

Hunt appointed culture secretary in new government

By **Pete Hyman**

Jeremy Hunt has been named as the new culture, Olympics, media and sport secretary in a series of new appointments by Prime Minister, David Cameron

Responsibility for the London 2012 Games has been incorporated into Hunt's new role, having previously formed a separate brief under the previous Labour administration.

Hunt said: "Our sectors – particularly the creative industries, culture and tourism – are vital elements in the UK's recovery.

"And the successful delivery of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games in London gives us a once-in-a-lifetime



IMAGE: CONSERVATIVE PARTY/PAUL TOBMAN

Conservative MP Jeremy Hunt has been named culture secretary

chance to showcase the country to the world in what will be the greatest show on Earth."

Arts Council England chief executive Alan Davey has welcomed Hunt's appointment

to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Davey said: "In his role as shadow culture secretary he has been a knowledgeable and passionate advocate for the arts

and a thoughtful supporter of the work of the Arts Council.

A British Hospitality Association (BHA) spokesperson said: "The BHA is pleased that we have a government that can give stability for the country and has a clear view of the way forward, particularly in the areas of public expenditure, tax policies and interest rates."

Other appointments include the David Willetts as minister for universities and science.

The government has also ditched plans for a third runway at Heathrow and new runways at Stansted or Gatwick, while the Air Passenger Duty will be replaced with a 'per flight duty' targeting airlines.

Pottery museum trust placed into administration

Wedgwood Museum to stay open despite appointment of insolvency practitioners

By **Pete Hyman**

Trustees of the Wedgwood Museum in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, have called in administrators after being saddled with a multi-million pound pension deficit.

The museum – dedicated to the 250-year-old historic pottery group – will continue to operate despite the appointment of Bob Young and Steve Currie of Begbies Traynor as joint administrators.

Wedgwood Museum Trust said that it had taken the



The trust has been handed a multi-million pound deficit

decision in order to allow the Wedgwood Group Pension Plan to receive support from the Pension Protection Fund.

The trust, which was forced to take on the deficit – said to be £134m – after Waterford Wedgwood collapsed last year, is deemed liable for the shortfall as five employees were part of the 7,000-member plan.

George Stonier, chair of Wedgwood Museum Trust, said: "The trustees are extremely grateful for the continued support of the museum's staff and its many friends, and remain optimistic that the collections will continue to be available to the public in our museum."

FIA national audit of fitness

The Fitness Industry Association (FIA) and The Leisure Database Company, is offering members a free profiling service to measure and increase participation on a local level.

The free service will enable operators to assess their membership for the very first time, while also offering facilities and the industry as a whole a chance to compare themselves against government targets.

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Collections to benefit from MA grants

Nine UK attractions to receive cash injection as part of main funding programme

By **Martin Nash**

The Museums Association (MA) has awarded grants to ten candidates in the second round of Effective Collections funding.

Yorkshire Museum and Northumberland's Berwick Museum and Art Gallery are among nine applicants in line for main fund grants of up to £10,000. Supported by the Esmée Fairbairne Foundation, the grants will enable successful candidates to develop and utilise their stored collections.

Yorkshire Museum is to receive funding for a scheme offering local employees greater insight into the objects they work with. The Pocket Money project will offer people such as charity collectors a chance to learn more about the museum's coin collection.



Yorkshire Museum is one of the attractions in line for an MA grant

Berwick Museum and Art Gallery has proposed a review of its entire collection, which includes 19th century French paintings donated by William Burrell and an extensive store of social history objects.

In addition to main funding awards, a further special project grant of £25,000 has

been awarded to Oxfordshire Museums Service for The History Cube – a scheme offering community groups access, training and support so that they can curate collections relevant to their interests.

Other successful applicants include Orleans House Gallery in Twickenham, London.

£4.9m boost for Nottingham youth facility plans

By **Pete Hayman**

A new multi-million pound youth centre is to be built in Nottingham after the local authority secured more than £4.9m as part of the government's myplace initiative.

Nottingham City Council (NCC) is behind the NGY project, which is one of four proposed youth facilities earmarked for the East Midlands region that will benefit from a funding package worth almost £20m.

Plans for the new centre include a music recording studio; a DVD production area; a dance studio; a gym and a café, in addition to offering activities such as football and martial arts.

The council is working in partnership with a range of



NGY myplace will be housed within the former home of Trent FM

private, voluntary and statutory organisations on the scheme, ensuring the facility provides support and advice on issues affecting local 13-19-year-olds.

NGY myplace will be housed in a revamped historic building in the city centre – 29-31 Castle Gate, which is the former home of radio station Trent FM and a specialist women's hospital.

NCC portfolio holder for children and families David Mellen said: "NGY myplace will be an innovative place for young people aged 13 and above in the heart of the city. "Whether it is just a coffee and place to meet friends or being able to speak to a trained professional, NGY myplace will have it all."

Masterplanners chosen for IWM revamp

Foster + Partners to develop vision for proposed overhaul of London war attraction

By **Martin Nash**

The Imperial War Museum London has appointed Foster + Partners as architect and Drivers Jonas Deloitte as project manager for a planned revamp of the site.

The move to commission a master plan for the Lambeth Road site – formerly the Bethlem Royal Hospital (Bedlam) – is in order to improve the experience for visitors. It is planned that the first phase will be delivered in time for national commemoration of the First World War centenary in 2014.

Foster + Partners and Drivers Jonas Deloitte will work with the museum to develop a comprehensive masterplan within the footprint of the existing building.



A masterplan for the museum revamp is due by September 2010

The structure's internal space will be redesigned to provide new galleries and visitor service facilities; a coherent visitor route will also be created.

Plans will additionally address the museum's intention to make the most of its revenue generation opportunities and

provide a more sustainable infrastructure for both it and the collections within it.

The long-term project will take a phased implementation approach, which will begin once a spatial masterplan has been approved by the museum in September 2010.

NTC reveals plans to open Whitley Bay landmark

By **Pete Hayman**

North Tyneside Council (NTC) has announced plans to open up the Whitley Bay's Spanish City Dome to the public as part of the 2010 Heritage Open Days programme.

The historic landmark, which first opened in 1910, is undergoing structural repairs to enable the council to provide escorted tours of the building between 9 and 12 September.

NTC has been working in partnership with English Heritage, with support from development agency One



Whitley Bay's historic Spanish City Dome first opened in 1910

North East, to restore the Dome and ensure public access can be resumed.

Repair work has been carried

out to the building's roof and roof terraces, while walls are undergoing treatment.

NTC's elected mayor Linda Arkley said: "The completion of the structural repairs to the building, giving it a long term future again, is one of the best things we can do to mark the centenary of this iconic building."

"We will stage an exhibition in the ground floor of the Dome that will not only celebrate the Dome's past, but also its future use with information displays from the short-listed developers about proposals for the buildings."

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IN BRIEF

Gosling and Prince's Trust to deliver tennis

► Gosling Sports Park has launched a new partnership scheme with the Prince's Trust called xl clubs, a team-based programme of personal development for students in their last two years of compulsory schooling. Gosling – one of four International High Performance Tennis Centres in the UK – will offer its top tennis facilities and Gosling tennis coaches to help improve tennis opportunity for all, particularly local young people.

Redbridge revamp advances to next stage

► Redbridge Sports and Leisure has secured £250,000 worth of funding, allowing it to embark on the next phase of redevelopment work at the Redbridge Sports Centre. The independent leisure trust has been awarded £250,000 from the London Marathon Trust towards the cost of a new 12-court indoor sports hall, which will accommodate badminton and netball. The grant has been secured following a two-year fundraising campaign as the trust aims to build a new Olympic-standard sports hall.

