Welcome to the 500th Celebratory edition of Leisure Opportunities magazine

When the magazine launched in 1986, the leisure industry was just starting out and was showing the earliest signs of the potential that’s now being realised. The typical leisure offer usually consisted of a smattering of aging facilities – an old swimming pool with cubicles down the sides, a musty cinema where you queued in the rain, maybe a park with a swing and slide and the pub which would mainly be for men, rarely for women and never for children and families. Hotels were often of the Fawlty Towers variety and most restaurants were ghastly, formal places serving ‘traditional’ British food.

How things have changed – and we’ve enjoyed writing about every bit of it. We’ve covered everything from the groundbreaking ceremony for the first David Lloyd Leisure club, to the creation of Alton Towers, and from the launch of the first multiplex cinema to the opening of The Sanctuary Spa in Covent Garden, London. Other milestones have included the first Center Parcs, boutique hotel, and gastropub. All these played a part in the development of the individual markets that have grown to make up the industry.

There have been a few fads and failures over the years too – remember the indoor cricket league, family entertainment centres and Royal Britain, Britannia Park and Wonderworld?

Leisure Opportunities has had many different designs over the years, but our commitment has always been to news, jobs and training and our aim has been to bring you the latest and most comprehensive selection of all of them. As new technology has emerged, we’ve seized it enthusiastically, bringing you the first website in 1997, the first daily website in 1998 and the launch of the Leisure Opportunities e-zine in 1999. Most recently, the magazine has gone digital, with PDF and turning pages editions available in addition to printed copies. Leisure Opportunities is now read by more than 400,000 people every month in all these various formats, making it the busiest news service in the industry.

We’ve been fortunate to have had the most amazing support from the industry over the years and we’d like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to all the readers, contributors, advertisers, trade associations and organisations – we couldn’t have done it without you.

The Leisure Opportunities Team
Sportscotland recently launched a three-year pilot initiative to increase the number of women coaches at grassroots, national and Olympic level. Caroline Wilkinson finds out if it’s in fact a UK-wide shortage and what is being done to fill the gap in coaching?

SUE TIBBALS chief executive, Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation

Women are under-represented in the coaching workforce: between two-fifths and three-quarters of coaches are men, and just one in four working with elite athletes or on development programmes are women.

Coaching needs to be more inclusive so we welcome initiatives such as Sportscotland’s Women in Coaching, as it actively tries to redress the gender balance. We need to make coaching an attractive and real proposition for women and there are significant rewards at play. If we can establish more women within the coaching workforce others are likely to follow suit, inspired by the role models before them. Female coaches can have a big impact in increasing the long-term participation in sport by women; using their understanding of the audience they can better meet their needs.

For most women, physical activity isn’t about competition from the outset but this is often a key outcome for coached sport. Coaching also needs to deliver for those women who wish to participate but not compete in their chosen activity.

REBECCA GIBSON national women’s boxing development manager, Amateur Boxing Association of England

Women’s boxing has experienced a boom in participation from 50 registered boxers in 2005 to more than 550 in 2009. This growth creates new development needs for the sport. Boxing’s boom is too young to experience former professionals turned coaches and the sport is extremely short of female coaches. This impacts on the gender balance and limits the opportunities for clubs to be “female friendly”.

The recruitment, development and retention of female coaches is a priority for us, as identified in the National Women’s Boxing Development Strategy and Whole Sport Plan. The plan is designed to provide female-only boxing tutor and leaders courses as an introduction to coaching.

CLARE CONNOR head of England’s Women Cricket

At a recreational level, with more and more girls participating in the game in schools and clubs, it is imperative that there are female coaches in place to nurture the younger players and to act as positive, skilled role models for girls participating in the game. The number of girls taking part in the Cricket Foundation’s Chance to shine scheme increased by 49 per cent during 2008, that’s nearly 125,000 school-girls. Although the number of female coaches is gradually increasing, we can always do more.

New Creative Scotland body to cost £3.3m

By Pete Hayman

Scottish culture minister Michael Russell has revealed that the long-awaited establishment of Creative Scotland, the new national cultural development organisation, is expected to cost £3.3m.

Addressing the Scottish Parliament on 2 April, Russell revealed that the agency, which will support and develop Scotland’s creative industries, is set to be formally established in 2010 and will replace the Scottish Arts Council (SAC) and Scottish Screen.

The new body will support Scotland’s creative industries

The Scottish government is expected to meet the full cost of establishing Creative Scotland, which is being led by Ewan Brown and the board of

First Children’s Plan play sites unveiled

By Pete Hayman

Children’s secretary Ed Balls and children’s minister Delyth Morgan have announced that 500 new or refurbished play areas have opened across England as part of a £235m government initiative.

The new openings form a part of the government’s Children’s Plan, which was part of the first roll out of the investment in the Children’s Plan, have been made available to children and young people by 53 local authorities in time for the Easter holidays.

It is hoped that the government’s first ever national play strategy will see 3,500 new or revamped play areas opened in deprived communities across the country by 2011, along with 30 adventure playgrounds. A further 89 local authorities will be offered funding from April 2009 in addition to the 63 that have already signed up to the scheme, with top-tier councils receiving at least £1m.

Balls has called upon local authorities to consult with local children and parents to ensure that play sites are being established in locations favoured by the community in a bid to increase children’s access to the facilities.

Balls said: “We’ve spent a lot of time talking to children and young people to get their views. I want to ensure that their views are taken on board when new sites are being built.”
**Lifestyle Centre opens in Winsford**

The £10.8m facility has replaced an aged sports complex due to be demolished

By Helen Patenall

The £10.8m Lifestyle Centre in Winsford, Cheshire has opened to the public.

Sports facilities will include a 25m swimming pool and a learner pool, as well as a 48-station fitness suite equipped by Life Fitness with a free weights area.

Additional facilities will include two squash courts, a dance studio and a multi-purpose hall with tiered, foldaway seating to accommodate basketball, badminton, five-a-side football, plays and conferences.

A health suite will offer a sauna, steamroom and spa pool, while conference and event rooms will be complemented by a cyber cafe and a bar. Developer Morgan Ashurst will now demolish the aged Winsford Sports Complex standing on the same site as the new Lifestyle Centre in order to provide landscaped gardens.

“One of the marks of a great leisure centre is whether the space is flexible enough to meet the needs of the community,” said Ashurst’s contracts manager Colin Dobson.

“The multi-use hall fits that brief because it allows a wide range of people – from amateur dramatics clubs to basketball squads – to use the same space.”

Visitors can either join the centre or buy a monthly Passport to Leisure ticket.

The ticket will give members access to the swimming pool, spa, squash and gym facilities, as well as entry to all council-operated leisure facilities, including Moss Farm and Knights Grange.

**Independents to unite at LIW**

The UK’s largest ever gathering of independent operators will take place at this year’s Leisure Industry Week (LIW) at IODE 2009 (Independent Operators Union). LIW is working with Creative Fitness Marketing to host two days of free seminars specifically designed to help independent operators improve their business, save costs and boost their bottom line.

In addition to the seminars, there will be a free networking evening with food, drink and entertainment.

