LIW 2015: The time for innovation is now

Health and fitness operators must redefine the boundaries of their market and embrace innovation if they are to survive and thrive in an increasingly competitive sector, says Ray Algar.

Delivering his keynote address at LIW 2015 in Birmingham, the fitness industry analyst issued a call to arms for entrepreneurs to redefine the sector.

Citing examples such as the start of the mid-market with the launch of Fitness First in 1993 and the arrival of the budget sector in the UK in the mid-noughties, Algar said the time is ripe for a great leap forward. Otherwise, he warned, the industry will continue to ‘squabble’ over the same 13 per cent of the adult population that are gym members.

“True entrepreneurs are unrestricted in their mission and redefine the boundaries they operate in to open up the market,” said Algar, suggesting innovation is the key to creating more opportunities.

Algar reiterated his view that the pathways of the gym industry are forking between self-service and supported propositions, best exemplified by the polarisation of minimally-staffed budget gyms and premium boutique clubs. Mid-market gyms are finding themselves caught in the middle of this split, with a proposition which fits neither category.

He said one way traditional mid-market clubs are seeking to counter this is to cut prices, citing Sports Direct charging £19.99 for monthly membership at former LA fitness clubs that once charged £40+.

“A decade ago people were in love with legacy clubs, now it feels that we’re almost giving them away,” said Algar.

He concluded that to succeed in a challenging market, brands must embrace innovation and strive to raise the bar. There is no longer room for mediocrity, he said. To thrive, brands must present a clear identity and belief in their purpose.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=C6M4F_O

Record-breaking Rugby World Cup underway

Rugby World Cup 2015 has already broken all previous ticket sales records and looks set to be the most viewed in the tournament’s history.

The eighth edition of the tournament, hosted across 13 venues in England and the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff, Wales, has so far sold 2.25m tickets – 95 per cent of the total number – surpassing the record set in 2007. In total, the World Cup will generate £240m in revenue – according to Brett Gosper, CEO of World Rugby, rugby union’s world governing body.

Continued on page 2

Gulliver’s to build £37m theme park

A former coal mine in South Yorkshire in the UK is to become the site of a £37m theme park and resort development after plans were unveiled by Gulliver’s Family Theme Parks.

The company, which owns several Gulliver’s-branded theme parks and attractions across the UK, purchased the 333-acre Pithouse West site from Rother District Council and has named its newest addition Gulliver’s Valley Resort.

The proposal includes a family-oriented theme park with an indoor water play zone, self catering woodland lodges and tree houses, a 100-bedroom hotel and an array of attractions. The theme park will include a NERF Zone, as well as an indoor climbing centre and Gully’s dream village - an area where children with life-threatening illnesses can enjoy cost-free respite from their conditions.

The project will open in four stages over 12 years

Details: http://lei.sr?a=F5y7t_O
FA CEO pledges cash for artificial pitches

Football Association (FA) chief executive Martin Glenn has renewed the FA’s pledge to increase spending on grassroots football – and the number of artificial pitches.

Speaking at the Soccerex Global Convention in Manchester this month, Glenn said the FA is undertaking a reorganisation that will refocus efforts to grow the game at community level.

“Delivering that reorganisation was part of the brief I was brought in on,” said Glenn, who took up his role at the FA five months ago.

“Over the past two years there has been a realisation that we need to spend more on grassroots facilities – and more specifically, to increase the number of artificial pitches.

“When it comes to artificial pitches, we are way behind other northern European countries with similar climates. We’re in a situation where English kids play on quagmires for two months – which means that conditions benefit strong kids rather than skilful kids.

“Part of the reorganisation is to spend less money on backroom staff and start spending more money on people delivering football.”

Last month, Glenn announced the new National Game Strategy, with the FA pledging to contribute approximately £260m to improve facilities, coaching, participation and infrastructure for grassroots volunteers.

Glenn, 54, was named the FA’s new CEO in March 2015 and took up his role in May after leaving his previous role as chief executive at United Biscuits.

Details: http://lei sr? a=hs38k_O
Chelsea and Spurs vie for Wembley

Two London-based Premier League clubs, Chelsea FC and Tottenham Hotspur, look likely to battle it out for the right to play their home games at Wembley stadium while their own stadiums are being rebuilt.

Both clubs will need to find an alternative home venue starting from the 2017-18 season – with Chelsea expected to relocate for three years and Tottenham likely to need a replacement stadium for one year.

Both clubs are understood to have opened talks with the Football Association (FA) – which owns and operates Wembley – regarding the move.

Speaking at the recent Soccerex Global Convention in Manchester, FA chief executive Martin Glenn said he would support clubs using the 90,000-capacity Wembley “under certain circumstances”.

“I won’t comment on individual clubs, but if that’s an opportunity we will follow it,” Glenn said. “It’s in our interest as an association for clubs to redevelop their grounds, make superb facilities and – if it’s possible – to help them in that transition by using Wembley, we are absolutely supportive of that.

“Wembley is primarily a football stadium, matches are more profitable than concerts and other things and we’re seeking to use it more for football.” Details: http://lei.sr?a=7s2R3_O

Glasgow Uni to open £10m sports facility

University of Glasgow is to launch its new £10m sports and fitness hub in October as part of plans to establish itself as a leading university for sport in the UK.

