

# leisureopportunities

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## DLL launches new Exeter club

PETE HAYMAN

David Lloyd Leisure (DLL) has opened its new £11m Sandy Park health and fitness club in Exeter, Devon.

The facility incorporates a 12,900sq ft (1,198sq m) gymnasium equipped with a number of cardiovascular and resistance machines, free weights and Power Plates.

Three indoor and five outdoor tennis courts; indoor and outdoor swimming pools; and a dedicated area for children's activities are also on offer at the venue.

A full programme of exercise classes will be offered by DLL's Exeter club, including yoga and pilates. Step, dance and aerobic classes are also provided.

DLL Exeter general manager Greg Fanning said: "The club is looking fantastic, and I cannot wait for all of our members to experience the excellent facilities here at David Lloyd."



The new Exeter facility boasts indoor and outdoor swimming pools

The Exeter development is the first club opening for the David Lloyd Leisure Group following the merger between David Lloyd Leisure and Next Generation.

The group operates 76 clubs across the UK and an additional 10 in Europe, with more than 450,000 members.



A fresh future for Ark Royal is being explored

## Museum plan for Ark Royal 'under discussion'

MARTIN NASH

Discussions are taking place on plans to preserve HMS Ark Royal and keep the ship at the Royal Docks in east London.

Under proposals being considered by the Mayor of London, the aircraft carrier would become a museum and visitor attraction similar to HMS Belfast, currently anchored in the River Thames near Tower Bridge.

The museum option is one of three being considered by the Ministry of Defence for the future of the ship. Others are either selling her to another navy or scrapping her.

## 2012 Olympic Canoe Slalom venue unveiled

PETE HAYMAN

The first new-build 2012 Olympic venue to be completed – the Lee Valley White Water Centre in Herfordshire – has been officially opened.

Lee Valley Regional Park Authority will own and run the centre before and after the Games, with the public able to use the venue from April.

The FaulknerBrowns Architects-designed venue incorporates an Olympic-standard 300m competition course and a 160m training course, as well as a 10,000sq m (107,639sq ft) finish lake and a facility building.

## More powers; less cash for councils

PETE HAYMAN

The government has announced that local authorities are to face an average budget reduction of 4.4 per cent in 2011-12, but will receive "more powers" under radical new proposals.

Communities secretary Eric Pickles said no council would see its spending power reduced by more than 8.9 per cent in 2011-12 or 2012-13. Pickles also confirmed wealthier areas would shoulder a greater burden of the cuts.

The funding announcement coincided with the publication of the Localism Bill, which will see "significant new powers" transferred from Whitehall to town halls. Under the reforms, community groups will have the chance to buy



IMAGE: DCLG

Pickles is promising a "significant" shift in powers

local assets, such as pubs, and libraries, while the planning system will also be revamped.

Pickles said: "[This will be] the most significant shift in power from officials in London to elected local councils in a generation."

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## SPORT

# Cycling/running on the increase

PETE HAYMAN

Strong growth in cycling and running participation has helped drive an overall increase in the number of people taking part in sport, according to Sport England's *Active People Survey* (APS).

The results of the survey confirmed that the "slow but steady" increase in participation numbers over the past five years has continued.

More than 6.9 million people now regularly take part in sport at least three times a week, which moves the government 123,000 people closer to its target of one million more participating by 2012-13.

According to the research, weekly participation in athletics - including running - has grown by more than 263,000 in the past two years. Cycling numbers are up by nearly 100,000. Netball has reported more than



More than 263,000 people have taken up cycling in the past two years

26,000 additional participants, although some major sports - such as football and swimming - have seen a decline.

The two sports, along with cricket and rugby, have now been challenged to tackle a drop in participation outside club structures, where attention has been traditionally focussed.

## Government calls in Wildcats stadium proposals

PETE HAYMAN

Wakefield Trinity Wildcats' plans for a new stadium at Newmarket, West Yorkshire, have been called in by the government.

The stadium development, which is designed to help the club secure a new Super League

licence, was awarded outline planning consent by Wakefield Council in October.

Wakefield and District Community Stadium Trust and developer Yorkcourt Properties are working in partnership with the club to deliver the 12,000-capacity stadium.

## Female leadership lacking in sports

TOM WALKER

The glass ceiling preventing women taking up senior posts in sports management is still in place, according to a report published by The Commission on the Future of Women's Sport (CFWS).

In the *Trophy Women? NGB Leadership Audit 2010* report, CFWS claims that despite an increase in the number of high-profile female directors of sport, the sector is still not reflecting gender diversity at senior management levels.

The lack of female role models at the highest level, the report states, is "hampering the work to increase women's participation in sport".

Commenting on the report, Sue Tibballs, chief executive of Women's Sport and Fitness



Women's participation in sport could suffer due to lack of female leaders

Foundation said: "We desperately need more women in top jobs to grow grass-roots female participation and to secure a viable sporting legacy for the next generation."



# £50m leisure strategy for Derby

PETE HAYMAN

Derby City Council (DCC) has launched a £50m leisure strategy to help support city regeneration projects.

It follows the unveiling of a £10m fund, which will support mixed-use schemes and help lever in £85m of private sector investment over a three-year period.

The strategy includes the provision of two new 'hub' facilities – a 50m Olympic swimming pool and a multi-use sports, leisure and entertainments venue. DCC is looking to ensure that it maximises the potential of the two schemes to help establish a network of smaller facilities across the city.

Private sector developers and operators have been invited to meet with council officers in the coming weeks before DCC looks to submit an OJEU announcement in March.



An Olympic-sized swimming facility is being proposed for the city

DCC leader Harvey Jennings said: "This is a statement of the council's intent to play a major and leading role in stimulating the market for development and leisure in Derby."

"We know from experience that there will be many ways in which private developers and operators can deliver our requirements."

## Funding boost for six Olympic sports

PETE HAYMAN

UK Sport has confirmed that six Olympic sports are to receive additional funding in a bid to strengthen medal prospects at the 2012 Games.

Hockey, gymnastics, boxing, Tae Kwon Do, rowing and canoeing are the beneficiaries of increases ranging between £197,000 and £1.13m.