The programme, designed to help independent operators, is due to be launched at the LIW exhibition.
Tigers get go-ahead for £100m plans

Rugby club’s ambitious redevelopment plans include new stadium and four-star hotel

By Tom Walker

Leicester Tigers Rugby Football Club (LTRFC) has been granted conditional planning approval for the £100m redevelopment of the former Granby Halls and Fosse Day Centre sites.

The project, which was given the green light by Leicester City Council, will be situated on land adjacent to the club’s Welford Road stadium, and includes the construction of a new four-star hotel.

Plans also include new facilities for the University Hospitals of Leicester and the University of Leicester on the Granby Halls site, as well as a multi-storey car park and an office complex on the city’s historic Fosse site.

The 20,000-capacity stadium will open for the 2009-10 season.

By Peter Hayman

The University of Worcester (UW) has announced that it has acquired a 47-acre (19-hectare) site on the outskirts of the city, which it intends to transform into a new business, science and sports park.

An indoor sports complex and playing fields are included in the 10-year scheme, which will be situated at Grove Farm in St John’s, more than a mile from the university’s St John’s campus. Former landowner Tesco has retained part of the site, which has already been granted outline planning permission for the development of a business park, although the university now also wants to expand its sporting and scientific facilities.

The university plans to consult the local community in the coming months on its strategy for the long-term development of the site. The remaining land retained by Tesco could be developed into a park and ride facility, to be operated by Worcestershire County Council.

Work begins on Wales’ £1.1m national judo centre

Construction work has begun on the National Judo Dojo at the Welsh Institute of Sport in Cardiff. The £1.1m centre is expected to open in August 2009 and will include international competition-standard facilities as well as a sports science and medicine centre.

Ken Evans, contract manager at Jehu Project Services, the construction company building the centre, said: “It will be a national facility for both training and competition and, with the Olympics just three years away, it will attract elite athletes from across Britain.” Philip Carling, chair of the Sports Council for Wales, added: “These developments are part of a long term programme.”

CFC secures stadium land

Club hopes to move to new ground by 2010-11 season

By Pete Hayman

Chesterfield Football Club’s (CFC) plans to build a new £13m stadium at Whittingham Moor have moved forward after the club acquired 10 acres (4.05 hectares) of land from Wilson Bowden Developments. The new 10,500-seat stadium forms part of a wider regeneration scheme, which also includes a Tesco supermarket and a mixed-use retail and business development on the former Dema Glass industrial site.

Construction work on the new stadium is expected to take 50 weeks, and the club hopes to be able to move into its new stadium in time for the start of the 2010-11 season.

Basketball arena gets greenlight

The arena will be the third largest venue of the 2012 Games

By Pete Hayman

Designs for the new London 2012 basketball arena, which is to be the third largest venue on the Olympic Park site, have been approved by the Olympic Delivery Authority’s (ODA) planning committee.

Plans for the temporary 12,000-seat arena, which will host basketball and handball events during the Games, as well as wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby, will now be referred to the Government Office for London.

The venue, which will be reduced to a 10,000-seat facility for the Paralympic events, will be located on the former proposed site of the Fencing Hall in the north of the Olympic Park.

A design team including Sinclair Knight Merz, Wilkinson Eyre and KSS Design Group is behind the plans.

Lowestoft centre to undergo £6m revamp

By Pete Hayman

Waterlane Leisure Centre in Lowestoft is to benefit from a planned improvement of a £6m Waterlane College. The Lowestoft Journal reported that the work at Waterlane would include a 1,500m² extension, a gym, spa facilities and a new café. Work on the project is expected to begin in the autumn.

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New structure for disability cricket

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has announced that it will take over the strategic development and delivery of all disability cricket. Ian Martin, the ECB’s national disability manager, will now be responsible for managing all disability cricket following a deal between the board and each of the groups involved in delivering disability initiatives. The ECB has formed agreements with the British Association for Cricketers with Disabilities, the English Federation of Disability Sport, the Cricket Federation for People with Disabilities, Blind Cricket England and Wales and the England Cricket Association for the Deaf.

Playing field safeguards expanded

Sport England has announced that its measures to safeguard playing fields from “inappropriate developments” has been declared a success. New figures released by Sport England state that 1,257 out of 1,186 (97.5 per cent) concluded on the project is expected to begin in the autumn.

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A design team including Sinclair Knight Merz, Wilkinson Eyre and KSS Design Group is behind the plans.
EU bid fails to cap UK working week

Discussions about capping the working week at 48-hours reaches stalemate

By Caroline Wilkinson

Hospitality workers still have the right to work more than a 48-hour week after formal discussions in Brussels to scrap the opt-out clause failed to reach an agreement.

The negotiations between UK government officials and members of European Parliament were meant to determine if the working week would be capped at 48 hours. But the UK and other European countries stood firm against the European Parliament’s proposed new law.

The British Hospitality Association (BHA) is worried that failure to retain the opt-out clause in the European Working Time Directive could have detrimental effects.

“Hospitality workers still have the right to work more than a 48-hour week after formal discussions in Brussels to scrap the opt-out clause failed to reach an agreement. The negotiations between UK government officials and members of European Parliament were meant to determine if the working week would be capped at 48 hours. But the UK and other European countries stood firm against the European Parliament’s proposed new law. The British Hospitality Association (BHA) is worried that failure to retain the opt-out clause in the European Working Time Directive could have detrimental effects.”

£25m revamp for Radisson

The newly-renamed four-star Radisson Edwardian Bloomsbury Street Hotel has undergone a £25m transformation, with new interiors designed by in-house team Amit Singh and Michael Attenborough.

The 174-room hotel boasts a new seventh floor, and a new meeting room and events suite including the 300-capacity Folly room with technology and touch screen controls.

Bloomsbury’s literary past inspired the hotel’s new interior design, a two-storey area, which features a wall full of pages from Virginia Woolf’s Mrs Dalloway.

Two of the hotels will be built in partnership with supermarkets

By Tom Walker

Budget hotel operator Travelodge has agreed contracts to launch 12 new properties, adding another 1,443 rooms to its UK-based portfolio.

The £77m deal will see the operator open hotels in nine locations, including five new sites in London. The largest of the 12 properties will be a 230-room hotel in Cambridge and the smallest a 66-room hotel in Liverpool. The other sites are in Edinburgh (115 rooms), Egham (80), Epsom (85), Northampton (75), Rugby (72) and Salford Quays (145).

Two of the exchanges announced also continue Travelodge’s recent trend of working in partnership with supermarkets. The new Egham hotel will be built above a Waitrose while the Rugby property will be constructed on top of a Tesco.

New law threatens 45,000 jobs

The British Hospitality Association (BHA) has warned that 45,000 jobs could be at risk if the government decides to make wage top-ups using non-cash tips illegal.

Although the BHA does not oppose the changes in legislation, it believes the Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform has underestimated the impact.

“Even by BERR’s own calculations the cost to the hospitality industry could be as much as £43m annually. We believe it could be significantly more than this and nearer £450m,” explained a BHA spokesperson.

“At a time of recession, we do not believe that adding millions of pounds of extra cost is the right move.”

Stay-at-home holidays could benefit the sector

T he weak value of sterling against the euro is encouraging more people to be enthusiastic about rediscovering the fun that can be had in Britain, rather than planning exotic overseas adventures.

The past Easter weekend sparked a furious boom in bookings at self-catered and campsite holiday parks.

