A new study by the Museums Association (MA) has revealed that one in five regional museums in the UK have been forced to downsize in the past year by closing a part of their museum to save on costs. According to the MA’s annual Cuts Survey, one in 10 museums are also expecting to introduce entrance charges to cover cuts in local authority funding. The MA says a similar number (11 per cent) are considering selling prized exhibits to raise much-needed cash to sustain their institutions.

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Pure Gym pondering £500m+ IPO

Pure Gym is preparing for a change of ownership, with a stock market float worth £500m or more the most likely outcome, Leisure Opportunities can confirm.

Having taken control of Pure Gym three years ago, US private equity firm CCMP Capital Advisors has hired the investment bank Rothschild to review options for cashing out on its investment.

With around 140 sites, Pure Gym is the UK’s largest gym chain and is currently in the process of converting the majority of the 42 clubs it bought from LA fitness last year for an estimated £70m. Pure Gym was recently named the 9th fastest growing private company in the UK, and is expected to open a further 35-40 sites (including the remaining LA fitness sites) during 2016. This rapid expansion has seen Pure Gym grow to double the size of nearest budget rival The Gym Group, which it nearly merged with 18 months ago. The Gym Group’s market value has increased to around £300m since its own IPO in November, and the market appetite for a directly comparable business would suggest that Pure Gym could receive a valuation in excess of £500m if it were to follow suit.

It is understood that a change of ownership is likely to take place in the next six to 18 months – be that through an IPO or a buyout by private investors – however current stock market turbulence and several other factors mean that a clear timeline for a deal is yet to be established.

Despite having experienced mixed fortunes in its previous brushes with the stock market, the health club sector has been attracting close attention from investors in recent months. Following The Gym Group’s successful IPO, fitness industry analyst Gareth Jones suggested that the float may embolden other operators – particularly those with private equity backing – to reevaluate the merits of going public.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=C8M4c_O

Alton Towers to unveil VR coaster

Alton Towers has confirmed plans to launch the UK’s first ever virtual reality rollercoaster, rebranding its Air ride as Galactica for the all-new space-themed VR experience.

Leisure Opportunities reported earlier this month that the theme park operator was likely adding the VR Coaster technology to its Air ride after it was revealed that Mack Rides and VR Coaster were working on nine new virtual reality rollercoasters, with the new technology due to be announced for a major attraction.

Alton Towers is leading the way for development of VR coasters worldwide in 2016, with Mack also telling Leisure Opportunities that it is working with several major IPs for branded VR ride experiences this year, which will be revealed in the coming months.

Alton Towers says that Galactica will be “the world’s first rollercoaster entirely customised for the full virtual reality experience.” Details: http://lei.sr?a=W3Y9j_O
Is rugby league London-bound?

London could play host to more rugby league games after Super League general manager Blake Solly earmarked three events a year for the south east.

Solly stressed there was a market in the capital and its surrounding regions for “big rugby league events,” despite the sport having its roots in the north of England.

Last year, Super League giants Wigan Warriors played against Catalan Dragons at Millwall’s New Den stadium in south-east London to a crowd of just over 8,000 – the biggest rugby league attendance in the capital for nine years – and Solly told BBC Radio Merseyside that the region would benefit from renewed focus.

“We’ve realised that we’ve got some great showpieces to take to London,” he said. “We know there’s a market in London and the south east for big rugby league events but we’ve got to serve them up.”

He said the Super League plans to take “three good rugby league events” to London and the south east every year for the next three years. “Next year we’ll have the Challenge Cup final and we’ll have a Four Nations game with England in it in London.”

The Challenge Cup, rugby league’s flagship domestic cup competition, is traditionally played at Wembley Stadium in north-west London. The 2015 Challenge Cup final between Leeds Rhinos and Hull Kingston Rovers attracted more than 80,000 fans.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=Y5g4J_O

Paralympic campaign calls for donations

The British Paralympic Association has launched its first major public-facing campaign in an attempt to raise funds for the 2016 Rio Paralympics.

Supercharge ParalympicsGB was unveiled to urge the British public to support the athletes competing in Brazil this summer with donations that would go towards their final preparations for the Games.

The BPA – the UK’s National Paralympic Committee which selects, enters and funds the Great Britain Paralympic team – generates finance through three streams: National Lottery money through UK Sport; sponsors and commercial partnerships; and charitable donations.

Paralympic sport is currently receiving £72.7m in National Lottery money from an overall UK Sport pot of £274.7m for the 2013-2017 Olympic Cycle.

Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson said the team needs “as much support and preparation as possible” and highlighted the importance of public support going into four Paralympic and Winter Paralympic events in long-haul destinations – Rio (2018), Pyeongchang (2018), Tokyo (2020) and Beijing (2022) – making it “more challenging and expensive” for disabled athletes.

Grey-Thompson is one of four ambassadors signed up to the initiative as well as broadcaster Clare Balding, comedian Eddie Izzard and Alex Brooker, the co-presenter of Channel 4’s The Last Leg.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=Q2m4Y_O

Jonnie Peacock features in the campaign video and imagery
EU football giants worth £5bn+

The top 20 richest clubs in Europe broke the £5bn mark for the first time for their combined revenues, with English Premier League teams accounting for almost half the list, according to a new report.

Real Madrid topped Deloitte’s Football Money League for the 11th consecutive year with revenues of £426.6m compared to the latter’s £395.2m – the first time all top three clubs passed the £377m mark. However, United was the highest placed of the nine Premier League clubs in the table.

“Despite the reduction in revenue year-on-year, the fact that Manchester United remains in the top three of the Money League demonstrates the underlying strength of the club’s business model,” said Deloitte’s Tim Bridge.

