Nickelodeon-branded attraction for Pleasure Beach

By Martin Nash

Children's entertainment brand Nickelodeon and the Pleasure Beach amusement park in Blackpool have agreed to develop the UK's first Nickelodeon-branded attraction.

Nickelodeon's shows and characters will feature in more than 14 attractions covering an area of 6 acres (2.4 hectares) at Pleasure Beach, with construction of Nickelodeon Land scheduled to begin in the autumn. A grand opening is planned for the spring of 2011.

Gerald Raines, senior director at Nickelodeon Theme Parks and Attractions said: "This is an ideal location for Nickelodeon and a great opportunity to expand our global presence."

Amanda Thompson, managing director of Pleasure Beach, Blackpool said: "Nickelodeon Land will combine Pleasure Beach's reputation for amazing rides and attractions with Nickelodeon's favorite fun characters to produce a wonderful attraction, which will wow visitors to the park."

Under the terms of the agreement, Nickelodeon will bring its characters, interactive shows, and 'green slime' to Pleasure Beach, along with new rides, games and food outlets themed with Nickelodeon characters including SpongeBob SquarePants, Dora the Explorer, Fairly Odd Parents and Avatar: The Last Airbender.

The attraction will join Nickelodeon Universe in Minneapolis' Mall of America; Nick Central at Dreamworld Australia; and Nickland at Movie Park Germany, together with Nickelodeon attractions at the Universal Studios theme parks in Orlando, Florida and Hollywood, California.

Work completed on Kentish Town Sports Centre

Historic leisure centre reopens to the public following £25m renovation scheme

By Tom Walker

The Kentish Town Sports Centre in London has reopened to the public, following a comprehensive £25m revamp of the Grade II-listed Victorian building.

Facilities at the new centre include three swimming pools, a 90-station health and fitness club equipped by Technogym, a Kinesis area, a Power Plate zone, a group exercise studio and a Wii Fit interactive zone.

Work also included the refurbishment of the facility's historical features – such as the main Willes pool facade – and the creation of a new café.

The project was undertaken by a team including Roberts Limbrick Architects; consultants Davis Langdon; property experts Cyril Sweett; Max Fordham Consulting Engineers; Alan Baxter and Associates; and Wates Construction.

The building has achieved a Very Good BREEAM (environmental building assessment) rating and has been designed to be more eco-friendly and cheaper to run by using an existing bore-hole to supply water to the pools.

The centre will be operated by Greenwich Leisure on behalf of London Borough of Camden.
Leisure schemes affected by NWDA funding cut

By Pete Hayman

A number of leisure schemes across North West England have been dealt a blow after the government reduced the regional development agency’s budget by £52m.

The Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) confirmed that all uncommitted projects will not receive funding in the current financial year, while there will be no new commitments during 2011-12.

Plans for the creation of a new National Football Museum have been dealt a blow after the government reduced the regional development agency’s budget by £52m.

The £220m Talbot Gateway scheme will no longer receive a £23m contribution from NWDA; a decision that Helen France – Blackpool Council’s executive director for places – said did not reflect the development’s viability.

France said: “We are looking at alternative methods of supporting the scheme and will be looking to bid to the new £1bn Regional Growth Fund.”

Blackpool’s Talbot Gateway is to lose out on NWDA funding.

Centre in Carlisle; and the Sportscity major destination site in Manchester will also miss out on support ahead of the agency’s dissolution in 2012.

NWDA chief executive Steven Broomhead said: “We have made a start by cutting non-committed projects and reducing our own administration budget but we now need to re-examine all existing projects and programmes to identify where further savings can be made.

“We will use all available flexibility to try to meet these challenging reductions but the reality is that this is a substantial reduction to our in-year budget and there is bound to be an economic impact.”

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May to target ‘failed’ drinking culture

Home Office plans overhaul of Licensing Act to combat on alcohol-related issues

By Pete Hayman

Home secretary Theresa May has announced new plans to overhaul licensing legislation that could see local authorities handed increased powers in a bid to help crack down on alcohol-related disorder.

A number of measures will be put to consultation as part of a bid to reform the Licensing Act, including the introduction of a fee for late-night licences and a ban on the sale of below-cost alcohol.

Other proposals include a limit on the number of Temporary Event Notices that can be applied for in a year and ensuring police and health concerns are considered when assessing license applications.

May said: “The benefits promised by the 24 hour drinking ‘café culture’ of drinking have failed to materialise and in its place we have seen an increase in the number of alcohol related incidents and drink-fuelled crime and disorder.

“We know that the majority of pubs and bars are well run business but the government believes that the system needs to be rebalanced in favour of the local communities they serve with tougher action taken to crack down on the premises which cause problems.”

The consultation is due to run for six weeks, with the Home Office revealing that nearly one million of all violent crimes last year were alcohol-related.
Robertson calls for 'bureaucracy bonfire'

**CCPR-led review to examine how to free sports clubs of legislation and regulations**

*By Pete Hayman*

A “bonfire of costly bureaucracy”, which aims to remove barriers that prevent people participating in sport, has been announced by sports minister Hugh Robertson.

The Central Council of Physical Recreation (CCPR) has been asked to conduct a review of the regulations and legislation affecting sports clubs, which is due to be completed by the end of the year.

Among the issues to be explored as part of the review is whether the new vetting and barring system will discourage more volunteers from helping with youth team sport.

The review will look into the current system that requires teachers to have a second Criminal Records Bureau check if they want to work with young people outside school.

Robertson said: "Against the challenging economic backdrop, I want to start a bonfire of costly bureaucracy in sport. We need to remove as many barriers as possible that stop people getting involved."

CCPR chief executive Tim Lamb added: "There's an urgent need to lift the burden of bureaucracy from clubs and volunteers. Red tape is preventing people from getting the opportunities they want in sport and taking up too much valuable volunteer time."

