious thing. It's so heartening to see a sector united in a common purpose, with the drive to prepare and present such a compelling argument in such an eloquent way. To read the report, go to <http://www.mla.gov.uk>

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For suppliers of products and services in the leisure markets, turn to p72

# World Leisure

## Énergie opens club in Qatar

The first ever énergie Fitness Club in the Middle East was launched at the start of February in Doha, Qatar.

Located close to Doha International Airport, the new £2m facility boasts Precor cv and resistance equipment, a dedicated boxing/combat studio, a private personal training studio and dedicated customer amenities and services.

The launch is part of énergie's strategy to open a number of new health clubs in Qatar and across the Middle East during 2010. The Middle Eastern expansion plans for the group are headed by énergie's operations director Nad Miyan.

Miyan said: "The response to the énergie fitness club concept in Qatar has exceeded our expectations. We opened the club with 750 members and enquiries are at unprecedented levels."



The Doha club is énergie's first in the Middle East

Jan Spaticchia, énergie CEO added: "This is a momentous time for the énergie group and it completes a vision I had many years ago. We have great plans for the

group in Qatar and the Middle East and we believe it will grow as it has in the UK."

Énergie Doha Airport is owned by GSSG Holdings under a franchise agreement.

## Ice Land waterpark set to open in UAE

A waterpark claimed to be the largest in the Middle East is scheduled to open in April in Ras Al Khaimah, UAE.

The Ice Land Water Park is the first element to open as part of the 120 acre family entertainment destination, WOW RAK.

Located 80km north of Dubai, WOW RAK will also boast an amusement park, shopping mall and resort facilities when complete. Developed by Polo Amusement Park as a joint venture with the local authorities of the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah, the 110,000sq m waterpark is themed around penguins and is said to have been inspired by global warming.



The park will open in April

As well as a variety of waterslides, the developers claim the park offers the world's largest manmade waterfall, a rain dance pool, aqua soccer, a snorkelling pool, an arctic wave pool and a kids' cove.

## Paramount plans Spanish theme park

Film company Paramount Pictures is looking into building what would be the largest theme park and entertainment centre in Spain, in the south eastern region of Murcia.

Reportedly aimed at competing directly with Disneyland Paris, the project would also incorporate a film studio designed to centralise all of Paramount's production in Europe.

Spanish minister for culture, Pedro Alberto Cruz, said he has received a letter from Paramount's licensing division expressing their interest in launching the project once its economic viability has been proven.

## World Gym eyes global expansion

A US-based team of experts has been recruited to build the international arm of one of Los Angeles' most famous fitness brands, World Gym.

Jim Teatum, former president of Nautilus' commercial division and senior market development director for Reebok International, and George Jackson, a club developer/owner and financial consultant previously with KPMG International, will handle the brand's international development and franchise growth. Founded in 1976 by Joe Gold, one of the original 'mus-

cle beach' ringleaders, World Gym targets 18- to 34-year-olds with a mid-priced membership offer and innovative programming based on the 'West Coast California' theme, where 'fitness meets celebrity'.

World Gym already has more than 200 locations worldwide - in the US, Canada, Central and South America, Africa, Russia, Asia, Australia and the UAE.

It was recently purchased by the Cammilleri family, who have invested in a major rebranding exercise and plan to expand the brand on a global scale.



The group plans a global roll-out



# New sustainable resort for Mexico

The new resort hotel of Imanta Punta de Mita opened in mid March on Mexico's Riviera Nayarit near Puerto Vallarta on the country's Pacific coast.

Designed by Texas-based architectural firm Overland Partners with an emphasis on sustainability and luxury, Imanta features seven accommodation lots, each constructed using locally sourced and environmentally friendly materials.

Five free-standing, one-bedroom Casas provide living areas, indoor/outdoor showers, pools and terraces, while a further two two-bedroom Casonas include a full kitchen, living room, dining room, pool and terrace. The resort's culinary approach is in keeping with the rest of the property, with an emphasis on fresh seafood and organic produce grown locally. Dining options include the Catch of the Day and



The resort was designed by architects Overland Partners

Tukipa restaurants, with cocktails available from the Observatorio rooftop terrace bar.

The resort also features a full-service spa, with naturopathic treatments which

can be carried out in guests' rooms, on the beach or in the spa itself, plus activities such as biking, hiking, bird-watching, eco-adventure tours and horse-riding.

## EHFA adds three new national associations

The European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA) has expanded its reach to 23 countries.

The association has secured agreements with three national associations to take the number of facilities within its membership base to 9,054. The three new additions are the German fitness employers association Deutsche Sportstudio Verband (DSSV); The Irish Institute of Leisure Amenity Management (ILAM); and Polski Związek Fitness & Wellness (PZFW), the sector association from Poland.

Herman Rutgers, executive director, said: "We have a very ambitious five year



There are now 9,054 EHFA-affiliated clubs

plan, which will be unveiled at our next general assembly in Essen, Germany, on 23 April. We need the maximum support from all key stakeholders in Europe in order to accomplish this plan."

## £372m robot park planned for Korea

Work is set to begin this year on a 784.5bn won (US\$560m, £372m) robot-themed attraction in Incheon, South Korea. The government recently announced that work could begin on Robot Land this year, to be completed in 2013. However, part of the park would be open by 2012.

The park will boast entertainment facilities, exhibition halls, a water park, education buildings and industrial support facilities. According to the government, 680.5bn won will come from private investors, 52bn won from the central government, and the other 52bn won from local government.

## Four Points by Sheraton to debut 13 hotels in 2010

Starwood Hotels is to add 13 new hotels to their portfolio of Four Points by Sheraton properties by the end of 2010.

In China, three Four Points properties are expected to open during the course of the year, with one each in Lianyungang in the east; the port city of Taicang to the north east; and Tai'An, also in the east and home to Mount Taishan, a UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage site.

The company is also planning to debut in Lagos, Bangkok and the resort island of Phuket in Thailand, while in Canada Four

Points hotels will be opening in Niagara Falls, Ontario; Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; and Calgary, Alberta.

In the US, properties are scheduled for San Jose, California; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Memphis, Tennessee; and Long Island City, New York.

Four Points by Sheraton currently operates 148 hotels in 24 countries. The planned expansion follows a US\$1bn rejuvenation of the brand which has seen major renovations and conversions of existing hotels, as well as new-build hotels.



Proposed sites include Bangkok, Thailand

# Commercial

## Deloitte: UK gambling sector 'worth £6bn'

New research carried out by professional services firm Deloitte on behalf of Ladbrokes has revealed that the betting industry is worth an estimated £6bn to the UK economy each year.

The Full Picture report, which aims to provide a quantitative and qualitative study of the gambling sector, has found that the economic contribution made by the sector is equivalent to 0.5 per cent of the UK's gross domestic product (GDP).

According to the report, the industry is also responsible for providing 15 per cent of horseracing's annual income, while also supporting employment for workers with little or no qualifications.

Simon Oaten, betting and gaming lead at Deloitte, said: "The betting industry makes a significant contribution to the British economy – but is subject to intense



Betting and gaming has increased in popularity

international competition. With internet and mobile betting growing, the challenge is to balance regulation with the conditions needed for the industry to compete."

Ladbrokes CEO Christopher Bill added: "This report will help inform the government about the contribution the industry makes in these difficult economic times."

## Minmar acquires new gaming properties

Business advisory firm Baker Tilly has announced that it has completed the sale of more than 100 gaming centres formerly owned by Agora Gaming Group to investment vehicle Minmar.

Edward Symmons LLP acted on behalf of Baker Tilly to secure the deal, which includes 106 leasehold properties formerly operated by the four subsidiary companies under the Agora banner.

Gaming centres in London and Aldershot are among those to be sold after Agora and its subsidiaries – Leisure World UK and Caesar's World – were put into administration on 7 December.



The deal includes properties in London

Administrator and Baker Tilly partner David Hudson said: "A sale has been agreed for the entire portfolio, which will safeguard 480 jobs and enable the estate to continue to trade under new ownership."



Revenues at Mecca were up in 2009

## Casino business drives Rank Group growth

Rank Group, the casino and bingo hall operator, has posted an operating profit of £60.8m for the year ending 31 December 2009 – a significant improvement on the £9.1m loss the group reported for the previous year.

The company's Grosvenor Casinos chain saw operating profit grow by a fifth and revenue increase by 7 per cent. An increase in customers and customer visit helped to boost the casino chain, while Mecca Bingo saw an increase in revenue through a growth in average spend per visit helping to offset a "modest decline" in the number of overall visits.

The group was also boosted by a successful legal challenge against HM Revenue and Customs, after a tribunal ruled that Rank Group was entitled to a VAT refund totalling nearly £26m.

## Downturn fails to affect racecourse figures

Attendance levels at racecourses across the UK remained stable during 2009 despite the challenging economic climate, according to new figures published by the Racecourse Association (RCA).

The total number of people attending horseracing events during the 12-month period increased slightly – by 2,000 – to 5,718,729 when compared with the previous year, although the average daily attendance decreased by 0.22 per cent.

RCA chief executive Stephen Atkin said: "The figures would have been even better

if it wasn't for December suffering abandonment during the winter's cold snap, which continued to make January a very testing time for racecourses.

"However, the all-weather tracks have done an absolutely magnificent job in keeping the show on the road and hopefully things will be back to normal soon to build on last year's success."

The RCA was formed in 1907 to represent the interests of racecourse operators in Britain. There are currently 60 active racecourses across the country.



## Winning Partnership Elevates The West Bay Club to Premier Holiday Site



An innovation in self catering holiday sites - the West Bay Club has undergone an extensive regeneration and development programme that has transformed it into a premier holiday location on the Isle of Wight. Guests are not only able to enjoy stunning, contemporary, New England styled cottages, they also benefit from every imaginable sporting facility including, a heated pool, gym, tennis, squash... the list goes on. The West Bay's ESPA Spa has now officially opened and offers locals the use of extensive facilities.

The architect responsible for the regeneration programme specified Armitage Venesta (AV) to manufacture and supply cubicles for both the wet and dry washrooms. Stadia, AV's free-standing changing cubicles and Relay cubicles, both systems entirely impervious to water, were installed in all wet areas.

Stylish Equinox cubicles with opaque glass doors and streamline polished pilasters were used to striking effect within the plush spa area. AV also supplied all benches and lockers.

As the West Bay Club continues its programme of regeneration and development, its partnership with Armitage Venesta continues to ensure its guests are provided with quality, lasting and aesthetically pleasing facilities.

**For more information on Armitage Venesta's washroom systems, call 01474 353 333 or visit [www.armitage-venesta.co.uk](http://www.armitage-venesta.co.uk)**



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# Hospitality

## £60m Cardiff Bay hotel plans unveiled

Wyndham Hotel Group and Cardiff-based developer Bayscape have unveiled plans for the construction of a new £60m waterfront hotel in Cardiff Bay.

The two companies have signed a 25-year management deal for the 32-storey Wyndham Cardiff, which will become the tallest building in Wales at 127m (417ft) high. Located on a site adjacent to the International Sports Village and the new 350-berth Cardiff Marina, the property has been designed by Custard Architecture and will feature 200 bedrooms as well as 35 serviced apartments.

The hotel will also have two restaurants and three bars, including a signature restaurant and bar on the 24th and 25th floor offering views across Cardiff Bay, as well as a health bar and café. Other facilities will include an indoor swimming pool, a



The hotel has been designed by Custard Architecture

spa, a sauna, a whirlpool, a fitness centre, and conference facilities, as well as 100 residential units, shops and offices.

Private river bus rides to the city cen-

tre will also be provided for guests. Malta-based operator CHI Hotels and Resorts will provide technical assistance and advice in the design of Wyndham Cardiff.

## Hospitality sector hits 10-year M&A low

KPMG has revealed that the number of merger and acquisition (M&A) deals in the hospitality sector reached a new 10-year low during 2009 as the recession had a sharp impact on the hotel sector.

Richard Hathaway, head of travel, leisure and tourism at the business advisory firm, said that operators and investors in the sector are still being affected by challenges in finding available finance.

Hathaway said: "Funding is available, but with the banks happy to sit on major assets in the hope of a property rebound, prospective investors will need to develop creative deals that work for them."



Mergers are at a record low

According to a recent study, some of the world's leading hotel groups expect to require US\$70bn (£46.2bn, £51.2bn) of refinancing in the next five years – US\$12bn (£7.9bn, £8.8bn) this year alone.

## Outlook 'looking up' for London's restaurants

A new survey of more than 300 restaurants across London has revealed that more than half of the capital's eateries expect to see an increase in takings during 2010, compared with last year.

Despite tough trading conditions, nearly 90 per cent of those questioned as part of Business Link's Restaurant Barometer for London said they are planning to maintain or increase staff levels over the coming months.

However, poor weather conditions during January meant that 49 per cent of restaurant owners reported a decline in takings, when compared with the same period last year.

## Historic seafront hotel reopens in Southend

The Rezidor Hotel Group has reopened a historic seafront hotel in Southend-on-Sea, Essex, following the completion of a major £25m refurbishment of the property.

First opened as the Metropole in 1901, the six-storey Park Inn Palace Hotel features 137 bedrooms overlooking the Thames Estuary. It is the 26th site to open under Rezidor's Park Inn brand in the UK.

Located on the Western Esplanade, the majority of the hotel's public areas are situated on the first floor – incorporating 36 meeting rooms and a large, divisible ball-

room capable of holding 280 delegates theatre-style and 200 guests for banquets.

Park Inn's new RBG Bar and Grill restaurant concept – which has already been rolled out at properties in Cardiff, Manchester, Peterborough and Belfast – is situated on the first floor of the revamped hotel, along with an adjoining bar.

Phillip Dark, regional director at Park Inn UK, said: "The new Park Inn Palace Hotel in Southend-on-Sea will be a great addition both to the hotel portfolio in the town and to Park Inn's UK hotel portfolio."



The hotel's historic bar

# Attractions

## London's Jewish Museum opens

A London museum dedicated to Jewish culture, heritage and identity in the UK reopened to the public on 17 March, following the completion of a comprehensive £10m redevelopment.

The Jewish Museum London in Camden Town has been expanded and revamped as part of the scheme, which has involved architects Long and Kentish and exhibition designers Event Communications.

New displays and exhibitions across four permanent galleries aim to provide visitors with the chance to explore Jewish life and culture as part of the wider history of Britain.

The museum's exhibits include the recreation of an East End street and tailor's workshop, a map showing where Jews have come from across the world and a number of historic artefacts.



The museum has four galleries

The Welcome Gallery introduces visitors to a range of Jewish people. History: A British Story examines how and why Jewish people settled in the UK.

## Downturn fails to halt Merlin growth

Merlin Entertainment Group, the UK-based visitor attraction operator, recently posted a 16.1 per cent increase in revenue for the year ending 26 December 2009.

A 10 per cent increase in visitor numbers compared with the previous year helped to fuel the group's growth over the 12-month period amid what it called a difficult trading environment.

The attraction operator was also boosted by the opening of Madame Tussauds Hollywood, US and the relaunch of the London Aquarium.

Merlin chief executive Nick Varney said: "During 2009, as well as delivering strong increases in sales and profits, we have reduced debt leverage, leaving the group better positioned."

## Abingdon museum makeover to go ahead

Plans to give the historic County Hall Museum in Abingdon, Oxfordshire, a complete makeover are to go ahead following the award of a final grant of £1.7m by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

To date, the project has been awarded £210,000 in development funding and a £50,000 project planning grant, making the total investment £1.97m. The Grade I listed building in the town centre was constructed between 1678 and 1682. Its dual role as market hall and Sessions House dates from when the town was included in the boundaries of the old county of Berkshire and played host to the local courts, the assizes.

The popular County Hall museum was created in the 1920s.

## McManus reopens after £12m revamp

The McManus art gallery in Dundee, Scotland, has reopened following a £12m refurbishment programme.

The main entrance to the attraction has been completely redeveloped, and inside the gallery spaces have been upgraded with interactive displays and visitor stations. A new retail and café area has been added, complete with an outdoor terrace and a new top-lit atrium.

There is also a new creative learning suite, catering for outreach programmes as well as inhouse workshops and classes.

The works were funded in partnership by Dundee City Council, the Heritage



The main entrance to the gallery

Lottery Fund, the European Union, Historic Scotland, and The McManus Fundraising Appeal. To celebrate the opening, a new exhibition – called The Making of Modern Dundee – has been launched.

## £9.25m boost for Giant's Causeway plans

Plans for the development of a new £18.5m visitor centre at the Giant's Causeway, Northern Ireland, have received a £9.25m boost from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB).

The funding announcement comes after the tourism agency reached an agreement with the National Trust (NT), which owns the attraction and plans to enhance the World Heritage Site's visitor experience.

Dublin-based architects heneghan peng are behind the designs for the new visitor centre, and design group Event

Communications have been selected to develop the interpretative aspect. The centre has received a £3m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and £4m from NT.

A fundraising campaign to secure the remaining £2m needed for the scheme is already underway, while construction work is expected to start on the main build in autumn 2010. Preliminary work will start in May to create new car parks, the relocation of retail and tourist information to the Causeway Hotel and the provision of additional catering kiosks and toilet facilities.



Work will begin in late 2010

# Sport

## DCMS unveils £6m after-school initiative

Young people will be given the opportunity to take part in Olympic sports as part of a new network of 3,000 after-school clubs created across the country.

Culture secretary Ben Bradshaw has confirmed that the government will spend £6m on creating the network of after-school clubs at English secondary schools and colleges as part of the sporting legacy from the 2012 Games.

Funding will be used to pay for new equipment and qualified coaches to run the clubs, which will provide a range of sports including boccia, badminton, table tennis, volleyball and wheelchair basketball. Sports national governing bodies, Sport England and the Youth Sport Trust, will work in partnership with schools and colleges to develop the new clubs, which will be operated under the Change 4 Life banner.



The initiative is part of the government's legacy plans for the 2012 Games

In addition to £3.4m from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Department of Health has earmarked £1.5m for the plans and Sport England will contribute a £1m grant.

DCMS funding will be sourced from the £780m made available by the government and its Physical Education and Sport Strategy for Young People fund for 2008-2011, announced two years ago.

## Athletics sees participation boost

More than 85,000 additional adults are taking part in athletics activities at least once a week and overall participation has increased to 7 million people, according to Sport England's quarterly update.

The first three months of the Active People Survey 4, which covers a 12-month period to January 2010, has revealed that 186,000 more adults are participating in sport compared with 2007-2008.

Athletics participation has seen one of the largest increases since the previous Active People report. The sport's participation numbers have increased by more than 200,000 during the past 15 months.



Athletics is the fastest growing sport

There has been a "strong increase" in participation in sport among men aged between 35- and 54-years-old, although the figures for women and disabled participants have shown a decrease.



The plans target 10 million people

## New 2012 legacy plan for disabled people

A major new plan to deliver a lasting legacy from the 2012 Olympic Games for 10 million people with disabilities across the country has been unveiled by the government.

London 2012: A Legacy for Disabled People has been endorsed by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and is poised to offer a range of improvements to life experiences for people with disabilities.

Sport England has confirmed that it will invest a total of £3.54m to nine national disability sports organisations as part of the legacy plan, which aims to drive up participation and increase grassroots opportunities.

The English Federation of Disability Sport will receive £1.5m of funding, while eight others will be entitled to bid for up to £2m in Lottery grants.

## 'Lasting legacy' aims for England 2018

England's bid to host the 2018 football World Cup is set to include a "sustainable legacy programme" to benefit communities across the world, according to board member Paul Elliott.

Speaking as part of a panel discussing major sports events and legacies at the Global Sports Forum in Barcelona, Spain, Elliott said that England presented a "low-risk" option when it comes to hosting the football tournament.

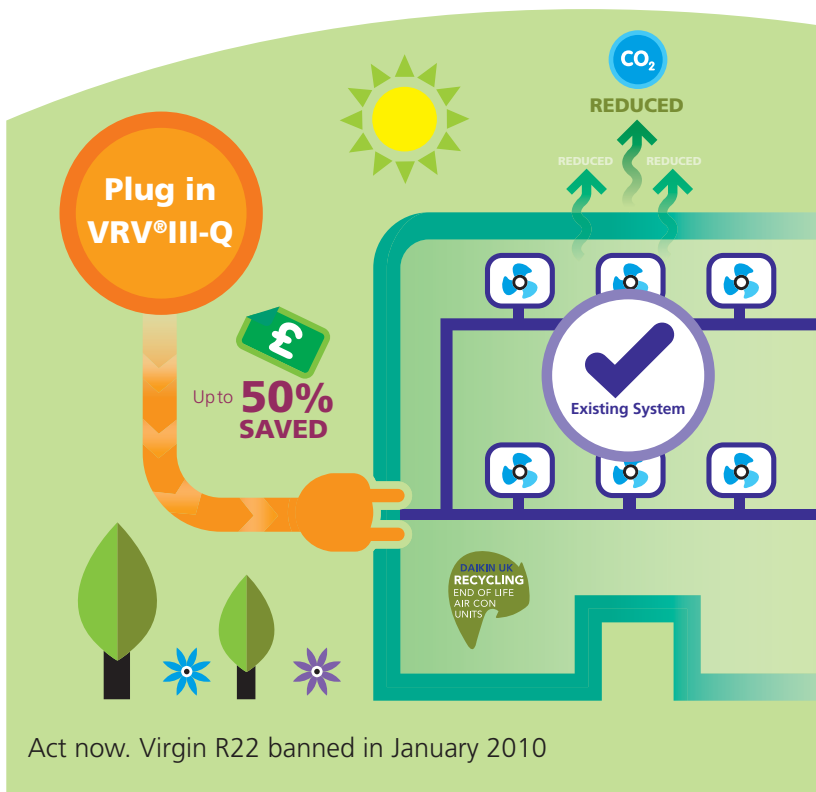
Elliott said: "The important thing in establishing a lasting legacy is to first

ensure the event itself is a success. We believe England's bid is a low risk option because of the commercial strength of its marketplace and because the [necessary] infrastructure is already in place.