Meanwhile, the elite sport agency has also announced an increase in funding for winter sports ahead of the 2014 Sochi Games to £11.3m. However, skiing, snowboarding, figure skating and men's bobsleigh will receive no funding.

UK Sport chair Baroness Sue Campbell said: "Bringing winter sports in line with their summer counterparts is the final piece of the 'no



Rowing is one of the six Olympic sports to receive a funding boost

compromise' jigsaw. Beijing showed that the UK Sport 'no compromise' approach works and it is right this is now embedded across the whole high performance system."

## Funding boost for Pwllheli sailing centre plans

PETE HAYMAN

Plans for a new £8.3m watersports and outdoor activity centre at Pwllheli have received a boost from the Welsh Assembly Government.

The National Sailing Academy and Pwllheli Events Centre scheme is in line to receive

European Regional Development Fund and Targeted Match Fund support.

Gwynedd Council is leading the project, which aims to create an internationally-recognised sailing venue capable of hosting competitions at the highest level.

## 2014 work starts at Kelvingrove Bowls Centre

PETE HAYMAN

Work has got underway on preparations for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games at the city's Kelvingrove Bowls Centre.

Five bowling greens set to be used for competition, training and warm-up during the event will be upgraded to international standard as part of the scheme.

A new drainage system is to be installed and the greens and ditches are to be rebuilt, with the first phase due for completion in early summer 2011. The overall scheme is to be completed by summer 2012.



Increased fan involvement is being looked at

## MPs to investigate football club governance

PETE HAYMAN

A new parliamentary inquiry examining the ownership of professional football clubs has been launched by the Culture, Media and Sport Committee.

It forms part of a coalition government pledge to encourage a reform of regulations that deal with the governance of club in a bid to increase supporter involvement.

Among the issues to be addressed by the committee during the probe is whether UK football clubs should be treated any differently to other commercial organisations.

## Sports provision 'improved' by safeguards

PETE HAYMAN

Sport England has revealed that 95 per cent of all planning applications involving a playing field have resulted in preserved or upgraded sports provision.

According to new figures for 2008-09, 43 per cent of all resolved cases that Sport England opposed subsequently led to an overall improvement in facilities.

Sport England is a statutory consultee on all applications that affect playing fields and the organisation objects to all applications that would harm provision.

### 'Woodland Workout' for North West Leicestershire

PETE HAYMAN

North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC) is to launch its new 'Woodland Workout' scheme on 9 January.

The scheme will see two personal trainers leading outdoor fitness sessions, which will make use of sandbags, lorry tyres and sledge hammers as part of the workout.

NWLDC's leisure champion, Trevor Pendleton, said: "Leave the treadmill and the gym behind and get out into the park and challenge yourself to make the most of the outdoors."



John Cleland is one of the new board directors

### FIA appoints trio of new board directors

TOM WALKER

The Fitness Industry Association (FIA) has appointed three directors to its board.

The new members are John Cleland (pictured), chief executive of Esporta; Innes Kerr, group operations director at Energie; and Debra Stuart, chief executive of Premier Training.

FIA executive director Dave Stalker said: "With increased credibility of the industry within the public health agenda, there has never been a more important time to have a wealth of experience on the FIA Board."

### Freedom Leisure chosen to operate Brighton venues

PETE HAYMAN

Not-for-profit organisation Freedom Leisure has been selected to operate a number of local authority-owned sports facilities in Brighton and Hove, East Sussex.

Brighton and Hove City Council is to transfer responsibility for the centres from a private operator to the trust for an initial period of 10 years starting on 1 April 2011.

Freedom Leisure already runs 18 sports facilities on behalf of seven local authorities in East and West Sussex, such as Crawley's K2 and the Olympos, Burgess Hill.

## New-look facilities for St Helens

PETE HAYMAN

Queens Park Health and Fitness in St Helens, Merseyside, has reopened to the public following the completion of a £4m redevelopment scheme.

St Helens Council worked with Life Fitness to deliver the rebuild programme at the venue, which includes a 217sq m (2,336sq ft) fitness suite.

More than 50 pieces of equipment have been supplied by Life Fitness, including the Elevation Engage cardiovascular range and the Signature Strength Series. Life Fitness has also worked with Go Active to install 'Journey' screens, which aim to help provide affordable and accessible exercise programmes to all.

Andy Gill, territory development manager - North for Life Fitness, said: "An important part of our brief was to ensure that the Queens



Queens Park Health and Fitness has undergone a £4m redevelopment

Park facility stood out in comparison to local private health clubs. That's why we worked very closely with Go Active to deliver a deliberate mix of both high end and inclusive gym equipment and help them develop a strategic gym floor layout and business plan to ensure the very best user experience."

### Lucozade owner acquires Maximuscle

TOM WALKER

Pharmaceutical corporation GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) has acquired UK-based Maxinutrition Group Holdings, which is the manufacturer of protein-enhanced nutrition products, from Darwin Private Equity.

The £162m deal will see GSK combine its existing portfolio of consumer healthcare and beverage products – including the Lucozade brand of 'power drinks' – with Maxinutrition's popular Maximuscle line.

## New youth gym opens in Wolverhampton

PETE HAYMAN

A new youth gym has been officially unveiled at Bilston Leisure Centre, Wolverhampton – one of 10 such facilities to be installed at venues across the city.

The Shokk venue incorporates around 30 pieces of equipment, such as rowers and resistance machines, as well as dance mats, a reaction wall and a climbing wall.

Designed for children aged between 11-15, the facility forms part of a £500,000 investment by Wolverhampton City Primary Care Trust.

Other Shokk gyms are located at schools and leisure centres, including Blakenhall Community and Healthy Living Centre, Aldersley High School and Central Baths.



Dr Adrian Phillips (left) with pupils from Bilston Primary School

Dr Adrian Phillips, Wolverhampton's director of public health, said: "This gives Bilston kids a great opportunity to have fun, be active and be healthy."



# Work starts on Rochdale facility

PETE HAYMAN

Willmott Dixon has started work on the site of a new leisure centre for Rochdale.

The main-build phase of the KKA-designed complex is due to start in early 2011, with facilities to include an eight-lane, 25m swimming pool and learner pool with a moveable floor; thermal and fitness suites; and dance studios.