The new facility will have a heavy emphasis on sports performance and features four separate operations – a 722sq m strength and conditioning facility called PowerPlay; a 722sq m cardiovascular and conditioning area called Pulse; a 661sq m sports hall; and a FanZone for students, members and athletes.

According to Euan Smith, director for University of Glasgow Sport – which will operate the facility – the new facility will look to cater for elite athletes as well as provide students and the public with a premium facility.

“The extension to our indoor sport facilities is indicative of our commitment to providing a world class learning environment for our students, staff and wider university community,” Smith said. “Our new facility will be one of the best of its kind in the UK,” PowerPlay will include 12 professional grade Olympic power racks and lifting platforms supplied by Elite Sport Performance Technologies (ESP). It will also include ESP’s ground reaction force plate system Strengthsense, incorporating the camera diagnostic system Eliteform, allowing users to gain instant feedback and maximise performance.

Other suppliers within PowerPlay include Pullum Sports (Eleiko competition plates and an Eleiko competition bar) and Matrix Fitness (resistance machines). Details: http://lei.sr?a=6r9Y2_O
Branson eyes Virgin expansion

Sir Richard Branson has announced the gym chain is gearing up for a significant international expansion over the next three years.

Branson said Virgin Active has enjoyed a strong response from members in Thailand, and more widely in Singapore too, we are confident we have the track record, a strong pipeline of potential sites and the right infrastructure in place to accelerate our growth.

The company hopes to build on the strong gains made in 2014, with a recent trading statement showing that for the year to 31 December, underlying earnings across the group grew by 13 per cent to £124m, with balanced growth across all territories.

Frame Kings Cross to kickstart growth

Trendy London fitness chain Frame will open its third studio next month, amid plans to scale up the business and double revenue by the end of 2016.

Frame founders Pip Black and Joan Murphy are planning a further two studios in 2016 and expect turnover to hit £5m as part of the expansion, which also includes a push into the retail market.

Situated in the middle of the major regeneration project underway around Granary Square, Frame Kings Cross will be the latest addition to London’s booming boutique fitness scene when it opens on 1 October. The 4,800sq ft (446sq m) site will have three studios to start, with a fourth planned for next year.

Classes on offer at the new site will include Boxfit, Ass & Abs, Frame Body, Kettlebells and Dance Cardio, while there will be dedicated areas for Yoga / Barre, Reformer Pilates and PT.

Frame Kings Cross will also have an “all singing all dancing” café serving healthy foods such as salads and protein bowls, plus protein pancakes. As is the case with an increasing number of boutique studios, there will also be a retail area stocked with a wide range of active wear.

“Alongside the launch of Frame Kings Cross, we’re launching a brand new website, fully mobile optimised and here to make an active lifestyle easy and accessible for people, even those who can’t make it to the studios,” said Black.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=A6j8b_O

Gold’s Gym inducts The Terminator into Hall of Fame

Gold’s Gym has inducted fitness legend Arnold Schwarzenegger into its Hall of Fame as the health club franchise celebrates 50 years in business.

Having started as a small concrete room featuring homemade gym equipment in Venice Beach in 1965, Gold’s Gym has subsequently grown into a global fitness brand with more than 700 gyms worldwide.

Schwarzenegger has been one of the chain’s most famous patrons and was presented with the special accolade at the Gold’s Gym Convention in Dallas, Texas.

“Wanting to find the best partner to serve our global dealers, education representatives, clubs, gyms and studios, as well as the worldwide Spinning community,” said John Baudhuin, CEO of Mad Dogg Athletics. Details: http://lei.sr?a=75m8_O

Precor announces new partnership with Spinning

Precor has secured an exclusive worldwide agreement with Mad Dogg Athletics, creator of the Spinning indoor cycling programme, that will see Precor assume all commercial production for a new line of Spinner indoor cycling equipment.

The tie-up adds another string to Precor’s bow, following on from the company’s recent acquisition of functional training systems provider Queenax.

“We wanted to find the best partner to serve our global dealers, education representatives, clubs, gyms and studios, as well as the worldwide Spinning community,” said John Baudhuin, CEO of Mad Dogg Athletics. Details: http://lei.sr?a=75m8_O

Schwarzenegger has become a fitness legend

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Branson eyes Virgin expansion

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Buoyed by the support of South African investment powerhouse Brait, which recently acquired a controlling stake in the business, Virgin Active has plans to significantly increase its presence in the Asia Pacific region.

The chain is partnering with leading Thai mall operators to secure prime locations for the six new clubs it expects to open in Thailand over the next three years. The company also announced plans to bring up to 14 new gyms to Australia, taking the total number of clubs to around 20.

“Our strong performance and position in Bangkok means that we have the perfect platform to grow our club network in the greater parts of the city, bringing our fantastic facilities to an even wider group of people interested in getting active,” commented Branson.

“Having seen the success of our clubs here in Thailand, and more widely in Singapore too, we are confident we have the track record, a strong pipeline of potential sites and the right infrastructure in place to accelerate our growth.”

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LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK
NEC Birmingham UK

20th-21st September 2016

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WWW.LIW.CO.UK
EuropeActive and IHRSA team up to crunch figures

Trade associations EuropeActive and IHRSA have announced a new collaboration that will see them join forces to produce a comprehensive annual report of the European fitness market.

