

£100m modernisation for London's Science Museum

By **Luke Tuchscherer**

The Science Museum in south west London is to undergo a £100m modernisation.

Designed by Wilkinson Eyre Architects, the designs are intended to match a wider project for the South Kensington area. Plans include a new glass feature called The Beacon on the Exhibition Road façade, intended to "present an exciting new image of the Science Museum as a dynamic and engaging place to visit".

The museum will feature a new rooftop cosmology gallery called SkySpace and there will also be two new galleries: Making Modern Communica-



The museum, founded in 1909, is set to undergo a refurbishment

tion, dedicated to the technological transformations that have helped to reshape society since the 1830s, and Making Modern Science, which will focus on the "very essence of

science" and shed light on theory, practice and ethics.

The existing Making Modern Flight and Making the Modern World galleries will be expanded and a new façade will also

be built, with multiple entrances and three sets of lifts added in order to ease congestion.

Professor Chris Rapley, director of the Science Museum, said: "As the Science Museum reaches 100 years we aim to celebrate the achievement of this great institution, while maintaining our focus on the future: the future of the Science Museum, and the future of Great Britain and the world."

"When Museum of the Future becomes a reality, the Science Museum will be closer than ever to achieving its aim of being the best place in the world to enjoy science."

The project is expected to be completed in 2015.

Designs unveiled for Birmingham Aquatics Centre

£58m leisure complex to include 50m swimming pool and multi-use sports hall

By **Tom Walker**

Plans for the £58m Birmingham Aquatics and Leisure Centre have been revealed for public consultation.

The proposals include a 50m swimming pool and an Olympic diving facility, as well as a leisure pool with rides and a teaching pool.

A fitness suite will house exercise studios, saunas and steamrooms, while sports facilities on offer include an eight-court sports hall, four five-a-side pitches and a



Construction work on the centre will begin in October

two-storey climbing wall. The community leisure and swimming pool complex will also provide a crèche, soft

play area, café, meeting rooms and a community policing room.

Cllr Martin Mullaney, cabinet member for leisure, sports and culture, said: "It is important to stress that this is not just about providing a facility for elite performers and attracting Olympic teams prior to London 2012. We're looking to provide the people of this city with the top-class sports facilities they deserve."

Work is scheduled to begin in October 2009, for completion ahead of the 2012 Olympics.

£200m leisure scheme on hold

Plans for a £200m retail-led development in the centre of Newport, South Wales, have been shelved after the developer behind the scheme was unable to secure the necessary funding.

A four-star hotel, a multiplex cinema and a new restaurant quarter were included in Modus Corvest's proposals for the Friars Walk scheme. The plans also included 450,000sq ft (41,806sq m) of retail space.

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NEWS FEATURE

Community clubs under threat?

A new report by Deloitte for the CCPR has revealed that 4 per cent of sports clubs – as many as 6,000 across Britain – could be forced to close during the next 12 months as a result of the recession. *Pete Hayman* examines the challenges currently facing sports clubs and whether the government is doing enough to help them survive

The CCPR study revealed that clubs are already reporting significant cut backs. The level of investment has been reduced to cope with increasing costs and decreasing membership at a time when UK sport forges ahead with plans to create a lasting legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

CCPR chair Brigid Simmonds said: "Sport needs all the support it can get but from the reception we get in some government departments you would think we were selling cigarettes or fatty foods. We know that clubs are likely to go to the wall as a result of the recession. What we don't want is to compound that with any new regulations which could push still more over the edge."

However, the government insists that it remains fully committed to developing community sport through initiatives that aim to enable clubs to flourish, while sports minister Gerry Sutcliffe argued that continued investment is helping to shape the future of UK sport for the better.

"An unprecedented amount of public money has gone into community sport to ensure its growth and success – and sport as a whole has received nearly £6bn since 1997," Sutcliffe said. "We also run a range of initiatives designed to support community clubs, including a tax relief scheme of up to 80 per cent on business rates that 5,000 clubs are currently enjoying."

"Now is not the time to be talking down sport. It is true that some community clubs are going through tough times but rest assured we are doing all we can to support the grassroots."

At the heart of government efforts to support grassroots sports is Sport England, which believes that its own research into participation illustrates a more positive outlook for sport. Chair Richard Lewis said it is committed to ensuring funding reaches the areas it needs to.

"Sport is facing tough economic times, so we all need to be vigilant, but that does not mean we should be unduly pessimistic," he said. "Grassroots sport is in relatively good shape. Our latest participation survey shows that the number of people playing sport regularly is rising."

"For our part, we must make sure grassroots sport derives maximum value for money from all



"Sport is facing tough economic times, but that does not mean we should be unduly pessimistic"
- Richard Lewis

of Sport England's investments. By monitoring, and sharing, the intelligence on what's working and what's not working, we can isolate the pressure points and help sports overcome issues."

But with many sports clubs operated by volunteers and funded by members, the battle to ensure long-term survival remains an ongoing one. Christine Neyndorff, Hertfordshire Sports Partnership director, argued that local authorities are already scaling back financial support for local clubs, while funding from the government provides no guarantees.

"There is little indication that much, if any, of this funding will end up helping local clubs with basic costs," she said. "The day-to-day reality for a voluntary sports club is a continuing struggle in the face of soaring expenditure."

As sports clubs face a continuing battle for survival in the midst of the ongoing recession, the government will not only need to ensure that enough financial support is being provided, but that it is going to those who need it most.

While the 6,000 closures predicted by CCPR may only be a minority of the total number of clubs, it will still undermine Sutcliffe's ambitions to establish the UK as "a world leading sport-ing nation with community clubs at its heart".

New government department established

Lord Mandelson appointed to lead BIS following recent merger of BERR and DIUS

By **Pete Hayman**

A new government department has been created following the merger of the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS).

Lord Mandelson has been confirmed as the minister in charge of the new Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), which has been established in order to develop Britain's economy and ability to compete on a global scale.

It is also hoped that the decision to merge the two departments will place further education closer to the government's attempts to fight off the current recession, as well as helping to lay foundations for economic recovery.



Mandelson said that BIS will help to bring Britain out of recession

Mandelson said: "Our purpose is to help bring the country out of recession and build up our economic strengths and competitiveness – I and my ministerial team are resolutely focused on this task. "The government needs to provide active and urgent

help to business and employees. Bringing together the strengths and capabilities of the two former departments will enable us to do that more effectively, ensuring British business can compete successfully in the future world economy."

Government unveils MoreActive4life campaign

By **Caroline Wilkinson**

More than 1,200 health clubs and leisure centres have registered to be part of the MoreActive4Life campaign, a sub-brand of the government's Change4Life initiative, which has been created to get one million people more active.

Set to launch this month, the summer consumer campaign has been developed by the FIA for members of UK health clubs and leisure centres.

It will involve FIA operating members working with the government, as well as national



£200,000 has been set aside to help launch the new initiative

commercial and media partners, to provide consumers with access to a range of activities.

The government has already allocated £200,000 to kickstart

the campaign, which is being promoted by specialists KTB.

"Using Change4Life as a door-opener, clubs and leisure centres are partnering with major brands such as Tesco and Asda," says David Stalker, FIA operations director.

"FIA members can now position themselves as partners to help tackle our national health problem at a local level."

Participating clubs and leisure centres have access to branded merchandise and promotional material.

For further details, contact: moreactive4life@fia.org.uk

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IN BRIEF

MalvernSpa is acquired by directors

► The directors of the UK-based spa and hospitality specialists Topaz Consulting have acquired the new MalvernSpa Hotel, Day Spa and Health Club in Great Malvern, Worcestershire. One of the directors, Andrew Hammond, said: "We believe the MalvernSpa is something very special and will attract visitors to the area at a difficult economic time." The £7.5m day spa will cover 20,133sq ft (1,870sq m) and will house 10 treatment rooms and separate pedicure and manicure areas.

Steiner strikes deal with Royal Caribbean group

► An agreement between Royal Caribbean International and Steiner Leisure has been extended until 2013. The extension means Steiner will continue as the exclusive provider of spas, salons and fitness centres and related beauty, wellness, and medical spa services and products on all Royal Caribbean International vessels currently known to be coming into service. The deal also covers the new vessels Oasis of the Seas and the Allure of the Seas, entering service in 2009 and 2010 respectively.

Yorkshire Beauty Therapy partnership

► The Leeds-based Yorkshire College of Beauty Therapy has agreed a contract with the Social Development Center, part of the Qatar Foundation, to set up and operate a beauty academy in Qatar, Middle East. Yorkshire College of Beauty founder and principal Christine Tilley will work with Social Development Center' Munira bint Nasser Al Missned towards opening the academy in October 2009. Details: ycob.co.uk

Intelligent Spas publishes global report

Global Spa Summit delegates among first to find out benchmark data for sector

By Sarah Todd

Independent research company Intelligent Spas was chosen as the premier research partner for the third annual Global Spa Summit (GSS), which took place in Switzerland last month.