He added that with the club’s return to the Champions League this season “it would not be surprising” to see Manchester United top the league next year with “forecasting revenues of around £500m”. Manchester City was sixth with a turnover of £352.6m, followed by Arsenal (£331.3m), Chelsea (£319.5m) and Liverpool (£298.1m).

Details: http://lei.sr?a=g6W7F_O

This Girl Can inspires 2.8m women

As Sport England’s This Girl Can campaign celebrates its first birthday, the quango has released data revealing the initiative has contributed to increased physical activity for 2.8m women.

The first televised advert was broadcast on 12 January 2015, followed by an extensive billboard, cinema and online presence.

According to research compiled by analysts TNS BRMB, 1.6m women have started exercising as a result of campaign recognition, with a further 1.2m boosting their activity.

Commissioned by Sport England, the research quizzed a sample of 1,000 women aged 14-30 in November 2015 about the physical activity they do, their attitudes to exercise and their awareness of the campaign.

Sport England chief executive Jennie Price said she was “encouraged” by the figures which “back up the Active People results” published last month. The 2015 Active People Survey found that 148,700 more women were active for at least 30 minutes once per week, every week in the 12 months up to September 2015.

“They [the figures] show This Girl Can is not just being talked about, but is also changing behaviour,” added Price, noting more must still be done to close the participation gender gap.

The figures additionally revealed that This Girl Can films have been viewed 37m times on the campaign’s YouTube and Facebook channels, while 540,000 women and girls have joined the This Girl Can social media community.

More than 7,000 organisations have signed up to deliver activity sessions for women and girls as This Girl Can supporters, while retail giant Marks & Spencer launched two clothing ranges in June and October 2015, with a third out this month.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=D9J3f_O

EU football giants worth £5bn+

Real Madrid was the richest club in Europe for the 11th season in a row

This Girl Can inspires 2.8m women

The campaign featured a number of eye-catching slogans

Sue Campbell will help to drive development

Sue Campbell lands new women’s football FA role

EFDS consortium wins £4.5m Spirit of 2012 grant

A consortium led by the English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS) has bagged a £4.5m grant to get people more active across 18 locations in the UK.

The initiative, titled Get Out & Get Active, will benefit from the money provided by the charity Spirit of 2012, and will focus on increasing participation in “fun and inclusive” physical activity.

Funding will go towards increasing demand for, and accessibility of, existing local authority schemes, sports clubs and the voluntary sector. Barry Horne CEO of EFDS said the programme can “change how people can be encouraged to become more active”.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=e9j7C_O
**Nautilus snaps up supplier Octane Fitness for £78m**

Nautilus has acquired Octane Fitness from private equity firm North Castle Partners in a deal worth £78m.

Nautilus – which has a fitness brand portfolio comprising Nautilus, Bowflex, TreadClimber, Schwinn, Schwinn Fitness and Universal – has been seeking a strategic acquisition for more than 18 months.

Nautilus believes the takeover of Octane – known for its Zero Runner and XT-One cross trainer – will help it to accelerate growth by being able to extend into higher price point products, penetrate new channels of distribution and expand into new international markets.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=5d9d4_O

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**Fitness First sells founding site**

Fitness First has sold its Queen's Park health club in Bournemouth – the site on which the chain's 360-club global empire was founded.

The Queen's Park Fitness First site – launched in 1993 by Mike Ballfour – has been bought by leisure trust BH Live for an undisclosed amount. BH Live will now operate the centre independently under the new name BH Live Active, Queen’s Park.

The disposal of the founding site is a significant landmark in the transformation of Fitness First, at a time when the chain’s UK arm has been put up for sale by owner Oaktree Capital Management. The development deals another blow to the legacy of the health club sector’s ailing mid-market, which last year saw former heavyweight LA fitness taken over by Pure Gym.

Fitness First declined to comment on the financial aspects of the Queen’s Park deal, but confirmed the site was one of several regional clubs being offered to operators as part of Fitness First’s strategic shift upmarket towards premium clubs in metropolitan centres.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=S9J2n_O

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**David Lloyd in £350m property sale**

David Lloyd Leisure (DLL) has agreed a £350m deal with M&G Investments for the sale and leaseback of 44 UK health clubs.

Described by an M&G spokesperson as a “routine property transaction” for the firm, the sites acquired will be leased to DLL for 125 years on a full repairing and insuring basis with contracted annual reviews linked to inflation. The portfolio comprises 25 freehold and 19 long leasehold properties.

According to Kris McPhail, investment director of M&G Real Estate (which sourced the deal), sale and leaseback transactions in alternative property sectors such as leisure have been popular in recent years. He said the opportunity to unlock value from real estate assets is proving appealing to businesses, while investors are enticed by the preferential returns compared to traditional real estate sectors.

“Long lease property investments such as this provide attractive cash flows that are inflation protected and contracted over the long term,” added Ben Jones, manager of the M&G Secured Property Income Fund.

The deal gives DLL – which was acquired by private equity firm TDR Capital in 2013 for an estimated £750m – a significant amount of capital which could be used to boost the business. It is, however, unclear how the funds will be used, as DLL has declined to comment on the deal.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=q2t6G_O
Fitbit facing lawsuit over accuracy

Fitbit, the world’s biggest seller of wearable technology, is being sued in the US over claims that its heart rate monitors are inaccurate and place exercisers at risk.

The proposed nationwide class action lawsuit was filed this month by three plaintiffs who say their Fitbit wrist-worn devices – the ‘Surge’ and ‘Charge HR’ – do not accurately measure heart rate as advertised. The lawsuit claims the devices – which use Fitbit’s ‘PurePulse’ Tracker technology whereby LED lights reflect on the skin to detect changes in capillary blood volume – dangerously underestimate heart rates during workouts and place users at risk of overexerting themselves.