Former FA chief 'voiced club finances concern'

► A leaked report compiled by former Football Association (FA) chief executive Ian Watmore has warned that more clubs may be on the verge of financial difficulties. According to the document seen by BBC Radio 4's *The Report* programme, Watmore wrote the report before resigning from the FA and suggested more clubs could be facing ruin. Efforts to introduce increased scrutiny over clubs' financial affairs have reportedly been opposed by both the Premier League and the Football League.

£500,000 for university sports plans

London institution receives Sport England boost towards redevelopment scheme

By **Pete Hayman**

Plans to redevelop and expand St Mary's University College's sports complex in Twickenham, London, ahead of the 2012 Olympics have been handed a £500,000 boost.

Sport England agreed the grant through its Community Involvement Fund, which will go towards the cost of a new-build part of a wider £8m project to upgrade facilities.

The new-build element will boast a sports hall, a strength and conditioning suite and changing facilities, and is set to be connected to an existing games hall and sports block.

Existing facilities will also be refurbished as part of the project, which is due to be



The new-build element of the project will boast a new sports hall

completed in summer 2011 and will see the centre used as a 2012 Pre-Games Training Camp for the South African squad.

It is also hoped the new facilities – designed by Rivington Street Studio and to be delivered by Morgan

Ashurst – will help develop stronger partnerships with the local community.

Professor Richard Fisher, head of St Mary's 2012 preparations, said: "It has been a long process but now the final part of funding is in place."

O2 Arena group reveals Olympic Stadium interest

By **Pete Hayman**

O2 Arena operator AEG has revealed that it is interested in taking over the running of London's Olympic Stadium following the 2012 Games.

The group is believed to be among a number of potential bidders that have expressed an interest in assuming control of the venue with the Olympic Park Legacy Company.

Although the bidding process for the right to run the stadium



AEG has confirmed its interest in running the venue post-2012

is at an early stage, an AEG spokesperson said: "Creating an ongoing success in East

London will not be easy and is not to be underestimated.

"However, we have turned the much loved Millennium Dome into the world's most successful venue in the form of The O2 and think, with reason, we understand East London better than most."

Other potential bidders include a joint venture between West Ham United Football Club and Newham Council, while Essex County Cricket Club are also reportedly interested.

London 2012 chiefs report 'healthy' ticket demand

London 2012 organisers have confirmed that more than 1 million people have registered their interest in obtaining tickets to attend Olympic and Paralympic events.

Nearly all – 96 per cent – of ticket registrations came from UK residents, with nearly a third from Greater London. More than 40 per cent were from people outside south east England.

Sebastian Coe, the chair of London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, said: "What has been really interesting is that there has been significant interest across all Olympic and Paralympic sports."

Public display for Worthing pool plans

Wilkinson Eyre Architects-designed proposals due to be submitted at end of May

By **Pete Hayman**

Local residents in Worthing, West Sussex, will be given the opportunity to view proposals for the town's new £17m swimming pool and leisure complex throughout May.

Plans for the Wilkinson Eyre Architects-designed scheme are due to be submitted at the end of May, with construction work expected to start at the seafront site in April 2011.

The proposed seafront complex will include a six-lane, 25m competition pool; a combined learner and diving pool with 1m (3.3ft) and 3m (9.8ft) diving boards; and an indoor leisure pool with flume and outdoor waters.

A health and fitness centre, a café and flexible studio space



The seafront complex will include a six-lane, 25m swimming pool

for activities and events are also among the facilities planned as part of the scheme, with details of the leisure waters still yet to be finalised.

A spokesperson for Worthing Borough Council said: "The design aims to maximise the potential of the site with

'ribbons' of accommodation flowing from north to south to emphasise the connection between land and sea."

Wilkinson Eyre Architects was selected for the scheme after winning a Royal Institute of British Architects design competition for the venue.

IN BRIEF

Trust takes over Bournemouth facilities

► Bournemouth Borough Council has transferred responsibility for five leisure facilities, the Bournemouth International Centre and the Pavilion to a new trust – BH Live. Run by an independent board of 11 trustees, the charitable trust took control of the venues on 1 May after being set up to deliver "significant" financial and service benefits. Stokewood Leisure Centre; Sir David English Sports Centre; Kinson Swimming Pool; Pelhams Park Leisure Centre and the Littledown Centre are the sites now operated by BH Live.

New changing village for Hartlepool facility

► Hartlepool Borough Council has unveiled a new changing village at the town's Mill House Leisure Centre as part of its wider £1m refurbishment of the venue. Funded mainly by Sport England, work has included replacing the male and female changing rooms with a single village, which is designed to be family friendly and offer access for disabled people.

Sporta re-elects board for fourth term

► The Sports and Recreation Trust Association (sporta) has re-elected its executive committee for an unprecedented fourth term. The committee, voted back in during the sporta AGM, comprises chair Craig McAteer from Link4Life; vice chair Jon Argent from Halo Leisure; treasurer Mark Sesnan from Greenwich Leisure; and honorary secretary Adrian Bailey from Barnsley Premiere Leisure. The only change to the executive board is the replacement of Edinburgh Leisure's Keith Jackson, who is retiring, with Ewan Jackson of Borders Sport and Leisure Trust.

London Irish plans rejected

Spelthorne Council in west London has rejected plans by London Irish rugby club for a new sporting centre of excellence in Sunbury-on-Thames, Surrey.

The application was in two parts, the first to demolish the clubhouse, driving range and other structures at Hazelwood Golf Club site to create five adult and 12 junior pitches, plus a clubhouse for London Irish.

The second was to demolish the existing London Irish stand and clubhouse in The Avenue, Sunbury, and use the land for the development of a mix of 194 houses and flats, a 60-bedroom care home, a health centre and a neighbourhood park.

Sportspark submits £2.8m plans



The scheme will create a new Olympic-standard gymnastics venue

By **Luke Tuchscherer**

Sportspark, a multi-million pound sports facility located at the University of East Anglia (UEA), has submitted plans for a £2.8m expansion.

As previously reported by *Leisure Opportunities*, the plans are set to include an Olympic-standard gymnastics centre and an enlarged SoccerPark.

If the plans are approved, three new seven-a-side football

pitches are due to open before Christmas and the gymnastics centre by next summer.

UEA director of PE and sport Keith Nicholls said: "Our success over the last decade has enabled us to reinvest nearly £9m in the last seven years.

"The gymnastics centre will enable us to meet the huge unsatisfied demand for gymnastics in the area and open up Sportspark to a large number of new young people."

IN BRIEF

Wii Fit clubs launched in Colchester

► Colchester Borough Council has rolled out new Wii Fit clubs across the Essex town in a bid to encourage more young people to become active. A pilot scheme proved successful at St James' Primary School, with a second Wii Fit club to be set up at St John's Green Primary School. Three Wii Fit consoles have been bought after the council secured funding from the Child First Extended Schools programme for North Essex. Forming part of the Safer Colchester initiative, the clubs will be delivered by council street wardens Stuart McEwan and Simon Townley.

TAG programme reaches 300 landmark

► Transforming a Generation (TAG) has ensured that more than 300 young people, who were claiming Job Seekers benefits, are now in training to be fitness instructors and/or in work. The number has been reached within five months of the launch. Designed to help unemployed young people enter the health and fitness industry, TAG aims to put 1,800 young people through the scheme during the next year. TAG was set up by Fred Turok, chair of the Fitness Industry Association and the founder of LA Fitness.

£182,000 boost for Angus initiatives

► Angus Council invested more than £182,000 in projects designed to promote walking and cycling last year. Nearly £160,000 was spent on the upgrade of paths at Kirriemuir's East Hill Road; Hospitalfield, Arbroath; and Orchard Loan to Forfar Loch. Cycle storage areas at local schools and the purchase of reflective jackets for walking buses were made possible through a £15,000 contribution.

Council unveils Armley Leisure Centre

Leeds City Council launches new facility as part of wider £33m joint development

By **Pete Hayman**

Leeds City Council (LCC) has unveiled the new multi-million pound Armley Leisure Centre.