"With that platform and a committed and focused approach, it's possible to focus on a sustainable legacy programme that benefits the world for many years after the World Cup tournament – and that's what we're setting out to do."

FIFA will announce the host of the 2018 World Cup in November 2010.

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# Spa & Wellness

## Extension for Spa by von Essen

Hospitality group von Essen is to extend its spa offering by adding a further seven spas to its portfolio of UK properties during the course of 2010.

Spas will be added to Callow Hall in Derbyshire; Congham Hall in Norfolk; The Greenway in Gloucestershire; Homewood Park in Bath; The Mount Somerset in Somerset; and Woolley Grange in Wiltshire. There will also be a standalone spa development in the village of Lower Slaughter in the Cotswolds, which will have combined access to both Washbourne Court and Lower Slaughter Manor.

Elsewhere within the group, the handover from Weston Homes to von Essen of the Hotel Verta development and the new London Heliport terminal in Battersea, London has been completed. The new 70-bedroom flagship Hotel Verta will



A spa will open at Congham Hall this year

feature a subterranean spa on two levels beneath the property. The hotel, von Essen's first in London, is scheduled to open in mid-2010 following a final fit out.

## Luxury facility opens at Cotswold House

A new spa has opened in collaboration with the Great Hotels of the World group and the Cotswold House boutique hotel in Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, UK.

The spa is operated by British company Temple Spa, and will be the first branded Temple Spa in the UK. It features seven treatment rooms, a hammam room, a hydrotherapy pool and several lounge areas created by designers D'Alton.

The £1.2m facility is located next to the main hotel in a converted coach house, and is accessed via a covered path.

Gearred towards both hotel and day guests, treatments use Temple Spa prod-



The exterior of Cotswold House

ucts and the menu blends holistic and advanced-results treatments including facials, pedicures and manicures, Indian head massage, thermal stone massages and a wide range of therapies for men.

## Ragdale Hall therapist to be jailed for six years

A spa therapist at Ragdale Hall in Leicestershire is to be jailed for six years after last month being convicted by a jury of four counts of sexual assault over a 14-month period.

Sentenced at Northampton Crown Court, Batini Mpfu was told by Judge Charles Wide QC that he had abused the trust of his clients. Mpfu was also given a Sexual Offences Prevention Order, banning him from offering his services as a therapist or masseur.

Chair of Ragdale Hall, Michael Isaacs, said: "Batini Mpfu abused the trust placed in him by guests and colleagues alike. We wish to assure everyone that Ragdale Hall's management and staff continue to strive hard to maintain the highest of standards."

## Champneys director mulls Caribbean expansion

Stephen Purdew, the director of the spa group Champneys, is mulling over the possibility of launching a Champneys in the Caribbean.

Purdew is visiting Barbados in March to meet government representatives with a view to opening "some level of Champneys operation" there.

The spa group recently reported a 9 per cent year-on-year growth in its annual results and said that pre-bookings for both March and April 2010 were 14 per cent higher than for 2009.

There has also been confirmation that the group has teamed up with the development company Casa Nita SL to develop its luxury Champneys Marbella property in Spain, which is scheduled to open in April 2011.

## First phase of Chevin hotel revamp completed

Crerar Hotels has completed the first phase of a £1.2m revamp of its Chevin Country Park Hotel & Spa in Otley, Yorkshire.

The first phase, costing £500,000, included the refurbishment of the hotel's 22 lodge cabin rooms, the opening a new Sonas Spa treatment room and the creation of three new self-catering log cabins within the hotel's grounds.

A further £700,000 will be invested in the coming months to expand the existing leisure club, to create a destination Sonas Spa and a further nine executive

bedrooms and to refurbish the existing Woodlands Suite function space.

Enda Rylands, general manager of Chevin Country Park Hotel & Spa, said of the refurbishment: "The hotel has undergone a real transformation.

"Along with the newly refurbished lodge rooms, the Sonas Spa is a great addition to our leisure offering."

The hotel's new Sonas Spa offers a full range of holistic and therapeutic treatments – supplied by Decléor – such as hot stone massages and aromatherapy.



The spa has been completely revamped



# Property

## Green light for £80m Leeds Arena plans

Plans for the development of a new £80m entertainment venue in Leeds, South Yorkshire, have been conditionally approved by the local authority.

Leeds City Council's (LCC) plans panel has backed the proposed 13,500-capacity Leeds Arena, which will be developed on a site in Claypit Lane in the city centre and will be operated by SMG Europe.

'Super theatre' plans for the new venue will ensure that the furthest seat will be no more than 68m (223ft) from the centre of the stage – compared with 90-95m (295-312ft) at most conventional arenas.

Regional development agency Yorkshire Forward has agreed to commit £10m to the scheme, which has met with opposition from neighbouring city Sheffield. Sheffield International Venues (SIV), which operates the Sheffield Arena, expressed



The venue will be operated by SMG Europe

concerns that the new Leeds venue could threaten their venue's viability.

SIV chief executive Steve Brailey said: "Right from the beginning, we have held

the view that an arena development in Leeds would result in significant damage to business in Sheffield and create a worrying challenge for both cities."

## Value of hotel property to fall in 2010

Hotel operators could see millions shaved off the value of their property portfolios during 2010, according to a report by Jones Lang LaSalle Hotels (JLLH).

The real estate firm said the fall in property prices will result in the market "correcting itself" after a period of perceived stability spurred by lack of stock and few sales, which have resulted in prices staying roughly at 2007 levels.

Hotel transaction volumes across the globe continued to fall during 2009, with the UK particularly hit by lack of activity.

The total value of hotel deals completed in the UK during 2009 was £353m – a



JLLH predicts a "correction" in hotel values

massive decline from the £1.81bn seen in 2008 and the 2007 peak of £7bn.

Mark Wynne-Smith, a spokesperson for JLLH, said the main reason for the stability in pricing during 2009 was a lack of stock.



An artist's impression of the plans

## Rose Bowl legal challenge thrown out

An application for a judicial review into Eastleigh Borough Council's (EBC) decision to contribute £32m towards the redevelopment of the Rose Bowl cricket ground has been dismissed.

A High Court judge rejected the legal challenge brought against the council by three hotel operators, which submitted notice to serve the judicial review on 20 November 2009.

EBC announced last month that it "acted properly within the law" in its decision to purchase land and invest in the construction of a new 175-bedroom hotel as part of the scheme near Southampton. New covered stands and upgraded media, catering and hospitality facilities are also included in the Rose Bowl scheme, along with an extended golf course.

## £85m Rhyl seafront plans back on track

Plans for an £85m seafront redevelopment in Rhyl, North Wales, appear to be back on track after a buyer was found to take over the scheme from Modus Properties.

The Manchester-based developer went into administration in June 2009, raising fears over the future of the mixed-use Ocean Plaza project, which aims to transform a 16-acre (6.5-hectare) site in the town.

Scarborough Development Group (SDG), the newly-formed property and investment company, has taken over the redevelopment scheme after acquiring the

site from administrators acting on behalf of Modus Properties.

The Ocean Plaza development is set to include an 80-bedroom hotel, a standalone leisure unit, a food store and offices, while SDG will also take over a number of other former Modus schemes across the UK.

SDG managing director Mark Jackson said: "We are a new and energetic company backed by great experience, and we are delighted to be one of the first companies to make a significant commitment to stepping back into development."

# Parks & Countryside

## CCC rejects national park boundary plans

Cumbria County Council (CCC) has rejected plans to extend the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks due to fears over what it describes as a "democratic deficit" in decision-making.

According to the council, issues currently dealt with by elected councillors on a county or district level would have been taken by unelected members of a national park authority if the proposals had been allowed to go ahead.

CCC also expressed concerns that the plans, which would have affected the Eden and South Lakeland areas, could have increased house prices and brought about more stringent planning restrictions.

CCC cabinet member for the environment Tim Knowles said: "While we do work closely and constructively with the national park authorities and Natural England, we



Plans to expand the national park have now been put on hold

feel we can't support proposals that will take decisions out of the hands of democratically elected members and could have a negative impact on some of our

local communities. The areas that Natural England are proposing become parts of the national parks are already beautiful and unspoiled areas of countryside."

## £3m scheme for NT's Stackpole estate

Welsh heritage minister Alun Ffred Jones has revealed plans for a £3m overhaul of the National Trust's (NT) Stackpole estate in Pembrokeshire, south west Wales.

Four main elements of work comprise efforts to transform the 2,000-acre (809.4-hectare) heritage and environmental centre, which has received £1.6m from the European Regional Development Fund. NT's charitable funds will provide the remaining balance for the scheme, which will include improvements to the existing accommodation at the former Home Farm Complex for students, volunteers and adult groups.



The 2,000-acre park will be revamped

The former Stackpole Court and the Brewery Complex will be revamped to enable visitors to see how the estate's landscape was shaped and to see how the infrastructure allowed it to function.

## Consultation for Redhill park proposals

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council (RBBC) is currently seeking views from local residents in Redhill, Surrey, over a long-term vision for the town's Memorial Park.

Potential design ideas for the park and additional information were put on show as part of an exhibition held by the council between 4-6 March, while a public meeting about the plans also took place on 9 March.

RBBC executive member for regeneration Allen Kay said: "Over the next few years, the regeneration of Redhill will result in a number of changes to the town, including to Memorial Park."

## Mayor opens new central London park

London mayor Boris Johnson has opened a new area of parkland on a site formerly occupied by the Aldgate gyratory traffic system in central London.

The new Braham Street Park – a 160m (525ft) long stretch of public space – boasts grassed and planted areas, a fountain and one of London's longest continuous wooden benches.

The project forms part of Johnson's wider Great Outdoors initiative to improve parks, streets and public squares across the capital, as well as the High Street 2012

programme to improve key routes in time for the London Olympics.

Developer Tishman Speyer contributed £2m towards the creation of Braham Street Park through planning obligations to Tower Hamlets Council – a partner in the scheme. The London Development Agency also contributed £350,000.

Johnson said: "This is exactly the kind of transformation that we are replicating across London ahead of 2012 and beyond – bringing formerly disused spaces back to life for Londoners to enjoy."



The revamped Braham Street Park

# Health & Fitness

## Pure Gym announces seven new sites

Budget gym operator Pure Gym is to open its fifth UK site in Sheffield, after agreeing to a leasehold deal on a property at the city's Sheaf Gardens industrial estate. The company has secured a former Dixons Car Showroom site and has started work to



The company plans to have 20 gyms open by 2012

convert the space into a health club.

The Sheffield club will be the first of seven new sites that Pure Gym will open during 2010. It plans to have 20 gyms operating across the UK by the end of 2011. The company has agreed terms for properties in Birmingham, Glasgow and Southend on Sea, and negotiations are at an advanced stage for further sites in Aberdeen, Belfast and Derby.

The expansion will be funded by a £6m

loan facility provided by a consortium of investors led by Magenta Partners. Pure Gym has previously raised £3.5m from its management and private investors.

Peter Roberts, Pure Gym CEO said:

"Our existing sites are trading well and have set the template for future developments. The new round of funding means that we are actively looking for further sites throughout the UK where there is access to strong population demographics."

## Fourth Fit4Less opens in Canterbury

Health club operator énergie opened its fourth of Fit4Less budget club in Canterbury, Kent, in March.

The club, which cost around £250,000 to set up, will be operated by a franchisee and will offer one standard membership of £16.99 a month. Chief executive at the énergie group, Jan Spaticchia, said: "This is a very exciting concept that we believe will do well in this economic climate."

"We are looking to continue to introduce Fit4Less to multiple towns and cities across Britain through our successful franchise support scheme, which empowers people to own their own business."



The club cost £250,000 to set up

The Fit4Less brand was launched by énergie last year as part of efforts to tap into the expanding budget gym sector.

## DLL to start work on new Exeter club

David Lloyd Leisure has confirmed that work is due to start in April on the construction of a new £11m health and fitness club in Exeter, Devon.

The new 60,650sq ft (5,635sq m) facility will incorporate a 25 x 12m indoor swimming pool, a 20 x 8m outdoor pool, three indoor tennis courts and five out-

door tennis courts, as well as 12,900sq ft (1,198sq m) of gym space.

David Lloyd Leisure plans to run a range of specialist tennis and swimming programmes for members at the new Exeter club, which is set to create at least 80 new jobs and will expand the operator's portfolio to 89 sites across Europe.

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# Public Sector

## Call for more staffed play areas

Play England has called for an increase in the number of staffed playgrounds to help beat child obesity and anti-social behaviour.

The association says that a report by independent think tank Demos supports the view that skilled staff – whether paid or voluntary – play a crucial role in successfully engaging the children and young people most at risk of a sedentary lifestyle and the resulting obesity, as well as those prone to anti-social behaviour.

The Demos report, called *People Make Play: The Impact of Staffed Play Provision on Children, Families and Communities*, claims that staffed playgrounds, often run by the voluntary sector, are an increasingly vital element in the multi-agency approach to improving outcomes for children. They are also thought to be more cost-effective than established statutory services.



Play can help combat child obesity

Adrian Voce, director of Play England, says: "This timely report illustrates the vital role adults have, not in the actual play of children but in the provision of the physical and social space that they need."

## Council seeks views on Kirkby's future

Knowsley Council is inviting local residents and businesses in Kirkby to help shape plans for the future of the town centre after earlier proposals were rejected.

The government dismissed plans for the Destination Kirkby scheme in late 2009, which had been put forward by Tesco and Everton Football Club (EFC) to include a new stadium for the Premier League outfit.

However, the council's public consultation exercise aims to put efforts to regenerate the town centre back on track. Knowsley Council leader Ron Round said: "Since the secretary of state's decision to refuse the previous regeneration pro-



The plans were first submitted in 2008

posals, we have been working with our partners to reassess the opportunities available to the town. This consultation gives the whole community a chance to play a part in the future of the town."

## Change4Life scheme unveiled in Wales

Change4Life, the campaign designed to encourage more people to adopt healthier habits and become more active, has now been launched in Wales.

The initiative – launched by the Welsh Assembly Government on 10 March – sees advertising displayed across television, billboards, newspapers and public transport from March. It is hoped that the Change4Life campaign will help to encourage a "lifestyle revolution" for families across Wales, with a detailed action plan being made available to parents.

Heritage minister Alun Ffred Jones said: "Simple changes to our lifestyle can improve our health, help us to live longer and set a good example to our children.

"We also want any organisations that deal with families to sign up and promote Change4Life so that families hear simple and consistent advice about healthy eating and physical activity."

Chief medical officer Dr Tony Jewell added: "Once a family has signed up for their unique plan they will be sent more information and advice on a regular basis."

## Vocational qualifications can help your business

SkillsActive, the Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure, Learning and Wellbeing, has been working closely with government to create a new website and advertising campaign designed to increase employer awareness and involvement in vocational reform.

The website is designed to inform all employers, including those in the sport, fitness, playwork, outdoors and caravan sectors, about changes to the vocational qualification landscape, including reforms to make all qualifications focus on choice, clarity and confidence.

The site is part of a joint project with Business Link and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, designed to ensure that each sector's businesses are at the heart of the changes.

Employers are now looking to put themselves in the best position to take up the opportunities of growth – skills will be crucial to taking on that challenge. That is why we are simplifying and modernising the system of vocational qualifications and I believe these changes will be invaluable to businesses and learners alike.

For anyone who wants to get the skills they need into their business or take up training opportunities themselves, the website gives them a great opportunity to find out more.

The changes come amid a wider reform of vocational qualifications across all sectors. The vocational qualification reform programme will see qualifications across every industry streamlined so that they are easier to understand and access. The new set of bite-sized qualifications will have simpler titles and clear indicators of how long each one takes to complete, its difficulty and its subject matter.

Active leisure employers looking to find out more should visit our new website: [www.businesslink.gov.uk/vocationalqualifications/](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/vocationalqualifications/)



Stephen Studd, CEO, SkillsActive

# Right skills, right for your business



Vocational qualifications are changing to help you develop the skills your business needs.

These new qualifications focus on **Choice, Clarity & Confidence:**

## **Choice:**

- Qualifications built up from bite-sized units
- Flexible training to fit business needs
- **Employers benefit from improved retention rates and profitability**

## **Clarity:**

- Easy to understand and compare skills leading to career progression pathways
- **Employers benefit from easier and effective succession planning**

## **Confidence:**

- Designed with employers
- Relevant to your daily business needs
- **Employers benefit from:**
  - In-house training linked to nationally recognise qualifications
  - Motivated staff who reach their potential

What does this mean for Sport and Active Leisure?

With over 663,000 paid employees working across the UK, a further two million volunteers, and an annual contribution on average of £8.6 billion to the economy, the qualification reform is going to have a real impact on sport and active leisure. A sector this vital deserves the best qualifications system in the world, and this is why SkillsActive has been working with employers to overhaul the current system and make new qualifications work for sport and active leisure. **Make sure you know how these changes will impact on your organisation.**

**To find out how these new vocational qualifications are right for your business, please visit:**

**[www.businesslink.gov.uk/vocationalqualifications](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/vocationalqualifications)**

# designnews

**PROJECT** Museum of London refurbishment

**DESIGN** Wilkinson Eyre and in-house team

**LOCATION** London, UK

## Museum of London expansion

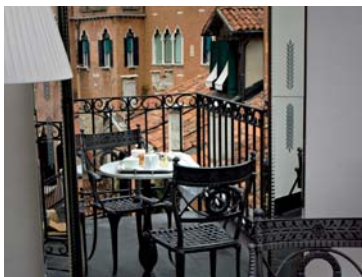
The Museum of London is nearing completion of its £20m refurbishment which will see the opening of five new galleries.

Architects Wilkinson Eyre and the museum's in-house design team have transformed its display spaces. The redesigned museum will feature the City Gallery, a new space housing the Lord Mayor's Coach; The Weston Theatre, a multipurpose space for films and performances which can also be used for corporate events; and the Clore Learning Centre, a 220-



seat lecture theatre. The new Sackler Hall features a 48m LED curtain and can be used as a private events space for up to 500 people, while a recreation of a Victorian Pleasure Garden will feature real trees and starry skies.

The new-look museum is due to open at the end of May.



**PROJECT** Palazzina Grassi

**DESIGN** Philippe Starck

**LOCATION** Venice

## Philippe Starck hotel for Venice

The Palazzina Grassi, Philippe Starck's first Italian hotel, has opened in Venice. The five-star hotel has 26 guestrooms and no reception desk – instead a 'personalised check in service' is promised. It also has a private jetty on the Grand Canal, a restaurant and bar, and a members' club.

The opulent design mixes the old and new. The hotel has a classical 16th century façade and a restored central colonnade in the reception area, but the guestrooms feature geometric lines, transparent glass wardrobes and LCD screens.



**PROJECT** Circus

**DESIGN** Tom Dixon

**LOCATION** London, UK

## Circus comes to town

Bar/restaurant/entertainment venue Circus launched in London's Covent Garden in January. Designed by former Habitat creative director Tom Dixon, the interiors were apparently inspired by the surrealist art movement and feature silver balls and glittering curtains. Tom Dixon-designed furniture has been used and the venue also features a dancer's pole and a giant dining table in the centre of the room.

Circus includes a 140-cover restaurant serving Pan-American cuisine and a cocktail bar headed up by Dick Bradsell.



**PROJECT Brooklands Hotel**

**DESIGN Carey Jones (architecture)**

**Mark Trevillion (interiors)**

**LOCATION Surrey, UK**

**Hotel to open in middle of racetrack**

The Brooklands Hotel opened in March, inside the historic Brooklands motor-racing circuit in Surrey.

The 120 bedroom hotel is next to Mercedes Benz World and features a destination spa, a cocktail bar and a restaurant.

The art deco inspired design features rich colours and materials, and glass has been used extensively for the building itself. Design features include leather panels, glittering light pendants and bespoke round daybeds in the suites. A giant wooden sculpture hangs in the atrium representing a 3D map of the Brooklands racetrack as it was in the 1930s.

The hotel is part of the Delancey portfolio and is a sister property to Bovey Castle and Grand Jersey.



**PROJECT The Arch London**

**DESIGN RDD (interiors) Graham**

**Seabrook Partnership (architecture)**

**LOCATION London, UK**

**New luxury hotel for London**

The 82 room Arch London has opened in London's West End. The hotel is housed in a row of nine Georgian Grade II listed townhouses and features 82 rooms and suites over six floors. It also has a lounge and study, a cocktail bar, a restaurant and a library serving afternoon teas and martinis.

The architecture was by Graham Seabrook Partnership, with interiors by RDD. The interiors mix modern technology and contemporary artwork with carefully restored architectural details. The bar features silver Philippe Starck bar stools, while the guestrooms feature original works by young artists. A collection of video art is projected onto the wall behind the marble reception desk.



