

LEISURE MANAGEMENT

ISSUE 2 2013

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Vancouver-based
Body Exchange

THE POP-UP EDITION

The temporary
venues shaking up
the industry

Steve Philpott & David Cowans

Why Places for
People bought
DC Leisure

David Bradley

Longleat's CEO tells us how
he's revolutionising the
safari and adventure park

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NIMBLE THINKING

Designing, funding, building and running facilities is an expensive undertaking, but because the majority of people's out-of-home leisure-time activity has traditionally taken place in and around some kind of facility, operators have always had to bear the costs associated with this infrastructure.

But it's becoming clear that in every sector, they're facing new competition from operations which are seeking to profit by offering equivalent experiences to customers, while bearing none of the costs associated with facility operations – and they're doing it in innovative, creative ways.

Health clubs have high fixed operating and maintenance costs, but makers of fitness apps, home fitness videos, home workouts and outdoor fitness boot camps can capture much of the same audience for the same purpose at a fraction of the cost.

Spas are facing a competitive threat from non-spa hotels which are putting together 'spa retreats' by bringing in experts to offer classes and treatments, but without needing the investment in infrastructure associated with a full-blown spa operation.

I could go on, but you get the point.

Added to this is a new generation of pop-up operations which use existing or temporary locations to launch time-limited, often highly creative leisure experiences on a low-risk basis. These operations are thriving in every part of the market and we cover them with a special report in this issue on page 42.

Pop-ups have the advantage of a low entry point in terms of costs, enabling operators to test concepts and locations without high risk, and some pop-ups have been so successful



"London's South Bank has been hosting a sell-out, pop-up hotel – in a boat, on the roof of the Queen Elizabeth Hall, no less – showing that even the most established institutions can embrace the pop-up trend"

they've morphed into permanent operations.

So should facility owners be worried about this fluid and entrepreneurial approach to creating leisure experiences? Perhaps. However, people love new things and let's face it, some leisure operators are pretty set in their ways and dreary – it seems as though having concrete foundations makes it difficult for some to be nimble in their thinking. I for one welcome this trend of innovation, creativity, change and general deliciousness.

These new entrants to the market may be shaking things up, but there's no reason facility owners can't take a leaf out of their book and get more creative with sub-letting and sharing facilities to generate new revenue streams or get some pop-up action for themselves. The fact London's South Bank has been hosting not only a pop-up restaurant, but also a (sell-out) pop-up hotel – in a boat – on the roof of the Queen Elizabeth Hall – no less, shows that even the most established institution can get into the trend.

So a treat – perhaps – but the motto needs to be, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em.

Liz Terry, Editor Twitter @elizterry

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Leisure Management works in partnership with





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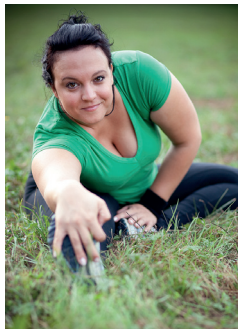
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BUYERS' GUIDE:

For suppliers of products and services in the leisure markets, turn to p72

PEOPLE

“People loved it and they were a bit amazed”

Maarja Kask, Karli Luik & Ralf Lööke, partners, Salto Architects



Main picture, left to right:
Lööke, Kask and Luik,
partners at Salto Architects

Estonian architects Maarja Kask, Karli Luik and Ralf Lööke of Salto Architects have created a 170ft (51m)-long trampoline through the forest as part of the Archstoyanie arts festival in Russia. The architects describe the bouncy rubber walkway as both “a road and an installation.”

Fast Track, which opened in November 2012 in the Nikola-Lenivets forest in south-west Russia, is made of black rubber, and allows people to bounce their way through the park en route to their destination.

“People loved it, and they were a bit amazed,” said Luik, of the installation.

“We wanted to work with the park infrastructure and not to create another pavilion or object that there

are plenty of already in this place.

Thus, Fast Track is an integral part of park infrastructure. It gives the user a different experience of moving and of perceiving the environment.”

The rubber road is far more sensitive to its forest environment than a traditional road, argued Luik.

“Fast Track challenges the concept of infrastructure that only focuses on the technical and functional aspects and tends to be ignorant of its surroundings,” he said. “This is an attempt to create intelligent infrastructure that is emotional and corresponds to the local context.”

Although Fast Track is probably the world’s longest trampoline, it was originally intended to be almost four times longer, Luik said. “Initially we wanted to install it on a slope through quite

dense forest and it was supposed to be 200m-long. In the end it didn’t have a slope and was 51-m long. It was challenging to convince the [festival] organisers that it was ‘arty’ enough on the one hand, and that it fit the budget on the other hand.”

Kask, Lööke and Luik founded Tallinn-based Salto Architects in 2004. The practice is currently working on a range of projects including the creation of the Pärnu Environmental Education Centre in Tallinn.

Details: www.salto.ee

"This show dares Los Angeles to dream again"

Sam Lubell & Greg Goldin, curators, Never Built: Los Angeles

Curators Sam Lubell and Greg Goldin are behind an exhibition launching in the spring exploring an alternative vision for Los Angeles.

Never Built: Los Angeles takes place at Los Angeles A+D Architecture and Design Museum, and features a collection of incredible architecture projects that only ever saw the drawing board.

It includes amusement parks, subways, aerial transport, parks, masterplans and buildings by architects including Frank Lloyd Wright and Frank Gehry that could have transformed the Californian city.

Goldin and Lubell turned to Kickstarter – the crowd-funding site that sees the public donate money to make a project happen – to fund the exhibition. So far, according to Goldin, \$32,000 has been raised by the public.

"We decided that in order to realise this show we needed funding from more than just corporate spon-



sors and philanthropists," said Lubin. "Crowdsourcing is an amazing way to expand that reach to the public."

[For more about Kickstarter, see *Leisure Management* Q1 2012.]

The idea for the show began when The Getty Research Institute offered the A+D Museum a few models of unbuilt work from its archive. Lubin and Goldin have been working on it for around two years.

"The fascinating stories and mesmerising images surrounding these projects shed light on a reluctant city whose institutions and infrastruc-

ture have often undermined inventive, challenging urban schemes from some of the world's greatest architects, engineers and planners," said Lubin. "Never Built sets the stage for a renewed interest in visionary projects in LA and dares the city to dream again."

During the exhibition's run, the entire museum space will become an "alternative vision for LA," featuring an unusual floor map of the city as a guide.

"The biggest challenge has been realising the show's amazing ambition," said Lubin. "We've had to retrofit the museum to handle a multitude of original materials, including new lighting, security, and fire systems. Also we've had to find and work with a designer, model makers, animators, contractors and graphic designers."

"We're installing very challenging installations, from an 11-foot-tall tower made of Lego to a monorail that moves through the space."

Details: www.aplused.org



The exhibition will feature designs including the LAX original masterplan (left)



“The vision is to inspire children to realise they are in control”

Leigh-Anne Stradeski, CEO, Eureka!

Leigh-Anne Stradeski, chief executive of the UK's national children's museum Eureka!, has helped to launch the Halifax attraction's new £2.9m health and body themed gallery.

Developed with the support of a £1.45m grant from the Wellcome Trust, the new gallery uses play, role-playing and interactive displays to help children learn about their bodies and how to look after them.

"With All About Me we wanted to create a gallery that places children at the centre of the whole experience but also plays a key role in delivering a very powerful message about being fit and healthy in a way that is true to our philosophy of 'learning through play'," said Stradeski.

"The current epidemic of inactivity and obesity is working against our children and we want to change this. The vision is to inspire children to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing and to realise



that they are in control of the choices they make about the foods they eat and the activities they engage in."

Designed by At Large, the new gallery features more than 100 interactive exhibits. These include The Senses, where visitors can peek into a giant nose complete with snot tanks, and a role play Health Centre com-

The gallery features a Senses exhibit, where children can look inside a giant nose

plete with a doctor's surgery, dentist's chair and maternity surgery.

Stradeski was keen to ensure that the impact of the gallery resonated beyond visitors' trip to the museum.

"To facilitate this we're creating a microsite with links to the gallery," she said. "We also hope that children will feel empowered to talk to families and teachers about issues that they might otherwise have felt unable to discuss, particularly around emotive subjects such as body image, diets and the differences that make them unique."

Stradeski has been CEO of Eureka! since April 2000. Prior to that, she was executive director of the London Regional Children's Museum in London, Ontario, Canada for six years.

Details: www.eureka.org.uk



“After the success of the Olympics, I hope people have been inspired to get on their bikes”

**Joanna Rowsell MBE,
Action Medical Research**

Olympic cycling gold medalist, Joanna Rowsell MBE, is continuing her role as cycling ambassador for children's charity Action Medical Research for 2013, and has accepted a challenge to get more women cycling.

Rowsell, who received an MBE in the 2013 New Year's honours list, won Gold for Team GB in the Women's Team Pursuit in last summer's Olympics. For 2013 Joanna will be riding for the new Wiggle Honda Women's Pro Cycling Team to compete on the road in both the UK and Europe.

Action Medical Research runs a

programme of fundraising cycling events, including three Action DIVA women only rides – launched by Davina McCall in 2011.

“I'm delighted to be an ambassador for children's charity Action Medical Research again this year,” said Rowsell. “After the huge success of the London Olympics I hope many people have been inspired to get on their bikes. Riding for Action Medical Research is a great way to raise money as well as get fit and the charity has a wide variety of different events, including some women's only events, which suit both beginners and experienced cyclists.”

“Cycling is a great way to get fit and isn't a high impact sport, therefore injuries are less common than in other sports such as running. It can be very sociable, with many cyclists meeting up for group rides at weekends and is also a great way to get about.”

“I think the work Action Medical Research does is awesome and it's even better if, while raising money for charity, people can get fit and enjoy cycling at the same time. I love cycling and AMR has a wide programme of events to suit everyone, whether you are a beginner and want to get started in shorter, fun events – like the 25km routes on the Action DIVA women only rides – or a more experienced cyclist looking to tackle the longer events such as London to Paris.”