The new collaboration will seek to strengthen the annual European Health & Fitness Market Report (EHFMR), currently produced by EuropeActive in co-operation with Deloitte, to provide an authoritative overview of the European market.

Starting with the 2016 EHFMR, IHRSA will cite the market information gathered by EuropeActive/Deloitte for the EU countries surveyed in the 2016 IHRSA Global Report. Details: http://lei.sr?a=j2Z4y_O

Nuffield wants healthier schools

Nuffield Health and think tank 2020health are working with Wood Green School in Witney on a new pilot to change how schools approach health and wellbeing.

The pilot scheme will explore the benefits of appointing a head of wellbeing at the comprehensive school, who will be tasked with developing a strategy to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of students and staff. It follows recent research from Nuffield Health and 2020health that highlighted how the school environment is second only to the parental home as the most important influence on a young person’s development.

Youth wellbeing has been constantly in the spotlight this summer, as damning statistics have highlighted the extent of the UK’s problem, particularly in terms of physical inactivity. Research released by Essex University showed fitness levels among English schoolchildren are lower than ever and still getting worse, while ukactive also made major headlines recently with its Generation Inactive report, which showed only half of seven-year-olds are meeting recommended physical activity guidelines of 60 minutes per day.

School plays a key role in a young person’s development

The new initiative, which is the first of its kind, will be funded by Nuffield Health and sees the second year secondment of a head of wellbeing to help develop and implement a health and wellbeing strategy at the school.

“We see this as an opportunity to change the way schools approach health and wellbeing,” said Dr Davina Deniszczyc, Nuffield Health’s medical director, wellbeing. “A head of wellbeing can provide effective support and infrastructure, which has the potential to transform pupil and staff wellbeing. The outcomes will be invaluable in helping to shape the future of school wellbeing.”

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

Jon Nasta aims to bring innovation to the role

Nasta named marketing director at Xercise4Less

Retention and digital marketing specialist Jon Nasta has joined Xercise4Less as director of ecommerce and marketing, tasked with helping to drive the gym chain’s ambitious UK expansion programme.

Nasta, 43, arrives after an eight-year stint with membership retention specialists Retention Solutions. He will oversee ecommerce and marketing across the chain’s 29 sites, which it hopes to increase to 100 by the end of 2016.

“Having worked very closely with Xercise4Less over the last few years, I am delighted to now be a part of the team,” said Nasta. “The sheer number of gyms we have planned to launch over the coming months shows just how big the brand has become in just over six years, plus how the demand for affordable fitness continues to increase across the country.”

Nasta said he hopes to bring innovation to the role and assist in developing a ‘number of industry firsts’ as he bids to support the expansion, grow the team and increase revenue streams.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=t6k8Z_O

Flexible gym contracts ‘better for retention’

Flexible gym contracts that don’t require members to commit to a fixed term are actually better for retention than traditional 12-month ties, according to a new report.

ukactive’s mid-year Business Performance Benchmarking Insight Report – based on data from more than 600 UK fitness and leisure sites – has found that enabling health club members to leave whenever they want is actually the best way to keep them.

The report found gyms with a fixed-term minimum 12-month contract saw an average membership length of 11.2 months, whereas gyms not requiring a 12-month commitment and offering more flexible contract lengths saw an average stay of 17.2 months.

The insight helps to neatly demonstrate one of the major shifts witnessed in the health club market over the past decade. Whereas the once dominant big box gyms were often synonymous with iron-clad, fixed-term contracts, these operators have lost a significant share of the market to low-cost operators, who typically eschew contracts in favour of rolling monthly memberships. The new report revealed several other findings. It showed that the sector is continuing to grow, with membership numbers up by nearly 1 per cent on this time last year and public trusts performing best – reaping the rewards of a renewed focus on widening their offerings.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=Z7zF_O
Indoor trampoline parks have been springing up in the USA and other worldwide destinations over the last 5 years and now they have arrived in the UK.

Multi-bed indoor trampoline parks, typically housed in buildings ranging from 15000sqft to 35000sqft, combine a mixture of flat and angled interlocking beds allowing users to enjoy time with their friends bouncing around the jumping arena and participating in activities including dodgeball, slam dunk or diving into a foam pit or onto an airbag … great fun!

The health benefits to the trampoline users are all apparent from cardiovascular fitness through to coordination, agility, muscle toning with improved health and stress relief. One hour’s bouncing burns more calories than running for an hour and organised fitness sessions are proving very popular.

The product has traditionally been transported in from the States but now the UK has its own manufacturer. Based in Yorkshire, Luna Trampolines, a sister company to House of Play, the world’s leading soft play supplier has positioned itself to save the air miles. Shaun Wilson, Director of Luna Trampolines said ‘designing and manufacturing equipment for indoor trampoline parks was a natural extension to the product we have been supplying to the indoor play industry through House of Play for over 20 years and required no additional automation in the factory’. The product supplied by Luna Trampolines has been developed to rival that available from the best suppliers throughout the world with safety and compliance a cornerstone. Wilson explains ‘we have a British manufactured product developed with reference to the available world standards and independently inspected and accredited to British Standards … you cannot get a better product than that!’ ‘and there’s not a question we cannot answer along the way’ Wilson continues, ‘the journey available to House of Play customers has been mimicked through Luna Trampolines … we take customers from concept to completion using our in-house skills and direct operational expertise gained from having set up our own multi-visitor entertainment centre’

Where will the industry go from here? The property agent phones have been red hot with operators trying to find suitable buildings in the race to open a facility and put their flag on the ground and claim territory … It might be that the many existing leisure operators with readily available space grasp the opportunity and turn potentially low income generating space into an income generating hub of the community.
Twitter: @leisureopps

Lake launches Uberwell blog for wellness design

Wellness design firm A.W. Lake has launched Uberwell, a wellness design, technology and trend blog intended to keep hotel and commercial property owners, developers and operators at the very forefront of wellness trends.