**PROJECT Burj Khalifa**

**DESIGN Skidmore, Owings & Merrill**

**LOCATION Dubai, United Arab Emirates**

**Burj Khalifa viewing deck opens then closes**

The Burj Khalifa opened to great fanfare in January in Dubai. At more than half a mile tall (823m) it is the tallest building in the world, and features an observation deck on its 124th floor, offering the public views of the city.

In February however, the deck was closed 'due to technical difficulties.' At the time of going to press it remains closed.

The Burj Khalifa was designed by US architects Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. Leisure facilities include the Armani Hotel Dubai and eight health and fitness clubs. The tower was previously known as the Burj Dubai, but was renamed after Abu Dhabi's president Khalifa Bin Zayed.

# KONCEPT

Based in Stockholm, the award-winning Koncept offers interior design, architecture and concept development services, with clients in the hotel, spa and retail sectors

## When did you launch?

We launched in 1996 and have since completed jobs in 20 countries. We now employ 30 people.

## What does Koncept offer?

Our mission is to develop unique environments that add value and competitive advantages to our client's businesses. To achieve this, we always base our ideas on an understanding of each client's business. Free, artistic creativity is important but we believe in structure in the creative process. This is why we begin all our projects by working with our clients to identify their specific challenges and goals. Once we've decided where to go, we can concentrate all our energy on moving in the right direction.

We approach all of our projects with a combination of joy and enthusiasm.

## What is Koncept's approach to interior design?

Environments can be designed to communicate strong messages that influence people. Architecture and interior design are excellent tools with which to communicate the identity of a company and a brand, and to get across its core values. Koncept designs unique environments that create value and a competitive advantage for our clients.

## What leisure projects are you currently working on?

Projects currently under production include new properties for Scandic Hotels in Hamburg and Stockholm, both due to open in 2011, a shopping mall project also opening in 2011 and the Gota Lejon theatre opening in Stockholm the same year.

Situated in the Scandinavian mountains, the five star Copperhill Mountain Lodge was designed by American architect Peter Bohlin of Bohlin Cywinski Jackson and AIX Arkitekter with interiors by Koncept.

It has 112 suites – most with a balcony or terrace providing spectacular views of the mountains – a spa and health club, two restaurants, a champagne bar and a lounge bar. It also has a 600-capacity conference venue and an on-site helipad.

The contemporary building was constructed in wood and stone, with glass and metal also used throughout. The interiors are characterised by large open spaces, rustic materials and large windows facing the mountains. The hotel and spa's relaxed feel is enhanced by an extensive use of natural materials throughout. These include pine, spruce, stone, leather and 2,000 tons of slate, which was locally-sourced.

The Copperhill Mountain Lodge Spa won best interior design award at the European Hotel Design Awards 2009 for its unique design, which the judges said embraced its location, environment and culture.

Sami culture (the Sami people are the indigenous people of northern Europe) has influenced the design of the deliberately rus-

## COPPERHILL MOUNTAIN LODGE

Are, Sweden

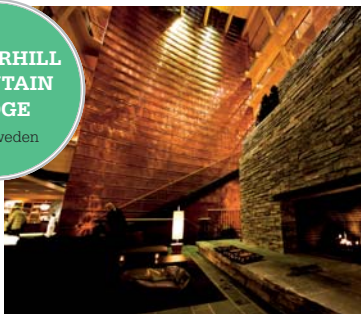


PHOTO KRISTOFFER ANDERSON



tic spa. Three of the nine treatment rooms are shaped like traditional Sami tipis, with the benches covered with reindeer hides and the ceilings designed to look like a starry sky. The treatments are Sami-inspired, and use birch oil and hot stones. They are carried out to a backdrop of traditional Sami music. The spa also features an indoor pool and a sauna with panoramic windows.

Elsewhere in the hotel, the design aim was to create a modern interpretation of a classic ski lodge. The warm tones and natural materials are again influenced by Sami culture, as well as the surrounding area's

history as an important copper mining site.

The copper mine theme can be seen in the 'Copper Shade' pendant lamps by Tom Dixon in the suites. The bathrooms also feature shimmering, copper-coloured tiles, which contrast with the contemporary white sinks. The walls are decorated with historic pictures from the nearby county museum. The public areas feature specially commissioned artworks including two 2m-tall sculptures by Spanish artist Jaime Plensas.

The Copperhill Mountain Lodge has undergone a major renovation programme, which was completed in December 2009.



## STORY HOTEL

Stockholm,  
Sweden

**Story Hotel launched in March 2009, and it won the award for best interiors at the European Hotel Design Awards 2009.**

The designers were briefed to develop a completely new hotel concept in the heart of Stockholm. The aim was to create a design that was both unique and relaxed. Konzept have mixed cutting edge design with comfortable features to create a unique hotel.

The hotel features 82 bedrooms, a late night bar, a restaurant, a café and a boutique. Konzept used New York pubs and bohemian hotels in Paris as sources of inspiration for the hotel's design. Original features from the historic building have been kept, with 'beautifully worn' walls left bare and the old entry doors reused as bed frames. Contemporary pieces of furniture and modern artwork have been used



throughout, contrasting with the original features and creating a unique hotel.

Other design features include industrial-style exposed pipes and concrete floors, which again contrast with velvet upholstery and satin quilts. The restaurant has a retro

modern look, while the bar was apparently inspired by a Parisian salon.

There is no check in desk at the hotel; instead guests book and pay for their room online, and enter their confirmation code at a check in computer in the hotel's lobby.



## B.A.R.

Stockholm,  
Sweden

The indigenous Sami culture has influenced the design. Three of the spa's treatment rooms are shaped like tipis, reindeer hides cover the benches and traditional Sami music provides a backdrop

**The clients – restaurateurs Henrik Norström and Peter Johansson – wanted to create a combined restaurant and market hall, also blurring the line between the kitchen and dining area.** Konzept were briefed to create a relaxed, urban dining experience that would reflect the restaurant's focus on local, fresh produce, with a particular emphasis on seafood.

The main challenge was to create a space that could easily make the transition from breakfast café to restaurant and bar, while still providing a unique atmosphere for each meal. Merging the market area with the restaurant area in a way that made sense and was not intrusive for diners was another big challenge.

Konzept created a rustic, warehouse-style restaur-

ant using ash, oak and tiles. Guests sit in the middle of the kitchen and pick fresh fish or lobster from the market or live from giant tanks ready to be cooked in the style of their choosing. Guests can also pick fresh vegetables and condiments and request their own individualised meal, or choose from a seasonal set menu.

B.A.R. opened to the public in December 2009. ●



## PAUL MAYER

Since it opened in 2005 with the UK's first wind tunnel, Bodyflight has expanded to add a leisure centre, hotel and café. The latest plans will see the launch of the Flow House indoor surf experience, as MD Paul Mayer tells Kath Hudson



**Wave Loch manufactures artificial wave machines, which can be used for surfing and bodyboarding**

### How do you describe your business?

Bodyflight offers unique, adrenalin-based leisure activities that are a bit different from the norm.

### Where did the inspiration for Bodyflight come from?

In 2000, I went on holiday to Florida with a friend who wanted to do a skydiving course. I just went along for the ride really, but had a great time on the course. While I was there I visited a wind tunnel, which gave me the idea for Bodyflight.

### Did you put the plan into action immediately?

It was my pet project for 18 months and then I gave up my job once I was confident the idea had a future. I had been looking for a business idea for a long time. I always thought it would be something to do with IT, but I realised this was an opportunity for me to do something a bit different.

A lot of my friends and family thought I was bonkers to give up a good job and a comfortable lifestyle to sell wind! But I never really saw launching Bodyflight as a great risk. I thought that if it didn't work out I'd have lost a bit of money and I'd just get another job. It was just really exciting to be working for myself and doing something I was interested in.

### Why did you choose the site in Bedford?

The building was already here. It was a MOD science research facility that included a wind tunnel built in 1950. It was a bit of a white elephant project and was only used for about 180 hours before sitting abandoned for 40 years.

The structure of the existing building was ideal for our needs, although we did have to replace everything inside it. The site gave us a great head-start; it meant we were able to open the world's biggest wind tunnel for half the price of a smaller new build. Bodyflight opened in 2005.

### What were the main challenges?


The financing was a challenge, because it was a bit of a leftfield idea, plus not that many venture capitalists look to invest in leisure. The technical side of things was also a challenge. To start with I thought a wind tunnel was just a fan with air blowing up, but I realised there's actually a lot more to it than that! At that point there weren't any wind tunnels in the UK and there weren't many scientists with the necessary knowledge.

### Who are your customers?

Around 70 per cent of our customers are experienced skydivers, and 30 per cent are beginners. The beginner market is mainly made up of people who want to try skydiving as a one off experience, but don't want to plummet towards the earth in a potentially deadly situation. We get a lot of stag parties and people who have been given a vouchers as a present.



**Bodyflight's tunnel generates wind speeds up to 180mph**



**The wind tunnel at Bodyflight is used as a training facility for professional sky divers as well by beginners**

## WAVE LOCH

Wave Loch was developed by surfer Tom Lochtefeld, who patented the FlowRider – a new kind of artificial wave machine – in the late 1980s. The first Wave Loch FlowRider opened at the Schlitterbahn waterpark in Texas in 1991, and in 1993, Lochtefeld built a larger, curling FlowBarrel sheet wave at the Summerland resort in Bo, Norway.

Lochtefeld went on to develop the Wave House concept – a complete 'beach and surf lifestyle package' offering retail, live music, entertainment, food and beverage, with the FlowRider and FlowBarrel sheet waves at the centre of the concept.

The first Wave House opened in South Africa in 2001. There are now

a further two Wave Houses, in San Diego, US and Santiago, Chile. Two more are under construction in Singapore and Zaragoza, Spain.

Wave Loch has now sold more than 100 FlowRider sheet waves, and they can be found in locations around the world including Center Parcs villages in the Netherlands, the National Aquatic Centre in Ireland, Hershey Park in the USA and on board five Royal Caribbean cruise liners.

In October 2009 Wave Loch announced that it had signed a joint venture deal with Bodyflight to launch



Flow House, a new visitor attraction concept. Flow House is based on the Wave Loch FlowRider and FlowBarrel waves and offers an indoor surf-themed experience which also encompasses food and drink, music, entertainment and retail.

### How long do the flights last?

The smallest package we do consists of two flights, which equates to two and a half minutes of air time. Most people do four flights, which is five minutes.

### Can you explain the thinking behind your current expansion plans?

The site has oodles of space and buildings. We realised we had the opportunity to bring a few additional, unique leisure facilities in. The wind tunnel was the first of its kind in the UK and we wanted to find some more new innovations. Also, we have

lots of customers on site and realised there was a need for more food and beverage and lounge areas to cater for them.

### You recently collaborated with Wave Loch. What does this collaboration involve?

Wave Loch manufactures artificial surfing waves including the FlowRider, which uses a bespoke board and a continuous stream of water. WaveLoch's successful concept, Wave House, centres on the FlowRider experience, while also offering food and beverage, music, retail and entertainment. Wave Houses offer an outdoor party atmosphere in large, beach-style venues.



**"There's no reason why there couldn't be a Flow House in every major town in the UK, but we need to test the water first and see if it's as popular as we hope. We'd love to open more"**

So far the Wave Houses have all been outside, so in collaboration with Wave Loch, we've come up with the Flow House concept – a new visitor attraction similar to Wave House, but indoors instead of outdoors.

There are a few places around the world which feature a FlowRider wave attraction indoors, but the Flow House philosophy is lifestyle-based, rather than just being a sporting activity. It encompasses food and drink, music, relaxation and entertainment, as well as the waves.

Early last year we started to research the idea and it became evident that Wave Loch was a market leader with both its sites and its products. The Waveloch management were quite excited about the potential of our site; about the fact that we already offer an extreme activity and could move quickly.

The Flow House is due to open at Bodyflight in May 2010.

#### **Will this appeal to existing customers or attract new ones?**

A mixture of both, hopefully. We have people aged from three to 97 using our wind tunnel. The age range won't be so wide for Flow House; we expect it to attract a core of local people as well as surfers, skateboarders and wakeboarders.

It will probably bring a new stream of people to Bodyflight, who'll come along for the day, and it will also increase the length of the stay for beginners using the wind tunnel.

We're thinking of running activity days when people can come and try all the activities on site, and are talking about the idea of summer camps for schools, as we have accommodation on site and a range of fantastic activities.

#### **What accommodation do you offer?**

We have 20 bedrooms, which range from single rooms to bunk rooms. We can sleep 40. The accommodation is mainly used by skydivers, who stay on site to train. This was the main reason we introduced the new leisure centre, which opened last year.

#### **What other new activities do you have?**

There's Vertigo, which is a bungee jump without the bounce, and Swoop, an extreme zipwire from a 35m tower, which stretches more than 200m and is very steep. People on the zip-wire travel at around 45mph. We are really starting to push that.

We are also planning to build a climbing wall, which will combine a traditional climbing wall and an adventure trail. We now

**Vertigo allows customers to free fall for two thirds of the 125ft drop before a cable gradually slows them down**

have two ways to get down from the tunnel (via the bungee and zipwire), but only one way to get up, which is in a lift. We thought it would be good to offer a fun way to get to the top. Climbing 35m is quite a challenge, so we're looking at a few climbing adventure ideas to make it a bit different.

#### **Do you plan to roll out the Flow House?**

If the timing is right and we can find the right locations, we would definitely like to open more. There's no real reason why there couldn't be a Flow House in every major town, but we need to test the water first and see if it's as popular as we hope.

#### **How much have you invested?**

To date we've invested £2.5m in the BodyFlight facility, and a further £1m in the Flow House.

#### **Are there any other elements you'd like to add in the future?**

We've got plenty of space on site and I'm always on the lookout for the next idea, so if something comes along that I think is cool and that people will use, then yes, absolutely.

#### **Do you have any long term ambitions?**

Not really, to be honest. It's a journey of discovery, and it feels as though it's a journey I'm following rather than leading!

#### **What's the highlight of your career?**

The World Challenge, which we run every year. It's recognised as one of the biggest competitions in the skydiving calendar. It attracts the top competitors and generates a huge buzz.

#### **What's the biggest lesson you've learned?**

That reflection is the key to decision making. It's easy to make decisions, but it's definitely better to listen first and talk later. ●







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# REYNOLDS

## FIONA REYNOLDS

From cutting down on Do Not Touch signs to creating allotments, the National Trust is revamping the way it communicates with the public, as its director general tells Magali Robathan

I meet Fiona Reynolds, the National Trust's director general, in the trust's headquarters in Swindon. The building is modern, welcoming and sustainable – built using wood from the trust's estate, it is naturally ventilated and generates around 30 per cent of the electricity it needs using solar panels. The offices are open plan to improve communication between staff, and the public is welcomed in to the airy café and on regular tours of the building.

The building is a good representation of what Reynolds was hired 10 years ago to help the National Trust achieve. "When I joined, I think people were looking for a bit of a fresh eye," she says. "The National Trust had done some wonderful things but there was a sense that we needed to enter the 21st century."

"We've perhaps been seen as being a bit stuffy, telling people what to do rather than listening to what people want to do. We've been very good at conservation but perhaps less in touch with people and the kinds of experiences they want. I feel I've been reconnecting us very strongly with the founding vision, but also making sure that we love people as much as we love places."

I'm here to talk to Reynolds about the latest part of this process of transformation. In February, the *Going Local* strategy was published, setting out the trust's aims over the next 10 years. It's described within the document as "nothing less than a cultural revolution" and sets out plans to involve local communities in the running of trust properties, to encourage risk and give property managers more freedom to run the houses in the way they think is best.

### A part of our heritage

The National Trust was set up in 1895 by Victorian philanthropists Octavia Hill, Robert Hunter and Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley. Worried about the effects of industrialisation and development, they founded the trust as a way of protecting threatened countryside, coastlines and buildings, in Hill's words: "For the everlasting delight of the people".

Today the trust owns more than 300 historic houses and gardens, 700 miles of coastline and 600,000 acres of countryside, making it the UK's second biggest private landowner after the Queen. As well as the stately homes it's best known for, its properties include the



PHOTO: ©NTFL/DAVID LEVISON

former homes of Paul McCartney and John Lennon and Birmingham's last surviving back-to-back houses.

Despite the recession, National Trust memberships have continued to grow. Last year it had 3.8 million members – up from 2.7 million when Reynolds joined in 2001 – and there were 15 million visitors to its properties and 50 million visitors to the coast and countryside in its care.

The trust has benefited from people staying in the UK for their holidays and Reynolds also believes that the difficult economy has made people appreciate simpler pleasures. "There has been a shift during this recession, with people remembering that money can't buy everything and actually there are some things that are more important, such as happiness and spending time with your family," she says. "I pray that will last."

When the recession started to bite, Reynolds explains, the National Trust began to cut costs and become more prudent, but also acted decisively, launching the Time Well Spent advertising campaign. "We tried to touch people's heartstrings with our message about the importance of the simple pleasures of life," she says. "Things that money can't buy – a walk in a beautiful woodland, or a picnic in the park with your family, or the wonderful views of a beautiful building or coastline."



PHOTO: ©NTFL/ANNEHIL DE SERIA

**The trust is working to create a more relaxed atmosphere**



**Reynolds is determined to ensure the National Trust becomes better known for the coast and countryside in its care, via a range of initiatives**

"If you join the National Trust it's a value proposition; you get free entry to all these wonderful places, but it's much more than that. It gives you freedom of spirit and a sense of peace and tranquillity that shopping with your children on a Saturday just doesn't. We've found that people have really responded to that."

### A passion for the country

Reynolds has spent most of her working life helping to protect and preserve the British countryside. "I am absolutely passionate about it, and I'm also really passionate about this country," she says. "I love what it stands for and I love that sense that each generation has choices. We can either mess it up or we can make sure there's a legacy for our children."

After studying geography and land economy at Cambridge, Reynolds joined the Council for National Parks in 1980. In 1987 she moved to the Council for the Protection of Rural England (now the Campaign to Protect Rural England), becoming director in 1992. She spent two years as director of the Women's Unit at the Cabinet Office, from 1998 to 2000, and a year as a member of the Policy Commission on the Future of Food and Farming. In 2001 she saw an advert for the post of National Trust director general and she knew she had to apply. "It's the best job in the world," she

says, with feeling. "I love my job and I feel incredibly lucky to be working for an organisation that is so passionate about places and people and really cares that future generations will have beautiful places to enjoy."

Reynolds may feel lucky to be working for the trust, but she also knows that her experience and enthusiasm has brought a lot to the role of director general. "I brought my personal passion and I also brought a sense that I know how things get done," she says. "I have been working on countryside policy for all my working life and I do know what you can do to improve beauty and improve management and make things better."

"I also know what government needs to do and what other people can do. Although the trust is very much a doer and not a lobbyist, it's important to understand how partnerships can work."

### Going local

The new *Going Local* strategy outlines the plans and aims of the organisation over the next 10 years.

The strategy, explains Reynolds, is about moving away from a "one size fits



all conservation solution" to running the trust's properties in a more individual way.

"Every single one of our properties is different and distinctive and has its own stories and its own personality," she says.

"It's a risk in a big national institution that there becomes a 'National Trust way of doing things' that overrides some of that local quirkiness."

"The *Going Local* strategy is partly about saying we want our properties to celebrate what's special about them, and we want to bring them to life in ways that are true to their own character."

In practice this means getting rid of barriers and Do Not Touch signs in the properties and presenting the stories of the buildings in a livelier way. In Upton House, in Warwickshire, for example, visitors arrive as if for a weekend in a country house – the fires are burning, music is playing and the visitors can sit on the chairs and drink cocktails. In other properties, stories are brought to life using actors in period costume.

"There have been accusations of dumbing down, but I don't believe we are dumbing down at all. I think there's a real integrity to what we're doing which I'm very proud of. I absolutely trust our people to get it right"

Properties are also being made available for community meetings and events, and local people are being involved in fundraising activities and decision-making. Last year the trust pledged to make 1,000 allotments available for local communities by 2012 as part of its Food, Glorious Food campaign.

"The allotments have been phenomenally successful," says Reynolds. "Last summer we gave away tomato plants and seeds to visitors and our gardeners gave out advice. It all helps to present a very different face of the trust."

Other initiatives include the Bonus Time campaign, which saw the trust open all of its properties for free during the weekend of 21 and 22 March.

The other part of the *Going Local* strategy is about decentralising control of the properties and allowing local managers the freedom to make their own decisions.

"We've just transferred about £35m from money that used to be held centrally into the properties' hands," says Reynolds. "They have more control over their own money, they can spend without

asking permission. We are also encouraging our people to be slightly less risk averse. They are all conscious that they look after very special places and the 'don't take any risks approach' has maybe gone a bit too far in some cases."

The public has, in the main, welcomed this approach, says Reynolds, although there has been some resistance.

"There are people, of course, that like to come to our properties and enjoy the very cerebral atmosphere and study the guide book, and don't want to have lots of people running around in costume or making a noise," she admits. "There have been accusations of dumbing down. But actually I don't believe we are dumbing down at all. All of this work is based on research, so the stories are all real stories, properly researched and all the artefacts and costumes are all properly made. I think there's a real integrity to it which I'm very proud of."

"There has also been some resistance in the form of people saying 'please don't trash these properties'. We're not talking about placing the properties at funda-

mental risk, just being a little bit more relaxed about the way we use them. I absolutely trust our people to get it right. Our staff and volunteers are so conscious of their responsibilities that I don't think that's a risk at all."

