

Hunt confirms 19 quangos will be axed or reformed

By **Pete Hayman**

Culture secretary Jeremy Hunt has announced that 19 of the 55 Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) public bodies will be shut or reformed.

Among the organisations to be shut are the UK Film Council and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, both of which had previously been earmarked for closure.

Elsewhere, UK Sport is to merge with Sport England, while the DCMS is still working with the Youth Sport Trust over its possible integration within the new structure.

The advisory committees for National Historic Ships and



Hunt said the changes will offer 'value for money for the public'

Historic Wreck Sites are to be abolished, while the Theatres Trust is to be declassified to work as an independent body.

VisitBritain, Arts Council England, the Heritage Lottery

Fund (HLF), English Heritage; and a number of museums are among those to be retained.

HLF chair Dame Jenny Abramsky said: "We will continue to work independently

across the UK with a range of partners in various sectors."

British Waterways will be replaced by a charitable agency and the Forestry Commission is to be retained but will also undergo "substantial reform".

The future of more than 900 agencies had been under the microscope as part of wider efforts to cut public expenditure. In total, nearly 200 quangos are to be shut across all government departments.

Hunt said: "These changes will allow us to continue to deliver some of the world's best culture, media and sport, while at the same time ensuring efficiency, transparency and better value for money."

James Caan sells Nuyuu Fitness to énergie Group

Budget operator offloaded by *Dragons' Den* entrepreneur for undisclosed sum

By **Tom Walker**

Health club operator énergie Group has acquired budget gym chain Nuyuu from an undisclosed sum from *Dragons' Den* star James Caan.

Four of the five Nuyuu clubs – East Grinstead, Stevenage, Newbury and Slough – will be rebranded by énergie over the next three months following the deal. The fifth site, located in Scotland, is not included as part of the transaction.

The deal marks the end of the road for Nuyuu, which was



Nuyuu was founded by Caan (top) and Silcox 12 months ago

jointly founded 12 months ago by serial entrepreneur Caan and Ben Silcox, a former LA Fitness national sales manager.

Caan's investment vehicle, Hamilton Bradshaw, was one of the primary investors in the Nuyuu venture, with Silcox appointed managing director.

As part of the takeover deal with énergie, Silcox will join the new business as a partner and will retain responsibility for both day to day operations and growth of the four clubs under the énergie brand.

The deal forms part of énergie's expansion strategy, which has seen the group add more than 20 facilities to its portfolio this year.

The Herb House set for opening

A 22,000sq ft (2,044sq m) spa called The Herb House is on schedule to open in early November 2010 at Lime Wood in the New Forest.

The spa will work in collaboration with Irish brand Voya and natural skincare brand NUDE. It will also offer treatments from farming company Daylesford Organic's beauty range, Bamford.

Designed by David Collins Studio, the spa will have 10 treatment rooms.

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Industry in 'united' call to Home Office

Sector organisations team up in joint submission as part of licensing consultation

By Pete Hayman

UK hospitality groups have teamed up as part of a joint submission to the Home Office in response to planned changes to licensing laws.

Home secretary Theresa May confirmed plans to overhaul the Licensing Act earlier this year, which could see local authorities being given more powers to crack down on drink-related issues and a ban on the sale of below-cost alcohol.

The submission has brought together groups including the British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA); the Association of Multiple Licensed Retailers (ALMR); and the British Hospitality Association (BHA).

The British Institute of Innkeeping; the Federation of Licensed Victuallers; Business In



The joint submission has demanded a review of alcohol taxation

Sport and Leisure; and NOCTIS, also worked on the submission, along with the British Holiday and Home Parks Association and the Tourism Alliance.

Among measures included in the joint submission is a review of alcohol taxation and new conditions that would help promote 'fair competition'

between hospitality businesses and supermarkets.

In the submission, the groups said: "We are particularly concerned that, given the nature of the measures that are now proposed, the request that there should be a deeper review of the Licensing Act has been denied."

£3.6m boost for local community green spaces

By Martin Nash

A total of £3.6m of funding for fifteen new projects, designed to encourage local communities to enjoy and improve the green spaces around them, has been announced by Natural England.

The projects form part of the Access to Nature scheme, which is run by Natural England and funded by the Big Lottery Fund Changing Spaces programme.

Richard Benyon, parliamentary under-secretary for natural environment and fisheries, said: "The Access to Nature Grant Scheme is a great way for local communities to come together and to make the most of their local environment and learn to appreciate wildlife.

"These projects will improve local woodlands and green spaces, helping to restore



The Canal Connections scheme has been awarded funding

habitats so that wildlife can thrive and allow us to create a natural environment that everyone can enjoy."

Awards range from £100,000 to the Castleford Heritage Trust for its Fryston Woods Access and Improvements Project, to £387,000 to Birmingham City Council for work involving the

regeneration of green space in the Perry Common area.

Other recipients include the Waterways Trust for Canal Connections in East Manchester (£124,537); Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust for Sea Green! (£243,852); the RSPCA for Hastings Wild Things (£245,981); Mersey and Red Rose Forests for Setting the Scene for Nature (£240,000); and Organised Chaos (North) for its child-focused Muddy Boots Project (£248,061).

Access to Nature is a consortium led by Natural England and including British Waterways, the Environment Agency, the Forestry Commission, Greenspace, Groundwork UK, the Land Restoration Trust, the RSPB, the National Trust, the Wildlife Trust, the Woodland Trust and BTCV.

London's Olympic Park set for royal title

OPLC plans events programme in mid-2013 for new Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

By **Pete Hayman**

London's Olympic Park will be renamed the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park when it reopens in legacy mode in 2013.

Following the 2012 Olympic Games, the 500-acre (202-hectare) site will include four miles of waterways, social housing, new schools, and health centres alongside office space and industrial buildings.

It is hoped that the site will become a visitor attraction in its own right, with landmarks such as the Olympic stadium, extensive parkland, the velodrome and Anish Kapoor's controversial Orbit viewing platform and sculpture.

The Olympic Park Legacy Company (OPLC) has already commenced work on a new events programme, which is



The Olympic Park will be named after Queen Elizabeth from 2013

scheduled to be rolled out across the site from mid-2013.

Margaret Ford, chair of the legacy company, said: "We have the opportunity to create a destination which is unique."

"The Olympic Park will be a visitor playground, combining world-class sporting events with

a host of cultural attractions, sitting alongside Europe's largest urban shopping centre."

OPLC is also hoping to team up with partners in a bid to help establish a schedule that is set to include open-air concerts, food markets, cultural festivals and sporting events.

£5m funding support for Black Cultural Archives

By **Pete Hayman**

Plans to create a new multi-million pound black history and cultural centre in Brixton, London, have been boosted by the award of more than £5m in funding support.

The Heritage Lottery Fund has confirmed a £4m contribution and the Mayor of London will provide £1m towards the development of the Black Cultural Archives (BCA).

A £910,000 funding package, to be spread over five years, has been provided by Lambeth Council towards the conversion



The Grade II-listed Raleigh Hall is to house the new BCA facility

of the Grade II-listed Raleigh Hall in Windrush Square.

The local authority has also gifted a 99-year lease for the derelict property, which will see

the building become the home for the BCA's collection of more than 10,000 documents relating to black Britain and the African diaspora. The restoration of Raleigh Hall will also see the property taken off English Heritage's 'At Risk' register and forms part of the wider overhaul of Brixton.

BCA chair Matthew Ryder said: "The movement of BCA to a permanent, purpose built home, is itself an historic moment. We believe it will enable the BCA to become a global resource and a leading heritage site in London."

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IN BRIEF

New-look gym for Woolwich leisure centre

► A new-look fitness suite has been unveiled at Waterfront Leisure Centre in Woolwich, South London, following the completion of a £125,000 refurbishment. The centre – run by Greenwich Leisure (GLL) on behalf of Greenwich Council – benefited from the installation of flooring and carpeting as part of the two-week scheme. Work has also seen 56 pieces of Technogym equipment installed, including treadmills, crossovers, varios and upgraded aerobikes. The cardio theatre entertainment system was also updated.