Financial worries, a weak pound and a rising trend for value-for-money domestic breaks has meant many families sat tight this Easter, preferring to holiday at home.

Advance bookings at the Caravan Club were up 40 per cent on last year’s figures – a demand that could translate into more than two million extra caravan holidays being taken in Britain this year, says the National Caravan Council (NCC).

Stephen Curragh, a partner at PwC in Belfast, said: “Given the experience of the past five months, the short-term future seems challenging”.

The 130-bedroom property include two city-view penthouse suites

The business launches as occupancy levels are falling

By Pete Hayman

A new design-led five-star hotel, operated by Hotel Partners, has opened in Belfast, Northern Ireland, following a £20m (21.7m euro) investment.

Fitwilliam Hotel Belfast, which is owned by businesswoman June Burgess and is situated on Great Victoria Street, is a 130-bedroom property featuring six studio suites and a two-bedroom penthouse overlooking the city.

Facilities at the hotel, which has been designed by London-based Project Orange, also include a bar, a restaurant, three conference rooms, an oak-panelled private dining room, a fitness suite and a business centre.

The hotel has been designed to exude glamour, however the opening comes in the wake of Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC) revealing that occupancy levels in Northern Ireland have decreased to 53.5 per cent, the lowest since 2002.

Caravan and camping holidays are changing fast. In the last decade, caravan holiday homes have evolved to be deemed serious competition in the accommodation market, boasting extensive leisure facilities, high levels of service and a family-oriented atmosphere.

More than £1.75bn was spent on UK caravan holidays in 2007.

The NCC predicts the rise in popularity could spell the creation of more than 1,900 new jobs in UK caravan parks.

In light of this, The Institute of Hospitality is rolling out of its Level 4 Diploma in Management for Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism, which has been integrated within a new Foundation Degree (F644) in Tourism Park Management, offered by Kingston University College. The four-year, part-time course is designed to validate and enhance the skills of those working in a modern park business. The programme is work-based, with taught components delivered in short residential blocks within Caravan Parks, to enhance the range of different experiences on offer to the learner.

Institute of Hospitality

Gary Appleyard is director of business development at the Institute of Hospitality.

Leisure Opportunities is a member benefit of the IOH
Camelot attraction to reopen in May

By Pete Rayman

Camelot Theme Park at Charnock Richard, Lancashire, is on course to reopen to the public on 23 May after it was acquired from administrators by the Carliole-based company The Story Group.

The park was left facing an uncertain future when it was placed into receivership in February, after previous owners Prime Resorts admitted that it had been struggling to compete for visitors.

Although The Story Group is looking to enter into negotiations with Chorley Borough Council in a bid to revive previous plans for a residential mixed-use development on the site, it has agreed to lease the park to Knights Leisure, a newly-formed group led by Roy Page, former chief executive of Prime Resorts, enabling Camelot to reopen this summer.

Page said: “Weeks of uncertainty have come to an end and, while I appreciate that the site’s long-term future is likely to include a mixed-use redevelopment, we are concentrating all our energy on preparing the park to open. “There’s already a real buzz about the place, which we are sure will regain its position as one of the region’s leading family visitor attractions. “We’ve got some exciting plans, which we’ll be sharing in due course.”

Les Ross, one of the joint receivers at Grant Thornton, added: “Securing the sale of Camelot Theme Park is a great result. The deal has secured more than 150 jobs at least for the short-term.”

The park was placed in receivership but will still open next month.

Cultural heritage cash slashed

By Helen Patenall

National museums and galleries reduced their acquisition budget by more than 70 per cent last year on account of the recession that was destabilising the art market.

According to new figures obtained under the Freedom of Information Act by the Conservative Party, spending on new artworks, artworks and pieces of cultural heritage by the national museums and galleries fell by more than £10m in 2007-08, to £4.3m.

The British Museum spent £1.7m in 2006-07 compared with £1m in 2008, while the National Portrait Gallery reduced its investments from £2m to £850,000.

The Conservatives have used this news to direct criticism at the government for failing to support cultural heritage.

Jeremy Hunt, shadow culture secretary, said: “The government urgently needs to look at ways to allow museums to build up endowments to prevent this decline in funds becoming a crisis.”

The budget has been cut by 70 per cent.

Results of pilot scheme revealed

The DCMS has revealed the results of a pilot programme that reviewed the self-assessment and the function of museums that could form the basis of peer reviews for directly sponsored museums in the UK.

The three pilots, carried out at the National Portrait Gallery, Natural History Museum and Tyne & Wear Museums, resulted in 26 recommendations from the DCMS. Funding bodies have been advised to develop good-practice guidelines for self-assessment, focusing on the excellence of the art and commitment to innovation. Others include more regular reviews to be managed by funding bodies.

Trust to take over Newcastle’s ‘Old Theatre Tyne’

By Tom Walker

The ownership of the Journal Tyne Theatre in Newcastle will be taken over by a trust set up to protect the building.

The freehold of the building will be handed over to the Tyne Theatre and Opera House Preservation Trust (TTT) by the Newcastle City Council as part of a three-year plan.

The change in the ownership of the Grade I-listed building aims to secure the future of the venue. The theatre will be operated – on behalf of the trust – by SMG, which also manages the city’s Metro Arena.

The £18m new build – designed by architects O’Connell & Tunnell – will be constructed at a new location in order to provide a theatre almost four times the size of the original 1968 site. Scheduled to open in 2011, the Lyric’s new home will comprise a 394-seat main auditorium, a 150-seat studio theatre, a rehearsal room, riverside foyers and a bar, dressing rooms, technical facilities and office space.

MLA South West unveils final grant

An organisation set up to promote the South West’s museums, galleries and archives awarded a final grant of £150,000 before it closed down last week to make way for a new integrated national and regional body.

The £150,000 grant to the New Expressions programme was the body’s last contribution following a shake-up of the MLA structure. New Expressions aims to create a fresh relationship between museums, artists and audiences, and support art exhibitions and installations across the region.

Read Leisure Opportunities online www.leisureopportunities.com/digital
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Belfast venue reopens after revamp

By Helen Patenall

The Ulster Hall, a historic 150-year-old cultural venue in Belfast, Northern Ireland, has reopened following an £8.5m refurbishment and extension, which has also been added at the rear of the building to provide dressing rooms, education suites and administration facilities. A moveable stage extension, while new sound, heating, lighting and air-conditioned systems have also been added.

Funding for the scheme was provided by the city council, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council of Ireland.

The redevelopment of the site included work in the Great Hall which has been restored and its history made wide restructure that it hopes will save up to £6.5m a year in administration costs.

Construction work will begin later this year and the centre is expected to open in 2011.

Work begins on Holburne development

Construction work has begun on the £13.6m redevelopment of Bath’s Holburne Museum of Art and is expected to take two years to complete. When it reopens, Holburne will house a collection of fine and decorative arts, and will be fully accessible for the first time. A new garden café will also be built.

The scheme has already received £10.6m of funding, comprising grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Lord and Lady Sainsbury’s Libnuty Trust and Bath and North East Somerset Council.