A 100-station Bodyline fitness suite; a 25m swimming pool and 10m learner pool; and a hydrotherapy pool are among the facilities at the complex, which was unveiled on 18 May and forms part of a wider £33m leisure development in the city.

Armley Leisure Centre also incorporates a four-court sports hall; a two-court sports hall; a dance studio and a café, along with a new outdoor multi-use games area.

Reading-based contractor Interserve started construction work on the new facility in October 2008, with the project managed by the Local Education Partnership with support from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport



LCC's John Procter tries out Armley Leisure Centre's fitness suite

and Sport England. A new leisure complex is also being developed at Morley as part of the wider £33m scheme, which is being overseen by LCC and will replace former facilities that have now been demolished in order to make way for the joint scheme.

John Procter, the council's executive member for leisure, said: "Lots of credit goes to

the whole team overseeing the project who, despite all the recent problems in the building market, have ensured this centre is opening perfectly on schedule.

"We are sure it will be hugely popular and well used in particular by the local community, so we cannot wait now to get the doors open and for people to start using it."

Eating disorder advice revealed

In association with Anorexia and Bulimia Care and Institute of Sports and Recreation Management (ISRM), the Fitness Industry Association (FIA) has developed a set of guidelines designed to help club managers deal with vulnerable exercisers who are at risk of, or already suffer from, eating disorders.

Part of a skills strategy designed to help fitness professionals deal more effectively with a wider community, the guidelines are available to FIA and ISRM members from the FIA and ISRM websites.

New gym for Pontypridd facility

By **Pete Hayman**

A new-look fitness suite has been unveiled at Hawthorn Leisure Centre in Pontypridd, South Wales, following a £70,000 scheme to upgrade the facility.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, which runs the venue, has leased 40 pieces of equipment as part of an agreement with Life Fitness.

The facility, which boasts a free weights area and a stretch area, also includes a layout that incorporates Life Fitness' Life Fitness Journey to guide users in their training.

Robert Bevan, the council's cabinet member for culture and recreation, said: "The newly



The new gym was unveiled by ex-sprinter Darren Campbell

refurbished fitness suite at Hawthorn Leisure Centre is exemplary and will undoubtedly impress the regular users.

"A range of groundbreaking initiatives are also being run, such as health referral schemes offering tailor-made exercise programmes to help patients on the road to recovery."

Paultons to open Peppa Pig attraction

Hampshire theme park plans seven new rides inspired by kids' television character

By **Luke Tuchscherer**

An attraction based on the children's TV show Peppa Pig is being built at Paultons Family Theme Park near the New Forest in Hampshire.

Peppa Pig World – scheduled to open by Easter next year – is being developed in partnership with Paultons, E1 Entertainment and the show's creators, Astley Baker Davies.

The park will feature seven rides inspired by the show – the Peppa Pig family car, Miss Rabbit's helicopter, Grandpa Pig's train, George's dinosaur, a Balloon ride, Danny Dog's car, George's boat and a ride in the 'clouds' around Windy Castle.

Some of the most popular and recognisable elements of the show will be recreated to make guests "feel like they are inside Peppa's world", including Peppa Pig's house, a fully



The attraction will be based on the popular children's TV character

animated attraction where visitors can watch Peppa and her family enjoying breakfast in their hill top home.

Along with the themed rides and outdoor play area, Peppa Pig World will feature the only Peppa Pig-themed indoor play area in the country.

The theme park will also boast the UK's largest Peppa Pig shop, which will sell a

range of Peppa Pig products on-site, in addition to exclusive merchandise that will only be available from Paultons.

Paultons Park commercial director Steve Lorton, said: "This is by far the largest project the park has ever undertaken and we are thrilled to have secured an exclusive license with E1 Entertainment for the UK and Ireland."

IN BRIEF

Cleethorpes theme park to reopen

► The Pleasure Land theme park in Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire, has reopened after suddenly closing on 14 April. The park, which was owned by Flamingo Land, has been reopened by Melanie Wood, one of its directors, and new owners DewarSavile Enterprises. Mrs Wood told the BBC that 99 per cent of the 200 staff that lost their jobs would return for the relaunch on 1 May. Pleasure Island Family Theme Park was opened in 1993 by Wood's father, the late Robert Gibb.

Cumbrian mine unveils zip wire plans

► The owner of the Honister Slate Mine near Keswick, Cumbria, has announced plans to develop a new zip wire attraction from the top of a 2,126ft (648m) Lake District mountain. Mark Weir's plans for the Lancaster Aerial Flight will see a cable running between the peak of Fleetwith Pike to the Honister Slate Mine Visitor Centre in the Borrowdale Valley. Plans have been submitted to the Lake District National Park Authority, which are due to be considered in June. If approved, the attraction is due to open in late summer.

Craigievar Castle reopens to the public

► Craigievar Castle, near Alford in Aberdeenshire, reopened on 1 May following a two-year restoration programme. The reopening of the National Trust for Scotland-operated property marks the end of a project to replace a concrete-based harling applied during the castle's last facelift in the 1970s with a traditional lime-based alternative. The 17th century tower-house, which is built on seven floors, attracts up to 15,000 visitors a year.

Nightingale expo unveiled by NT

Letters and artefacts belonging to Florence Nightingale have been put on public display for the first time to mark the centenary of the nurse's death.

The National Trust (NT) has made a range of memorabilia, available at Claydon House, Buckinghamshire – former home of Nightingale's sister Frances Parthenope Verney and brother-in-law, Sir Harry Verney.

In addition to the exhibition, the NT has used photographs to recreate the private sitting room once used by Nightingale.

Claydon House manager Philip Warner said: "This gives visitors the chance to discover a different aspect of the life of one of our country's most enduring heroines."

Cash pledge for Margate scheme

By **Pete Hayman**

Plans for a heritage attraction in Margate, Kent, have been handed a boost after the local authority agreed to contribute up to £4m towards the scheme.

Thanet District Council (TDC) has pledged £2.2m towards the regeneration of the Dreamland site, which is set to house one of the world's first amusement park of historic rides.

Councillors also agreed to borrow up to £1.8m if the scheme is unable to attract alternative funding, although the proposals are subject to approval from the full council.

In addition to the funding, TDC cabinet members agreed to start work on transferring part of the Dreamland site from



The scheme will transform the town's former Dreamland site

owner Margate Town Centre Regeneration Company, which will enable the development of the heritage amusement park.

TDC is working in partnership with the Dreamland Trust on the scheme, which has been awarded funding through the government's Sea Change initiative, as well as from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

IN BRIEF

Punch reveals £20m pub investment plan

► Punch Taverns has announced plans to invest £20m across its UK pub estate to help encourage growth through a series of "small-scale" improvements. The pub group has revealed that 450 properties will benefit from an average of £37,000 under its Investing For Growth (I4G) to carry out work to boost trade. Work has already started at 12 sites, focussing on upgrading food promotions and improving cask-ale deals in the lead up to the World Cup and the summer.

Leisureplex acquires Welsh seaside hotel

► Coach holiday and seaside hotel operator Leisureplex has acquired the 67-bedroom Seabank Hotel in Porthcawl, South Wales, from Park Hill Hotels in a deal worth around £2m. Facilities at the hotel include a 120-cover restaurant, a 100-cover bar and five function rooms. Leisure property specialist Christie + Co acted on behalf of Park Hill Hotels on the deal. Leisureplex currently operates 17 hotels in the UK and the Seabank Hotel will become the company's third Welsh hotel.

Travelodge appoints new chief executive

► Budget hotel chain Travelodge has announced that Guy Parsons will take up the position of chief executive officer from 1 July, after being chosen to succeed Grant Hearn. Hearn – the group's chief executive officer since 2003 – is poised to become executive chair, while former non-executive chair Keith Hamill has been appointed deputy chair. Parsons joined Travelodge as its managing director UK in October 2004, having served as managing director at restaurant chain TGI Friday's and sales and marketing director at Whitbread.

