EPR Architects are working to design the hotel and spa – in collaboration with Barr+Wray – at the upcoming Poultry Hotel in London. The five-star offering will occupy the Grade I-listed former Midland Bank headquarters – the vault of which was portrayed as Fort Knox for the climax of 1964 James Bond film *Goldfinger*.

Slated to open in 2016, the high-end hotel is expected to feature 252 bedrooms, in addition to a restaurant, health and leisure facilities, rooftop terraces and two pools. Continued on back cover

**Luxury hotel set for ‘Goldfinger’ bank vault**

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**Two thirds of UK kids are ‘insufficiently active’**

More than two thirds of children in Britain fall below recommended levels of fitness for their age group, according to a new study.

Research by youth activity provider Fit For Sport, comprising 10,000 primary-school aged children, found that 67 per cent were unable to reach targets in jumping, running and throwing. Meanwhile, 24 per cent fell significantly below recommended levels, indicating that fitness is a cause for concern.

The findings of the *Challenging Children’s Inactivity* report should serve as a wake-up call for parents, warned Fit For Sport CEO and founder Dean Horridge, who said many place too much emphasis on their child’s academic performance and not enough on their activity levels.

“This is a clear call to action,” said Horridge. “Physical inactivity is a ticking time bomb for the UK’s health – both parents and schools must make sure children are spending enough time being active to improve their fitness and health levels now, and set them off on a journey towards enjoying an active life.”

The UK is currently in the grip of an inactivity epidemic and the latest findings indicate that much more must be done to reverse this trend. Chief Medical Officer guidelines recommend children spend 60 minutes a day being physically active, yet only 21 per cent of boys and 16 per cent of girls achieve this.

In his foreword to the report, ukactive CEO David Stalker notes that youth activity levels are continuing to decline, indicating that more needs to be done by organisations, parents and teachers to reverse the trend.

“Previous research suggests the average 10-year-old in 1998 could beat 95 per cent of youngsters in 2008 in running tests, and further statistics show children’s activity levels are continuing to fall,” writes Stalker. “Inactivity is the fourth largest cause of disease and disability, and directly contributes to one in every six deaths in the UK. As well as protecting against these dangers, being physically active every day is vital for the healthy growth and development of children.” Details: http://lei.sr?a=T7Z2a

**Virgin Active to be sold to investors**

Global fitness chain Virgin Active has been sold to South African investment firm Brait in a deal that values the business at approximately £1.3bn.

Virgin Active has perennially been linked to potential IPOs – both on the London and Johannesburg stock exchanges – however a company spokesperson told Leisure Opportunities that the deal means there are now no plans for a listing in the immediate future.

Brait will acquire an 80 per cent stake in the health club operation, which was founded by Sir Richard Branson in 1999. Virgin Group will retain a 20 per cent stake. The gym chain has 267 clubs worldwide and is Europe’s largest health club group by revenue.

The gym chain was founded by Sir Richard Branson

“ ‘We are delighted that we will continue to play a part in this alongside Brait, another long term investor with a strong track record in growing businesses,” said Branson. Details: http://lei.sr?a=N6t5b
Council sport and leisure budgets have been slashed by an overall figure of £42.4m since 2010, according to a survey released this month.

An investigation by the BBC found that London and north-west England were among the regions hardest hit, with almost half the total £42.4m cuts coming from councils in these areas.

Among the best-known leisure facilities to face the axe since 2010 was Sheffield's Don Valley Stadium – where Olympic heptathlon champion Jessica Ennis-Hill had trained – while the West Midlands' only 50m swimming pool in Coventry is also set to close.

The pressure on local authorities to balance the books in the face of deep austerity cuts appears to have taken its toll. Meanwhile, David Sparks, who chairs the Local Government Association, said soaring social care bills are leaving local authorities with "little choice" but to squeeze budgets.

The Sport and Recreation Alliance CEO Emma Boggis sympathised with the "extreme financial pressures" that councils face, but said short-term cuts now would lead to larger problems further down the line.

"Reducing investment in sport and in leisure facilities is storing up problems for the longer-term," she told the BBC.

"Limiting access to leisure facilities will result in greater inactivity and bigger costs to the NHS in terms of tackling conditions like diabetes, cardiovascular disease and depression."

Details: http://lei.sr?a=V8A7M

Luton Town ‘close’ to new stadium location

Luton Town Football Club (LTFC) is close to securing a site for its planned new stadium, according to the club's CEO Gary Sweet.

Speaking ahead of the game against Hartlepool on 18 April, Sweet said that the club had passed "another important project milestone" in its efforts to relocate and move from its ageing Kenilworth Road ground.

"We’ve made some significant breakthroughs in recent weeks," Sweet said.

"Firstly, we’ve obtained support for our plans from the Labour Party group members at Luton Borough Council after a series of initial engagements.

"Secondly, we’ve been sufficiently encouraged to push ahead with the necessary enabling development plans to ensure that the stadium’s construction can be funded through building other facilities. Not only would this wide-ranging, mixed-use plan assist the club, we believe it will also benefit the town greatly."

Sweet added that while a preferred site had been identified, the club would not be announcing it due to commercial confidence and to protect the "probability of success".

The club has, however, now entered the pre-application stage with the council’s planning office. If LTFC’s plan is successful, it will bring to an end one of the most protracted and colourful stadium relocations in English football history. Details: http://lei.sr?a=Y4Y7V
Work starts on £33m elite centre

Construction work has begun on Scotland’s new £33m Sports Performance Centre, located at the Riccarton Campus at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh.

The facility, designed by Reiach and Hall Architects, will become the new training base for Scotland’s elite athletes and will support the high performance needs for football, rugby and volleyball, while offering additional support to athletics, badminton, basketball, cricket, fencing, handball, hockey, netball, shinty and squash.