Marketing event for London attractions

Representatives from a number of London’s riverside tourist attractions have attended a marketing event to discuss ways to promote the area to visitors. The meeting at the London Bridge Experience in Southwark was designed to ensure each of the area’s venues were well positioned to take advantage of the predicted increase in visitor numbers from the UK and overseas this year. Topics discussed include the state of the tourism industry, marketing opportunities and advice on how to reach group markets.
The changing face of leisure

Leisure Opportunities was first published in 1986, catering for a demand for more frequent news coverage of an aspiring sector. Since then, the industry has rapidly evolved into a mature market, thanks largely to the talented and ambitious people who have chosen the sector to build their careers in. Tom Walker gathered together some of the industry’s most respected and experienced players and asked them how the sector has changed since the first Leisure Opportunities hit their desks 23 years ago.

Since its launch in 1986, Leisure Opportunities has provided people working in leisure with a source of up-to-date news. Browsing through those first issues, it quickly becomes clear just how dramatically the landscape of the leisure industry has transformed. Looking at the industry today, there is now a plethora of industry associations and a wide range of specialised training providers, consultancies, property companies and suppliers. Adding to the emergence of the most niche businesses imaginable, the industry has also experienced consolidation in all of its sectors and the largest companies within the sector now employ workforces that measure thousands of people.

“There have been considerable changes around ownership since Leisure Opportunities first appeared,” says Brigid Simmonds, chief executive of Business in Sport and online services for professionals working in the leisure industries. The company works in partnership with over 20 different trade bodies and holds over 100,000 key industry contacts.

Established in 1981, The Leisure Media Company publishes a wide range of business magazines and online services for professionals working in the leisure industries. The company works in partnership with over 20 different trade bodies and holds over 100,000 key industry contacts.

According to a report by Sport England, more people are taking part in organised sport than ever before of training and skills. “When I started my first teacher training course in the early 1980s, there were no qualifications,” she says. “A lot of dancers were teaching aerobic exercise and weren’t necessarily qualified in anatomy or physiology. It was a real mix of enthusiastic, unqualified instructors with big personalities. Since those days we’ve seen a dramatic increase in the level of skills, brought on by reputable training companies, government funding, modern apprenticeships, SkillsActive and of course the Registrar of Exercise Professionals (REPs).”

Attractive technologies

Another sector to have experienced a period of intense consolidation similar to that of the fitness sector is the visitor attractions market. The likes of Merlin Entertainments have grown to operate international portfolios of sites, while the traditional, family-run parks are increasingly a thing of the past. But its not just the emergence of large companies that has changed the way attractions are operated.

500th ISSUE SPECIAL

The Leisure Media timeline

1981 Leisure Media was founded and published its first magazine, Leisure Management.

1986 Leisure Opportunities was the second title to launch.

1995 Attractions Management and Health Club Management were launched.

1997 Leisure Opportunities went online with a flow of daily news in 1997, two years before the Guardian and The Times.

1997 Sports Management was first published.

What have been the most significant developments in the past 23 years? The public have become much more discerning and savvy about what experiences they buy and how they judge good value. Has there been a watershed moment that changed the industry? I think the arrival of the internet has probably had the most impact on the relationship between leisure operators and their customers. I’d like to say the foot & mouth crisis certainly brought home to government the importance of tourism to the UK economy but these days I wonder whether they’ve forgotten that.

Do you think the government offers enough support to the sector? Support to the sector? Certainly not, reducing bureaucracy, labour flexibility, and simpler planning laws would all be areas I feel government could improve.

What would your advice be for leisure businesses in these challenging times? In difficult times it’s vital to be focused on the basics. Managing cash, delivering value and customer satisfaction become even more vital. Try very hard to keep good staff.

How do you see the leisure industry developing in the next 10 years? I’m sure the internet still has a long way to go in offering new ways operators can engage with and attract customers. Technology will almost certainly offer new ways to enhance the customer experience.
The leisure industry has developed into a multi-faceted, mature market in recent years in the past 23 years. While the increased level of training provision available for fitness instructors and private trainers has played its part in transforming the health club sector, the visitor attractions market has also been altered dramatically by the technological revolution.

Colin Dawson, chair of the British Association of Leisure Parks, Piers and Attractions (BALPPA), says that while operators have benefited from advances in ride design, they have also seen a dramatic rise in what people expect to experience during a visit to a theme park. The technical innovation in areas such as coaster design has been quite extraordinary, says Dawson. “Interactivity, for instance, is such a significant development. You now have all these amazingly fast roller coasters, 4D cinemas and even rides that mix the traditional coaster experience with 3D visuals – just look at the Spider-Man ride at Universal Orlando. On the flip side, however, guests now see these new amazing rides as everyday occurrences and expect a park to provide a new spectacle ride every year.

**Peter Kay, Fusion**

**How has the leisure industry developed in the last 23 years?**

We’ve seen the rise of health and fitness, the emergence of mainstream health clubs and higher quality facilities in both the public and private sector.

**What have been the most significant developments in the past 23 years?**

The local authority contracting landscape has moved from the days of CCT to today’s Strategic Commissioning environment. The sector has developed from a mature, consolidated private sector and the explosion of Trusts. The sector will now, in turn, achieve a period of consolidation.

**Has there been a watershed moment that changed the industry?**

Obesity, driven by poor diet and sedentary lifestyles and coupled with a rising awareness of the need for regular physical activity has altered the perception of active leisure and changed sport and health and fitness from a marginal activity to a mainstream one. The key business development has been Direct Debit subscription memberships which has changed the face of the industry.

**Do you think the government offers enough support to the sector?**

There will be less consumerism and capital investment, but good value will be the watchword. Sustainability will also be a critical part of everyday life. There will be less consumerism and capital investment, but good value will be the watchword. Sustainability will also be a critical part of everyday life. The key issue is education. Children should be given daily opportunities to engage in physical activity and the leisure sector has a responsibility to provide a new spectacular ride every year.

**Nigel Talbot-Ponsonby, Humberts Leisure**

**How has the leisure industry developed in the last 23 years?**

The sector has grown in importance, become more diversified, sophisticated and age-friendly. The leisure industry has diversified, with new sectors, such as health and fitness and casual dining and there’s been a flight to quality.

Leisure has evolved from an accepted by institutional and other investors and has become sophisticated in terms of market valuation, funding and acquisition criteria. These factors, together with advances in technology have increased the pace of operating in the sector. This giant marketplace employs 10 per cent of Britain’s workforce and contributes £50bn to GDP. Leisure spend is now an accepted part of an individual’s annual budget.

**What have been the most significant developments in the past 23 years?**

“The leisure property industry is constantly reinventing itself. The single most important factor has been the increased awareness of leisure to society and the desire of investors to include leisure in their portfolio.

Today the leisure choices facing the leisure tourist are infinite – but downturns mean a serious reduction in spend. Thus Location, quality of offering and pricing rule.

**Has there been a watershed moment that changed the industry?**

The 1995 Beer Orders had a dramatic effect on the bowling industry by widening the bowling industry of vertical integration. The Royal and Ancient Golf Club’s Demand for Golf study in 1999 had a huge impact on our built environment, like so many things in life - is timing and that can only be achieved by having a thorough understanding of the sector.

And there is a cost involved in that.”