Darwin site misses out on world heritage list

*By Martin Nash*

UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) has added 21 new sites to its World Heritage List, comprising 15 cultural, five natural and one mixed properties. Four sites have also been added to its list of sites in danger.

Among the cultural sites named are the Australian convict sites, 11 in total and mainly around Sydney and in Tasmania, plus Norfolk Island and Fremantle; Jantar Mantar in Delhi, India – architectural astronomy instruments dating from 1724; the 11th century Imperial Citadel of Thang Long-Hanoi in Vietnam; the Tabriz Historical Bazaar Complex in Iran; the Bikini Atoll nuclear test site in the Marshall Islands; and the 17th century canal ring area in Amsterdam, Holland.

The UK's nomination for Down House – the workplace and home in Bromley, south London, of Charles Darwin – to join the list of world heritage sites has been deferred.

The World Heritage Committee said that although the bid was very strong in recognising scientific achievement, further analysis and study was needed. It has now been referred back to the UK authorities for these issues to be addressed.
Branson set to sell off Virgin Active?

Health club operator “in talks” with a number of potential bidders for the business

By Tom Walker

A number of private equity groups are considering making a bid for health and fitness operator Virgin Active.

Blackstone and CVC Capital Partners, both of which already have investments in the leisure sector, are among companies looking to take over "a considerable size" of the business.

Part of Sir Richard Branson’s Virgin Group, Virgin Active currently operates 72 health clubs in the UK and also has operations in the Mediterranean and South Africa.

It is understood that Branson would retain a share in Virgin Active as part of any takeover deal.

Two private equity companies – Permira and Bridgepoint Capital – already hold stakes in the chain after being part of a deal to sell the

Virgin Active currently operates more than 70 clubs across the UK

Wiltshire to invest £117m on facilities

A number of local authority-run leisure centres in Wiltshire are to be handed over to the public, but £117m will be spent on upgrading existing facilities or building replacement centres.

Wiltshire Council confirmed that Corsham, Downton, Pewsham, Tisbury, Westbury and Woolston Bassett leisure centres would be transferred, as well as Westbury and Bradford-on-Avon swimming pools. The decision was taken after the council said it would need to spend £93m to maintain the existing 23 facilities in the next 15 years, and in the present financial climate was deemed not to be "affordable or sustainable".

Fusion Lifestyle to run Enfield facilities

Four facilities in Enfield, London, are to receive nearly £9m worth of improvements over the next three years after Fusion Lifestyle was appointed to run council-owned sites. A total of seven sites will be run on behalf of Enfield Council, with Albany, Southbury, Southgate and Edmonton leisure centres to be revamped. The operator will also run Arnos Pool, Aspire Sports and Fitness Centre and Bramley Bowls Centre as part of the deal.

Work starts on Oxford scheme

Work has started on a revamp of Oxford’s Barton Pool to provide a 40-station gym, improved changing facilities and a new reception area.

Improvements will also be carried out on the 25m pool and existing studio as part of work at the four-year-old facility, which is to be renamed Barton Leisure Centre and is run by Fusion Lifestyle.

An extension next to the pool and entrance will house the new facilities and is designed in the same style as the complex, while also incorporating eco-friendly measures.

Two new openings for Gym Group

Budget club operator The Gym Group has opened a new site in Birmingham, increasing the number of sites in the company’s portfolio to eight.

The new club, located on Birmingham High Street, is the second new Gym to open this month, following the launch of Brighton Gym on 7 July.

The 22,000sq ft (2,044sq m) Birmingham site – equipped by Matrix – is the operator’s largest site to date and boasts 170 pieces of equipment.

The Gym Group chief executive officer John Treharne, said: “The opening of Birmingham and Brighton is another exciting milestone for us.

The group has more than 90 sites in South Africa, with more scheduled to open this year, and an international portfolio currently standing at just short of 190 clubs.

The group reported annual revenues of £391m for 2009 – a 15 per cent increase on 2008. Pre-tax profits for 2009 were £101.1m, up from £85.5m in the previous year.

The budget chain plans to expand across the country

“We are now over halfway through our national roll-out and it’s great to see the concept coming to life.

The Gym Group also operates fitness facilities in Guildford, Surrey; Leicester; Liverpool; and Manchester, as well as a further two clubs in London – Hounslow and Vauxhall.
Approval for Nottingham leisure plans

Victoria Leisure Centre proposals receive final go-ahead by central government

By Tom Walker

Plans to replace the Victoria Leisure Centre in Sneinton, Nottingham, with a new £9m facility have been given final approval by the government. The plans were given the green light by Nottingham City Council (NCC) in June, but as the building is located within a conservation area and is owned by the council, plans required the approval of communities secretary Eric Pickles.

Designs for the complex have been drawn up by London-based architects Levitate and form part of a wider £32m NCC-led scheme to upgrade leisure provision across the city. Plans for the new Victoria Leisure Centre incorporate a six-lane, 25m swimming pool with separate children’s pool and fun splash play area and fitness and health suites.

The centre is also designed to complement efforts to revitalise the Sneinton Square area, which aims to improve links between the city centre and surrounding neighbourhoods. The decision will bring to an end the efforts of the Save Victoria Baths pressure group, which was seeking to have the council’s decision to redevelop the baths overturned.

Maidstone Leisure centre reopens after revamp

By Tom Walker

Maidstone Leisure Centre in Kent has reopened to the public following a £4m renovation.

The project, undertaken by ISG, included the creation of a two-storey, 500sq m (5,382sq ft) fitness suite; two new exercise studios; a new toddler play pool with interactive water features and new swimming pool changing facilities.

Life Fitness has installed more than 70 pieces of six-lane, 25m swimming pool with separate children’s pool and fun splash play area and fitness and health suites.

The layout is also designed to aid group training and includes a free weights section and circuit series equipment.