Action Medical Research has been funding medical breakthroughs since it began in 1952. The charity is currently supporting work around Down's Syndrome, epilepsy, sickle cell disease, and diabetes, as well as some rare and distressing conditions that severely affect children.

Details: www.action.org.uk/cycling
www.joannarowsell.com



Action Medical Research organises a range of charity cycling events



“It’s about being ruthless about making changes where we need to”

Andy Edge, Odeon

Andy Edge, last year appointed by Odeon Cinemas to the new role of commercial director, has launched a new customer insight strategy as part of a drive to improve the guest experience at Odeon.

Edge, who was recruited from the Tussauds Group last May, implemented the ‘My Odeon’ programme at the end of last year. The programme was developed in partnership with customer experience management experts Empathica, and is now being rolled out across Odeon’s 123 cinemas in the UK and Ireland.

“At Odeon, our customers are as fanatical about film as we are,” said Edge. “We want to give every guest a premier service in an inspiring environment. Therefore, feedback on what they really think and feel about their in-cinema experience is at the heart of taking our business forward. Our previous mystery shopping programme didn’t give us the breadth and frequency of data that we needed.

“My Odeon’ enables guests to provide honest feedback via a short online survey, which can also be accessed via mobile devices such as smart phones. The survey is promoted in cinemas through QR codes on posters and on cards handed out by staff. Customers who complete the survey are entered into a monthly prize draw to win £1,000.”

Customer feedback is sent to cinema managers in near real time, with



The new customer insight strategy is currently being rolled out across 123 cinemas

data collated into easy to understand, actionable reports, enabling the business to implement operational changes with cinema employees that have an immediate impact on customer satisfaction levels.

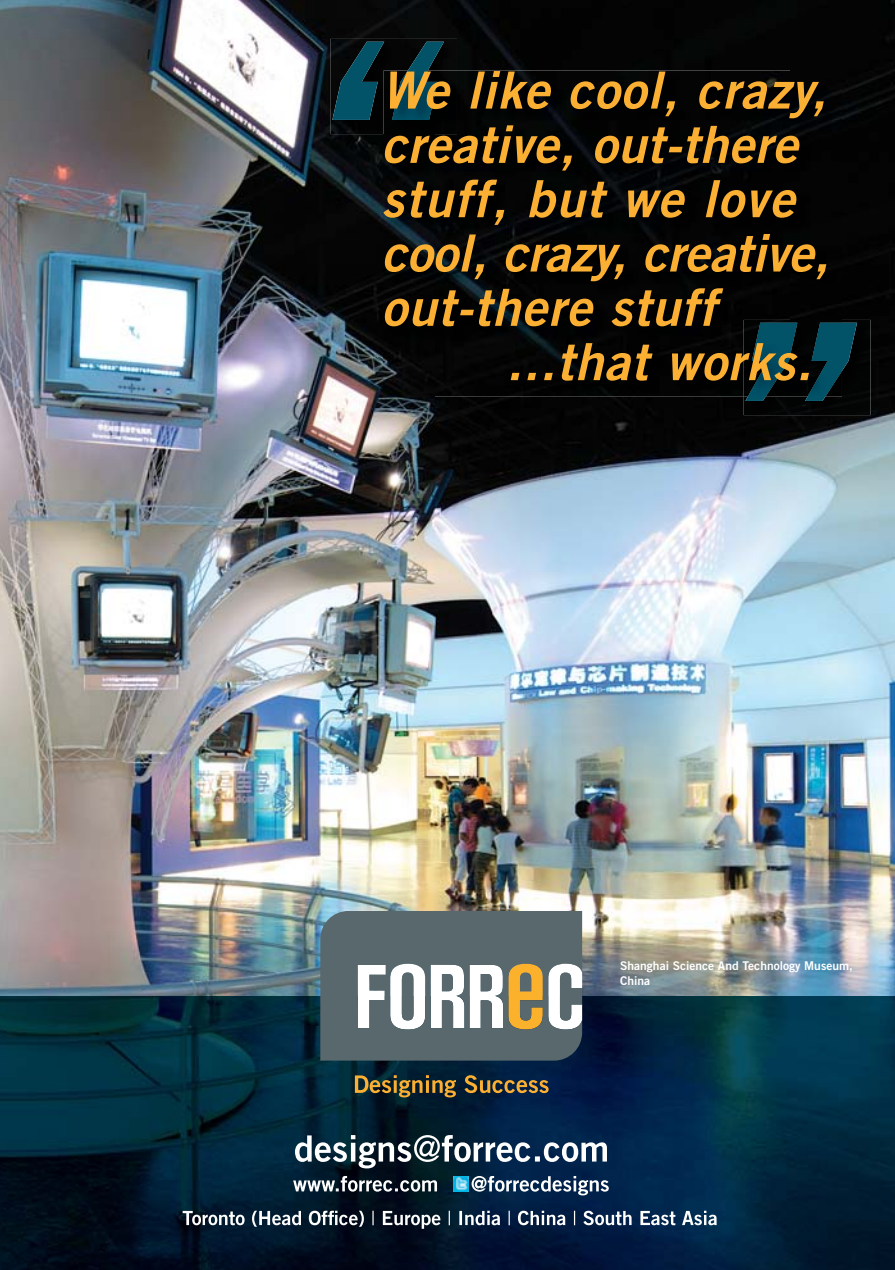
“Because the feedback is so detailed, we can implement changes as a result of the data we get,” said Edge. “We measure everything from the temperature of the auditorium to queue lengths and the cleanliness of the toilets.” As a result of feedback about queue lengths at certain sites, Odeon has adjusted the rostering to ensure a faster service for customers, and it

has also changed car parking signage in response to comments that it was confusing in some sites.

“We’re keen to get much more feedback, because the more we can collect, the smarter we’ll be,” said Edge. “We want to personalise the service for our customers; find out what they like and what they watch so we can interact with them with unique footage and games before they come to the cinema and once they get home. We want to broaden their experience so that it’s about more than just the two hours in the cinema.

“It’s about focusing on the customer, getting the guest journey right and being pretty ruthless about making changes if we need to, because the power of the data is there.” ●

Details: www.odeon.co.uk



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Shanghai Science And Technology Museum,
China

US\$205m Texas-themed theme park for Houston

Plans are underway to build a multi-million dollar theme park project in Montgomery County, Texas, US.

Developer Monty Galland is in the process of working through agreements with the East Montgomery County Improvement District (EMCID) for the new attraction.

Due to open in 2015, the Grand Texas Theme Park project will include a 120-acre Texas style theme park, a Big River Water Park, an 8,000-seat amphitheater and a baseball park seating up to 12,000 people.



The Jewel Box aims to offer a sensory experience

First Jewel Box health club opens its doors

Sports Club/LA opened the doors to its new Jewel Box health club in Chestnut Hill, Boston, US in March.

The concept – a brainchild of Smaira Million, CEO of Millennium Partners Sports Club Management – is marketed as a first-of-its-kind health club that provides members with “an unrivalled sensory-evoking, luxury eco-friendly experience.”

The design includes a blend of cutting-edge technology and sustainable architecture. The new club is the first of the Sports Club/LA family to be created outside a downtown location and takes on a more intimate format than the company's large-scale, multi-purpose clubs.

Indian government plans 20 new 'tourism parks'

The Indian government has announced plans worth Rs 1,000 Crore (US\$183.6m, £140.3m, £113.9m) to develop 20 themed tourist parks across the country to mirror resort town developments in Cancun, Mexico and Sentosa, Singapore.

The parks will form part of the government's tourism development strategy, revealed by tourism minister Shri Sahai. The five-year plan also outlines details for skill development, infrastructure development, promotion and branding and taxation and incentives.

George Lucas plans pop art museum

Filmmaker George Lucas has revealed his vision for a popular art museum to be built in San Francisco overlooking the Bay Area, Alcatraz and the Golden Gate Bridge.

His proposal is one of 16 received by the Presidio Trust, which is overseeing the rejuvenation of the former commissary site at Crissy Field, with others proposals including an observatory, an environmental museum and a museum dedicated to the US response to the Great Depression.

Lucas has pledged to fund the construction and endowment of the proposed 45,000sq ft to 50,000sq ft (4,181sq m to 4,645sq m) museum, which local media report will cost up to US\$700m (£536m, £467m). A further endowment would be gifted upon his death.

Constructed of stone and stucco walls and a glazed north facing façade, the museum would include at least five exhibition galleries.

The galleries are set to range in size from 4,500sq ft to 8,500sq ft (418sq m to 790sq m) while being connected by public spaces to be used for displays and events.



Lucas has pledged to fund the US\$700m project

Lucas said: “I want to create a gathering place where children, parents, and grandparents can experience everything from the great illustrators such as Rockwell, N.C. Wyeth and Maxfield Parrish, to comic art and children's book illustrations along with exhibitions of fashion, cinematic arts, and digital art.”

Spa and water park opens in Gubbio, Italy

A new Wellness & Spa Water Park has launched at Park Hotel Al Cappuccini in Gubbio, Italy. Designed by Italian architect Simone Micheli, Cappuccini Wellness & Spa Water Park is formed of two separate areas.

The first - Acque Emozionali - is a 3,767sq ft (350sq m) open access space featuring a swimming pool, children's pool, concurrent swimming, spa pool, hydro-jet tub and a Thalasso bath.

The Hydromassage Room includes an ark-shaped hydromassage that uses magnesium and potassium-enriched water and a thalassic tub. The Centro Cappuccini Wellness & Spa focusses on finding harmony and beauty through the medical properties of plants using nature and technology.



Hotel Al Cappuccini is the latest to combine a spa with a waterpark

Spa facilities include a mediterranean bath, a sauna, a Turkish bath and a relaxation room.

The spa will also feature emotional showers that revitalise guests using a variety of aromas, changing temperatures and varied lighting.