Dr. Terry Stevens, a consultant with more than 30 years’ experience in the industry, says another factor that has affected the leisure industry in the past decade is the blurring of boundaries between leisure and retail. “When does leisure become retail? when does retail become an experience, when does a retail experience replace attraction?”, he says. Stevens flags up high street shops which are represented not just as places to buy goods, but as exhibits of the brand. “Look at the Adidas shop on Oxford Street in London, or what you think is a shop and end up having a leisure experience – in the end you might not even buy anything because you’ve satisfied a different set of interests.”

**Missed opportunities?**

The introduction of the National Lottery in 1994 is another development that gets mentioned frequently when exploring the leisure and events and issues that have left their mark on leisure. Simmonds says that grants available from the Lottery have changed the environment around sport, leisure, heritage and charities forever. “Lottery funding has had a huge impact on our built environment, small clubs and charities, our national heritage and to sport and the arts,” she adds. No wonder – since 1994 the Heritage

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And a member benefit line

- Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions (ASVA)
- British Hospitality Association (BHA)
- EROTE conference (European leisure science organisations)
- MIPFA (The Retail, Catering and International Management Association)
- IMIAD (The Institute of Sport, Parks & Leisure)
- Sport And Play Contractors Association (SAPCA)
- World Waterpark Association (WWA)
- The Club Managers Association of Europe
- The Fitness Industry Association
- The Tourism Society
- REPS (The Register of Exercise Professionals)
- World Leisure
- SAPCA

Have the tourism earnings deficit been a massive increase in that number of a half opened during this period. This has coincided with the erosion of the traditional weekend, as Sunday sport and shopping act as alternatives to mainstream leisure. Families which used to be the majority of days out, have less time together, so the market has become more competitive. Day visit patterns have changed dramatically, as travel has become more costly and compact and day out travel distances have greatly reduced.

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Ken Robinson, CBE

How has the industry developed since 1986? As far as attractions are concerned, the major developments have been a massive increase in their number (almost half opened during this period). This has coincided with the erosion of the traditional weekend, as Sunday sport and shopping act as alternatives to mainstream leisure. Families which used to be the majority of days out, have less time together, so the market has become more competitive. Day visit patterns have changed dramatically, as travel has become more costly and compact and day out travel distances have greatly reduced.

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Do you think the government offers enough support to the sector? It has been a massive increase in the number of attractions in recent years, and there has been a significant increase in their numbers. As far as attractions are concerned, the major developments have been a massive increase in their number (almost half opened during this period). This has coincided with the erosion of the traditional weekend, as Sunday sport and shopping act as alternatives to mainstream leisure. Families which used to be the majority of days out, have less time together, so the market has become more competitive. Day visit patterns have changed dramatically, as travel has become more costly and compact and day out travel distances have greatly reduced.

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Two of the most recent plans, Parkview (above) and REO (below)
Coast benefits from heritage status

World Heritage Site status provides Jurassic Coast with unexpected rewards

By Pete Hayman

New research has revealed that since the Jurassic Coast was awarded World Heritage Site status in 2001 more social, economic and cultural benefits have been brought to the region than previously thought. Regeneration consultant, Era, conducted the study into the impact of the Jurassic Coast, which stretches for 95 miles (152.9km) along the south England coastline between Dorset and East Devon. According to the study, the creation of a distinctive identity has enabled the Jurassic Coast to increase learning, education and business opportunities involved in managing the Jurassic Coast. ‘Communities and businesses have grasped the opportunities offered by the World Heritage inscription. Even in the current economic climate, the study’s findings suggest that the coast has the potential to play an important part in developing the economies of Dorset and East Devon.’ The benefits far exceed expectations according to Hilary Cox, Dorset County Council’s cabinet member.

More people turning to life’s ‘simple pleasures’

By Pete Hayman

New figures released by the National Trust (NT) have suggested that the economic downturn could lead to more people seeking ‘simpler pleasures’ in their leisure times. A survey of 2,000 people conducted online by independent specialists OnePoll has revealed that 84 per cent of people consider days out at beauty spots to be more important this year as people look to find ways to make their money go further. The results showed that 64 per cent of people favoured walks in the park, while a third of respondents listed visits to galleries and historic gardens as being more popular than theme parks and sports events. It was also revealed that more people than ever consider the value of visiting beautiful places, including gardens and beauty spots, as important. Fiona Reynolds, NT director general, said: ‘We all need quality time to relax and recharge our batteries, whether in a recession or not. But it seems that having less money to spend on treating ourselves is focusing our minds on what really matters. “Getting away from it all and spending a day with family and friends in beautiful surround-ings is becoming essential to help ease away the stresses and strains.”

Green light for sports stadium in Newport

By Pete Hayman

Plans for the multi-million pound redevelopment of the Rodney Parade rugby stadium in Newport, South Wales, have been given the go-ahead by Newport City Council (NCC). A new 15,000-capacity stadium is at the heart of the three-stage scheme, which will be home to both Newport Gwent Dragons rugby team and Newport Rugby Football Club (NRFC). S&P Architects are behind the designs for the development.

Approval for Headingley pavilion

Ambitious £21m project to include Will Alsop-designed Test match venue

By Pete Hayman

Construction work is set to get underway on a new £21m pavilion at Headingley Carnegie Cricket Ground in Leeds after Yorkshire County Cricket Club (YCCC) and Leeds Metropolitan University (LMU) approved the scheme. BAM Construction has been appointed to build the new 4,000sq m (43,056sq ft) facility, which has been designed by architect Will Alsop to comply with the England and Wales Cricket Board’s (ECB) requirements for Test match venues. Plans for the new building, which will operate as a cricket pavilion during summer months and as a teaching facility at other times, include a media centre, upgraded player changing and treatment rooms and replacement spectator seating.

IN BRIEF

New national nature reserve for North Wales

The Countryside Commission for Wales (CCW) has announced that Maelgwn-Farell, a five-hectare (12.4-acre) site near Llandudno, has been designated as a national nature reserve. Much of the site, located on the Great Orme on the north coast of Wales, has been fenced by the CCW in order to allow mountain ponies and other livestock to graze, which in turn will encourage some of its rich plant life to flourish.

Perthshire visitor centre approved

Perth and Kinross Council has approved outline plans for a new visitor centre in Loch Tay, Perthshire. According to the Perthshire Advertiser, an initial application was rejected on the grounds that it contravened the council’s sustainable economic policies. A spokesperson said: ‘The centre will target a broad range of users, especially focussing on families, children and young people, who will engage in hands-on experiences that raise awareness and respect for the countryside and the environment.’

New Lake District attraction approved

The Lake District National Park has approved a new visitor attraction at Elterwater slate quarry. The attraction – which is estimated to increase visitors to the area by 20,000 – is based at a working quarry above the village of Elterwater and will feature underground tours. Bulging Slate, the owner, said it would upgrade the existing buildings, improve car parking and access to quarry viewpoints and run the tours. The visitor attraction is understood to be an ancillary element to the quarry’s operation.

Pragmatism is key to planning

AARON PEATE is an associate at Indigo Planning, a corporate member of the Leisure Property Forum (LPF).

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agmatism and flexibility in planning decisions are required now more than ever to get things moving in the recession, and this is as relevant to the sports and leisure industry as in other development sectors. Latest estimates suggest that around £75bn of development projects in the UK have stalled because of the current financial crisis.