The centre will include a full-sized indoor pitch with seating for 500, international standard grass plus synthetic outdoor pitches, a high performance strength and conditioning centre, a high performance medical centre and hydrotherapy pool, fitness centres plus studios and support services. There will also be a 12-court sports hall with 300 spectator seats, a large public health club, restaurant and private dining areas plus conferencing spaces. The centre’s name – Oriam – and accompanying branding, was also announced at a groundbreaking ceremony attended by Louise Martin, chair of Sportscotland. She said: “Oriam will facilitate sporting excellence in Scotland by helping performance athletes develop and maximise their talents across many sports.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=K6u8e

Phase 2 unveiled for £200m Lord’s revamp

Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) has announced the latest phase of its redevelopment plans for Lord’s Cricket Ground in London, which includes replacing the historic Tavern and Allen stands.

MCC, which owns the venue, intends to have a single new structure built in place of the two existing stands – adding more than 5,500 seats – to raise the ground’s overall capacity to just under 30,000.

Designed by global sports architects Populous, the new stand is expected to be completed by 2019, with work on the first phase beginning in September 2015. As well as replacing the Tavern and Allen stands, the second stage – which is the biggest planned phase of the Masterplan for Lord’s – includes a new Thomas Lord Building, a new Tavern pub and internal reorganisation of the Pavilion to provide more room for cricket teams and staff.

Additional aspects of the project also include a new Harris Garden Building with a bar opening out on to the Garden, and extra dressing rooms for tennis and squash.

Derek Brewer, MCC chief executive & secretary, said: “The South-Western Project will ensure facilities for players, match officials, supporters and MCC Members are of the highest possible standard by modernising areas of the ground that have become tired.

“MCC is committed to maintaining Lord’s as the finest cricket ground in the world, and this project also provides a wonderful new front door to the Home of Cricket.”

Details: http://lei.sr?a=H5e6Z

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Chelsea picks Technogym to supply gym equipment

Technogym has secured a new partnership with English Premier League leaders Chelsea Football Club, becoming the official fitness equipment supplier to the first team, development squads and ladies teams.

Under the agreement, Chelsea’s training ground in Cobham, Surrey, will be equipped with Technogym equipment including ARTIS cardiovascular and strength equipment. The gym will also include Technogym’s Omnia-3 training rig for versatile functional training; Pure Strength range of plate-loaded equipment for high-level strength training; and the Dual Adjustable Pulley cable machine. Details: http://lei.sr?a=g8s8f

The wide-ranging contract is for 20 years

Pulse lands local leisure contract worth ‘up to £45m’

Pulse has won a 20-year contract to become Suffolk Coastal District Council’s (SCDC) Strategic Leisure Development Partner in a deal potentially worth up to £45m.

The contract will see Pulse work with SCDC and its Strategic Leisure Operations Partner – Places for People Leisure – to develop existing and new leisure facilities and services in the district.

The partnership and £45m contract value also incorporates the potential redevelopment, equip and operational support of a number of other facilities within four additional local authorities’ portfolios listed on the tender – North Norfolk District Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Council, Bolsover District Council and North East Derbyshire District Council.

SCDC expects to invest between £10-20m in its leisure facilities over the next 20 years. Pulse will provide SCDC with advice, support and proposals on design, funding, strategic planning, marketing, branding and operational best practice, as well as being principal supplier for all building works. Details: http://lei.sr?a=H5g3G

Fitness First eyes LA London sites

Fitness First remains firmly in the running for the £80m race to capture LA fitness, amid hopes that a successful deal would help it corner the lucrative London market.

Fitness First global CEO Andrew Cossett has previously said the chain wants to be the Audi A4 of health clubs, offering a premium proposition in high density urban centres. The group hopes to replicate recent successes in Asian cities like Hong Kong with a drive in the UK capital.

LA fitness boasts an enviable property footprint in London with 22 sites, including two ‘premiumised’ LAX clubs, which have reportedly enjoyed initial success. A well-placed industry source told Leisure Opportunities that the lure of LA’s London presence would see Fitness First pursue the deal to the end, despite the need for additional investment in a number of LA sites.

Fitness First is currently in discussions to sell its German arm for just under £200m and Leisure Opportunities understands that partial funds from a successful sale could be used in a bid for LA fitness. Competition has been hotting up in recent weeks as a number of players indicate interest in the 44-club LA fitness portfolio. Pure Gym and Sports Direct Fitness remain in contention, while Terra Firma Capital Partners has also reportedly lodged a bid. One potential stumbling block for Fitness First could be the Competition and Markets Authority, which has previously taken the view that the UK gym market is separated by pricing sectors.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=Q8v4U

Health club sector M&A activity rising

The health club sector is becoming an increasingly attractive prospect for investors, as evidenced by a significant jump in the number of mergers and acquisitions (M&A) seen in the sector over the past year.

There were 19 M&A transactions alone in 2014, compared to an overall total of 24 in the three years previously, according to the European Health & Fitness Market Report 2014.

The report – presented by Karsten Hollasch of Deloitte at the European Health & Fitness Forum (EHFF) in Cologne, Germany – observed an industry that has escaped the doldrums of recession and is becoming an attractive prospect, thanks to its growth. It noted the majority of activity was driven by strategic investors and financial investors rather than private individuals, with only one of the 19 M&A transactions driven by the latter in 2014.

Other key findings from the report included:

- There is correlation between GDP growth and gym membership increases. This was demonstrated by 2014 membership growth in Spain, Turkey, Germany and Poland - all of which outstripped the average European gym membership growth rate of 4 per cent.
- Most European club operators expect to grow in 2015, with Polish clubs the most optimistic and Russian clubs the least.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=j5egC
The rapid advance of technology is democratising fitness, giving consumers more choice than ever and leaving businesses facing difficult dilemmas, according to new Pure Gym CEO Humphrey Cobbold.

Speaking at the European Health & Fitness Forum (EHFF) during FIBO week, Cobbold said technology is empowering consumers, providing choices where decisions were previously made for them, and he acknowledged that it’s sometimes a struggle to adapt.

Citing air travel as an example, Cobbold said passengers are now able to choose their airline, flight, class, boarding options and seat at the touch of a button. He noted users want will be key to long-term success.

“Technology is ‘democratising’ fitness and predicted that focusing on what young gym users want will be key to long-term success. “This technology revolution is coming from the bottom up – young people get it much quicker than we (over 50s) do,” he said.