Signature treatments at the spa include facial rejuvenation. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=D8s1A>

JRA appointed to design spaces at Cade Museum

The Cade Museum Foundation has appointed Jack Rouse Associates (JRA) to design the exhibition and gallery spaces at the planned Cade Museum for Creativity and Invention (CMCI) in Gainesville, Florida, US. JRA won a design competition organised by the CMCI, which

attracted bids from a total of 27 design firms in the US and Canada.

The US\$9m (£6.9m, £6m) museum is named after Dr James Robert Cade, the University of Florida physician who led the team that invented the Gatorade energy drink in 1965.

Taj to launch Marrakech hotel

Taj Hotels is to enter Morocco with the opening of its latest resort – Taj Palace Marrakech – by June 2013.

Located in the Palmeraie district, Taj Palace Marrakech features 161 guestrooms including 25 luxury suites.

Set on 136 acres, the hotel will house a Jiva Grande Spa featuring 14 treatment rooms and two hammams.

Spanning 40,903sq ft (3,800sq m), the spa uses Indian healing and wellness therapies blended with Moroccan practices.

The spa experience includes Indian body therapies – ayurveda, meditation and holistic treatments will all be on offer. A fitness centre and yoga temple will also feature.

The resort was originally due to open in 2011 under the management of Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group.



Taj Palace Marrakech houses a Jiva Grande Spa with 14 treatment rooms

The contract was withdrawn, however, and taken over by Taj Hotels. The hotel, which features Moorish, Indian and Venetian architecture, will also house four Riads, traditional Moroccan palaces with interior courtyards, housing 1,668sq ft (155sq m) suites with two open terraces. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=A4R9Z>

Hospital operator Virtua opens second spa

North American hospital operator, Virtua, has further diversified into the spa market with the launch of its second facility. The Virtua Health & Wellness Center opened in Moorestown, South Jersey, at the beginning of December.

Among the mix of facilities, the centre boasts a spa, vir tú, offering a range of treatments and thermal facilities.

The spas are at the extreme end of Virtua's efforts to focus on keeping people healthy, rather than taking care of them when they are sick.

"Helping people be well, get well and stay well is Virtua's mission," said Richard P Miller, Virtua President and CEO. "This centre will be a destination for wellness, diagnosis, care and treatment. Everything has been designed



The health care provider is increasing its focus on preventative services

to focus on the needs of the community, while maintaining a one stop destination for medical and wellness services."

Virtua has an existing spa in Washington Township. The company also owns four hospitals. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=t4v1F>

New Caesar Sports site in development

Hans van Os Holdings, in the Netherlands, has begun work on a new, premium health club in the centre of The Hague.

Due to open in December 2013, the club – which will operate under the Caesar Sports Health Club brand – is being built by Pelikaan

Bouw (see an interview in *Health Club Management* April 2013, p32).

An existing site, the 4,500sq m club is being entirely rebuilt. Facilities will include a 900sq m fitness suite, a group exercise studio, a mind-body studio, a pool, restaurant and café.

Omani football club plans US\$300m sports resort

Oman-based football club Fanja has signed a US\$300m (£231m, £187m) investment deal to construct a destination sport resort with luxury hotel, villas and a range of sports facilities.

Located at A'Saih al Ahmar in the Wilayat of Bidbid, the investment will create 14 multipurpose facilities including sports, tourism, sports medicine and entertainment complexes. Fanja hopes to have the complex open by 2014. The contract was signed by the club's chair Himyar bin Nasser al-Ismaili and the CEO of the company making the investment through the Oman-Kuwait Partnership.



The new club opened in January

Latest club opening for Linzenich

Linzenich Fitnessgruppe, the German health club operator, opened its 13th site in the city of Cologne on 19 January.

The facility – which operates under the banner of SPORTSCLUB4 – offers a gym supplied by Pulse, Life Fitness, Matrix, Freeman and Star Trac. The bright, spacious area is spread over two floors with a large cardio zone and group exercise studio. There is also a Life Fitness SYNRGY360 functional workout zone.

Waterfront 'leisure city' planned for UAE

Another major tourism and leisure scheme has been unveiled for UAE, this time by The Al Zorah Development Company, which is a joint venture between the Government of Ajman and Soldiere International.

The mega resort will have a city centre with hotels, luxury spas, offices, retail and marinas, six beachfront hotels, a golf course, restaurants, a beach club with swimming pools and residential property. The resort also includes a Mangrove of the World theme park, developed in collaboration with US-based visitor attractions designers BRC. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=g4R8x>

LONG LIVE LONDON 2012

The 2012 Olympic Games stands as a shining example of how to effectively implement security strategies on a large scale

The London 2012 Olympics saw many urban areas reap the rewards of the Games taking place in the capital. As athletes, dignitaries and tourists travelled to the UK, extended opening hours at entertainment venues became the norm.

In turn, security measures and staff working hours were increased to cre-

ate a safe environment for all, while at the same time enhancing the customer experience.

Throughout the Games, bars, shops and restaurants demonstrated the enormous contribution security makes to the night-time economy and to the operational management of these venues. This has caused such a growth in evening trade in the leisure sec-

tor that, from 2015, Transport for London will be operating an extended late night service on the London Underground network.

A roaring success during the Olympics, it's hoped that this move will encourage a further night-time economy boom to build on that seen across the summer months in 2012.

Beyond transport services, door



■ Organisers of large events can learn from the security strategy at the 2012 Olympics



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supervision in particular has benefited from an enhanced professionalism over the last few years, due to the introduction of regulation and licensing courtesy of the Security Industry Authority (SIA). It's now a criminal offence to undertake the licensable activities of a door supervisor without an SIA licence, which helps to crack down on hoax workers.

In order to renew their SIA licenses, door staff will need to complete training in physical intervention skills and develop extensive awareness of terrorist threats. They will also need to be trained first aiders.

"As the night-time economy has developed, so the role of the door supervisor has changed," explains Tony Holyland, the SIA's competency manager. "These additional mandatory skills will help door supervisors to handle situations which often involve resolving drink-fuelled disputes and escorting disorderly revellers off the premises."

During the 2012 Olympics, event stewards were also under the media spotlight. Scrutinised for how they handled a range of situations, they

demonstrated their exemplary performance at venues across London.

The Games showed that providing event staff with the insight behind key protocols helps those protocols to be enforced effectively.

Many lessons were learned during the London 2012 Olympics. After it emerged that G4S would struggle to supply the required number of security personnel, there was concern that London couldn't handle the pressure. Those fears were unfounded.

The success of London 2012 wasn't only evident from the 65 medals won by Team GB, but also in the overwhelming global support received for the organisation of the event.

Security operations were exemplary throughout the Games, with no high profile incidents reported.

IFSEC International, the world's largest event for the security industry, will explore these issues and more.

Taking place from 13-16 May 2013 at the NEC in Birmingham, IFSEC International 2013 is part of UBM's Protection and Management Week.

During the event, David Rubens, MD of David Rubens Associates,

will be providing an insight into how the security strategy for the Games was implemented at a conference session entitled *Security and policing at London 2012: lessons learned*. This presentation takes place in the IFSEC Academy Centre Stage Theatre. Discussing the thought-provoking challenges faced by the managers of large-scale events, Rubens will build on the experiences of last summer and explain how London 2012 will act as a blueprint for future major events.

Registration for IFSEC International is free and also gives badge holders access to FIREX International (www.firex.co.uk), the Facilities Show (www.facilitiesshow.com) and Safety & Health Expo (www.safety-health-expo.co.uk).

For further details and free registration, please visit www.ifsec.co.uk. Companies interested in exhibiting should contact Tristan Norman, group sales manager, on +44 (0)20 7921 8285 or tristan.norman@ubm.com ●



ESPA secures Carrick wellness partnership

Carrick Spa on the shores of Loch Lomond has partnered with global brand ESPA to enhance the 'world of spa and wellness' at the resort. The partnership has seen the introduction of a range of solution-led ESPA facial and body treatments, rituals, massages, and wraps. Therapies at the spa are designed to deliver the physical and emotional therapeutic benefits.

New treatments include the Advanced Enzyme Facial, as well as a 'Hero Treatment', targeting the back, face and scalp, and a Signature Rainshower Massage.

ESPA treatments aim to combine natural ingredients with the latest age-defying technology. Carrick Spa features 17 dry and wet treatment rooms, including a couple's suite and a roof-top terrace with infinity pool. It offers guests a range of thermal experiences, aromatherapy steam, holistic studio and pool. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Z3U2l>



Mandarin has teamed up with Sculpt at the spa

Mandarin to expand spa facilities at London hotel

Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park, London is to unveil its new wellbeing and fitness facilities this summer with the opening of a swimming pool and fitness centre.

The new wellbeing and fitness space, which is being created by leading hospitality designer Adam D. Tihany, will feature a 17m indoor swimming pool, internet stations and a modern fireplace.

The facility's changing areas are set to house saunas, steamrooms, experience showers and a relaxation area.

Elsewhere, the fitness centre will feature Technogym wellness equipment along with Corian screens to create privacy.

Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park has teamed up with the health and fitness consultancy, Sculpt, to offer visitors a full menu of wellness services. Sculpt's team of experts include personal trainers, nutritionists and a physiotherapist, who will look at lifestyle, nutrition and work/life balance. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=hsy3M>

BISA and SpaBA join forces

Two previously independent UK spa associations – the British International Spa Association (BISA) and the Spa Business Association (SpaBA) – are to join forces as part of plans to form one unified body for the country's spa industry.

The new – as yet unnamed – association has identified three priority areas for development: education; accreditation, benchmarking and the implementing of a code of practice; and market intelligence and providing quality data for the UK spa industry. The launch of the new association – along with the new name and branding – is expected to take place by the end of April.

Charlie Thompson, head of health and beauty for Virgin Active, will become the new chair of the association, while Berni Hawkins,



Alex de Carvalho (left) with Lesley Bacon and Charlie Thompson

the current chair of BISA, will become a deputy chair with a responsibility for education.