“Recently valued at US$3.4tn, wellness has gone mainstream,” said Adria Lake, owner and MD of A.W. Lake. “Spanning generations and market demographics, the wellness consumer is anyone and everyone who aspires to be healthy, happy and have plenty of energy for an active lifestyle.”

Uberwell curates articles from across the internet which are relevant to the wellness consumer. Details: http://lei.sr?a=N9s5t_O

Deadline nears for global spa mentorship project

Spa industry veterans interested in acting as mentors to up-and-coming leaders have until 31 October to apply to be part of the Global Mentorship Programme, which launched this year with its first group of mentors and mentees.

Senior spa directors with more than five years of experience can apply online at www.mentorshipEvidence.com. The programme hopes to attract 50 mentors and 100 mentees in 2016; of the initial 17 mentors who took part in the programme in 2015, 14 are continuing their roles, and the initiative has already received 20 new mentor applications. The programme is led by co-chairs Jean-Guy de Gabriac, CEO of Tip Touch International spa consultancy, and Deborah Smith, principal of Smith Club & Spa Specialists.

“As a spa consultant and trainer for over 14 years, I have seen that what makes a good spa great is essentially the vibrant energy that the spa manager shares with his or her team,” de Gabriac told Leisure Opportunities. Details: http://lei.sr?a=n6A6K_O

Portavadie loch-side spa debuts

Scottish resort Portavadie has opened its 1,991sq m (21,431sq ft) spa and leisure centre, part of a further £10m development to the property.

The spa and leisure centre includes four treatment rooms and six swimming pools, including a children’s splash pool, a 16m (52ft) indoor pool, outdoor spa pools, and a 9x9m (30x30ft) outdoor infinity pool. It also includes two Scandinavian saunas, a steamroom, Precor-equipped gym, and a 10-bed relaxation area, with floor-to-ceiling views across Loch Fyne to the Isle of Arran.

Designed by Ayrshire-based Steward Associates, the spa uses glass, local stone, white oak and walnut to create a natural setting, and is open to both visitors and guests.

“It’s fantastic to see our unique, world-class spa and leisure experience at Portavadie now open,” said GM Iain Jurgensen. “The team has created the most stunning light-filled relaxation and wellness space, offering the ultimate in luxury and reward for our guests.”

The heated outdoor infinity pool offers views over Loch Fyne.

John Lewis launches in-store spa concept

John Lewis has joined forces with salon and spa operator Regis UK to create a brand new beauty spa concept called ‘&Beauty’, which launched at the retailer’s new multi-million pound Birmingham store on September 24.

The new retail partnership will strengthen Regis UK’s national salon offering and will address a “shift in consumer behaviour”, noticed by the operator, towards “more people opting for on-the-go hair and beauty solutions to fit in with the demands of everyday life,” according to Jackie Lang – MD at Regis UK. “The launch of the new &Beauty concept at John Lewis will provide people with a convenient interlude between shopping, making it easier than ever to enjoy some me-time,” added Lang.

The partnership will provide John Lewis customers access to more than 100 hair and beauty treatments, as well as waxing, threading, manicures and microdermabrasion. The new 2,500sq m concept will offer a large relaxation spa area, including four treatment rooms, for guests to enjoy massages, body treatments, facials and pamper packages.

Beauty and spa product lines at the concept store include Crystal Clear, Lira, Pai, Pink Boutique, ishga and OPI. Hair products will include Kerastase, SP, Nioxin, Moroccan Oil and Redken. Details: http://lei.sr?a=c7d5K_O
It's Showtime!

Sunday 4th October 10am - 6pm
Monday 5th October 10am - 5pm
Hoskins to create Rosewood Edinburgh

Hoskins Architects will design a new Rosewood hotel at Edinburgh's former Royal High School, a historic landmark building on Calton Hill in the centre of the Scottish capital that has stood vacant for almost 50 years.

The neoclassical, listed building was originally designed by architect Thomas Hamilton and completed in 1829. The plan to invest more than £75m to restore and convert the property is led by Duddingston House Properties and Urbanist Hotels.

The 147-bedroom hotel will include a Sense spa, fitness centre, indoor swimming pool, three restaurants and bars, and a 3,200sq ft (297sq m) ballroom. Gareth Hoskins, the architect for the project, said the new designs respond to comments made by heritage organisations and the public.

“The design focuses around an informed restoration of the central Hamilton-designed building, repairing its decaying fabric and maintaining the sculptural presence of its frontage without intervention,” said Hoskins.

The existing Greek revival building will house the public areas of the hotel, allowing its spaces to be fully accessible to the public for the first time in the building's history. The hotel's bedrooms will be set away from the original building in two newly constructed wings.

Details: http://lei.si?a=v2K3t_O

Hilton teams with Uber for travel

Hilton Worldwide has announced a new technology-driven partnership with ride-sharing service Uber to streamline travel experiences for Hilton guests.