One of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit, Teresa Black, claims that in one instance, her personal trainer recorded her heart rate at 160 bpm, while her Fitbit read 82 bpm.

The lawsuit states: “Plaintiff Black was approaching the maximum recommended heart rate for her age, and if she had continued to rely on her inaccurate PurePulse Tracker, she may well have exceeded it, thereby jeopardizing her health and safety.” Fitbit has indicated that it will “vigorously defend the lawsuit” and said that its devices are intended to provide data to help users reach their fitness goals, rather than serve as scientific or medical devices.

The accuracy of fitness trackers is a contentious issue and there have been numerous pieces of research into trackers since the technology first came to prominence. One recent study by researchers at the University of Iowa looked at devices from eight leading fitness tracker brands and found Fitbit to be among the most accurate, second only to the BodyMedia FIT device. 

Details: http://lei.sr?a=6X6bs_O

Star Wars fever sparks lightsaber workout

With Star Wars smashing box office records by the minute, it was perhaps inevitable that the force would make its way from cinema screens to gym studios. JJ Abrams’ reboot of the franchise has boosted one of the more unlikely 2016 trends: lightsaber fitness classes.

The workouts, where fans practice their Jedi sparring skills, are popping up across the US and also in the UK, with participation rates soaring since the release of the film. The sessions combine cardio and bodyweight conditioning, using a variety of replica lightsabers to add an extra element of fun to fitness.

In Europe, Italian firm LudoSport has been producing ‘sporting lightsabers’ and instructor classes since 2006 and has plans to open many more academies across the continent.

There are currently four LudoSport academies in the UK – Bristol, London, Cheltenham and Cardiff – which teach the seven styles of the sport from the Star Wars world using flexible blades mounted on weighted hilts. “We’re not here pretending we’ve got special powers. It’s a great form of exercise and a good competitive sport,” LudoSport Bristol class leader Jordan Court told the Bristol Evening Post last year. “You don’t have to be into the films to enjoy the class. In fact I’ve had a few people come who’ve never seen Star Wars and they say afterwards ‘we should probably watch the films now’.”

With Disney set to release a new Star Wars film every year between now and 2020, it seems Star Wars workouts are likely to become more popular.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=J6u8V_O

Life Fitness owner buys rival Cybex for £138m

Brunswick Corporation announced last week (20 January) that it has acquired fitness supplier Cybex International for £138m, with Cybex to join its Life Fitness Division portfolio of brands.

The deal, which is subject to a working capital adjustment, sees the full line of Cybex cardiovascular and strength products join the Life Fitness stable. Brunswick president and COO Mark Schwabero said the acquisition would strengthen its stable of brands serving the commercial fitness market, enabling economies of scale, stronger presence in fast-growing segments and a wider international reach.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=3fjfy_O

Club Company planning a fitness facelift for new club

Country club and golf operator The Club Company has snapped up Wharton Park Golf and Country Club in Worcestershire, with plans to add a sizeable health and fitness facility as part of the undisclosed investment.

Having been named Health Club Operator of the Year at the 2015 Flame Awards, Club Company told Leisure Opportunities it’s planning to replicate the winning formula at Wharton Park, with further details of the proposition to be released “in due course.”

Situated on the edge of the historic, riverside town of Bewdley, surrounded by the Wyre Forest and Worcestershire countryside, Wharton Park features an 18-hole championship golf course considered to be one of the finest in the county.

Commenting on the deal, CEO of The Club Company Thierry Delsol said: “In time and with additional investment, Wharton Park will fit the Club Company model, offering golf and extensive health and fitness facilities to suit all the family.”

Details: http://lei.sr?a=h3P6U_O

Wharton Park is the firm’s latest acquisition

Leisure

HEALTH & FITNESS
SPA & WELLNESS

L’Oreal debuts stretchy, wearable UV monitor

At the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas this month, skincare brand L’Oreal debuted its My UV Patch, a stretchable skin sensor designed to monitor UV exposure and help consumers educate themselves about sun protection.

The patch will be introduced by L’Oreal’s dermatological skincare brand, La Roche-Posay, and is a transparent adhesive that stretches and sticks directly to any area of skin. Measuring one square inch in area and 50 micrometers thick – half the thickness of an average strand of hair – the patch contains photosensitive dyes that change colours when exposed to UV rays.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=k5U8M_O

Key muscle groups are targeted in the session

London spa offering male yoga workshops

Ushvani day spa in London is offering male yoga workshops to accompany a range of new treatments and products designed specifically for men.

Tailored specifically for the male physique, the workshops will differ from typical yoga with dynamic flows tailored to address fitness requirements and male-oriented tension, targeting the core and larger muscle groups.

Areas focused on will include hamstrings, calves, hip flexors, quadriceps, shoulders and pectorals. The workshop will also include Ushvani’s digestive tea upon arrival, as well as a 15-minute break with Imbibery juices and dried fruit.

Participants are also invited to extend their stay after the class with a Men’s Signature Facial or a Total Body Experience. Held in Ushvani’s Sentosa Studio and led by an expert yoga instructor, Joanne Gledhill, the workshops see dynamic flows tailored to address fitness requirements and male-oriented tension, targeting the core and larger muscle groups.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=E9V7a_O

Voya pop-up for Mandarin Oriental

Skincare brand Voya is set to host a pop-up spa at the Mandarin Oriental, London, from 1–12 February.

Guests will have a personalised consultation from a Voya therapist, and then will be able to sample Voya products through two treatments: a 45-minute Peppermint and Seaweed Sugar Glow body scrub and a 30-minute Ocean Fresh Facial, each priced £45.

In addition, guests who purchase two Voya products at retail will recoup the cost of the treatment.