She will be joined by two other deputy chairs – Alex de Carvalho (responsible for market intelligence) and Lesley Bacon (responsible for accreditation and code of practice). Details: <http://lei.sr?a=W3toM>

Guerlain opens first UK luxury day spa

The UK's first Guerlain Spa has made its debut at The Caledonian, A Waldorf Astoria Hotel in Edinburgh, Scotland.

The spa has three spacious treatment rooms offering treatments such as intensive, complete and radiance facials, body sublimation and harmonising massages.

A range of personalised treatments will be available using the Orchidée Impériale skin care range – a product line inspired by the longevity of the orchid.

Among the signature treatments is the 150-minute Orchidée Impériale Prestige, which includes a firming massage, repeated three times by alternating deep massage sequences with softer relaxing ones.

This is followed by three different masks using products from the Orchidée Impériale range including the new Longévité Concentrate. There will also be a range of spa treatments on offer including facials to energise the skin tailored to men.



Facilities include a luxury relaxation lounge

Spa facilities include saunas, a steamroom, spa pools and a swimming pool. There will also be a gym with television-equipped exercise machines. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=23ZoK>

UK shoppers heading online for beauty purchases

More than a third (38 per cent) of online shoppers in the UK have bought beauty and personal care products online in the last 12 months, according to research by global strategy consultancy AT Kearney. The study found that online beauty sales grew almost four times

faster than overall retail sales, with the percentage set to increase further.

Based on survey responses from 3,942 participants across Europe, the survey found that UK shoppers buy more beauty products online than clothes. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=L1e6O>

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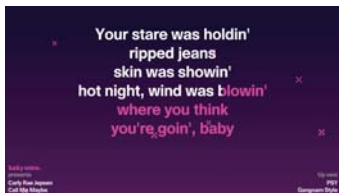
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Paisley Abbey plans to build £2m visitor centre

Paisley Abbey has submitted plans to Refrewshire Council for the £2m reconstruction of its fourth cloister, to house a visitor centre, café, gift shop and function space over two floors.

Edinburgh-based architects Simpson & Brown have submitted the plans for the extension, which they say will complement the existing 12th-century abbey without copying what was already there.

Its hoped the expansion will attract more visitors and secure the Abbey's financial future. *Details:* <http://lei.sr?a=55m6j>



Presenter Sir David Attenborough at the launch

Attenborough opens new Wakefield Museum

A new museum and library has launched at the Merchant Gate development in Wakefield, Yorkshire.

Wakefield One, officially opened by wild-life presenter Sir David Attenborough, is located on the ground floor in the council's new civic building and details the history of the people of Wakefield.

The main displays tell the story of the people who shaped the region's history through themes such as love, war, play and crime. *Details:* <http://lei.sr?a=C3C2z>

Will.i.am launches STEM youth education scheme

A new scheme to engage disadvantaged youth with science and technology has been launched by international pop star will.i.am, in collaboration with The Prince's Trust, at the Science Museum in London.

Funded by a £500,000 donation from the artist, the scheme will deliver workshops aimed to inspire 13-19 year olds in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. It will be delivered by Science Museum outreach staff and target young people struggling at school and at risk of exclusion. *Details:* <http://lei.sr?a=O8o7s>

Hadrian's Wall plans visitor centre

Concept designs have been revealed for a £10.5m visitor centre and hostel at the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site in Northumberland National Park.

Newcastle architects Jane Darbyshire and David Kendall (JDDK Architects) have been appointed to explore the initial concepts for The Sill, which will replace existing facilities built in the 1960s.

The building will act as a hub for visitors to explore more than 400sq miles of national park. Activities at the park include stargazing, discovering rare flora and fauna and learning traditional skills such as dry stonewalling and hedgerow laying.

Design concepts will focus heavily on sustainability, incorporating a range of locally-sourced materials, heather-thatched pitched roofs and whinstone walls.



The JDDK concept plans include thatched roofs and whinstone walls

It will include a café, retail spaces and rooftop viewing galleries.

The local community will be consulted about the development over the coming months before a final design is submitted for round two Heritage Lottery Funding in December. *Details:* <http://lei.sr?a=OrFie>

Merlin plans London listing in 2014

Merlin Entertainments has revealed London as its preferred location for a planned initial public offering (IPO), after its turnover topped £1bn for the first time during 2012.

At a presentation of its annual results on 27 March, the attractions operator revealed total visitor numbers were up 16 per cent on 2011 at £54m and revenue had risen 15 per cent to £1.074bn.

Speaking to Bloomberg news, chief executive Nick Varney said he made no secret that the group's preference was to list in the UK – a move planned by 2014. However, he said 20 per cent of all Merlin's business is in North America and all options would be considered. Varney has announced several times that the group



Varney said despite challenges Merlin achieved £1bn revenue in 2012

planned a market flotation but these have been delayed each time due to the poor economic climate. Varney said 2012 was the 13th consecutive year the group had beat its profit target. *Details:* <http://lei.sr?a=r3B8m>

Shortlist announced for Museum of the Year award

England's first purpose built art gallery, a gallery dedicated to sculptor Barbara Hepworth and a London museum dedicated to music and anthropology are among the finalists for the Art Fund's 2013 Museum of the Year. The annual competition was this year open

to any accredited museum or gallery, whereas previously only those with a new project or development from the previous 12 months had been eligible.

To see the full list of museums that made the shortlist, see <http://lei.sr?a=P1N9r>

New architecture review launched

The British government has launched an independent review of architecture and the built environment with the aim of better shaping policy to achieve quality design.

The report – expected to be complete by the end of the year – will be led by London-based architect Sir Terry Farrell with support provided by an advisory panel.

In addition to the government's role in promoting quality design, the review will look at the economic benefits of architecture, cultural heritage and the built environment, and promoting education and outreach and developing skills.

Culture minister Ed Vaizey said: "Good design builds communities, creates quality of life, and makes places better for people to live, work and play in." He urged the architecture



Sir Terry Farrell will lead the review, supported by an advisory panel

and design industries to contribute their views when the panel issues a call for evidence shortly. Farrell is known for his work on the Home Office and Greenwich Peninsula in the UK, and Korea's Incheon airport in Seoul and Guangzhou Station in China. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=t6V7B>

Funds for Birmingham's £450m city revamp

Birmingham's £450m regeneration programme for its city centre has taken a step forward with a funding allocation of £63.1m approved for the first phase of the project.

The Paradise Circus project was one of the UK's largest city centre outline planning applications approved last year and will include up to 10 buildings in 17 acres of land between Centenary Square and Chamberlain Square.

The funding was approved on 14 March by the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP (GBSLEP) board – representing a partnership of businesses, local authorities and the education sector. The development covers an Enterprise Zone – one of 24 nationwide developed as part of a



The development will cover 17 acres and has a large leisure element

2011 government initiative to support new and expanding businesses. The development will include leisure and entertainment facilities and civic amenities. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=5smg>

Aberdeen to get £25m De Vere Urban Village Resort

A £25m urban village resort is to be built on the outskirts of Aberdeen as part of the Prime Four business park at Kingswells.

Scotland's first De Vere Urban Village Resort, which was approved by members of the council's development management sub-committee,

will include a five-storey 148-bedroom hotel and a luxury health spa.

It will also house a leisure club with a gym and swimming pool as well as business and conferencing facilities and restaurants and bars. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=H9h8f>

London to get 100 'pocket parks' in forgotten spaces

Work has started on the first of London's 'pocket parks', which have received £2m of funding to transform neglected urban spaces into mini oases.

Twenty-seven 'hooks and crannies' in 17 boroughs were selected for the first round of funding. Benefits of the parks include improving air quality, reducing flood risk, providing shade and offering a haven for wildlife. A £30,000 edible park on dead space behind a bus stop in Stockwell will include vegetables, herbs and fruit. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=k3U3D>



The Flax Mill site houses seven listed buildings

Funding sought for £12m Flax Mill regeneration

An £11.6m funding application to regenerate Shrewsbury's 18th-century Flax Mill Maltings for public and commercial use will be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) by the end of March.

The site comprises seven listed buildings and includes the Main Mill, which was built in 1797 and was the world's first iron-framed building and the forerunner of the modern skyscraper. Other buildings to be renovated include the Kiln, the Dye, Stove House and the stables. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=n8p7p>

Museum planned for Old Magnus Building, Newark

A new national Civil War Museum in Newark, Nottinghamshire, expected to attract more than 40,000 visitors a year to the area, is set to receive a £1m boost from Nottinghamshire County Council.

The council funding will join the £3.5m Heritage Lottery Fund to go towards the £5.4m costs of the initiative.

The new museum and learning centre will be based in the Old Magnus Building, which includes a Tudor School Hall and Georgian and Victorian classrooms. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=A6e8o>

Funds for digitisation of arts and heritage

A new £4m initiative funded by the Arts and Heritage Research Council, aims to develop ways for digital technologies to help communities explore their culture and heritage. The funding is open to independent research organisations, including museums, and will bring together researchers, community engagement experts and digital technology specialists.

The resulting research will be used to develop assets like new or enhanced digital databases, archives, galleries and creative outputs. *Details:* <http://lei.sr?a=r2D7N>



George Osborne's budget was welcomed by pubs

Budget 2013 – tax boost for pub sector and SMEs

The chancellor George Osborne has scrapped the annual alcohol duty escalator and cut the price of a pint of beer by 1p from 24 March. The move aims to help out the UK's pub sector – although Osborne confirmed that a planned duty increase for other forms of alcohol would go ahead.

There will also be help for small and medium-sized businesses with the introduction of the new Employment Allowance. The new scheme will take the first £2,000 off the employer National Insurance bill of every company in the country.

Council funding cuts on arts beginning to bite

Budgets across the UK are delivering harsh cuts to arts groups with Westminster council set to cut arts funding by 100 per cent, while Newcastle council will deliver a 50 per cent cut in funding.