New outdoor gym planned for Tonbridge

► A new outdoor gym is to be installed at Tonbridge Sportsground after more than £12,000 of funding was contributed by the Local Strategic Partnership. Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council is to create the new facility as part of a wider bid to improve local recreation and youth provision at the venue. Particularly aimed at people aged at least 60 years old, the new outdoor gym facility is expected to be ready to open by spring 2011.

Barnstaple club bought by powerlifter

► The Floor One Fitness Club in Barnstaple, Devon, has been bought by a former powerlifting champion. Surrey-born Steve Middleton, who is a former world and British champion, has taken over the 2,500sq ft (232sq m) club. Current facilities include a gym with 18 cv stations and 10 strength stations, a free weights area, a fitness studio with 10 Pulse spin bikes, changing rooms (with a sauna in the male changing room) and a reception with a bar area. Middleton now plans to refurbish the facility.

Anytime Fitness to open first UK club

US-based operator to kickstart expansion scheme with the launch of Bristol venue

By **Tom Walker**

US-based health club operator Anytime Fitness is to unveil its first UK club in Bristol.

The Bristol club forms part of wider plans to open 50 sites across the UK and Ireland by the end of 2012 after the parent company secured a master franchise agreement.

Anytime Fitness, which is looking to expand its international operations, currently runs 1,250 clubs in the US and also has nearly 100 facilities in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico and India.

Other potential sites in the UK are being considered in the Greater London area and across southern England, with possible locations to include suburban markets near large cities and smaller towns that currently do not have a health club.

Anytime Fitness' UK clubs will be around 4,000sq ft



US-based Anytime Fitness is to embark on a major UK expansion

(371.6sq m) in size, fitted with a range of cv and strength machines supplied by Precor, and open 24 hours a day.

Justin McDonnell, Anytime Fitness master franchisee for Australia and New Zealand, has been appointed to lead the UK and Ireland master franchise group. He said: "We will not be making any significant changes to the Anytime Fitness model as it currently exists."

Independent retail planning consultant Andy Thompson – also part of the group's UK and Ireland consortium – added:

"We hope to open the first Anytime Fitness club in the UK by the end of this summer.

"We are currently looking at sites in the Greater London area, the South East and also the South West of England. Our plan is to have 50 clubs operational by end of 2012."

Rochdale centre gets green light

Work on finalising plans for a new leisure centre in Rochdale town centre has now got underway.

The £10.8m complex is set to include swimming pools, a sports hall and a large fitness gym along with a youth gym and dance studios.

It is earmarked to replace a 1930s original "municipal baths" and fitness centre conversion.

The Rochdale centre is the final major project in a three-year programme of investment under the management of Link4Life, the Rochdale Borough-wide Cultural Trust.

Nottingham site for Fitness4Less

By **Tom Walker**

Budget gym operator Fitness4Less has acquired a 15,500sq ft (1,440sq m) site for a new club in Nottingham.

Fit-out of the unit, which is located at "The Pod" – Bildurn Properties' mixed-use scheme in Fletchergate – will start immediately on the new-build, open-plan property.

The acquisition is part of the chain's ambitious expansion plans. In January 2010, the company appointed leisure property specialists Christie + Co to oversee the acquisition and development programme across the UK.

According to Jon Patrick, head of leisure at Christie + Co,



Fitness4Less will offer classes at the new The Pod site

the property's location – on the doorstep of mixed-use development – will help ensure significant footfall.

"The Pod is a great location for Fitness4Less – it's easily accessible and provides high quality space," he said.

The Nottingham Fitness4Less club is due to open in January.

Management team buys Total Fitness

Barclays Ventures private equity backs deal to acquire UK and Ireland businesses

By **Tom Walker**

The management team of health club chain Total Fitness has acquired the group's UK and Irish businesses.

The deal, for an undisclosed sum, was backed by private equity from Barclays Ventures. Cash provided by the bank will also be made available to upgrade the chain's 24 sites as well as expand the portfolio.

Founded in 1996, with its first club in Castleknock, Dublin, the group currently operates three purpose-built clubs in Dublin and 21 across the North of England and Wales.

Situated in out-of-town locations, a typical Total Fitness club occupies up to 80,000sq ft (7,432sq m) with facilities such



Total Fitness currently operates 24 clubs across the UK and Ireland

as swimming pools, saunas, steam rooms, gyms, studios, cafes and retail outlets.

Graham Hallworth, who led the buyout, is now executive chair of the group, having also steered Crown Paints through a 2008 management buyout.

Hallworth said: "This new investment will now enable us to build on our strengths and grow our market share by implementing a long-term programme of strategic investment. Total Fitness has an extremely bright future ahead."

Blaydon Leisure and Primary Care Centre unveiled

By **Pete Hayman**

Gateshead Council has unveiled a major new multi-million pound health and leisure complex on the former site of Blaydon Comprehensive School.

Blaydon Leisure and Primary Care Centre was developed by the council and NHS South of Tyne and Wear to incorporate a primary care centre and an active leisure element.

Facilities that comprise the leisure part of the development



The pool at the Blaydon facility

include a 317sq m (3,412sq ft) fitness suite equipped by Technogym; a six-lane, 25m

swimming pool and a learner pool, as well as a multi-purpose room and additional changing facilities for outdoor activities.

The new complex also boasts healthcare facilities and is the first of two new-build schemes planned by Gateshead Council as part of a £36m investment in local leisure provision.

The second – Heworth – is due to be completed in late 2010. Both have been designed by S&P Architects and built by Willmott Dixon.

UK Fitness Network membership boosts fitness levels

More than 80 per cent of UK Fitness Network (UKFN) members feel that their membership has helped them improve their fitness levels.

This year's online member research carried out by Proleisure shows that UK Fitness Network members continue to enjoy the wide choice of centres available to them.

This is reflected in the online survey results that show over 80 per cent feel that their membership has led to increased fitness levels and 65 per cent improved health benefits.

This year's results show that two thirds of UKFN members are enjoying the use of more than two centres on a regular basis.



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IN BRIEF

2011 launch for school sports competition

► Nine communities across the country are to pilot the government's new Olympic and Paralympic-style school sports competition from early 2011. Schools in London, Kent, Greater Manchester and North Yorkshire are among the areas to pilot the competition, which is to culminate in county finals next summer. Tyne and Wear, the Black Country, Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire and Cornwall are the remaining five areas that will help launch the initiative, which will feature a range of Olympic and Paralympic sports.

Wakefield Sports Club eyes new facilities

► Wakefield Sports Club has appointed Sports Solutions GB (SSGB) to help explore plans for the creation of a new community sports and social club. The amateur multi-sports club was founded in 1847 and currently occupies the 7.4-acre (3-hectare) College Grove site. However, it is now eyeing up an expansion of its facilities. SSGB will help draw up a feasibility study into plans to develop a new club elsewhere in Wakefield, while also turning the existing site over to housing.

Rochdale leisure centre gets green light

► Work on finalising plans for a new leisure centre in Rochdale town centre is underway. The new £10.8m development will include swimming pools, a sports hall and a large fitness gym along with a youth gym and dance studios. It will replace a 1930s original "municipal baths" and fitness centre conversion. The new Rochdale centre is the final major scheme in a three-year programme of investment, which is being led by Link4Life, the Rochdale Borough-wide Cultural Trust.

Work starts on £26m Luton complex

S&P Architects-designed Aquatic Centre to feature Olympic-sized swimming pool

By **Pete Hayman**

A groundbreaking ceremony has been held to mark the start of work on the construction of a new £26m Aquatics Centre at Stopsley Common, Luton.

Luton Borough Council (LBC) are leading the project with Luton Learning and Community Partnership and Surrey-based contractor Wates Construction.

The new Aquatics Centre will boast a 50m, eight-lane swimming pool with diving facility and spectator seating for 400 people, as well as a 20m, five-lane community pool with moveable floor. A 100-station fitness suite and a large sports hall will also feature as part of the S&P Architects-designed complex,



S&P Architects has designed the new £26m Luton Aquatic Centre

along with a dance studio; a spinning room; a multi-use activity room and a café.