“We are thrilled to be welcoming Voya for their first pop-up,” said Helena Field, director of The Spa at Mandarin Oriental London. “With a fantastic line of organic seaweed-based cosmetic products, Voya stands out as one of the best brands in the world and it is an honour to be hosting the brand at our award-winning spa.”

This is Voya’s first pop-up spa, inspired by consumer demand for more spa treatments and retail outlets in London. There aren’t currently plans for more pop-ups, but Voya will re-evaluate after the Mandarin Oriental London pop-up.

“We’re delighted to have partnered with one of the most esteemed hotel groups within the spa industry,” said Kira Walton, co-founder of Voya. “At the heart of Voya, we believe in high-quality and result-driven organic beauty, paired with a first-class spa service. Not only does this exceed client expectations, but it also ensures customer loyalty, perfectly complementing the philosophy of The Spa at Mandarin Oriental London.”

Details: http://lei.sr?a=w8c8z_O

Elemis opens Birmingham training centre

Skincare brand Elemis has opened the Birmingham Academy of Excellence in the Midlands city.

The training centre teaches technology, hands-on treatments, understanding the strengths of great actives and formulation, knowledge of consultation, client retention and closing of a sale – all tools necessary to run a profitable business.

“We are delighted to open the doors to your network of therapists to train them to the highest standard,” said Noella Gabriel, who is the managing director of Elemis.

“The heartbeat of Elemis has always been education. After 25 years, it’s incredibly important our delegates are brought into an environment that represents the journey of the Elemis brand to its fullest. To be immersed in that environment is key to enabling delegates to fall in love with the brand.”

Taking cues from the Elemis journey, brand pillars and The House of Elemis, the Elemis Academy of Excellence immerses trainees in the Elemis DNA and ensures attendees leave the training fully embracing their role as an Elemis ambassador, advocate and brand custodian with full accreditation, according to the company.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=H6q8q_O

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Details: http://lei.sr?a=H6q8q_O
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IN MEMORIAM

Geraldine Howard

a personal note

Geraldine Howard, co-founder of Aromatherapy Associates, died last week. Liz Terry pays tribute to an extraordinary woman

She turned every situation to a positive. Even her cancer treatment inspired the launch of a new oil, called Inner Strength, which she used as a fund-raiser for a new cancer protocol she had benefitted from

By Liz Terry, CEO of Leisure Media

Geraldine Howard was the best of us, she was a light spirit and a joyful soul who worked tirelessly to make the world a better place through her endeavours, gifts and energies.

She was hugely creative and compassionate and her first instinct was always for others. These gifts directed her life’s work, meaning she led her team at Aromatherapy Associates in building a business with great integrity which creates meaningful products people need and value.

She’s left a great legacy: a company which leads the field in innovation, standards and consistency; a list of loyal clients who view their relationship with Aromatherapy Associates as far more than just business; and a lifetime spent training others and passing on her knowledge, passion and enthusiasm for aromatherapy.

Geraldine was a businesswoman and understood that in order to spread the word about aromatherapy and make it a force for good, she had to build a successful company. However, her business-focus was driven by her ideology
and not by personal greed, so her many successes were all the more authentic as a result.

She got great satisfaction from seeing the enthusiasm for her products among her loyal customers, who use them as part of their personal wellbeing regime and from the fact that their lives are changed for the better by using the products she created.

It was also important to her that others were also able to lead happy, fulfilling lives with good employment prospects – be it within her own business or those of her clients – as a direct result of her work.

There’s a group of people in the spa industry, who can proudly say ‘I was trained in aromatherapy by Geraldine Howard’ and to feel it as a badge of excellence – they will carry on her work and are one of her greatest achievements.

She had a genius for aromatherapy which – when combined with her highly empathetic nature – enabled her to intuit the healing needs of others. It’s important we remember that this powerful gift was the bedrock of her life’s work.

On a personal level, for the many who counted Geraldine as a friend or mentor we’ve been very blessed to have her in our lives. She created positivity in so many ways and lit up the room with her smile.

She led by example and her grace under pressure in the face of the illness which took her from us far too soon, is a true inspiration in how to take what life dishes out and make the very best of it right to the end.

She turned every situation to a positive and even her cancer treatment inspired the launch of a new oil – called Inner Strength – which she created and used as a fund-raiser for a new cancer protocol she had benefitted from.

And even after drastic chemotherapy in 2015, she still found the strength to devise a treat for friends, colleagues and delegates at the Global Wellness Summit in Mexico City. Unable to attend due to her failing health, she mixed a special aromatherapy oil and sent it – along with a taper for every delegate – to enable everyone present to take a break and inhale the scent. She planned this with huge attention to detail and it was such a generous and thoughtful thing to do.

The purpose being to raise awareness of the need for hospitals to use essential oils in patient treatment regimes.

In an accompanying video, she explained to delegates how she had found great comfort through the use of oils while in hospital and wanted to pass this idea on to the wider world.

Later, delegates applauded when she was honoured via Skype with the Leading Woman in Wellness Award in the Global Wellness Awards. Geraldine’s legacy and gift to us is a set of powerful lessons: to make the most of every second of precious life, to put our heart and soul into our work and find joy in it, to give selflessly of ourselves, to keep fighting right to the end and never give up, to set the highest standards in everything we do and most importantly, to never lose our sense of humour.
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**HOTELS**

**Ted Baker founder designs Hilton interiors**

The Hilton Bournemouth has opened, featuring interiors by Ted Baker fashion brand founder Ray Kelvin and one of the UK's first eforea spas.

Classic design and quirky innovation are central to the hotel's aesthetic, with bespoke interiors and furnishings designed exclusively for Hilton Bournemouth by Kelvin throughout. The hotel was developed by privately-owned property company THAT Group – whose chair is also Kelvin – and which owns the hotel and neighbouring Hampton by Hilton Bournemouth.