The conference, that attracts high-end wellness professionals from around the world, received a custom report based on research collected during Intelligent Spa's Global Spa Benchmark Program, which is currently underway in more than 60 countries.

Pete Ellis, chair of the GSS Board of Directors said: "This in-depth study by Intelligent Spas provides delegates with a first look at the most reliable, up-to-date benchmarks



The report was created to help spas adjust to the economic times

available in the global spa and wellness industry.

"As day, hotel and medical spa owners and managers navigate through these uncertain economic times, this perspective will help them see the big picture and adjust

prices and services to manage their properties successfully."

The statistical report covered revenue, expenses, visitors and employees as well as a range of benchmark ratios. Intelligent Spas has researched the spa market for the past eight years.

Von Essen launches Halcyon at Bishopstrow House

By Sarah Todd

A new spa called Halcyon has launched within Bishopstrow House, part of the von Essen hotel Collection in Wiltshire.

The spa offers a range of 40 treatments and four therapy rooms, including a double room for couples.

All treatments will use the Elemis range of products. Other suppliers for the spa included Carlton Couches, Stan Ledbetter for the Rasul Mud Therapy,



The spa will offer a 40 treatments carried out in its four rooms

Ariane Poole make-up, Culpepper products and Natural Magic candles. Other facilities include a rasul mud

therapy room, decorated in Turkish Ottoman style, a relaxation suite and an indoor and outdoor swimming pool.

Pub group launches Pint-Sized Pampering for punters

Merchant Inns pub company has launched a new spa concept called Pint-Sized Pampering.

Based around the launch of The Spa Treatment Rooms at the group's The Lambert Arms property in the Chiltern Hills near Oxford, the spa treatments will be offered as part of an overnight spa break at the pub.

Therapies will use the French Ella Baché professional skincare range, which has recently relaunched in the UK. An extensive range of spa treatments are offered, including an Organic Radiance Facial, a Full Body Hot Stone Massage, a Men's Muscle Manipulator and a Radiance Eye Treatment.



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IN BRIEF

Fit For Sport and Total Fitness join forces

► Training provider Fit For Sport has partnered with Total Fitness health clubs to equip 56 of its fitness staff with the skills to run children's activities. The Active IQ-accredited NVQ Active Leadership qualification includes practical training in behavioural management and the engagement of children and communication. The seven-month course is designed to provide the skills to adapt and improve existing classes.

Winchester's River Park centre set for revamp

► Winchester District Council is to spend £1.5m on repairs to the city's River Park Leisure Centre to maintain the 35-year-old building fit for purpose. A Sports Facilities Study carried out by consultants RQA in 2008 recommended "the need for high expenditure on the building structure and plant over the next few years to maintain the building to an acceptable standard." The cabinet also proposed extending the gym and changing rooms, improving the health suite, reception and wet side changing rooms, and constructing a new fitness studio and a climbing wall.

Matrix announces new contracts

► Matrix Fitness Systems has signed a number of new public sector contracts. The manufacturer has secured a partnership agreement with operator Abbeycroft Leisure to equip the gym at Haverhill Leisure Centre in Suffolk; the centre is currently undergoing a £6m refurbishment. The redevelopment includes the expansion of the gym to twice its former size, with 100 stations, as well as a dedicated combat and personal training area.

BRS tax to "cripple" health initiatives

FIA warns government of the impact the tax could have on UK fitness operators

By **Tom Walker**

The Fitness Industry Association (FIA) is urging all UK health club operators and the government to recognise the "crippling" effect that the new Business Rate Supplement (BRS) would have on the nation's health campaigns.

Given the large and expensive spaces fitness facilities require, the FIA warns that if the extra tax of 2p in every £1 is introduced, clubs with a rateable value of more than £50,000 would pay anywhere between £1,000 and £13,000 more in business rates – per club, per year.

The proposed bill would allow local authorities to levy an additional tax, on top of current business rates, to help raise funds for economic development projects.

Andrée Deane, FIA's CEO, said there is a fundamental



The FIA has called for the industry to oppose the new legislation

inconsistency between the government's targets for increased participation in physical fitness and imposing a "crippling tax burden" on the very organisations tasked with helping to reach those targets.

"BRS isn't a stealth tax, but it's not high on many managers or owners agendas - and it should be," she said.

The FIA is calling for fitness organisations to be exempt

from the tax and, if not, for the threshold to be increased beyond £50,000.

Colin Moynihan, British Olympic Association chair, agrees, and added: "A BRS, coupled with the expected rise in Uniform Business Rates, has the potential to inflict a significant and negative impact on public and private health and fitness facilities." Details: www.fia.org.uk

Green light for Roefield centre

By **Helen Patenall**

Ribble Valley Council has approved proposals to upgrade Roefield Leisure Centre in Clitheroe, Lancashire.

A £1.1m investment will provide a new fitness suite equipped with 46 stations of Life Fitness cardiovascular and resistance equipment with fully integrated screens and a VIVO system, dedicated to young people and the over-50s.

The centre will also offer daily access to activities such as the Time Out Youth Activity Centre and the GP Exercise on Prescription Scheme.

Additional facilities are to include an aerobics and dance studio, meeting rooms, a



The new gym will be fitted with Life Fitness equipment

crèche and refurbished changing rooms.

Sport England has awarded £195,000 and the North West Development Agency has contributed £125,000 towards the improvements, which will be overseen by the not-for-profit operator Ribble Valley Sport and Recreation.

Mountbatten Centre opens to public

The fitness centre has been re-launched following a £20m refurbishment project

By **Tom Walker**

The Mountbatten Centre's fitness facilities have re-opened in Portsmouth following the completion of a £20m refurbishment project.

The Mountbatten Centre offers a 50m, eight-lane swimming pool with a moveable floor and submersible boom, allowing two 25m pools to be created.

The centre also features a 12.5m teaching pool, a 200-seat viewing area, a 150-station Technogym-equipped fitness facility, a steamroom, spa and treatment rooms, and changing rooms. The existing sports hall has benefited from a new semi-sprung floor and improved lighting,



The centre, which has a 50m pool, will be managed by Parkwood

while the athletics and cycle tracks have been resurfaced.

A dance studio, function room and club rooms have also been built, along with a new entrance and reception area. Construction was carried out by building firm Kier Southern.

The project was funded by Portsmouth City Council and a £5.49m grant from Sports England. Worcestershire-based Parkwood Leisure will manage the centre and its adjacent Gymnastics Centre – which opened in February.

Aura Trim Leisure Centre opens in County Meath

By **Kate Cracknell**

Trim Town Council and Aura Sport and Leisure Management have opened the new €14m (£12.3m) Aura Trim Leisure Centre in Trim, Ireland.

The complex is operated by Aura, which runs Ireland's largest chain of leisure centres.

The 368sq m (3,961sq ft), Precor-equipped fitness suite offers 33 pieces of CV equipment, including four AMTs, plus Precor's new C Line



The gym boasts 33 CV stations

strength range. There is also an aerobics studio, a sports hall, a 25m swimming pool and

learner pool, a health suite with steamroom and sauna, two field turf soccer pitches and a lawn bowling facility.

Aura is committed to providing an affordable swimming and fitness offering with pay as you go options at the new club, which covers both the gym and classes.

Aura Sport and Leisure Management operates 10 centres throughout Ireland, with more than a million visits to its sites every year.

IN BRIEF

Council underwrites sport centre's losses

► Duffryn Community Sports Centre in Newport, South Wales, has received a cash boost from Newport Council. According to the *South Wales Argus*, there were fears that the centre, which has suffered losses of more than £80,000, would close. However, the council has agreed to underwrite the losses and will contribute £10,000 each year. The centre opened three years ago within the grounds of Duffryn High School, which operates the facility.

REPs unveils changes to CPD guidelines

► Changes have been made to how REPs' members can earn their Continual Professional Development (CPD) points. Following a consultation, REPs members – who need to earn 24 CPD points every 24 months – can now gain up to 20 points through awarding body qualifications, industry awards and courses with mandatory assessment. Workshops endorsed by SkillsActive are worth up to four points, as are online exams seminars and trade shows.

Trixter directors complete MBO

► Three directors of UK-based fitness equipment supplier Trixter have completed a management buy out of the company. Chief executive Michael Rice, managing director Patrick Murray and service director John Mills have purchased the core businesses, global rights, intellectual properties, products and services to all Trixter brands. The management team secured a financing package worth more than £1m to complete the deal, which includes Trixter Europe as well as subsidiaries Trixter North America and i3Sport software.

IN BRIEF

Potter attraction adds garden

► The World of Beatrix Potter Attraction in Bowness-on-Windermere, Cumbria, has added a new exhibit for the summer season. The Peter Rabbit Naturally Better Garden, created by designer Richard Lucas, features the varieties of fruit, vegetables, herbs and flowers featured in books by author Beatrix Potter.