A sports hall and a youth gym are also proposed as part of the development, which is being led by Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) in partnership with Link4Life. The project forms part of a wider £34m investment in leisure undertaken since the formation of Link4Life in 2007.

RMBC cabinet member for environment and leisure David Clayton said: "We are committed to providing residents with modern,



The multi-million pound centre will include thermal and fitness suites

high quality sports and leisure facilities, and this is the latest demonstration of that.

"When the centre opens in the Olympic year of 2012, it will be the third £10m plus centre to open in the borough since 2009, with Middleton Arena and Heywood Sports Village already offering fantastic facilities."

## Independent gym eyes franchise model

TOM WALKER

The owners of the truGym budget health club in Maidstone, Kent, are looking to open new UK sites.

Parm Singh, director of truGym told *Health Club Management* that as part of the expansion plans, he was looking at attracting potential franchisees from 'different business backgrounds'.

"We are providing a complete solution for anyone looking to operate the truGym brand," he said.

"They will benefit from economies of scale and our expertise, from equipment purchasing and marketing to access control and security. We are also looking to partner with existing gym owners, that want to convert their gyms to the truGym model."



truGym is looking to attract franchisees from a range of backgrounds

Singh added that there are currently plans for the opening of a further two truGyms in early 2011 – one in Medway and the other in South London – as well as plans for an additional four sites throughout 2011.

## Joint Consultative Forum for fitness industry

TOM WALKER

The Fitness Industry Association (FIA) has set up a Joint Consultative Forum with a number of royal medical colleges and faculties.

The forum is the first of its kind and has been designed to offer exercise professionals

the opportunity to 'share a table' with doctors from a number of the royal colleges.

According to the FIA there is still limited use of exercise as part of preventative medicine and treatment – an issue that the association has identified as one of its key priorities.



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Plans include a large heat experience spa

## Welsh public sector day spa to open in 2011

PETE HAYMAN

Wales' first public sector day spa is scheduled to open in September 2011 at Deeside Leisure Centre, Queensferry – part of a £4m revamp of the facility.

A large heat experience spa, featuring a herb sauna; a crystal steam room; a salt grotto and foot spas are proposed, along with an aroma and treatment rooms.

The new spa facilities will form part of the second phase of a wider redevelopment being carried out by Alliance Leisure and Flintshire County Council.

## Wentworth Spa chooses KORE Therapy

TOM WALKER

Training company KORE Therapy is looking to expand its services and “bridge the gap between the spa and the gym”.

The company, which specialises in sports and fitness recovery training and treatment, has secured a deal to offer its training services for therapists at the Wentworth Club spa in Surrey, UK. Founded by John Brazier, who is also vice president of the Federation of Holistic Therapists, the company has already provided its services at the Chiva Som international health resort.

## Knowsley development reaches milestone

TOM WALKER

The steel frame of a new £16.1m leisure, spa and cultural complex in Huyton, Merseyside, UK, has been completed.

Due to open in autumn 2011, the 6,600sq m (71,042sq ft) Knowsley Leisure and Culture park will feature a day spa with a steamroom, sauna and hot room.

Four treatment rooms and a relaxation lounge will form part of a dry spa area at the Broadway Malyan-designed complex. Other facilities include two 25m swimming pools, a fitness suite and a squash court.

## Ayurveda Pura opens Greenwich spa

TOM WALKER

Ayurveda Pura, a London-based supplier of Ayurvedic health and beauty products, has opened its first spa – Ayurvedic Health Spa & Beauty Centre – in Greenwich, south London.

The ayurvedic spa offers natural beauty and holistic therapies. Facilities include four treatment rooms, two shower rooms, a large training/yoga studio and a vegetarian health café

Dr Deepa Apte, the clinical director of Ayurveda Pura, said: “By opening our own flagship health spa we are able to extend our offering by providing affordable luxury in a place that aims to promote natural beauty and holistic therapy.”



The treatments at the spa are based on ayurvedic and holistic therapies

The spa offers ayurvedic consultations, a wide range of ayurvedic treatments, traditional beauty treatments – such as facials and scrubs – as well as yoga classes.

## Steiner to acquire shipboard spa rival

TOM WALKER

Steiner Leisure has signed a letter of intent to purchase The Onboard Spa Company, its principal competitor in the cruise line spa market.

Steiner confirmed that it is currently in negotiations with Onboard with the view to executing a definitive purchase agreement.

In connection with any definitive agreement, it is anticipated that the principal owners of Onboard would enter into consulting and non-competition agreements with Steiner. In a statement, Steiner also outlined that as part of the deal, certain indirect shareholders of Onboard are likely to be subject to non-competition agreements.

Leonard Fluxman, president and chief executive of Steiner, said: “We believe that this agreement would further strengthen our



Steiner has acquired its principal competitor in the cruise line sector

relationships with the cruise line industry and we would look forward to serving on this new group of vessels once all arrangements have been finalised.”

He added that the company has already begun negotiations with cruise lines currently served by Onboard to serve their vessels.

## Irish brand Voya to supply Burj al Arab

TOM WALKER

Irish skincare supplier Voya has secured a deal with Dubai-based resort giant Jumeirah to supply its treatments at the Assawan day spa at the Burj al Arab luxury hotel in Dubai, UAE. The seaweed brand will make its full range of

foot and body treatments available to guests at the luxury spa – including Voya's signature Herbal Seaweed Bag massage.

The 5,000sq m (54,000sq ft) Assawan Spa is located on the 18th floor of the Burj al Arab – the fourth tallest hotel in the world.

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## ATTRACTIONS & MUSEUMS

### Scottish think tank calls for new museums body

PETE HAYMAN

Scotland's Museums Think Tank has called for a new national agency to support the country's museums and galleries.

It is one of a number of recommendations outlined in a report to ensure a 'sustainable future' for the sector, which would see the proposed body guide the development of a national museums strategy.

Other measures to be implemented include direct public funding for three industrial attractions – the Scottish Maritime, Mining and Fisheries Museums.



The tower will offer several viewing platforms

### Green light for Rossall Point attraction proposals

PETE HAYMAN

Wyre Borough Council has approved plans for an observation tower at Rossall Point in Fleetwood, Lancashire.