## Changing climate

As well as the *Go Local* strategy, the National Trust recently unveiled its energy document *Energy - Grow Your Own*. In this, it pledges to reduce the use of fossil fuel by 50 per cent by 2020, beating the government's target of 34 per cent.

"The National Trust works on the basis that we have properties and huge land holdings all around the country, and things happen as a result of a changing climate," says Reynolds. As such a huge land and property owner, we feel the effects of climate change more than most. It's not about temperature or sea level rising in a predictable way, it's about the damage caused by unpredictable events - the big floods, the dramatic coastal collapses on chalk cliffs in the south, or very hot, dry summers. Insects survive during mild winters and eat through incredibly precious textiles. These events have real, practical impacts.

"It's not that we can single-handedly stop climate change but we have to take it seriously and work out our response."

The strategy is twofold. Firstly it's about adaptation; managing the changes in a way that impacts the properties and landscapes as little as possible.

Secondly the trust is focusing heavily on reducing its carbon footprint, as set out in the *Energy - Grow Your Own* document, which explains how it plans to achieve its aim of cutting its reliance on fossil fuels. The initiative will involve the trust's entire building stock and will introduce micro and small scale energy



PHOTO: ©NT/STEPHEN JOHNSON

The trust is creating 1,000 new allotment plots for local communities

## HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL TRUST

1895

The National Trust is established by Octavia Hill, Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley and Sir Robert Hunter

1907

National Trust Act comes into force

1927

Stonehenge Down is bought after a national appeal

1931

The National Trust for Scotland is established

1937

The National Trust Act of 1937 enables the Trust to accept the gift of country houses, with endowments in land or capital which are free of tax

1953

The Queen Mother becomes president of the National Trust



PHOTO: ©NT/PAUL WATKINSON





schemes using wood fuel from the trust's estate, solar, heat pumps, hydro and wind. The trust also plans to install more than 50 new wood fuel boilers over the next five years.

As well as reducing carbon emissions, the initiative will also cut energy costs, says Reynolds – the trust currently spends around £6m a year on power and heating for its properties.

It's a huge challenge, and one which is made even more tricky by the need to ensure that the energy systems don't intrude aesthetically on the buildings on which they are installed. "We recognise that visitors to a medieval castle don't want to see photovoltaics, for example," says Reynolds. "In Dunster Castle we have managed to find a place to put them that is hidden from view, but you

**Biomass boilers are being installed in trust properties. They use wood chip from National Trust woodland**

can go up to the top of the castle and see them, and there are dials showing how much energy they are generating.

"Lots of these initiatives are win-win. We're transferring lots of oil boilers to wood chip. We've got the wood on our estate which provides the fuel, and it's good to coppice those woodlands, because it encourages wildlife. It's a really good example of how you can achieve multiple benefits by thinking carefully about how you do things."

The next 12 months look set to be extremely busy for Reynolds, with the

focus on putting the *Going Local* aims into practice, bringing the properties to life and holding 'meet the neighbours' events to get to know the local communities better.

The trust is also pushing to celebrate the outdoors, with initiatives such as downloadable walks on its website as well as the allotments and outdoor activities. "We want to be as well known for our coast and countryside as for our stately homes," she says. The outdoors is Reynolds' personal passion, and she spends much of her free time walking.

What about Reynolds' longer term aims? They are the same as the aims of the National Trust today, she says, which are the same as they were when it was launched in 1895: "To promote beautiful places, for everyone, for ever." ●

1968

First National Trust magazine



1970

The Trust begins to sell items such as tea towels at its properties, leading to the formation of National Trust Enterprises

1997

National Trust acquires part of Snowdon, thanks to the 'Save Snowdon' Appeal which was launched in 1990 by Sir Anthony Hopkins

2003

Prince Charles becomes president of National Trust

**HISTORY MATTERS**  
PASS IT ON

2006

The launch of the History Matters campaign

2010

The launch of the *Going Local* strategy, pledging to get closer to local communities

# culture SHOCK

All around the world,  
landmark cultural facilities  
are taking shape. Magali  
Robathan takes a look at  
tomorrow's museums, art  
galleries and music venues

**D**espite the global downturn, huge sums of money are still being poured into the major arts and culture projects of the future. Mammoth, exciting museums, concert halls and galleries are taking shape around the world and many are set to become architectural icons of the 21st century. Some of these have been delayed as a result of the economic climate – in some cases by several years – but when they do open these projects promise to be amazing.

We can't cover them all, of course, but here's a snapshot of the latest on some of the most exciting cultural projects set to open over the next few years.

## Museum of Liverpool, UK

Biggest new build British museum in a century

The much-anticipated Museum of Liverpool is taking shape on Mann Island, between the Albert Dock and Pier Head, and is set to open in spring 2011. It will be the biggest new-build national museum in Britain in more than 100 years.

The £72m building was designed by Danish architects 3XN but has been delivered by AEW Architects after 3XN were removed from the project in 2007. The museum will house exhibits from the National Museums Liverpool's entire collection, much of which is currently in storage. The story of Liverpool will be told via four galleries, each with a different theme: Creative City, Port City, Global City and People's City.

The Creative City gallery will include displays focusing on The Beatles and Merseyside's famous football clubs, while the Global City gallery will feature a 180-seat theatre showing work created by Liverpool artists. The People's City will explore the experience of living in Liverpool while Port City will look at how the city became one of the world's great ports.

The Museum of Liverpool replaces the Museum of Liverpool Life, which opened in 1993. The Museum of Liverpool Life was so successful that the waterfront building which housed it wasn't able to accommodate the sheer number of visitors and the idea to build a new museum was born.

The centre will feature  
three main galleries



## Centre Pompidou-Metz, France

French cultural centre nears completion

The Centre Pompidou's first decentralised cultural centre – the Centre Pompidou-Metz – is due to open in May 2010.

At the end of the 1990s, the Centre Pompidou's president decided to open another facility. Metz was chosen partly because of a lack of cultural resources in the area and partly thanks to its position near Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium and Switzerland.

The Centre Pompidou-Metz will run temporary exhibitions of modern and contemporary art, displaying works of art from the Centre Pompidou Museum of Modern Art's collection.

The building has been designed by Shigeru Ban and Jean de Gastines. It features three main galleries at different levels, each with huge picture windows looking out onto Metz landmarks.

IMAGE: SHIGERU BAN ARCHITECTS EUNOIE & JEAN DE GASTINES / ARTFACTORY



The Museum of  
Liverpool is under  
construction

IMAGE: CHILLIS MEDIA





The extension will allow more visitors

## Tate Modern extension, UK

New building to fulfill Tate Modern's potential

Swiss architects Herzog and de Meuron are behind the Tate Modern's £215m new extension, which has been designed to address the problems of overcrowding and strain on the museum's public facilities.

An average of 4.6 million people now visit every year – more than twice the numbers it was designed for – and the museum desperately needs more space.

The new extension will provide more than 5,000sq m of new gallery space including more flexible areas for major exhibitions, dedicated family areas with restaurants and cafés, a Children's Gallery and two new public squares. It will feature galleries for displaying photographs and works

on paper, as well as areas designed by young people for young people – 60 per cent of visitors to the Tate Modern are under 35.

The design of the extension was revised by Herzog and de Meuron in 2008 and the revised plans won planning permission in April 2009. The former power station's oil tanks are at the heart of the new plans – they are being retained as 'raw spaces' and the new building will rise from them. The building will feature a 'perforated' brick façade, allowing it to glow at night.

It will be visible from the north, and will rise behind the existing building when viewed from the river. It is hoped the new extension will be open by 2012.

## Bell Lightbox, Canada

New Toronto centre to celebrate film

Set to open this autumn, the Bell Lightbox in Toronto is the largest new cultural project in Canada for years, and will act as a permanent home for the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). It will be housed in the bottom five floors of a new 46 storey mixed use tower and will feature five cinemas, three galleries, three learning studios, restaurants, cafés,

theatres and meeting places. It will also have an open air amphitheatre on its roof for film screenings.

Designed by Toronto-based architects KPMB, it will feature a concrete canopy projecting over its main entrance. This will be punctuated with glass 'windows' that will create a spotlight effect, while moving images will be projected onto the pavement.

The Bell Lightbox will feature a large atrium



## Saint Louis Art Museum, US

Museum expansion project back on track

St Louis Art Museum announced in December that it will proceed with its expansion project following a year-long delay. Work on the \$130.5m expansion was originally due to start in late 2008, but was delayed due to the economic downturn.

Designed by London-based architects David Chipperfield, the expansion

will increase the museum's gallery and public space by 30 per cent and will provide new galleries, a new fully accessible entrance and a new car park. The new wing will be wrapped in full-height panels of concrete, glass and metal and will feature huge windows, providing views of the surrounding Forest Park.

## MAXXI, Italy

Zaha Hadid-designed museum set to open

Rome's National Museum of the 21st Century Arts, known as MAXXI, is opening in May. It will incorporate two new museums, MAXXI Art and MAXXI Architecture. MAXXI Art will explore 21st century art via exhibitions and events including conferences, documentaries, dance performances, music concerts and guided tours. MAXXI Architecture is Italy's first national museum of architecture and will look at both 20th and 21st century architecture.

The idea is that MAXXI will act as a campus; as well as exhibiting con-

MAXXI is opening in May



temporary works, it will provide a space to study and create new work.

Designed by Zaha Hadid, the building is a simple concrete and glass structure with the two separate

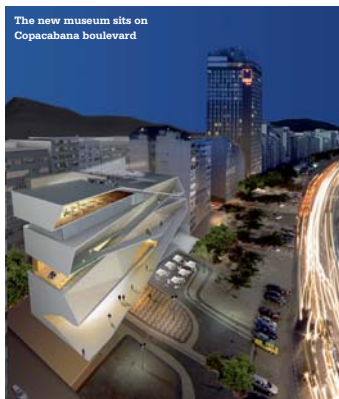
museums located around the full height grand hall which also links to the reception, café, bookshop, auditorium, library, event halls, temporary exhibitions and educational

spaces. The building has a transparent roof, allowing lots of natural light in.

The project was launched by the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities for Italy in 1998.

IMAGE: IWAN BAAN

The new museum sits on Copacabana boulevard



## Museum of Image & Sound, Brazil

New museum to help improve Rio's image

New York architects Diller Scofidio + Renfro are behind the design of the new home for Rio's Museum of Image and Sound, which is due to open in 2011.

The existing Museum of Image and Sound is in the city centre and houses a huge collection of Brazilian music, photographs, videos, posters, films and newspaper archives.

The new museum will explore the history of Brazilian music and film and will feature galleries, education rooms, an auditorium, a piano bar, a café, a restaurant and a rooftop cinema.

The architects used Copacabana boulevard – where the new museum is situated – as inspiration. The museum's entrance has been designed to act as an extension of the famous boulevard. A path leads from the seafront to the museum and zigzags externally up the building's six storeys, offering views of the beach and ocean.

It will be built on the site of Discoteca Help, an infamous nightclub that became notorious for prostitution and drug dealing. The museum is part of a plan to clean up the city's image before the 2014 World Cup.

IMAGE: COURTESY OF DILLER SCOFIDIO + RENFRO

## National Museum of African American History and Culture, US

Construction of Washington museum of African American history due to start in 2012

The architectural team Freelon Adjaye Bond and Smith Group were chosen last year to design the Washington National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC).

The museum is set to

open in 2015, and the total cost is estimated to be \$500m. It will be located on the National Mall near the Washington Monument.

The NMAAHC was established in 2003 by an Act of Congress. It has no premises, but conducts

seminars and conferences, creates travelling exhibitions and is currently collecting artefacts designed to bring to life the major periods of African American history. It has its own gallery in the National Museum of African History.

The museum is part of the Smithsonian Institution and will be the only national museum devoted to documenting African American life, history, art and culture.

The design team is currently working on the building design [see p38].

Herzog and de Meuron used the water as inspiration for the wave-shaped roof



## Elbphilharmonie, Germany

**Concert hall to put Hamburg on the map**

Under construction on Hamburg's waterfront, the Elbphilharmonie concert venue is the anchor of a major new structure

by Herzog and de Meuron. The ambitious aim of the project is to create one of the best concert auditoriums in the world. Herzog and

de Meuron's structure will house three concert halls, a hotel, apartments, a plaza featuring restaurants and bars and a wellness area.

The core of the building is an old cocoa bean warehouse. The glazed upper

levels rise from the brick foundations up to a wave-shaped roof, which mirrors the water below.

The main hall will seat 2,150 and will host a mix of classical, jazz, world music and pop concerts.



Visitors will be able to walk behind the museum's stone facade



## Grand Egyptian Museum, Egypt

**Museum to provide backdrop to pyramids**

One of the world's largest museum development projects, the \$550m Grand Egyptian Museum near the pyramids in Giza, is set to provide a massive boost for Egypt's tourism industry once it launches. It's currently due to open in 2013.

Designed by Dublin-based architects Heneghan Peng, the museum will feature 30,000sq m of exhibition space devoted to Egyptian history. It will also house an 800 seat auditorium, a conference facility and a library. The planners are expecting it to attract 4.8 million visitors a year.

The museum will be set in a 50 hectare site with gardens designed to act

as parks for visitors and locals, as well as two restaurants, ticketing facilities, cafés and a large conservation and energy centre for restoring artefacts.

The architects had the tough job of designing a landmark building that wouldn't compete with the nearby pyramids.

The main façade of the museum is a dramatic, translucent stone wall formed of a series of triangles creating a geometric pattern. Inside, the museum features a giant lobby, with an enormous staircase leading to the various galleries. A 121-tonne statue of Rameses will stand in the courtyard.

A new home is planned for the Miami Art Museum



IMAGE: GHERZOG & DE MEURON. VISUALIZATION BY ARTFACTORY/LAB

## Miami Art Museum, US

**Plans unveiled, but is the project in trouble?**

In October, Herzog and de Meuron unveiled design plans for the new \$220m Miami Art Museum. The new facility, set to replace the existing Miami Art Museum, includes 200,000sq ft of programmable space – more than three times the size of the museum's current facility. It is

the anchor for the new 40 acre Museum Park, which is seeing the underused Bicentennial Park completely redeveloped.

The new Miami Art Museum will also house an educational complex with a library, auditorium, classrooms and workshops, as well as a café and a shop.

The three storey building will sit on an elevated platform and below a canopy, which will create shaded plazas. Vegetation will be built into the columns supporting the canopy, as part of a strategy to 'bring the park into the museum'.

The new museum is currently scheduled to open in 2013. It is, however, behind schedule and short on funding, and recent head-

lines have suggested the project could be in trouble.

Assuming all goes to plan, the Miami Art Museum will share Museum Park with Miami Science Museum and Planetarium (MiaSci).

The project began in 2000 when the Miami Art Museum and the Miami Museum of Science teamed up to create a proposal for Bicentennial Park.

The opera house is now due to open later this year

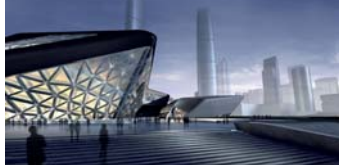


IMAGE COURTESY OF ZAHA HADID ARCHITECTS

## Guangzhou Opera House, China

**Major new theatre delayed by fire**

Due to open last year, the launch of China's Guangzhou Opera House was pushed back after the site went up in flames in May 2009. The building, which will incorporate a 1,800-seat grand theatre, a multipurpose hall, an entrance lobby and café and restaurant facilities, is now due to open later this year. It is expected to be one of the three biggest theatres in China.

The 70,000sq m Opera House was designed by Zaha Hadid, and resembles two giant boulders sitting on the banks of the Pearl River. The building will open out onto the riverside and docks area, with the towers of Guangzhou's Zhujiang New Town providing a dramatic backdrop.

Guangzhou city officials are hoping that the building will put the city on the cultural and architectural map.

## Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi

**Work has started on Cultural District**

In Issue 1 2009, *Leisure Management* reported on the development of Saadiyat Island, part of Abu Dhabi's plans to position itself as the cultural hub of the Middle East.

Saadiyat Island is located 500m off the coast of Abu Dhabi. Its Cultural District will feature new branches of the

Guggenheim and Louvre museums as well as a performing arts centre, a maritime museum and the Zayed National Museum.

Construction started on the Louvre Abu Dhabi in May 2009. The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi and the Zayed National Museum are both due to open in 2012/2013.

## San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, US

**SFMOMA considering list of architects**

The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) is planning to build a new wing which will treble its gallery space. The project is still in the early stages, with SFMOMA currently working up a detailed business plan for the expansion.

The new wing will

house contemporary artworks from the huge private collection of Doris and the late Donald Fisher (founder of the Gap clothing chain) alongside art from the museum's collection. The collaboration with the Fishers was announced by SFMOMA in September 2009.

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The exhibits are lit using natural light as much as possible



## Bernard Tschumi

Protecting precious archaeological remains was a major challenge when creating the New Acropolis Museum, as Bernard Tschumi tells Kath Hudson

### When and how was your architectural practice established?

Bernard Tschumi Architects was founded in 1982 with the winning competition entry for the Parc de la Villette, a 125-acre park with cultural facilities in the north-western part of Paris.

### What is your approach to architecture?

In architecture, there is often too much emphasis on what a building looks like, rather than what it does.

### How did you get involved with the New Acropolis Museum?

A former employee brought the architectural competition to our attention, and we were shortlisted along with other architects including Daniel Libeskind and Arata Isozaki. We learned of the jury's decision in September 2001.

We were given a brief to create a single building designed explicitly to house the sculptures, archaeological treasures and architectural details found in and around the Acropolis. Unlike many museum projects, this already had a distinct and dramatic collection. The design was created explicitly for those artworks.

### What was your inspiration for the design?

In all of my work, I am interested in the relationship between architecture and the people who inhabit the buildings. For the New Acropolis Museum, there was a desire to create a very clear path through the museum that would represent a narrative journey through the history of the Acropolis.

### What sustainable/eco features were incorporated in the design?

It's not easy to create a green museum because of curators' strict requirements regarding conservation. We were, however, able to use architectural solutions relying on natural light, open

spaces, and an innovative double-glazed façade that makes it easy to recycle and filter the conditioned air. Technologically advanced glass also helped energy efficiency.

### How did you design the museum so that natural light could be used?

The organisation of the museum allowed for natural light at the core of the building and in all of the gallery spaces through skylights, glazed façades, and even glass floors. For a collection designed to be viewed in daylight, it was important to recreate those conditions as much as possible.

### What was the biggest challenge and how did you overcome it?

There were three major challenges in designing the museum. Firstly there was the site, which was covered in precious archaeological remains that couldn't be disturbed. Secondly its location provided a challenge – just 300m from the Parthenon, one of the most recognised buildings in all of western civilization. Finally part of the collection that the building is designed around is currently being exhibited in the British Museum.

### What element of the finished project do you feel most proud of?

The biggest achievement of the museum is the way the building establishes a dialogue over centuries and provides a bridge between the ancient and the contemporary.

### You are currently working on the Alesia Museum in France? What stage is this project at?

The Alesia Museum consists of a museum and interpretive center on the site of a historic siege between Julius Caesar's army and the Gauls in 52BC. Construction of the Interpretive Center has been going on for about 10 months.





ALL IMAGES BERNARD TSCHUMI ARCHITECTS

**The building was constructed primarily from glass, concrete and steel. It sits just 300m from the Parthenon (above)**

### THE NEW ACROPOLIS MUSEUM

Opened in June 2009, The Acropolis Museum exhibits almost 4,000 artefacts found on the archaeological site of the Acropolis of Athens, dating from the Greek Bronze Age to Roman and Byzantine Greece.

The redevelopment of the museum

has been in the pipeline since the mid-1970s, but issues with the site's location delayed the progress.

Bernard Tschumi Architects with Michael Photiadis ARSY won the fourth architectural competition in 2001, with plans which elevated

the building above the ground on pillars. The ground floor is glass in places to reveal the archaeological excavations below.

Collections are exhibited on three levels. A fourth middle level houses the shop, café and offices.

The project called for a museum, set into the hill, and an interpretive center, on the plain below the hill, with battlement recreations that help explain and inform the historic site's significance for visitors.

### How did you ensure the museum wouldn't detract from the site?

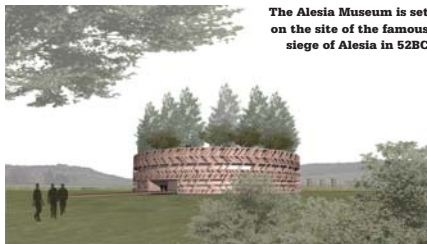
By taking on the deliberately generic shape of a cylinder for both buildings and by using two different local materials for each exterior, the project both enhances and defers to the site.

### You've been working on the design of a concert hall and cultural centre in Bordeaux-Cenon. What will this offer?

The project features two large performance halls, one suitable for intimate concerts, theatre or dance, and a larger venue for rock concerts and large-scale performances.

The design for the centre features a folded roof, which covers the project and forms a common denominator for all of the spaces within it. Circulation is marked by dark glass avenues that weave around the performance volumes.

The building is currently under construction and should open to the public sometime this year.