Scotland holds first museum summit

► Scotland's 60 museum leaders convened in Stirling earlier this week to debate how best to address the challenges facing the sector. The conference focused on how the nation's industrial and voluntary museums can be sustained and how funding and limited resources can be better distributed between national and local museums. Leading the convention, culture minister Michael Russell said: "This summit presents a real opportunity for new thinking about how we understand museums in Scotland, how we work together, and how best we can tell the story of this country and its people."

Blackpool's Winter Gardens loses grant

► A £1m annual grant to the Winter Gardens events venue in Blackpool has been withdrawn by the council owing to the 'disappointing state' of its facilities. The council award was put in place in 1986 to help attract major conferences to the town in a bid to regenerate the local area, with 2007 attracting the Conservative Party's annual conference. However, a review of the venue in summer 2008 revealed that it was not up to scratch and the council decided against renewing its annual subsidy from this October.

New gardens open at Butterfly World

First phase of the £25m attraction includes 12 gardens shaped like a caterpillar

By **Tom Walker**

Phase one of the £25m Butterfly World Project near St Albans, Hertfordshire, has now opened to the public.

The Future Gardens attraction offers visitors 12 showcase gardens and one charity garden arranged in the shape of a caterpillar.

Seven permanent gardens, including the Lilliput Leaf Garden, Children's Leaf Garden, Dry Leaf Garden and the British Butterfly Garden, are complemented by 'antennae' walkways and a spiral roboscis walk.

Therese Lang, director of TJM Associates and creative director of Future Gardens, said: "Future Gardens will provide visitors with the inspiration and enthusiasm to think about how they can develop their own garden space with real imagination while at the



The attraction will have 12 separate gardens for visitors to explore

same time keeping the environment in mind.

"We are looking forward to illustrating how the gardens will change and develop over the four summer months - a luxury that is not available at any other UK garden event."

It is estimated that the conservation park will attract 200,000 visitors between now and October, when the 26-acre

(10.5-hectare) site will close for construction of phase two.

The world's largest butterfly dome - measuring 100m wide and 17m high - will house 10,000 tropical butterflies among Mayan ruins and is scheduled to open in 2011.

Founder Clive Farrell hopes to ultimately make it the "largest butterfly walkthrough experience in the world."

Weston pier gets back on track

By **Pete Hayman**

Plans for the £34m redevelopment of the Grand Pier in Weston-super-Mare are back on track after the owners of the 104-year old attraction reached an agreement with North Somerset Council (NSC).

Pier owner Kerry Michael warned that the project was at risk of being shelved after claiming the council had "moved the goalposts" in a dispute over legal costs.

However, the Grand Pier is now expected to reopen as planned in summer 2010 after a series of negotiations between NSC and Michael resulted in an agreement that has ensured the scheme remains on track.



The owners hope to reopen the pier in summer 2010

Michael said: "We have worked through the issues to reach a solution which is acceptable to all."

"Once the key decision makers were all together, we very quickly reached agreement and after that it was just a matter of putting the relevant professionals together to formalise the agreement."

MA collections scheme launched

The Museums Association (MA) has launched its new Effective Collections scheme.

The initiative consists of four parts: the Main Fund, which offers £10,000 per project for museums to review their collections and make better use of them; the Special Project Fund of up to £25,000 per project for museums engaged in innovative projects; the Find an Object database, which will allow museums to post adverts offering objects for loan or permanent transfer, or to register an interest in borrowing or buying objects; and finally, Culture Change, which will look at ways of changing museums' attitudes towards the use of their collections.



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IN BRIEF

Shinty gets £110,000 funding boost

► The Scottish Government is to invest £110,000 in the indigenous sport of shinty. The funding, to be delivered through sportscotland, will allow the Camanachd Association to continue to grow the sport at grassroots level, with plans to take the sport into more primary and secondary schools. Sports minister Shona Robison said: "This funding will help ensure that shinty continues to grow in communities across Scotland. I am particularly encouraged to hear that more schools will be showcasing the sport."

FIFA backs 2012 Team GB compromise

► A team comprised entirely of English players is to represent Great Britain at the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games after the plan was given the green light by FIFA, following months of speculation and concerns from Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales that a unified team could threaten each nation's independent footballing status. However, an agreement has now been reached to enable England to represent Great Britain at the 2012 Games, which has been ratified by FIFA's executive committee.

Irish minister unveils Tallaght Stadium

► A new 11.2m euro (£9.7m) stadium in Dublin, which is home to Shamrock Rovers Football Club, has been officially opened by the Irish minister for arts, sport and tourism, Martin Cullen. The purpose-built Tallaght Stadium currently has a capacity for 3,300 spectators, but that is set to increase to nearly 7,000 when the construction of the venue's East Stand is completed later this summer.

Cornish golf resort revamp completed

Crown Golf's £20m St Mellion redevelopment includes £2.5m golf course upgrade

By Pete Hayman

Crown Golf has unveiled a new 80-bedroom hotel at the St Mellion International Resort in Cornwall, following a £20m refurbishment of the venue.

Facilities at the hotel include the Aero Leisure and Spa complex, which incorporates three swimming pools, a sauna, a steamroom, a spa pool and a fitness suite equipped with cardiovascular machines and free weights.

The hotel also features two restaurants – the Bewdren Brasserie and An Boesti, as well as the Nicklaus Bar and 13 conferencing and banqueting suites, while the resort's golfing facilities have also received an extensive refurbishment.



St Mellion is scheduled to stage the English Open event in 2011

Both of St Mellion's golf courses have benefited from a £2.5m investment as part of the scheme, with the Jack Nicklaus signature course having been restored to European Tour standard ahead of the English Open in 2011.

The Old Course has been renamed The Kernow Resort Course following the scheme, which has included a major bunker rebuilding programme, remodelled greens, new tees and the creation of a new cart path network.

Premier League clubs resist economic downturn

By Pete Hayman

Most Premier League clubs reported an operating profit during the 2007-08 season as the league's collective revenue increased to nearly £2bn, according to new research.

Deloitte's *Annual Review of Football Finance* revealed that clubs' revenues had increased by 26 per cent compared with 2006-07, and are expected to break through the £2bn barrier during the 2008-09 season.



Big clubs are responsible for most of the £3bn debt

However, the research also revealed that the economic downturn is having an impact

on the amount of investors willing to inject cash into clubs as the league's net debt has increased to more than £3bn.

Two thirds of the total net debt has been attributed to the Premier League's top four clubs – Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool and Manchester United – while the cost of players' wages has also contributed. Salary expenditure reached £1.2bn following the largest annual increase recorded by the Premier League.

Goals Soccer Centres nets £11m for expansion plans

Goals Soccer Centres, the operator of five-a-side football centres across the UK, has secured £11m through the sale of nearly 6.7 million shares in order to help fund its expansion plans.

The Scotland-based company now intends to increase its rate of new openings from four to six new five-a-side centres each year from 2010 onwards, while also safeguarding its long-term future.

Managing director Keith Rogers said: "The demand for five-a-side football has remained resilient and our pipeline, with more than 40 sites, is strong. This placing will enable us to accelerate our rate of centre openings and allow us to take advantage of exciting new opportunities."

Green light for £35m Brit Oval plans

A new four-star hotel is among the proposals for the South London cricket venue

By Pete Hayman

Surrey County Cricket Club's (SCCC) plans for the £35m redevelopment of the Brit Oval venue in Kennington, south London, have been approved by the government following a public inquiry.

The scheme had been approved by Lambeth Council in January 2008, but was called in after the Health and Safety Executive raised concerns over a nearby gasholder.

Plans include the construction of a new stand – to replace the existing Lock, Laker and Peter May South stands – which has been designed by Populous and will increase the Brit Oval's capacity to 25,000.

The scheme will be carried out in partnership with Arora



A new stand is set to increase the Brit Oval's capacity to 25,000

International Hotels, which is to open a new 168-bedroom, four-star property as part of the project, while a new public piazza will be created on the site of the Surrey Tavern.

Paul Sheldon, SCCC chief executive, said: "This decision has been a long time coming,

and we are very pleased with the outcome. The development is an important one both for cricket and our community.

"The continued improvement of facilities at the Brit Oval means that international cricket is guaranteed a place here for many years to come."

Stirling football academy opens

Stirling University, Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence, has unveiled the new National Women's Football Academy.

Scottish FA chief executive, Gordon Smith, said: "The facilities and staff are outstanding and will help take our young players and our national teams to the next level. The players will have access to the best possible coaching and sport science professionals."

Scottish Football Association players Lisa Evans and Christie Murray will start scholarships at the academy this autumn, via the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council's Winning Students network.