Clapham House announces GBK plans

Restaurant chain set for expansion after London-based group reveals share issue

By **Pete Hayman**

Restaurant operator Clapham House Group (CHG) has revealed plans to raise around £2.2m through a new share placing to grow its Gourmet Burger Kitchen (GBK) business.

More than 3.7 million shares have been made available through its conditional placing, which will go towards supporting the UK-based group's restaurant opening programme.

CHG currently operates 58 restaurants under the GHK and The Real Greek brands across the country, as well as 15 international outlets. Expansion plans are set to be carried out in the financial years (FY) ending March 2011 and 2012.

Paul Campbell, the group's chief executive, said: "We



The new share issue will help CHG further expand the GBK chain

slowed our expansion programme over the last two years during the recession.

"We chose our new sites carefully during this period and will continue to do so.

"We have already identified a number of locations which we believe have good potential for

FY 2011 and 2012. This will drive the continuing growth of GBK, as well as creating employment opportunities within the company."

Since acquiring GHK in 2004, CHG has expanded the business from six restaurants to 51, 29 of which are located in London.

Ash slows hoteliers' recovery

The recovery of the UK hospitality sector has been slowed by the volcanic ash cloud that caused air travel disruption earlier this month.

Robert Barnard, partner for hotel consultancy services at PKF, revealed that increasing occupancy rates since the start of the year have been hit by cancelled bookings.

Meanwhile, preliminary figures for March released by PKF Hotel Consultancy Services revealed a 5.7 per cent increase in occupancy at London hotels compared with the same period last year.

Regional hotels, however, continue to suffer as room rate dropped by 6.3 per cent.

Marriott opens at Lingfield Park



The hotel's corner rooms will provide views of the racing venue

By **Martin Nash**

Marriott Hotels and Resorts has opened the 116-room Lingfield Park Marriott Hotel and Country Club under a franchise agreement with Arena Leisure.

The property is adjacent to Lingfield Park Racecourse, between London and Brighton and one of the UK's oldest horse racing venues, birds-eye views of which can be had from the hotel's corner rooms.

Facilities at the hotel include Breathe Spa – offering an indoor swimming pool, steam room, sauna and fitness centre – and a newly landscaped 18-hole golf course complete with teaching academy

On-site facilities also include a restaurant – called the Cyprium Bar and Grill – and a selection of conference and banqueting suites.

An official opening celebration is planned for 21 June.



ADAM Architecture is behind designs for the new Soho base2stay

Green light for new London hotel

base2stay concept eyeing up new Soho development

By **Pete Hayman**

Construction work on a new 73-bedroom base2stay hotel in Soho, London, is poised to get underway early next year after the project was given the green light by the local authority.

Westminster City Council's planning committee has approved plans for the five-storey development, which has been drawn up by London-based ADAM Architecture and incorporates a neo-classical design.

base2stay – the hotel concept first unveiled in

Kensington, west London, in 2006 – was devised by founder Robert Nadler in order to remove what it calls "unused extras", such as bar, restaurant and gym facilities.

Rooms are equipped with mini-kitchens – including a microwave, a sink, a kettle and a fridge – to encourage guests to bring their own food, as well as an on-screen 'base directory' of local attractions and services.

The Soho base2stay property will be located on Carlisle Street, although the group's next hotel is due to open in Liverpool in August 2010.

Whitbread posts revenue increase

Year-end figures released by leisure group Whitbread show total revenue for the period increased by 7.5 per cent on the same time last year (£1.334m) at £1.435m.

Like for like sales were down 0.5 per cent for the year but showed a rise of 3.1 per cent in the fourth quarter.

Pre-tax profits were up 6.6 per cent at £239.1m, with profit after tax rising to £160m against £90.3m for

2008/2009. Net debt fell by £109.7m to £513.4m, against £623.1m last year.

Premier Inn, the company's budget hotel division, saw sales up 4.7 per cent, with like for like sales declining 4.3 per cent.

Sales at Whitbread's restaurants – Beefeater, Brewers Fayre, Table Table and Taybarns – rose 1.3 per cent, with like for like sales seeing a rise of 1.7 per cent.

Modern technology - our master or our slave?

Recent advances mean hospitality managers can be swamped with vast amounts of data

Of the many areas which impact on the hospitality manager's day-to-day responsibilities, technology is one the most difficult to control. No one can deny that the technological advances we have witnessed over the past 25 years have transformed our working lives, not to speak of their wider impact on society.

Today, it would be inconceivable to operate any business without the support of the Internet, and this is especially true for the hospitality industry, where on-line reservation systems and attractive web-sites are now key elements in the marketing mix for all companies.

At the same time, the advent of low-cost airlines, fuelled by the ease with which sales activity can be made through the Internet, together with more rapid and sophisticated communications systems have created a demand for the hospitality product in a way which would have been unimaginable even 10 years ago.

The advent of social media, including Twitter, as well as sites such as TripAdvisor, have revolutionised the power of the customer, and businesses across all sectors are having to respond rapidly and intelligently if they are to exploit the full potential of these phenomena.

Internally, the hospitality manager now has access to guest management systems, as well as endless permutations of management information. The challenge, of course, is how to manage the technology to best advantage without becoming a slave to the systems designed to support managers. Yet the advances in technology are so rapid that it has become very difficult for individual managers to keep abreast.

It is in this context that membership of a professional body can really help in providing welcome support. For example, the Institute of Hospitality has transformed its information services over the past couple of years in order to provide a modern and responsive service for its members. Its regular publications, as well as access to more than 400 sector-relevant e-Books also provide insight and evaluation (in layman's language) of technological advances to ensure members maintain their awareness without being swamped by detail.

In an age where individuals can be masters of their own (virtual) universe, it is reassuring to know that help is at hand when a cyber attack looms!



Institute of Hospitality
formerly HILMA

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is chief executive
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IN BRIEF

Arts project to 'uncover' Belfast's historic rivers

► A new arts scheme – backed by Belfast City Council – is set to "uncover" some of the hidden rivers that helped to shape the city. Resounding Rivers will see artist Matt Green project sound into the city's streets to provide the Blackstaff and Farset rivers with a "renewed presence", as well as the reshaped Lagan. Green – a sound artist based at the Sonic Arts Research Centre – has been commissioned by PLACE, the Architecture and Built Environment Centre for Northern Ireland, for the scheme.

RSC nears £112.8m theatre appeal target

► The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) has revealed that it needs a further £5.5m to reach its Transforming Our Theatres fundraising target. More than £107m has already been raised through the RSC's £112.8m appeal, which was launched to help fund the creation of a new home for the organisation in Stratford-upon-Avon. A new film trailer has been unveiled by the RSC in an attempt to raise the remaining £5.5m, which will go towards a scheme to revamp the Royal Shakespeare Theatre.

Council approves Hackney Empire plans

► Hackney Council have approved plans for a scheme adjacent to the Hackney Empire that aims to safeguard the historic venue. London-based Thornsett Group is leading the Wilton Way project, which includes the demolition of office facilities and the construction of a new building. Plans include 425sq m (4,575sq ft) of flexible space to be used for community activities linked with the Empire, including a 46sq m (495sq ft) café and reception area.

Arts venue opens after £15m revamp

Purpose-built exhibition space among improved facilities at Birmingham complex

By **Pete Hayman**

A Birmingham arts venue has reopened after closing for two years to enable a major £15m renovation to be carried out.

Work at the Midlands Arts Centre (mac) has included the creation of the Gallery, the venue's first purpose-built exhibition space, as well as refurbished visual arts, crafts and performing arts studios.