It is hoped the new Aquatic Centre – due to open in 2012 – will drive up participation among local residents and improving health in the town.

LBC leader Hazel Simmons said: "We are committed to investing in the Luton Aquatics Centre that will provide superb swimming and diving facilities and a modern sports centre to help the people of Luton to live healthier more active lives."

UK Athletics backs West Ham stadium application

By **Pete Hayman**

UK Athletics (UKA) has backed a bid by West Ham United Football Club (WHUFC) and Newham Council to take over London's Olympic Stadium following the 2012 Games.

The national governing body has announced the Premier League club as the sport's preferred bidder for the venue, which it said provides "the strongest opportunity for a vibrant sporting legacy".



UKA has backed WHUFC's bid

UKA chair Ed Warner said: "What has impressed me so much about the joint bid from

West Ham and Newham is their clear commitment to the spirit of the Olympic legacy and not just athletics at the elite end, but with the retention of the community track.

"The team at West Ham have also been keen to support our bid to host the World Athletics Championships in 2015 at the stadium, fully understanding that a significant international event will play a major part in realising their ambition of a British sporting hub."

New £700,000 cycle track for Middlesbrough

A new £700,000 closed cycling road circuit is to be created at Prissick Base in Middlesbrough, which is designed for use by riders of all ages and abilities.

Prissick Cycle Park, which is to boast a 1km (0.6-mile) looped track and clubhouse, has been funded by the Middlesbrough Healthy Town programme and British Cycling.

It is anticipated that the new facility will be open by December and is one of more than 40 projects being delivered as part of the Healthy Town initiative. British Cycling is providing funding as part of efforts to create a number of new cycling facilities across the UK.

£10m Olympic boost for London sites

Newly-designated Games-time training venues to benefit from major investment

By **Pete Hayman**

Leisure and sports facilities in London are to benefit from at least £10m of investment after being designated as 2012 Games-time training venues.

Schools, universities and leisure centres are among the facilities to be used by athletes during the 2012 Olympic and Paralympics before returning to community use in legacy mode.

An initial 16 venues have signed up with the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) and the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA).

An additional 12 – primarily football training facilities sited outside London – are due to commit by the end of the year, with LOCOG managing the



The mayor (left) with Gail Emms, Sebastian Coe and John Armitt

project and the ODA funding the majority of capital works.

Redbridge Sports and Leisure Centre is set to benefit, offering training facilities for Olympic badminton, judo and wrestling, as well as Paralympic goalball. The ODA will provide funding towards a new £6.4m badmin-

ton and netball centre, as well as £200,000 from the Play-Sport London Facilities Fund.

London mayor Boris Johnson said: "[This] announcement puts some very important wheels in motion with a host of local venues across the capital being upgraded."

IMAGE: ANDREW BAKER

Coe under fire from council

Tower Hamlets Council (THC) has slammed a decision to start and finish the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic marathon events in The Mall.

The authority accused the London 2012 Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) of breaking its promise to East End communities.

Confirming the plans, LOCOG chair Sebastian Coe said it had been "one of the hardest decisions LOCOG had to take."

A THC spokesperson said: "This is not enough for the people of Tower Hamlets. They have been promised the opportunity to get involved with the greatest show on earth."

Final green light for Old Trafford



The stadium is seeking to recapture international cricket matches

By **Pete Hayman**

Plans for a multi-million pound redevelopment of Manchester's Old Trafford cricket stadium have been approved by secretary of state Eric Pickles.

Earlier this summer, Government Office North West revealed that it would not challenge Trafford Council's decision to approve the scheme; a move that has now been backed by Pickles.

Two new grandstands and a refurbished pavilion are mooted as part of the Old Trafford overhaul, which will increase capacity to 15,000 spectators – rising to 25,000 with temporary seating.

Floodlights and a screen for action replays will also be installed at the ground, which is being revamped in a bid to secure an Ashes Test match in 2013 after losing out last year to Cardiff's SWALEC Stadium.

IN BRIEF

Swansea set for major new football facility

▶ A new football centre of excellence and community facility is set to be developed at Landore playing fields in Swansea after the local authority backed the scheme. Swansea Council has agreed to release the entire Landore site to Swansea City Football Club (SCFC) to establish the centre, which is to include pitches, changing areas and spectator facilities. Councillors have also agreed to assist Landore Cricket Club in its relocation from the site to a venue that meets South Wales Cricket Association standards. SCFC will help provide funding.

England poised to withdraw 2022 bid?

▶ England could be set to withdraw its bid to host the 2022 World Cup if the US agrees to formally withdraw from the race to stage the 2018 event. According to the BBC, England 2018 bid international president David Dein told a media briefing that he expected the US to pull out of the 2018 World Cup race and added that England would "almost certainly" end its efforts to secure the right to host the 2022 tournament in response.

Manchester United reports £80m loss

▶ Manchester United Football Club has reported a pre-tax loss of nearly £80m for the year ending 30 June, even with 'record' revenues for the period. Despite operating profits topping more than £100m for the period, the Premier League club paid out £40m in interest payments, as well as nearly £67m in one-off finance charges. MUFC chief executive David Gill said: "These results show record turnover, record operating profits and exceptional growth in our commercial activities."

IN BRIEF

Carluccio's acquired by Landmark subsidiary

► The £90m takeover of Carluccio's restaurant group has been declared unconditional. The bid by the Dubai-based Landmark Group – using its C1 Acquisitions subsidiary – will not be opposed by Carluccio's major shareholder, Richard Caring. Caring is the owner of Caprice Holdings, which owns the Ivy and J Sheeky restaurants, as well as the Annabel's members club. Landmark, which already owns franchise rights to Carluccio's in the Middle East, has received acceptances of 74.6 per cent of the issued share capital of the Italian food chain.

Richoux Group unveils new expansion plans

► The Richoux Group has raised around £2m by way of a placing of 25 million shares, which it plans to use developing its Zippers and Frankie's Easy Diner concepts. Both chains are to be expanded "in order to assess the viability of these concepts" and the company has said it has already identified a number of sites it hopes to acquire. The company also revealed that Frankie's Easy Diner will be rebranded. A separate statement from Richoux has announced the appointment to the board of Robert Rayne as a non-executive director of the company with immediate effect.

Three 'green' awards for Radisson Edwardian

► Hotel operator Radisson Edwardian has been awarded three gold accreditations by the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS). Each of Radisson Edwardian's 12 four and five star London hotels were assessed by the GTBS covering a range of areas from energy and water efficiency, to waste management and local community support.

Refurbished hotel reopens in Glasgow

Historic A-listed property restored and updated as part of major £20m overhaul

By **Pete Hayman**

Glasgow's Grand Central Hotel, which was acquired by operator Principal Hayley in spring 2009, has reopened following a major £20m overhaul of the property.

First opened in 1883, the A-listed property is located close to the city's Central train station and has benefited from the restoration of a number of the hotel's original features.

Interior designer Charles Leon Associates and architects Crerar and Partners have worked with Principal Hayley on the revamp, while Historic Scotland has also been involved.

Work has included raising the grand ballroom's ceiling by 3m (10ft) in order to uncover windows that had been blocked for decades, as well as an



One of the bedrooms at Glasgow's revamped Grand Central Hotel

update of the property with a "contemporary modern look".

A champagne bar overlooking Central Station is among facilities at the 186-room hotel, along with the grand ballroom – The Grand Room of Glasgow – and 21 meeting rooms. The Tempus bar and restaurant

concept – led by executive chef James Murphy – is to be added to the facilities in late October.

Grand Central Hotel general manager Laurie Nicol said: "The Central Hotel is one of the most beautiful buildings in Glasgow and it is great to be part of its renaissance."

Dorset town plans approved

A 63-bedroom hotel is to be built in the centre of Dorchester, Dorset, after Simons Developments' plans for a £60m overhaul of the town was approved.