“We need to ask ourselves ‘how do we reach 15 to 25-year-olds who see the world differently? How do we shape it to make it appealing to them?’” Details: http://lei.sr?a=x4N5U

ukactive to lead childhood inactivity fight

Tackling youth inactivity is an increasingly pressing priority and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) recently declared it should be a top priority for all parties in the forthcoming General Election. An increasing number of organisations across the physical activity sector have created products and services to boost youth activity levels, prompting ukactive to support the momentum. The physical activity sector body is launching a new ukactive Kids membership category and will produce a policy report in early June calling for greater focus on children’s activity levels by the next government.

ukactive Kids will aim to inform government policy, develop strategies to foster sector growth and work closely with members to define standards and good practice.

“At a time when the new government will review its approach to children’s activity it’s essential the sector has a strong, unified voice on the key issue of promoting an active childhood,” said Dean Horridge, chair of the ukactive Kids Board. Details: http://lei.sr?a=j9r5w
Lincoln Castle completes £22m redevelopment

Lincoln Castle in Lincolnshire has reopened following a £22m refurbishment, restoring the centrepiece of the city to its former glory and providing a new home for the historic Magna Carta.

The redevelopment includes a new high-security vault to house both the 1215 Magna Carta and the 1217 Charter of the Forest – the only place in the world where copies of both rare documents can be viewed in the same location. The castle walls have also undergone a restoration, with visitors now able to walk the entire length of the wall. Other new facilities include a new café, shop and an educational space with a widescreen cinema. Details: http://lei.sr?ta=x9e8G

Mather to design £7.7m Royal Mint visitor centre

Design consultancy Mather has been awarded the contract for the upcoming £7.7m interactive visitor centre at the Royal Mint in Llantrisant, Wales.

Providing exhibition design and management services, Mather will produce an interactive museum experience that will explore the unique history of the Royal Mint, showcasing more than 1,100 years of coin manufacturing.

This is the first time in its history that the site – which produces 90 million coins each week, for 60 different countries – has ever officially opened its doors to the public. The purpose-built visitor centre will also house a retail shop, café, educational rooms and a ‘strike your own coin’ experience.

“This project presents an unique challenge to create a visitor attraction within such a high security site,” said Chris Mather, managing director at Mather. “Coins provide a unique insight into history, so it’s our vision to use them to tell the story of the Royal Mint and the many key historical events that have taken place over the years.” Details: http://lei.sr?ta=W3r3e

Tech start-up to ‘revolutionise’ VR

A Ukraine-based development company has revealed plans for an interactive entertainment attraction that works with a virtual reality headset and a gamepad to deliver a full-motion interactive experience.

Andrew Borisov and his co-founder have invested £333,000 over the past three years to develop the MMOne concept, which is the only one on the market to combine virtual reality and dynamic movement to create a completely immersive experience.

“We did integrations with two titles about a rollercoaster and the result was stunning,” said Borisov speaking exclusively to Leisure Opportunities. “If you use Oculus Rift to simulate a rollercoaster ride, the result is you come off not feeling very good because your body can’t make sense of what’s going on. The point of MMOne is that you are almost like an Avatar from the films. All the movements you experience in virtual reality are replicated in the chair so you can feel complete immersion.

“In terms of how gameplay works, when you press a button the chair will repeat your movements. My dream is to have 50 MMOnes over the globe or in one space integrated and having a battle. We want to create a VR network so people can play against each other.”

The single person MMOne model is targeting amusement parks, theme parks, cinemas, FECs and shopping centres. The company is also in talks with a major theme park operator over developing a larger scale version. Details: http://lei.sr?ta=ugh4z

Star Wars send Disney shares soaring

Disney’s share value has jumped US$2bn (£1.33bn) following the release of the teaser trailer for upcoming movie Star Wars: The Force Awakens, promising huge value in the the IP’s relaunch and upcoming attractions.

The two-minute clip, which sent the internet into a spin this month with a glimpse of returning characters Han Solo and Chewbacca, was released to the public on 16 April as part of a four-day Star Wars celebration event that was taking place in Anaheim, California.

The trailer offers a throwback to the previous Star Wars films – with a Luke Skywalker monologue, shot of Darth Vader’s destroyed helmet, an army of Storm Troopers and a crashed Star Destroyer – also providing a first look at the new characters of the franchise.

Disney purchased production company Lucasfilm and the Star Wars brand in 2012 for US$4bn (£2.7bn). Speaking in December, Disney CEO Bob Iger said that a raft of new attractions coming to Disney’s theme parks would be based on the new sequels and any subsequent spin-offs, not the older films in the George Lucas franchise. Following the trailer’s release, stock in Walt Disney went into overdrive, reaching a high of US$108.30 (£72.35) a share – representing a near US$2bn jump in value. Details: http://lei.sr?ta=3F8S9
Leisure Industry Week is the UK's leading leisure trade expo, showcasing over 300 exhibitors at the NEC in September each year.

**Pool & Spa Zone**
A comprehensive array of pool and spa products, design concepts, with advice from industry experts on how you can benefit. Enjoy a spa treatment from one of the expert therapists.

**Young Fitness & Play Conference**
Dedicated to the education of children from primary school upwards with seminars and demonstrations on physical literacy, tackling childhood obesity, health, nutrition and soft play.

**Feature Gym**
Browse a state-of-the-art concept gym showcasing cutting edge, innovative equipment for futuristic training and equipment ideas as well as sports nutrition sampling and secondary spend seminars.

**Leisure Facilities Conference**
Targeted at Gym and Leisure Centre Owners & Managers, talks will deliver key collateral on industry trends and essential business systems such as pay systems, signage, financing and much more.

**Group Fitness**
An interactive area providing varied taster sessions in everything from HIIT, contemporary Personal Training, Olympic lifting, step & tone, Pilates and much more.

**Secondary Spend**
Learn more about how to maximise revenue with presentations on secondary spend options including sports nutrition, accessories and clothing.

**1000 Club**
Take top line partners and customers into a professional meeting space to close deals, network and discuss opportunities.

**The Heartbeat of UK Leisure**
Leisure Industry Week is the UK's leading leisure trade expo, showcasing over 300 exhibitors at the NEC in September each year.

Help change the UK leisure industry and contact Phil Mortimer, Show Manager on p.mortimer@bodypower.tv for further details.