A new visual arts education suite and an audio and visual media studio capable of transmitting to other parts of the centre are also among the mac's new facilities.

The centre has been working on the scheme in partnership with a local south Asian arts company – sampad – which



mac closed for two years to allow the renovation to be carried out

promotes work from countries such as India and Sri Lanka.

Improved access, upgraded seating and lighting and a larger café have also formed part of the renovation, which was funded by Birmingham City Council and other sources.

mac chief executive and artistic director Dorothy Wilson said: "Over the last two years, the one element that's been missing from mac has been the people, and it's wonderful at the end of a project like this to see mac brought back to life."

New cultural trust to manage Peterborough sites

By **Pete Hayman**

A new trust has taken over the management of a number of culture and leisure venues owned by Peterborough City Council (PCC) as part of a new 25-year deal, which came into effect on 1 May.

Trust officials launched the new 'Vivacity' brand in a bid to encourage more people to use the facilities, which include sports centres, the Key Theatre and Peterborough Museum.



The Key Theatre is among the venues now run by the trust

The trust is applying for charitable status that will exclude it from business rates

and allow it to secure other benefits, including funding sources not open to the council.

Existing staff members have been transferred into the new trust, with employment and pension conditions set to be protected under Transfer of Undertakings regulations.

Trust chair Shelagh Smith said: "Recent reports indicate that many councils expect budget cuts in discretionary services such as libraries and sports facilities."

Barbican director to lead Cardiff's Millennium Centre

Mark Taylor, commercial and venues director at the Barbican arts complex in London, has been appointed chief executive of Wales Millennium Centre (WMC) in Cardiff.

Taylor will take up the position in August after his appointment was confirmed by the WMC chair, Lord Rowe-Beddoe, on 21 April.

Since joining the Barbican as commercial director in 1996, Taylor helped increase the venue's average commercial net income from £2.3m a year to £4.4m in 2008-9.

Taylor said: "Wales Millennium Centre sits at the heart of bringing the world to Wales and taking Wales to the world."

RSPB plans new Solway coast reserve

Improved visitor experience to form part of proposals for Wigtown Bay scheme

By **Pete Hayman**

A new coastal nature reserve and visitor experience is being planned for the Solway Firth, Scotland, under plans revealed by RSPB Scotland.

The conservation group has acquired more than 150 hectares (371 acres) of saltmarsh and floodplain on the western coast of Wigtown Bay to progress the proposals.

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) has provided £200,000 towards the scheme, although an additional £525,000 is still required in order to enable RSPB Scotland to transform the area into a new reserve.

The site, which is regarded as an important stopping-off point for birds migrating south, is set to benefit from an increase in wet grassland and



The Crook of Baldoon will form part of the coastal nature reserve

RSPB Scotland aims to provide easy access for visitors.

Dave Beaumont, regional reserves manager for south and west Scotland at RSPB Scotland, said: "We now have a fantastic opportunity to protect this magical place as a vital haven for wildlife as well as a tranquil place for people to enjoy."

SNH area manager Chris Miles added: "The RSPB proposals for this site fit well with the marketing of the Wigtown Book Town and the 'Wigtown Bay Ospreys Project'. "[The proposals] complement the growing reputation of Dumfries and Galloway for outstanding wildlife tourism."

EU funding for Norfolk Broads green tourism plans

By **Pete Hayman**

Plans to introduce a number of green tourism projects on the Norfolk Broads have received a €500,000 (£434,384) boost from the European Union (EU).

The Broads Authority will launch a new tourism website at the end of May as a result of the funding, while a range of other initiatives are also in line to net a share of the funding.

Improvements to visitor facilities between Ludham Bridge and How Hill; the introduction of a new conservation fund; and an increase in the number of waterway electricity charging points are among the projects mooted.

The funding has been made available by the Sustainable Tourism in Estuary Parks (STEP) initiative, part of the European



The money will be used to improve the Broads' visitor experience

Regional Development Fund's Interreg Two Seas programme.

Ian Russell, chair of the Broads Tourism Forum, said: "Funding of this type presents a range of wonderful opportunities to deliver new initiatives which will help improve the visitor experience."

The Broads Authority head of tourism Bruce Hanson said: "It

provides a great boost for sustainable tourism in the Broads and we are particularly pleased to be working very closely with the Broads Tourism Forum to achieve our aims."

As part of the STEP project, the Broads will be working with Biesbosch National Park in Holland and a protected area around Kruikebeke in Belgium.

IN BRIEF

Council holds Sheffield park consultation

► Sheffield City Council has held a consultation to gather comments on plans to enhance an area of green space in the heart of the South Yorkshire city. Residents in the St Vincent's quarter were asked to give views on efforts to increase the size of the space between Edward Street and Upper Allen Street. Plans include the remodelling of the existing ball games area as a multi-purpose arena with sitting walls and terraces; the creation of a new artificial grass surface and new public art. Electrical supplies to help support community entertainment and events is also included as part of the scheme.

Council unveils Bramall Hall consultation

► Stockport Council has unveiled a new public consultation in a bid to gather comments on its plans to revitalise Bramhall Hall and Park, Cheshire. The consultation exercise, which commenced in April and will run throughout May, aims to help develop a new "holistic and sustainable" strategy to guide the site's management. Local residents can view the plans at Vernon Park Museum until 18 May, having previously been put on public display at Bramhall and Central Libraries.

Forestry sector to discuss Scottish issues

► A range of key issues – such as the use of timber in construction – set to affect the Scottish forestry sector in the coming years are due to be debated by industry representatives at a major conference on 2 June. Organised by the Confederation of Forest Industries and Forestry Commission Scotland, the Low Carbon Economy conference will include a speech from Richard Lochhead, cabinet secretary for rural affairs and the environment.



THE PRINCE'S
REGENERATION TRUST

TENDER OPPORTUNITY: Audience Development Plan

The Prince's Regeneration Trust are project managers for the first phase of the regeneration of Bletchley Park, working closely with Bletchley Park Trust. As a critical part of the development of the site, we are commissioning an Audience Development Plan and are inviting organisations with suitable experience with the opportunity to tender for this piece of work.

The site is complex and a main imperative of the project is to make the visitor experience more coherent, enjoyable to explore and intuitive.

A major redevelopment and modernisation programme is currently being implemented at Bletchley Park. The project is an ambitious and long overdue regeneration of historic Bletchley Park to create an improved exciting and innovative museum and centre of education worthy of the site's unique heritage. The project will preserve the unique heritage of this important site whilst improving the layout and accessibility. The project will improve life-long learning opportunities at Bletchley Park, and will renovate historic buildings currently at significant risk of collapse.

To request a copy of the Audience Development Plan brief, please email tenders@princes-regeneration.org

Tender documentation must be submitted electronically by no later than noon on Friday 28th May 2010.

President HRH The Prince of Wales
90-92 Great Portland Street, London, W1W 7NT
Charity No.1089932



Expressions of Interest are invited by Buckinghamshire County Council for the future management and control of 4 Country Parks which attract more than 500,000 visitors per annum

- Black Park Country Park
- Langley Park Country Park
- Denham Country Park
- Thorney Park

and up to 40 green spaces which include, woodlands, nature reserves, picnic areas and associated car parks comprising in total approximately 630 ha

For further information visit:

www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/parks/country_parks_green_spaces_project.page

Please send Expressions of Interest to the following address:

Buckinghamshire County Council,
Finance and Commercial Services,
Room G21, Old County Offices,
Walton Street,
Aylesbury HP20 1YG
email: procurement@buckscc.gov.uk

Please note: Interested organisations must request an information pack and a Pre Qualification Questionnaire from the above address. The deadline for receipt of completed Pre Qualification Questionnaires is 5:00pm on Friday 18th June. Any responses received after this deadline will not be considered.