Westminster City Council will reduce its arts budget from £350,000 to £192,00 in 2013-14 and cut it completely by 2014-15 in a bid to set the lowest band D council tax in the country. Soho Theatre and English National Ballet are among the groups that will lose funding under the plans. *Details:* <http://lei.sr?a=j1K3g>

Activity pilot launches

A ukactive-led partnership – involving NHS Bedfordshire, Team Beds & Luton and local authorities – has been selected as one of 14 pilot projects to receive support from a £5.8m Sport England fund designed to support inactive people in getting more active.

The partnership will see a motivational interviewing programme entitled Let's Get Moving being introduced to Bedfordshire and Luton.

Aimed at getting the most inactive members of local communities more active, the initiative includes the target of placing an exercise professional in each GP surgery.

David Stalker, CEO, ukactive said: "We have a strong belief that putting an exercise professional into every GP surgery can have a dramatic impact on the health of the nation – particularly so when armed with motivational



The ukactive scheme will target the most inactive members of the public

interviewing techniques and the ability to signpost into activity sessions.

"With local authorities taking on responsibility for public health, it's vital that our sector is able to work to develop initiatives that deliver outcomes worthy of investment from the £5.45bn ring-fenced public health budget." *Details:* <http://lei.sr?a=05Yov>

Public bike scheme planned for Northants

Councils in Northampton have revealed joint plans to launch an urban cycle-hire scheme – similar to London's 'Boris Bikes' – by the end of this year as part of efforts to create a "cleaner, greener, healthier county".

The scheme will be operated in partnership between the county and borough council and would see docking stations at the university campus, the railway station, the entrance to Becket's Park, the skate park at Midsummer Meadow, Brackmills and the new bus interchange in the town centre. People would become members of the scheme and use a PIN code to release bikes from the docking station before returning it at the end of their journey. Work is being



The initiative is a partnership between the county and borough councils

done to finalise the details of the hire scheme, though the county council said charges would vary depending on the length of the journey. *Details:* <http://lei.sr?a=F5W3k>

Northern Ireland arts organisations land £13.6m

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland has awarded £13.6m of funding to 109 arts organisations in its annual funding allocation.

The Annual Funding Programme allows arts organisations to make a one-off application to secure public funds from the Department

of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and the National Lottery. Funding is awarded for running costs and programming. This year 15 organisations have landed the funding for the first time – including music festival Glasgobur. *Details:* <http://lei.sr?a=n7r4s>

King's Cross hotel to relaunch

London's first railway hotel - Great Northern Hotel - will re-open in April for the first time in almost 12 years following multi-million-pound renovations.

Situated between King's Cross Station and St Pancras International, the privately owned Grade II-listed building has been restored by owner-operator Jeremy Robson of Ram.

Originally designed by architect Lewis Cubitt, the Great Northern Hotel opened in 1854 as the first of the new generation of Victorian railway hotels. Archer Humphries Architects were responsible for the interior design, which followed the theme of timeless elegance with a hint of modernity.

The hotel's 91 rooms were refurbished with a Victorian inspired colour palette and three room types were created: Couchettes



The Grade II-listed property first opened as a luxury hotel in 1854

(which emulate train sleeper compartments); Wainscot (named after their walnut Wainscot panelling) and Cubitt (named after the architect Lewis Cubitt). The aim for the renovation was to evoke the romance of rail travel from a bygone age and to preserve a sense of history and style. *Details:* <http://lei.sr?a=14j6q>

Malmaison and Hotel du Vin sold to KSL

US-based private equity firm KSL Capital Partners has acquired UK boutique hotel brands Malmaison and Hotel du Vin. KSL plans to invest significantly in the existing portfolio of 27 hotels and expand both of the hotel brands in the UK and internationally.

The investment will support the current development strategy of chief executive Gary Davis - who joined the brands in January 2012 - including the planned September opening of a new Malmaison Hotel in Dundee, Scotland. There are also plans to convert an existing property in St Andrews, Scotland, to a Hotel du Vin by early 2014.

Davis said: "We look forward to leveraging their considerable expertise, which combined with the talent in our own senior leadership team, will further develop our leading hotel brands." Despite the economic climate, we're proud of the strong operational and financial position that the hotels currently enjoy."



Malmaison Reading is one of 12 hotels in the group

KSL specialises in travel and leisure enterprises in five primary sectors: hospitality, recreation, clubs, real estate and travel services. It already owns The Belfry in the West Midlands, as well as a number of luxury hotels and resorts in the US. *Details:* <http://lei.sr?a=VzO3h>

Shangri-La, The Shard, to open in summer this year

Details of the UK's first Shangri-La - to occupy levels 34 to 52 of The Shard - have been revealed ahead of its opening this summer.

The five-star 202-room property will be London's first elevated luxury hotel and promises panoramic views of nearby

attractions such as the Tate Modern, the Tower of London, St. Paul's Cathedral and Shakespeare's Globe. Features will include custom-made beds, iPod docking stations and complimentary high-speed internet access. *Details:* <http://lei.sr?a=Uoy7r>

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Margam Park plans £2m revamp of leisure facilities

Almost £2m is being spent to give leisure facilities at Margam Park in Port Talbot, Wales a new lease of life.

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) invested £1.6m to restore and repair Port Talbot's tourist attraction.

As well as the HLF grant, Neath Port Talbot Council has secured £218,000 in match funding from the European Regional Development Fund for the project.

Plans for the park include a new camping and caravan site as well as a new mountain bike trail. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=v8K2O>*



The grants help efforts to improve green spaces

Love Parks scheme gets Lottery funding boost

Love Parks, a project to conserve parks and green space across England, has received a £416,450 grant from Big Lottery Funding to develop a network of trained volunteers. Run by parks charity GreenSpace the launch of the project coincides with their Love Parks Week, which encourages people to organise and attend events during the summer holidays.

To date an estimated half million volunteers in 4,000 community groups have worked to improve the country's green space, but access to training and knowledge has been limited.

Chief executive of GreenSpace Paul Bramhill said of the project: "This essential training resource will not only improve groups' knowledge but also give communities belief that they can do something to protect their local green space."

England chair of the Big Lottery Fund Nat Sloane said: "We hope this project will ensure that parks are still there for the next generation to benefit from and enjoy by bringing whole communities closer together and giving them the tools they need to protect their local green space."

According to NHS figures, an estimated £2.1bn could be saved in public health costs if every household had access to quality green space. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=H9K6D>*

Work starts on 100 'pocket parks'

Work has started on the first of London's 'pocket parks', which have received £2m of funding to transform neglected urban spaces into mini oases of green space.

Twenty-seven 'nooks and crannies' were selected for the first round of funding in 17 boroughs across the city.

Benefits of the parks include improving air quality, reducing flood risk, providing shade and offering a haven for wildlife. A £30,000 edible park on dead space behind a bus stop in Stockwell will include vegetables, herbs, fruit and hops to sell to the Brixton Beer Co-operative, and apple trees bred specifically for London's climate. The space will host social gatherings and members of the local community are welcome to take part in gardening at the park. In Shepherd's Bush, £40,000 will help transform a neglected depression between two schools into a mini amphitheatre for shows, picnics and a place to relax.

The second round of applications for the mini parks will open in May, with a total 100 'pocket parks' to be complete by March 2015.



An artist's impression of one of the 'pocket parks'

Mayor Boris Johnson said: "London is already an incredible place to live, but by making the most of our small forgotten outdoor spaces and providing trees, greenery and meeting places, the fantastic quality of life here can still be improved upon." *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=k3U3D>*

Coastal towns receive regeneration funding

Seaside towns around the UK are to receive a cash boost for projects that bring new leisure and business opportunities to the country's coastal communities.

Twenty seaside projects have been given grants of up to £2.6m each from the Coastal Communities Fund. The money will support projects such as rejuvenating parks, old heritage sites, schemes to provide skills training and advice and helping businesses embrace digital technology. The £16m fund is raised from the Crown Estate's marine assets and reinvested in coastal areas.

Communities secretary Eric Pickles said: "It's a missed opportunity if we fail to tap into the huge potential our coastal towns have to welcome new industries and to diversify their economies so that they can become year-round success stories."

"We have seen enormous enthusiasm for this government fund and had to make some difficult choices but the projects we've chosen



Morecambe Bay is among the funding recipients

will create thousands of jobs and will help many start-up businesses."

Projects that will receive funding include £500,000 for the Morecambe Bay Partnership and Cumbria County Council's plan to enhance the area as a tourism destination. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=E7Sg>*

Tennis, BMX and skating facilities for Durham park

Work is underway on tennis, BMX and skating facilities at Billingham's John Whitehead Park, Durham, UK.

Work on the multi-use games area will begin in the coming weeks, and will see current facilities replaced with four tennis courts.

This is a reduction from the six courts currently available but the council states new facilities will be much improved. A contractor has also been appointed to construct a new BMX and skatepark, with work set to begin by the summer. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=g3Qos>*

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Stamford AFC's planned £5m ground gets approval

Stamford AFC's new ground and sports educational facility has moved a step closer after being granted planning permission by the South Kesteven District Council.

The multi million pound development is a partnership by the football club, Burghley House Preservation Trust/Burghley Estate Leisure Limited and New College Stamford. Located on land west of Ryhall Road, the stadium will feature a new first team grass pitch with a two-storey covered stadium for spectator seating and standing. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=g5t5x>



Virgin boss Richard Branson signed the deal

Virgin signs deal with Lawn Tennis Association

Virgin Active has become the official health club of the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), under a three year agreement.

Virgin Active will introduce a number of LTA tennis products to its members – including Mini Tennis, designed for three to 10 year-olds and Cardio Tennis, a group fitness class that takes place on a court.

Gary Stewart, head of racquet sports at Virgin Active, said: "The LTAs overall purpose mirrors that of Virgin Active – to continue to grow and sustain the sport, nurture young talent and increase participation." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=M414p>

More British women involved in sport in 2012

The number of women participating in sport and physical activity has increased by more than one million since 2005, according to the latest Taking Part survey.

Released by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the survey examines participation in sport, heritage and the arts in England.