Planning authorities need to offer help in these difficult times

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Management & Operation of a New Leisure Centre Birmingham City University

Birmingham City University is developing plans to deliver a new dry leisure centre at the University, the new facility is due for completion in November 2009. The University is seeking Expressions of Interest (EOI) from suitable leisure management contractors including existing NPDO’s and private sector operators to express an interest in managing and operating the new facility including the operation of its indoor Moon Lane facility. The Moon Lane facility consists of natural turf pitches, a floodlit all weather pitch, associated ancillary facilities and conference facilities.

It is envisaged that the Contract will be for a term of 10 years with a proposed date for the award of Contract in November/December 2009.

The University considers that the existing staff at the Moon Lane facility will transfer under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) regulations (TUPE) and that the Code on Workforce Matters apply. Potential Partners must complete a Pre Qualification Questionnaire and demonstrate a proven successful track record in a variety of areas including delivering innovative partnerships to be included on the Council’s select list.

Interested organisations can request an information pack and pre-qualification questionnaire from Colin White, Senior Consultant, Strategic Leisure, 3rd Floor, Rutherford House, Warrington Road, Cannock Chase District Council, Cannock, Staffs, WS11 1BG.

The closing date for the return of completed questionnaires is 12pm Friday 8th May 2009.

Potential Partners must complete a Pre Qualification Questionnaire and include their:
- Company name, address, contact name and registration number
- Company telephone and Fax number
- Company full Health & Safety Policy
- Details of two recent (within last 12 months) and similar projects undertaken by the company
- 2 company references

Completed questionnaires should be sent no later than 12 noon on Friday 24th April 2009 to: Sean Stewart, Leisure Contracts Manager, Parks, Sport & Leisure Department, Westminister City Council. Applications should be sent via e-mail to info@westministercouncil.gov.uk

SELECTION PROCESS: Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:
- Experience of similar projects
- Demonstration of a successful performance record
- Experience of key members of Contractor’s project team
- Health & Safety Policy
- Financial Assessment
- QA systems
- References

Organisations wishing to express an interest must do so by completing a Pre Qualification Questionnaire which can be obtained either by writing to the following address or by sending an email to sean.stewart@canuc.gov.uk

Completed questionnaires must be returned as a hard copy to arrive no later than 17:00 on Thursday 21st May 2009.

The Northern Ireland Forest Service invites expressions of interest for the provision of the Design, Supply & Installation Of a Play Area and Small Balls Area of a New Leisure Centre

The Northern Ireland Forest Service invites Expressions of Interest from suitably qualified and experienced Operators to register their interest in any potential commercial venture on land owned by the Forest Service in particular Forest Service is willing to consider innovative proposals with regard to:
- Car parks
- Lodge facilities
- Camping facilities;
- Upgrading, development, and management of the existing caravan and camping facilities
- Renewal Energy propositions eg windmills;
- Other commercial propositions to generate income from or within the existing estate;
- Further information on Forest Service can be found on forestservice.gov.uk

Interested Operators should register their interest by writing to the address below quoting reference number 263645DA:-

Department of Finance and Personnel, Central Procurement Directorate, Contracts Branch, Level 2, Clare House, 303 Airport Road West, BELFAST, BT3 6ED.

Fax Number: 028 90816555

Email: construct.info@dfpni.gov.uk

Further information regarding this project, please contact: Philip Field, TPS Consultants Limited

Telephone: 0207 7265268

To book your advertisement in the Leisure Opportunities Property Directory call +44 (0)1462 431385
UK losing its competitive edge

The nation is the only European country to drop out of the index's top 10

By Tom Walker

The UK has dropped out of the top 10 of the World Economic Forum’s (WEF) Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report, covers the tourism sector’s performance in 133 countries around the world. The index, which forms part of WEF’s annual Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report, covers the tourism sector’s performance in 133 countries around the world. The UK is the only European country to fall out of the top 10 after being ranked 11th. Last year, the UK’s tourism sector was considered the 6th most competitive.

A spokesperson for the WEF said: "The economic downturn forces a rethink on the UK’s travel and tourism policy by the government and the industry.

"Competition between destinations will heat up, as many customers are managing their travel budgets more tightly. "New climate change regulation initiatives — such as the emissions trading scheme — will put additional costs on destinations that under-invest in a sustainable and climate-neutral travel and tourism infrastructure. The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index uses a combination of data from publicly available sources, international travel and tourism institutions and experts.

Ryanair opposes new Irish travel tax plans

By Pete Hayman

Ryanair has called on the Irish government to scrap plans for a €10 (£9.17) travel tax after it was revealed that Dublin Airport suffered a 12 per cent decrease in passenger numbers during February.

Figures announced by the government-owned Dublin Airport Authority (DAA) showed that 1.4 million passengers travelled through the airport last month, a drop of 200,000 on the 2008 same period. The company has also called for a 30 per cent reduction in the DAA’s existing charges.

Horse riding to give a boost to Devon’s tourism

Devon County Council (DCC) has unveiled plans for new pilot schemes that will take advantage of the county’s equestrian tourism market to help attract more visitors to the region.

Recreational horse riding networks of full and half-day circular routes will be established to boost the development of associated rural businesses.

London is still the UK’s favourite city

By Caroline Wilkinson

Sport England’s £1.8m coaching scheme provided 7.5 million people with access to quality coaching during 2007-08. The coaching bursary scheme, delivered in partnership with the National Skills Academy for Sport and Active Leisure, SkillsActive and sports coach UK, provided people with the opportunity to take part in accredited coaching courses across 45 sports. It forms a part of Sport England’s target of getting one million people playing more sport.

So far the scheme has provided 3,900 bursaries, supporting 1,800 coaches to achieve further qualifications. Stephen Studd, SkillsActive Group CEO, said: “Coaches are the lifeblood of sport in this country and investment of this size will both support their development and continue to build a coaching infrastructure for the future.

"Quality coaching underpins many of Great Britain’s sporting ambitions – be in the top five sporting nations by 2012 and to raise participation at grassroots level.”
DISCOVER YOUR POTENTIAL... DISCOVER OUR PASSION

Training
...

from exercise professionals who meet the following entry requirements:

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:

- Endorsement from a local pulmonary rehabilitation team
- A current valid first aid certificate
- 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.

CHRONIC RESPIRATORY DISEASE EXERCISE INSTRUCTOR COURSE

BLF bursaries are now available for the May 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 3 on the Register of Exercise Professionals. It covers:

- Endorsement from a local pulmonary rehabilitation team
- Management of COPD
- 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.

Contact Sheneq Hackett on +44(0)1780 444695

For more details contact Top Lodge Leisure Ltd on: +44(0)1780 444667 / fax: +44(0)1780 444019

Shenagh or Paul@top-lodge.co.uk www.top-lodge.co.uk

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Everything you want to know about the visitor attractions market. From theme parks and museums to science centres, zoos and corporate brandlands
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ASSISTANT REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Salary: Circa £42,000 + Benefits
Based South Bristol

The South West Region has £18m of long-term sustainable successful business. Working with the Regional Director your responsibilities will include overseeing facilities from South Wales to West Berkshire. You will manage and motivate the staff of the business, develop your management skills, leading and applying structured reporting and accounting procedures. You will ensure safety and quality standards are maintained whilst looking to develop further our excellent client relationships.