Leasehold business opportunity in Norfolk

Operation of a theatre and cinema venue

Princess 
Theatre & Cinema
Hunstanton

The Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk is seeking expressions of interest from suitable individuals or organisations for the management, promotion and operation of the 472-seat Princess Theatre and Cinema venue on an initial ten-year lease, subject to negotiation.

The venue, which includes café and bar facilities, is situated in a prominent location in Hunstanton, a coastal resort at the mouth of the Wash in the North West of Norfolk, approximately 16 miles from King's Lynn. The venue is in a good state of repair. Innovative proposals are being sought which include the provision of a year-round programme of entertainment along with a summer season programme of 13-weeks in total.

Potential operators would also be required to maintain availability of the venue for use by community groups and for amateur productions.

In considering proposals from potential operators, the Council will be flexible and open to suggestions as long they include ways in which the aforementioned requirements could be met.

For further information or informal discussion, contact Michael Walsh on 01553 616396 or e-mail: michael.walsh@west-norfolk.gov.uk.

To express an interest and request a pre-qualification questionnaire please email: procurementtenders@west-norfolk.gov.uk. Expressions of interest should be received by 12 noon on 11.06.2010.

For further details about the venue and to view lease particulars, please visit the Council's website: www.west-norfolk.gov.uk

www.halton.gov.uk

Tender Opportunity

Halton Borough Council invites expressions of interest from suitably experienced and financially secure organisations that are willing to work in partnership with the Council to secure the redevelopment of the sports facilities at Widnes Recreation Club, Liverpool Road, Widnes WE8 7EY.

The site is spread over 11.8 hectares and currently provides space for 9 outdoor pitches, bowling greens, changing facilities, large clubhouse, with car parking.

The Council is offering a lease and organisations are encouraged to develop proposals to manage the site as a multi sport activity centre and a centre of sporting excellence, for both outdoor and indoor activity. The management and development of the site should be in line with Halton's priorities and it is envisaged significant investment will be required. The ownership of the site will remain with the Council. The Council would still expect to see the facility operating pitch hire from the autumn of 2010.

Companies wishing to be considered or requiring further information should apply in writing by letter for the pre-qualification (PQQ) documentation as soon as possible but no later than 12pm Friday 4 June 2010, to:

John Hatton, Leisure and Recreation Manager, Runcorn Town Hall, Heath Road, Runcorn, WA7 5TD or email john.hatton@halton.gov.uk

Completed pre-qualification documentation must be submitted as soon as possible but no later than 12pm Friday 18 June 2010.

A list of tenderers for this contract will be drawn up following the receipt and analysis of completed questionnaires; subsequently tender documents will be issued to selected applicants.

A response to this advertisement does not in itself guarantee an issue of an invitation to tender and Halton Borough Council does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any tender subsequently received.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST: Management of the Grange Golf Course, Walsall

Walsall Council is seeking Expressions of Interest from suitable leisure management contractors to enter into a contract to manage and develop The Grange Golf Course, Walsall under an initial 10 year Lease and Operating Agreement.

The Council wants a person or organisation that supports our vision for an excellent golf service, and welcomes ideas and proposals for the long term development and sustainability of pay and play golf in Walsall. There would be no capital or revenue support from Walsall Council for the duration of the contract and the Council would not support proposals involving the large scale import of materials. The Council would also require that the golf course is open to members of the general public and that the charging policies have been previously agreed with the Council.

Interested parties are asked to register an Expression of Interest by either email to procurement@walsall.gov.uk or in writing to:- Walsall Council, Procurement Team, The Council House, Lichfield St, Walsall, West Midlands WS1 1TP

THE DEADLINE FOR REGISTERING AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IS NO LATER THAN 12 NOON ON 4TH JUNE 2010.

Interested parties will be required to complete and return a qualification questionnaire which will be used to assess the suitability and capability of potential bidders. The questionnaire will be emailed to organisations expressing an interest. Interested parties must include their email address when registering their Expression of Interest.

If the Council receives interest from a sufficient number of eligible parties invitations to submit outline proposals will be issued and evaluated prior to detailed invitations to tender.

The deadline for receipt of completed questionnaires is no later than 12 noon on 25th June 2010.

Completed questionnaires may be emailed to procurement@walsall.gov.uk or be in a plain unmarked envelope and returned to the address above.



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EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Nottingham City Council is seeking expression of interest from prospective operators to provide a comprehensive city centre Christmas offer for 2010

This includes a Winter Wonderland and a themed market incorporating an outdoor bar and food outlets.

Expressions of interest are requested by 4 June 2010

For more information call Matthew Gilbert on 0115 915 8618 or email matthew.gilbert@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Nottingham City Council
Arts and Events, 2nd Floor,
Isabella Street, Nottingham
NG1 6AT



HERRIOT
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www.worldofjamesherriot.org

SALE / LEASE EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

The World of James Herriot is a popular visitor attraction in Thirsk, North Yorkshire, celebrating the famous author and veterinary surgeon. The attraction is also a registered museum and attracted 29,000 visitors in 2009/10.

Hambleton District Council is inviting offers to buy or lease the property and to take responsibility for the operation of the visitor attraction. Once expressions of interest have been received, the Council will seek formal bids to determine the most economically favourable offer.

If you want to express an interest, please provide your details to the contact below, together with a brief proposal on how you envisage you will continue to develop and manage the World of James Herriot. You should do this by 04 June 2010.

For further information on the operation of the World of James Herriot, you can contact Clair Hewitt on (01609) 767102 or clair.hewitt@hambleton.gov.uk



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IN BRIEF

Work to start on Leicester 'gateway'

► Leicester City Council has announced that work on a £1.65m project to transform one of the gateways into the city centre is due to start later this month. A ground-level, 10m (32.8ft)-wide crossing for pedestrians and cyclists will be installed to replace the existing underpass between Granby Street and the station as part of the scheme. Plans include alterations and landscaping to the surrounding areas and the development of a network of cycle lanes, with work set to get underway in the week commencing 24 May. The government's New Growth Point initiative is funding the scheme, which will see the underpass filled in during the summer and work on the new crossing begin in the autumn.

Desborough leisure centre plans approved

► Plans for the development of a new leisure complex at the Grange Estate in Desborough, Northamptonshire, have been awarded the green light by local planners. Kettering Borough Council (KBC) has approved proposals subject to the signing of a Section 106 agreement, which will also include the construction of 13 affordable houses. The first of a two-phase leisure centre development will comprise a four-court sports hall, a fitness suite, changing facilities and an entrance lobby, as well as play areas. However, KBC has called for the proposed site of the new leisure centre to be decontaminated in accordance with government and Environment Agency regulations.

Merchant Quarter plans for Aberdeen

Local council working with local businesses to transform historic part of the city

By **Pete Hayman**

Aberdeen City Council (ACC) has revealed that it is working with a consortium of local businesses to create a Merchant Quarter in the city.

The venture aims to help promote tourism, leisure, business and retail opportunities in the city centre, incorporating a wide range of daytime and evening activities.

A total of 26 independent businesses have signed up to the consortium, which aims to create a new cultural "grown-up" area based around food, drink and lifestyle businesses.

The vision for Aberdeen also includes a new artistic gateway, including themed lighting, sculptures and street furniture, while also improving the city's tourism offer.



Part of the Green will be included in the planned Merchant Quarter

Merchant Quarter plans will also feature part of the Green – an area being regenerated under a £2.8m Townscape Heritage Initiative involving a number of public bodies.

ACC director of enterprise, planning and infrastructure, Gordon McIntosh, said: "This area is the historic heart of

Aberdeen and was for many years a bustling, thriving hub of activity.

"The concept of a safe, secure and pleasant environment where people can socialise and enjoy amenities and attractions away from the more boisterous atmosphere on Union Street is bound to be a winner."

£114m scheme for Lambeth

Lambeth Council has unveiled plans for the £114m regeneration of the Myatt's Field North estate in south London as part of a new public consultation exercise.