The revamp took just over six months to complete and was funded by Maidstone Borough Council. The centre will be managed by Maidstone Leisure Trust and Serco Leisure.

New equipment for Western Isles facilities

Two leisure centres located on the Outer Hebrides of Scotland are set to benefit from the installation of new cardiovascular equipment under plans confirmed by the council.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar – the Western Isles Council – has revealed that Technogym will supply Ionad Spòrs Leòdhais, Stornoway, and the Lionacleit Sports Centre in Benbecula with a number of new machines.

A new strength and conditioning area is also currently being created at Ionad Spòrs Leòdhais as part of the council’s wider investment in local facilities. The new machines will be installed from 16 August.
HRH The Duke of Gloucester has officially opened the new £21m Carnegie Pavilion at Headingley Carnegie Cricket Ground in Leeds, West Yorkshire.

Designed by architect Will Alsop, the dual-use facility has been developed as the result of a partnership between Leeds Metropolitan University and Yorkshire County Cricket Club (YCCC).

The facility will be used by the club during the summer as a cricket pavilion, which will boast a media centre, improved player changing and treatment rooms, hospitality suites and spectator seating, while the university will use the building for teaching space during the academic year.
Tigers to pursue stadium development

Castleford’s rugby league team looking for a move to new Glasshoughton ground

By Pete Hayman

Castleford Tigers rugby league club is to pursue plans for a new stadium after securing an agreement with developer Waystone that secures land for the proposed development.

The announcement comes after Wakefield Trinity Wildcats rejected a possible ground share with the Tigers and reaffirmed its commitment to a new ground at Newmarket.

Waystone has already been given the green light for the Glasshoughton venue as part of a wider 335-acre (136-hectare) mixed-use development, which includes an Xscape venue.

Ramsden and Partners has been appointed to draw up detailed designs for the stadium, which will occupy a 20-acre (8-hectare) site as part of the agreement and it is hoped that work will be underway by spring 2011.

Castleford Tigers chief executive Richard Wright said: "This agreement secures the 20-acre site at Glasshoughton on behalf of the club and is another step forward in delivering the stadium."

Meanwhile, Wakefield and District Community Stadium Trust revealed it had reached agreement with Wakefield Trinity Wildcats and the local authority over the development of the Newmarket venue.

Rotherham United submits ground plans

Rotherham United Football Club (RUFC) has submitted plans for the construction of a new 12,000-seat stadium at the Guest and Chrimes site to the local authority. The npower League Two club currently plays its home games at the Don Valley Stadium in Sheffield after leaving Millmoor in 2008.

However, RUFC is now eyeing up a return to the South Yorkshire town. Rotherham Metropolitan District Council will now determine the fate of the planning application. It is hoped that the council will consider the proposals in the autumn.

DCMS defers free-to-air TV events decision

A decision to review a list of major sporting events protected for free-to-air television has been put on hold by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) until 2013.

The announcement means that home Ashes cricket – the four-yearly Test match cricket series between England and Australia – is set to remain on Pay TV beyond 2016. An independent panel chaired by former Football Association chief David Davies, set up by the previous government, had advocated the restoration of home Test match cricket to the list of ‘crown jewel’ events.

Budget golf course unveiled

A new low cost golf course, which allows players to book tee times online without any membership fees, has launched in Guildford, Surrey.

The 18-hole Clandon Golf will operate purely on a ‘pay as you play’ basis and aims to attract players of all abilities.

It has no club house or other facilities normally associated with golf clubs and all bookings and payments are made online.

The venture is the brainchild of Guy Buckley, formerly of IMG and the Clubhaus Group. The course was built by Hampshire-based Kestrel Contractors, which will also maintain the course on behalf of the owner.

Table tennis scheme hits London

Ping-pong tables were lined up across the concourse of London’s St Pancras International station on 22 July to mark the launch of a month-long scheme to get more people playing the sport.

The English Table Tennis Association and the participatory arts group, Sing London, have teamed up to deliver the Sport England-funded scheme to provide ping-pong tables for free, impromptu use.

A programme of masterclasses, competitions and other activities are being planned, such as a ‘singles for singles’ dating event. Around half of the tables are set to be retained on a permanent basis.
Merlin reveals Blackpool Tower plans

Operator aims to develop new 'Eye' attraction overlooking historic seaside resort

By Pete Hayman

Attractions operator Merlin Entertainments has unveiled its plans for a major transformation of Blackpool Tower and Louis Tussauds waxworks.

Earlier this year, Blackpool Council completed the acquisition of the iconic tower, the Winter Gardens and the Golden Mile Centre in a bid to revitalise the Lancashire resort.

The council then appointed Merlin to operate the attractions on its behalf.

Three of Merlin's brands – Madame Tussauds, Dungeons and 'Eye' – will be arriving in Blackpool, with plans for the Blackpool Tower Dungeon due to be submitted on 9 August.

An Eye observation deck overlooking Blackpool promenade and seafront, including 4D pre-show, and a sympathetic restoration of the Grade I-listed structure are also proposed by the operator.

Elsewhere, a new Madame Tussauds attraction is earmarked to open in April 2011 and £200,000 has been invested in upgrading the resort's Sea Life attraction.

Blackpool Tower's existing venues will be retained.

Blackpool Council leader Peter Callow said: "Bringing the Tower into public ownership is already paying off."

Iain Hawkins, heading up Merlin's Blackpool operations, added: "A great deal has been achieved in just three months, but by the time we move in in November we will have much more detailed plans to show the people of Blackpool to encourage them to share our enthusiasm for this project."

New water ride for Thorpe Park

In line with its Medium Term Development Plan that was submitted earlier this month, Merlin Entertainments' Thorpe Park theme park has applied for full planning permission to install a new water ride.