Candidates should demonstrate the ambition and drive necessary to make a difference to our organisation. You will be passionate about exceeding customer expectations, developing leisure facilities for the local communities, knowledgeable about the leisure industry, and have a recognised, appropriate qualification. You will have ideally held a management position in either the private or public sector leisure industry and will have a strong commercial approach to business.

In return we will give you a rewarding role, with the ability to create your own career path, the opportunity to develop and motivate your own staff and make your own decisions, as well as taking responsibility and recognition for the success of excellent customer service.

London’s Most Successful Social Enterprise

GLL currently manage around 70 Leisure centres within the M25 area on behalf of our local authority and other partners. As a staff owned and controlled organisation we offer employment, training and career opportunities that far exceed the rest. We are a dynamic and innovative organisation with long term ambitions to be at the forefront of London’s Olympic preparation and legacy requirements and to be the operator of the Olympic Aquatic Centre. We are looking for people who are passionate about delivering Leisure provision of the highest quality. In return we can offer a comprehensive Management Development Programmes which will give you the opportunity to gain the necessary skills and experience to progress through our management structures.

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Up to £36,600* (London wide)

This is a key support role to our General Managers and includes full business responsibility for the efficient delivery of the service in a small to medium sized well and dry centre.

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Up to £31,860* (Reading, London wide)

The assistant manager role will work closely with the Centre Manager to provide the effective management of the facility, with an emphasis on either sales and brands or operations.

Centre Managers and Assistant Managers must have:

• At least 3 years proven & successful management experience within the Leisure Industry, including working within a large well & dry centre
• A commercial awareness and experience of leading and coaching teams to maximise revenue.
• A leisure related degree or professional equivalent and a full complement of statutory qualifications (NPLQ, First Aid at Work and Pool Plant Operators)
• includes 8% attendance related bonus subject to terms and qualifying period

Corporate Sales Consultant

Up to £35,000 (fixed term contract – extended if self-funding)

The role of Corporate Sales Consultant requires someone who is driven, enthusiastic and professional. You will be responsible for generating revenue through achieving corporate membership sales against challenging targets so you must possess the following.

• Previous supervisory/management experience in a sales environment
• Experience of operating direct debit membership schemes
• Experience in successful budget management

Excellent communication skills

Please download an application form from the GLL Website www.gll.org or email recruitment@gll.org or call 020 8317 5000 extension 4020

Closing Date for all returned applications: Thursday 30th April 2009

- includes 8% attendance related bonus subject to terms and qualifying period

Closing Date for all returned applications: Thursday 30th April 2009

- includes 8% attendance related bonus subject to terms and qualifying period
Gedling Borough Council

Leisure Services Department

Ref No: LC0208

Assistant Manager
Carlton Forum Leisure Centre
Band E: £19,998 - 21,350 per annum

Further details/application forms can be obtained under the "Further detail" link or by downloading from the website.

Closing date for completed applications is Wednesday 27th May 2009.

INTERESTED? Please call David Ashlee – Town Clerk
(01582 513000) for an informal discussion or (01582 890600) for an application pack.

Applications close on Tuesday 5th May 2009
Provisional long list interview date Thursday 14th May 2009
Provisional final interview date Wednesday 27th May 2009

Can you reach the gold standard?

Sports Development Manager
(Wideness Accessing)
£32,380 - £36,730 p.a.

Step into Sport Project Officer
£24,331 - £28,705 p.a.

This is an opportunity to work in an exciting winning sports service and make a real difference to sport in the county. It is an exciting time for sport in Nottinghamshire and for our team. We are seeking someone with the drive, flexibility and creativity to build the Step into Sport project which supports and rewards young volunteers. The successful candidate will have excellent organisational and interpersonal skills, project management experience, proven IT skills, experience of producing reports, project plans, and presentations, a proven track record of successful partnership working with sports agencies, including NGOs and will possess a sound knowledge of sports development and sports policy.

Ref: ESC/0874/S/C. Closing date 1 May 2009

Urgent recruitment opportunity

Sports Development Manager
(Investment and Resources)

In this newly created role, you will help to improve and influence the places where sport is played. With responsibility for our capital programme, you will also influence Building Schools for the Future and play a key role in producing a facilities strategy for the county. You will also oversee our revenue support to groups and individuals, including new funding programmes for our talented athletes. You will help us to spend money but also to attract it from government, lottery and the commercial sector and will have a proven record of generating revenue. You will also have expertise in facility planning, design and operation, in financial planning, and will have excellent organisational and interpersonal skills, project management experience, a proven track record of successful partnership working with sports agencies, including NGOs and will possess a sound knowledge of sports development and sports policy.

Ref: ESC/0869/S/C. Closing date 1 May 2009

An enhanced CRB check will be required for all above posts. You will need access to a car for business purposes, and a willingness to work some evenings and weekends.

Disabled applicants who meet the essential shortlisting requirements will be guaranteed an interview. Job scheme available.

Step into Sport Project Officer
£24,331 - £28,705 p.a.

Application forms and job description can be obtained from www.nottinghamshiresports.co.uk or from the Employment Services Centre via email jobs@nottnshires.gov.uk stating job title and reference number, your name, address and postcode. Alternatively, please tel. 0844 9800800 (Mon - Bmng Monday - Friday, Bmng - 12on Saturday).

Minicom available during office hours tel: 01623 434993.

The Council is committed to equality and diversity and will actively seek to ensure through its recruitment processes that it does not recruit people who are unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults.
Working towards a brighter future

www.northampton.gov.uk

NORTHAMPTON LEISURE SERVICES

Leisure Centre Managers x 3

Grade 502 £26,784 - £28,353 pa

Northampton Leisure Services manage three busy leisure facilities in a competitive market. Due to a restructuring and the continued success of our service we are looking for three individuals who can drive our business forward.

We require three positive individuals who can inspire a team, lead by example, are excellent communicators, can bring fresh ideas to our successful operation and have great customer service skills. The right candidates will be able to meet tough deadlines, adapt to a constantly changing environment, have strong people management skills and have a proven track record in Leisure Management.

The Centre Manager will be responsible for the daily management of one of the three centres, and will be responsible for the daily operational aspects of running a busy leisure centre. Northampton Leisure Services has achieved Quest, Charter Mark, IT, TASE and was an APSF finalist in 2008. We wish to continue and develop this success with the right candidates.

For more information and an informal chat about the positions please contact John Fletcher on 01604 873700

Closing date: 28 April 2009.

Interview date: TBC.

Apply online at www.northampton.gov.uk or telephone our recruitment line on 01604 873529 quoting the relevant reference number. Alternatively email us at recruitment@northampton.gov.uk working towards equality • new deal applicants welcome

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CLUB DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

27 hrs per week
£19,394 - £21,270 p.a (dependent upon experience & qualifications)

3 year fixed-term contract

Looking for a challenge? Committed to making a difference?

The Lifestyle Team works with a variety of organisations to co-ordinate and deliver services identified in the local Sports and Physical Activity Alliances Delivery Plan.

We are looking for an enthusiastic person with good communication skills and an understanding of Community Sports Club knowledge.

The position is to work across the Borough of Rosendal, the brief - to increase capacity in Voluntary Sports Clubs, to increase the number of qualified coaches and active volunteers working in sports clubs, to deliver the number of clubs satisfying Clubmark Accreditation as part of the Sports England Community Investment Fund Programme. You will identify opportunities for local school age leaders to link to a Club environment, identify and put in place Coaching Development Courses, and establish action plans with clubs to continue development opportunities.