Residents living on or near the estate are being handed the chance to comment on plans, which include sports facilities and a landscaped park.

A community centre and revamped commercial units also feature among the plans, in addition to the refurbishment of 172 homes.

Work starts on Heathrow's T2

By **Pete Hayman**

Demolition work has started at London's Heathrow Airport's first terminal building, which is making way for the development of a £1bn replacement.

The facility, which was originally designed by architect Frederick Gibberd and officially opened in 1955, was renamed Terminal 2 in 1969 upon the completion of the existing Terminal 1.

Forming part of airport operator BAA's wider £4.8bn investment in improving facilities at Heathrow, the T2 was designed by London-based architects Foster + Partners.



An artist's impression of T2

HETCo - comprising Ferrovial Agroman and Laing O'Rourke - has been appointed to deliver the facility, which will boast more than 11,000sq m (118,403sq ft) of floor space for self-service check-in facilities and 15 security search lanes.

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LPF: When healthcare meets health & fitness



An early evening LPF seminar to be held at:

David Kerr Associates, 32 Welbeck St, London W1G 8EU
on Thursday 24th June 2010, 6.15pm - 8.30pm

CONTENT:

The seminar will review the opportunities and prospects for co-operation between the two sectors, looking in particular at Government health policies, medical treatment and social attitudes.

This will be a stimulating and interesting first stage examination of the trend that seems likely to lead to future development of health parks in the UK.

SPEAKERS:

Garri Jones of Circle Health,
Julian Evans, Head of Healthcare at Knight Frank

PROGRAMME

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 6.15pm Seminar registration | Fee: |
| 6.30pm Seminar introductions | £45.00 + VAT LPF members |
| 6.40pm Speaker presentation | £55.00 + VAT member guests |
| 7.20pm Q&As | £90.00 + VAT non members |
| 7.30pm Drinks and networking | |
| 8.30pm Close | |

TO BOOK OR FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Michael Emmerson, LPF Administration
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What does the coalition bring?

New policy decisions will have a far-reaching impact



KURT JANSON is policy director at Tourism Alliance

The coalition agreement between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats is only six pages long, but it has a surprising number of issues that impact upon the tourism industry.

While there is good news in the decision to scrap the ID card scheme and the next generation of biometric visas, the strong emphasis that the agreement makes on environmental issues holds bad news for aviation.

The development of a third runway at Heathrow, a mainstay of Labour policy, will be cancelled. This is compounded by an agreement not to allow additional runways at Gatwick and Stansted.

A second change in aviation policy will be altering the basis upon which Air Passenger Duty is levied. Instead of being levied on a per person basis, it will now be levied on a per plane basis.

As an alternative, there has been an agreement to push forward on the establishment of a high-speed rail network. While this is laudable, a high speed rail system and improved links to the European high-speed rail network is not going to be a viable solution for people travelling from many European countries let alone long-haul visitors.

However, the most significant impact may well come in plans to significantly reduce public spending. There will be an emergency budget around the end of June at which £6bn of cuts will be announced for 2010/11.

The consensus is that this is just the start, with the public funding of tourism development under severe pressure for the foreseeable future.

BAA reveals impact of ash chaos

Glasgow Airport 'worst hit' as Scottish airports bear brunt of disruption

By Tom Walker

Scottish airports were among the worst affected by flight disruption caused by the Icelandic volcanic ash cloud during April, according to figures from operator BAA.

Passenger numbers for the group's three Scottish airports declined by more than 28 per cent as flights were cancelled due to a six-day lockdown of UK airspace.

Glasgow Airport was the worst affected BAA airport, posting a drop of more than 29 per cent compared with March. Aberdeen (26 per cent) and Edinburgh (28.3 per cent) also reported sharp falls.

Compared with the same period for 2009, passenger traffic for the six BAA-operated airports in the UK declined by nearly 23 per cent to 6.9 million people.

Meanwhile, Irish tourism minister Mary Hanafin has held a meeting with a number of industry representatives to discuss how



Glasgow was one of the worst hit airports

to address the impact of the ash cloud on air travel and inbound tourism.

National tourism agency Fáilte Ireland is currently working with the Irish government to draw up a customer care charter that aims to increase confidence among both operators and visitors.

Beach awards to help boost Welsh tourism?

By Pete Hayman

An increase in the number of Welsh beaches that have been handed Blue Flag status could boost the tourism industry, according to Keep Wales Tidy (KWT).

The organisation revealed 45 Welsh beaches and five marinas have met the award's 30 Blue Flag criteria.

KWT chief executive Lesley Jones said: "With a record number of beaches and marinas achieving Blue Flag status we are well positioned to announce that a trip to our coast will be a quality experience."



Swansea Marina received Blue Flag Status

New tourism campaign launched in Southend

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is backing a new tourism campaign to attract more visitors to the seaside town.

The 'On Sea' campaign builds on the town's name and includes advertising and marketing material titled 'Dine On Sea', 'Smiles On Sea' and 'Events On Sea'.

The first phase of publicity material using the branding is being distributed

to rail stations, through local accommodation providers and information points.

The campaign is a joint project by the council, University of Essex, South Essex College, Essex Police and Southend Together, a local strategic partnership.

This year sees the completion of a range of infrastructure changes in the town in a bid to boost the tourism offer.



The Leeds and Liverpool Canal will offer work for local jobseekers

FJF programme to benefit canal

Unemployed residents to work on Bradford waterway

By **Martin Nash**

Unemployed Bradford residents will work along the Leeds and Liverpool Canal this spring as part of the government's Future Jobs Fund (FJF) scheme.

A five-strong team, led by British Waterways in partnership with the Bradford Motor Education Project, will be responsible for carrying out a number of maintenance tasks along the canal, which will include painting, litter clearance, minor towpath resurfacing, vegetation management and dry stone walling.

The skills and experience picked up over a six month contract can then be transferred on to their future careers.

The FJF aims to create around 150,000 jobs nationally in unemployment hotspots, with 100,000 of these aimed at 18-24 year olds. A further 10,000 are also designated as 'Green Jobs', delivering benefits to the wider community.

A partnership, led by Bradford Council and supported by Aspire-i and Incommunities, aims to work with a range of employers in a bid to support 1,250 jobs.

NSAH extends Disney programme

The National Skills Academy for Hospitality (NSAH) has extended its Disney Institute programme for 2010.

Following the initial Disney Institute programme in London last year, the NSAH has launched an enhanced package for 2010, delivering year-round Disney Institute leadership and management training for the sector.

The centrepiece of the initiative will again be the

five-day seminar programme, held at the Millennium Gloucester Hotel in London between 13 and 17 September, with three distinct courses on offer.

NSAH is also presenting a series of 90-minute Disney Institute WebCasts, broadcast live over the internet from Orlando, direct to subscribing companies' head offices, training venues or even individual outlets.

Time to change the sector's perceptions

The hospitality industry needs to realise the vital contribution of housekeeping

The world of housekeeping and accommodation management has, and is, changing rapidly not just across the UK, but internationally too.

Many people don't really understand the term, and have little idea of what the role really entails, and that's why Springboard is working with its partners to highlight the opportunities for employment and shine a light on some of the issues facing this sector.

It's not just about making beds and keeping rooms clean, important that those things are. People employed in this area often get involved in the selection of fabrics, recruitment and training, along with ordering stock and budgeting and much more.

You don't necessarily need to have academic qualifications, but there are Apprenticeships for those under 24, and degrees in hospitality management that incorporate units of study in this area. Or you can opt for a qualification in culinary arts and accommodation management.

If you're involved in supervising others there are NVQs in housekeeping and hospitality supervision, and housekeepers tend to be loyal and stay in the role for some time. But recent changes to visa regulations and the over reliance on Eastern Europe to plug shortfalls in this sector cannot be guaranteed. The industry need to grow and nurture home grown talent.