Subject to approval being received from Runnymede Borough Council, the 64ft-high (19.5m) ride – to be built by Canada-based WhiteWater West – will be located in an area occupied by Octopus Garden.

With a theoretical capacity of 600 people per hour, the ride will be a family attraction where up to six people ride upwards in a raft via a conveyor belt to the top of the structure and then spiral downwards on a chute to ground level.

Chocolate attraction for Bristol?

By Tom Walker

A new visitor attraction based on the history of chocolate is being planned for Bristol.

Chocolate Harbour is poised to include a multi-media exhibition, a "chocolate emporium", an in-house chocolaterie and teaching school, as well as a restaurant.

The plans are the brainchild of entrepreneur and local event organiser Laurence Trackman, who describes himself as "a life-long devotee of the history and culture of chocolate".

To be located at Bordeaux Quay, Trackman said the £2.5m centre will be funded through private investment.

"We’re planning to open in the summer of 2011 to coincide with the launch of the spectacular £25m M Shed museum of Bristol," Trackman said.

"We are currently working very closely with Bristol City Council in all respects, which sees this project as one more achievement in bringing diversity to the city’s visitor attractions, and to the social life of its historic Harbourside."

Pioneer Museum to receive £2.3m upgrade

The Pioneer Museum in Rochdale – the birthplace of the Co-operative movement – is to receive a £2.3m makeover. The Co-operative Heritage Trust has been awarded £1.5m by the Heritage Lottery Fund to fund the development. The museum will be transformed, creating new facilities and learning spaces. Displays will be designed incorporating images and objects from the National Co-operative Archive and museum collections.

Edinburgh’s Camera Obscura attraction has reopened its doors after a £1.2m renovation project.

The attraction, located on the city’s famous Royal Mile, has extended 200sq m (2,153sq ft) into the upper two floors of the adjacent ‘Ragged School’ – a former 19th century home for destitute children – and new exhibits include the Vortex Tunnel of light and the Get Lost mirror maze. It also boasts an Ames Room, which creates giants and dwarves of those that enter it, was originally created by Adelbert Ames in the 1930s.

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It may be summertime, but this is as good a moment as any to consider the long-term demographic trends which suggest a distinctly autumnal outlook as far as the country’s population is concerned. In this regard, the government’s Office for National Statistics estimates that by 2033 nearly a quarter of the population will be aged over 65, compared with around 16 per cent now. So why is this of interest to us in the hospitality sector?

Traditionally, the sector does not have the best of reputations when it comes to employing older workers or encouraging its people to work into older age. Bars, pubs, restaurants and hotels will often be staffed by younger workers, and the sector can have a reputation for a physically demanding, high pressure, long-hours culture. At the same time, however, of all the challenges facing the industry in the future, the availability of skilled people will remain by far the greatest. Here in the UK, by 2017 it is predicted that more than 200,000 new jobs will be created within the hospitality sector. If one then adds on the replacement requirement for existing jobs, the figure becomes 1 million posts to fill. Developing a capable workforce must therefore remain the number one priority if the industry is to enjoy the benefits of the exciting growth predictions.

The irony is that hospitality does lend itself very well to older-age working. For example, the industry attracts many people who are self employed or are business owners, and therefore in control of how and when they retire. Secondly, the normally negative image of the sector’s long hours can also be made into an attractive proposition to a more flexible older worker. Long hours, and a frequently 24-hour operation in parts of the industry, provides an chance for older people to be employed at times which might be more difficult for others with family responsibilities for example.

In short, demographic changes will mean the sector will have little option but to embrace older workers and accept later-life working as the norm rather than the exception. To assist, organisations such as the educational charity The Life Academy, the Employers’ Forum on Age and the Third Age and Employment Network, offer useful resources, while the industry’s sector skills council, People 1st, can help employers when it comes to planning for and managing older workers.
Green light for Tate Britain proposals

Local authority approves extensive multi-million pound overhaul of London gallery

By Pete Hayman

Tate’s original London gallery is to benefit from revamped areas

The plinth’s current occupant

Mariele Neudecker; Hew Locke; Allora and Calzadilla; Elmgreen and Dragset; Brian Griffiths; and Katharina Fritsch are vying for the commission, which will take its place on the plinth from the end of 2011. London mayor Boris Johnson said: “It’s that time again, when the art world braces itself for a spurt of bold ideas for what is surely the premier public art spot in Britain.”

“This is the chance for today’s most exciting artists to create something in one of the most historic and traditional settings imaginable,” he added.

By Pete Hayman

Trafalgar Square’s Fourth Plinth shortlist unveiled

A number of artists have been shortlisted to produce the next commission for the Fourth Plinth in London’s Trafalgar Square, which is currently occupied by Yinka Shonibare’s Nelson’s Ship in a Bottle.

An exhibition is due to be held in the crypt of St Martin’s in the Fields from 19 August to showcase preliminary models and sketches from each of the proposals for the scheme.

Griffiths; and Katharina Fritsch are vying for the commission, which will take its place on the plinth from the end of 2011. London mayor Boris Johnson said: “It’s that time again, when the art world braces itself for a spurt of bold ideas for what is surely the premier public art spot in Britain.”

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IN BRIEF

Hornsey Town Hall scheme approved

Haringey Council has approved plans for the transformation of Hornsey Town Hall into a multi-million pound arts centre for Crouch End, London. The redevelopment of the Grade II*-listed building received the green light from the council’s planning committee on 12 July.

John McAslan and Partners is behind designs for the new-look Hornsey Town Hall, which will incorporate a new two-screen arthouse cinema, a flexible performance and music space and creative studios.

Finchley Youth Theatre reopens

Finchley Youth Theatre in north London – part of the Barnet Youth and Connexions Service – has officially reopened following the completion of a refurbishment scheme. The venue, which is open to young people across the London Borough of Barnet, now includes a new foyer, a box office reception and a drinks and seating area. Retractable seating has also been installed in order to allow the theatre space to be used for workshops and teaching.