**The Alesia Museum is set on the site of the famous siege of Alesia in 52BC**

### What other leisure projects are you working on?

We are currently designing an African American Museum and Cultural Center near Washington DC [see Arts and Culture round up feature on p32 for more details of this] and are also working on a complete redesign of Paris Zoo. [The Parc Zoologique de Paris in Paris' Vincennes woods has been closed since 2008 for major reconstruction work. The project is due to be completed by 2014.] ●



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# ACROSS THE BOARD

From getting protesters on side to England's World Cup bid, three of leisure's top consultants tell us about the exciting projects they've been working on

## TORKILDSEN BARCLAY

**Project: Barn Elms  
outdoor sports club**

### **What's been the most interesting project you've worked on recently?**

One of the longest running projects Torkildsen Barclay has been involved in is finally coming to a conclusion. The Barn Elms outdoor sports complex in Richmond upon Thames is a thriving hub of sporting activity with a Charter Mark football club attracting hundreds of young players. It is also used for rugby, cricket, tennis, angling and athletics.

The facility is used by schools, clubs and casual users. However, the poor condition of its facilities belies the significant sporting outcomes being achieved.

### **When did you get involved?**

In 2003, Torkildsen Barclay was engaged to help the council, users and local stakeholders to assess the potential for the transfer of another multi-sports club to Barn Elms, together with the capital from the possible sale of their site. The aim was to use the investment to create a significantly improved facility, including a major new clubhouse and pavilion. After a year the proposals proved impractical, but the aspiration was there.

In 2006, the council decided to pursue the option of enabling development on 'white land' within Barn Elms to create the funding for new facilities. Our role was to work closely with the users and stakeholders to create a development brief for a community sports complex.

The project was fraught with environmental difficulties and sensitivities, not

least because the site was close to a national bird sanctuary.

As the white land development brief was prepared, a group of local residents became increasingly vocal, not wishing to see any part of the site developed for commercial purposes, and putting forward their own fundraising proposals.

### **What did you advise?**

With advice from Torkildsen Barclay, the council decided in 2008 to postpone the pursuit of the enabling development and work in partnership with local residents and users to see whether alternative funding was practical.

Over the past two years a wide range of financing options have been explored. The local community group has been able to seek funding routes not open to the local authority. Everyone is working together, and through the hard work of the community, the users, the council and its advisers, a range of funding sources has been lined up. These include national governing bodies, local charitable trusts, school investment, council capital and community fundraising.

A planning application for the new pavilion and site improvements will soon be submitted and the final funding applications will also be made.

### **Why was this project so exciting?**

The project has demonstrated that the collective energies of public, sporting and community bodies working together can find creative solutions to long term problems that, on their own, no individual party would have been able to resolve.

### **What else have you been working on?**

Torkildsen Barclay is currently advising Exeter City Council on the tendering of its leisure management contract and the Shenley Leisure Centre Trust on the appointment of a new chief executive. We've also been working on the economic assessment of proposals for a major sports city in Saudi Arabia.



**Barn Elms Sports Hub in Richmond upon Thames**

PICTURE COURTESY OF AD ARCHITECTS



## STRATEGIC LEISURE

**Project: Review of National Governing Body of Sport Funding Process**

### What's been your most interesting recent project?

Strategic Leisure was commissioned to review the 2009-2013 National Governing Body of Sport (NGB) funding process. The seven stage funding process was developed in response to the new Sport England Strategy 2008-2011, which advocated an enhanced role for NGBs and an outcome-focused approach to Sport England investment.

The aim is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of this new method and highlight any areas for improvement. The review also involved identification of learning points to be reflected in subsequent funding processes.

The overall project facilitated the development of 46 plans to deliver against the new Sport England Outcomes.

The final report was signed off by Sport England in January 2010.

### Why was this project so exciting?

It provided us with the opportunity to review very recent policy changes in relation to the UK sporting infrastructure through the new role of NGBs.

### What was your role?

Strategic Leisure's role was to review the funding process through research and consultation, to establish the NGB perspective of this new method.

The research gathered views and perceptions from all 46 NGBs involved in the process via an e-survey, telephone interviews and a series of discussion groups.

Consultation was also conducted with a number of other stakeholders involved in the process. This comprised telephone interviews with national partner agencies tasked with providing support to NGBs, and Sport England representatives.

Our role was to analyse the findings of the review, and develop a detailed study

report. This included recommendations on 10 key areas, covering timescale, training on use of specific participation tools, production and dissemination of information. These were approved by Sport England in early February 2009.

### What was the biggest challenge?

Ensuring engagement from all 46 NGBs was a challenge. This was achieved and has contributed to clear recommendations for future funding processes.

Strategic Leisure also consulted with a number of national partners to get their views on the overall funding process.

A further challenge was to analyse the data collected and rationalise it in terms of recommendations. To do this, we categorised feedback into three main areas: issues affecting all NGBs; issues affecting some NGBs; and issues which were a factor of the overall process, but not material to its focus. The review's recommendations focus on the first two categories, which highlighted the need for change and development of specific elements of the overall process.

### What else are you working on?

We are doing a number of PPG17 audits and assessments, and are developing the Green Infrastructure Strategy for the new Northumberland unitary authority. Planning work includes a sports facility strategy for Leeds Metropolitan University; an evaluation of the agreement between the Sports Council for Wales and Disability Sport Wales; and a Physical Activity Plan for Herts CSP.

International work includes development of a National Football Strategy for Hong Kong and a Yachting Strategy for the Oman Ministry of Tourism.



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## CONSULTANCY



Wembley would be used if London won the bid

### pmplegacy

**Project: England's  
2018/2022 World Cup bid**

#### What is the most exciting project you've worked on recently?

pmplegacy is currently supporting England's bid to host the 2018 or 2022 FIFA World Cup. The team was involved in the city selection process and has since been retained to contribute to the development of the overall candidature file, creating a compelling bid and highlighting the key attributes of each of the 12 selected candidate host cities. The aim is, of course, to create a compelling case for England's submission, which will be presented to FIFA in May this year.

The decision on the two hosts for the 2018 and 2022 tournaments will be made in December 2010.

#### How were the potential cities chosen?

The city selection process involved visiting and working with 16 cities across England as part of England 2018's team of technical advisors. An evaluation matrix was developed allowing each city to be reviewed against hundreds of criteria including elements such as the technical capabilities of each stadium, each city's visitor and leisure offer and the quality of its grassroots football development proposals.

The timescales for all involved in the city selection were very tight. Huge amounts of information had to be compiled and reviewed to create bid

documents for each city containing hundreds of pages of carefully detailed information. The 12 potential host cities were selected in December 2009 to be a part of England's final bid.

#### What made this project so exciting?

As Christian Nelson, one of the consultants who worked on the bid, put it: "Working on the England bid is a combination of all the best elements of being a consultant – meeting interesting people and working on something which will have a genuine impact. Plus it's the FIFA World Cup! Playing a part in winning the world's best event would be fantastic."

#### What else are you working on?

pmplegacy is currently working with the British Equestrian Institute on the feasibility of a national equestrian centre and with England Netball on a feasibility study of their potential bid to host the England 2015 World Netball Championships. We also hosted the international legacy conference Legacy Lives at the start of March. The conference looked in detail at the potential legacy benefits of major sporting events across sport, art, tourism, economic development and regeneration, volunteering, schools and young people.

pmplegacy is the major events division of sport and leisure consultancy pmpgenesis. Based in London, the organisation has a track record of working in over 30 countries worldwide. We have 20 years' experience helping cities, local organising committees and national federations bid, win, plan and deliver major sporting events. ●

As we inch out of recession, sport and leisure can act as a catalyst for economic recovery with the right government support, says BISL chairman David Teasdale



## GROWING THE MARKET

**G**rowing the market. Now there's a challenging title, in the light of present economic conditions. As I write, national figures show a 0.1 per cent growth rate; hardly the 'recession is over' clarion call we all seek. The British economy will recover during the course of this year, but recovery will be slow. That's the view of the private sector in sport and leisure that I speak and write for, as BISL chairman.

People stop and ask me: What is BISL all about? After 25 years, I find the question surprising, but also motivating. Such enquiries indicate that BISL still has a way to go to achieve the recognition that it deserves. Let me answer the question, and then deal with the actions needed to get real growth back into the UK sport and leisure market.

BISL represents the private sector. We stand alongside organisations including the CCPR and Youth Sport Trust; trade bodies like the British Beer & Pub Association and British Hospitality Association; and government bodies like Sport England and UK Sport. BISL is a member body. Our members represent a 'broad church', from gambling companies to sports governing bodies; from operators to accountants. BISL is committed to growing the market on behalf of its members and the private sector generally. Because part of this involves getting more people participating in sport and physical activity, BISL has common interests with many other organisations. Sport England, for example, recognises that it should work with the private sector as well as local government and sports governing bodies in order to hit its target of getting a million people doing more sport.

### OUR INDUSTRY CAN HELP

This year, growing the market sounds to some like a daunting challenge. We're just creeping out of the toughest recession for many years. There's a General Election ahead, with political change anticipated. The new government will have little money available to help kick start the economy.

There is some good news though. Sport and leisure is one of the bankers for the new government. We are a relatively young industry, with a great growth record and built-in national demand. Why? Because people have more leisure time and they look for our industry's products and services to fill it. Because the UK has a fine national tradition of gaming and of pubs and restaurants and cafés being an important



**We need to focus on getting our products and services right, to encourage demand. Let's make it easy and fun for people to come through our doors. Great customer service must be everyone's goal**

part of their communities. The obesity crisis also plays a part. Central and local government need to act with leisure and sport providers to get more people more active. Then there's the 'decade of sport' – starting with London 2012, we'll see big events with a big capacity to encourage the population to do more sport. The experiential economy is also good news, with experts predicting that in the next few decades we will spend more of our money on experiences.

All of these trends and opportunities indicate that the sport and leisure market will continue to grow. But what can we do to accelerate the process?

We need to focus on getting our products and services right, to encourage and meet demand. Let's make it easy and fun for people to come through our doors. Swimming sets a good example with its national drive for culture change in our pools. Great customer service must be everyone's goal.

We must also work together. Public, private and voluntary bodies must all give the same messages about community activity and enjoyment and health.

Here at BISL we say to government, work with us, not against us, and you will see recovery. Regulation is the enemy of growth. Taxation hits pricing and investment.

Let's please have the listening government we ask for in our BISL manifesto. Sport and leisure is one of the main markets for that national growth we are all seeking. ●



# The Pub Market

With high taxes, the smoking ban and fierce competition hitting the pub industry, some have predicted the death of the British boozer. Yet the real picture is not nearly as gloomy, says Matthew Goodman



**D**epending on which landlord you ask, running a pub in Britain today is either the best job in the world or the worst.

Glance through the press and you would be given the impression that there are a lot more in the latter camp than the former. It is not hard to work out why. A so-called perfect storm of higher taxes,

red tape, cut-price competition from supermarkets and the smoking ban have all combined to impact pubs. Popular wisdom has it that there are few industries that are having it much tougher than the good old-fashioned British boozer. And yet...

Reading the recent run of trading statements and financial results from the majority of pub companies, you would be hard pushed to wonder what all the fuss is about. The top performers, such as JD Wetherspoon and Mitchells & Butlers – which has had more than its fair share of boardroom issues to handle at the same time as running its pubs – are holding up very well through the recession. Many operators are reporting sales growth. The word is that even for the tenanted pub giants, which have suffered the most over the past year or two, business is starting to stabilise, although this has yet to be reflected in the financial results they release to the stock market.

Some observers wonder how long the run of positive news

flow can last, and there are plenty who think that consumer spending, which held up surprisingly well in 2009, will come crashing back to earth this year. After the General Election, taxes will almost certainly rise, and interest rates are unlikely to be too far behind. With unemployment also expected to climb, the short term outlook is far from healthy.

## STILL IN DEMAND

Despite the challenges, there's still strong demand among pub companies to buy quality sites. The market for pub properties has taken a big hit over the past year or two, but for the right outlet in the right location, prices are holding up.

Tim Martin, the chairman and founder of JD Wetherspoon, reckons that values have fallen about 30 per cent from peak to trough. JD Wetherspoon has completed a number of astute deals to add to its portfolio of around 760 pubs.

Indeed, as with residential property, the market got overheated. London is one part of the country where demand continues to ensure prices remain high. Ian Edward, a non-executive director at the Geronimo Inns pub group, says: "There is a lot of competition for freehold sites in London. Everyone, from Greene King to Fuller's and Young's, is keen as mustard on buying them. The market is very strong."

In part, the strength of demand was driven by Punch Taverns' move last year to sell a number of its best freehold locations to



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There's no shortage of people out there who want to run a pub. As long as that remains the case, valuations are likely to hold up no matter how gloomy the economic picture remains

**Pub groups reacted angrily to what was seen as a steep rise in tax on wine, beer and spirits in the 2010 Budget**





**Mitchells & Butlers is one of several large pub chains that has reported better than expected results**

raise money to pay down part of its outstanding debt. Pubs came up for sale that many rivals described as just too good to pass up.

Ralph Findlay, CEO of Martson's, says: "There is still competition for good assets." This is reflected in the valuations that are being paid. Punch has been able to dispose of some of its top sites at a multiple of about 13 times their earnings, a level that would not have been out of place during the boom years.

## THE TAIL END OF THE MARKET

Where the market has been hit harder is the pubs that make up the 'tail' – those deemed non-core – for the large tenanted pub companies. In the past, groups such as Admiral Taverns have been built by snapping up those pubs regarded as surplus to requirements by the larger tenanted operators.

But the companies that were doing these deals have been hardest hit by the recession and are no longer in the market bidding up such assets. Admiral, for example, which was bankrolled by Lloyds Banking Group, has undergone a debt-for-equity swap, with its main lender taking a big stake in the business in exchange for agreeing to reducing its loans.

Values were underpinned by sites' suitability for alternative use – most commonly, being converted into homes – but with the residential market in such disarray, this has diminished, having a knock-on effect on demand for bottom-end pubs.

There are signs, though, that even this end of the sector may have started to recover. Towards the end of last year, property agent Christie & Co put 300 pubs from Punch Taverns' 'turn-around division' up for sale, and reported a strong level of interest. Neil Morgan, the agent's head of pubs and restaurants, estimates that

more than 60 per cent of the sites that it has sold will continue to trade as pubs rather than face conversion.

Similarly, Enterprise Inns has been raising funds through sale-and-leaseback deals on small parcels of pubs from its 7,400-strong estate. At the time of writing, it had just announced the sale of eight sites through an auction, raising more than £8m. This followed the sale towards the end of 2009 of three separate packages of pubs, raising £35m. Much of the money raised will be used to pay down company debt, and further auctions are planned. Christie & Co has said the level of interest has led to the prices being paid for these kinds of pubs stabilising. Both companies have indicated that the size of their estates could shrink further as they continue to sell pubs.

As the CEO of one large pub company says: "There's no shortage of people out there who want to run a pub." And as long as that remains the case, valuations are likely to hold up however gloomy the economic picture. ●

*Matthew Goodman is a business journalist at The Sunday Times*

# Sustainable Stockholm

**I**t has 12,000 hectares of green space, and 800 km of cycle lanes. There's a national park in its centre, it is pedestrian and public-transport-friendly, and its hospitality industry is an eco-conscious traveller's dream. Stockholm is a model example of sustainability, and this year the city is sharing its experience with the world as the first European Green Capital.

"We have a great opportunity to have a dialogue with Stockholmers and the businesses and visitors that come to Stockholm," says vice mayor Kristina Alvald, who heads Stockholm's city planning division. And the city isn't stopping there: there are plans to continue decreasing the city's environmental impact until it's fossil fuel-free by 2050.

Stockholm has a proud tradition of environmental awareness. "I think it originates from our closeness to green

The Scandinavian city with plans to go fossil-fuel free by 2050 has been named the first European Green Capital. Andrea Jezovit investigates how environmental awareness in Stockholm's leisure and hospitality sectors is helping the city meet its goal

areas," says Alvald. "And the fact that Stockholm actually lies on water—it's a city on islands. With that closeness to nature, I suppose it's in our blood."

This awareness has led to achievements that won over the European Commission in its Green Capital decision. In 1990, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 5.4 tonnes per Stockholmer were registered, but the city's climate action plan



PHOTO: HENRIK TRYG - STOCKHOLM VISITORS BOARD

## Stockholm launched its successful bicycle borrow and return project in 2006

has reduced this by 25 percent, with plans to reduce them further. A congestion charge discourages car-use, green vehicles are encouraged, and there's an effi-

cient public transport system, which 80 percent of the city's 800,000 residents use daily. All city-owned buildings are being made more energy efficient, and innovative waste and water management have been made a priority.

## GREEN SPACE GALORE

Stockholm's management of parks and green space sets a world-class example. Public green space makes up 47 per cent of the city and 90 per cent of residents live no further than 300m from a park or green area, a guideline built into new developments as the city grows, Alvald says. Stockholmers love their parks—according to one study, 60 per cent of residents visit a park or green space several times per week in the summer.

The city's 27sq km national park, Ekoparken, became the world's first national urban park when it was established in 1994. It boasts a number of rare species, the densest population of giant oak trees in Europe and hundreds of protected buildings, including museums and palaces. Today it's the most frequented urban park and tourist destination in Sweden, as well as a conservation area protecting biodiversity for future generations. And it's not the region's only protected area: Stockholm county as a whole boasts over 200 nature reserves,



IMAGE: ROYAL SEAPORT/AX ARCHITECTUR AB

## The Royal Seaport scheme could feature an opera house



PHOTO: NICHOLAS SOULING - STOCKHOLM VISITORS BOARD

## The European Green Capital Award

The European Commission presents this annual award to a European city with a record of great environmental achievements, ambitious goals for further improvements and the ability to promote best practices to other cities. In 2009, eight finalists for the new award were selected from a pool of applicants and evaluated: Amsterdam, Bristol, Copenhagen, Freiburg, Hamburg, Münster, Oslo and Stockholm. The evaluation panel awarded the 2010 title to Stockholm, and 2011 title to Hamburg.



including two national parks, for a total of 35,000 hectares of protected land. The city has also taken action to safeguard its 24 bathing beaches: in 2008, legislation introduced new standards for bathing water, and Stockholm is famed for the pristine swimming and fishing it offers.

Cycling has become just as much a part of Stockholm life as green space. In 2007, the city was honoured as 'The Biking Promoting City of the Year', and it aims to become one of the leading biking cities in Europe. It's well on its way—the number of cyclists in the city has increased by 70 percent in the last five years, and today 100,000 people ride their bikes daily across the 800km of cycle lanes. Alvsdal cites the success of the Stockholm City Bikes programme, run by the city in conjunction with Clear Channel, as one reason for the influx of new cyclists; it allows pass-holders to borrow and return bicycles from 70 sites around the city. Twenty-four hour service depots are also located along important

cycling lanes, and the number of lanes is set to grow. "That's part of the overall strategy for Stockholm's growth," Alvsdal says. "We know people will continue taking their bike and the more Stockholmers we have, the more need there is for this sort of transport. So we have a programme for new bike lanes in the city as new developments are built."

### A NEW GREEN DISTRICT

Stockholm's next major development is one of Europe's largest regeneration projects, and is ambitious not just in scale but in terms of sustainability. Set for completion in 2025, the SEK20bn (£1.86bn), 660-acre Royal Seaport will contain 10,000 new apartments, 30,000 new work spaces, a cultural district and a revamped harbour, on the site of a brownfield industrial area beside the Ekoparken national park. And, as one of 18 developments around the world involved in the Clinton Foundation's Climate Positive Development pro-

gramme, the new community will not only be fossil fuel-free, but will also strive to reduce emissions to below zero.

The city already has experience constructing one world-famous sustainable community—Hammarby Sjöstad, a new residential district for 35,000 with strict environmental requirements on buildings, waste and traffic. "We're now taking the next step, based on our experiences with Hammarby Sjöstad," says Royal Seaport environmental strategist Tomas Gustafsson. "We're talking very energy efficient buildings; separation and sorting of waste; and sustainable transport, which includes public transport, bike lanes, walking lanes, buses driven by biogas, and city rail. We're talking about using organic waste to produce biogas which will be used to drive the cars."

Measures will be taken to integrate the community with Ekoparken in a safe way. Ecological corridors will be constructed to allow different species to move between the park and green spaces



within the development, old oak trees will be protected, and the closest homes to the park will be carefully distanced and feature height restrictions to better integrate them into the surrounding nature.

The new cultural district will be situated in the site's old gasworks area, home to 100-year-old heritage buildings, and will include an opera house and a museum or gallery, both of which are still in the initial planning stages.

Creating green cultural buildings is something Stockholm is already focused on, however. Beginning last year, the Stockholm cultural administration's 'Climatesmart Culture' programme has overseen a number of accomplishments, including installing LED lighting in areas of the City Museum of Stockholm and Kulturskolan, a city-run arts centre; work on waste management; and an application for the EU's Climate Change, Monuments & Heritage project, which aims to increase the energy efficiency of historic buildings while preserving them.

Solar cells have also been added to the roof of Kulturhuset, a city-owned cultural venue which has also recently opened an environmental-themed café and exhibition space, Ekoteket.

#### GREEN HOSPITALITY

Separate from the council's initiatives, Stockholm's hospitality industry has embraced sustainability and is working to follow strict environmental guidelines and contribute to a greener city.