Part of an on-going problem is that housekeeping is not often seen as a desirable or worthwhile career option and a lot of vocational courses tend to focus on food preparation, cooking and service. This has helped exacerbate the problem of understanding the importance that a quality accommodation management team can have.

What people often miss is the progression, often rapid, from this role to front-of-house or training within the organisation. It also offers the chance to enhance professional qualifications.

Conferences that Springboard is helping to organise – the first of their kind – are being held in The Cumberland in London (3 June); The Midland Hotel, Manchester (14 June); and The Balmoral in Edinburgh (1 July). It's targeting general managers, HR Directors and the housekeeping and Accommodation Managers themselves.

We see this very much as a wake up call and a real chance to change the perceptions of this important part of the industry.



Springboard

GARETH EDWARDS
is education director of Springboard UK. *Leisure Opportunities* is the official recruitment magazine for Springboard UK

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Sports Facilities Officer

Grade SO1/2 £24,646 - £28,636

37 hours per week



This is an exciting opportunity to work in a vibrant city and influence the quality of service provided by a range of sports facilities.

The ability to develop partnerships with facility operators is a key requirement to ensure continuous improvement in the performance of these facilities.

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Excellent communication skills will be required combined with experience of budgetary control and an ability to work under your own initiative.

There will also be the chance to assist in the review of the future management arrangements for a number of sports facilities which will take place over the coming months.

This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and is subject to a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure Check.

Closing date: Friday 4th June 2010

You can obtain an application form for this job and further details from Carl Woby on 01273 290711 or by email at carl.woby@brighton-hove.gov.uk or phone the Human Resources Recruitment Line on 01273 292284 (voicemail) or minicom facility 01273 295100

Completed application forms can be submitted by email at the above address or by post to: **Human Resources, 4th Floor, Brighton & Hove City Council, Kings House, Grand Avenue, Hove, BN3 2LS**

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To work with us, you need to be educated to degree level in physical education/sports science, or NVQ level 3 exercise and fitness or be an advanced instructor. You will also have additional qualifications in exercise referral and cardiac rehabilitation, and knowledge of manual handling, and sports massage/remedial therapy.

Further information and application forms are available from www.derbyshire-fire.co.uk or telephone the HR Services Section on 01332 777018.

The closing date for completed applications is Friday 28 May at 1600 hours.



Fitness Co-ordinator

£18,501 - £19,658 Helensburgh Ref: OSF40150/R1

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Health & Fitness

Coordinator

Ref: CM15/7

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Duties will include membership sales, performing inductions, fitness assessments, preparing personalised fitness programmes, responsibility for managing a team of fitness instructors and conforming to all relevant Health & Safety regulations. Great emphasis will be placed on offering a high level of customer service. You must hold a Gym Instructors Level 2/3 qualification and a First Aid at Work qualification.

Fitness Instructor Ref: CM14/5

20 hours per week

Grade 4 £16,054 - £19,126 per annum, pro rata

We are looking for a highly motivated individual possessing excellent communication and interpersonal skills to join our team.

Duties will include performing inductions, fitness assessments and preparing personalised fitness programmes. Great emphasis will be placed on offering a high level of customer service. You should hold a Gym Instructor Level 2/3 qualification and a First Aid at Work certificate.

Appointment will be subject to a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau check at the enhanced level.

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Closing date: 21 May 2010

Children's Activities Co-ordinator

Company: The Hawthorns School
Salary: £18,000-£20,000 depending on experience
Location: Surrey, United Kingdom
Closing date: 24 May 2010

National Business Development Director

Company: SkillsActive
Salary: Circa £55,000 package
Location: London, United Kingdom
Closing date: 24 May 2010

Football Coaches

Company: The Sports Factory
Salary: Negotiable
Location: New Jersey, United States

Fitness Professional

Company: Future Fit Training
Salary: up to £30k
Location: Nationwide, United Kingdom
Closing date: 27 May 2010

Operations and Marketing Duty Manager

Company: Sportspace / Dacorum Sports Trust
Salary: £18,035 plus London Weighting
Location: Hemel Hempstead, United Kingdom
Closing date: 28 May 2010

Sporting Club Thamesmead Project Manager

Company: Trust Thamesmead
Salary: £40,000
Location: London, United Kingdom
Closing date: 28 May 2010

Facility Officer - Operations

Company: St Mary's School Sports Centre
Salary: £16,265 - £19,091 pa
Location: Calne, United Kingdom
Closing date: 31 May 2010

Assistant Partnership Development Manager

Company: The Mandeville School
Salary: £27,116 - £29,866
Location: Aylesbury, United Kingdom
Closing date: 04 Jun 2010



Programme Manager (Swimming)

Company: New Forest District Council
Salary: £24,828-£28,901 per annum
Location: New Forest, Hampshire, United Kingdom

Sales Manager

Company: Sportwise Training Ltd
Salary: £18,000 - £20,000 + bonus (depending on experience)
Location: Birmingham, United Kingdom

Trainee Personal Trainer/Fitness Instructor

Company: The Training Room
Salary: £20K-£30K
Location: Nationwide, United Kingdom
Closing date: 01 Mar 2011

Olympic Legacy Co-ordinator

Company: Stockport MBC
Salary: £27,052 - £30,851 per annum
Location: Stockport, United Kingdom
Closing date: 21 May 2010

Chief Executive of Zoological Society

Company: Bristol Zoo
Salary: £80,000, negotiable
Location: Bristol, United Kingdom
Closing date: 28 May 2010

Food and Beverage Leader (Events)

Company: Parkwood Leisure
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Location: Wycombe, United Kingdom
Closing date: 30 May 2010

Spa Therapist / Receptionist

Company: Sofitel Hotels
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Irish thinktank questions focus on reducing wages

Temporary VAT reduction advocated by TASC in a bid to tackle problems facing Ireland's restaurant industry

By **Pete Hayman**

Abolishing wage agreements and reducing pay will not tackle the problems facing Ireland's restaurant sector, according to thinktank TASC.

A nine-page briefing document published by the organisation has claimed the move would reduce consumer demand and increase inequality, and has called for other measures to be implemented.

According to TASC research, the Irish exchequer would lose about 1,143 (£970) for every

full-time employee within the restaurant sector whose pay is cut to the statutory minimum.

Instead of cutting wages, the thinktank has suggested a temporary VAT reduction and excise taxes for restaurants could be more effective in helping the industry to address the issues facing it.

Sinéad Pentony, the think-tank's head of policy, said: "In addition to further widening the income gap, TASC believes that reducing restaurant wages would fail to address the real cost issues."



IMAGE: BRITAIN ON VIEW

TASC believes reducing pay will not address the sector's problems

Red Knights consortium to seek 'fair' MUFC deal

By **Pete Hayman**

A consortium eyeing up a potential bid for Manchester United Football Club (MUFC) has confirmed that it will offer what it considers a "fair value" for the club.

The Red Knights are believed to be in the final stages of launching a takeover bid for the former Premier League champions, which is set to be in the region of £1bn.



The group is eyeing 'fair value'

Recent media reports claim that MUFC owners, the Glazer family, rejected a £1.5bn bid for the club in 2009, but the

Red Knights believe the club's value has now fallen.

In a statement, the Red Knights said: "Our primary goals remain to facilitate a return of ownership of the club to its supporters and the community; and to restore the financial health of the club.

"We have had productive conversations with potential investors, which have reinforced our belief that it is wrong to offer above fair value."

World Heritage bid for Broads?

The Norfolk and Suffolk Broads could be awarded World Heritage Site status after the Broads Authority confirmed that it was considering a bid.

Authority members met on 14 May to decide whether to press ahead with the bid, which was first mooted in 2005-06 but has been on hold to receive guidance.

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