The scheme will form part of a wider £1.6m programme funded by the former Sea Change initiative and will replace an out-dated facility used by the National Coast Watch Initiative (NCI).

Studio Three architects are behind the designs of the tower, which will include several viewing platforms, an education centre and a new home for NCI volunteers.

### Council lifts Bromsgrove Museum sale restrictions

PETE HAYMAN

Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) has announced that it has removed the restrictions that had been placed on the proposed sale of Bromsgrove Museum.

The decision was taken after a potential buyer – Friends of the Museum – said it could not secure financial backing under the initial terms set in October 2009.

Members of BDC's cabinet will now allow the £285,000 sale to move forward without restrictions in a bid to allow the museum to reopen under new ownership.

## ACE agrees MLA role transfer

PETE HAYMAN

Arts Council England (ACE) has agreed to take over a number of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council's (MLA) primary functions.

The Renaissance in the Regions programme; the improvement and development of regional museums; and cultural property functions will be incorporated into ACE's remit. However, it will not be taking on the MLA's strategic archives role.

The government is to provide an additional £46m to help ACE deliver its new roles, with talks now underway with the MLA and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to determine the criteria of the new Renaissance Programme and how the transition can be managed.

It is expected that the transition process will see the functions move to ACE by the end of



ACE will take on responsibility for the development of regional sites

2011, with the closure of the MLA scheduled to take place by March 2012.

ACE chair Dame Liz Forgan said: "This is a unique opportunity to join together the historic and the contemporary; to do away with the artificial divide caused by different funding streams and create a more coherent offer."

## National Conservation Centre closes

PETE HAYMAN

Liverpool's National Conservation Centre has closed its doors as a tourist attraction as a result of government spending cuts.

National Museums Liverpool (NML) said that it can no longer afford to keep the attraction open in light of a 15 per cent budget reduction announced in October, on top of a 3.5 per cent cut made earlier in the year.

However, the centre will continue to house conservation work and NML has confirmed that Sudley House and Piermaster's House at Albert Dock, which had been under threat, will remain open to the public.

NML director Dr David Fleming said: "We said that a 15 per cent reduction in our funding



NML will continue behind-the-scenes conservation work at the centre

would have grave implications for us being able to maintain our world class museums and galleries. We are now seeing the impact in terms of a venue closure, following the loss of posts through a voluntary severance scheme."

## Public to comment on plans for £30m Science Oxford

TOM WALKER

The public are being given the chance to comment on Science Oxford's proposals for a £30m cultural centre for science and enterprise.

Science Oxford has begun a consultation in a bid to secure local support for the scheme,

which is planned for the heart of Oxford and will be built over the next five years.

Plans include a digital planetarium, interactive galleries, a public plaza, an enterprise and innovation centre offering rentable office space and corporate events facilities.



# Hunt urges private arts funding

TOM WALKER

Culture secretary Jeremy Hunt has set aside £80m for match fund schemes as part of government plans to increase the number of philanthropic donations to arts groups.

Revealing a new ten-point strategy for the future of arts funding, Hunt said he wanted to create “a new generation of philanthropists” and increase the private sector’s share in supporting the arts.

“Public funding of the arts will always continue”, he said. “But we must help our arts organisations develop more mixed funding models, to help give them long term financial stability and certainty.”

The ten point plan includes the £80m pot of gold, which the government hopes will lead to more than £160m being invested in arts via match funding; a commitment to develop and



Hunt aims to create a ‘new generation of philanthropists’ for the arts

train fundraising skills and capacity across the culture sector; and harnessing digital technology to boost philanthropy.

Speaking at the European Association for Philanthropy and Giving event on 8 December, Hunt dismissed claims that the measures were simply a response to cuts in arts funding.

## First wave of London 2012 Festival projects revealed

PETE HAYMAN

Cate Blanchett, Damon Albarn and David Hockney are among artists included in the first group of London 2012 Festival commissions.

It is anticipated that more than three million people will attend a range of art events and

performances as part of the festival, which will provide the finale to the Cultural Olympiad.

Scheduled to open on 21 June 2012, the first event will be a Peace One Day production held in Derry, Northern Ireland – produced by Jeremy Gilley and Jude Law.

## ACE investment for Doncaster arts venue

PETE HAYMAN

A new performance venue to be built as part of Doncaster’s new Civic and Cultural Quarter is to receive £2.1m of National Lottery funding.

Doncaster Council has confirmed a funding agreement with Arts Council England (ACE), which will also see £92,000 provided by the agency in 2011-12 to develop the venue’s programme.

ACE regional director Cluny Macpherson said: “The state-of-the-art venue will help make Doncaster an even more vibrant and exciting place to live and visit, ensuring more people’s lives are enriched.”

Cynthia Ransome, the council’s cabinet member for neighbourhoods and regulatory/



The venue will be the heart of Doncaster’s Civic and Cultural Quarter

customer services, said: “This contribution by Arts Council England to the delivery of the new performance venue is a huge vote of confidence in Doncaster.”

## Edinburgh ‘events hub’ scheme approved

PETE HAYMAN

Plans to transform Edinburgh’s Assembly Rooms into an “events hub” for the city have been given the go-ahead by councillors.

Members of the City of Edinburgh Council’s development management sub-committee have voted in favour of plans for the refurbishment of the venue despite opposition from campaigners.

When complete, the Assembly Rooms will provide spaces that will be made available for year-round events, including during the summer festival season.



A dance studio has been created at the venue

## Hertford Theatre reopens following major overhaul

PETE HAYMAN

East Hertfordshire District Council has unveiled the new-look Hertford Theatre, following a £1m overhaul of the building.

Formerly known as Castle Hall, work commenced on the refurbishment of the arts venue in July and included the creation of a café run by Serendipity Foods; a bar; and a dance and exercise studio.

A new art gallery also formed part of the scheme, along with a new-look foyer area, box office and River Room, and the demolition of outdated parts of the building.

## New-look arts venue unveiled in Biggar

PETE HAYMAN

Biggar Corn Exchange has officially reopened following the completion of a refurbishment programme undertaken by South Lanarkshire Council.

The Grade B-listed venue received £500,000 from the Scottish Government’s Town Centre Regeneration Fund, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the council.