Funding to promote Scottish island culture

An initiative devised by six local authorities in Scotland to promote island culture to mainland audiences has received £820,000 from the European Union. Scotland’s Islands aims to use contemporary and traditional music and art to engage with a wider audience as part of the project, due to launch in April 2011 and extending into spring 2012. The scheme, which will be co-ordinated by Western Isles Council – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, has received more than £1.8m from a range of sources.

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Cultural bodies in spending cuts appeal to government

Leaders of some of the country’s most prominent cultural institutions – spearheaded by Arts Council England – have appealed directly to Prime Minister David Cameron not to cause “irreparable damage” to what they refer to as its most economically successful sector in the imminent Spending Review.

They argued that, while the cultural sector is willing to play its part in the UK’s economic recovery with realistic cuts, the 25-40 per cent reductions proposed would be “catastrophic”.

The plans would add to the 3.5 per cent cuts proposed this year, as well as the sector’s £322m contribution to the 2012 Olympics.
One of the few things that the Labour government and the new coalition agreed on is that, as a nation, the British drink too much alcohol; that this causes anti-social behavior and that it is a burden on the health system. This view resulted in Labour introducing the Licensing Act 2003 and the new Mandatory Code of Practice for the sale of alcohol. While well intentioned, these requirements had a significant unintended impact on small businesses in the tourism sector. Businesses such as B&Bs, guesthouses and holiday park operators that wanted to provide small amounts of alcohol for customers went from paying £30 and filling in a simple form to suddenly paying a fee based on their rateable value (typically at around 10 times the previous amount) and having to fill in a much more complicated application. As a result, many just stopped selling alcohol.

Now the new government aims to continue where the Labour government left off. The Home Office has just released a consultation that includes a proposal that applicants for an alcohol license undertake an assessment of the impact that their selling of alcohol will have on the local community. It is time that the government implemented the recommendations of the Elton Review on Licensing and introduced a de minimus approach to licensing so that businesses selling small amounts of alcohol can go back to paying a small fee and filling in a simple registration form.

KURT JANSON is policy director of Tourism Alliance

It is time to listen to Elton

Government should look at existing licensing reviews

£16m to develop Welsh 'adventure tourism'

By Pete Hayman

Plans for the creation of four Welsh tourism centres, which will offer facilities for outdoor and adventure activities, have been handed a £16m funding boost. The Welsh Assembly Government has announced that funding will help create new centres of excellence.

North Wales Cycling Activity Tourism Centre of Excellence will receive more than £2.2m, which encompasses nine components and includes upgraded facilities at Coed Llandegla near Wrexham.

Mountain bike tourism is in line to benefit

TOURISM

Sport tourism prospers in the UK

Two million foreign visitors to Britain attended sports events during 2008

By Martin Nash

According to a new survey by national tourism agency VisitBritain, three million visitors to the UK in 2008 spent £2.3bn watching and playing sport.

The survey shows that nearly two million visitors watched sport in Britain in 2008, the most recent year for which full figures are available. They often did this at a venue such as Lord’s or Hampden Park, spending more than £1.3bn in the process.

Meanwhile 1.4 million visitors played amateur sport at more modest British locations, contributing another £1.3bn. Some both watched and played.

VisitBritain calculates that sporty foreign tourists accounted for about 14 per cent of all spending by visitors in 2008, with a sporting visitor spending far more – an average of £900 per trip – than ‘ordinary’ foreign tourists who typically spend £500.

Football is revealed to be the key attraction for foreign spectators. Around 1.2 million went to a match, of whom 267,000 were Irish, 95,000 Americans, 88,000 Germans, 86,000 Norwegians, 75,000 Spanish, 65,000 Italians, 55,000 Australians and 52,000 Dutch.

Venues such as Lord’s attract tourists

DCMS reveals UK’s world heritage candidates

Nearly 40 UK locations have applied for World Heritage Site status, according to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Tourism minister John Penrose has published a list of bids for the country’s Tentative List of the 38 sites looking to be included in the UK’s submission of candidates to UNESCO in 2011.

Among the sites bidding is the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter; Historic Lincoln; Merthyr Tydfil; Offa’s Dyke; and the Turks and Caicos Islands. Brunel’s Great Western Railway; Chatham Dockyard and its Defences; the Dover Strait; Jodrell Bank Observatory; the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads and the Lake District are also included.
In Brief

Work starts to improve Corby’s George Street

Corby Borough Council (CBC) has announced the start of work on a scheme to transform the town’s George Street, which will deliver improved pedestrian access with the leisure area. The local authority, together with Northamptonshire County Council, secured £3.3m towards the work through the North Northants Development Company and hopes the scheme will take up to nine months to complete.

Highways service provider MGWSP will carry out the work, which is designed to complement the Corby East Midlands International Pool and Corby Cube. CBC lead member for regeneration Jimmy Noble said: “The improvements to George Street are part of an overall masterplan and key project for Corby that links up and complements the brand new Corby Cube, Corby East Midlands International Pool, Willow Place and rail station.”

Council reveals £52m cost of leisure scheme

A £13.3m leisure complex in Wolverhampton, which opened in December 2006, is set to cost local taxpayers more than £52m by the time the council pays off the scheme. Wolverhampton Swimming and Fitness Centre, which includes a 140-station gym, a six-lane, 25m swimming pool, and a leisure pool, was built under a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and is located in Wednesfield. The scheme was led by Wolverhampton City Council in partnership with DC Leisure, which secured the contract to operate the venue for a 30-year period ending 31 October 2036.

London’s West End set for renovation

NWEC outlines new pedestrian-friendly measures to further boost area’s appeal

By Pete Hayman

London’s West End is set for a major transformation as part of efforts to attract an additional 50 million visitors a year by 2010, which have been unveiled by the New West End Company (NWEC).