The latest report presents figures for the period January to December 2012 - which includes the period when the UK hosted the Olympics and Paralympics. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=m8U4T>

£150m boost for school sport

The government has confirmed that it will make an extra £150m-a-year investment in PE and school sport over the next two years.

As reported in *Leisure Opportunities* on 13 March, the ring-fenced money will be jointly provided by the Department for Education, the Department for Health and DCMS and will see money going directly to primary school headteachers to spend on improving the quality of sport and PE.

Funding for each school will be calculated by the number of primary-aged pupils based on January 2013 figures and schools will have to spend the money on improving their provision of PE and sport.

All schools with 17 or more primary-aged pupils will receive a lump sum of £8,000 plus a premium of £5 per pupil. Smaller schools will



The extra funding is aimed at improving after-school sports provision

receive £500 per pupil. Crucially, schools will have the freedom to choose how and what the money will be spent on – a decision which will provide a boost for the UK's sports provider sector and professional coaches.

To see the full government announcement on the funding, see: <http://lei.sr?a=FoXoG>

Sport England funding to tackle inactivity

Thousands of people living with and beyond cancer are among those who will be helped to get more active after Sport England announced £5.8m through its Get Healthy Get Into Sport fund.

Macmillan Cancer Support, which will receive £500,000, is one of 14 groups benefiting from funding, which comes as new research shows that the cost of inactivity to the NHS in England is £944m.

The Macmillan project will open up fresh sporting opportunities for cancer patients in 10 parts of England, including work in Oxford to help 14 to 25-year-olds with cancer to get active. Macmillan is investing a further £230,000 in the scheme. Almost 130,000 inactive people are expected to get involved in sport through



The scheme aims to get 130,000 inactive people taking part in sport

the scheme, which will explore a wide range of ways to use sport to improve health.

Physical inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality after high blood pressure, tobacco use and high blood glucose. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=h8M2v>

British Cycling aims to get 1m more women cycling

British Cycling plans to have 1m more women cycling in the UK by 2020 by shifting the culture and accessibility of the sport, it has revealed in a new document.

'A Journey of Inspiration and Opportunity - Our Vision for women's cycling 2013-2020'

revealed the organisation wants increased female membership, more women riding competitively and more women involved in the governing of the sport.

In 2012 525,000 UK women were regularly cycling. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=u3b8B>

Health & Fitness

Gym chains agree to OFT ruling

Three health club operators have agreed to change their contract terms following an investigation by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) which deemed some of the practices used by the gym groups as 'unfair'.

Bannatyne Fitness, David Lloyd Leisure and Fitness First have now agreed to change their contract terms to make them more transparent and give their members better cancellation rights. Among the changes to have been stipulated by the OFT are:

- Extended rights for members to cancel their contracts early should their circumstances change in a way that makes attendance at the gym difficult or unaffordable - for example if they lose their jobs or suffer an injury.
- A commitment not to describe membership as being of a fixed duration, if the contract



The OFT recommendations will see the chains change contract policies

automatically continues on a rolling basis after the initial membership period has expired.

- Greater transparency about key membership features, including initial membership periods and cancellation rights, and for these to be provided upfront as part of the sales process. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=c4X6X>

Pure Gym plans 30 new club openings

Pure Gym is set to double its number of London gyms as the company, founded in 2008, seeks to become the biggest gym chain in the UK.

The budget gym opened a facility in Wandsworth last month and plans to open in Hammersmith, Enfield, Finsbury Park and Balham.

The company will be running a total of 50 budget gyms by the end of April, with at least 30 openings planned before the end of the 2013-2014 financial year.

As a result of its expansion plans the company has appointed Stephen Rought Whitby group acquisitions director.

Pure Gym is reported to have made profits of €9m for the year to February 2013, up from €5.3m in 2011-2012.



The Pure Gym brand was launched in 2008 and currently has 38 clubs


The company is backed by Magenta - the private-equity firm of New Look founder Sir Tom Singh. Pure Gym was founded by Peter Roberts in 2008 and has since grown to 38 clubs in the UK. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=17joC>

Think tank recommends rewards for healthy citizens

People who make healthy lifestyle choices should be prioritised for non-emergency hospital appointments as a reward, a report by think tank Demos recommends.

The report, entitled *Control Shift*, said NHS users could prove their responsible lifestyles by


sharing data from their supermarket or gym and this would promote a public service culture of "getting back what you put in." It said the government could top-up benefit recipients' Universal Credit if they attended the gym regularly. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=16G1w>



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DESIGN NEWS

From a rainforest hotel to a Zaha Hadid tower, we check out what's new globally



PHOTOS: PAUL CARRECHA

The design was inspired by local rock formations

Project: Elliott Museum Grand

Design: Gould Evans

Location: Florida, US

Elliott Museum Grand reveals new look

The Elliott Museum Grand has reopened in Florida, US, following a multi-million dollar 'green' reconstruction project that includes a new building with expanded galleries. The architect, John Curran of Tampa-based firm Gould Evans, used the surrounding environment as inspiration for the striking new building.

The new 4,459sq m museum provides expanded galleries and studio space, as well as a 50-seat theatre, café, library, and flexible space for up to 500 people.



● Floor to ceiling windows maximise natural light in the galleries



Project: Botanique Hotel & Spa

Design: Coletivo de Arquitetos

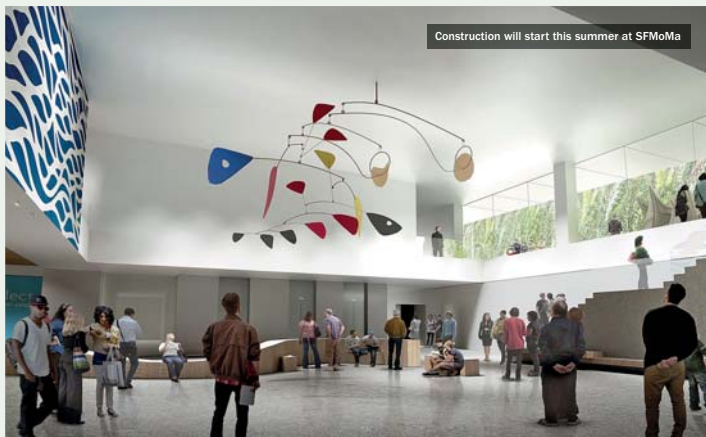
Location: Campos do Jordao, Brazil

Rainforest hotel and spa launched

A new hotel has opened in the Atlantic rainforest in Brazil, backed by The Body Shop co-founder Gordon Roddick, AOL co-founder David Cole and two local Brazilian entrepreneurs.

Designed by Sao Paulo architects Coletivo de Arquitetos, the Botanique Hotel and Spa has six suites, 11 villas, a cinema, lounge and a 10,000sq ft spa with nine treatment rooms and an indoor pool.

The design features glass walls, exposed steel and wooden beams.



Construction will start this summer at SFMoMa



● It will feature the biggest public living wall of native plants in San Francisco

\$555m expansion plans for SFMoMa revealed

San Francisco's Museum of Modern Art (SFMoMa) has revealed details of its 235,000sq ft expansion, which will add to its galleries and public spaces, and provide a new home for the Doris and Donald Fisher Collection of contemporary art.

The new museum, which has been designed by Snøhetta, is due

Project: SFMoMa

Design: Snøhetta

Location: San Francisco, US

to open in 2016 and will feature seven levels with 130,000sq ft of gallery space. It will also feature a large vertical garden and almost 15,000sq ft of art-filled free access public space, as well as space dedicated to live art.

The design will be environmentally sensitive, and will aim to achieve LEED Gold certification



● Zaha Hadid's 'twisted tower' will be 170m-tall

Project: Citylife Milano

Design: Zaha Hadid, Daniel Libeskind, Arata Isozaki

Location: Milan, Italy

Milan tower project underway

Work is underway on Zaha Hadid's 'twisted tower' in Milan, part of the Citylife Milano project which is set to transform the Milanese skyline.

The project sees Zaha Hadid, Daniel Libeskind and Arata Isozaki each designing a tower in the middle of a 160,000sq m park ('the twisted one', 'the curved one' and 'the straight one', respectively). The towers will house around 10,000 people as well as an art museum, a retail area and a pavilion for sports and entertainment.



The hotel offers views of the surrounding countryside

Project: Hotel Central

Design: JOI-Design

Location: Clervaux, Luxembourg

Revamped Luxembourg hotel launches

JOI-Design have transformed the former Hotel Central in Clervaux, northern Luxembourg, into Le Clervaux Boutique & Design Hotel.

The hotel consists of a 19th century private villa, with a contemporary glazed extension. JOI-Design mixed old with new in the design, blending stylised baroque elements with contemporary features.

A deep red has been used throughout the hotel, with baroque-style furniture and stylish motifs.



• The boutique hotel features 22 individual suites



• The leisure buildings are being designed by Holder Mathias
For an interview with the project architect see p30

Project: Center Parcs Woburn Forest

Design: Holder Mathias (leisure facilities)

Location: Woburn, Bedfordshire, UK

New Center Parcs on track for 2014

Construction work on Center Parcs' new £250m village in Bedfordshire, UK is on schedule for a spring 2014 opening.

The holiday village will comprise 625 forest lodges and a 75-bed hotel. Welsh architects Holder Mathias are responsible for the design of the 16,000sq m pool and leisure building as well as the 24,000sq m sports complex. These feature a 'subtropical swimming paradise', an Aqua Sana spa, indoor sports facilities and a range of restaurants and retail offers. Sparcstudio is also working on the project.

CAROLYN MERRIFIELD



■ Carolyn Merrifield became a partner at Holder Mathias in 2008

Creating a modern arts centre in a historic building, and designing the leisure complexes for Center Parcs' new resort in Woburn – just a couple of the challenges taken on by Holder Mathias. Partner Carolyn Merrifield tells us more

What drew you to a career in architecture?

A love of art and science. There are very few careers that allow you to combine both of those things.

How did you start your career?