Fixed seating in the theatre has been replaced with retractable raked seating, while dressing rooms have been turned into committee and training rooms

## Festive cheer behind the austerity gloom



**PHILIPPE ROSSITER**  
is chief executive of the  
Institute of Hospitality

As we approach the end of the year, thoughts turn to the festive season and its parties, gifts and jollity. There is little doubt that this is one of the busiest periods in the year for the hospitality industry, with restaurants and hotels often seeing a large element of their annual turnover achieved in just a short three-week period. Yet will this year follow the same trend?

From a somewhat gloomy perspective at the beginning of the year, the industry defied predictions. London hotels experienced an exceptionally busy summer, while the relentless search by investors for new opportunities pushed the average investment cost of a room to unprecedented levels. At the same time, however, this is not a universal trend across the country, and there are parts of the UK where recovery is still something of a pipe dream. One doesn't even have to venture far from the capital to see parts of the industry are struggling.

So what will Santa bring to cheer us up? A VAT increase in the New Year; April's increase in National Insurance contributions; and lowered expectations for GDP growth are just some of the goodies in store for the industry. We must also remember what is in store for us as individuals, with austerity measures due to start affecting our personal economic well-being.

Santa may, therefore, resemble Scrooge more than the bearer of glad tidings of comfort and joy! But is it really as bad as this? Examining predictions for growth from leading forecasters, there is little doubt that, despite these looming challenges, the wind is set fair for 2011 and beyond. Of course, success will only be achieved by remaining vigilant on costs, as well as focussing on improving levels of customer service.

More importantly, the industry has the ability to confound the pundits by creating real opportunities for growth. Using the qualities of flexibility and innovation, the industry has already demonstrated its ability to weather the storm by being resourceful and imaginative. These same qualities can ensure that we all have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

## HOTELS

### Eco hotel for Bristol airport

TOM WALKER

EPR Architects have been awarded planning consent for an environmentally-friendly hotel at Bristol Airport.

The 251-bedroom property is set to be located close to the terminal building and is designed to be sustainable, minimising the consumption of energy, materials and water through the selection of construction materials and technologies that minimise site wastage and that have been locally sourced wherever possible.

The 'social heart' of the hotel will be the ground floor reception area which can be entered either from the car park or from the pedestrian path from the terminal.

Facilities at the £20m hotel include a restaurant and bar, three meeting rooms, staff accommodation and administration offices,



EPR Architects are behind the design of the Bristol Airport property

which are to be located close to the reception area in the north wing.

The property will be owned by Berkshire-based hotel group Pedersen, which already owns three hotels across Bristol – the Novotel on Victoria Street, the Mercure on Welsh Back and the Ibis at Temple Quay.

### 3d Leisure secures hotel contracts

TOM WALKER

Management company 3d leisure has secured a deal with Crown Hotels to operate leisure services at hotels in York and Boroughbridge.

Both hotels include a health club, swimming pool, sauna, steamroom, a day spa and

solarium, with the two new additions taking the number of properties operated by 3D Leisure to 49 across the UK.

A spokesperson said 3d Leisure was appointed as part of efforts to tackle a drop in membership levels at both clubs.

### West Midlands luxury hotel gets go-ahead

MARTIN NASH

Calthorpe Estates and Wylam Investments (Edgbaston Holdings Limited) have secured planning permission to develop the commercial element of the Edgbaston Mill project in Birmingham.

The decision means that Edgbaston Mill – a mixed use retail, leisure and residential scheme opposite the Warwickshire County Cricket Club (WCCC) ground – will see the construction of a 200-room hotel, which will feature a luxury health club.

Work is expected to start in spring 2011, with contractors Anglo Holt aiming to open the complex by spring 2012.

WCCC's Edgbaston ground is itself in the middle of a £30m redevelopment, with the



The development will be built adjacent to Edgbaston cricket ground

construction of a new 8,250-seat area of the stadium replacing the original 5,000-seat section. Work began in April this year and is expected to be completed by July 2011.



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## To raise or not to raise – VAT is the question



**KURT JANSON**  
is policy director at  
Tourism Alliance

With the end of 2010 looming, inbound and domestic tourism figures are starting to come into focus. It seems that inbound numbers and expenditure for the year will be static, with the fall in the value of the pound helping to offset weak demand for international travel.

On the domestic side it seems that the “staycation” phenomenon is over, with trip numbers to September down 3 per cent and spend down 6 per cent – when inflation is taken into account, that is a real terms decline of nearly 10 per cent.

These weak tourism figures will extend into 2011, with the faltering global economic recovery and the full impact of government cuts flowing through to domestic expenditure. On top of this weakness in the market, the tourism industry will see VAT increasing to 20 per cent on 4 January 2011.

This will further suppress inbound tourism and encourage domestic tourists to either cut back expenditure or to holiday overseas instead. While there is an immediate need to restore some sense of health to the government finances, increasing VAT on tourism-related goods and services is counter-productive in the long term.

By comparison, most European countries have a reduced VAT rate on accommodation to stimulate tourism, while the majority also have a reduced rate for restaurant meals as well to increase employment. The benefit of such a move can be seen in France, where VAT on restaurant meals was cut to 5.5 per cent just 15 months ago.

So far, the results have been impressive. Restaurant sales have increased 4.3 per cent, prices have decreased 2.1 per cent and more than 28,000 new jobs have been created. In addition, pay to staff has grown by €1bn.

The predictions are that at the end of three years, the total price decrease will be 5.8 per cent, 100,000 new jobs will have been created and the French government will have fully recouped the €2.6bn pa decrease in the level of income that it incurred from the reducing the VAT rate.

It's a model for growth that the UK government needs to seriously consider.

## TOURISM

# Ireland slashes air travel tax

PETE HAYMAN

Ireland's air travel tax has been reduced from €10 (£8.54) to €3 (£2.56) per passenger as part of an attempt to drive up inbound tourism numbers.

It is among a package of measures to be introduced as part of the government's Budget for 2011, which aims to “correct” the country's economy by €6bn (£5.1bn).

Tourism, culture and sport minister Mary Hanafin said: “Implementing this measure will mean the government taking in some €56m (£47.8m) less in tax but the knock on benefits will be felt throughout the wider industry.”