Housed in a soaring glass structure, the 172-room property offers panoramic views to the coast and across the popular seaside town.

"With miles of beaches and bustling nightlife, Bournemouth was a natural fit for Hilton Hotels & Resorts to bring its brand of hospitality and continue its expansion in the UK," said Rob Palleschi, global head of full service brands, Hilton Worldwide. "This property incorporates cutting-edge design with all the Hilton touches our guests identify with.

Our collaboration with THAT Group and the opportunity to incorporate Ray Kelvin's design expertise has created a posh getaway for travellers to create memorable experiences."

Local craftsmanship and design influences are visible around the hotel, including specially curated items celebrating the best of British design. Artworks include a collection of local Poole Pottery – one of the largest on public display – and Colin Moore's mural of Poole Harbour, which hangs in reception.

Details: [http://lei.sr7a=H6T3N_O](http://lei.sr7a=H6T3N_O)

**Mangas named CEO of Starwood**

Starwood Hotels & Resorts has named Thomas B. Mangas chief executive officer, effective 31 December, following the resignation of Adam Aron, who is leaving the company to become CEO and president of AMC Entertainment Holdings.

Mangas was previously executive vice president and chief financial officer – a post he held since September 2014 – and was responsible for the global accounting, tax, treasury, strategic planning, corporate development, risk management, investor relations and supply chain functions. Prior to joining Starwood, he served as executive vice president and chief executive officer of Armstrong Floor Products.

Alan M. Schnaid, currently Starwood's senior vice president, corporate controller and principal accounting officer, will be appointed chief financial officer. Robyn Arnell, currently VP, finance and accounting services, will assume the role of corporate controller.

Starwood said it continues to expect its previously announced acquisition by Marriott International to close by mid-year 2016.

"On behalf of Starwood's board of directors, I would like to thank Adam for stepping in to lead our company during a pivotal time in Starwood's history," said Bruce W. Duncan, chair of the board. "He accomplished much during his tenure as CEO, and contributed in countless ways as a member of our board for nearly a decade. He leaves this company in excellent hands with Tom, a valued leader on our team who was instrumental in our review of our strategic initiatives."

Details: [http://lei.sr7a=S3y6t_O](http://lei.sr7a=S3y6t_O)

**Sugar tax proposals appear muddled**

Sugar tax proposals have a well-funded and professionally-run way to achieve this is for each hospital to lose further income. The expected proceeds of £20m–£40m a year would be used to improve the health of the NHS's own 1.3m workers.

Simon Stevens, the head of NHS England, pledged to introduce a sugar tax across hospitals. The expected proceeds of £20m–£40m a year would be used to improve the health of the NHS's own 1.3m workers.

This proposal seems to pull in opposite directions by seeking to reduce sugar consumption (as part of the fight against obesity) but also raise revenue. If the goal is to discourage the public from consuming sugary drinks and snacks, why not ban them completely from hospitals, as they are outlawed from state schools? Alternatively, why impose a tax just in hospital retail outlets and not across the entire country?

The proposal also ignores the fact many hospital caterers make extra income from vending sales which subsidise the patient meal service. Hospital caterers are already under great financial pressures and the last thing they need is to lose further income.

Combating obesity is a complex issue, but offering tasty and nutritious meals and snacks for NHS staff, visitors and patients should be central to the cause. The best way to achieve this is for each hospital to have a well-funded and professionally-run catering operation that serves everybody.
Oculus Rift commercial release date announced

Oculus Rift developer, Oculus VR, has made the consumer version of the virtual reality technology available to pre-order for a commercial release in March.

The device went on general sale for pre-order from 6 January at 4PM GMT. The company also says it is giving away a free finished version of the technology to anyone who pledged enough for a developer kit on the initial Kickstarter campaign.

VR is about to take a big step into the mainstream, with not only the Rift, but also the newly-announced HTC Vive, Playstation VR and Microsoft Hololens all preparing for commercial launches.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=U4N7W_O

Flying Scotsman to ride again after £4.2m refurb

The Flying Scotsman – one of the world’s most famous locomotives – is getting ready to return to the rails after more than a decade of inactivity.

The engine, which retired from full-time service in 1963, has undergone a restoration for the National Railway Museum in York, UK, at a cost of £4.2m.

Following low-speed tests to be run along the East Lancashire Railway, the Scotsman rode the rails of the heritage line on the weekends of 9-10 January and 16-17 January in a dedicated steam preview event. On 23 January the train was due to conduct a mainline test, travelling from Manchester to Carlisle.

The Scotsman gained worldwide fame after its debut at the 1924 British Empire Exhibition in London. In 1928, the train was set to close permanently on 11 January but the Safari Zoo Nature Foundation – a charity run by the zoo – will be given the animal park, according to park management. "It is a challenging site with a strong identity and a robust setting," said zoo boss David Gill has retired from all its new facilities that will be under construction in the coming months for Easter.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=c3H3a_O

Museum of London seeks designer

The Museum of London has officially started its search for an architect to design its proposed new home inside a vacant Victorian market.

Design competition organiser Malcolm Reading Consultants has been appointed to lead the search. A two-stage contest will begin in February 2016. A panel will be selected to create a shortlist and the winning architect will be announced in Q2 2016.

The museum and the City of London Corporation – which has bought the leasehold for the new site in central London’s West Smithfield locality – are aiming to receive planning permission, raise the necessary capital funds and deliver the new museum by 2021.

The new facility will be located within a 25,000sq m (269,000sq ft) market complex comprising several 19th Century buildings, including a general market and a fish market.

"It’s a challenging site with a strong identity and a robust setting,” said competition organiser Malcolm Reading. “The museum’s ambition to create a dynamic cultural destination here is inspirational. This is a project which will intrigue the global design community.”