Register today for FREE entry (saving £30) at liw.co.uk
Music festival adds spa sanctuary

Festival wellness pop-up service Wild Wellbeing is to appear at Camp Bestival in Dorset, providing spa experiences for attendees lining up to hear musicians including Clean Bandit, the Kaiser Chiefs and Professor Green. The festival will take place between 30 July and 2 August at Lulworth Castle.

Founder and managing director of Wild Wellbeing, Colette Crespin, told Leisure Opportunities about the challenges of operating a spa and massage sanctuary in a challenging festival environment.

“We use hand-crafted, beautifully decorated yurts, with two therapists in each, divided by a privacy screen,” said Crespin. “We’ll have five yurts at Camp Bestival running simultaneously every day with treatments all day.”

In addition to the yurts, other complementary wellness offerings in the Wild Wellbeing spa zone, known as The Hideaway, include eco showers, beauty station and a yoga tent.

“We are still in talks for Camp Bestival as to who is going to be our official skincare partner,” continued Crespin. “In the past, we have collaborated with REN, Mio and Jurlique. We are working with Neal’s Yard Remedies at Wilderness Festival this year too.”

Crespin said Wild Wellbeing embraces the challenge of running a spa operation at a festival. “Execution is always streamlined in pre-production prep; the fun really begins on-site when variants start to occur like extreme weather or logistical changes – but that’s the fun! If it was all plain sailing it would be pretty boring.”

Pennyhill Park spa set for rugby revamp

Pennyhill Park Hotel & Spa in Bagshot is refurbishing its spa to include a three-level dry sauna experience that will open in May, in addition to upgrades across the rest of the site’s wellness facilities.

Darren Dixon, spokesman for the 123-bedroom hotel, told Leisure Opportunities that £1.1m will be invested back into the spa in the form of upgrades to the ice igloo, Osmanian chamber, herbal saunas, as well as a change of fitness offering.

The 3,500sq ft (325sq m) gym’s equipment is being upgraded with Technogym Artis kit. The new three-level dry sauna experience – which is set to open ahead of the England Rugby World Cup squad taking up residency at the site in the autumn – will offer a cedar and glass sauna room, an adjacent cooling off area and drench bucket. Dröm UK is installing the thermal zone.

Dröm UK’s project director Erin Lee said: “Working together, we are aiming to educate bathers by encouraging them to use the rooms in a certain sequence. This will enhance the bathing experience and maximise the health benefits, enabling bathers to really relax and enjoy the time spent in the wonderful surroundings Pennyhill Park has to offer.”

Originally designed by Monia Allegretti, the spa offers 21 treatment rooms, six nail stations, two swimming pools, four warm spa pools one hydrotherapy pool and nine thermal cabins.

Blogger who ‘cured cancer’ admits she never had illness

Australian wellness blogger, Belle Gibson, who built an online community and sold a recipe book off the back of claims she cured terminal brain cancer through diet and lifestyle changes alone, has admitted that she never had the disease.

In an interview with Australian Women’s Weekly, Gibson said: “None of it’s true.”

Early in March, the supposed wellness guru’s lie began to unravel when it was revealed she never donated thousands of dollars to charity, which had been promised from the proceeds of her successful mobile phone app, website and recipe book.

Later that month, Gibson said she had been “wrongly” diagnosed by a German magnetic therapist with cancers in her blood, spleen, uterus and liver – however she maintained her terminal brain cancer was real. Gibson refused to show journalists medical records or any proof to back her claims that, by avoiding conventional medicine, her brain cancer had been stymied. Penguin has ceased publishing her recipe book and the Apple store no longer offers her app. Details: http://lei.sr?ta=G3U8Y

Just five days of fatty diet alters digestion: study

After only five days of eating a high fat diet, the way in which the body’s muscle processes nutrients changes, according to a study by Virginia Tech – published in the online version of the journal Obesity. This is thought to be the first study to find that a change in metabolism happens so quickly after adopting an unhealthy diet, increasing the risk of diabetes and other diseases.

“This shows that our bodies can respond dramatically to changes in diet in a shorter timeframe than we previously thought,” said Matt Hulver, an associate professor of human nutrition, foods and exercise at the Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Details: http://lei.sr?ta=G3U8Y

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Party manifestos pay tribute to out progress

Election manifestos from several of the main political parties have acknowledged the role of tourism and hospitality as a key contributor to the UK economy for the first time ever. This is a significant achievement for the thousands of businesses and 3 million strong workforce across the industry that have been campaigning alongside the BHA to bring about a better understanding and recognition of the industry’s contribution.

The Conservative Party manifesto pays tribute to the industry as a supporter of three million jobs and references ‘the value of the tourism industry to the UK economy.’ It promises to speed up the visa process for tourists, invest in transport infrastructure as well as stepping up its efforts to recruit more apprentices to the sector.

The Green Party manifesto stated their support for the BHA’s long running campaign to cut tourism VAT (see page 11).

Welsh National Party Plaid Cymru has also pledged to reduce tourism VAT in their manifesto, pledging a commitment to make ‘holidays at home more affordable and attract foreign tourists.’

The Liberal Democrat manifesto commits to strengthening the Hospitality and Tourism Council. The manifesto also pledges to give higher status to tourism within DCMS and to empower local Tourism authorities’ decision-making powers to promote tourism propositions.

The UKIP manifesto, meanwhile, calls for the creation of a dedicated Minister of State for Heritage and Tourism, to be attached to the Cabinet Office.

The only glaring absence is the Labour party which has all but failed to reference tourism in its manifesto, beyond a token reference to promoting access to green spaces in local planning.

Together with our members, we are calling for all political parties to work with us to support policies which unlock our industry’s significant potential to create more careers, apprenticeships, jobs, exports, growth and prosperity. We urge them to support policy reforms for growth and prosperity for all UK regions.

Will.i.am partners W Hotels on eco-project

Musician Will.i.am and Coca-Cola have partnered with Starwood’s W Hotels brand to bring recycled plastic products to properties across the world – promoting sustainability as a stylish lifestyle choice.

Will.i.am and Coca-Cola have brought a new brand called Ekocyte to the chain of luxury hotels. Ekocyte has made branded sheets, manufactured using part rPET – polyester partially made using recycled plastic.