West Dorset District Council (WDDC) green lighted the revamp of the 2.5-hectare (6.2-acre) Charles Street car park site, which is also set to include landscaped lawns and cycle parking spaces.

Housing and retail units are also included, along with the potential for an adult education centre.

WDDC development control committee chair Fred Horsington said: "The committee felt that the Charles Street site offers the best option to expand Dorchester."

Blakes Hotel acquired for £20m



The luxury hotel was bought out of administration by two hoteliers

By **Tom Walker**

London's Blakes Hotel has been acquired for £20m, and its new owners are considering rolling out the brand across the globe.

The iconic 52-bedroom hotel in Kensington has been bought out of administration by hoteliers and investors Navid Mirtorabi and Meir Abutbul.

The hotel – designed by Anouska Hempel in 1981 – was acquired by buy-to-let firm

GuestInvest in 2007, although that company went into administration in 2008.

Meir Abutbul, who is the director of the new management company Blakes Management Limited, said: "Blakes is spectacular. It looks sumptuous, but we have some improvements in mind and Anouska Hempel will be in charge of design and styling. We are also planning on expanding the Blakes brand internationally."



The ME London will include two destination restaurants and bars

ME by Melia to launch in London

Sol Meliá set to convert 10-storey City Bank building

By **Tom Walker**

Sol Meliá has unveiled plans to open the UK's first ME by Melia hotel in Holborn, London.

It follows the purchase of the 10-storey City Bank building from Anida, a subsidiary of BBVA bank, which will now be redesigned by British architect Norman Foster to provide 173 rooms across four categories.

Finalising construction work and fitting out the hotel is set to cost a further €52m (£45m), with facilities to include a convention centre, bars and two destination restaurants.

The ME London, close to both Covent Garden and Trafalgar Square, is expected to open in 2012 and will join the company's Meliá White House, situated next to Regent's Park.

Sol Meliá vice chair and CEO, Gabriel Escarrer Jaume, said: "This deal brings the addition of a strategic asset in a key destination, and also positions the brand in one of the most important feeder markets in the world travel industry."

The ME by Meliá brand currently includes two hotels in Spain – the ME Madrid and ME Barcelona – and two in Mexico.

Sector shines in consumer survey

Hotels and restaurants offer the best customer service in the UK – according to a survey by Retail Eyes.

The survey questioned nearly 6,000 shoppers and 27 per cent picked hotels and 21 per cent named restaurants as the place they had received the best service.

Department stores were assessed to have the third best customer service, with 11 per cent of the vote, while

supermarkets (10 per cent) and local convenience stores finished fourth and fifth.

Half of the respondents believed the best attribute for providing good customer service was "listening and understanding what the customer is looking for".

Retail Eyes CEO Tim Ogle said: "It's clear from our survey that the first point of call should be ensuring staff interact with customers."

New reports highlight hospitality's crucial role

The sector's contribution to the economy deserves greater government recognition

Earlier this month, the BHA commissioned two reports. One was from Oxford Economics, which outlined the huge – and largely unrecognised – contribution which hospitality makes to the general economy. Only four other industries are bigger in employment terms than hospitality – a significant finding.

The second, produced internally, shows what changes have to be made to ensure that the industry stays at this commanding position, employing over 2.4 million people directly and a further 1.3 million indirectly. The second report also suggested that we could, through growth, increase the number of people in the hospitality industry by 236,000 by 2015. We believe that no other industry, at this time of cut-backs and redundancies, is able to make such a claim.

How do we believe that such growth can be achieved? Through a variety of measures, but chiefly by ensuring that the industry and government working in partnership, with the government championing the industry as one of the main economic drivers.

We believe that, first and foremost, we want to create a cross-cabinet committee for hospitality and tourism, which would coordinate policy and greater cohesion across government departments. We believe this should be combined with an annual meeting between the Prime Minister and key cabinet ministers with leading members of the BHA. Our experience is that other countries that have pursued successful hospitality and tourism strategies in recent years have strong leadership for the sector from the highest levels of government.

We want government recognition that the UK's national tourist boards are central to the success of the industry and they need long-term security, and a more commercial focus. And there is everything to be gained by English tourism joining up – to a greater degree – with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to promote Britain as an international destination across the world.

And of course, price and competitiveness are key elements of future success. So we are seeking a joint study with government on the impact of the rate of VAT on accommodation, restaurants and attractions. All but four EU countries have a reduced rate of VAT on hotel accommodation, which makes the UK uncompetitive.

There are many other recommendations – the full report is on the BHA website (www.bha.org.uk) – which help point the way ahead to a prize of sustained growth.



UFI IBRAHIM is chief executive of the BHA. *Leisure Opportunities* is a member benefit of the BHA, for your free copy call **01462 471932**

IN BRIEF

Survey carried out on Hastings Pier

► Specialist engineers from Gifford of Southampton have conducted an initial examination of Hastings Pier following the fire on 5 October. The company said it still had 'extreme public safety concerns' around the pier for beach users, noting that even six days after the fire, debris was still continuing to fall from the structure onto the beach below. The study found no significant further damage to the main structure of the pier under the apron and central sections.

First phase of Burns museum opens

► National Trust for Scotland has opened the retail area and café at the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway - the first phase of the opening schedule for the attraction. The first major museum to open in Scotland since 2007, the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum will house the most significant Burns collection of its kind including 5,000 artefacts, manuscripts and memorabilia of the bard. The full exhibition, which is to bring the story of Burns to life, is due to open on 1 December.

Opening hours cut at British Museum

► The British Museum is to reduce its opening hours in a bid to deal with government cuts. According to a memo leaked to the Public and Commercial Services Union, and reported by London's *Evening Standard*, late night opening would be stopped on Thursdays and restricted to Fridays only. The 3 per cent cut, which is affecting other national institutions, has meant that the museum must save money. Neil MacGregor, managing director of the museum, has also warned that free admission to the attraction was under review.

Mary Rose construction phase starts

Warings Contractors appointed to deliver new Wilkinson Eyre-designed museum

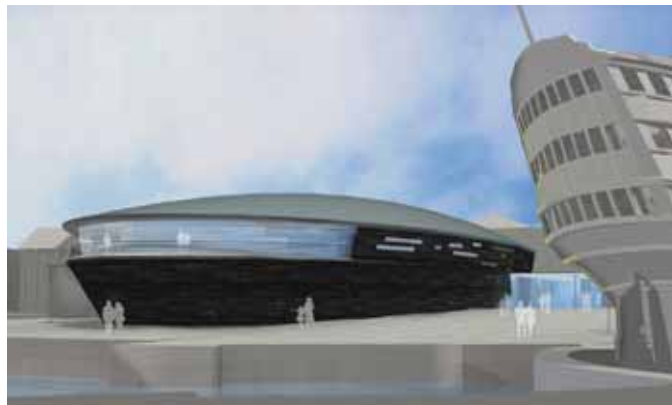
By **Pete Hayman**

Work has got underway on the £16.3m construction phase of the new £35m Mary Rose Museum at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, Hampshire.

The Mary Rose Trust (MRT) has appointed Portsmouth-based Warings Contractors – part of the Bouygues group – to build the new museum, which is due to open in 2012.

A team including Wilkinson Eyre Architects has drawn up designs for the scheme, which will see a boat-shaped building constructed over the dry dock that contains the *Mary Rose* – Henry VIII's flagship.

More than 19,000 artefacts raised from the bottom of the Solent – where the ship sank in 1545 – will be put on show in galleries located on the same level as the ship's main deck when the new museum opens.



The building will cover the dry dock that contains the *Mary Rose*

The start of the construction phase also coincides with the 28th anniversary of the raising of the *Mary Rose*.

MRT is looking to secure the remaining £4m needed to fund the scheme, which has been boosted by a £21m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Rear Admiral John Lippiett, the trust's chief executive, said: "The significance of the *Mary*

Rose collection cannot be underestimated and we still have a £4m fundraising target to meet before the museum can be opened to the public in 2012, the UK's Olympic year.