London unveils new cycle routes



The superhighways are designed to provide safe cycling routes

By Pete Hayman

London mayor Boris Johnson has unveiled two proposed routes that will comprise the first Cycle Superhighways, designed to increase the number of cyclists in the capital.

The superhighways will provide a safe and continuous route between central London and the outer boroughs to encourage more Londoners to cycle to work, and is designed

to reduce congestion, overcrowding and carbon emissions.

One of the pilot routes, which are scheduled for completion by May 2010, will link South Wimbledon with Bank, while the second will link Barking with Tower Hill.

The mayor, together with Transport for London, is consulting with eight London borough authorities over a further 10 routes, which are due to be developed by 2012.

IN BRIEF

Poole Town FC proposals approved

► Branksome Recreation Ground is set to become the new home of Poole Town Football Club after the local authority approved the club's plans to relocate from Tatnam Park. The Borough of Poole Council gave the green light for the club's proposals on 9 June, which include the construction of a new 150-seat stand, an enclosed football pitch, and three all-weather multi-use games areas, as well as the refurbishment of the recreation ground's pavilion and improved social facilities.

Council calls for Liverpool ground share

► Liverpool Football Club and Everton Football Club have been told to share a new stadium, to ensure Liverpool is included in England's bid to host the 2018 World Cup. Warren Bradley, leader of Liverpool City Council and head of the city's 2018 bid committee, told the *Observer* newspaper that a new, shared stadium at Stanley Park was required as neither of the club's current grounds meet FIFA's World Cup criteria.

CB Holding acquires West Ham United

► West Ham United Football Club's (WHUFC) long-term future has been secured after it was acquired by CB Holding for an undisclosed sum. Doubts had been raised over the future of the Premier League club after former owner and chair, Bjorgolfur Gudmundsson, ran into financial difficulties due to the collapse of the Icelandic banking sector. However, Gudmundsson has now left WHUFC after accepting an offer from CB Holdings, which is controlled by the Icelandic government-owned bank, Straumur-Burdaras.

IN BRIEF

Banksy exhibition opens in Bristol

► An exhibition showcasing the work of controversial graffiti artist Banksy has opened at the Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery. More than 100 pieces of Banksy's art will be displayed across the museum's three levels and works include a burnt out ice cream van and a number of animatronics. The museum was closed prior to the exhibition as museum officials wanted to build the exhibits in secret. The contents of the exhibition were even kept hidden from top-level council officials. The museum, which is owned and operated by the Bristol City Council, will hold the display until 31 August.

English Heritage appoints new chair

► Baroness Kay Andrews has been appointed the new chair of English Heritage following an open competition earlier this year. Andrews will replace Sandy Bruce-Lockhart, who died last year. Culture secretary Ben Bradshaw said: "Kay Andrews was the unanimous choice of the independent panel, which assessed all the applicants for the chairmanship. Public interest in our history and heritage is really high at home, and looks set to captivate the huge numbers who are set to visit the UK in 2012. There are exciting times ahead and she is well-qualified to lead English Heritage through them." Andrews added: "I am delighted to be appointed the new chair of English Heritage. I am conscious that I do so following last year's tragic death of Sandy Bruce-Lockhart. He was a great man and a wonderful champion of England's heritage. It will be a great privilege to take the baton and be directly involved in the protection and promotion of our historic environment."

Bishopsgate Institute set for revamp

The cultural and education venue can now be refurbished thanks to a £1.5m grant

By Pete Hayman

Construction work is set to get underway on the two-phase restoration of cultural venue Bishopsgate Institute in London after receiving £1.5m from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The first stage of the scheme includes the transformation of the institute's lower ground floor to provide a refurbished studio and a new library and education space, as well as the installation of amenities, changing rooms and a lift.

Phase one is expected to be completed by Spring 2010 before construction starts on the second stage in summer 2010, which will include the refurbishment of the Great Hall and the creation of a new café.



The Bishopsgate Institute first opened for community use in 1895

It is hoped that Bishopsgate Institute, which opened in 1895 to offer a learning space for thousands of Londoners, will provide an enhanced meeting place and educational facility for the local community following the revamp.

Andrew Fuller, chief executive at the institute, said: "The Institute has been at the heart of the cultural, educational and community life of Spitalfields. The grant ensures we can continue to fulfil the role more effectively in the 21st century."

Government funding for new £30m Leeds Arena

By Pete Hayman

Plans for the construction of a new £30m 12,500-seat entertainment arena in the centre of Leeds, West Yorkshire, have received a funding boost from the government.

Yorkshire Forward, the regional development agency, has confirmed that it will invest in Leeds City Council's proposals, despite concerns the project may threaten plans for the 13,000-seat Sheffield Arena.



The site is currently a car park

Tom Riordan, chief executive of Yorkshire Forward, said: "Following extensive, indepen-

dent evaluation Yorkshire Forward's board has confirmed its decision to invest in the development of a Leeds Arena."

The Leeds Arena, to be operated by SMG Europe, is earmarked for a 5.1-acre (2.06-hectare) site on Claypit Lane and will be delivered by the council after bids by prospective developers were deemed too expensive.

The proposal will now be submitted to central government for funding approval.

Kirkcudbright Art Gallery development put on hold

Plans to build the new £10m Kirkcudbright Art Gallery in southern Scotland may be scrapped after the council's stage one Heritage Lottery Fund bid for £4m was rejected.

The gallery was to be located at the town's Johnston Primary School, following the school's relocation to a new building in 2010. It was to

provide temporary gallery space for a changing exhibition programme and educational and research facilities.

Other funding was coming from Dumfries and Galloway Council, Lowland and Uplands Scotland Regional Development Fund and private donations and sponsorships.

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IN BRIEF

Revenue drops at Park Plaza

► Park Plaza Hotels has seen revenue drop 15 per cent in the five months to 31 May, in line with management expectations. Group revenue for the period was 29.1m euro (£25m), while group RevPAR was 73.3 euro (£62.4) compared to 90.2 euro (£76.7) last year. In the UK, RevPAR fell from £100.9 to £95.6 on a constant currency basis, but occupancy rates remained nearly the same at 83.1 per cent compared with the year before.

Hilton Garden opens in Norwich

► A Hilton Garden Inn is to be built in Norwich, Norfolk, thanks to a head of terms agreement between City Living Developments and the hotelier. The 125-bedroom hotel is part of the £120m mixed-use scheme at St. Anne's Wharf in the centre of Norwich. The deal is expected to be completed this month, and the hotel to open by spring 2011. Other elements of the residential-led scheme include retail and leisure facilities as well as a £2m steel swing bridge across the River Wensum.

Manchester to get new £15m hotel

► Plans for a £15m Express by Holiday Inn hotel in Manchester have been approved by the city council. Muse Developments has secured permission to build the 192-bedroom hotel as part of the fifth phase of its £100m mixed-use Smithfield scheme in the city's Northern Quarter – a joint venture with Crosby Homes. The Northern Quarter site will also include a new 1,330sq m (1,431.6sq ft) public square and the scheme includes art galleries, offices, bars and cafés, retailers and a £26m 230-bedroom Crowne Plaza hotel, which was completed in 2008.

Edinburgh arts hotel project called in

Plans to convert a former cinema have been referred to the Scottish Government

By **Helen Patenall**

Plans to convert a former 1930s Odeon cinema in Edinburgh into a new arts hotel called ZED have been referred to the Scottish Government.

A planning application submitted by Duddingston House Properties to the City of Edinburgh Council for the conversion and part demolition of the grade B-listed art deco building was approved in October 2008 on the condition that the project be referred to Historic Scotland.

However, uncertainty over the auditorium's interior demolition as part of the designs proposed by Make Architects has resulted in the historic body referring the case to Scottish ministers.



The hotel has been designed by London-based Make Architects

Michael Russell, Scottish culture minister, said: "The application concerning the Odeon has attracted a lot of attention, from both those who would like to see its auditorium retained and those who believe it should be adapted for a new use.

If approved, the Art Deco frontage, foyer and external shell of the auditorium would be retained in order to accommodate a café, a restaurant and a multi-purpose space incorporating a film projection area and meeting rooms for community use.

Greene King in Punch pubs deal

Greene King, the pub operator and brewing company, has acquired 11 managed properties from Punch Taverns for £30.4m.

The deal, which is set to be completed on 1 July, includes seven pubs in central London and four located in Scotland.

Rooney Anand, chief executive of Greene King, said: "I am really pleased we have been able to acquire these high quality assets, further strengthening our presence in two key geographies for us."

Giles Thorley, Punch Taverns chief executive, added: "This transaction is in line with our stated strategy of increasing free cash flow and reducing the level of our debt."

Premier Inn reports sales slump

The budget chain has been hit by falling sales in the first quarter

By **Pete Hayman**

Whitbread, one of the UK's largest hotel and restaurant operators, has reported a sharp fall in like-for-like sales at its budget hotel chain, Premier Inn, during the 13 weeks ending 28 May 2009.