The overall allocation for tourism is nearly €148m (£126.4m), including more than €62.5m (£53.4m) for Fáilte Ireland to help promote the country as a destination and develop and upgrade a number of tourist attractions.



IMAGE: TOURISM IRELAND/NTAN

Ireland has cut air travel tax in a bid to attract more overseas visitors

Meanwhile, the culture and sport sectors will receive €150m (£128.1m) and more than €91.5m (£78.2m) respectively.

The Budget for 2011 is regarded as one of the toughest austerity budgets in the country's history and forms part of a four-year strategy to correct Ireland's ailing economy.

## New smartphone app launched for Scottish tourism

TOM WALKER

Historic Scotland, the National Trust for Scotland and VisitScotland have teamed up to launch a free Days Out iPhone app.

The app aims to capitalise on the Scottish staycation trend and is part of VisitScotland's

Winter White campaign targeting the domestic markets – including the Scots themselves.

The app offers an ‘Inspire Me’ button to attract locals, allowing them to type in their location and for the app to spit out ideas for things to visit in the locality.

## Scotland's historic battlefields to be listed

MARTIN NASH

Historic Scotland has issued a list of Scotland's important battlefields – *The Inventory of Historic Battlefields*.

The first phase contains 17 sites considered to be of national importance for the contribution they make to Scotland's archaeology and history and provides information to assist in their management, interpretation, promotion and protection.

The list is designed to help local planning authorities and other public bodies who will have to take the battlefields

into account if they make any decisions about the landscape that might affect them.

Scottish minister for culture and external affairs Fiona Hyslop said: “The inventory



The Battle of Culloden, the location of which is contained on the list

will help increase general awareness of historic battlefields throughout Scotland and the contribution they make to understanding our history and landscape.”



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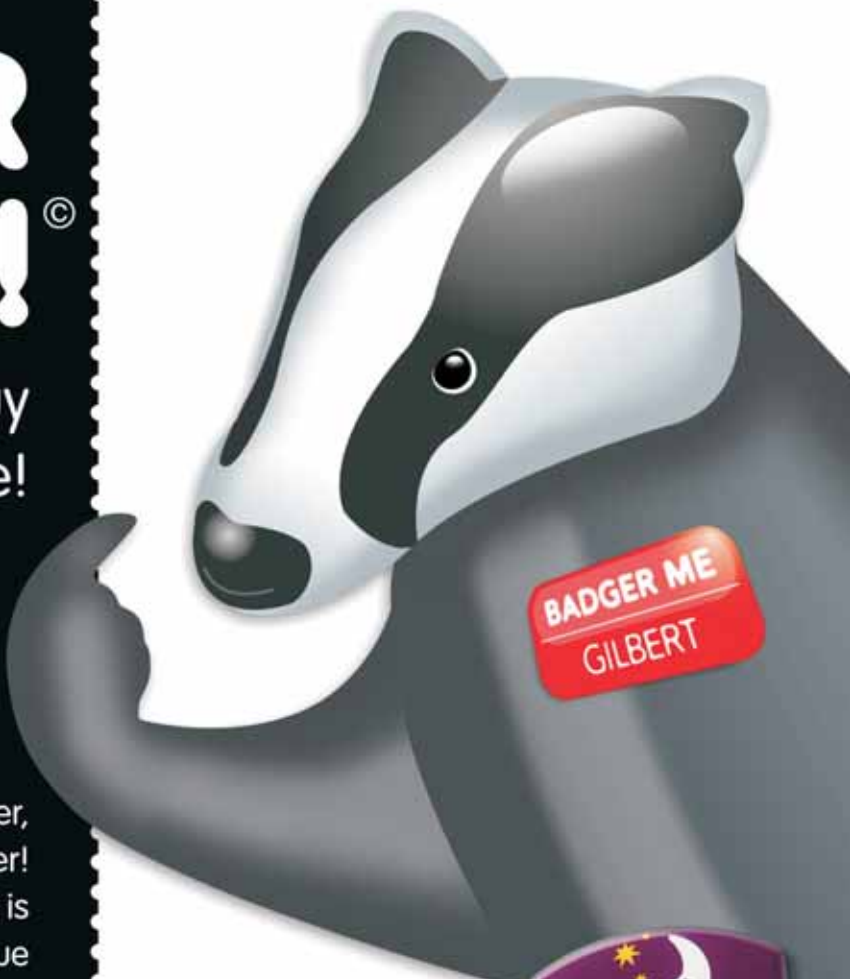
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An 'iconic' 21-storey building will be developed

## £180m Canning Town scheme underway

PETE HAYMAN

A groundbreaking ceremony has been held to mark the start of work on a £180m regeneration scheme in Canning Town.

The 680,000sq ft (63,174sq m) Rathbone Market development will include 49,000sq ft (4,552sq m) of retail space and cafés and a new market square.

Sisk has been appointed by English Cities Fund to deliver the scheme, which will also include the construction of a 21-storey building to provide an 'iconic addition' to London's skyline.

## Green light for £200m Liverpool development

PETE HAYMAN

Liverpool City Council (LCC) has approved planning permission for a £200m overhaul of the city's Edge Lane Central area.

Restaurants, leisure facilities and retail units are proposed as part of the development, which has been put forward by developer Derwent Holdings.

A new community park and outline plans for 26 residential units have also been given the green light by LCC planning officials.

The proposals will now have to go before the government for approval.

## Council secures sports centre lease agreement

PETE HAYMAN

St Albans City and District Council (SACDC) has secured an agreement with HSBC for the early termination of the Bricket Wood Sports Centre lease.

A settlement figure of £550,000 has been confirmed, which the local authority said would be "significantly less" than the £1.4m estimated cost of seeing out the lease.

SACDC took the decision to cease operation of the venue for a number of reasons, such as the opening of Watford Leisure Centre and expected maintenance costs.

## Turner Contemporary handed over

PETE HAYMAN

Turner Contemporary, a new £17.4m gallery dedicated to artist JMW Turner in Margate, has been officially handed over by Kent County Council (KCC).

Construction work is now complete at the David Chipperfield-designed attraction, which been transferred over to the trust that will operate the venue. The handover comes after it was confirmed that Turner Contemporary will open on 16 April 2011.