The group, which represents 600 businesses on Regent Street, Oxford Street and Bond Street, set out six aims that are designed to develop the area as a leisure destination.

NWEC proposals include a major event to coincide with the capital’s Cultural Olympiad and the development of a visitor pavilion on Oxford Street ahead of the 2012 Games, as well as 20 public spaces to increase visitor “dwell time”.

One of the six priorities also incorporates plans to prioritise pedestrians using the streets, which is set to include the introduction of shopping hours, an increase in the number of diagonal crossings at major junctions and 50 per cent more space for pedestrians.

NWEC chair Dame Judith Mayhew Jonas said: “We have embarked on an ambitious redevelopment and rejuvenation of London’s West End over the past 10 years and today sit at a crucial crossroads.

“It is imperative that we sustain our current momentum going forward, not just in key public realm improvements but across the board in all our initiatives and lobbying.”

Scottish golf resort planned

A £100m golf resort is being planned for Royal Deeside in Aberdeenshire.

Plans involve expanding the Inchmarlo Golf Centre, which is already a four-star resort with two courses – one of which is championship standard.

According to The Press and Journal, the new resort proposals include a 75-bed hotel that would incorporate a leisure centre, a spa, a swimming pool and conferencing facilities. A new restaurant would link the golf club and the hotel.

£600k for Urban Village scheme

Coastal Housing Group’s (CHG) plans for a multi-million pound Urban Village development in the heart of Swansea have been handed a boost by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Welsh deputy minister for housing and regeneration Jocelyn Davies revealed that the Strategic Regeneration Area initiative will contribute £600,000 to help fund the project, which aims to revitalise the city’s High Street area.

The Urban Village project – designed by Mathias Holder Architects of Cardiff – incorporates a series of new courtyard spaces linking shops, food and drink outlets and offices.

CHG’s plans also form part of a wider bid to regenerate the High Street area, which includes the railway station and another development being led by Gwalia Housing Association.
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Expressions of interest by 30th August 10
The company is already looking to expand its services into the UK

**The Running School enters Ireland**

Franchise-based concept to teach ‘efficient running’

*By Tom Walker*

The Running School has opened its first franchise in Ireland, at the Sports Injuries Sports Medicine Clinic in Castlebar, County Mayo.

Founded by Mike Antoniades, The Running School is a franchise-based concept designed to teach anyone - from children to elite athletes - to run faster and more efficiently in the space of six hours.

The Sports Injuries Sports Medicine Centre - which offers a physio clinic, rehab room and performance centre (gym) - has an existing client base comprising both recreational and elite athletes. The Running School concept has been introduced not only to help improve performance and speed, but also to ensure that clients in the final stages of rehab are running efficiently before ramping up their training.

It will operate as a full franchise operation on-site, with members of staff being trained in all of the methodologies and protocols.

The Running School hopes to roll out further franchises in Ireland and the UK.

**Premier launches Power Clubs**

*By Tom Walker*

Premier Training International is to launch a new qualification for personal trainers at this year’s Leisure Industry Week (LIW) show in Birmingham.

Designed by Premier, the new Power Club course is based on methods first used in Persia and later adopted by the Indian military.

Power Club training first surfaced in the UK during the age of the British Empire, when soldiers learned and developed the method after being introduced to it on the sub-continent. Interest faltered before WWII but now Premier will be restoring it as a training modality for the industry.

The exercises are based around human movement patterns and will be marketed as dynamic group sessions.

Premier is hoping that the new method will establish itself among the top trends of 2011.

**Consultancy courses by Carlton**

*By Sarah Todd*

Training provider The Carlton Institute is to offer a new portfolio of consultancy services for owners and operators of spas.

The new team has a range of specialist areas of knowledge that can be tailored to fit a client’s specific needs. These include a treatment skills assessment which is an independent standards assessment of a facility or team with recommendations on how to improve where needed.

Other areas of expertise include how to grow customer bases and boost business skills including training courses for improving retail sales; benchmarking services; customer research and website audits.

**Social media workshops for spas**

*By Sarah Todd*

Marketing and training services provider Sleeping Lion has unveiled two new social media workshops for the spa and salon industry.

The first, called Building A Successful Online Media Strategy, is a one-day workshop that can also be tailored to a half-day course if required. The second, called Social Media Marketing In Six Weeks, takes place over one hour per day as an online course to help spas better connect directly with their customers and is run in association with online reputation management company Tiger Two.

Sleeping Lion was launched in 2005 by marketing professional Sarah Taylor. During Taylor’s career, she has worked with brands including Six Senses, Mandara Spa, The Savoy Group and The Caledonian Club.
Stewart Regan to head Scottish FA

Yorkshire County Cricket boss to take replace Gordon Smith as SFA chief executive

By Pete Hayman

Stewart Regan has stepped down as chief executive of Yorkshire County Cricket Club (YCCC) after accepting an offer to lead the Scottish Football Association (SFA).

The 46-year-old has been named SFA chief executive to replace Gordon Smith, who announced his departure from the national governing body in April after three years in the position. Regan is also former director of the Football League Championship and strategic planning director at Bass Brewers. During his time at YCCC, he oversaw a range of schemes, including the opening of the £21m Carnegie Pavilion.

SFA president George Peat said: “The role of requires a wide range of skills and a thick skin but we believe Stewart is the perfect candidate.”

Gala Coral to seek new chief executive

UK-based bingo hall and casino operator Gala Coral has announced that chief executive Dominic Harrison is set to step down to pursue "new career opportunities".

Executive chair Neil Goulden has been named interim chief executive while the company begins its search for a replacement, after Harrison confirmed plans to leave Gala Coral after six years. Harrison, who was appointed chief executive in October 2008, is set to remain with Gala Coral until 1 October to ensure a smooth transition.