The company has already slashed the cost of family rooms in a bid to reverse the slump, which has contributed to an overall decrease of 2.7

per cent in like-for-like sales across Whitbread's operations when compared with the same period last year.

However, the decrease was partially offset by the strong performance at Costa Coffee during the first quarter, which reported a like-for-like sales increase of 2.6 per cent and a total sales increase of 18.5 per cent. Like-for-like sales at Whitbread's pub restaurants also increased by 2 per cent.



The average cost of eating out increased to nearly £12 last year

Restaurant bills hit record levels

Average consumer spend to decline after 2008 highs

By **Luke Tuchscherer**

The cost of eating out is expected to fall after hitting new highs last year, according to food sector analyst Horizons.

The amount spent on a meal in a restaurant has risen by 20 per cent over the past five years, with average spending jumping from £10.09 in 2004 to £11.98 in 2008.

The prices of meals in pub restaurants have increased as ingredient costs have risen. Combined with customers increasingly choosing costlier items from the menus, the

average price for a pub meal is currently £13.76.

European-style restaurants – those with Italian, Spanish, British and French menus – saw spend rise 19 per cent with the average price paid rising to £20.51 in 2008. Spend in Chinese and Indian restaurants rose 16 per cent, with consumers paying an average of £12.66 for an ethnic meal.

However, Horizons said it is now seeing menu prices fall, which will continue until the end of the year. The analyst predicts that average bills could fall back to 2006 levels.

Travelodge unveils new property fund

Travelodge, the UK budget hotel operator, has established a new joint venture with property fund manager Meghraj Properties as part of efforts to capitalise on the slump in the property market.

The £100m property fund, called Tamesis Capital, is designed to enable the company to acquire distressed assets from banks and administrators, as well as other hotel operators.

Chaired by Malcolm King, former senior partner at King Sturge, Tamesis has been established in order to purchase up to 14 hotels which will then be leased to the budget chain.

The fund is hoping to raise £40m of equity, supplemented by £60m of borrowings. So far the fund has secured £20m from Meghraj clients with Travelodge investing a further £500,000.

Taking responsibility for the tourism sector

Recent government reshuffle provides no new answers for tourism's place in Westminster

With the recent government reshuffle, the question again arose: should the responsibility for tourism remain with DCMS or should it be transferred to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), the new name for the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, where, presumably, regulatory reform has now been thrown out of the window?

Should tourism be linked with the UK's cultural and historic heritage or, as one of the largest economic sectors, generating £19bn per annum in export earnings and employing up to 2.1 million people, should it be relocated to BIS where it would be treated more as an industry than a cultural activity?

Change came there none. Tourism remains part of the culture and heritage scene, despite being by far the biggest industry in the department's portfolio. Thus, it came as a surprise that when DCMS announced its plans to create 5,000 to 10,000 new jobs using money from the Future Jobs Fund – a £1.1bn challenge fund where organisations compete for money to create jobs for the young long-term unemployed and others with disadvantages in the workplace. Rather than being a core component of the strategy, the tourism sector hardly rated a mention.

The strategy Lifting People, Lifting Places focuses on investing in culture, media and sport as a way of helping the economy recover, but many of the initiatives highlighted are simply a rehash of existing schemes. However, what the document does highlight is the view that by investing in arts, culture and sport, there will automatically be an increase in tourism. This is a ludicrous assumption and ignores the £10bn spent by British and overseas visitors every year. It is this closed thinking that is behind the current plans to develop a British City of Culture competition.

The belief is that if government investment is focused on developing the cultural and sporting facilities of destinations, there will automatically be an increase in tourism numbers. This cleverly negates the need for any direct government investment in tourism marketing, which is considered to be better handled at a local level or by the private sector.

So while we are debating which government department should be responsible for tourism, the government seems to be debating whether there should be a responsibility at all.



BOB COTTON is chief executive of the BHA. *Leisure Opportunities* is a member benefit of the BHA, for your free copy call 01462 471913

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New council set up to promote London

Mayor Boris Johnson appoints new team tasked with "rebranding" the capital

By **Pete Hayman**

Representatives from London's promotional agencies and business groups have met with mayor Boris Johnson following the establishment of a new council designed to promote and "rebrand" the capital.

The Promote London Council has been set up in order to provide a more comprehensive approach to attracting more visitors and marketing the city ahead of the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Sebastian Coe, chair of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games; London Development Agency chair Harvey McGrath and Stuart Popham, chair of the Confederation of Business Industry



The Promote London Council is looking to increase London's allure

London, are among the representatives on the council.

Johnson, who will chair the new council, said: "In just three years time, the eyes of the world will turn to London as we host the greatest sporting event in the world and it's appropriate that we brand ourselves

accordingly. This is a huge task but one that we must start shaping immediately.

"With the Promote London Council in place, I am confident that we're now in a stronger position to showcase the capital's fantastic array of cultural and sporting assets."

RSC unveils night train service



The Courtyard Theatre is currently RSC's main venue in Stratford

By **Pete Hayman**

A series of special late night train services will operate between Stratford-upon-Avon and London this summer, after the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) teamed up with Chiltern Railways.

The services, which launched on 30 May, depart from Stratford-upon-Avon at 11.20pm on selected Saturdays

in order to allow theatregoers from London and locations along the route to attend productions in the bard's Warwickshire home town.

Anyone will be able to use the services, but they are specifically intended for those visiting The Courtyard Theatre, which is currently the RSC's main venue in the town while the Royal Shakespeare Theatre undergoes a £100m revamp.

Scottish rally event confirmed

EventScotland has revealed that the inaugural Rally of Scotland, which will form part of the Intercontinental Rally Challenge, is expected to provide a £2.6m boost to the economies of Stirling, Perth and Kinross.

The three-day event, taking place between 19 and 21 November, is expected to attract around 30,000 spectators to the region, with an additional 15,000 visitors from overseas. Scotland has secured the event for a three-year period. It is hoped that the likely influx of visitors will help to boost occupancy during a period that is traditionally quiet.

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IN BRIEF

Clapham Junction plans get scrapped

► Plans for the £400m redevelopment of Clapham Junction in London have been withdrawn after the joint venture behind the scheme faced opposition from the local authority. Metro Shopping Fund, which comprises Land Securities and Delancey, submitted a planning application to the London Borough of Wandsworth in September last year. The project included a two-level pedestrian street with cafés, bars and a 1-acre (0.4-hectare) rooftop garden with a restaurant and arthouse cinema.

First draft of Chard masterplan revealed

► Members of Chard Community Forum have been given the chance to view the first draft of South Somerset District Council's masterplan for the revamp of the town. Improvements to leisure and sports facilities are included in the draft masterplan, which has been developed by LDA Design over the past four months following consultation with local stakeholders.

Eastbourne Pier is put up for sale

► Eastbourne Pier has been put up for sale by its owner Six Piers. The 1,000ft long, Grade II-listed Victorian pier – which first opened in 1870 – boasts two bars, an amusement arcade, shops and the Atlantis nightclub. Richard Baldwin of Humberts Leisure, which is handling the sale, said: "This is an exciting opportunity to purchase a restored Victorian gem at a time when the holiday market in the UK is seeing substantial growth."

Plans for Project Pinewood submitted

The multi-purpose development could include sports and entertainment facilities

By Pete Hayman

Plans for a new living and working community for the creative industries at Pinewood Studios in Iwer Heath, Buckinghamshire, have been submitted to South Buckinghamshire District Council.

The £200m Project Pinewood development is designed to provide filmmakers and producers with a range of streetscapes for film and television productions, including New York and Paris, without having to travel abroad.

The proposals for the 44-hectare (109-acre) site also include a multi-purpose community venue, indoor and outdoor sports facilities, a cinema, a theatre and a music production area, as well as public open spaces.

Planning expiry gets extended

Leisure developers are now able to retain their planning permission from Westminster City Council for up to five years in a move to help projects that are put on hold during the economic downturn.

The council, which allowed developers to keep planning permission valid for up to three years, has introduced the extension (at the discretion of the council) so applicants can avoid the lengthy process of resubmission so not to risk projects being scrapped.



Venice is just one of the streetscapes to be created at Pinewood

A training and education facility for the creative industries and up to 1,500 homes are among the plans, which were first unveiled by Pinewood Shepperton in November 2007 in a bid to secure the future of the studios.

A spokesperson for the studio said: "Project Pinewood

is a long-term scheme of national significance to create a living and working community for the creative industries.

"Project Pinewood is one of the most forward-looking strategic initiatives in the UK screen and related industries, designed to achieve economic efficiencies in filming."

£70m Ayr campus gets go-ahead

By Pete Hayman

Construction work on a new £70m University of the West of Scotland campus in Ayr is set to get underway in September 2009 after the development was given the go-ahead by the local authority.