Starting in North America, with global expansion across all W sites expected, each king size sheet set uses approximately 31 recycled 20 oz (570g) plastic bottles. This equates to more than 268,000 plastic bottles across all of the W Hotel beds currently in North America.

Starwood claims guests won’t feel a difference. “The more sustainable sheets are made using the same high quality process as the W brand’s current bedding, with the only difference being the use of recycled polyester instead of new polyester,” reads a statement.

It promises to recycle even more plastic, Ekocyte created the ‘Mobile Charger and Accessory Valet’ (MCAV) – a USB charging device that also acts as a jewellery/watch stand and an alarm clock. Developed by Taipei-based engineering firm Miniwiz, the device is partially made from three recycled plastic bottles. It comes in six colours and will soon be on the nightstands of every W Hotel room around the world.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=v3u3R

UK regional hotels outshine London

Despite continued concerns that the UK’s tourism industry is too reliant on London, 2014 saw regional hotels outperform their counterparts in the capital for the first time in 14 years, according to a report released this month.

Hotel Britain 2015 – compiled by business advisory and accountancy firm BDO based on data from 656 hotels – found that UK hotels outside of London returned strong figures across the board. Average occupancy for the regions was up 2.3 per cent to 75.1 per cent for the year – the highest occupancy since the compilation of Hotel Britain statistics began in 2004. Average room rate for the regions was up 7.7 per cent on 2013 to £60.71 – pushing rooms yield up 10.2 per cent to £45.60.

The regional success story continued with a rooms yield compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.9 per cent for 2010-2014, overtaking London for the first time since 2001-05.

Set against the backdrop of 4 per cent increase in supply, London hotels still maintained a very respectable 82.6 per cent average occupancy rate for the year. They also enjoyed a 0.9 per cent increase in average room rate to £148.42 – surpassing the 2008 peak of £137.47. As a result, rooms yield grew 0.7 per cent to £122.61. Reflecting the strong figures, transactional activity in the hotel sector also increased to £6.1bn – up 13 per cent on 2013.

“The UK hotel sector has had a phenomenal year. Regional hotels have outperformed their London counterparts for the first time in 14 years, proving the economic recovery is not just felt in the south east,” said BDO’s Robert Barnard. Details: http://lei.sr?a=w3Y9t

Details: http://lei.sr?a=vywF5
TOURISM

Green Party pledges VAT cut

The Green Party has become the second political party to commit to reducing VAT on tourism from 20 to 5 per cent in its election manifesto, Plaid Cymru having been the first.

Despite reports of a ‘Green Surge’ in recent months – with the party now boasting more members than Ukip – the notion is largely symbolic, given that the Greens are forecast to win just one seat – the retention of Caroline Lucas’s Brighton Pavilion constituency. That said, the prospect of the tightest general election in decades has thrust smaller political parties into the spotlight, as their support could be crucial in forming a coalition government.

Tourism bosses have long been campaigning for a reduction in VAT on accommodation and attractions, to place the UK in line with the rest of Europe. The Nevin Report, commissioned by the Cut Tourism VAT Campaign, found that a VAT reduction from 20 per cent to five per cent for tourism businesses would provide a £4bn boost to the UK economy, create 120,000 jobs and put the UK back on a level footing with European tourism rivals.

“International competition for tourism is increasing while the UK’s share of the global market is declining, and I am delighted a national political party has committed to do something about it,” said Graham Wason, chair of Cut Tourism VAT. “Reducing VAT on tourism to 5 per cent would not only make the UK more competitive with other destinations within Europe, but would also increase the affordability of regional tourism hotspots and generate more investment for local businesses.” The campaign has gained momentum in the last 12 months, but has seemingly been unable to influence the manifestos of the main political parties. Details: http://lei.sr?a=H7D8tm

Boris bidding to boost cultural tourism

Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, has outlined plans to boost cultural tourism right across the UK capital.

He says he wants visitors to enjoy the “giant oak trees” of major cultural institutions, but also “dig deeper into the undergrowth and savour the wild flowers of our quirkier and more off beat attractions.”

A new report, Value of Cultural Tourism to London, published by the Greater London Authority, shows cultural tourists spent £7.3bn in 2013, generating £3.2bn for the economy and supporting 80,000 jobs in the capital. Four out of five travellers say culture is their main reason for visiting London.

However, much of the capital is missing out on this bonanza. London’s top 20 attractions account for 90 per cent of tourist visits and, according to Transport for London, most first time visitors stay within zones one and two - the inner core of the city. Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, believes more needs to be done to maximise the potential of culture through creating jobs and safeguarding the future of key institutions. “We celebrate our world class museums, galleries, theatres and concert hall in the heart of the city, but we must stop underselling the cornucopia of other cultural riches to be found right across the capital,” said Johnson. Details: http://lei.sr?a=z6U2X

Green Party leader Natalie Bennett unveiled the manifesto

PaldfMenon has asked tourism and cultural agencies to pool ideas

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11
Olympic sports legacy the focus of June IUA event

The Sports and Leisure Working Party Group of the International Union of Architects (UIA) has announced it will examine the legacies of the most recent Olympic Games – London 2012 – and most recent Commonwealth Games – Glasgow 2014 – at a seminar and site visit to be held in London on 12 and 13 June.

The venue will be the office of Space Syntax. The group will also tour the Olympic Park, visiting the Aquatics Centre, Copper Box multi-purpose arena and Velodrome (pictured), all of which are fully operational. If conditions allow, a stadium visit will also be arranged. The London 2012 stadium is currently undergoing changes as it prepares for legacy mode.

In addition to the Legacy review and site visits, recently appointed group director Gar Holohan will give a briefing about the reorganisation and refocussing of UIA Working Party Groups.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=c6U8w

Exploring the crucial role of a bee colony in the global ecosystem, artist Wolfgang Buttress and architects BDP have created a hive structure to serve as the centrepiece of the UK’s pavilion at the upcoming Milan Expo.