PEOPLE SHORTS

- Bev Risman, a former dual-code international rugby player, has been unanimously voted to become the next president of the Rugby Football League (RFL). Risman, who played for the British and Irish Lions rugby union team in 1959 before captaining the Great Britain rugby league side in 1968, will represent the RFL in an ambassadorial role over the next 12 months.

- The Peak District National Park Authority has re-elected Narendra Bajaria CBE as its chair and revealed a number of new committee members. The authority’s new deputy chair is High Peak Borough Councillor Tony Favell and the committee will be made up by vice-chair of planning Trevor Bagshaw; chair of services, Christopher Pennell; and vice chair of services Gill Heath.

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Chronic Respiratory Disease Exercise Instructor Course

BLF bursaries are now available for the September 2010 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
- Management of chronic respiratory disease
- Responses to exercise and exercise prescription
- Managing breathlessness
- Referral pathways

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

- Level 3 or equivalent qualification as recognised by REPs
- A current valid first aid certificate
- Endorsement from a local pulmonary rehabilitation team
- 100 hours practical exercise instruction over the past year, with some experience of working with clients with COPD/respiratory disease
- Current CRB disclosure form

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: 0207 688 5618
w: www.lunguk.org
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Bexley and Dartford, London
Salary: Up to £40,000 plus benefits  Ref: AM/BEX

We have the opportunity for an innovative individual to lead our Bexley and Dartford Management teams by taking overall responsibility for the operation of four busy leisure facilities with a combined turnover in excess of £7m and a mix of indoor, outdoor, wet and dry leisure facilities. Bexley is a neighbouring borough to the Olympic Park heightening the importance of this exciting role ahead of the London 2012 Olympic Games.

We require a commercially astute, enthusiastic and self motivated Manager to lead these busy facilities, which have been subject to substantial investment and development over the past few years.

This key role will involve the management of all customer, health and safety, operational and commercial issues, whilst maintaining our ongoing excellent relations with the London Borough of Bexley Council and Dartford Borough Council and supporting their ambitions for improved leisure services. A proven track record in managing and developing sport and leisure facilities is essential.

**CENTRE MANAGER**
Southend Leisure Centre, Southend, Essex
Salary: Up to £32,000 plus benefits  Ref: CM/SOUT

The Leisure & Tennis Centre has been the flagship facility for the Southend contract for the past 12 years and has been identified as a Pre Games Training Camp for the 2012 Olympics. Southend-On-Sea Borough Council will complete a £13.5m investment in the centre by October 2010, which will see a 25-metre swimming and international pool added to the already extensive dry activities including a fitness suite, indoor and outdoor tennis courts and athletics track.

The successful candidate will be required to take overall responsibility for the effective management and operation of the Centre, ensuring that the standard of service is to the quality expected of such a prestigious facility, which will lead to increased usage, satisfy the expectations of the Council and develop commercial performance. You will have a demonstrable ability to work with International and National sporting organisations and athletes. This position is being dealt with by Parkwood Leisure.

Interviews for this position will be held on the 25th August 2010.

Successful candidates should have a recognised qualification in leisure management, sports development or related subject, preferably to NVQ3 or degree level and have extensive knowledge of the leisure industry. You will also possess excellent communication and customer liaison skills and be committed to exceeding customer expectations. You should be able to demonstrate that you are a dedicated and dynamic individual and capable of meeting the demands of the centres whilst creating an energetic, innovative and responsive multi disciplined team. A proven track record in the launch of a new facility or of developing participation in activities would be advantageous.

**APPLICATIONS**

**By: 19th August 2010**

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Assistant Operations Manager
Full Time 37 hours a week, shift rota basis including some weekends based in Oxted, Surrey. Salary circa £18,000 pa.

This job requires an individual who is customer and team focused with an understanding of the leisure industry and who has an aptitude for developing our services and facilities with an attention to detail whilst upholding high standards throughout.

You will be responsible for managing a team of Duty Officers overseeing the day to day operation of our busy centre, reporting to and deputising for the Technical & Operations Manager.

NPLQ qualification is essential. You will be required to undertake training in Sports & Recreation Management at NVQ level 3/4 as well as a Pool Plant Operators course. First Aid at Work qualification is preferred but training can be given. Recruitment is subject to a satisfactory enhanced CRB check.

Closing date: Sunday 29 August 2010, interviews commencing 1 September.

Swimming Instructor
Swimming Instructor required to teach at Tandridge Leisure Centre, Oxted; UKCC Level 2/ASA Level 2 qualification essential.

We are looking for an instructor who is enthusiastic and has a passion for teaching swimming to join our friendly teaching team on the following days: Monday 4-6pm; Tuesday 4-6.30pm; Thursday 4-6.30pm; Friday 4-6pm

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A sound knowledge of sports development principles and practices is essential, as is experience of sports development work within the education and/or local authority sectors. Applicants should be aware of the national initiatives promoted through the Youth Sport Trust and Sport England.

Good IT skills, experience of operating Microsoft Office, and the ability to communicate effectively in a variety of circumstances are all required. An appropriate Level 1 or 2 qualification in Sport & Recreation Management at NVQ level 3/4 as well as NPLQ qualification is essential. You will be required to undertake an enhanced CRB check.

Completed application forms should be returned to:
The Golf Foundation, The Spinning Wheel, High Street, Hoddesdon, Herts EN11 8BP

The Golf Foundation is an equal opportunities employer. Applications from women, the disabled and ethnic minorities who have relevant experience are encouraged as these groups are currently under-represented in the organisation. Alternative formats for this advert will be made available on request.

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If you are someone who is passionate about sport and relishes the opportunity to deliver many exciting sports programmes in and around Tavistock, can manage a small team of Sports Centre staff and can work in partnership with the Sports Centre Manager to ensure the Community element of the project is delivered, this is a great opportunity for you.