Through the tie-up, Hilton guests around the world can set Uber ‘Ride Reminders’ which come in the form of automated phone notifications, making it easy to request Uber rides to and from the hotel when needed. They will also receive a £13 discount on their first ride.

Additionally, Hilton HHonors members will soon be able to explore the ‘Local Scene’ in select US cities through a digital guide of the top trending restaurants and nightlife spots selected for being the most frequented destinations with Uber riders. This will be accessible through the HHonors app, on which members can already book a stay, check-in, select their room, pre-order amenities and use their smartphone to enter their hotel room door with a digital key.

“By partnering with Uber, a leading innovator, we’re helping travellers explore destinations like they’re locals,” said Rich DiStefano, senior director of mobile products at Hilton Worldwide.

“This is the first time any company has leveraged Uber riders’ most frequented destinations to provide local recommendations. We’re excited to offer these unique benefits for our loyal guests.”

Details: http://lei.si?a=D4U7T_O

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Details: http://lei.si?a=D4U7T_O
Featuring a wealth of expert hoteliers, respected journalists and on-the-money industry analysts, the show includes two dedicated theatres – the Business Theatre and the Innovation Stage sponsored by CLEAN and UKHA – delivering 16 free-to-attend seminars and panel discussions. Learn how to shape and steer your business to success, tap into new trends and initiatives and hear first-hand from some of the biggest names in the business.

All the sessions cover a diverse mix of insight and advice to help build and grow a successful hotel business. From marketing and sales support, business, investment and growth insight, design and technology trends, through to staff and service best practice, the programme will tackle the hottest topics in the sector.

Key speakers at 2015’s show include; Fiona Duncan of The Telegraph, James Lohan of Mr & Mrs Smith, Carrie Wicks of Firmdale Hotels, Jules Pearson of The Hoxton and Ed Purnell of the Hotel Marketing Association.

In addition – and new for 2015 – is the Independent Think Tank, a smaller, more in-depth gathering of industry professionals, who will debate the issues affecting today’s independent hotelier. There will also be an expanded and spruced-up Destination Spa Talks programme, featuring a range of key speakers and sessions, including Tammy Kenyon of Limewood.

Bursting with ideas and inspiration, product launches and promotions, this year’s Independent Hotel Show will also feature a carefully selected line-up of over 300 premium exhibitors from across the hotel supply chain. From bathrooms, spas and wellbeing, fabrics and furniture to entertainment, food and drink, the show offers the biggest and most diverse collection of suppliers, covering all the essentials needed to run a successful and profitable hotel.

Discover the latest in design from luxury fabric specialists Kobe UK and leading bedroom experts And So To Bed. Put lighting into the spotlight with designer and manufacturer Vaughan Ltd, and tap into some fabulous new tableware from LSA International. Soak up bathroom design inspiration from luxury suppliers C.P. Hart and Hansgrohe, then immerse yourself in the latest in spa innovation from Alpha Wellness Sensations and Rigo Spa Ltd. Sky Business will be showcasing their latest innovations in hotel entertainment, whilst Electrolux Professional will offer advice on hotel white-goods to match your individual needs.

The Independent Hotel Show, presented by Rate Gain, returns to Olympia this October (20-21) with a packed two days of networking, new business ideas, advice and insight for anyone involved with the luxury, boutique and independent hotel sector.
The election of Jeremy Corbyn as the leader of the Labour party will certainly cause a large shift in the party’s policies across a wide range of issues. And while the party is still in the process of reformulating policy and will probably not be in a position to fully articulate its new manifesto until the New Year, there are policy areas where we can be certain there will be impacts on tourism.

The most obvious is transport, where it is expected that Labour policy will move further towards taking concerted action to prevent climate change. Corbyn is known to be strongly opposed to aviation expansion in the South East and it is also reasonable to expect that Labour will be opposed to any reduction in Air Passenger Duty.

Corbyn’s policies on other forms of transport could also cause problems for the tourism industry. On roaming, he is opposed to significant development, while Labour’s recent adoption of his policy to re-nationalise the railways as franchises come up for renewal will make the franchise holders seriously reconsider their investment plans which will be detrimental to customers.

There are also potential problems related to employment. While the government is doing a reasonable job in distinguishing between good and bad practice when it comes to zero hour contracts, it is very likely that Labour will view all contracts that do not guarantee work as being exploitative and seek to ban their use altogether. This would pose significant difficulties for tourism attractions and destinations trying to balance staffing levels with demand.

However, there is an area where Labour policy could support tourism. One of the main themes of Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership bid was the need for a more equitable and “fairer” society. At the moment, around 5m UK children are unable to be taken on a holiday each year because their parents can’t afford to take them. Yet it’s well known there are significant personal and community benefits from children taking holidays.

So there could be a significant opportunity to include social tourism in Labour policy. Something that would benefit both UK destinations and UK communities.

TOURISM

Football tourism worth £684m

The popularity of the Premier League helped bring in £684m worth of spending in 2014 from international tourists.

According to a new report from VisitBritain called Football tourism scores for Britain, 800,000 international visitors to Britain last year enjoyed a day out at a football match, with famous grounds Old Trafford and the Emirates Stadium proving to be the most popular.