The impressive 14m3 aluminium lattice structure, called the Hive, has been constructed and manufactured by Stage One, which also built Thomas Heatherwick’s London 2012 Olympic torch. The company used 115,000 individual components to turn sculptor and painter Buttress’ vision into reality. Buttress has tweeted a series of images of the nearly completed structure ahead of the world trade fair.

Visitors to the UK pavilion will be taken on an experiential journey through the life of a bee colony, highlighting the importance of pollination to ecosystems and food supplies. The pavilion also reflects the British landscape and demonstrates how the country is a ‘hive of activity’ creating solutions to global challenges.

The Hive is inspired by real scientific research and groundbreaking UK technology, which can be used commercially to monitor the health of beehives, in turn making a contribution to addressing global food issues.

The visitor experience starts with a journey through an orchard and wildflower meadow, while more than 1,000 LED lights illuminated within the hive will relay information transmitted from a real beehive located 870 miles (1,400km) away in Nottingham.

The Milan Expo will host a total of 145 nations and runs for 184 days on an exhibition site covering 1,000,000sq m (10,763,910sq ft). It opens on 1 May. Details: http://lei.sr?a=w2s7N

Three-peaked skyscraper by F+P for central London

Foster + Partners have designed a 50-storey tower set to grace London’s skyline.

Principal Tower will be part of Principal Place, a mixed-use development to feature a half acre public piazza and events space, bars, cafes, restaurants, shops and offices.

Sited near Shoreditch, Liverpool Street Station, major financial institutions and Silicon Roundabout, Principal Place will be developed by Brookfield, Concord Pacific and W1 Developments in a joint venture.

Foster + Partners, the architects behind the London Gherkin, have laid out plans for 30 upper storeys of the 175m (574ft) tower, with a residents’ gym and spa, screening room, lap pool and 24-hour concierge.

The tower’s environmental strategies include a combined heat and power plant, roof photovoltaic panels and grey water harvesting. Details: http://lei.sr?a=T8d9b

Hive pavilion builds buzz for Milan Expo

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Robin Snell leads Coliseum renovation

Robin Snell and Partners is to transform the largest theatre in London’s West End as part of a £1.2m renovation project.

The company won a competition run by the English National Opera (ENO) and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) for the revitalisation of the ground floor foyer of the grade II listed London Coliseum.

The foyer will be opened up to provide uninterrupted views from the street, with the London-based practice aiming to generate a sense of the excitement of the productions taking place within the theatre. The design will also create extra space for a new wine bar and café.

Originally designed by prolific theatre architect Frank Matcham, the 2,359-seat London Coliseum first opened in 1904.

Robin Snell and Partners said it would reform the theatre’s Edwardian foyer rooms, restore the Roman mosaic floors to their original splendour, re-light the exterior and interior spaces, and position contemporary objects and furniture within the foyer, “all bringing theatrical sparkle to the place”.

Keith Williams, founder of Keith Williams Architects and chair of the RIBA Competitions awarding jury, said Robin Snell & Partners was chosen for “the sensitivity of their approach to Matcham’s famous theatre” and the “breadth of their vision in seeing opportunities for the ultimate transformation of this much loved building.” Details: http://lei.sr?a=j4b4C

Hive pavilion builds buzz for Milan Expo
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Ark

Ark is a growing education charity and one of the country’s top-performing academy operators with 31 academy schools in Birmingham, Portsmouth, London and Hastings at present. As part of its education portfolio, it has a number of sports and leisure facilities.

Ark is inviting offers from suitably experienced and competent leisure/community management operators, including existing trusts, non-profit distributing organisations and the voluntary and public sectors, to enter into a service concession arrangement to operate its dual use leisure facility at Helenswood Academy in Hastings, East Sussex.

Ark Schools will be seeking solutions to deliver key objectives, to secure investment and service improvements, to increase access to sport and leisure across its catchment and to provide a substantially improved revenue position.

The partner organisation(s) will bring skills, financial capacity, proven operating practices and procedures, commercial acumen and dynamism together with an approach to managing the services.

The contract will be for an initial term of 5 years but will include provision for a potential extension of up to 2 additional 12 month periods.

The proposed contract commencement date is 1st October 2015.

For further details and to obtain the Information Memorandum and Pre Qualification Questionnaire please email Nick Page on nickpage@fmgconsulting.co.uk or telephone 07921 611495.

Deadline for PQQ submission is Friday 8th May 2015.

Exciting opportunity in Lightwater Country Park

Surrey Heath Borough Council are keen to hear from interested parties with viable business initiatives which would suit a country park setting. A fantastic opportunity has arisen to launch a new service or activity, in the vacant building previously used as a visitor centre at the heart of Lightwater Country Park in Surrey.

This opportunity is open to all markets; however services which are able to embrace one or more of the following criteria will be looked upon favourably:

- Promote Lightwater Country Park as a destination
- Introduce new areas of activity within the park
- Maintain and build on the Parks existing service offer
- Connect to the local community
- Earn an income for the Council

Expression of Interest Process

Expressions of Interest will be invited from 20th April 2015 and applications must be received by 3pm on Friday 29th May 2015. Shortlisted applicants will then be invited to submit a full business plan.

Please email business.services@surreyheath.gov.uk with any enquiries and to access an Expression of Interest form.

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Lifet ime Training course courts consumers

Lifetime Training has launched a new ‘Personal Train Yourself’ course aimed at encouraging fitness enthusiasts to expand their knowledge base and improve their workout quality when using a PT isn’t an option.

The course is designed to help fitness aficionados gain the knowledge to train for an event, save money on PT sessions, create their own fitness programmes and better understand their training regime. It is also intended to maintain training quality and intensity for those who typically rely on a PT, but may find themselves on the road or in need of an impromptu workout.

Elite athletes such as Olympic javelin thrower and Team GB captain Goldie Sayers, Team GB Decathlete John Lane, as well as fitness enthusiast and Sky Sports News presenter Kirsty Gallacher, have all signed up to take part in the programme.

“I workout with a trainer three times a week but I also train on my own,” said Gallacher.

“Although my trainer gives me a bespoke programme, I sometimes feel that I lack confidence. Am I doing things right? Am I going to get the right results? I love fitness and want to develop my knowledge base. I also feel that with a greater depth of understanding, I will enjoy my training more.”