R Durtneil and Sons has delivered the new building, which will feature 750sq m (8,072sq ft) of gallery space located across two floors.

KCC cabinet member for community services Mike Hill has overseen the development



The new Turner Contemporary is scheduled to open on 16 April 2011

of the attraction. He said: "It is a great day for Turner Contemporary and for Margate. I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to all those who have supported the project."

## HCA boost for £250m Telford plans

PETE HAYMAN

Public sector funding for the £250m Southwater regeneration scheme in Telford has now reached £29m, following Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) investment.

A £9.5m contribution from the HCA will complement £15.5m pledged by Telford and Wrekin Council (TWC).

The £29m will be used to fund preparatory work to create plots for development and to upgrade utility services.

TWC leader Andrew Eade said: "I am delighted that the HCA has now put their funding into the scheme. The vital enabling works are now moving forward and in just a few weeks, people will see some very visible changes and major activity on the site."

The scheme, which also involves the Southwater Event Group, will also include the



The scheme aims to transform the Shropshire town's night economy

creation of a new leisure hub – with space for a leisure pool and a multi-screen cinema, as well as hotels, restaurants and bars.

On 6 December, *Leisure Opportunities* reported that McPhillips (Wellington) had been appointed as the council's main contractor for the regeneration scheme.

## £250m Stevenage regeneration 'still on track'

PETE HAYMAN

Stevenage Borough Council has confirmed that plans for the £250m regeneration of the town centre are on course.

A planning application is due to go before the council's planning and development control

committee in spring 2011, which will cover an 18.95-hectare (46.83-acre) area.

Four new public squares are due to be created under the scheme, along with the provision of greater opportunities to boost the town's evening activities.



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### Broomhill Outdoor Pool Sherrington Road, Ipswich



Ipswich Borough Council (the "Council") is seeking Expressions of Interest from suitably experienced parties wishing to work up detailed proposals to repair, refurbish and operate this redundant outdoor swimming pool.

The facility was built in 1938 and is a Grade II listed building. The site is owned by the Council and includes a car park.

Planning conditions are likely to limit further re-development potential to ancillary recreational and leisure activities.

The Council may provide up to a maximum of £1 million of capital funding that may be available from 2013/14. The capital contribution from the Council will be conditional upon:

- confirmation of sufficient third party capital funding to allow the re-development to be completed.
- no further capital, revenue or other form of financial guarantee or underwriting being required from the Council.
- the pool being open to the public for swimming.

To register your interest and receive an information pack please contact: Simon Unthank, Ipswich Borough Council  
t: 01473 432212 e: [simon.unthank@ipswich.gov.uk](mailto:simon.unthank@ipswich.gov.uk)

The closing date for receipt of Expressions of Interest is noon on 26 January 2011.



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### Training hotel planned for Inverness

MARTIN NASH

A £16m training hotel for disadvantaged youngsters is scheduled to open in 2014 in Inverness, Scotland.

The four-star hotel will be run on social enterprise principles and is a joint venture of the Albyn Housing Society and the Calman Trust.

It will have 120 rooms, of which 40 are to be designed as self contained apartments.

As an early model of the hotel, the Calman Trust is to open Artysans, Inverness' first fully commercial social enterprise café. Featuring specially designed training kitchens and workshops, the café aims to employ four full-time staff and offer training for up to 42 young people in 2011, growing to 106 places by 2013.



The four star hotel will be operated on social enterprise principals

Dr Isobel Grigor, chief executive of the Calman Trust, said: "By offering training within a work environment, individuals will be able to develop skills in a meaningful way."

### Research reveals UK hiring prospects

PETE HAYMAN

Research from recruitment firm Manpower has found that more UK firms expect to take on more staff in the first three months of 2011.

The *Manpower Employment Outlook Survey* collated views from more than 2,100 employers and revealed an overall seasonally adjusted net increase of two per cent.

The figure varies by sector and region, however, with the hotel and retail sector showing a negative outlook of five per cent – the weakest hiring climate included in the survey with more employers looking to decrease their staffing levels rather than to take on new workers.

Manpower UK managing director Mark Cahill said: "We must work together to bridge the gap between candidate expectation and the reality of the post-recession labour market."



Hotel and retail is one sector that doesn't have such a bright outlook

"We need to address the issue of generational unemployment and the social behaviours of younger generations. There is still some way to go, but those seeking work must focus on retraining, upskilling and gaining on-the-job experience – all of which are beneficial to securing permanent employment."

### GLL launches young athletes' funding scheme

TOM WALKER

Leisure trust GLL has opened the process for talented young athletes across London and South East England to apply for a series of financial and training grants being offered by the GLL Sport Foundation.

A total of £400,000 has been made available, which the foundation will invest in sporting hopefuls. Successful applicants will benefit from up to £1,500 for training, travel and equipment during the next 12 months.

Change, challenges  
and opportunities.



STEPHEN STUDD

is chief executive  
of SkillsActive

As the year comes to an end, it's fair to say it's been a challenging 12 months. Our sector will be feeling battle weary right now. The continued instability of the economic climate and the harsh reality of the finalised Comprehensive Spending Review have meant the day-to-day challenges have become all too apparent.

Challenges aside, I believe the sector has had some genuine opportunities and great successes over the past year. Our National Skills Academy has delivered a staggering number of opportunities through the Future Jobs Fund, engaging with employers from sport and fitness, and in particular working with football, rugby, boxing and swimming national governing bodies of sport to create 350 jobs alone.

We also cleared some barriers from the Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence to ensure its sustainability. The Apprenticeships, Children's, Learning and Skills Act was passed through the House of Commons last autumn; part of the new policy stated that all apprentices would need to be employed in line with the new national minimum wage legislation. This new investment would have been impossible for national governing bodies to support. As a result, we initiated a review of the AASE programme, which has resulted in the skills minister announcing that all Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth sports would be exempt from employing their apprentices.

We have also had a new skills strategy this year, setting out the government's vision for reform of the skills system to improve the skills of the workforce, the performance of the economy and engagement in learning through further education. Encouragingly Investing in Skills for Sustainable Growth places Sector Skills Councils at the heart of engaging with employers.

This in mind, we'll continue to work to inform and influence government on the role of our sector, and while 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.