The £684m spent by football-watching international tourists last year represents a 15 per cent rise – or an increase of £89m – compared to when the research was last conducted in 2010. Football tourists were also shown to be more willing to splash out during their trip. While the overall global average spend on an international visit to Britain in 2014 was £656, those visits including football matches had an average spend of £855.

The research highlights the mass international appeal of Premier League football and its increasingly valuable role as a global draw for visitors to Britain. The findings show that football is the number one draw for sport-watching international tourists, with 73 per cent attending a football match.

VisitBritain has been working closely with the Premier League to harness its global appeal as a means of boosting tourism and the agency’s CEO Sally Balcombe said the sport can also help to draw tourists beyond London.

Tourism minister, Tracey Crouch, added: “Britain is home to many of the world’s favourite clubs so it’s no surprise more international visitors are going to football games while they are here. Details: http://lei.sr?±=7b8z7_O

Welsh tourism grows year-on-year

It’s encouraging news for Welsh tourism, as the latest figures from the Great Britain Tourism Study show that domestic visits to Wales have grown year-on-year for the last two years.

In the first five months of 2013, Wales received 3.03m overnight domestic tourism visits and this figure has risen to 3.61m for 2015, with expenditure jumping by 21.5 per cent, to £685m.

Wales is pushing the adventure angle: this summer Surf Snowdonia, the world’s first inland surfing lagoon, was launched and 2016 will be marketed as the ‘Year of Adventure’ in Wales, focusing on giving people compelling reasons to visit.

The deputy minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, Ken Skates, welcomed the results and expects Wales to build on them going forward: “We are continuing to work closely with the industry to sustain these good figures,” he said.

“Last year was a record breaking year for the tourism industry in Wales and early indications suggest this year will also be strong, with many customers pre-booking to visit earlier in the season and Cadw sites reporting an 8.2 per cent increase of overall paying visitors in July.

“To see such continued positive figures for the early parts of the year is further encouraging news, not just for the tourism industry but for the economy as a whole.”

Details: http://lei.sr?±=C2A8e_O

KURT JANSON
is policy director of the Tourism Alliance

The deputy minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, Tracey Crouch, added: “Britain is home to many of the world’s favourite clubs so it’s no surprise more international visitors are going to football games while they are here. Details: http://lei.sr?±=7b8z7_O

The research highlights the mass international appeal of English football

Details: http://lei.sr?±=C2A8e_O

TOURISM

Football tourism worth £684m

The popularity of the Premier League helped bring in £684m worth of spending in 2014 from international tourists.

According to a new report from VisitBritain called Football tourism scores for Britain, 800,000 international visitors to Britain last year enjoyed a day out at a football match, with famous grounds Old Trafford and the Emirates Stadium proving to be the most popular.

The £684m spent by football-watching international tourists last year represents a 15 per cent rise – or an increase of £89m – compared to when the research was last conducted in 2010. Football tourists were also shown to be more willing to splash out during their trip. While the overall global average spend on an international visit to Britain in 2014 was £656, those visits including football matches had an average spend of £855.

The research highlights the mass international appeal of Premier League football and its increasingly valuable role as a global draw for visitors to Britain. The findings show that football is the number one draw for sport-watching international tourists, with 73 per cent attending a football match.

VisitBritain has been working closely with the Premier League to harness its global appeal as a means of boosting tourism and the agency’s CEO Sally Balcombe said the sport can also help to draw tourists beyond London.

Tourism minister, Tracey Crouch, added: “Britain is home to many of the world’s favourite clubs so it’s no surprise more international visitors are going to football games while they are here. Details: http://lei.sr?±=7b8z7_O

Welsh tourism grows year-on-year

It’s encouraging news for Welsh tourism, as the latest figures from the Great Britain Tourism Study show that domestic visits to Wales have grown year-on-year for the last two years.

In the first five months of 2013, Wales received 3.03m overnight domestic tourism visits and this figure has risen to 3.61m for 2015, with expenditure jumping by 21.5 per cent, to £685m.

Wales is pushing the adventure angle: this summer Surf Snowdonia, the world’s first inland surfing lagoon, was launched and 2016 will be marketed as the ‘Year of Adventure’ in Wales, focusing on giving people compelling reasons to visit.

The deputy minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, Ken Skates, welcomed the results and expects Wales to build on them going forward: “We are continuing to work closely with the industry to sustain these good figures,” he said.

“Last year was a record breaking year for the tourism industry in Wales and early indications suggest this year will also be strong, with many customers pre-booking to visit earlier in the season and Cadw sites reporting an 8.2 per cent increase of overall paying visitors in July.

“To see such continued positive figures for the early parts of the year is further encouraging news, not just for the tourism industry but for the economy as a whole.”

Details: http://lei.sr?±=C2A8e_O

KURT JANSON
is policy director of the Tourism Alliance

The research highlights the mass international appeal of English football

Details: http://lei.sr?±=C2A8e_O
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ATTRACTIONS

BP sponsorship of British Museum sparks protest

Anti-oil protesters invaded the British Museum recently to protest its sponsorship from industry giant BP.

Protesters congregated in the museum’s great court on 13 September, all dressed in black with umbrellas, to form the world “no” in giant letters.