"One year on since the launch of the Mary Rose Public Appeal we remain reliant on the public to continue to ensure this national treasure is preserved for future generations."

£9.7m Birmingham plans backed

By **Pete Hayman**

Plans for the creation of a new £9.7m wing at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery have been given the green light by Birmingham City Council (BCC).

Work to build and fit-out Birmingham – A City in the Making is due to start by the end of the year, with the top floor of the attraction to be transformed with the creation of five new galleries.

Plans drawn up by West Yorkshire-based Redman Design will see four galleries focus on the development of the city from its origins to the end of the Second World War.

A fifth gallery will also be incorporated into the 1,040sq m (11,194sq ft) wing, which



Redman Design has helped to draw up plans for the museum

aims to examine the character and people of Birmingham, containing 'living memories'.

BCC cabinet member for leisure, sport and culture Martin Mullaney said: "The collection represents our manufacturing tradition, the diverse communities found here in Birmingham and the continuing growth of our city."

Record crowd for UK museums

New figures from the National Museum Directors' Conference show that this summer saw a record number of visitors to the UK's national museums.

More than 5.7 million people visited UK national museums in August, which represents an increase of 11 per cent over the same month last year.

Among the highlights were a 15 per cent rise across the four branches of Tate; a 24 per cent increase at the Victoria & Albert Museum; a 17 per cent increase at the Natural History Museum; and a rise of 18 per cent at the National Gallery.

In total, national museums across the UK played host to more than 42 million visitors during 2009-10.

Football and fashion lure Gulf tourists

VisitBritain research reveals an increase in the number of Middle Eastern visitors

By **Martin Nash**

The number of tourists coming to the UK from the Gulf region of the Middle East has jumped, according to a new report from tourism agency VisitBritain.

Around 494,000 people from the area made trips to the UK in 2009, an increase of 9 per cent on the year before.

Tourists from Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates said they were particularly attracted to the UK by the opportunity to shop for fashion and luxury goods not available at home – plus the chance to watch an English Premier League club in action.

Gulf tourism makes an important contribution to the UK economy, with the average spend per person while they



Premier League football is one of the main appeals to Gulf visitors

are in the UK being £1,733, more than treble the £554 spent by the average tourist. The region was the source of 1.7 per cent of UK visitors in 2009, spending 5.2 per cent of the total foreign tourist spend.

VisitBritain also found that while Gulf visitors currently

have limited knowledge of Britain outside London, the idea of visiting other parts of the UK was "very appealing."

When would-be Gulf region tourists were asked where they would like to visit in the next three years, only Malaysia had a slight edge over Britain.

easyJet resolves brand dispute



The airline can still use the 'easy' brand for its ancillary activities

By **Pete Hayman**

Budget airline easyJet has confirmed that it has resolved a long-running legal dispute with founder Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou over the use of the 'easy' brand.

The revision of a licence agreement will allow the airline to use the 'easy' name for its ancillary activities, which include tie-ups with car hire and hotel booking companies.

In return for what the carrier calls improved operational flexibility, Sir Stelios will receive 0.25 per cent of easyJet's revenue in "royalty" payments – fixed at £3.9m and £4.95m for the first two years.

Sir Stelios has also agreed to give up the right to appoint himself as easyJet chair and easyGroup's right to name a representative on the budget airline's board of directors.

OpenTable nets toptable.com

OpenTable, the US-based provider of restaurant reservations, is to acquire its UK-based counterpart, toptable.com, for around US\$55m (£34.4m).

The acquisition is due to be concluded during the fourth quarter of 2010, with the deal being financed using existing cash, equivalents and short-term investments.

OpenTable president and chief executive officer Jeff Jordan said: "This acquisition of toptable.com is designed to accelerate the growth of our business in the UK in a meaningful way.

"We will be able to provide a superior service to restaurants and diners in the United Kingdom."

IN BRIEF

Dublin to bid for World Design Capital status

► Dublin City Council has revealed that it will be leading the city's bid to be awarded World Design Capital status in 2014. The council will spearhead a group of four local authorities in a bid to the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design, which designates cities on a bi-annual basis. It is hoped that a successful bid to become World Design Capital will help boost the Irish capital's economy, while recognising its role in creative and innovative thinking.

Virgin Active teams up with MTV

► Health club operator Virgin Active has teamed up with Music Television UK and Ireland (MTV) to launch the new MTV Urban Workout at 71 Virgin Active clubs throughout the UK. The workout is based on the hit US show, *Randy Jackson presents America's Best Dance Crew*, and is a mixture of break dancing, hip-hop and free running. Using an exclusive soundtrack, the MTV Urban Workout aims to provide a full-body workout with emphasis on the core fitness, cardio exercise and upper body work normally associated with a hardcore gym workout.

New scheme to boost female participation

► A campaign has been launched in a bid to encourage women in the East of England region to adopt a more healthy lifestyle and take part in sport. Get Back Into is led by six county sports partnerships and Sport England, with a wide range of activities listed on a new website to encourage females to get back into exercise. It comes after Sport England research found that just 12.75 per cent of women in the region participate in sport three times a week.

IN BRIEF

Wycombe church to house new arts centre

► A new arts centre is set to open at a High Wycombe church and adjacent hall after a local community group secured the leases to the buildings. Wycombe Community Arts Centre has already moved into St John's Church and Hall after signing a lease agreement with Wycombe District Council (WDC). The Arts4Every1 Centre for the Arts, Creativity and Enterprise is to open in phases over the coming months to offer a number of performances, workshops and exhibitions. WDC acquired the properties earlier this year after the church buildings shut in 2009 following a reorganisation of the parish of High Wycombe.

New e-commerce site for contemporary art

► A new e-commerce site, designed to allow the public to acquire work by a range of contemporary artists and designers, has been launched. Selected galleries can showcase and sell work through the portal, which is funded by Creative Scotland and was created with the help of Arts Council England and CultureLabel.com

TDC reveals plans for gallery opening

► Thanet District Council has revealed the 'priority projects' to be carried out ahead of the 2011 launch of Margate's new Turner Contemporary gallery. Decorative hoardings or screenings will be erected at the Fort Road Hotel and Arcadian sites as part of 10 schemes outlined in an action plan agreed by councillors on 23 September. Meanwhile, the council said it would continue to work with the sites' owners to try and progress rebuilding plans, although added that compulsory purchase order proceedings had started "as a back-up".

Ashford arts plans clear last obstacle

Church to incorporate community venue as part of £1.7m 'shared sacred space'

By **Pete Hayman**

Plans for a new arts venue as part of a 'shared sacred space' at St Mary's Church in Ashford, Kent, are to go ahead after the last remaining objection to the project was dismissed.

The Dean of the Arches Court, head of the ecclesiastical court of the Archbishop of Canterbury, refused Christopher Cooper's application to appeal a Commissary Court decision to approve the scheme.

Under plans for the Arts at St Mary's project, work will take place to enhance the church's role as a place of worship, as well as creating an arts venue to cater for 350 people.

The £1.7m scheme has received £1.2m Growth Area



St Mary's Church will be transformed into a 'shared sacred space'

Funding from Ashford's Future and a £100,000 contribution from Ashford Borough Council (ABC). The Church of England has also contributed funding towards the development.

Bernard Heyes, portfolio holder for culture at ABC, said:

"Mr Cooper has used every legal avenue available to stop the re-ordering of St Mary's. His arguments have been formally rejected on every occasion."

The Commissary Court of Canterbury approved the Arts at St Mary's scheme on 2 June.

Operator appointed for new Guildford arts venue

By **Pete Hayman**

Guildford Borough Council (GBC) has appointed HQ Theatres to operate the Surrey town's new entertainment venue, which is scheduled to open in autumn 2011.

The council carried out a "comprehensive evaluation process" to select an operator to manage the Austin-Smith:Lord-designed venue, which is being delivered by Willmott Dixon Construction.