In particular, green has become the norm for hotel chains in Stockholm—as well as across Sweden and Scandinavia. The fact that several major new Stockholm hotel developments will operate with an eye to sustainability is just business as usual. Scandic, which currently operates 18 properties in the city, will launch its new flagship location, the Scandic Grand Central, in a 100-year-old former office building in 2011. The property will be renovated to include Scandic's regular environmental stand-

#### **The Radisson Blu Waterfront Hotel (glass building on left of image) will be cooled using lake water**

ards for Sweden, such as district heating based on renewable energy, advanced waste separation, energy-efficient insulation and water-conserving showers.

Scandic, which is based in Stockholm and operates 139 hotels around the Nordic region and northern Europe, began its environmental programme in the 1990s, looking to promote energy efficiency as a way of saving costs. Today, it's one of the industry's leading sustainability programmes and has come to define the company. "We could never stop with this because there would be a revolution within the company," says Inger Mattsson, Scandic's manager of sustainable business. "It's really become a part of company culture."

Since 1996, Scandic has cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per guest per night by 78 percent, energy consumption per guest per night by 31 percent, water consumption per guest per night by 22 percent, and unsorted waste per guest per night by 40 percent. Each hotel compares consumption figures with others monthly, and all staff members receive extensive environmental training. A big effort is made to solicit green ideas from all staff, which has been important, Mattsson, says. In 1994, one staff member suggested not changing towels every night for long stay guests. "That's become an industry standard," says Mattsson.

Like Stockholm, Scandic has big ambitions for going fos-



**Operakällaren restaurant has been awarded the Nordic Swan eco label**







PHOTO: ÅKE E. SÖN LINDMAN

sil fuel-free—the chain hopes to achieve this at its hotels by 2025, but it will be a big challenge. “Quite a lot of it is out of our hands. Take district heating—how do we influence society and suppliers in 10 different countries to deliver district heating based only on renewable energy?” Mattsson, says. “I do believe we’ll manage, but it will be tough.”

Reizidor has also long worked on sustainability in its Nordic hotels. The Radisson Blu Waterfront Hotel & Stockholm Waterfront Congress Centre, set to open in January 2011, will include some interesting environmental innovations. The hotel’s glass façades will double as 1,040sq m solar collectors and gather 1 MW of energy daily, the equivalent of 90,000 normal low energy bulbs. The building will be cooled by lake water stored in 250 tonnes of ice tanks in the basement and 20,000sq m of material from the building previously occupying the site is being reused in construction.

Reizidor’s Arlandia and Sky City hotels, located in Sigtuna Arlanda near Stockholm’s airport, are both participants in Respect Europe’s Climate Neutral Enterprise programme, and have brought their remaining emissions down to zero by supporting Clean Development Mechanism projects around the world; and each of Reizidor’s Swedish hotels has been certified by the Nordic Swan eco-label. Scandic’s properties, along with Stockholm hotels operated by Rica,

**At the Scandic Anglais guests are given a reusable bottle to fill with water and can borrow bikes for free**

Sheraton, Choice Hotels and Nobis AB, have also been certified by Swan in recent years. “The Nordic Swan is much stricter than other environmental labels,” says regional Radisson Blu coordinator Sabina Helmersson. “This has caused us to reconsider some of our operational procedures, such as energy level consumption per room and waste management. We wouldn’t have been willing to explore this change without the influence of an eco-label.”

Operakällaren, a Michelin-starred Stockholm restaurant operated by Nobis AB, recently became Sweden’s first gourmet restaurant to receive the Swan label. Nobis Hotel Stockholm MD Claes Anerud says it’s a challenge—requirements concerning energy, electricity, water, chemical usage and waste must be met. “You also have to commit to buying a certain percentage of ecological farmed products and locally produced product. That’s not always as easy when you’re in the middle of a large city,” he says.

Another Stockholm restaurant, Rosendals Trädgård, takes a different approach to sustainability. The café has a garden and greenhouses where organic fruits and vegetables are grown; all leftovers are composted, and anything that can’t be grown onsite is sourced locally.

“Swedes, and Stockholm residents in particular, are very keen on all things eco, so in the past few years quite a few restaurants and bakeries here have joined the movement,” managing director Maria Bergkvist Vordstedt says.

**GREEN TRAVELLER’S PARADISE**

With all the green hotels, green restaurants and inviting green spaces, the Stockholm Visitors Board is actively promoting Stockholm as a green city, with a number of environmental-themed events. The city is hosting an Earth Hour conference and free concert, as well as the International Water Prize, and June’s huge Love Stockholm 2010 festival will feature a Stockholm pavilion showcasing the green city. “There’s no green festival as such, because Stockholm is always a green city; it’s our way of living,” says Stockholm Visitors Board PR manager Ann-Charlotte Jansson.

The first official European Green Capital Conference, with a mission to share sustainable urban development knowledge with other European cities, will take place in Stockholm in October, and a professional study visits programme to teach others about the city’s environmental work has been launched.

Vice mayor Alvald is excited for other cities to see what Stockholm has accomplished. “If we as a city provide a good role model, I think we can inspire others to take responsibility.” ●

As work starts on the £16.1m Knowsley Leisure and Culture Park, CLOA's John Bell and Knowsley Council's Andrew McCormick look at how it fits into the leisure facilities strategy



## WELLBEING IN KNOWSLEY

**A**s *Leisure Management* goes to press, work is starting on the new £16.1m Knowsley Leisure and Culture Park, one element of a £25m leisure facilities strategy to be implemented across the borough.

The centre will feature two 25m pools and an eight-lane competition pool with spectator seating for 300 people. It will also include a six court sports hall, a fitness suite, a squash court, spa facilities, two dance studios and a café area.

The sports hall will allow the centre to host sporting and cultural events including performances, pantomimes and award ceremonies, and will feature retractable seating for up to 900 people. Adult day care services offering a range of visits and activities for people with disabilities will also be based within the complex.

It is hoped that the centre will strengthen Knowsley's growing international sporting links in the build up to the 2012 Olympics.

The planning application also included a £5m OurPlace youth facility, to be built on the same site as the leisure centre. Funding from the Department for Children, Schools and Families managed by Big Lottery has been approved for this.

OurPlace has been developed in partnership with young people across the borough and will provide them with the facilities



**The centre will include seating for 300 spectators on the first floor overlooking the competition pool**

and services they need. It will feature computer rooms; music and art spaces; advice and wellbeing services; an outdoor multi-use games area; and BMX and skateboarding facilities, all housed in a welcoming and iconic new building.

The centre will aim to provide services for young people in a manner that suits them and in a place where they feel comfortable. There will also be a range of opportunities to gain new skills through participation in activities and by volunteering to help run the centre.

The leisure centre and youth facility will be located on the same campus as Huyton Arts and Sports Centre for

Learning. Together, these will form a wider leisure and culture park campus, which will transform the local environment and maximise leisure and culture opportunities.

Knowsley Council is also currently in discussion with national governing bodies of sport about additional outdoor facilities.

### THE KNOWSLEY CONTEXT

Leisure and Culture in Knowsley sit within the directorate of Wellbeing Services. The directorate integrates health and social care, embracing NHS Knowsley and adult social care, as well as leisure and culture. The integration of these services has pro-



**The Knowsley Leisure and Culture Park will incorporate sports and leisure facilities and a youth facility**



The design plans for the park include a new public square in front of the building



## SEB COE HAILS KNOWSLEY SPORT DEVELOPMENT'S GET QUALIFIED PROGRAMME

**Get Qualified, a programme developed by Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council Sport Development Service, won a national accolade from the London 2012 organisers earlier this year, as well as the praise of gold medalist Seb Coe.** Get Qualified, a programme aimed at increasing the number of new and existing qualified sport coaches within Knowsley by supporting the local voluntary sector with free and discounted local coach education courses, was given the London 2012 Inspire Mark award. The Inspire Mark recognises innovative and exceptional projects that are directly inspired by the 2012 Games.

A range of coach education courses will be put in place within Knowsley using the new centres for learning. These will build on the programme that was first developed in September 2009. A comprehensive six month coach education programme will be run from April using local facilities. A wide range of Level 1, 2 and 3 sport qualifications will

be offered, including football, netball, basketball, athletics, table tennis, badminton, rugby league and boccia.

Knowsley Sport Development Service has set a target of qualifying 2012 new volunteers and coaches in a wide range of sports leading up to the 2012 London Olympic Games and beyond. The new Get Qualified programme was launched at the start of March.

Lord Coe, chair of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games said: "I am proud that with the help of partners such as Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council we are delivering on the vision to use the power of the Games to boost participation in sport."



vided major advantages in service provision and economies in business support functions. Examples of key projects include a GP exercise referral scheme; an obesity strategy; and an Arts in Health programme that saw Knowsley develop creative events for locals to support key health priorities in the borough.

Another strategic dimension is the Building Schools for the Future programme, which has seen all of the borough's secondary schools replaced with seven new Centres for Learning. These have a range of leisure and cultural facilities.

### THE BACKGROUND TO THE PARK

The development of Knowsley Leisure and Culture Park is part of a wider leisure facilities strategy in Knowsley. Following an external consultant's examination of Knowsley's leisure facilities, the service concluded that the current leisure facilities in the centre of the borough were ageing and no longer fit for purpose.

Replacing 'like for like' was discounted, as it would be too costly and would result in an over-provision of swimming pools with resultant high revenue costs. It was recommended that the centre of the borough (like the north and south) should have one main leisure 'hub' facility with the main public pools.

These pools would be complemented by a small pool – run at a higher temperature – at Stockbridge Village Neighbourhood Centre. This would provide a facility for the disabled, young children and those needing warm water for health reasons. The Stockbridge centre would also feature a four court sports hall, fitness suite, community room and youth facility.

Other facilities to be added as part of the overall regeneration of Stockbridge Village Neighbourhood Centre include a multi use games area and a new co-located primary school.

The leisure facilities strategy is further strengthening the leisure and cultural provision in the borough, leading on from the council's recent programme to improve facilities in Knowsley, which began with Halewood (south) in 2002 and Kirkby (north) in 2007. A planned £25m package of investment in sports and leisure facilities in the centre of the borough was approved in February 2009. The £25m includes the development of the new central Knowsley facility, demolition of the existing centres and also the investment of £1m into the leisure offer within Prescot.

Knowsley council is also looking to improve golfing in the borough by entering into a competitive dialogue process for the management and funding of Bowring Park Golf Course. ●

# How to get funding in tough times

Raising finance in the current climate can seem like an impossible task, but with the right approach it can still be done. Locum Consulting director Jim Roberts offers some hard-won advice on improving your chances

## What a difference a couple of years make

**DECEMBER 2007:** Based on one meeting in a hotel lobby in Kazakhstan, we raise £30m from an American fund for a £200m development project

**DECEMBER 2009:** After four months' work, endless due diligence, piles of research and reams of documentation, we give up on trying to place an £8m opportunity with a £120m upside

In 2009, no fund manager was going to be fired for doing nothing. In fact, one of the best performing real estate fund managers in the world was a young man in India, who didn't place one penny of a \$500m fund and eventually returned all of the money with a bit of interest earned. That's the environment we're in. Though it is loosening up, 'masterly inactivity' will continue to be the strategy of choice in 2010. Raising capital will be a tough, energy-sapping business.

But it's not impossible. Last year, Colliers helped to secure a £300m war chest for an acquisitive development team targeting distressed assets. At Locum Consulting, we have secured the debt and are close to securing the equity for a \$350m resort project in Russia. We are in the process of arranging the forward sale of a £35m country park hotel.

It hasn't been easy. In order to raise finance in this market you need to be heard, you need to be believed, and you need the perseverance and tenacity to close the deal.

## CAPTURE THEIR ATTENTION

The pendulum has swung – from too much money chasing too few projects, there are now too many projects and not enough cash. Cash rich investors are currently overwhelmed

with opportunities. They receive investment prospectuses daily and they can't possibly give their full attention to every one. So how do you get your project to the top of the pile?

An introduction helps, but beware of false prophets with big address books.

It's not about how many people you know, but how well you know them and how much they trust you. Most investors have a small retinue of originators that they trust to bring them decent deals. That's who you should deal with. Credibility is currency in this market – we guard our relationships with investors closely and we don't waste their time. We check out every deal beforehand and will not take anything to market until we are comfortable that we can endorse it. That's why they take our calls.

## COMPETENT COLLATERAL IS NEEDED

It's vital to have an executive summary that cuts through the marketing speak and gets to the point: this is who we are, this is what we're doing, this is what's in it for you.

Also important is an investment memorandum that tells the story of the deal in a language and design that will resonate. Glamour and flashy renderings are out; professionalism and numbers are in. The story should speak to different audiences – the chair who wants to get the gist of it and the analyst who wants as much detail as possible. The story should be measured and competent. If it looks too good to be true, it probably is. Hyperbole, over-enthusiasm and any hint of urgency should be avoided. When you are trying to get a squirrel to come out of a tree, jumping up and down will not help.

## PROVE THE CASE

Risk is the operative word – nobody will touch it. The game is no longer about talking up the upside or higher valuations. An investment proposition will go further with a reasonable

It's a long and arduous road from a first meeting to a signed contract. Don't start spending cash after every friendly conversation. Yes it's the chairman you need to impress but it's the junior analyst you need to convince



PHOTO: ISTOCK.COM/MARCUS CLACKSON

return and a protected downside. Can you guarantee the income? Can you phase the construction? Who owns the underlying asset? De-risking the opportunity should be central to all of the preparation and planning that goes into the investment search.

It's a good sign when they start asking questions. It means they are taking you seriously. Have the answers ready.

If asked how realistic your projections are, be ready with a full market analysis. When asked if you can really build your project for the quoted price, hand over a cost consultant's report and a contractor's estimate. When questioned about who will operate your project, have a signed Letter of Intent. An independent valuation from a reputable firm of surveyors will provide reassurance for a potential investor.

## CLOSE THE DEAL

It is a long and arduous road from a first meeting to a signed contract. The head of mergers and acquisitions for one of the Big 4 accountancies told me once that: "Every good deal dies at least three times before it closes."

Don't be seduced by titles and don't start spending cash after every friendly conversation. Developers have wasted

## **Preparation and flexibility are important when trying to persuade potential investors in today's economic climate**

months and months having friendly conversations. Yes, it's the chair that you need to impress, but it's the junior analyst that you need to convince – and that's a lot harder. Steel yourself for a seem-

ingly endless back and forth on points of minor detail. An exceptionally successful first meeting can be the prelude to months of follow-ups, revisions, negotiations and discussions. 'Analysis paralysis' is the price we are paying for the profligacy of the last few years.

Pick your battles wisely. Stand firm when you need to, but be prepared to change the deal to suit the investor's requirements. When someone is dangling a seven-figure cheque, don't argue about the colour of the skirting board.

"Pre-sale of residential properties is unthinkable at this resort!" Is it? Is it really? Even if that makes the difference between a proposition with legs and one that gains no traction? Maybe you should think about it some more.

Check your emotions at the door. Don't raise your hopes too high when things are going well and don't beat yourself up after every setback. If your project is as strong as you think it is, then your perseverance and patience will be rewarded, but it will take time and energy. ●

# TRANSFORMING ABERDEEN

Aberdeen has ambitious plans to transform its centre into a Guggenheim-inspired cultural hub and give Edinburgh and Glasgow a run for their money. Kath Hudson reports

**A**berdeen is a city of contrasts. Thanks to the oil and gas industries, there is wealth and just 2.1 per cent unemployment. However, the city doesn't reflect this; it has no centre to speak of and the lack of investment over the last 30 years has led to a loss of civic pride. The shopping centres have moved to the north and south of the city, with a black hole in between of dreary, north-facing gardens, which have fallen into disrepair, attracting drunks and drug users. With a dearth of cultural amenities, and nowhere to meet or gather, people visit to shop or drink rather than spend time in the city. Tourists coming to the region find little to detain them in the city and quickly head out to the stunning surrounding countryside.

This could all change. Exciting new plans, put forward by public/private partnership Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future (ACSEF), aim to transform the dead space at the city's heart into a cultural hub. This would feature an iconic attraction – along the lines of the Guggenheim – an arts centre, an outdoor performance area, green space and a café culture. The idea is

that people will meet and spend the day there, and it will be a space for constant activity, such as music festivals in the summer and an ice rink in the winter. It will link the different areas of Aberdeen, giving it the proper centre it currently lacks.

"The plans for the City Square Project are radical – it's a major remodelling of Aberdeen," says ACSEF chair Tom Smith. "It provides a tantalising prize for us socially and economically. It is about safeguarding and creating jobs for our children and grandchildren. It is a bold and ambitious project which has rightly become a hotly debated issue."

The area in question, the Denburn Valley, currently comprises Union Terrace Gardens, an unsightly railway line and a dual carriageway. The plans would cover what is currently there, raising the gardens to street level to create the city square. It would create five acres of public space at street level, and an all-weather concourse underneath, with natural daylight, which would span a further two acres. This level could house museum space to display city artworks and artefacts currently in storage,





ACSEF conceptual illustrations show how the area could look



or a Covent Garden-style market area, which could attract major brands. People would be able to arrive by bus or train and be in the heart of the city via a quick underground walk, instead of being faced with a windswept, unattractive walk uphill.

**Green space and water features are at the heart of the plans**

## SIBLING RIVALRY

The people of Aberdeen feel as though it's time their city benefited from public funding. Having received negligible investment for decades, there are feelings of rivalry with other Scottish cities. Dundee has secured in the region of £66m worth of public sector funding for its waterfront development and is now looking for a further £45m for the proposed V&A museum offshoot. Glasgow has received hundreds of millions of pounds of public funding for various projects, including the Commonwealth Games, and the Edinburgh Trams cost the public purse £80m.

"There is no reason why Aberdeen cannot aspire to securing a major arts brand and establishing our own Guggenheim," says Smith. "The regeneration of Dundee's waterfront has helped it secure the V&A museum, and our aspirations should be to attract major national arts and culture facilities. There is real potential to bring together organisations involved in the performing and visual arts, building on existing arts festivals, to create a hub focused on enhancing the region's cultural offering and attracting major events, fairs, street theatre and other art-related activities. There is a vibrant and diverse arts community here, and creating a major indoor and outdoor arts space in the heart of the city would allow it to be showcased more widely."

A number of cities have provided models for the City Square Project, including Federation Square in Melbourne and

Discovery Green in Houston, which was initiated and delivered by a public/private sector partnership, and has transformed downtown Houston, attracting significant investment, new business and stimulated tourism. With Millennium Park, Chicago has experienced a cultural revolution, which ACSEF would like to emulate. Stockholm is also an inspiration, showing that even in a cold climate, it's possible to create a vibrant café culture [see p46 for more details on Stockholm].

## TIME BOMB

However, it's not just a desire to keep up with the neighbours that's making Aberdeen so desperate for regeneration. Oil supplies – which are responsible for the thriving economy – are dwindling and unless Aberdeen can create a strong reason for businesses to stay, they could well decide to relocate. A recent poll of 1,300 local businesses showed they were adamant the city centre needed to be improved.

"Great cities need to be attractive – they need to offer good employment prospects and they need to offer a diverse range of activities to attract and keep people, particularly those starting out in their careers," says Smith. "This scheme is about us being able to attract and retain business and investment, so that when the North Sea oil runs out, companies are encouraged to stay here. Otherwise, we face a mass exodus of companies and people and severe unemployment."

As well as improving the city, this project is part of a broader aim to safeguard the economy for future generations, by putting the city on the map as a global energy hub. Businessman Ian Wood, who has pledged £50m of the £140m needed for the scheme to go ahead, believes that transforming Aberdeen is essential. "Aberdeen wants to establish its position as a global energy hub; the energy capital of the eastern hemisphere, and





ACSEF believes the City Square Project would attract more tourists

## THE PROPOSALS IN A NUTSHELL

- A cultural hub, in the form of an iconic attraction
- A gathering space incorporating an outdoor performance area and amphitheatre
- Water features, symbolising Aberdeen as a major port and harbour
- Celebration of the economic landscape of the region via public art or physical exhibition space
- Green space, including lawns, formal gardens and tree-lined avenues
- Landmark sculpture and public art
- Lighting features and design to animate the square and garden at night
- Children's play area
- Seasonal displays and activities, such as an ice rink in the winter and music festivals in the summer
- Lower concourse level with natural light wells to provide further performance arts space and connectivity, through the transport hubs
- Sustainability at the forefront of design, construction and maintenance

the headquarters for administration and technology of major offshore oil and gas developments over the next 100 years," says Wood. "[It also needs to establish itself] as being a leading developer and supplier of the technology, expertise and know how which will deliver alternative energy solutions, including deep water offshore, wind, wave and tidal energy."

## STICKING POINT

Although the plans are popular with the business community and young people, there is enough opposition to prevent the City Square Project from progressing hitch free. Some people want to keep the gardens as they currently are and the team behind Aberdeen's Peacock Visual Arts Centre have won planning permission for the development of a new arts centre, sited into the sunniest part of Union Terrace Gardens. They have secured 75 per cent of the capital funding from public funding sources, but cannot progress further as they have been unable to raise 25 per cent of the £13m from the private sector. ACSEF has said it would like to integrate the arts centre into the City Square project, and has offered all the requirements within a new iconic building, but Peacock Visual Arts are still not completely on side.