I studied architecture at Cardiff University. I then spent a year in London at a small practice, then came

back to Cardiff. I spent a short spell working for the local authority, which convinced me that I wanted to be part of a practice rather than being a small cog in a big anonymous wheel.

I joined a company called Burgess, which seemed to have the right sort of philosophy for me. I quickly rose through the ranks and became a partner at 31. That lasted 16 years – I became managing director of Burgess Wales, but then decided I wanted to work for a slightly bigger organisation with a wider variety of work. The biggest and best architectural practice in Wales is Holder Mathias so I jumped ship six years ago and became a partner about a year later.

How would you describe your philosophy when it comes to architecture?

It's a combination of thinking about and responding to the environment, and making sure that you meet the client's requirements. That's very important; while you've got to have a clear concept that responds to the environment, you can't let that get in the way of meeting the brief. If the client isn't happy you won't get more work, so I'm not precious from that point of view.

What do you think the role of architecture is?

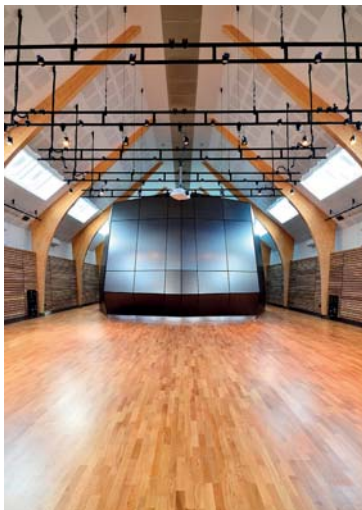
It's about creating beautiful places, improving the environment and creating something that everyone will enjoy.



■ The café has glazed walls, allowing passers-by to see inside



■ Holder Mathias has designed the leisure buildings for Center Parcs' new site in Woburn
For more on Center Parcs Woburn see p26



Where do you get your inspiration from?

It's generally not particular architects that inspire me. It's more about the quality of the space we are creating, and about trying to get the detailing right. I like using natural materials like glass and wood, and thinking about how those materials go together so they are really beautifully designed.

How did you get involved with Gwyn Hall?

Several years ago, we were involved with a commercial developer called Simons and were putting in a big bid for the redevelopment of Neath's town centre [in South Wales]. As part of our concept, we wanted to link in with the refurbishment of Gwyn Hall, which was taking place at the time.

We had our final presentation the day that Gwyn Hall burned down. We literally turned up in the morning with the smell of smoke in the air and everyone a bit shocked that this beloved building had burned down. We won the job and impressed Simons, and about three months afterwards they asked us to do some concept work for Gwyn Hall. That's when I started to work with Wilco Stekkinger, who was a very important part of the design team on this project.

What was the brief?

To try and create three venues: a community theatre, a 3D cinema and a multipurpose studio. I didn't think the client felt it was possible at the beginning, because the site is really small. Before the fire, there was just one real venue – the main theatre just about filled the whole space – plus an over-wide corridor that could sort of be used as a second venue. The café and back of house areas were under the theatre.

We have really used every square millimetre of the space in the building to create those three venues.

What was your concept?

Before the fire, Gwyn Hall's main theatre was on the upper floor, which meant you had to get 300 or 400 people all the way up the stairs, only to bring them back down again. That used up a huge amount of space.

The moment you decide to put the theatre on the ground floor, you lose a lot of that circulation space, which is fantastic, but then you hit a problem because the theatre is too tall to fit within the old-fashioned structure – the roof of the theatre would have clashed with the first floor windows.

Our idea was to lift the structure right to the top of those first floor win-

■ Instead of dividing the upstairs into two rooms using partitions, the architects created a cinema pod

dows, but still bend it down so that the theatre is the height you expect it to be. It's almost like the underside of a boat, so it links in at the edges but then barely comes down over the theatre, which is where we sat the upper floor. That gave the space lots of headroom – if you'd just tried to put the upper floor in the roof, you would have been really restricted.

We couldn't lift the roof; the outside of the building had to be exactly as it was before the fire.

It really was quite a clever concept. The client said they wanted three spaces, but they didn't really have a big enough site to deliver them. By doing it this way, we could suddenly give them a lovely 400-seat theatre, a nice studio and the 3D cinema, which was key for them to try to drive some money back into the organisation.

How did you design each of the venues?

We designed a new theatre which is completely multipurpose. That was something the client wanted, but they were expecting us to just blank out

the windows. The building had lovely big arched windows with fine stonework and stained glass in, so we said why not make them part of the auditorium. For daytime events, the windows can be used as part of the space. For evening events, we have two sets of blinds – acoustic blinds and blackout blinds – which makes it a truly multipurpose space. It means it can be used for amplified and choral shows.

We designed seats that can slide out of the way for events where the floor space is needed, and a timber floor. The space also has an orchestra pit, so you can either have the full rank of 400 seats, or you can have fewer seats and an orchestra.

The roof was completely destroyed by the fire, so we put in lovely new curved timber trusses. We thought it was a pity to split the space upstairs into two rooms for the cinema and dance studio, so we came up with the idea of sitting the cinema in the space like a little pod. It looks quite alien and modern, and you can see the whole roof over and around it. It makes for a really fantastic big volume that would have been ruined if you'd put an ordinary partition up between the two venues.

The café is at the front of the building. By making it out of glass, it immediately makes the front of the

GWYN HALL IN BRIEF

Client: Neath Port Talbot Borough Council **Value:** £8m

The Victorian Grade II listed theatre was devastated by a fire in 2007, part way through a £4m restoration project.

Holder Mathias took the shell of the destroyed building and transformed it into a new Gwyn Hall, which houses a 400 seat state-of-the-art community theatre and 3D cinema, a 140 capacity

studio venue and a 70 seat cinema.

Holder Mathias devised a way of providing a new café and entrance lobby by designing a contemporary glass box extension to the front of the building, allowing people to see inside the centre. The new arts centre reopened in 2012.

building very vibrant, because people can see what's happening inside.

How was sustainability taken into account?

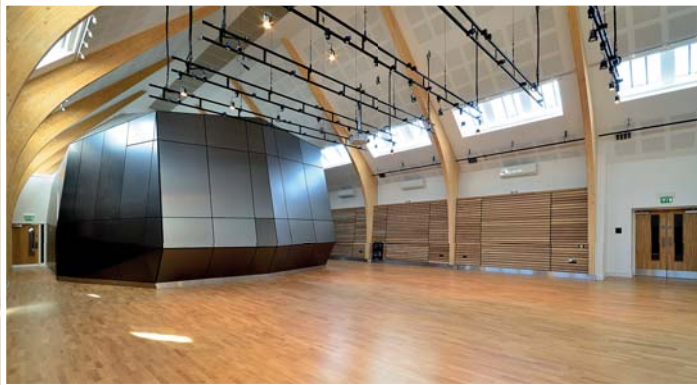
It was really important to us, although there was a limit to what we could do. We used natural light and natural ventilation everywhere we could, and displacement ventilation where we couldn't. We did up the fabric of the building and improved it quite a lot. It was about trying to make everything as efficient as possible. We also tried to use natural, locally-sourced materials.

The client felt it was very important that we used Welsh slate, although it's not cheap. The new stonework had to be matched exactly with the exist-

ing stonework. We had to colour match and material match the mortar; even the size of the grains had to match. The listed people were really picky about trying to make sure that when you looked at it you would never really tell what had been patched and fixed and what hadn't been.

What was left of the building after the fire?

Pretty much all that was left were four walls. The roof had completely gone, the floor had completely gone. At the front of the building there were two stairwells on either side with a spiral staircase in – that was remarkably unscathed. The chimneys were there briefly but the client was so worried



■ The cinema pod has been a huge success, and an important source of revenue for the centre



about the structural stability of the walls that they had to push them in so they were destroyed. We had to completely rebuild them from photographs.

What is your favourite part of the refurbished building?

The top studio, with the lovely curved beams and the cinema pod at the bottom end. It's such a surprisingly modern space in a lovely old building.

What were the biggest challenges of this project?

The limitations on the height. The thing about theatres is that there are a lot of people in them, and you have to deliver an awful lot of air [conditioning], and you have to do it very quietly, as people obviously don't want to hear the air conditioning system. That means huge ducts. It was difficult with such an old building, trying to squeeze all the services into the headroom we had, particularly since the planners said no grilles on the outside of the building and no big new penetrations through the walls. We did manage it but it was 'by the millimetre' stuff.

What reactions have you had?

The centre has been so popular in Neath. They've had great audience numbers. The theatre and second space have been very busy, and the cinema has been a huge hit. Late in the day, the client said they wanted to use the main auditorium as a back up

■ The seating can slide away, allowing the theatre space to be used for alternative events

cinema for peak times. When *Skyfall* came out it was broadcast in the big cinema and they had sell out audiences. It's great for a theatre like that to get extra revenue.

It's quite an understated building. It's not particularly showy, but I'm pleased with how carefully a lot of the detailing has been carried through.

Who do you admire in architecture?

Angela Brady who is the current president of RIBA, because she is a female role model in architecture and there are so few of us at a senior level.

I also like Zaha Hadid's architecture. On a more local level, there is an architect called Chris LLOYN who does lots of quite small residential work. He's managed to get a really lovely balance of design and materials.

What do you love about your job?

The variety. I work on so many different building types.

Also, as an architect, you are creating something. With almost every client we deal with, we're helping with an idea they've got and we're creating something out of it which is going to last and is hopefully better than what they might have imagined.

And what do you enjoy the least?

It's a constant battle to maintain that original concept and the quality of the project. From the moment you come up with the idea, you're constantly having to reduce the thing down to make sure it is affordable. You might have a battle with the planners, and you frequently have a battle with the contractors who will want to try to make it cheaper.

It's a bit of a miracle when you get to the end of the job and it is what you wanted it to be.

Where is your favourite place on earth?

I love Three Cliffs Bay in the Gower [in South Wales, UK]. It's just the most perfect setting. It was great when my children were young because it has a lovely safe area of water and it's really protected from the elements.