Sharon Ament, director of the Museum of London, pledged to identify “a world-class, outstanding and inspiring architect who will deliver a design which combines stunning modern vision for a new museum with West Smithfield’s sensitive heritage.”

Details: http://lei.sr?a=G3U5W_O

U-turn sees charity take over zoo

A zoo in Cumbria that looked set to close this month after a dispute with the local council has now revealed alternative plans to hand the attraction’s assets over to a charitable organisation.

Barrow Borough Council raised several concerns about South Lakes Safari Zoo in Dalton last month, issuing an order on 17 December to prove within 28 days that walkways were safe. The zoo responded in a statement, saying they felt “harassed” to the point that they were unable to continue under such conditions.

The zoo was set to close down permanently on 11 January but the Safari Zoo Nature Foundation – a charity run by the zoo – will be given the animal park, according to park management. "In a move planned over two years ago, the Safari Zoo Nature Foundation will operate the zoo in 2016 and onwards,” said a statement.

"We hope that 2016 will bring increased funds and awareness to all our overseas projects that are the focus of the zoo’s very existence.

“It is hoped that the zoo can open all its new facilities that will be under construction in the coming months for Easter.”

The statement also said that even though zoo boss David Gill has retired from the zoo, he will be the project leader of the overseas programmes for the charity. The zoo closed for a short time on 11 January, with plans to reopen around Easter.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=G3U5W_O
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Stokes to helm £40m England fund

Andrew Stokes, the former CEO of Marketing Manchester, has been named interim director, England by the British Tourist Authority (BTA).

Stokes is tasked with overseeing implementation of the £40m ‘Discover England Fund’ announced in chancellor George Osborne’s Comprehensive Spending Review.

His appointment comes amid the controversial decision by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to go against expert recommendations to split VisitEngland and VisitBritain, choosing instead to bring them closer together under the responsibility of the BTA. The move has been widely criticised by tourism industry bosses, with the Tourism Alliance telling Leisure Opportunities (see left) that it risks harming domestic tourism in England.

BTA chief executive Sally Balcombe confirmed that the organisation’s priorities, as directed by government, are to market the nations and regions of Britain overseas to drive international leisure and business tourism.

In his role as director, England, Stokes will lead on the development and delivery of the £40m ‘Discover England Fund.’ The BTA said the fund is specifically for England tourism product development to ensure that ‘bookable’ regional product is being sold in international markets. Despite industry concerns that the BTA is turning away from the promotion of tourism domestically, the organisation says domestic tourism will also benefit from the new international focus, as money will be spent on “developing a product that will be attractive to domestic as well as international markets.”

Details: http://lei.sr/a=7w6U6_O

Star Wars boost for Irish tourism

Ireland’s tourism body is hoping for a boost off the back of the phenomenal success of Star Wars: The Force Awakens, as fans of the franchise begin to flock to the island of Skellig Michael, which played a key role in the blockbuster film.

Skellig Michael – which appeared in a key scene at the end of the first instalment of the new trilogy and will be featured in the second release – has been receiving more attention in recent weeks following the film’s release. Tourism officials for Ireland are hoping to capitalise on the boom in popularity, turning the UNESCO World Heritage Site into a Star Wars hotspot.

Tourism Ireland has teamed up with Lucasfilm, releasing a promo video with the crew and director J Abrams, discussing why the location was selected. The video has so far attracted more than 800,000 hits.

In addition to the video, Tourism Ireland has created a dedicated website for Star Wars fans, as Northern Ireland did for Game of Thrones with great success, pin-pointing where filming locations were and how to reach them with ease.

The decision to allow filming to take place on Skellig Michael generated some controversy in 2014, with concerns raised over potential damage. However, a report found that filming on the island had “no adverse impact on seabirds, their habitats or other biodiversity.”

“Star Wars: The Force Awakens has been breaking records around the world, bringing the magnificent scenery of Skellig Michael and the Wild Atlantic Way to the attention of millions,” said Niall Gibbons, CEO of Tourism Ireland.

Details: http://lei.sr/a=q4s2J_O

Skellig Michael is at the heart of Ireland’s tourism push
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Preliminary Market Consultation
Cobtree Manor Park Golf Course & Leisure Hub opportunity

Maidstone Borough Council, in association with the Cobtree Manor Estate Trust, wishes to undertake preliminary market consultations with suitably experienced operators prior to issuing a call for competition to manage the Cobtree Manor Park Golf Course. The contract will include the opportunity to invest in a new commercial leisure and hospitality activities hub on the site, centred on a possible new or refurbished club complex (subject to planning approval).

The Course offers a fine opportunity for an experienced golf/leisure operator to develop the business in the vibrant commercial centre of Kent and the county town of Maidstone with great potential for growth of associated new on-site leisure investments.

Cobtree Manor Park Golf Course is a successful and well regarded 18 hole public pay and play golf course with a clubhouse, green keepers, and out buildings. The Trust has benefited from a regular income stream and wishes to see a continuation of income from its land and it may also be prepared to make capital available to invest in future development in partnership with an operator, linked to an ongoing commercial return.

The Council and the Trust wish to attract a wider range of users in the future, and will support innovative proposals to increasing the offer. These could be based on the core golf offer with the opportunity to attract new ancillary commercial leisure or amenity uses, while avoiding duplicating the current leisure provision in the area.

The Council welcomes written outline proposals with indicative financial models from interested companies on the best way to achieve its requirements and how these could effectively be delivered whilst gaining an insight into the market’s potential and capabilities.

For further information and how to register an interest please go to the Kent Business Portal: https://www.kentbusinessportal.org.uk/procontract/portal.nsf/vLiveDocs/SD-DEVV-6UGE9Y?