Lifetime is eager to tap into the growing emphasis on wellness and believes greater understanding will help consumers achieve better results. Details: http://lei.sr?sa=m5M6a

Wales eyes army of young volunteers

A new deal between Sport Wales and Sports Leaders UK will result in an “unprecedented number” of young sport volunteers working in Wales.

The two bodies have signed a new three-year memorandum of understanding (MOU), which will look to end the practice of short-term agreements and create a joint commitment which will make it easier to keep youngsters active in programmes.

Sarah Powell, CEO of Sport Wales, said: “The MOU is designed to establish clear responsibilities, minimise duplication and maximise effective use of resources for the benefit of young people. If we are to continue growing numbers then we have to work in partnership with organisations like Sports Leaders UK in order to get the maximum out of the resources we have.”

In total, there were more than 8,500 sports leaders trained in Wales – across schools, colleges, universities, outdoor centres, sports clubs and NGBs. The new deal will look to increase that number – as well as bring in even greater numbers of younger people to take part in community volunteering.

Powell added: “We know that the younger we can get people involved, the more likely we are to keep them volunteering. More volunteers also brings about more people playing sport and doing physical activity.”

Details: http://lei.sr?sa=K7v9k

With the General Election fast approaching and youth unemployment figures still high, political parties are under pressure to form coherent and proactive education policies.

Given that the skills gap is one of the major issues affecting the UK economy, one of the top priorities on the leaders’ agendas is boosting apprenticeship schemes.

In March, Labour pledged it would introduce legislation within 100 days of taking office to boost vocational education and apprenticeships, while last week the Liberal Democrats stated they would double the number of employers offering apprenticeships to young people.

This is promising but what would it mean for the leisure industry? Apprenticeships are a cost-effective way to recruit and train employees as well as provide young people with the skills, knowledge and the work experience that they need to become fully-competent active leisure, learning and wellbeing professionals.

At SkillsActive, we believe in giving all young people opportunities for training so they can develop the necessary skills required to work in the industry, regardless of their background. By creating more apprenticeships, the government will make progress in closing the skills gap and be able to give more young people the chance to kick-start their career, enabling them to gain nationally recognised qualifications while earning money.

I firmly believe that apprenticeships are critical for ensuring the sector is equipped with the right talent to drive the industry forward. At SkillsActive, we are committed to ensuring that employers are getting the best out of their apprenticeships and that individuals are really making the most of the benefits that these schemes offer them. The leisure, learning and wellbeing industry provides great and rewarding long-term prospects and it is important that we highlight this to young people.

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Head of Sports Services

Salary: £53,413 - £57,354 per annum

Leicester is a sporting city. We are passionate about sport as an integral part of the city’s vibrant life. As part of this, the Council is committed to ensuring that sport and physical activity can be enjoyed by everyone. We are looking to recruit a dynamic, experienced and committed team member to join our prestigious Sports Centre. This swimming pool and fitness suite facility is set in the private grounds of St Mary’s School in Calne which opens its doors to community members during peak times. Other facilities include a dance studio, therapy suite, outdoor tennis courts and astro turf pitches.

You must have sound knowledge and experience in the day to day operations of a wetside leisure facility. Communication skills are also essential, as is the ability to respond to customers.

It is essential that you have a professional qualification or relevant experience in a leisure related or marketing field.

St Mary’s School Sports Centre is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils and members. Due to the nature of the work involved the successful applicant will be required to undertake an Enhanced Clearance via the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Further details and an application form are available on request from the Sports Centre office on 01249 857335 or via e-mail to: lchalk@stmaryscalne.org.

Closing Date: Monday 18th May 2015

Marketing & Sports Development Duty Officer

Full-time - 40 hours per week
Salary - (£19,306 - £24,617)

We have a vacancy for an enthusiastic, conscientious and motivated team member to join our prestigious Sports Centre. This swimming pool and fitness suite facility is set in the private grounds of St Mary’s School in Calne which opens its doors to community members during peak times. Other facilities include a dance studio, therapy suite, outdoor tennis courts and astro turf pitches.

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Closing Date: Monday 18th May 2015

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If you are excited by this role, please email a covering letter and your CV to charlotte@energiehq.com or telephone us at énergie Head Office on 0845 3631020 and ask for Charlotte Blunsdon.
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The job’s a mixture of pro-active selling, people management and keeping an eye on that all important bottom line. So you’ll be an all-rounder with a flair for customer care in a soccer environment. Management experience of working in the sports/leisure sector is desirable, most importantly you will need a positive attitude and a passion for delivering a Quality Service in an extremely fast paced working environment.

With a starting salary of £16,000 – £20,000 together with a performance related bonus scheme, pension and shift allowances we are undoubtedly competitive, we also aim to invest in your career with exciting career progression opportunities available.