The post will provide a challenge for an experienced and committed professional who has been successfully involved in project and resource management, marketing, and promotion and has used good communication skills to develop excellent working relationships with others.

Due to the community element of the role, the post holder is required to work some weekends and evenings.

Tavistock College will be the direct employer for this post which is being funded by Sport England’s Community Investment Fund. The successful applicant will be required to undertake an enhanced CRB check.

Application packs and more information are available on the college website:

www.tavistockcollege.devon.sch.uk

Closing date for applications: 24 August 2010
Full Time Recreation Assistant
Company: Central YMCA
Salary: £16,749 per annum
Location: London, United Kingdom
Closing date: 13 Aug 2010

Health and Wellness Advisor
Company: Balfour Beatty
Salary: £23,000 - £32,000
Location: Nationwide, United Kingdom
Closing date: 13 Aug 2010

Leisure Assistant
Company: Oakhill Academy
Salary: Competitive salary + sales bonus
Location: Whalley, Ribble Valley, UK

Apprentice Duty Officer - 2 posts
Company: University of Stirling
Salary: £19,743 - £22,236 p.a
Location: Stirling, United Kingdom
Closing date: 16 Aug 2010

Assistant Operations Manager
Company: Tandridge Leisure Limited
Salary: circa £18,000 pa
Location: Oxted, United Kingdom
Closing date: 29 Aug 2010

Fitness Consultants - 3 posts (term-time only)
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Salary: £15,719 - £18,117 pa (pro rata)
Location: Liverpool, United Kingdom
Closing date: 18 Aug 2010

Team Leader
Company: University of Liverpool
Salary: £18,643 - £21,565 pa
Location: Liverpool, United Kingdom
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Part Time Recreation Assistant
Company: Central YMCA
Salary: £4,466 per annum
Location: London, United Kingdom
Closing date: 20 Aug 2010

Lifeguard / Instructor – cascades
Company: Tewkesbury Borough Council
Salary: £17,161
Location: Tewkesbury, United Kingdom
Closing date: 20 Aug 2010

Swimming Manager
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Location: Daventry, United Kingdom

Duty Manager
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Company: Focus Training
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Fitness Trainer/ Personal Trainer
Company: Roehampton Club
Salary: OTE £25k, plus benefits
Location: London, United Kingdom

School and Community Basketball/Multi Skills Coach
Company: Spalding High School Sports College
Salary: Circa £16,000
Location: Spalding, United Kingdom
Closing date: 27 Aug 2010

ASA Level 2 Swimming Teachers
Company: Swim School North East
Location: Newcastle / Durham / Whickham / Sunderland, United Kingdom

Head Therapist
Company: Corinthia
Salary: Competitive
Location: London, United Kingdom

Personal Trainers
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Salary: Potential salary of £20-£30k
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Closing date: 15 Sep 2010

Become an Advanced Youth Trainer
Company: SHOKK Limited
Location: Nationwide, United Kingdom
Closing date: 13 Oct 2010

Trainee Personal Trainer / Fitness Instructor
Company: The Training Room
Salary: £20K-£30K
Location: Nationwide, United Kingdom
Closing date: 01 Mar 2011

General Managers
Company: Park Resorts
Location: Nationwide, United Kingdom
Closing date: 13 Aug 2010

Caravan Sales Manager
Company: Park Resorts
Salary: OTE of £40-100K
Location: Nationwide, United Kingdom
Closing date: 13 Aug 2010

Retail Managers (Food and Beverage)
Company: Park Resorts
Location: Nationwide, United Kingdom
Closing date: 13 Aug 2010

Blue Lagoon Manager
Company: Bluestone National Park Resort
Salary: attractive plus benefits
Location: Pembrokeshire, United Kingdom
Closing date: 20 Aug 2010

General Managers
Company: Park Resorts
Location: Nationwide, United Kingdom
Closing date: 13 Aug 2010

Caravan Sales Manager
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Blue Lagoon Manager
Company: Bluestone National Park Resort
Salary: attractive plus benefits
Location: Pembrokeshire, United Kingdom
Closing date: 20 Aug 2010

Events Manager
Company: Daventry Active Ltd
Location: Daventry, United Kingdom

Beauty Therapist
Company: Berkeley Health Club and Spa
Location: London, United Kingdom

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The successful candidate will have sole responsibility for managing their department and the gym team, and will be required to work evenings and weekends when required as part of the shift rota.

Please email your CV and a covering letter to Adam Bodimeade, General Manager at: rivers@ibisclub.co.uk

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Green light for £4.5bn Wirral Waters development

Major regeneration scheme designed to transform Birkenhead’s former docks into new waterside destination

By Pete Hayman

Wirral Council has approved plans for a major £4.5bn regeneration scheme — Wirral Waters, which aims to turn Birkenhead Docks into a new waterside destination.

Manchester-based developer Peel Holdings is leading the project, which is one of the largest planning applications in the UK and covers 18 million sq ft (1.7 million sq m) of land on the banks of the River Mersey.

The landmark project will include a hotel and a cultural attraction

Boris Johnson launches London cycle hire scheme

By Tom Walker

London mayor Boris Johnson has unveiled the capital’s new Barclays Cycle Hire scheme, which forms part of wider plans to increase the number of Londoners taking up cycling.

More than 300 docking stations have been placed every 300m (984ft) apart across the city, with 5,000 bicycles for hire. More than 12,000 have already signed up as members.

The scheme, including Glenn Howells Architects, Broadway-Malyan, Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, Allford Hall Monaghan Morris and HKR.

Transport for London commissioner Peter Hendy said: “We expect this scheme to generate up to 40,000 new cycle journeys every day in London as the capital’s cycle revolution rolls on.

“Building on the experience of other world cities who have launched similar schemes, we and our operator, Serco, will use the first month of operation to see how, when and where our members use the scheme.”

CONTACTS BOOK

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