Three local architecture graduates have come up with a range of designs showing some of the different possibilities for the City Square Project

The City Square Project needs to receive widespread public support in order to go forward and the feedback from the eight week public consultation was being assessed at the time of going to print. If the consultation suggests that the public is in favour of the concept, then the feedback will be used to inform the design brief, which would then go to an international design competition. Interest has already been shown from international design and engineering firms eager to get involved, most notably the firm which engineered the Pyramids at the Louvre. Outline and full planning would be sought, with further consultation as part of the planning process. The remainder of the funds would have to be raised, through national capital sources of public funds available for major infrastructure/regeneration projects. And, if all goes according to plan, Aberdeen could have its new city centre by 2014.

Hopefully the plans will be supported, as an investment of this scale in the infrastructure of the city would act as a catalyst to attract further investment for the regeneration of the city centre. The City Square Project is a forward-looking scheme, which would have both immediate and long term benefits for the city of Aberdeen and its people. ●



# GO GREEN

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# exceeding expectations

**C**olour-changing lights, 'disco lifts' and singing showers are a few of the funky features at Butlins Bognor Regis' new £20m Ocean Hotel and Spa – the latest product of a five-year £100m investment scheme to expand the holiday brand's appeal.

Known for its no-frill holidays for Brits on a budget, Butlins was possibly one of the least likely places a holidaymaker would go in search of a little luxury or a spa break – until now.

With the addition of the spa hotel in August 2009 and an extensive facelift across all three of its resorts in Bognor Regis, Skegness and Minehead, the

Last issue we reported on the background behind Butlins' new Ocean Hotel and Spa. This issue Caroline Wilkinson checks into the new hotel to see if it's living up to the hype

Bourne Leisure Group (BLG), owner of the brand since 2000, has hoisted the resorts from cheap to chic. Value for money is still at the core of the company's concept, however, and its fun-orientated ethos is as strong as it was when the late Sir Billy Butlin launched the holiday brand 74 years ago.

All rooms at the Ocean Hotel feature a separate children's den (above left); Mirror balls brighten up the lobby (above); The modern building was designed by Havant-based PWP Architects (below)

## RAISING STANDARDS

Linking the upmarket 200-room spa hotel with the brand's eccentric personality was essential, according to the resort director Jeremy Pardey. Created by PWP Architects and Birmingham-based interior designers Newman Gauge, the seven-story development features disco mirror balls in the double-height lobby, 1970s music in the lifts and under-the-bed lighting in the children's rooms to help banish monsters. The guestrooms also feature colour-change lighting above the beds, rainfall showers and views over the South Downs or the sea.

"The hotel has only been open since August and it's flying," says Pardey, adding that it's operating at 89 per cent occupancy and that it met its annual revenue target within three months of opening. The hotel started 2010 with more than £1m-worth of booking, with 55 per cent coming from first time visitors to Butlins.

In line with Butlins' ethos of offering something for all budgets, the Bognor Regis resort has six different standards of accommodation and various dining options. The hotels are considered to be the resort's 'premier' accommodation but target different audiences from the chalets. The spa hotel offers guests an experience more suited to families with older children or guests without children. The Shoreline Hotel, meanwhile, is geared towards younger families, with bunk beds, a play area and kids' entertainment at breakfast. As





**Butlins was determined to create a spa with personality using bright colours and fun treatments**

families account for more than 70 per cent of Butlins' business, the resort's peak period for the usual four-night stay is concentrated during the 13 weeks of school half terms and summer holidays. During this time, it could cost a family of four between £700 and £1,000 to stay at Ocean Hotel, as opposed to the resort's room-only and apartment accommodation, which ranges from £500 to £800.

### THE SPA EXPERIENCE

This isn't the first time Butlins has entered the spa market, but this offer is entirely different from its more conservative sister spa at Butlins Skegness in Lincolnshire. However the success at Skegness, where seven new treatment rooms have been added, made it evident to Pardey that the other resorts needed a spa too. This time the management team was determined to create a spa that reflected Butlins' personality.

The £2m, 670sq m (7,211 sq ft) Ocean Spa features playful furniture, a singing shower, a -16°C snow cave and a vivid mix of colour meant to have a positive influence on guests' mood. There's also a private relaxation area where guests can order food and drinks. While the 125sq m (1,345sq ft) thermal suite has been designed using a rainbow palette, the 10 treatment rooms were kept relatively neutral with earth-toned walls, soft-coloured lighting, and cloudy sky projections on the ceiling. Other facilities include a hydro pool, a sauna and mango-scented steamroom and an outdoor hot tub.

According to spa manager, Amy Neale: "It took two years, and a lot of briefing, to refine the spa's funky concept. Everyone involved had to understand the project to avoid it looking tacky, which is the way it could have gone had the team not had the right expertise," she says. "Adding

lots of colour and breaking away from the 'norm' could have been very dangerous for business if it was done wrong. It proves that a spa can be colourful and still relaxing though."

The purpose of the over-18s Ocean Spa was to add an extra twist and "quality to the resort, something the guests don't expect," explains Pardey. "One thing we recognise from feedback is that mum is a really important person during a family holiday. When you come to Butlins it's an active break, usually centred around the children. Mum needs a place to take one or two hours out so that she can have her holiday too."

In addition to the funky features, Butlins and its spa partner UK-based Spa Find have revamped classic treat-

ments and added the Butlins' signature by creating unusual treatments of its own. "As with everything at Butlins, we needed to think about how we could inject some fun into a traditional spa treatment," says Andrea Knowles, Butlins' head of public relations, who developed the ideas for the signature treatments. "From using ultra-soft mattress covers and marshmallows in teenage facials, 'tummy pods' that play classical music to unborn babies, facials with real flakes of gold and a men's massage with football highlights projected on to the wall, there's something for everyone."

For Neale, it was important that the spa could cater to a wide range of customers. "A lot of people are intimidated and think that spas are just for those with money," she says. "The whole purpose of this spa is to banish these preconceptions by offering quality at great value. We have more than 70 treatments to choose from. People can spend £20 or more than £100 on a two-hour body treatment." Ocean Spa also offers a two-hour Spa Experience session in the thermal suite for £19. There are also daily tours of the spa to give guests a chance to look around without feeling pressured. The approach seems to be working, as more than 50 per cent of those who book treatments are spa 'virgins'.

During family breaks the Ocean Spa runs at around 60 per cent occupancy and during adult-only weekends the thermal suite nears its 30-person capacity. Families don't tend to use the thermal suite as much as non-families, but tend to purchase more treatments. Neale increases her team of therapists from 10

## Entertainment at Bognor Regis

Activities at the Bognor Regis resort include a waterpark, a funfair and extensive outdoor and indoor sports areas with facilities for short tennis, netball, basketball and football, with coaching sessions delivered by FA-accredited trainers. In addition to more than 50 free activities, there is a chargeable Odeon cinema, new high ropes (introduced in 2009), mini golf and a new archery venue. According to Butlins' exit surveys, the most popular facilities are the Splash Waterworld, followed by the Hotshots sports bar with its ten-pin bowling, pool

to 15 during the summer months, and employs a second male masseur. She's finding more men are using the spa as a place to escape; around 20 per cent of clients who buy treatments are male, and one of the spa's most popular treatments is the Sporting Highlights Massage (£29). Other popular treatments include manicures (£18-£25) pedicures (£23-£35) Heavenly Head, Neck and Shoulder Massage (£38) and Spa Find's Complete Calmness 2-in-1 Facial and Massage (£38). Around 79 per cent of the spa's revenue comes from its treatments, 29 per cent from Spa Experience passes and the rest from product sales.

Most of the marketing of the spa has been done via the press and internal promotions in the rooms at the Shoreline and Ocean Hotel. As a result, in 2009, the spa captured 65 per cent of hotel guests and 25 per cent of resort guests. However this may change now that the Ocean Hotel and Spa has opened as



tables and big TV screens and the Butlins' free family funfair. Other facilities include more than 10 restaurants, pubs and bars, shops and a revamped live entertainment venue called Centre Stage, which hosts performances by contestants from *X-Factor* and *Britain's Got Talent*.

a separate entity from the resort. The Ocean Hotel also features heavily in Butlins' current advertisement, which is being aired across mainstream terrestrial and satellite television channels as well as the website and family brochure.

## SO FAR SO GOOD

Attracting business is not as much of a concern as maintaining success for Butlins. For the second year running, Butlins experienced a 10 per cent increase in visitors in 2009. But there are no signs of complacency from Butlins' management, who are already planning new packages for spa guests and implementing a scheduled programme of yearly accommodation upgrades. There are also murmurs of a planned £20m swimming pool, a third hotel for Bognor Regis and a possible spa at the Minehead resort. So while the brand's 75th anniversary is fast approaching, Butlins shows no signs of slowing down.

## my experience Caroline Wilkinson, journalist

**Y**ou'd never think it was Butlins' was a phrase I frequently heard from guests and employees during my visit to the Ocean Hotel and Spa. And I have to say I was thinking exactly the same thing. Half expecting a budget spa and hotel, I was pleased to be proved wrong and can now officially say I'm a Butlins' convert; already planning an adults-only weekend. In the middle of a child-saturated resort, the Ocean Hotel and Spa was an oasis of peace away from the mayhem. You can't help but smile at the cheesy disco music in the lifts



and the funky décor didn't look tacky as I'd expected, but fun and chic. The hotel is also located far enough from the central entertainment areas so you don't have to suffer screaming children.

The spa was the real surprise. I prepared myself for a garish display of colour and singing showers – not my idea of a relaxing atmosphere. However, I was amazed by the quality of service, the originality and the sophisticated offering. The optional singing showers don't interfere with guests' relaxing in the thermal suite, the vibrant colours make you smile not

cringe, and I left feeling rejuvenated. My only complaint is that a car park vista is not the most idyllic backdrop for outdoor hot tub bathers.

My two-hour Beauty and the Beach body treatment was brilliant, and a good example of Butlins' twist on traditional therapies. Meant to mimic a day in the sun, the treatment comprised a sand scrub, seaweed facial and mud wrap, followed by a deeply relaxing Hawaiian hot stone massage. It was topped off with a non alcoholic cocktail. The infrared electromagnetic heat lamp did feel a bit gimmicky, but this can be overlooked, as the quality of the treatment really made it work. ●

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# A NEW DAWN

As the Carbon Reduction Commitment comes into force, many businesses are still unaware of the massive impact it will have. Dave Lewis, head of business energy services at npower, says the right approach could see companies benefit from the scheme

**T**he Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) energy efficiency scheme is now upon us. When it went live on 1 April, the CRC specifically created a direct link between businesses' carbon emissions and their finances. Those that fail to manage the scheme could face financial challenges, while those that plan stand to benefit.

A recent report by PriceWaterhouseCoopers calculated the potential additional costs facing leisure businesses within the CRC. It anticipates a worst case scenario where companies could see a 20 per cent increase in their outgoings by 2015 if they don't save energy and thus perform poorly under the scheme. This figure shows the potentially significant impact of a poor performance in the CRC on an organisation's bottom line.

The CRC will apply to any organisation with half-hourly metered electricity supply, anticipated to be about 20,000 in

the UK. These organisations will be required to make an information disclosure to the Environment Agency about their energy consumption in 2008, which is being used as the qualification year. This must be done by September.

Those whose consumption was 6,000 MWh or more a year in 2008 will be required to participate fully. Importantly for the leisure industry, consumption will be measured at a group level, not by individual sites. As such, hotel and gym chains and other multi-site businesses will be included as well as large stadia and arenas.



Dave Lewis

## THE HARD WORK STARTS

It's once companies have qualified that the work really begins. Once a business is in, the CRC will capture emissions from all fuel types. Participants will have to forecast their energy consumption at the start of each trading year, as well as their equivalent emissions. They will then need to buy sufficient allowances to cover their emissions for the year ahead at a cost of £12 per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> initially.

It is this stage when accurate forecasting of emissions and energy usage is vital. If leisure businesses are to purchase for the year ahead, they will need an accurate record of their current consumption to give them a solid start in the process.

There are significant cashflow issues which may arise as a result of inaccurate forecasting of emissions. For instance, forecasting too few emissions will mean a company doesn't buy enough allowances and will therefore have to purchase more allowances on the open market, potentially at a higher cost per allowance. Purchasing too many allowances, on the other hand, means cash is tied up in the CRC until allowances are recycled, which could be as long as 10 months after the purchase date.

At the end of the trading year, participants will submit details of their actual energy consumption and emissions, and surrender the allowances they have purchased.

## THE ROLE OF THE LEAGUE TABLES

This information is then used to compare performance in terms of how well organisations have reduced their emissions, which is published in a league table revealing best and worst performers. To start with, league table position will also be partly based on an early action metric taking into account measures







**The Encompass Professional is one of a range of new tools coming onto the market to help companies manage their energy consumption**

**TOOLS  
TO HELP  
MONITOR  
ENERGY  
USE**

**F**or many businesses, the ability to forecast allowance requirements, risk exposure and cashflow related to allowance purchasing will require a step change in how they manage current and future energy consumption. npower has been working with organisations to develop the tools to achieve this.

Among these is the newly-launched

Encompass Professional. This is a new monitoring tool that analyses energy use in detail and combines historic data on consumption levels and energy usage with 20 year weather patterns to calculate future energy use. This information is then used to devise strategies to reduce consumption and costs, improving management and cash flow.

Using the tool, organisations will be

able to better manage their purchase of carbon allowances through the ability to predict their carbon emissions.

Encompass Professional is the latest addition to npower's 'm3' portfolio, a range of energy management tools and services, which also includes energy monitoring and targeting together with guidance on implementing carbon and energy reduction strategies.

to improve energy efficiency such as installing smart meters or achieving the Carbon Trust standard.

The league table is important for two reasons. Firstly, as already mentioned, money received for the purchasing of allowances is recycled to participants based on their league table position. Those at the top receive their purchase plus 10 per cent and those at the bottom receive their purchase minus per cent. By year five of the scheme, this will increase to 50 per cent – a real incentive to perform well.

Secondly, there is the impact on reputation. The public relations impact of a low league table position could be as important as the financial implications in a world that is increasingly aware of organisations' environmental impact, particularly in a public-facing industry like the leisure sector.

## **AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE**

Businesses in the leisure industry should build the CRC into their core business operations. It should be viewed, not as a compliance exercise, but as an opportunity to reduce energy

costs, invest in cost-effective technologies and change culture.

To perform well under the CRC, organisations will need to have detailed plans in place to record and report on their emissions, and then work at reducing them. Smart meters should feature as a priority in these plans. These will capture detailed data on energy use which can then be analysed to make informed decisions on energy efficiency.

Once a business has its energy management strategies in order, it is crucial that there is senior level management buy in. Energy use is so important to a company's bottom line that it deserves board level attention. Boards should be aware of the financial implication of non-compliance and the impact to their business' cashflow, not to mention the reputational risk associated with a low league table position.

With 2010 a pivotal year for the CRC, it's imperative that leisure businesses grasp the implications the scheme places on their organisation. There is time to respond and get the tools and strategies in place. However, with the September deadline fast approaching, it's important that this work starts now. ●

## Skidata's Vario.Gate

Access systems company Skidata AG has unveiled a versatile, easy-to-use ticket reader suitable for use within stadiums as well as at amusement parks and trade shows.

Called Vario.Gate, the entry control system features an intelligent scanning device that accepts and checks tickets in RFID, Print@Home and barcode formats at a single scanning point. The single scan point aids both operators, who can sell tickets in a variety of formats, as well as visitors, who can then enter quickly and easily.

leisure-kit.net keyword  
**skidata**



## Gateway secures IAAPA new product award

Gateway Ticketing won a best new product award at IAAPA, thanks to its eGalaxy Reseller Web store.

A web-based PoS application, the product allows operators to save time and money thanks to a range of automated processes, such as reconciliation and a print-on-demand function. The application also provides up-to-the-minute sales reports to let operators track revenue immediately rather than at the season end.

leisure-kit.net keyword  
**gateway**

## TICKETING SYSTEMS

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## TOR Systems unveils Maxim Solution software

Leading provider of visitor engagement solutions, TOR Systems, has unveiled its latest scheme for use within the museums, heritage and visitor attractions sectors.

Called Maxim Solution and operating on industry standard platforms, the 'best of breed solution' has been designed to combine stability, speed and resilience with cutting-edge technology.

The product includes integrated touchscreen PC-POS units as well as the option to integrate real-time internet sales via MaximWeb, which can then be linked to external retail,



leisure-kit.net keywords  
**tor systems**

financial, catering and CRM software as and when required.

TOR Systems' Ticketstor offers further web sales capabilities for clients organising temporary events.



leisure-kit.net keywords  
**open frontiers**

## Time Pursuit books in at BeWILDerwood

Open Frontiers' Time Pursuit ticketing solution has been deployed at the children's tree house adventure park, BeWILDerwood, Norwich, UK.

The web-based booking system not only allows visitors to purchase admission, but also to buy merchandise and gift vouchers. Meanwhile, full gate admissions technology has also been built into the Time Pursuit program. On site, wireless scanners have been installed, enabling advance bookers to use a fast-track entrance.

## Gamma moves into Chatsworth House

Chatsworth House in Derbyshire has chosen to install a number of integrated modules from Gamma Dataware's LeisurePOS platform.

At the home of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, Gamma will be supplying solutions for admissions and ticketing, gift aid, bookings and event management, membership CRM as well as a web booking interface.

In addition to these, Gamma is also providing an Integrated Chip & PIN and back office 'customer not present' credit/debit card software solution.

In further news, the company has also completed a Point of Sale installation at the BugWorld Experience in Liverpool, which opened last year.



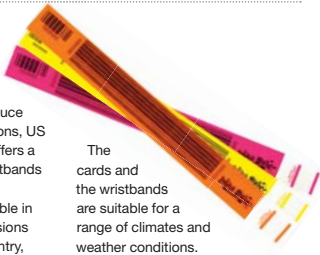
 [leisure-kit.net](http://leisure-kit.net) keyword  
**gamma**

## Cashless solutions from National Ticket

For places looking to introduce cashless automation solutions, US company National Ticket offers a selection of bar coded wristbands and plastic cards.

The wristbands are available in plastic, vinyl and hi-res versions and can be used to allow entry, access lockers and also enable visitors to add cash on to them to pay for food and activities.

The cards and the wristbands are suitable for a range of climates and weather conditions.



 [leisure-kit.net](http://leisure-kit.net) keyword  
**national ticket**



## VENPoS helps Blenheim Palace sell

Blenheim Palace has implemented the VENPoS Online e-commerce platform from visitor attraction software specialist Vennersys.

Through VENPoS Online, Blenheim Palace will sell tickets, memberships, merchandise and experiences, from cream teas to fishing memberships.

Blenheim Palace already uses VENPoS to manage physical admissions and retail operations. One of the key factors in the decision to deploy VENPoS Online was its integration with the rest of the application, especially the CRM and Bookings modules.

Vennersys is developing a range of product enhancements for 2010 designed to increase functionality in the areas of CRM and e-commerce, one of which is the launch of VENPoS BoxOffice. This will work in conjunction with VENPoS Online to allow customers to choose their seats at the point of online purchase.

 [leisure-kit.net](http://leisure-kit.net) keyword  
**vennersys**

## Pick and choose your own itinerary

Omniticket's Connect program has seen its pick-and-choose technology used for the first time by the Pikes Peak Country Attractions Association in Colorado, USA.

With the Pikes Peak Pick-N-Choose Ticket, visitors can select, online, only the attractions they want to visit. When a visitor has selected their venues, an overall price is then calculated.

Once payment has been made, visitors print a confirmation page to retrieve their all-in-one pass.



 [leisure-kit.net](http://leisure-kit.net) keyword **omniticket**

It's tough out there, but that doesn't mean leisure businesses can't improve their lot. Grahame Senior offers some advice on making the most of the opportunities of the current market

## How to Succeed in a Low-Growth Environment

**A difficult economic climate doesn't have to be all bad news. Clear-sighted thinking can help you survive the hard times while building your business**

**N**o one in the leisure and hospitality business can be under the impression that the current market is easy.

After a year or so of recession, we're just about getting through an appalling winter in which retail sales have hit their lowest level for many years. The great British public have rediscovered the delights of staying at home. January weather created something of a whiteout for many hospitality businesses and February wasn't all that much better.

February has traditionally been the time when cashflow problems really bite and it's a month when an increasing number of businesses throw in the towel and put up the shutters.

Without being quite so drastic, spring is also a good time to reappraise your business practices and think through the best way to operate effectively in a market that offers low or even no growth in overall volumes of business.



### Low growth doesn't have to mean no growth

Interestingly enough, such a climate does not have to be all bad news. There are ways to succeed despite the lack of any upward trend in overall revenues. It is possible to enrich the margin in a business without increasing the turnover. The

starting point for this process is to review every aspect of the business to ensure that it's working to its optimum result.

### Be realistic and review everything

Being realistic starts with recognising the fact that the overall economic climate is likely to continue creating difficulties for some time to come. There are no easy options – money is tight for both businesses and individual budgets and people are increasingly worried. Paying off debt has become the new hobby at every level and taking risks is something we would all rather avoid.

Barack Obama's much vaunted slogan 'Yes, we can' was possibly not so well judged in its implied confirmation that we can just keep on having more. 'No we can't' would have been a more realistic suggestion – but of course it wouldn't have won the election. No matter how many times we are told that things can go down as well as up, we still have a seemingly unshakable belief in the fact that good times can go on forever. They can't and they won't but the same reality check underlines the more reassuring fact that, whilst good times may be on hold, it's not going to be all doom and gloom. People will still continue to do the things they need to do, celebrate the occasions they think are important and set some of their hard-pressed budgets aside for the civilised pleasures of life.