According to the British Museum, BP has acted as its “most longstanding corporate partner.” BP – which signed a £10m sponsorship deal with the British Museum, National Portrait Gallery, the Tate and the Royal Opera House – has been criticised previously over sponsorship of prominent cultural establishments.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=VzX5K_O

Scotland’s first fulldome digital planetarium opens

Visitors to Glasgow Science Centre can now enjoy a new addition to the institution – Scotland’s first fulldome digital planetarium, which opened on 5 September.

Able to seat 115 people, the new fulldome digital system by Swedish company Sciss offers guests the chance to visualise real-time scientific data and satellite imaging and to see the universe in three dimensions. The system can also now show 360º full-screen films, which will be projected in HD across the 15m (49ft) dome, with Google’s Back to the Moon for Good, narrated by Tim Allen, among the first to be shown.

“The new digital system will allow our visitors to explore the universe like never before, through live presenter-led shows taking them on a tour through our solar system, or zooming out to seeing our galaxy from above,” said astronomer and planetarium manager Steve Owens. “We will take seconds to transport our audiences to places in space that would take the fastest spacecraft ever built 40,000 years to reach and we will have shows suitable for all ages.”

Details: http://lei.sr?a=a6l6g_O

Stubbs designs Bath observation pod

Plans for the world’s first revolving glass observation pod in the centre of Bath have been unveiled by the co-founder of SRA Architects, Nicholas Stubbs.

The £5m plans would see the rotating 65m-tall (213ft) ‘AquEye’ built on the Somerset city’s Pulteney Weir Island next to the historic Pulteney Bridge.

The structure, made up of two long masts, holds an observation pod at the end of it that would swing out over the River Avon, rising up above the historic city as it turns to offer a view of the surrounding area. The pod is capable of handling 35 passengers per ‘flight,’ with three ascensions an hour offering unrivalled views of the largely Georgian and Roman-era city.

The high-tech, low-profile design has been created specifically for a historic city such as Bath, so as not to have a significant visual impact on the surroundings.

There has been some opposition to the plan, with preservation advocates saying that the pod is poorly located, blocking views of the 18th century weir and bridge in the city, which is designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

A crowdfunding campaign for the development will launch in November to support the full planning and development of the installation, which should gain some traction with names such as Olympic gold medal winning skeleton champion Amy Williams supporting the project. If planning permission is granted and fundraising is successful, it is hoped that AquEye will be open by 2017.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=b6b6W_O

Alton Towers founder buys Crealy

Alton Towers founder buys Crealy Great Adventure Park will become Camel Creek Resort

John Broome has acquired Cornwall’s Crealy Great Adventure Park, along with 200 acres of adjacent farmland, with the intention of transforming it into a premier European destination, called Camel Creek Resort.

Plans, due to be submitted to Cornwall Council next month, include the addition of up to 236 holiday villas, tree houses, a pool, spa and convention centre. Although the theme park – which includes a range of family rides and animals – will be updated, there are currently no plans for any large new rides.

“Crealy is just crying out for this kind of operation,” said Broome, who took control of Alton Towers in the 1970s before selling it to The Tussauds Group in 1990.

“There will be a tropical lake, the largest in Britain, heated by a combination of biomass, wind turbines and solar panels, providing a water feature for each of the properties.”

The Down family have owned the park since 2004. It has seen an increase in visitor numbers year-on-year and was the UK’s first solar-powered theme park. The sale proceeds will allow the Down family to invest in their other park, Devon’s Crealy Great Adventure Park.

Under the new owners, the management team will stay in place. Admission will be free to people living within 1km, with discounts for other locals.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=Y4A2b_O

Preservation advocates have argued that the pod is poorly located near the Somerset city’s Pulteney Weir Bridge.

The new digital system showcases the solar system.

Crealy Great Adventure Park will become Camel Creek Resort.
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**Leisure plans for Victorian fort**

Plans have been revealed for a £16m redevelopment of a 19th century fort in Plymouth, Devon, to become a visitor attraction and apartment complex.

Fort Bovisand was built in 1845 to defend the entrance of the Plymouth Sound. Sitting beside Bovisand Harbour, the fort remained an active defence unit through the Napoleonic War and both World Wars before being abandoned by the Ministry of Defence in 1956.

The proposal by ADP Architecture – which includes a visitors interpretation centre, a learning hub with outdoor and indoor spaces, plus a temporary exhibition space for themed displays – will also feature a number of flats to cover development costs. In addition, the fort will become a hub for diving and surfing.

A public consultation is now underway for the plans, with two sessions having taken place at the start of the month. The attraction aspect will be part-funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), which in 2013 granted £350,000 to “bring the fort’s history to life”.

A spokesperson told Leisure Opportunities: “We are now involved in detailed development stage leading to our Round 2 HLF submission and full planning application early in 2015. We have engaged key specialists – the architect, surveyors and designers – who will bring the interpretation element of the heritage area and the public spaces to life.”

To be delivered by the Fort Bovisand Trust and Fort Bovisand Developments, redevelopment work is scheduled to start in Q1 2016, with the aim of opening for the first time in 2018.

*Details: [http://lei.sr?a=M9s8x_O](http://lei.sr?a=M9s8x_O)*

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**Bannatyne Group acquires hotel and spa**

Bannatyne Group, the company which was founded by TV Dragon and leisure entrepreneur Duncan Bannatyne, has acquired the Clarice House country hotel and spa in Bury St Edmunds.

The Group, which operates a large portfolio of hotels, spas and health clubs across the country, described the deal earlier this month as a "small local investment for an undisclosed sum.”