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Gallery Refreshment Project Manager
Titanic Belfast, the largest Titanic themed, 5 star visitor attraction in the world is looking to Commission a company or individual Project Manager to deliver the next phase of their Gallery Refreshment programme which is scheduled for completion February 2017.

- This will be a 12 month contract.
- The refreshment will be implemented in two stages.
- Development Stage (March 2016 – July 2016)
- Delivery Stage (July 2016 – February 2017)
- There will be a review period at the end of the development phase

Contact: Heather Graham for project brief heathergraham@titanicbelfast.com
Submission Deadline: 4pm, Friday 5th Feb 2016
**TRAINING**

**Quest, CIMSPA stage joint event**

Leisure professionals planning to attend this year’s Quest and CIMSPA annual conferences will be able to save themselves a trip, after the bodies announced the meetings would be combined into a two-day event.

Quest, the quality scheme for sport and leisure, has held its annual conference with sister initiative the National Benchmarking Service (NBS) since 2010. This year, for the first time, the event will run side by side with CIMSPA’s annual conference as part of a programme which also contains an evening reception and networking event.

The Quest NBS Conference will take place on Wednesday 10 February 2016 at Holywell Park, Loughborough, with the CIMSPA Conference taking place at the same venue the next day.

Delegates can choose to sign up for one or both days and/or the evening reception. The first day is open to anyone interested in Quest and NBS, whether they are already in the scheme, just signed up or are simply considering it. The second day is open to anyone with an interest in CIMSPA's work.

Caroline Constantine, Quest operations director, said: “CIMSPA and Right Directions, which manages Quest and NBS on behalf of Sport England, have enjoyed a unique corporate partnership since April 2014. “Holding our annual conferences in tandem is another great way for us to share best practice and promote the benefits of both CIMSPA membership and participation in Quest and NBS to an even wider industry audience.”

CIMSPA CEO Tara Dillon added: “CIMSPA is delighted to be joining forces with the popular Quest NBS Conference to host a two-day event. With double the number of high-profile speakers, interactive workshops and quality networking opportunities, this new joint conference is yet another example of how CIMSPA and Right Directions are working together to raise standards in the industry.”

Details: [http://lei.sr?a=9E4W7_O](http://lei.sr?a=9E4W7_O)

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**Lifetime adds new beauty diplomas**

UK-based Lifetime Training is launching a new range of accredited qualifications for beauty therapists.

The Level 2 diploma includes traditional modules on facial skincare, manicure and pedicure, waxing and makeup. The Level 3 diploma features body, hot stone and Indian head massage, aromatherapy, self-tanning and microdermabrasion. These are all presented alongside business-based skills, such as working in a beauty-related business, reception duties and health and safety practices, as well as value-added modules which cover the topics of gel manicures and intimate waxing.

Initially the courses are going to be offered through Lifetime Beauty Academies situated in Birmingham, Manchester and Brentwood, with a wider rollout to cities such as London and Liverpool later this year.

“After some time now, Lifetime’s clients, including spas, hotels and gyms, have been highlighting the industry need for a growing number of high-quality therapists, so our decision to extend our provision to the beauty sector is backed by strong employer support,” said Mike Jones, commercial director.

Details: [http://lei.sr?a=Z2g6z_O](http://lei.sr?a=Z2g6z_O)
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Company: 360 Play
Location: Stevenage, UK

Membership Consultant
Company: Everyone Active
Location: Stratifit - Ipswich - Avon, UK

Assistant General Manager
Company: The Gym Group
Location: London Colindale, UK

General Manager
Company: The Gym Group
Location: London Aldgate, UK

Area Leisure Manager
Company: Freedom Leisure Ltd
Location: Worcester, UK

Lifeguard - Full / Part time
Company: Everyone Active
Location: Various locations, UK

Assistant General Manager
Company: The Gym Group
Location: Milton Keynes, UK

Fitness Instructor
Company: Glo Gym
Location: Oldham, UK

General Manager
Company: Glo Gym
Location: Oldham, UK

Exercise Class Instructors
Company: Glo Gym
Location: Oldham, UK

Fitness and Operational Supervisor
Company: Glo Gym
Location: Oldham, UK

Fitness Instructor - part time
Company: energie group
Location: Harrow, UK

Membership Sales Advisor
Company: energie group
Location: Long Eaton, UK

Personal Trainers Wanted
Company: Soho Gyms
Location: London, UK

Fitness Instructor
Company: energie group
Location: Long Eaton, UK

Personal Trainers
Company: The Gym Group
Location: London Angel, UK

Assistant Sales Manager
Company: Everyone Active
Location: Carshalton, UK

Spa and Health Club Manager
Company: Hilton Bournemouth
Location: Bournemouth, UK

Recreation Assistant
Company: Everyone Active
Location: Fareham, Hampshire, UK

Tennis Development Manager
Company: Alve Leasure
Location: Kings Lynn, Norfolk, UK

Leisure Attendants
Company: Brio Leisure
Location: Chester, Various, UK

Swim Teachers
Company: Brio Leisure
Location: Various, UK

Trainee Duty Manager
Company: Parkwood Leisure
Location: Birmingham, UK

Casual Recreation Assistant
Company: Parkwood Leisure
Location: Birmingham, UK

Duty Manager
Company: Love Withington Baths
Location: Manchester, UK

Cafe Bar Chef
Company: Ilkeley Lawn Tennis Club
Location: West Yorkshire, UK

Business Dev Manager
Company: Parkwood Leisure
Location: Worcester, UK

Event Water Safety Manager
Company: Swim Safety
Location: Herts, UK

Assistant General Manager
Company: The Gym Group
Location: Greater Manchester, UK

Sales Director
Company: Parkwood Leisure
Location: Worcester, UK

General Manager
Company: The Original Bowling Co.
Location: Cardiff & Peterborough, UK