We are a very long way from a situation in which all that our society can afford are the bare necessities.

### Don't wait for things to get better – make them better

The key discipline is to make a realistic review of every aspect of your business; look at the areas where you can

## A CHECKLIST FOR REVIEW – SEVEN SIMPLE STEPS TO SHARPEN UP

- 1 Costs.** All suppliers are increasingly willing to review their charging levels and to make a better offer. If it's tough for you, it's tough for them and most businesses will share the pain.
- 2 Customer offer.** Look at the way your products and services are structured and add value rather than cut costs.
- 3 Your top team.** Look at the way your key staff are motivated and engage with your business and share your plans and risks with them. A more realistic climate means that

people are more willing to be flexible and add that little bit extra.

- 4 The competitive edge.** Take the time to check out your competition. Do it objectively and look at their weaknesses so that you can build your strengths.
- 5 Don't look tired.** Engage someone to do an audit of your premises and ensure that you come across as customer-focused rather than penny-pinching and dilapidated.
- 6 Sharpen up your database.** People most likely to spend more money

with you are the people who are already your customers. Make sure your database of guests and prospects is bang up to date and accurate. Communicating with people personally and effectively is the best way to make them choose you.

- 7 Promotional calendar.** Review last year's performance and look at the cool spots when business was bad. Plan offers and promotional initiatives to fill in the gaps and build a stronger business performance year-round.



**'The Den' at Howard's House in Wiltshire provides a cosy spot for guests to relax in**

## Howard's House Hotel – A Winter of Investment

As I mentioned in this column before, I've stepped away from the safety of simply offering advice and stepped into the real risks of running a hospitality business. We took on Howard's House Hotel in Wiltshire ('Britain's Most Romantic Hotel 2010' according to the *Good Hotel Guide*) in April 2009 and have spent the last year or so getting things together, reviewing

every aspect of the business and building a base for a year of excellence in 2010/2011. Of course, the timing wasn't ideal and like everybody else, the snow this winter came at exactly the wrong time for us to maintain our bookings and make the most of the end of the shooting season. That said, we carried out our own reality check and put together rather a lot of small actions

which hopefully will bond together and build a stronger business.

In summary, we've listened to our customers, engaged and energised our staff and spent a little money in a hopefully wise direction. Time will tell!

The next big thing is the new dining terrace – opening 1 May – part of our strategy to improve our onsite spend via a better guest experience.

cut costs and improve margin; deliver the service levels which increase customer satisfaction and generate better footfall and repeat business.

The important thing about such a review is to ensure it's conducted objectively. It's very easy to let yourself off – you know the reasons why things are done a little bit this way or a little bit that. However, customers won't sympathise. Use a friend or perhaps even a new colleague to review things for you and get a clear-eyed view of all the things you could do better. It may be a slightly painful shock but you're certain to find ways to deliver a better business offering and will almost certainly stop wasting money.

A simple rule on that front is to 'do things once'. We all know the habit of picking something up, looking at it, thinking about it and putting it down again for another day. That kind of indulgence leads to woolly thinking and almost always wastes money. Make decisions now – and in particular make phone calls

to solve problems now – and you'll be amazed how it simplifies and cuts costs.

Direct conversations with your customers – remembering to be appreciative for the fact that they still are your customers – is the best way to keep in touch with the reality of the business.

### Using sterling's weakness to build on our strengths

There seems little end in sight to the weak pound. With that and the continuing disruption to flights and most forms of foreign travel – the 'staycation' seems here to stay. By stratifying your markets into families, couples, groups and special interest guests, you can quite easily build a calendar of offers and attractions to suit the current season. July can be a surprisingly difficult month to fill, as it falls between the excitement of spring breaks and fully fledged summer holidays. At Howard's House Hotel (see box above) we're planning to try a month of added-value offers for July and aim it at

different groups in different weeks.

There's no doubt that the value for money offered by short-distance breaks is increasingly attractive. Why waste valuable time, money and energy on travel when you can stay closer to home and get great food and a friendly welcome.

In summary, 2010 is unlikely to be much of a bumper year for any in the leisure sector. However, there is increasing evidence that today's market is very resistant to missing out completely on its holiday and leisure opportunities, no matter how tough times get.

Pitching your particular offer at the right people with the right temptations in terms of added value can still pay off. Attention to service detail and making sure you talk to your customers about what they really want from their visit can create increased margin and a satisfactorily stronger bottom line result.

When the great leap forward isn't available, small steps in the right direction can get you where you need to be. ●



## New Clarins mousse

Clarins has launched its Delectable Self Tanning Mousse for those looking to give their skin a healthy, tanned glow. The mousse contains oil from the mirabelle, a small golden plum, which is high in fatty acids that have anti-dehydrating properties. The product is applied a day after exfoliating the skin and is placed on top of a moisturising cream that acts as a base. The almond scented mousse can then be spread across the face and body – avoiding the eyebrows – to create a bronzed look.

leisure-kit.net keyword  
**clarins**



## Waterproof televisions for wet environments

New from Aquavision comes the Series4 range of waterproof televisions designed for the bathroom and other wet environments.

Available in three finishes including mirrorvision, which becomes a mirror when the tv is switched off, the televisions are slim in profile and can be fitted into any stud or solid wall. They come with a waterproof remote control and stereo speakers and are available in sizes from 17-42in.

leisure-kit.net keyword  
**aquavision**

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## The Deep and charity Pump Aid join forces to help African villages

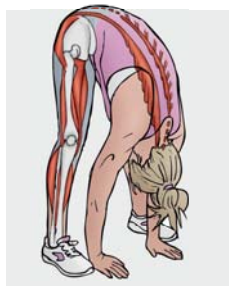
The Deep aquarium in Hull, UK, has teamed up with Thirsty Planet water and charity Pump Aid.

So far, staff and visitors to the attraction have helped to provide more than 38.5 million gallons of clean, disease-free water for some of the poorest people in Africa through sales of Thirsty Planet in The Deep's cafe and restaurant.

For every 500ml bottle of Thirsty Planet sold, a 5p donation is made to Pump Aid, which works with communities in Malawi and Zimbabwe to give access to sustainable supplies of uncontaminated water.



leisure-kit.net keywords  
**waterbrands**



leisure-kit.net keyword  
**idass**

## Resistance series of educational charts

Drawn by graphic artist Matt Lambert, IDASS charts provide vitally useful information for both personal trainers and their clients to better understand the exercises being performed. Each chart features clearly-drawn images illustrating both the exercise and then the stretch performed after plus a few lines of script that qualify the action. Latest to be released is a resistance series, which includes 10 exercises, an anatomy chart and a 'personal trainers tip' advice box.



## Orly's Sweet and Bloom collections

Nail care and beauty product supplier Orly International has released details of its two new collections, called Sweet and Bloom.

The Sweet range was inspired by sweets and the 18ml nail lacquers come in a choice of six colours including pixy stix (a vibrant pink), gumdrop (a soft green) and snowcone (a vibrant blue).



Bloom is a range of six limited edition shades including a poison ivy green called Wandering Vine and Thorned Rose, a rich burgundy.

## Orbana help Eddie Izzard's marathon effort

The Orbana energy drink, which recently launched into the UK, was used by comedian Eddie Izzard during his *Sport Relief* marathon challenge, which saw him run an incredible 43 marathons in 51 days.

A mixture of vitamins, minerals, amino acids and electrolytes, the drink is purchased in powder form so that the ingredients don't dilute over time while sitting in a liquid solution.

 [leisure-kit.net](http://leisure-kit.net) keyword  
**orbana**



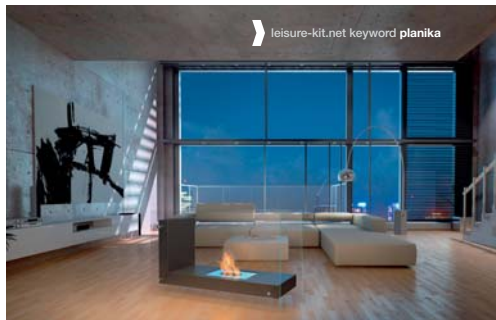
## New sports nutrition range from Lucozade


A new low calorie sports drink called Lucozade Sport Lite has been unveiled by GlaxoSmithKline, (GSK) joining the company's popular Lucozade Sport® product.

The 500ml drink is available in two flavours – lemon and lime and summer berries. Lucozade Sport Lite is formulated to deliver electrolytes as well as energy-releasing B-vitamins and contains 70 per cent less sugar than regular sports drinks.

GSK also has three new 'impulse products' for operators to consider – Pro Muscle 'All in One' Carbohydrate Protein & Creatine Bar; Body Fuel Carbohydrate Energy Bar and Body Fuel Jelly Beans. Each of the three new products has been developed with help from top athletes and is intended to effectively deliver fuel, power and strength to sports and exercise participants while adding to a venue's incremental impulse sales.

 [leisure-kit.net](http://leisure-kit.net) keyword  
**glaxosmithkline (GSK)**



 [leisure-kit.net](http://leisure-kit.net) keyword **planika**

## The L-shaped ventless fireplace from Planika

Planika's L-shaped ventless fireplaces are an innovative addition to a range of different spaces. A transparent piece of furniture, the L-shape is available in dark oak or white, lacquered MDF that resembles the letter 'L', with an open fire hearth.

Also suitable for use in spas and hotels, the L-shape runs on a bio-fuel, which is said to emit only water vapour and CO<sub>2</sub> when burnt. Meanwhile, double-sided glass intensifies the flame and stops the user from burning themselves.



## Oakworks maxx out

From Oakworks comes the Celesta Maxx, a fully electric spa treatment table said to blend beauty and functionality. Offering flat, upright, recline and zero-gravity positions, the table/chair is ideal for use with roll-away pedi-spas, within multi-functional spa rooms and medi-spas.

Key features include a maple base, an electric three-section contour top, Aero-Cel™ padding with UltraTouch™ fabric, foot and hand controls, a QuickLock™ Face Rest and removable side armrests.

leisure-kit.net keyword  
**oakworks**

## Overboard's Dry Tube bags

OverBoard has unveiled a blue version of its 20 and 40-litre Dry Tube bags, suitable for watersports, camping trips and outdoor fitness activities.

Described as hard-wearing, the bags are constructed from 600D PVC tarpaulin and thanks to the 'Fold Seal System', is said to be 100 per cent waterproof. The bags include a heavy-duty grab handle and removable shoulder strap and are also available in red and yellow.

leisure-kit.net keyword  
**overboard**



leisure-kit.net keywords  
**animalive**

## Interactive solutions from AnimaLive

AnimaLive's technology spans a wide range of bespoke live animation solutions, including creating a custom-made character. Installation options include a ChatterBox Mini, an animated character that interacts live with an audience of any size, said to be an ideal way to greet guests. Other concepts include a ChatterBox Party Room, allowing interaction between guests.

## Deaf Alerter receives IFI recognition

The Deaf Alerter® DA2000 System has been selected as the first product to be awarded Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) Recognised Product Status. Designed to aid those with hearing difficulties in the swift and safe evacuation from buildings, the product is to be listed under Fire Evacuation Safety Products within the IFI portfolio of products.

When the Alerter receives an emergency evacuation alert such as a building's fire alarm, the unit vibrates and displays the message. The Alerter will also continue to vibrate until the person is completely outside the building.



leisure-kit.net keywords  
**deaf alerter**

Additionally, during an emergency situation, the Alerter also emits a loud audible tone to help emergency rescue staff to find the person if trapped in a room with low visibility.



leisure-kit.net keywords  
**st.tropez**

## St. Tropez introduce new Pro Spray System

St.Tropez has revealed its new spray tanning booth as well as a limited edition 'dark mist' treatment to coincide with the launch.

Called The Pro, the ergonomically designed booth has a cocoon-like silhouette. Featuring a patented warm air flow, said to minimise overspray and maximise drying time, The Pro also has low energy consumption. The booth is also fully transportable and simple to build, while all moving and electrical parts are away from the main structure.

## Decl  r launches range of luxury skincare products

Aromatherapy-orientated luxury skincare brand Decl  r has unveiled a range of sun-care products.

Called Aroma Sun Expert, the new products contain active plant ingredients said to draw their vitality from the sun. Extracts used include Egyptian jasmine, Tahitian vanilla, extract of re   (oceanic ginger) as well as the essential oil of Damask rose – all intended



to boost skincells' defences. The three-step programme includes an Aromessence   Solaire Tan Activator Serum and a Hydrating Milk with SPF30. There are also two pre- and post-sun treatments that can be promoted to accompany the Aroma Sun Expert range.

leisure-kit.net keyword  
**decl  r**

## Get on your eBike with the Tailwind

Facilities that supply bikes for guests' use might consider investing in Schwinn's latest electric model: the Schwinn Tailwind, incorporating Toshiba's Super Charge ion Battery (SCiB). Thanks to the SCiB power technology, the eBikes can be recharged in 30 minutes through a standard electrical outlet. Riders will typically be able to travel 25 to 30 miles per charge. The bike



comes in four sizes for standard frames and three sizes for step-through frames.

leisure-kit.net keyword  
**schwinn**



## Technogym launches green treadmill

A new environmentally-friendly treadmill, which designers claim reduces energy consumption by 40 per cent, has been launched by Technogym.

The Run Now machine has been certified by TUV, which corroborates Technogym's claims that the treadmill offers the same or better performance as others in the same category, but consumes less energy.

Run Now is the result of a year's worth of research and has been launched as part of Technogym's Excite+ line. Other new features include an adjustable display stand – to improve visibility and reduce dazzle – and the 'ready to run' safety device, which uses a light system to tell users when it's safe to step on the belt.

Technogym says that the machine is part of a wider plan to develop green products with a view to creating a self-sufficient gym, powered by people doing physical exercise.

leisure-kit.net keyword  
**technogym**



leisure-kit.net keyword **clarity commerce**

## Football club scores with events solution

Clarity Commerce has supplied an events management software solution to Middlesbrough FC's special events team to help boost non-match day revenue at the club's Riverside Stadium. The new event manager solution gives the club's events team the opportunity to customise stationery and documentation to each specific event without the help of the support desk. The software's diary checklist option also ensures the efficient and effective management of sales with follow-up calls. ●

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**Converting coffee drinkers and ensuring the tea is served at the precise correct temperature is just part of Catriona Grant's job as head tea sommelier at the Turnberry. She tells us more**

# Tea sommelier

## What does your job involve?

I am the head tea sommelier at the Turnberry Hotel on the Ayrshire coast of Scotland. I'm also the manager of the tea lounge and I make all the decisions about which teas we have in the hotel and run training for our four tea sommeliers.

Our job is to find out a bit about what type of tea a guest would normally drink and help advise them what tea will work best with what they are eating.

We usually try to encourage guests to try something a bit different – we have 30 teas, and these are changed regularly. We also ensure that they are served correctly, as different teas need to be served at different temperatures.

## Why did the Turnberry decide to introduce tea sommeliers?

The hotel underwent a major refurbishment in 2009. Part of the aim of the refurbishment was to return this historic hotel to the way it was when it was originally built. When the Turnberry first opened in 1906 the Grand Tea Lounge was at the heart of the hotel. Guests would step off the train from London, and would sit and enjoy afternoon tea while their servants were preparing their rooms.

We wanted to restore the original tea lounge and introduce a really special afternoon tea experience. The Grand Tea Lounge is very relaxed with a huge fireplace and comfy seats looking out onto the spectacular views of the Irish Sea and the Isle of Arran, and we have a live pianist to enhance the experience.

## How do you choose which teas to stock at the hotel?

It involves a lot of tea smelling and tasting and meeting with suppliers. When selecting tea, it's important to taste it at different times because our taste buds change throughout the course of the day. Also teas have different effects – a tea that is right for the morning might be too stimulating for the evening.

## What training did you undergo?

I was lucky enough to go on a course run by [renowned tea specialist and author of several books on tea] Jane Pettigrew. I learned about the different types of tea, how to taste the tea effectively and what you should be looking for.

We studied the colour and scent of each tea, smelling and

**Catriona Grant heads up a team of four tea sommeliers**

## The Turnberry Resort

A £30m refurbishment of the Turnberry Resort in Ayrshire was completed in July 2009.

Architects 3DR Reid and designers Fox Linton Associates were responsible for the refurbishment, which aimed to restore the hotel to its original glory. The Turnberry opened in 1906 and was originally designed by architect James Miller.

Following the refurbishment, the Grand Tea Lounge is now a member of the Tea Guild, an organisation that requires affiliates to brew and serve tea in accordance with the United Kingdom Tea Council.

tasting the leaves when dry and once they had reacted with the water. We all had to shout out different words to describe what we were getting from the teas. Then we wrote down how the taste changed and how the tea felt in our mouths. For example, Assam can be very dry in your mouth, whereas Darjeeling is great for quenching your thirst.

## Afternoon tea is currently quite fashionable. Why do you think this is?

I've seen a huge rise in the popularity of afternoon tea. I think people like it because it's a real occasion and it's not rushed, so they can sit and relax. People don't always want to go out at night, and children can enjoy it too. People also love the ceremony of it all, the way the tea is brewed in traditional samovars and

brought out on tea trolleys, the cake stand and the beautiful tea boxes. Our American guests particularly love this aspect of it.

## What makes your afternoon tea different?

We offer two alternative afternoon teas here – the traditional Turnberry tea, with scones, sandwiches and pastries – and a speciality afternoon tea, which we change every month or so. We had a healthy, revitalising tea in January, with strawberry soup and prawn wraps, and we offered a Burns afternoon tea for Burns Night with locally produced Scottish food including Arran cheddar, Scotch eggs and Scottish smoked salmon.

The Turnberry has developed a really good reputation for its afternoon tea and we are now a Grade A member of the Tea Guild. We recently had two guests who flew up from London specifically for our afternoon tea.

## What's your favourite part of the job?

It's satisfying when you encourage people to be more adventurous and send them away realising there's more to tea than PG Tips. Converting a coffee drinker is the ultimate achievement. ●



# Diary Dates

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**14-16 APR 2010**


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**International Congress on Club Management**

Villaitana Golf Resort and Spa, Spain  
This congress will feature educational presentations, forum discussions, keynote speeches from club industry leaders and social and networking opportunities to meet with fellow club managers from all over Europe.

The Club Managers Association of Europe's Annual General Meeting of members will be held on 14 April, and there will be an optional golf competition for delegates and spouses after the congress has finished.

**Contact** Jerry Kilby CCM

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**20 APR 2010**


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**Parks for Youth**

Watershed Media Centre, Bristol, UK  
Parks for Youth is a one-day conference focusing on successfully engaging young people in parks and green spaces. The conference will cover a range of different topics, including how to consult with young people, methods of establishing strong and effective partnerships with other organisations that provide youth services, and how to enable young people to feel proud and take ownership of their local environment.

**Contact** Caroline Carsey

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**20 APR 2010**


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**LPF Seminar – The London Eye and Merlin**

London Aquarium, London, UK  
An early evening seminar which includes a tour of the London Aquarium, a 4D show of the London Eye and a flight on the London Eye with wine and canapés. The seminar itself will cover the history of the London Eye and an analysis of its financials, its performance and the related property issues of the attraction. There will be a review of the London market – what's working and what's not – and a look at how Merlin is keeping Tussauds, The London Dungeon and its other attractions relevant for tomorrow's visitors. The seminar will

conclude with an assessment of the real opportunities for visitor attractions during the 2012 Olympics.

**Contact** Michael Emmerson

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**20-22 APR 2010**


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**Sustainabilitylive!**

NEC, Birmingham, UK

Trade show for the water, environment, energy, land and sustainable business sectors. Taking place at the NEC Birmingham, Sustainabilitylive! brings together experts in the field and decision makers across a range of industries, from large multinationals to SMEs and the public sector, all shaping the UK business approach to move to the low carbon economy of the future.

Highlights include a political debate with all three major parties giving their perspective on what happened in Copenhagen, and what is to follow, with Colin Challen MP (Labour), Lorely Burt MP (LibDem) and the Right Honourable John Gummer MP (Conservative).

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**22 APR 2010**


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**ISRM Cymru Wales CPD Seminar & AGM**

Machynys Peninsular Golf Club, Llanelli, Wales

ISRM-CYMRU WALES is open to all. This spring training seminar will feature some of the leading leisure managers in Wales. The seminar, coffee on arrival and a buffet lunch is free of charge to all ISRM members and students. Guests are very welcome to attend for the nominal fee of £10 per person.

**Contact** Kevin Harding

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**Email** kevbrecon@btinternet.com

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**04 MAY 2010**


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**LPF Annual Members Dinner**

One Lombard Street, London, UK  
Annual meeting for LPF members and their guests, limited to just 150 spaces. This event is now fully booked.

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**07-10 MAY 2010**


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**10th Annual International Conference on Sports**

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**12-13 MAY 2010**


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**Museums and Heritage Show**

Earl's Court, London, UK

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**Building Schools for the Future**

Burntwood Leisure Centre, Lichfield, UK

During this seminar, Partnership for Schools (PIS), the organisation established to deliver Building Schools for the Future (BSF), will outline the process of engagement upon formal entry into BSF.

**Contact** Leigh Griffiths

**Tel** 0118 929 8355

**Email** leigh.griffiths@ispal.org.uk

**Web** www.ispalvents.org.uk

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**20 MAY 2010**


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**TMI Hot Topic 2010**

The Roundhouse, London, UK

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