The Neo-Jacobean mansion sits on a 20-acre estate and boasts a range of facilities and equipment from Precor, as well as a dance studio offering a wide range of classes including Yoga, Pilates and Zumba.

A spokesperson for the Bannatyne Group said: “We are happy with the local management and the facilities will operate as normal. Terms and conditions of existing membership agreements will be honoured.”

*Details: [http://lei.sr?a=M9s8x_O](http://lei.sr?a=M9s8x_O)*
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TRAINING

Clubbercise teams up with Street Step

Clubbercise, the dance fitness class that claims to ‘bring a night out to a workout’ has joined forces with Street Step in order to help disadvantaged young people find work in the fitness industry.

Launched earlier this year as part of the Street League charity, Street Step is a social enterprise that works with 16-24-year-olds who face socioeconomic barriers to help build their confidence and enable participants to discover employment opportunities.

Clubbercise will be delivered as part of Street Step’s employability programme. The dance class will be used to help nurture skills such as body language, communication, first impressions, building self-confidence, overcoming nerves and working well with others.

Street Step’s managing director Lindsey MacDonald said that when she was researching different dance fitness classes Clubbercise jumped out at her. She felt that the branding, energy and sense of fun were perfectly aligned to Street Step’s values and ethos.

“We want to make learning fun and appeal to the young adults who we’re working with and Clubbercise helps us to do that,” said MacDonald. “As a business, Clubbercise encourages and supports self-employment in the dance fitness industry, which is a positive and viable option for our street Step Academy graduates. We want to empower our young adults and give them the tools they need to make it into the fitness industry.”

Clubbercise co-founder Claire Burlison Green added: “We recently partnered with the ‘This Girl Can’ campaign so have seen first hand how positive engagement and reinforcement makes a huge difference to people’s lives.”

Details: http://lei.sr?a=e5P4j_O

New spa apprenticeship scheme

Privately owned hotel group Macdonald Hotels has partnered with Cheshire-based The International School of Beauty Therapy to create a training programme and apprenticeship for employees at 21 of its properties.

Louise Leach, founder of the beauty school, has worked closely with Jeanette Jones, managing director of leisure and spa at Macdonald Hotels, to create “The Macdonald Way,” a customised training programme for the hotel group.

“The Macdonald Way will be the bible for this partnership, and it will be written as we deliver,” said Leach. “It will comprise standardised practices which all hotels can use as a reference guide, from how the therapist beds should be set up, to the uniform rules which need to be abided by. After the first 12-month period, Macdonald Hotels will then have an in-place programme for the next cohort of apprentices.”

The training programme is designed to be used as a complete staff training programme for Macdonald spas, both for for new apprentices and to up-skill and empower existing staff and create team-building and staff loyalty, the company said, as well as to achieve standardisation across all spas.

The International School of Beauty Therapy will provide onsite training at each spa, in addition to outside support through an intranet site dedicated to the partnership.

The partnership has two levels, the first focuses on facials, manicures and spa host training, followed by the second looking at body massage techniques and blended oils.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=y4a3g_O

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Demographics are dead: Trend report

Predicting consumer behaviour based on demographic norms such as age, gender and income as a means to shape a business has become obsolete, according to global agency trendwatching.com, which says it’s time for businesses to tear up the playbook.

In a feature for Health Club Management, the agency notes that consumers are rejecting traditional moulds of how they are expected to behave, choosing instead to construct their own identities and lifestyles around individual preferences and interests.

Citing unexpected statistics, such as the fact that women account for the majority of UK video game players, and that there are more gamers aged over 44 than under 18, trendwatching.com notes that the world is moving on and firms will have to keep pace with consumers’ changing tastes if they wish to prosper. Not only that, but they must keep abreast of innovation from competitors, as each leap forward leads to a shift in consumer expectations.

In terms of emerging consumer trends identified, one of the most interesting highlighted at the recent London Trend Seminar was the shift away from demonstrating status through material possessions, towards status as a product of who you are and what you do. This can be evidenced in the fitness market by the popularity of extreme obstacles course races and the focus from gyms in offering their services to help consumers train for these events.

The trendwatching.com report also strongly supports a departure from sector norms and advocates becoming what is often referred to as a ‘market disruptor’, to forge new ground.

Details: http://leisrta=heyX3fJ_O

McCull swaps LA fitness for Anytime

Fitness industry veteran Arthur McColl is leaving his role as COO of LA fitness to become CEO of Anytime Fitness Australia.

With LA fitness health clubs currently being absorbed into the portfolio of new owner Pure Gym, McColl has decided that now is the right time to pursue a new challenge and take up the reins at Australia’s biggest gym chain. In just seven years, Anytime Fitness Australia has amassed a total of 420 gyms and McColl has been tasked with increasing the franchise’s dominance.

"With a proven track record in multi-site management, product and brand innovation, business growth, plus team and member engagement, we are excited to see Arthur’s return to Australia as CEO for Anytime Fitness," said Anytime Australia chair and co-founder Justin McDonell.

McColl will be based at the Lane Cove Sydney HQ and will start on 26 October, having played a key role in transitioning LA fitness into the hands of its new owner.

McColl will be undertaking his second stint Down Under, having previously spent three years developing the Livingwell brand in Australia from 2003 until 2006.

Details: http://leisr?ta=Q4W7p_O