South Ayrshire Council has awarded full planning permission and approved the transfer of land to the university for the 18,000sq m (193,750sq ft) facility, to be situated on the Craigie Estate by the River Ayr.

A gym, a drama studio and a library are among the proposed facilities at the new campus, which will also provide



Plans include a courtyard space

a new base for the Scottish Agriculture College and include a general teaching space, a refectory, a lecture theatre and computing labs.

Plans for the campus have been drawn up by Scottish-based architects RMJM.

QUEEN ELIZABETH II STADIUM ENFIELD Refurbishment of 400m Athletics Track EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

The London Borough of Enfield is inviting contractors to submit an expression of interest for the replacement of Queen Elizabeth II Stadium's athletics track and runways.

The refurbishment of Queen Elizabeth II Stadium athletics facilities will include a 6 lane 400m athletics track with one home straight, a long jump/ triple jump runway with a landing pit at either end, a high jump fan in the D at the western end of the track and a shot put throwing area in the D at the eastern end of the track.

We are looking for contractors to tender for the design and build of the above works. Companies wishing to tender for this contract are invited, in the first instance, to complete a Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ).

Completed PQQs must be returned by 2.00pm on 21st July 2009.

Those companies taken forward from the PQQ stage will be sent tender documents in due course. It is planned to take forward a maximum of 4 companies to submit detailed tenders. The works are proposed to take place in late 2009 and early 2010.

The works required which will include drainage works and replacement of the athletics facilities, are likely to take place as an independent contract. However, renovation works will also take place to restore a listed building at the stadium adjacent to the athletics track. It may be that the successful applicant for the athletics track works will be nominated as a subcontractor to the contractor carrying out works to the listed building.

Please contact the person below to request a PQQ. Completed PQQ responses must also be sent to the same name and address: Tim Harrison, Education, Children and Leisure Services, PO Box 58 Civic Centre, Silver Street, Enfield, Middlesex EN1 3XJ E-Mail: tim.harrison@enfield.gov.uk Telephone: 020 8379 6125 Fax: 020 8379 3777



TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF WELLNESS EQUIPMENT AND ASSOCIATED ICT

The Council is seeking tenders for the Provision of Wellness Equipment and Associated ICT for the Hetton Sports Complex which is due for completion early 2010.

Tender documents are available to download from www.nepoportal.org

The return date for completed tenders is by NOON 10th July 2009.

Any queries regarding this opportunity should be addressed to:

Mr K Marshall, Assistant Procurement Manager, Corporate Procurement, Civic Centre, Burdon Road, Sunderland SR2 7DN

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TENDER FOR THE OPERATION OF ALLESTREE PARK AND SINFIN GOLF COURSES

Derby City Council Environmental Services Division is seeking 'expressions of interest' for the operation of its two mature 18 holes golf courses, Allestree Park Golf Course founded in 1930 and designed by H S Colt, and Sinfen Golf Course which opened in 1923. Leases of 25 years will be granted to enable lessees to invest in facilities and course improvements. There is scope for a further extension of up to a further 25 years. Options to extend will be dependant on the level of investment proposed in the tender responses.

The Courses each have approximately 30,000 rounds played each year and have a private golf club on site, Allestree Park Golf Club, and Derby Golf Club (based at Sinfen).

The tender process will be run as a two stage process. A short list of companies or organisations will be compiled from the 'expressions of interest', and these will be invited to go through the tender stage where the Council's specific requirements will be detailed and historic usage and income information will be available.

To obtain documentation please go to www.sourcederbyshire.co.uk and follow the links
For any further information please contact Linda Spiby on 01332 642053

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Green light for Coventry park scheme

War Memorial Park's £3.8m facelift to be funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund

By Pete Hayman

Coventry City Council (CCC) has approved plans for a £3.8m refurbishment of the city's War Memorial Park, which first opened in 1921 to commemorate the lives of soldiers who died in World War One.

The council is expected to contribute £240,000 capital funding to the proposed scheme, which includes the restoration of park features and the revamp of the central pavilion to provide educational, training and cultural activities.

Improvements to tennis courts and three football pitches and the restoration of gardens and pools are also outlined as part of the War Memorial Park project, which has received £2.8m from the Heritage Lottery Fund in April.



Work will include the restoration of the 88-year-old public park

It is also hoped that the scheme will help to increase the number of volunteers involved in activities such as gardening and collecting World War One-related history, while people with special needs will receive nationally-recognised

training and qualifications in horticultural skills.

The rest of the funding is to be sourced from external sources, including volunteer organisations and Section 106 contributions from developments elsewhere in the city.

English Heritage unveils new Carisbrooke garden

By Pete Hayman

English Heritage has opened a new Edwardian-inspired garden within the former privy garden of Queen Victoria's daughter, Princess Beatrice, at Carisbrooke Castle near Newport, Isle of Wight.

The garden, which has been created in partnership with garden designer and former presenter of BBC's *Gardeners' World*, Chris Beardshaw, is designed to celebrate the Princess' role as the island's governor until 1944.

Period plants, fruit trees and a fountain have been incorporated into English Heritage's design in order to keep it as close as possible to the original layout of the garden, which was established as Princess Beatrice's private garden in 1913.



Improvements at the site include a new visitor centre and a shop

Other recent improvements at Carisbrooke Castle have included a new visitor reception, a shop and new interpretation boards at the site.

The garden has also been developed to complement the Victorian garden at Osborne House near East Cowes, which is maintained and managed by English Heritage.

English Heritage commissioner, Gilly Drummond, said: "Chris Beardshaw's imaginative design interprets and celebrates an important period in the medieval castle's history.

"Princess Beatrice grew up at Osborne House, married and is buried at Whippingham Church and spent a great deal of her adult life at Carisbrooke Castle."

IN BRIEF

Newport visitor centre reopens

► The National Park Visitor Centre in Newport, Wales, has officially reopened. Owned by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, the facility was extended and refurbished over the winter. The revamped centre features an interactive display pertaining to a bilingual oral history project called Talking Newport/Tafod Tydrath, which gives visitors a chance to hear local people sharing their memories of Newport's past and hopes for the future.

National Park decision put back

► The New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA) has given itself more time to come up with a draft plan for the future of the park, after it was inundated with replies to a public consultation. The approval of the authority's National Park Plan has been extended to the end of October, to allow "adequate time for the draft to be revised in the light of the many comments received". Clive Chatters, chair of NFNPA, said the authority's priority would be to look at the large number of "constructive and critical" comments that it has received during the consultation.

New measures to save iconic lakes

► The Environment Agency has launched a campaign designed to help protect the UK's most famous lakes from threats such as climate change, pollution and non-native species. At last month's 'Lakes for Living, Lakes for Life' conference, the agency's chair, Lord Smith, warned of the dangers of pesticides and fertilisers contributing to regular blue-green algal blooms in the Lake District, preventing people from going into the water.

Coming home to value for money

Homecoming gives Scotland an excellent opportunity



PHILIP RIDDLE
is chief
executive of
VisitScotland

The recession brings challenges to all sectors of the economy and tourism is no exception as with these challenges come opportunities.

The strength of the euro, the US and Canadian dollars is positioning Scotland as a strong destination for European and North American tourists as well as domestic visitors who may have traditionally went abroad but are now looking to holiday at home.

Homecoming Scotland 2009 gives the country a unique competitive advantage. With more than 300 events and a sense of celebration that it will generate, it is exactly what Scotland needs to continue to perform well.

We have also launched a £1m 'credit crunch' campaign, which aims to encourage UK residents to holiday in Scotland this year. 'The Perfect Day' campaign is expected to reach more than 36 million people across the UK making it VisitScotland's biggest ever domestic campaign to date.

A new addition to this year's campaign is the 'Perfect Experience' which identifies authentic and unique or out-of-the-ordinary experiences available around Scotland.

Tourism growth is critical to Scotland. We cannot be complacent and must continue to offer value for money and compelling reasons why people should visit Scotland as opposed to the many other destinations available, even within the UK. While tourism cannot escape the pressures of the economy, by working together we can put tourism growth back on track.

Mayor unveils heritage festivities

Month-long Story of London celebrations to chart the history of London

By **Pete Hayman**

London mayor Boris Johnson has officially launched a new month-long programme of events to celebrate the capital's past, present and future and encourage more people to explore the city's heritage.

The Story of London celebration will see more than 400 events held throughout June at locations across London.

Each week of events will culminate in a 'Big Weekend' dedicated to a specific theme, including a Tudor river pageant to mark the 500th anniversary of Henry VIII's coronation co-ordinated by Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) and the British Film Institute's Jazz and Film Weekender.

A series of activities will also be focused around the smaller museums and sites situated in outer boroughs of London, with HRP and English Heritage providing funding for special events.