You will be contracted to Rosendal Leisure Trust and based at your Head Office in Ferrersival.

A leisure qualification and/or at least two years’ experience of working within the leisure industry, and particular experience of working with schools, clubs and coaches is essential. In addition, knowledge of the Clubmark Accreditation Scheme or National Governing Body Awards is desirable. Experience of working with other Sports Organisations / agencies and issues with relation to child protection would be an advantage.

For an informal discussion, telephone Martin Kay on 01780 243219, after 20 April. Closing Date 5 May 2009

The post is subject to satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau check as an employer.
Berkshire Sport, 2-4 Darwin Close, Reading www.berkshiresport.com

Berkshire Sport, the County Sports Partnerships, is working to ‘make Berkshire an active and successful county’. It links elements of the sporting infrastructure including Local Authorities, LEAs and School Sport Partnerships, Futures/Higher Education Establishments, National Governing Bodies of Sport, Youth Sport Trust, Sport England and the community sports infrastructure.

From 1 April 2009 Berkshire Sport is entering a new and exciting time and it is looking for a:

**LEAD OFFICER (PROJECTS)**

£24,402 - £28,353 pa

Fixed-term until 31 March 2010, plus a further year subject to funding being available

Full-time, up to 37 hours per week – flexible arrangements available

REF: LAT0119

We require an innovative, inspirational and committed person who has excellent project management and communication skills, can work independently, in a team and strategically across a number of organisations in Berkshire.

You will play a key role delivering the Berkshire Sports and Step into Sport/Leadership academies. Both of these work areas link to the 5 hour sports participation offer and Sport England’s Grow, Sustain and Excel outcomes.

Working with a range of individuals and organisations including school sport partnerships, leisure facility provision, sports clubs, community groups, professionals and volunteers, your main duties will be to maximise the delivery of the service across Berkshire.

A record of achievements in project planning and sports development or equivalent field is desirable.

For more information, please contact David Simkins on 0118 376 6120.

Application forms can be downloaded or completed on-line at www.reading.gov.uk. Alternatively, email: recruitment@reading.gov.uk or call 0118 939 0039 (24 hour answering phone) quoting the relevant reference number and stating which position you are interested in.

**Fitness Instructor for gym in Bahrain**

Must have qualifications by American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)

Basic package is $2,000 per month, with accommodation.

2 year contract with annual leave. 21 days sick leave, 15 days per annum indemnity, free medical via government hospitals.

Apply with cv/photograph to Mr. Karim Mansouri, Managing Director, Karim Mansouri Group – karim@karimansouri.com P.O.Box 5185, Manama, Bahrain.

Hansel Sport, the County Sports Partnerships, is working to ‘make Berkshire an active and successful county’. It links elements of the sporting infrastructure including Local Authorities, LEAs and School Sport Partnerships, Futures/Higher Education Establishments, National Governing Bodies of Sport, Youth Sport Trust, Sport England and the community sports infrastructure.

From 1 April 2009 Hansel Sport is entering a new and exciting time and it is looking for a:

**Fitness Manager**

Salary: 13-14k basic + commission, realistic OTE £18-22k uncapped.

La Roche Health and Fitness is the premier Health Club in Maidenhead and are seeking a reps level 3, fitness instructor/ personal trainer to join our fitness centre. You will be ambitious, results driven, hard working and have a passion for fitness.

If you are interested in the position please send your cv to manager@larocheleisure.co.uk.

**Health and Fitness Instructor (€12k – €14k)**

**Next Issue:** 28 APRIL 2009

**BOOK YOUR NOON ON WEDNESDAY 22 APRIL**

**TO ADVERTISE, Contact the Leisure Opportunities team on:**

| t: (+44) 01462 431385 | e: leisureopportunities@leisuremedia.com | www.leisureopportunities.co.uk |
Marketing & Sales Manager

Finesse is an Industrial & Provident Society (IPS) responsible for managing a diverse portfolio of indoor and outdoor leisure facilities in Hertfordshire. We are looking to recruit a highly motivated person to lead, coordinate and deliver sales and marketing activity for the company.

Reporting to the Managing Director and with direct responsibility for the Membership Sales Team, you would be expected to ensure that sales targets are achieved and to provide guidance, advice and instruction to the Director of Operations and other members of his/her team in order to ensure that the Company’s other key income targets are met.

To do this effectively you will need excellent people and team building skills together with a proven ability to deliver outstanding customer care.

With the ability to create and innovate to maximise commercial opportunities your financial skills will enable you to create achievable business plans, while your ability to project manage will ensure delivery within schedule and budget.

To demonstrate all of the above we would expect you to have at least 3 years senior experience of sales management or marketing and proven success in a similar customer focused environment.

An information pack and application form can be downloaded from our website, www.finesseleisure.com or alternatively call the Recruitment Line on 01707 357299 or Email: m.ford@finesseleisure.com

If you would like to have an informal discussion with the Managing Director, Mike Barlow, regarding the position then please call 01707 357762.

Closing date: 12 noon on Thursday 10th April 2009. Interviews will be held on 14th and 15th May 2009.

Finesse is an Equal Opportunities Employer
The London aquarium, since being bought by Merlin in 2008, has undergone a refurbishment and rebranding.

By Caroline Wilkinson

The £5m revamp of the London Aquarium has been completed and the attraction rebranded under Merlin Entertainments Group’s SEA LIFE banner. The firm acquired the aquarium in May 2008.

Following a six-month transformation, the attraction situated by the River Thames features an underwater glass tunnel walkway and offers visitors the opportunity to feed stingrays, to watch diving displays and interact with touch pools and discovery zones.

Spread over three floors and 14 themed zones, the aquarium holds 500 different species.

General manager, Toby Forer, said: “The result is an immersive and exciting marine journey with coral caves, a Pacific shipwreck and a dive school. Our ultimate aim is to tell a serious eco story in an entertaining way.”

The aquarium also provides the UK with one of the leading centres for marine management, conservation, preservation and education.

The aquarium now holds more than 500 species 14 themed zones.

Creation of rooftop COMO spa at The Met on hold

By Sarah Todd

Development work has been postponed ‘until further notice’ on an expansive rooftop spa overlooking Hyde Park, which was to open at The Metropolitan hotel in London by the end of 2009.

A spokesperson said: “Given the current economic situation, The Metropolitan has postponed the building of the rooftop spa until further notice.

The project was to revisit the idea in the near future.”

The spa was to open by 2010 – the plan is to revisit the idea.

The project would have seen the addition of a whole new floor to the building, covering two levels.

The first level was to feature six treatment rooms, a glass-roofed reception, a relaxation area and a COMO Shambhala boutique and a presidential suite.

A mezzanine floor above, with a gym and yoga studio, was also planned as well as a whirlpool with room for up to 25 people. Details: metropoli-tan.como.bz

The spa was to open by 2010 – the plan is to revisit the idea in the near future.

Scheme to get kids outdoors

Natural England has launched its One Million Children Outdoors programme to expose young people to the natural environment.

New research by Natural England revealed less than 10 per cent of kids play outdoors and less than a quarter come into contact with nature on a weekly basis.