The venue will open next year

Hampshire-based consultancy Scott Wilson also forms part of the team delivering the

new venue, which will replace Guildford's former Civic Hall and will feature an auditorium with a capacity of 1,000 seated or 1,700 standing, as well as a multi-purpose studio; a café; bars; and foyer spaces.

GBC strategic director Jim Miles said: "By using a commercial operator partner, we will ensure that a diverse entertainment programme will make the best and most cost-effective use of everything our new venue has to offer."

Basildon's Towngate Theatre set for major renovation

Basildon's Towngate Theatre is in line for a major revamp as part of a £1bn project to regenerate the town over the next 20 years.

Plans to overhaul the venue form part of developer Barratt/Wilson Bowden's (BWB) vision for the Essex town, and have been given the green light by Basildon Council.

BWB aims to increase the seating capacity of the theatre from 546 to 1,200 to enable existing backstage areas to be reused and the auditorium and foyer to be rebuilt.

The foyer could also include arts facilities, such as a gallery and cafés, as well as being considered as a potential location for a library.

£10m HLF windfall for park schemes

Six projects to benefit from confirmed funding through Parks for People initiative

By **Pete Hayman**

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Big Lottery Fund (BIG) have announced that six parks across the UK are set to receive a share of £10m.

A £1.8m grant will help to complete improvements at Maidstone's Mote Park as part of a wider restoration, which includes the regeneration of a 19th century pavilion.

Elsewhere, the conservation of chimneys and pit mounds connected with the industrial heritage of Telford are among the proposals for Telford Town Park, which will benefit from a £2.1m award.

Woodland and flower beds at the Lordship Recreation Ground in Tottenham will be properly maintained, while the Shell Theatre and River Moselle are



Telford Town Park has secured a share of the £10m HLF package

to undergo restoration work with the help of a £3.8m grant.

Meanwhile, grants have also been allocated to Mesnes Park in Wigan, which has secured a £1.9m grant, and Whaley Bridge Memorial Park in Derbyshire (£478,000). The sixth park to benefit – Cambuslang Park in South Lanarkshire

– will receive support from the HLF only, worth £551,500.

HLF chief executive Carole Souter said: "These grants are far-reaching and provide great opportunities to protect our precious wildlife, for volunteers to learn new skills, and get local people involved with taking care of their local park."

IN BRIEF

Work starts on historic Bracknell park revamp

► Bracknell Forest Council has started work on a £4.4m revamp of grounds surrounding South Hill Park Arts Centre, Birch Hill. Landscape maintenance group Gavin Jones will undertake work on the project, which will include the restoration of the terrace garden and conserving woodland areas. New trees are to be planted and a new entrance created as part of the scheme, which has received a £2.3m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund.

Next stage of Stirling park scheme underway

► Stirling Council has announced the start of work on the second stage of an £80,000 project to help enhance the town's historic Kings Park. The local authority's land service gardeners have embarked on a planting scheme in order to enhance the south gate entrance, following the completion of the first phase. Stage two will also see Land Engineering (Scotland) undertake work to level and reseed the events area, before resurfacing the two football pitches in March 2011.

Plymouth park scheme consultation starts

► Draft plans for a renovation of Central Park, Plymouth, are to go before local residents as part of a consultation exercise, which started on 18 October. Plymouth City Council is behind the proposals, which have built on ideas adopted as part of its Central Park Area Action Plan in September 2008. The masterplan includes outdoor sports pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens and a 1km (0.6-mile) cycling track. A new events field and a new hill viewing point are also mooted, along with an outdoor performance space.

Gower section of Wales coastal footpath unveiled

By **Pete Hayman**

Efforts to create a path around the entire Welsh coast have taken a step forward with the opening of a 16-mile (25.7km) section on the Gower peninsula.

Welsh environment minister Jane Davidson, walkers and local schoolchildren unveiled the stretch of path between Port Eynon and Llanmadoc in late September.

The latest stage of the path has seen seven legal diversions of existing routes, as well as the creation of around 1.2 miles (1.9km) of new footpath to incorporate Rhossili beach and Worm's Head.

A cave in which the Red Lady of Paviland – a skeleton dating back to the late Stone Age – was discovered will also be passed on the route.



Rhossili Beach has been incorporated in the new section of path

Davidson said: "This section in particular includes one of the most iconic views in Wales as well as two nature reserves and some of the most important archaeological sites in Wales."

Gareth Sullivan, Swansea Council's cabinet member for economic regeneration and planning, added: "Gower has

been a vital attraction for this part of Wales for many years that has attracted millions of visitors to its amazing scenery and walking country."

Plans to create a new path around the entire coast over the next two years are being led by the Welsh Assembly Government along with the Countryside Council for Wales.

Expression of Interest

Leisure Development Opportunity



Swindon Borough Council is inviting initial expressions of interest from suitably experienced organisations to submit ideas for the development / redevelopment of a centrally-located, leisure-based site in Swindon.

The ageing, but ever popular Oasis Leisure Centre in North Star is nearing the end of its operational life and requires substantial upgrading. Ideas and proposals involving refurbishment and new-build will be welcomed by the Borough Council to provide a regional leisure and event destination.

In addition to the facilities currently on offer at the Oasis Leisure Centre, schemes that deliver an enhanced events arena, an indoor snow facility and an ice rink will also be welcomed. Ancillary retail facilities and visitor accommodation may also be considered.

In addition to the Oasis Leisure Centre, the Borough Council also owns an adjoining 5.6ha site which will be available to the successful leisure provider. Other land can be made available if required up to a total area

of around 9.5ha. It is expected that any new facility will be privately operated.

To be invited to submit detailed proposals, organisations will need to register an initial interest by emailing lawrencemurphy@forwardswindon.co.uk by 4pm on **Wednesday 3rd November 2010**.

Information supplied should include:

- **Contact name**
- **Organisation name & contact details**
- **Brief overview of organisation**

An information pack will be made available upon receipt of these details.



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The Partner must have the capacity and expertise to sustainably manage the site on a daily basis and be the named point of contact for the public.

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IN BRIEF

Work underway at Bangor pool

► Glasgow-based Barr + Wray has been selected by main contractor Farrans Construction, on behalf of North Down Borough Council, to install the 50m swimming pool and associated plant works at a new leisure complex in Bangor, County Down, Northern Ireland. The £38m centre, which has been designed by McAdam Design with S&P Architects to house Northern Ireland's first ever Olympic-sized pool, is to be completed in summer 2012. Barr + Wray will supply and install three treatment systems for the 50m pool, diving pool and wave pool, as well as the wave generator, diving bubbler system and pumping for various water slides and two spa pools. It will also install two moveable floors and two submersible booms for the 50m pool and an additional floor for the diving pool.

University of York scheme moves forward

► Work has been completed on the first phase of a £750m expansion of the University of York's (UY) Heslington East campus. New accommodation for the institution's departments of computer science and theatre, film and television were developed as part of stage one, which cost £200m. UY has confirmed that planning has already started on the second phase to include a sports village, which will be available for use by the community and will feature a swimming pool. A fitness suite and all-weather pitches are also mooted as part of the new sports village, which will accompany student accommodation and academic buildings in stage two.

Debt agreement for Battersea group

REO secures agreement over the deferral of repayments with its loan note holder

By **Pete Hayman**

Real Estate Opportunities (REO), the group behind the planned £5.5bn redevelopment of Battersea Power Station, has secured agreement over the deferral of debt repayments.

The developer has reached a deal with its loan note holder that will see "all principal and interest payments" put on hold until 31 May 2011.

It follows the news that REO had been handed an extension on a combined £262.5m facility with the Bank of Scotland and Bank of Ireland on behalf of NAMA until 31 August 2011.

However, that extension, which comprises the £225m Battersea Power Station facility and the £37.55m site assembly facility, had been dependent on the latest agreement.



REO is planning a major regeneration of Battersea Power Station

A REO spokesperson said: "A further announcement setting out the agreed financial restructuring terms will be made in due course."

REO's plans for the major £5.5bn overhaul of Battersea Power Station have been drawn up by architect Rafael Viñoly and includes 700,000sq ft

(65,032sq m) of restaurant and retail space and a hotel.