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<th>Job Role</th>
<th>Company</th>
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Fitness Operations Manager
Company: Fusion Lifestyle
Location: Essex, England
Community Health Coach
Company: Live Well Luton
Location: Luton, UK
1-2-1 Swimming Teacher
Company: Everyone Active
Location: St Albans, Hertfordshire, UK
Health Checks Practitioner
Company: Live Well Luton
Location: Luton, UK
Fitness Instructor
Company: Malvern St James School
Location: Malvern, Worcestershire, UK
Regional Activity Scout
Company: Move GB
Location: London, UK
Club Promoter
Company: énergie group
Location: Havant, UK
Commercial Sales Manager
Company: Concept Fitness
Location: England & Wales, UK
Team Leader
Company: Everyone Active
Location: Hertford, UK
Club Promoter
Company: énergie group
Location: Various, UK
Park Manager
Company: Reboot Leisure
Location: Herts / Beds / Bucks & UAE
Sales Manager
Company: Reboot Leisure
Location: Herts / Beds / Bucks & UAE
Club Promoter
Company: énergie group
Location: Eastbourne, UK
General Manager
Company: The Gym Group
Location: Colchester, UK
Head of Sports Services
Company: Leicester City Council
Location: Leicester, UK
Swim Lesson Manager
Company: Everyone Active
Location: Cirencester, UK
Personal Trainers
Company: Speedflex Surrey
Location: Surrey, UK
Duty Manager
Company: Everyone Active
Location: Stratford Upon Avon, UK
General Manager
Company: St Michaels Hotel and Spa
Location: Falmouth, UK
MoveGB Customer Motivator
Company: Move GB
Location: Bath, UK
Event Crew
Company: Big Bang Promotions
Location: Sheffield and London, UK
Customer Service Apprentice
Company: énergie Group
Location: Wimslow, UK
Gym Manager
Company: Pure Gym Limited
Location: Motherwell, UK
Fitness Instructor
Company: Energie
Location: St Albans, UK, UK
Assistant Gym Manager
Company: Pure Gym Limited
Location: Motherwell, UK
Sports Development Manager
Company: Fusion Lifestyle
Location: Essex, England
Swim Teacher
Company: Everyone Active
Location: Spellthorne / Watford, UK
Regional Activity Scout
Company: Move GB
Location: Various, UK
Freelance Personal Trainers
Company: Ben Dunne Gyms
Location: Liverpool/Manchester, UK
Duty Manager/Fitness Instructor
Company: Ben Dunne Gyms
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Company: Everyone Active
Location: Nuneaton, UK
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Company: Fusion Lifestyle
Location: London, England
Sales Manager
Company: Fusion Lifestyle
Location: Buckinghamshire, England
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Company: Parkwood Leisure
Location: Dolygaer Outdoor Centre, UK
Sports Coaches
Company: Bolton Lads & Girls
Location: Bolton, UK
Personal Trainer
Company: Grace Belgravia
Location: London
Marketing & Sports Development Duty Officer
Company: St Mary’s School Sports
Location: Wiltshire, UK
Assistant Manager
Company: Valley Leisure Ltd
Location: Andover, UK
Fitness Motivator
Company: Everyone Active
Location: Loughton, Essex, UK
Recreation Assistant
Company: Royal Automobile Club
Location: Epsom, Surrey, UK
Head of Finance
Company: Hertsmere Leisure
Location: Borehamwood, UK
Membership Consultant
Company: Everyone Active
Location: cheam, UK
Deputy Manager
Company: NRG Gym Limited
Location: Watford, UK, UK
Butlers
Company: Butlers in the Buff
Location: Nationwide, UK
Tutors / Assessors
Company: Diverse Trainers.
Location: Nationwide, UK
Customer Service Advisor
Company: GLL
Location: Oxfordshire, UK
Membership Advisor
Company: Skills Active
Location: Central London, UK
Technical Support Assistant
Company: STA
Location: Walsall, UK
LifETIME PTA Global Maxima
Company: Lifetime
Location: Nationwide, UK
Membership Consultant
Company: Xercise 4 Less
Location: Nationwide, UK
Personal Trainer
Company: Xercise 4 Less
Location: Nationwide, UK
General Manager
Company: Xercise 4 Less
Location: Various locations, UK
Sales and Marketing Manager
Company: Xercise 4 Less
Location: Various locations, UK
General Managers
Company: The Gym Group
Location: Various locations, UK
Impact Sales Consultant
Company: Nuco Training
Location: Nationwide, UK
Swimming Teacher
Company: Becky Adlington’s Swim Stars
Location: Nationwide, UK
Group Sales Manager
Company: Club Training
Location: London
First Aid Instructor Training
Company: Nuco Training
Location: Nationwide, UK
Spa Director
Company: WTS International
Location: Cairo, Egypt
Spa Director
Company: WTS International
Location: Cannes, France
Spa Director
Company: WTS International
Location: Geneva, Switzerland
Beauty Therapists
Company: Center Parcs Ltd
Location: Suffolk / Cumbria, UK
Operations Director
Company: Delapre Abbey
Location: Northampton, UK
Visitor Reception Manager
Company: National Trust
Location: West Sussex, UK

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Leisure and hospitality businesses could be missing out on up to £16bn in additional revenues by failing to adequately cater to the needs of over 65-year-olds.

That is the top-line finding of An ageing population: the untapped potential for hospitality and leisure businesses – a new report published on 22 April by Barclays Corporate, which found many businesses are failing to appreciate the power of the ‘grey pound.’

Britain’s ageing population means the importance of this market will continue to increase. With the population of over 65s expected to have grown 34 per cent by 2025, Barclays predicts that leisure and hospitality spending by over 65s will reach £57bn by the middle of the next decade.

The report highlights that despite over 65s being by far the biggest spenders in terms of age bracket, just five per cent of leisure and hospitality businesses see over 65s as their most important demographic for sales and revenue.

“It is clear from the report that the over 65 age group is a huge and untapped opportunity for the hospitality and leisure sector within the UK,” said Mike Saul, head of Hospitality and Leisure at Barclays. “There appears to be a gulf between the perception and reality of the spending power of over 65s. By not fully focusing on the needs of this generation, and the revenue growth opportunity they represent, businesses may risk missing out on their share of £16bn this year alone.”

The research found over 65s added £37bn to the UK economy through hospitality and leisure spending in the last year. This level of spend represents 36 per cent more than the average consumer. Details: http://lei.sr?a=W7x9z

Over 65s were also found to be the most loyal customers

Luxury hotel for Goldfinger bank vault

Continued from front cover

In addition to a wealth of leisure facilities, the Poultry Hotel will have rooftop terraces and two pools. There will also be a bar in the bank’s former vault – where Goldfinger’s lethal henchman Oddjob, played by Harold Sakata, famously met his demise when he was electrocuted by Bond at the end of the 1964 film.

Originally built between 1925-1939, the Midland Bank building was one of the most expensive bank headquarters of its time. It is considered to be British architect Sir Edwin Lutyens’ finest commercial building.

EPR Architects’ website says: “The proposals [for the hotel and spa] have been developed with sensitivity to the existing Lutyens interiors and elevations and in close consultation with City planners and conservationists. An insensitive 1960s extension at the rear will be demolished and replaced with a new bedroom wing.” The refurbishment will include a spa with an elaborate thermal zone – Barr+Wray will procure and install. Hotel developer and owners Sydell Poultry and Capital Construction & Development, are working with Ardmore Construction to bring the project to fruition. Details: http://lei.sr?a=W7x9z

Midland Bank building was built from 1925-1939