Events will celebrate London's rich heritage

The Heritage Lottery Fund is supporting the Story of London initiative as part of the National Lottery's 15th anniversary celebrations, with more than £200,000 awarded to 23 projects across 14 London Boroughs and an exhibition at City Hall showcasing a further 15 flagship schemes.

Penzance Harbour revamp plans withdrawn



Penzance Harbour was set to be upgraded

By **Pete Hayman**

Plans for the redevelopment of Penzance Harbour as part of a scheme to improve the sea link between Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly have been scrapped.

The project, which included the construction of a new passenger and freight terminal building, encountered opposition due to the proposals incorporating the site of the town's Battery Rocks beach.

The plans have been withdrawn in order for the outcome of a new study investigating alternative options to be considered.

Adventure travel firm reports slump in demand

Holidaybreak has reported that demand in its adventure travel division, Explore, decreased by 16 per cent in the six months ending 31 March 2009.

The company has blamed the effects of the recession and the weak pound for the decline in interest, which has contributed towards an operating loss of £10.8m in the first half of the year.

PGL, Holidaybreak's education division, also revealed losses of £3.8m, which has resulted in Holidaybreak reporting overall losses before exceptional items of more than £18m.

The company admitted that it traditionally reported a loss in the first half of the year due to seasonal effects of the camping and education business.



MLA will fund up to 50 apprenticeships in museums across the UK

New scheme to train creatively

MLA has earmarked £250,000 for apprenticeships

By **Luke Tuchscherer**

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) has pledged £250,000 to fund up to 50 apprenticeships in museums across England over the next two years.

The scheme, which is part of the Creative Apprenticeship programme developed by Creative & Cultural Skills, is designed to open up entry routes into museums and will provide £5,000 for each apprentice's employment.

Roy Clare, chief executive of the MLA, said: "Current

economic circumstances emphasise the urgent need to invest more in the cultural workforce in Britain.

"We are excited about what these apprenticeships can bring to the industry and the start it can give people wanting to make a career in our sector."

There are three pathways in the Creative Apprenticeship scheme that museums can focus on: community arts management, cultural and heritage venue operations and live events and production.

The deadline for the first round of applications is 17 July.

SHOKK gets NSA accreditation

Youth activity specialist SHOKK has been awarded the North West Centre of Vocational Excellence, as part of the National Skills Academy for Sport and Active Leisure (NSA).

SHOKK will work in partnership with Trafford College and Salford University to co-ordinate and deliver free training and qualifications in youth activity, as well as career progression courses.

The employer-focused courses include one- and two-day CPD courses, NVQs, VRQs and workshops for instructors and activity leaders.

All programmes will be linked with Key Stage 2,3 and 4 of the National Curriculum, to ensure young people develop complementary skills in and out of school.

The NSA was developed by Skills Active for an employer-led approach to training.

Government shuffle puts employers at forefront

New department places operators where they should be – at the heart of policy making

Now, more than ever, we must look to the future and provide greater insight into the world of work, the skills needed to succeed in the sector and build relationships between employers, colleges and universities. With that said, the world of skills and education has been changing over the past few weeks, prompted by the reshuffle in Westminster. The government has merged the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (previously known as BERR), with the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS).

The resulting new Department for Business, Innovation and Skills is charged with building Britain's capacity to compete in a global economy. For the first time, this new department puts together skills, FE, HE and business development all under the same umbrella and recognises the need to have employers, colleges and universities closely aligned at a government level – something Sector Skills Councils have lobbied for since their inception six years ago. This new department puts employers where they should be – at the heart of education reform and policy making.

So what does that mean for our industry? For a start, we finally have a doorway to discuss vocational skills development aligned with academic qualifications, apprenticeships are recognised as part of business and innovation, and skills development is now visibly at the heart of government thinking. We are an industry that needs the highly technical vocational skills to operate, combined with the more academic skills in leadership and management to succeed. Not forgetting that the training and qualifications available need to reflect this, and be eligible for public funding. We can be encouraged by this new department's remit to deliver on the government's ambitious objectives to expand the number of apprenticeships available. Despite the negative stories in the press recently, last month the government announced that it will fund a £1.9m Apprenticeship Expansion programme in our sector, led by our National Skills Academy.

So the outlook is positive, it seems that the new department will be positioned to guide us through the economic turbulence, and we're confident that the sector can once again prove resolute as the economy responds to the current downturn. As always, we will continue to work closely with employers across the sector to encourage the continued development of staff and investment in training at this time.



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STEPHEN STUDD is
chief executive of
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Lecturer/Course leader FDA & Top up degree programme:

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Sport and Leisure Management (Temporary 1 year full time contract to cover maternity leave).

Considerable emphasis is placed on the development of employer linked degree programmes with the writing of new specifications, distance learning materials etc and there are opportunities for additional payment for this work.

Applicants must have a relevant degree accompanied by teaching or training experience, significant industrial experience in related fields, strong ICT/ILT and organisational skills. Applicants without a teaching qualification should be willing to work towards one.

All posts commence 1st September 2009.

Closing date for all posts: Thursday, 2nd July 2009.

Interview date: Thursday, 16th July 2009.

Loughborough College promotes diversity in employment and welcomes applications from all sections of the community. As part of our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, successful applicants will undergo appropriate screening.

Loughborough College is renowned as a Centre of Excellence for Sport, Exercise and Fitness.

Sports Development Officer

£22,452 - £25,746 pa

We are seeking to appoint an innovative, self directed and highly motivated individual to take the lead on enrichment, competitive sport, volunteering and coaching. You will provide opportunities for students to participate in recreational and competitive sport and will work with local schools and organisations to provide volunteering opportunities. You will also teach, assess and support elite athletes studying at the College. The successful candidate will have a degree in a relevant subject area, experience of elite sport, teaching experience and experience of working with external partners.

Closing date: Tuesday, 7 July 2009

We offer a whole range of benefits including generous holiday entitlement (60 days for lecturing posts), family friendly policies, an excellent final salary pension scheme and first-rate facilities on site including a nursery and fitness suite.

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Chronic Respiratory Disease Exercise Instructor Course

BLF bursaries are now available for the September intake of this innovative distance learning course.

Developed by Loughborough College, the University Hospitals of Leicester and the British Lung Foundation (BLF), with funding and input from Rotherham PCT, the course has been submitted for endorsement at level 4 on the Register of Exercise Professionals. It covers:

- Physiology and pathology of respiratory disease
- Managing breathlessness
- Management of chronic respiratory disease
- Referral pathways
- Responses to exercise and exercise prescription

The BLF bursary, funded by Air Products, is available to exercise professionals who meet the following entry requirements:

- Level 3 equivalent qualification as recognised by REP's
- 100 hours practical exercise instruction over the past year, with some experience of working with clients with COPD/respiratory disease
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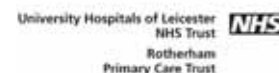
Instructors taking up a bursary will be expected to work with local Breathe Easy support groups to set up exercise classes within the community.

For more details or an application pack please log on to www.lunguk.org/supporting-you/blf_active/ or contact Danielle Smreczak using the details below

e: exercise@blf-uk.org

t: 020 7688 5618

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Want to know more? Download an application pack from our website www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/venue, email recruitment@stedsb.gov.uk or phone our 24hr job line on 01284 757030. Please quote the relevant post number. Closing date 5 July 2009. Interviews and assessment centre: 21 and 22 July 2009. Ref: COM0273.

We are committed to equal opportunities and to safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable people.

We expect all staff and volunteers to share these commitments.



CENTRE OPERATIONS OFFICER

Salary: £15,244 – £17,032 per annum plus 4% performance bonus.

Based at Gravesend you will be responsible for the swimming pool and sports hall maintenance, provide support to teaching staff during lessons and act as a lifeguard during public sessions. You should have experience of working in a Leisure Centre environment. The centre is open from 7.30am – 10.30pm Monday to Friday and 8.30am – 6.00pm Saturday & Sunday. The postholder must hold the First Aid at Work 4 Day Certificate and at least a RLSS Lifeguard qualification and ISRM Pool Plant Certificate.

The college is committed to promoting equal opportunities and actively encourages applications from disabled persons and ethnic minorities.



See our website for further details of the above post – www.nwkcollege.ac.uk.

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Sandwell Leisure Trust



SANDWELL LEISURE TRUST IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SANDWELL MBC AND SANDWELL PCT HAS THE FOLLOWING EXCITING NEW ROLES FOR THE RIGHT PEOPLE.

Job Title: Physical Activity Development Officers (3 posts)
Ref: SLT 357
Scale: SO1 (£24,402 to £26,016)
Hours: 37 hours per week, up to 31st December 2011 (Fixed Term Contract)
Location: Tipton Sports Academy, Tipton, West Midlands

It is an exciting time for Sandwell Leisure Trust and for the development of sport and physical activity in the Borough. Following the launch of the new Physical Activity, PE and Sport Strategy we are now looking to appoint three enthusiastic, dynamic and motivated Physical Activity Development Officers who can drive forward the implementation of the Strategy across Sandwell. We are looking for people with a can do approach who will work with local residents and increase adult participation with an emphasis on sustainable activities.