A riverside park, an extension to the Riverside Walk through to Battersea Park, and public access to restored historic areas of the power station also feature as part of plans that have been submitted to Wandsworth Council.

Tropicana plans moves forward

Plans to revamp Weston-super-Mare's Tropicana centre have progressed after two developers moved to the next stage of the evaluation process.

North Somerset Council received expressions of interest from Harvard Tisdale and Nightingale Group, both of which are seeking to revamp the waterfront site.

The local authority has stipulated that potential developers must incorporate a leisure/swimming pool open to the public on a casual basis.

Milestone for Green Townscape

By **Tom Walker**

Work has been completed on a £2.8m streetscape renovation in Aberdeen, which forms part of the wider Green Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI).

The five-year THI, which was unveiled in 2009, is a conservation-led programme that aims to transform the city's historic Green and surrounding areas.

Most of the funding was provided by Aberdeen City Council (ACC) and Scottish Enterprise, while the Green THI contributed a £525,000 grant.

Work featured the planting of trees and shrubs and the installation of new seating.



Aberdeen's historic Green area

Gordon McIntosh, director of enterprise, planning and infrastructure at ACC, said: "The changes in the area are quite remarkable – it looks much cleaner, brighter and more inviting than it has done for years."

LPF: Children's Entertainment Centres – the latest industry developments

An early evening LPF seminar to be held at:

Gambado Chelsea, 7 Station Court, Townmead Road, London SW6 2PY on Wednesday 10th November 2010, 6.30pm - 8.30pm

CONTENT:

The seminar will give an update on the Children's Entertainment Centre industry from an Operators perspective and from property perspective. It will give an overview of the industry, the progress its made, the latest developments and where its heading in the future. Followed by a panel Questions and Answer session

SPEAKER:

Iain Westwater, Managing Director, Gambado. He has over 25 years experience in the hotel, leisure and children's play sector having previously worked at The Pinnacle Leisure Group and Cannon's Health & Fitness.

Alex Cheney, Managing Director, Monkey Bizness Limited. Alex is a co-founder in Monkey Bizness, he has spent the last six years running a multi-site family entertainment business growing from 1 site to 9 in sites in this time achieving revenue growth of 40% plus year-on-year.

David Kerr, DKA Associates

PROGRAMME

6.30pm Registration 8.30pm Finish

Fee: £45.00 + VAT LPF members
£55.00 + VAT member guests
£90.00 + VAT non members



TO BOOK OR FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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A new strategy will boost Wales' growing reputation



ALUN FFRED JONES is Welsh Assembly Government minister for tourism

Earlier this month, Wales delivered its first Ryder Cup and as victorious captain Colin Montgomerie said, 'the world was watching and Wales delivered'. The event was ten years in the making and we are extremely proud to deliver such a prestigious event.

It was evident that the weather didn't dampen the spirits and enthusiasm of the supporters and players, and that our warm Welsh welcome made it a Ryder Cup to remember. Now, the work begins to make sure we maximise opportunities presented by the Ryder Cup.

During the four days, 620 million people watched worldwide when Wales made history as excitement continued into a fourth day. The tournament may have ended but the effects of the Ryder Cup will be evident for years to come; it has already done wonders for Welsh golf.

We have seen an increase of 32 per cent in the number of golf tourists to Wales and participation in the sport has also increased. The event has also left a lasting infrastructure legacy for South East Wales, with the Welsh Assembly Government investing more than £9.5m to improve the local road infrastructure and £8.5m to redevelop Newport station.

The Ryder Cup shows how major events can increase awareness and build Wales' reputation. The Welsh Assembly Government's major events strategy was launched during the the Ryder Cup week. This is Wales' first co-ordinated and systematic approach to delivering and hosting future major events and will see Wales developing a new portfolio of major events in the coming years.

UK scores high on new NBI study

Britain remains fourth 'most admired' country overall in recent research

By Tom Walker

The UK has retained fourth overall place on the annual Nation Brand Index survey (NBI), keeping its place on the overall list – behind the US, Germany and France.

However, the UK has slipped in the NBI's sub-categories following the survey, which is based on interviews with 20,000 adults worldwide and is seen as a clear indicator of how nations are regarded by the public.

Britain's reputation for offering a warm welcome has suffered, as the UK only managed a lowly 13th spot. On the list of countries considered rich in natural beauty, the UK fared even worse – 23rd.

The UK also failed to inspire as a destination for sports tourism, finishing 8th on the list for 'excelling in sports', despite the perceived interest in tourists travelling to see Premier League football and major events such as the Ryder Cup.



Britain retains its overall appeal to tourists

Sandy Dawe, chief executive of VisitBritain, said: "Our 'welcome' ranking at 13th suggests we still need to work hard on this aspect ahead of the 2012 Olympic Games.

"The NBI shows clearly what our very considerable strengths are but also the things we have to work on."

VisitBritain and BA launch new joint initiative

By Martin Nash



The initiative will target the UK's heritage

A joint promotion by VisitBritain and British Airways (BA) is to market the UK to inbound visitors as having "more world-class heritage and history sites than anywhere else on earth".

The campaign, which is entitled 'Classic', also emphasises the emotional allure and authenticity of attractions that can be found across Britain.

The global campaign, which is being financed equally by BA and VisitBritain, offers special fares to economy passengers.

'Busiest September' for Heathrow Airport

Heathrow Airport has experienced its 'busiest September ever' after passenger numbers increased by 7.6 per cent compared with the same period last year.

Latest figures from operator BAA have revealed that more than 6.2 million people flew from the airport last month, which is the largest month-on-month increase since July 2004.

Across the BAA's six UK airports, passenger numbers grew by 3.3 per cent to nearly 9.9 million. The decline in the number of people using Stansted airport has also slowed to 4.3 per cent.

BAA chief executive Colin Matthews said: "The growth reflects an improved outlook for our airline customers and an increase in business confidence."



The academy will provide the foundations for a career in hospitality

New De Vere Academy launched

AHG unveils new initiative to train up sector workers

By Tom Walker

Independent hotel operator Alternative Hotel Group (AHG) has launched a new education and training initiative for the UK hospitality sector.

Called De Vere Academy of Hospitality, the first location for the academy will be at De Vere Wychwood Park, near Crewe.

The Academy is now set to be rolled out across the UK with three more openings scheduled in the next six months – at De Vere Venues in Milton Keynes, Liverpool and London (Greenwich).

AHG aims to train 10,000 people in the hospitality industry over the next three years to a professional and recognised vocational qualification standard and provide students with the foundations for a career in the industry.

The ambitious scheme has the support of the National Apprenticeship Service and also local and central government.

Links have already been forged between the academy and the hospitality industry including Hilton Hotels, Crowne Plaza, Manchester City FC and the Trafford Centre.

Initiative to discover rugby talent

A scheme has been launched by Swansea Council with the Ospreys rugby union team and the Welsh Rugby Union to help unearth fresh talent.

The initiative will see community coaches from the Ospreys visiting schools across the city in a bid to support club rugby and increase participation among local young people.

Coaches will visit schools local to four clubs – Penlan;

Pontarddulais; Penclawdd; and South Gower – to help boost membership and deliver training sessions.

Swansea Council rugby development officer Ben Rose said: "The whole programme is specifically designed to encourage more local children to play rugby. The clubs in question have identified that they need more players and we're happy to help."

Facing the spending review head-on

The sector must ensure the mechanisms are in place to tackle challenges that lie ahead

As we approach the finalisation of the government's comprehensive spending review (CSR), we have a nervous wait to see where final cuts in public spending will be enforced.

It was interesting to listen to the speeches from the recent Conservative Party Conference, particularly from skills minister John Hayes, when he stated that the trend in this country was towards the creation of highly skilled jobs, and that the nation's training and education system must meet that challenge if we are going to prosper. He then went on to say that the UK needs to "raise our game in terms of skills". I could not agree more.