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	19 Jan	25 Jan	2
February	02 Feb	08 Feb	3
	16 Feb	22 Feb	4
March	02 Mar	08 Mar	5
	16 Mar	22 Mar	6
April	30 Mar	05 Apr	7
	13 Apr	19 Apr	8
May	27 Apr	03 May	9
	11 May	17 May	10
	25 May	31 May	11
June	08 Jun	14 Jun	12
	22 Jun	28 Jun	13
July	06 Jul	12 Jul	14
	20 Jul	26 Jul	15
August	03 Aug	09 Aug	16
	17 Aug	23 Aug	17
September	31 Aug	06 Sep	18
	14 Sep	20 Sep	19
October	28 Sep	04 Oct	20
	12 Oct	18 Oct	21
November	26 Oct	01 Nov	22
	09 Nov	15 Nov	23
	23 Nov	29 Nov	24
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**'Radical' change to health policy**

PETER HAWMAN

Health secretary Andrew Lansley has announced plans for a 'radical' new public health service to encourage people in England to adopt healthier lifestyles.

Public Health England will see the government hand over more power to local authorities, with one-fifth of funding from within the overall NHS budget to be made available. The Department of Health estimates that around a fifth will be spent on the delivery of the new service, which will also incorporate industry, charities and other departments.

In his White Paper, Lansley said the approach would incorporate projects such as the new Cusack Olympic legacy participation programme and the protection of green spaces. Government plans include creating communities designed for 'active ageing', as well as giving every child the opportunity to benefit from the best start in life.

Lansley said: "People's health and wellbeing will be at the heart of everything local councils do. Directors of public health will be able to champion local cooperation so that health issues are considered as a priority."

**The Gym Group secures £20m expansion funding**

RYAN COOPER

Low-cost health club operator The Gym Group has revealed that it has secured a seven-figure funding package towards its plans for expansion.

Primary investor Bridges Ventures and a revolving credit facility from HSBC will help finance the group's move to grow its UK portfolio from 14 sites.

The Gym Group is looking to acquire up to an additional 100 sites during 2011 and aims to expand its estate to 150 clubs over the next two years.

**New sustainable resort for EuroDisney**

DAVID HARRIS

Euro Disney and Groupe Pierre & Vacances Center Parcs have unveiled Les Villages Nature & Val d'Europe (Villages Nature), their new sustainable vacation destination concept.

Central to the concept - which envisages 50 per cent of the resort retained as green space - is 'harmony between man and nature', reflected in both the accommodation and the activities offered. The first 100 houses (and a new) phase is set to open in 2011 and will include the construction of 1,700 apartments and cottages.

**February start for £45m Tate project**

PETE HAWMAN

Tate has announced that work on a £45m project to transform its original London gallery - Tate Britain - is to start in February 2011. Designed to help conserve the gallery's built designed building, the scheme will also entail a major upgrade of the the Grade II\*-listed building.

Carew & John Architects' plans include the reconstruction of nine galleries in the south-east part of the building and the removal of its main entrance on Millbank. The River Room - formerly a watchmaking gallery divided into three offices - will return to public use as a single room, with new learning spaces and a café and also to be created. The scheme is scheduled for completion in 2013.

Simon Jones Architects is project manager, with Alan Baxter Associates, Mordant Partners and Turner and Townsend also involved.

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firstsite's Senior Management Team is inviting applications for a General Manager to manage and drive the organisation's day-to-day operations. You will play a major role in implementing the ambitious mobilisation programme that will enable firstsite to open its doors to the public as dynamic, efficient and future-proof organisation. You will have demonstrable leadership, managerial experience of a leisure/arts facility or visitor attraction, the ability to manage and oversee complex projects, and excellent administrative skills.

To apply, please send your CV and a covering letter to [janet@firstsite.uk.net](mailto:janet@firstsite.uk.net) Alternatively, write to Janet Spence, firstsite, 4 – 6 Short Wyre Street, Colchester, Essex CO1 1LN

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Company: firstsite  
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## Leeds eatery for London group

PETE HAYMAN

Restaurant group D&D London is to develop and run two eateries at the Trinity Leeds leisure development.

D&D has finalised agreements with Land Securities, which will see the restaurants occupy 12,000sq ft (1,114sq m) of floorspace. Both properties – a modern French eatery and a grill serving British food – are due to open in 2013 and will have interiors designed by Conran and Partners.

D&D chief executive Des Gunewardena said: “We’ve always thought that Leeds would feature prominently as part of our plans to expand in the UK outside London.”

Land Securities retail leasing director John Grimes added: “Leeds is the second most



D&D London is to take up residence with two sites at Trinity Leeds

important financial and legal services hub outside London with a catchment to support the aspirational and niche destination which we will deliver.”

## Sales growth slows at UK pubs/restaurants

PETE HAYMAN

Combined like-for-like sales at some of the UK’s leading pub and restaurant chains grew by just 0.4 per cent in November – compared with the same period in 2009, according to the latest Coffer Peach Business Tracker.

It is the slowest rate of growth since May, although it was the sixth successive month of increasing same-store sales. Meanwhile, total sales – including new openings – were up by 1.7 per cent, while month-on-month figures were down by 5.5 per cent.

## easyJet Holidays concept to launch

PETE HAYMAN

Low-cost carrier easyJet is to launch a package holiday service in 2011 after securing a three-year agreement with Lowcosttravelgroup.

Legal practice DLA Piper has advised on the easyJet Holidays venture, which aims to further increase easyJet’s ancillary revenues, with customers given the chance to book low-cost European holidays through [easyjet.com](http://easyjet.com). The venture will be backed up by Lowcost’s marketing team and call centre service.

easyJet chief executive officer Carolyn McCall said: “We see a significant opportunity to further grow our ancillary revenues, by offering our customers a huge range of flexible and low cost beach and city holidays. This will be based on our extensive flight schedule and Lowcosttravelgroup’s great quality, competitive accommodation and transfers.”



easyJet is to offer European holiday packages

Lowcost CEO Paul Evans added: “Lowcost’s significant growth over the last five years has demonstrated the huge demand for good value holidays and combined with easyJet’s respected brand, we believe we can create a very significant player in this market industry.”

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