We are looking for people who have experience of working within a sport and physical activity environment who have worked with statutory/non statutory agencies. You should also be able to demonstrate successful achievements in the areas of sport and physical activity development. Self motivation, good communication and co-ordination skills, along with a good understanding of breaking down the barriers that prevent sport and physical activity, are essential for these posts.

We particularly welcome applications from women, people from ethnic minorities and people with disabilities as they are under represented within our service area.

This opportunity is available as a secondment from other organisations, but we do ask you to seek the approval from your current employer before applying.

So if you think you have what it takes to get our Communities active then this could be the job for you.

For an informal discussion about any of the above posts please contact John Harling on 0121 506 4980.

Closing date is: Friday 3rd July 2009

Short listing will take place on: Tuesday 7th July 2009

Interviews will take place on Monday 20th July 2009

Application forms quoting reference number SLT 357 are available from:

Telephone: 0121 521 4459 (24 hour answer phone)
Website: www.jobs.sandwell.gov.uk
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Application packs can be obtained from the College website at www.esher.ac.uk/information/Pages/Jobs.aspx or Tel: 020 8398 0291.

Closing date : Thursday, 2nd July 2009
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The closing date for applications is Friday 3rd July 2009, Assessment Centres (1 day) will be held on 29th & 31st July, 5th & 6th August at the National Badminton Centre in Milton Keynes.

If you want to be part of the best sports development team in the country we want to hear from you. Please logon to our website www.badmintonengland.co.uk or email enquiries@badmintonengland.co.uk or telephone 01908 268400 for an application pack.

For informal discussions regarding these positions please contact Vicky Foster-Lloyd, Network Manager 07825 094730 / vickyfoster@badmintonengland.co.uk

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You will need to possess a degree or equivalent level qualification in Sport or a related subject area and have experience of teaching or coaching sport. Experience of teaching and assessing fitness and/or some relevant sports coaching qualifications would be an advantage. You should have good communication and interpersonal skills and be able to engage young people aged 16-19. You should also be prepared to obtain an advanced teaching qualification which the College will support financially in full over the two year period of the course.

Closing date: Friday 3rd July 2009.



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Recreation Assistant £13,500-£14,052 pa

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You'll need previous experience of working in a leisure centre and be able to work flexible shifts. As well as being an effective team member, you'll show initiative and have experience in giving great customer service.

If you think you can make a positive contribution, contact us today on 020 7613 9245 for an application pack, or apply online at www.hackney.ac.uk. For information about the role please contact Lee Perkins, on 0207 613 9527.

Closing date: Tuesday 30th June 2009.

The College is committed to safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults. Our workforce is reflective of the community and we welcome applications from everyone.



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- Qualifications as a Lifeguard and Fitness Instructor are also highly desirable.
- The post is subject to satisfactory references, medical report and an enhanced CRB check.

Please send your CV and a brief covering letter to Wayne Bishop at the above address or email: wbishop@forest.org.uk
For further information please call Wayne on 0208 509 6545
www.sylvestrian-leisure.co.uk Closing date Friday 10th July 2009



are you up for the challenge?

At Newport we've embraced the Going for Gold scheme which rewards residents for being more active. The following exciting opportunity has arisen to ensure the continued success of this project.

SOCIAL WELLBEING & HOUSING

Health Challenge Partnership Officer (Going for Gold Activity Coordinator)

£30,546 - £33,328

Ref: SS1085-1

Newport is home to many leisure and sports facilities and with your support we can continue to encourage local people to take part in physical activities through the Going for Gold scheme. You will be vital to keeping our residents healthy through the effective leadership of the health literacy and activity programme.

Candidates should possess a degree in social work, or a related field, with application to this project and in particular an understanding of the importance of health challenges.

Closing date: 3rd July 2009.

Visit www.newport.gov.uk/recruit or call **01633 656656** for an application pack quoting the reference.



These posts are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and are subject to a CRB check. We are committed to equality of opportunity.



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Salary: £30K OTE: £60K+ (uncapped).

Location: North Thames region

Company: Power Plate International

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Due to its ongoing success and expansion, Power Plate International is looking to add to its established UK Commercial Sales Team with a Regional Commercial Sales Manager for the North Thames region.

The successful candidate will have a Sports Science degree and have preferably gained experience in commercial sales of capital equipment within the UK fitness industry.

Reporting to the UK Director of Commercial Sales, you will be a motivated self-starter, equally adept at working on your own initiative, as you are as part of a wider team.

The successful candidate will be expected to live in their designated territory, and will be a car owner with a full, clean driving licence. Business travel is fully expensed. You will be provided with a laptop, a blackberry and all the tools you need to assist you in your sales efforts, including full product training and Head Office administrative support.

The position available offers candidates an exceptional opportunity to join a globally-recognised brand, in a fast-paced, forward-thinking company.

To apply, please email your CV and a photograph to Vesselina.zlatareva@powerplate.com

For more details regarding Power Plate International please visit www.powerplate.com

CLOSING DATE: END JULY 09

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(Health and Physical Activity)

Salary – Grade 10 - £31,439 - £35,079

(Subject to Job Evaluation) Full Time

Base: Children's Village, Rhyl



Leisure Services are looking for an Active Lifestyles Manager to be a key member of their management team and be responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring a range of sport, health and active lifestyles programmes and policies within Denbighshire.

The successful candidate should be educated to degree level or hold an appropriate equivalent leisure qualification and also have 3 years experience in a management or supervisory position within a Leisure or Health working environment.

For an informal discussion about the post please contact Jamie Groves, Head of Leisure Services on 01824 712723. Appointment subject to Criminal Records Bureau Check.

Application forms and further details are available from the Corporate Customer Service Centre on 01824 706101 or write to Customer Service Centre, County Hall, Wynnastay Road, Ruthin, LL15 1YN www.denbighshire.gov.uk
Closing date: Monday 6th July 2009

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Sales Development Manager

Salary: £26,784 - £28,353 per annum

Responsible for maximising total business sales and opportunities, developing to its fullest extent productive revenue from income streams, both new and existing, including (but not limited to) Conference, Meeting and Incentive Markets and ancillary earning facilities. The ideal candidate will have had extensive experience in a sales environment and have excellent management and organisational skills. Good financial acumen is also required as well as exceptional communication and negotiating skills.

Application packs are available from any Customer First Centre or by contacting Customer First, telephone 01723 232323 option 4, e-mail customer.first@scarborough.gov.uk or jobvacancies@scarborough.gov.uk
Vacancy details are also available from www.scarborough.gov.uk and www.oneplacenorthyorks.com

CLOSING DATE FOR BOTH POSTS: 12 Noon, Tuesday 30 June 2009.
INTERVIEW DATE: 14 July 2009

Scarborough Borough Council



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Leisure operators in line for £500m HMRC refund

Gaming companies could be entitled to tax windfall following High Court's landmark decision in favour of Rank

By **Pete Hayman**

Deloitte has revealed that the leisure industry could be in line for a £500m windfall after the High Court upheld Rank Group's claims that the bingo hall and casino operator is entitled to a VAT refund.

Rank Group is set to receive £62m after it successfully argued that HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) breached EU rules on fiscal neutrality in relation to the amount of VAT paid on both interval bingo and gaming machines.

According to Deloitte, tax adviser to Rank Group, other leisure operators could now be entitled to receive similar repayments in light of the judgement, which supports a similar ruling made by VAT and Duties Tribunal in May 2008.

Tony McClenaghan, senior indirect tax partner at Deloitte, said: "It remains to be seen whether HMRC will appeal the decision, however the decision of both the VAT Tribunal and the High Court are unequivocal and we would expect the Court of Appeal to share this view."



The High Court has backed Rank Group's claims for a VAT refund

MLA unveils plans for new London regional team

By **Pete Hayman**

A new regional team for London is to be established by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) in April 2010 to complete a nationwide overhaul of its services.

The plans have been approved by the Mayor of London, who currently holds statutory responsibility for culture in the capital, as well as trustees of MLA London who



London boasts many museums

will now close the remaining regional MLA agency.

It follows a restructuring of the MLA last year, which

has resulted in the establishment of three other area teams for the North, West and East regions.

Andrew Motion, MLA chair, said: "The MLA's transformation was designed to deliver a single light-footed national organisation operating effectively in every English region to help local government drive the development and improvement of museums, libraries and archives."

Nature reserve for Cambridge

East Chesterton in Cambridge is to benefit from a new nature reserve.

The conservation area will feature a meandering stream, a reedbed and seasonally wet areas to provide suitable habitats for a range of wildlife, while a 5m (16.4ft) high tower designed as public art will provide nesting opportunities for swifts.

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