Assistant Manager
Company: The Original Bowling Co.
Location: Milton Keynes, UK

Deputy Manager
Company: The Original Bowling Co.
Location: High Wycombe, UK

Swimming Teacher
Company: Everyone Active
Location: Watford, UK

Water Babies Instructor
Company: Water Babies
Location: Hertfordshire, UK

Freelance Personal Trainer
Company: Everyone Active
Location: Hampshire, UK

Fitness Motivator
Company: Everyone Active
Location: Hampshire, UK

Fitness Motivator
Company: Everyone Active
Location: Loughton, UK

Partner Support Assistant
Company: Move GB
Location: Bath, UK, UK

Sales Manager
Company: Anytime Leisure
Location: London and Midlands, UK

Personal Trainer
Company: Everyone Active
Location: Loughton, UK

Training consultant
Company: Clubwise Software Ltd
Location: Buckinghamshire, UK

Recreation Assistant
Company: GLL
Location: South Oxfordshire, UK

Fitness and Leisure Manager
Company: Lifehouse Spa and Hotel
Location: Essex

Customer Support Consultant
Company: Clubwise Software Ltd
Location: Buckinghamshire, UK

Full Time Duty Manager
Company: Atlantis Leisure
Location: Oban, Scotland, UK

Exercise Tutor
Company: Age UK Oxfordshire
Location: Across Oxfordshire, UK

Leisure Dev Manager
Company: Three Rivers District Council
Location: Hertfordshire, UK

Recreation Assistant
Company: Everyone Active
Location: Fareham, Hampshire, UK

Attention Personal Trainers
Company: Club Training
Location: Nationwide Opportunities

General Managers
Company: truGym
Location: Various, UK

Impact Sales Consultant
Company: Xercise4Less
Location: Various, UK

General Managers
Company: The Gym Group
Location: Various locations, UK

Sales and Marketing Manager
Company: Xercise4Less
Location: Various locations, UK

General Manager
Company: Xercise4Less
Location: Various locations, UK

Membership Consultant
Company: Xercise4Less
Location: Various, UK

Personal Trainer
Company: Xercise4Less
Location: Nationwide, UK

GP Exercise Referral
Company: Focus Training
Location: Nationwide, UK

Spa Manager
Company: L’Horizon Beach Hotel & Spa
Location: Jersey, Channel Islands, UK

Spa Therapist
Company: GLL
Location: Camden, London, UK

Group Spa Manager
Company: Center Parcs Ltd
Location: Nottinghamshire, UK

Head Spa Therapist
Company: Myoka Spas
Location: Malta

Beauty Therapist
Company: The Wellbeing (London) Co Ltd
Location: Richmond, London, UK

Spa Therapist (casual)
Company: GLL
Location: West London, UK

Spa Therapists
Company: Lifehouse Spa and Hotel
Location: Essex, UK

Events and Entertainment Team Leader
Company: Sea Life
Location: Weymouth, UK

Business Manager
Company: World Horse Welfare
Location: Somerton, Somerset, UK

Area Team Leaders (Rides)
Company: Drayton Manor
Location: Tamworth, UK

Senior Aquarist
Company: Chessington World of Adv
Location: Chessington, UK

Visitor Service Manager
Company: Yorkshire Wildlife Park
Location: Doncaster, UK

Guest Experience Manager
Company: Legoland Discovery Centre
Location: Dallas, United States
Lumiere festival lights up the capital

On the back of successful events in Sydney, Berlin and Lyon, London welcomed a new international light festival when Lumiere lit up landmarks across the capital.

Running from 14 to 17 January, Lumiere London showcased a selection of renowned artists from across the world, with the event drawing thousands of visitors to the UK capital.

Installations for the event were spread right across the city in 30 prime locations, including Piccadilly, Regent Street and St James’s, Trafalgar Square, plus Westminster, Mayfair, and King’s Cross. In conjunction with the event, visitlondon.com created a free map which pinpointed the installations, as well as incorporating the festival into the London Official City Guide app.

The event was given the full support of the city and was backed by London mayor Boris Johnson, with founding support from Bloomberg Philanthropies, Atom Bank, London & Partners and the Heart of London Business Alliance. Each location showcased a number of artists. Highlights included Stockholm-based Floating Pictures’ Light Graffiti in King’s Cross, an installation where audiences could use smartphone torches or any other source of light to “paint” onto their surroundings.

In Piccadilly, Lyon’s Porté par le vent created Luminéoles, brightly coloured fish which delighted crowds by floating and swooping through the air, dancing with the elements.

More than 200 volunteers were recruited for the event, with guides offering local knowledge of the city and tips to tourists. Details: http://lei sr? a=q8n6Z_O

Cuts hit regional museums hardest

Continued from front cover

According to the Museums Association’s (MA) annual Cuts Survey, 11 per cent of museums are considering following the approach of Northampton Museum, which lost its Arts Council England accreditation in 2014 after it sold an Egyptian statue to a private buyer for £15m to fund an extension of the museum and art gallery.

The survey said that since 2010, 44 museums across the UK have been forced to close, with further closures “inevitable”. In order to avoid this outcome, 8 per cent of museums surveyed introduced an entry fee in the past year, while a further 12 per cent said they would in 2016.

On a brighter note, while year-on-year public funding decreased by 2 per cent and income from grants and donations had fallen by 4 per cent, self-generated income from regional museums increased by 6 per cent, indicating an attempt to counter cuts by exploring new commercial opportunities.

“Museums serving local communities deliver real public benefit and there is a danger that whole areas of the country will have these services wiped out if cuts continue,” said Sharon Heal, director of the Museums Association. Details: http://lei sr? a=d8n7z_O