I have always said that in order to support sustained growth in the economy, employers need to develop the skilled employees that they require. We must have a skills system that is more responsive to employer's needs, and there is an opportunity, through the new government and the finalisation of the CSR, to really address this and remove some of the bureaucracy surrounding it.

Hayes also stated that the government was aiming to increase the number of apprenticeships, revolutionise careers service provision for all ages and remove barriers to further education – including the enhancement of part-time, vocational and community-based learning – which I wholeheartedly support. However, any change to the skills system will need to demonstrate a clear return on investment, whereby training leads to business impact and increased productivity.

So what will the CSR announcement and its potential ramifications mean for the sport and active leisure sector? We're yet to find out. However, we do know that sport and health are under just as much pressure as other sectors, and I have very real concerns that these areas will be hit just as hard. We have to be ready and have the mechanisms in place to ride this economic storm, and yet we have to deliver a world class workforce that keeps the nation fit, healthy and engaged if we are ever to overcome this ongoing recession.

We will continue to work on behalf of employers to inform and influence government on the role of our sector, and whilst our contribution to society as a whole may be recognised, it does not in any way mean that we, as a sector, are impervious to the cuts. It is with this in mind that I call on all employers to be committed to training and development and help demonstrate the true wealth and impact of our industry.



SkillsActive

STEPHEN STUDD is chief executive of SkillsActive

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For an informal discussion please contact the Sports and Community Centre Manager on Telephone number 0114 2480519.

Job Description barrie.murfin@killamarsh-pc.gov.uk

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Human Resources Section, Celtic Community Leisure,
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Tel No: 01639 640068 Email: Stephanie.rayner@celticleisure.org
www.celticleisure.org



Centre Manager

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For further information and application pack contact Linda Davies on 01209 722031 or ldavies@cblc.co.uk

Closing date: Wednesday 27th October 2010

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To download an application form and job details please visit: <http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/jobs/>

Alternatively these may be obtained from Sally Popplewell, Senior Sports Administration Officer, email: sportsjobs@leeds.ac.uk tel: +44 (0)113 343 5080. Job Reference Number: 222001

Closing Date: 5pm, 12th November 2010.

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Company: Parkwood Leisure
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Location: Exeter, United Kingdom
Closing date: 22 Oct 2010

Divisional Managers

Company: Club Training
Salary: £40,000 - £50,000
Location: Greater London / South East / North, United Kingdom
Closing date: 22 Oct 2010

Duty Manager

Company: Parkwood Leisure
Salary: £16,000
Location: Exeter, United Kingdom
Closing date: 22 Oct 2010

Recreation Assistants - 2 posts

Company: Parkwood Leisure
Salary: £8,528 - £12,729.60
Location: Torbay, United Kingdom
Closing date: 22 Oct 2010

General Manager

Company: Parkwood Leisure
Salary: £30,000
Location: Barnstaple, United Kingdom
Closing date: 22 Oct 2010

Project Manager - Indoor Cricket Last Man Stands

Company: England Cricket Board
Salary: c£30,000 pa plus car, pension, PMI
Location: Nationwide, United Kingdom
Closing date: 22 Oct 2010

Sports Club Manager

Company: The Connaught Club
Location: London, United Kingdom

Medical Aesthetician - Harrods

Company: Urban Retreat
Salary: depends on experience
Location: London, United Kingdom

Sports Development Manager

Company: Tower Hamlets
Salary: £40,506 - £43,152 per annum
Location: London, United Kingdom
Closing date: 24 Oct 2010

Sports Development Officer

Company: Havant Borough Council
Salary: £27,052 - £30,011
Location: Havant, United Kingdom
Closing date: 25 Oct 2010

National Business Development Director

Company: Skills Active Group
Salary: Circa £55,000 package
Location: London, United Kingdom
Closing date: 25 Oct 2010

Fitness Instructors

Company: Personal Touch Fitness
Salary: £14,500 - £17,000 + PT
Location: Reading, United Kingdom

Graduate/Trainees - 2 posts

Company: Athis Limited
Salary: £12,000 basic
Location: Essex / Surrey, United Kingdom

Become a Master Trainer

Company: Premier Training International Ltd
Location: Nationwide, United Kingdom

Become a Gym Instructor

Company: Focus Training
Location: Nationwide, United Kingdom
Closing date: 29 Oct 2010

Full and Part Time Instructors

Company: Kieser Training
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Become a Personal Trainer

Company: Focus Training
Location: Nationwide, United Kingdom
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Become an Exercise to Music Instructor

Company: Focus Training
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Company: Premier Training International Ltd
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Company: Premier Training International Ltd
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Company: YMCA Fitness Industry Training
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Company: YMCA Fitness Industry Training
Location: London, United Kingdom

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P/T Exercise and Fitness Trainers

Company: The Skills Partnership Ltd
Salary: Rate: £100 - £180 per day
Location: Hertfordshire / Surrey / Chesterfield
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Membership Advisor

Company: Parkwood Leisure
Salary: rate of pay £6.27ph-£7.65ph
Location: Nottingham, United Kingdom
Closing date: 05 Nov 2010

Personal Trainers

Company: YOUR Personal Training
Location: Various (see details) UK

Coach Soccer with the New York Red Bulls

Company: Red Bull New York
Location: United States
Closing date: 17 Dec 2010

Trainee Personal Trainer / Fitness Instructor

Company: The Training Room
Salary: £20K-£30K
Location: Nationwide, United Kingdom
Closing date: 01 Mar 2011

Level 2 Apprenticeships

Company: Parkwood Leisure
Salary: Weekly Wage: £95
Location: Nationwide, United Kingdom
Closing date: 01 Oct 2011

Attractions and Events Manager

Company: HIT entertainment Ltd
Salary: Competitive + Benefits
Location: London, United Kingdom

Food and Beverage Leader

Company: Parkwood Leisure
Salary: rate of pay £6.73ph-£7.67ph
Location: Nottingham, United Kingdom
Closing date: 29 Oct 2010

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Controlling costs 'primary concern' for businesses

UK leisure operators reveal limits on investment to be a main issue according to latest *Alliance Skills Monitor*

By **Tom Walker**

Reduced profitability, limits on future investment and maintaining staff morale are among the top three concerns for UK leisure companies.

Latest results from the *Alliance Skills Monitor*, a quarterly report produced by the Sector Skills Councils, also revealed that a quarter of companies have seen their costs increase and a quarter have reduced their staff numbers.

There are signs, however, the mood within the sector is now

lifting, with more than a third (36 per cent) of respondents expecting revenue to increase over the next three months – more than twice the proportion who expect a decrease.

A clear majority (70 per cent) expect staff numbers to remain the same, signalling an end to large cuts in staff numbers.

Stephen Studd, chief executive of SkillsActive, the Sector Skills Council for Sport and Active Leisure said: "This quarter's panel clearly shows that training is picking up, which is very encouraging."



The report shows companies are no longer cutting down on staff

Peel submits £5.5bn Liverpool Waters proposals

By **Pete Hayman**

Plans for the £5.5bn redevelopment of an area of disused docklands in Liverpool have been submitted to the local council by Manchester-based developer Peel Holdings.

Liverpool Waters will provide more than 14 million sq ft (1.3 million sq m) of mixed-use floor space and will complement a similar project on the other side of the River Mersey.



The docks are to be revamped

Occupying 150 acres (60.7 hectares) of former docklands, the development will include a cultural building; restaurants; a

cruise terminal and Shanghai Tower – the tallest UK building outside London.

More than 9,000 homes and office space are also proposed as part of the Liverpool Waters planning application, which has been led by consultants WYG under the guidance of Peel.

Meanwhile, Peel also said it had ensured historical features are to be conserved as part of the project, with part of the site within a World Heritage Site.

Punch to offload 1,300 pubs

Punch Taverns is to sell around 1,300 leased properties after reporting a pre-tax loss of £159m for the year to 21 August.

The pub group said it had earmarked a "core estate" of around 4,700 properties with long-term futures, while the rest of its estate – totalling 1,347 – is to be offloaded by the end of the year.

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