Are you working on any other leisure projects?

I'm hoping to get started soon on a project at The Wood Norton Hotel in Evesham, Worcestershire, which has just opened after a major restoration. They want us to design a new eco spa for them – we're hoping to get started on the project this summer.

We're also very busy with Center Parcs work. We're doing the leisure buildings at the new Center Parcs at Woburn. We've also just finished refurbishing Butlins' pool in Skegness. ●



DAVID BRADLEY

Longleat Safari and Adventure Park is being revolutionised, with multi-million pound investment, exciting new attractions and plans for theme park rides. Its chief executive tells Magali Robathan why this is just the start



I haven't been to Longleat Safari and Adventure Park for several years, and when I arrive, it's clear that a lot has changed.

The transformation starts at the front gate, where Longleat's team of designers and model makers are putting the final touches to the entrance. Previously a unremarkable gate, it now features models of some of the animals at Longleat appearing to leap out towards the visitors.

Inside, new attractions added last year alone include Gorilla Colony, Cheetah Kingdom and the African Village, while 2013 will see the launch of Penguin Island and Stingray Bay, the opening of a 4D cinema and the launch of some new themed attractions based on the successful *Deadly* tv series with Steve Backshall.

While the park used to close between October and March, it has now started running hugely successful events for Halloween, Bonfire Night and Christmas. And the next few years could see even more dramatic transformations if plans to create a new area of theme park rides come to fruition.

The driving force behind all this change is David Bradley, who was brought in as chief executive of Longleat Enterprises – which includes the safari and adventure park, the Cheddar Gorge caves attraction and two hotels – in June 2010.

"The past three years have been frenetic, passionate and energetic," says Bradley. "It's been about constant innovation. Most businesses evolve over time; we are revolutionising this place. Everything has changed



– the website is completely new, we’re putting in new products, we have repositioned and remarketed ourselves. Even the way we’re running the safari park is new – we’re trying to present it in a much more energetic way. We’re currently in a very exciting phase in the history of Longleat.”

I meet Bradley in his office, which overlooks the adventure park and grounds. “I get a great view,” he says. “I sit here and watch our customers walking past with smiles on their faces and hear their excited chatter. It makes it very tangible what we’re doing.”

EARLY DAYS

Before joining Longleat, Bradley worked in consumer brands and marketing for a range of companies, including Unilever, Smith Kline Beecham,

▲ A suspended walkway launched as part of the new African Village in 2012 allows visitors to feed the giraffes

Silverstone, Wickes and the Granada Group. He spent two years with Travelodge, developing the Travelodge City brand during his time there. He is perhaps best known for his three year stint between 1998 and 2001 as MD and senior VP of Legoland, when he was one of the team who helped turn it into a hugely successful attraction.

In 2010, the flamboyant Lord Bath (son of the sixth Marquess of Bath, who launched the safari park in 1966) handed Longleat Enterprises to his son Ceawlin, Viscount Weymouth. Ceawlin decided that the park needed to be modernised, and asked Bradley to come on board as CEO.

Bradley was immediately drawn to the role, he says. “What attracted me was the opportunity to work with a bit of a blank canvas.

“There were no intrinsic rules or guidelines to follow. And I thought this place was a bit of an uncut diamond. It’s got it all; it’s got fantastic heritage, beautiful Capability Brown-designed grounds, and the house is widely acknowledged as one of the best examples of Elizabethan high architecture in Britain. The challenge we embarked on was to modernise the product offer, while retaining the core values of the house.”

It was always going to be important to be sensitive about the changes, as Longleat Safari and Adventure Park is such a well-loved part of British heritage. The sixth Marquess of Bath, Henry

"I'm not a particularly patient person, but this place doesn't need a patient person right now. There's so much work to be done here – we need to move quickly"

Frederick Thynne, opened the doors to Longleat House in 1949 in order to raise money to maintain his estates, making it the first British stately home to be opened to the public.

The safari park – the first to open outside of Africa – launched in 1966, and was the brainchild of James Chipperfield, of the Chipperfield Circus family.

"One of my earliest memories is coming to see the lions at Longleat," says Bradley. "The trouble was that not much had changed since back then.

"When I joined, Longleat was very tired, dated and stuck in the past."

RAPID CHANGES

When he joined the group, Bradley immediately set out to make his mark. His first task was to plough investment back into the park. "Ceawlin and I convinced the trustees to reinvest every penny that this business gener-

ates for the first five years back into it," he says. "It was important that not a penny should leave." Over the past two to three years, more than £30m has been ploughed back into the park, mostly in the form of new attractions.

Bradley's first full year, 2011, saw the launch of the Meerkat Walkthrough enclosure in Jungle Kingdom, Monkey Temple and the Hunters of the Sky aerial bird display. The park welcomed new animals including a group of male lions, a herd of wildebeest, two new white rhinoceros and Anne the elephant, who was rescued from a circus.

Another big first for 2011 was the opening of Longleat over the Christmas period. Christmas attractions included a 50ft musical Christmas tree, a Santa train ride and grotto, an ice rink and Christmas stories brought to life by actors in Longleat House.

"Opening at Christmas has been phenomenally successful for us," says Bradley. "We had more than 30,000 people taking the Santa Train during the last Christmas opening, and

◀ Two gorilla brothers were reunited last year at Longleat Safari Park, after being separated for three years





Steve Backshall visited the safari park to record his *Deadly Safari* CD guide to Longleat



the attractions in the house were particularly popular. It was quite an act of faith opening at Christmas for the first time though. The tree alone cost almost half a million pounds to build. You have to commit to spending the money, you open the gates and hope that the consumers come."

The group also bought two former Von Essen hotels in 2011 – Homewood Park in Bath and Bishopstrow House in Warminster – allowing visitors to stay overnight and increasing the potential dwell time.

If 2011 was busy, 2012 was even more so. Around £7m was invested in the park last year, with the big openings being the African Village, Cheetah Kingdom and the Gorilla Colony.

The African Village – which Bradley describes as "the safari park on foot" – features a giraffe feeding area, a lemur walkthrough and a giant model of a baobab tree with aerial walkways and viewing towers. The Gorilla Colony is home to four western lowland goril-

las, which joined the park last year. "The new gorilla area allows visitors to enjoy extraordinary encounters with these awesome primates in a near-wild environment free from bars and viewing windows," says Bradley.

LOOKING AHEAD

It should be clear by now that Bradley doesn't believe in taking his time. "I'm not a particularly patient person, but this place doesn't need a patient person right now," he says. "The only low point of this job is that there aren't enough hours in the day. There's so much work to be done here – I can see what the place needs and we have to move quickly."

Bradley says that he only sleeps for five hours a night – "I'll happily get up at 4am and start work," he says – and it's a good job, as 2013 looks busier than ever for him and his team.

"This year is particularly exciting," he says. "We have teamed up with BBC Worldwide to launch a series of *Deadly*-

themed attractions across the park."

The four year plan will see parts of the park transformed in the style of the popular Steve Backshall-presented *Deadly* programmes – which include *Deadly Top 10* and *Deadly 60*.

From Easter onwards, visitors can go on a *Deadly Safari*, voiced by Steve Backshall, who talks about the animals at Longleat while relating them to his own adventures. A *Deadly Challenge Zone* is also due to open in May in the existing Adventure Castle area, which will feature around 30 interactive touch screens where visitors can undertake a series of challenges including trying to run as fast as a cheetah and climb as quick as a monkey.

Other new attractions include the £3m Penguin Island and Stingray Bay, due to open in May. Penguin Island is a 225,000 litre sea water display, which will house a colony of Humboldt penguins and will feature giant viewing windows allowing visitors to watch the animals from above and below the

► Longleat offers visitors the chance to hand feed many of the park's animals (right)

water. Stingray Bay is the new open-topped home for a selection of tropical stingray species.

A new 4D theatre is being built near Penguin Island, which is also due to open during the summer, and which will show a range of films themed to tie in with what's happening elsewhere in the park – Christmas films will be shown over the festive period, for example.

Further ahead, Bradley and the team are working on the exciting sounding Project Inca – a plan to introduce a series of theme park rides to Longleat.

"I've been working on this project for around two years," says Bradley. "I want to increase the dwell time to around eight hours at Longleat and this is part of that plan."

Bradley unrolls the plans for the new area, showing a mix of possible rides including a flume ride, a boat ride, a rollercoaster, a carousel and a temple structure. "The idea is that we would build a miniature station for this new area, and the existing train would drop visitors off there," he says.

"The area would feature a mix of rides and attractions. We're on Grade 1 parkland here, so we have to work



closely with the planners to get all the necessary permissions sorted."

Longleat has also recently released detailed plans for a new elephant sanctuary, which will include a 994sq m heated accommodation area with natural sky light panels and automated feeding systems, and 24 acres of outdoor space featuring a grassy paddock, sand pits and pools. The area could home Anne, Longleat's female elephant, and up to three other elephants. The plans have been submitted to the local council for approval.

Visitor numbers seem to suggest that most people are embracing the

changes at Longleat – last year the attraction had 1.2 million visitors, up from 1 million in 2010.

COURTING CONTROVERSY

Bradley's tenure hasn't been without controversy. Last year Longleat announced that it would be restricting public access around the formal grounds and gardens, and banning dogs from this area entirely.

The announcement was met with anger from some local residents, who had previously roamed freely around the park, but Bradley is unrepentant about the decision.

DAVID BRADLEY IN HIS OWN WORDS

What drives you?

I've always been a highly driven person. My mother tells me I had 10 paper rounds at the age of 11. I have an inner drive which means I have to live every day as fully as I can and try to do something different each day.

What inspires you?

I really believe that behind every project there is one person driving it. That person might build a team, but the nugget of the idea

comes from the individual. What inspires me is being able to get the team to mine the mine.

What are you proudest of since joining Longleat?

I'm proud of the fact we've been able to cover so much ground so quickly. We have achieved a real cultural shift, and we have a very strong team here.

There are several hundred of us in the boat, rowing as fast as hell in

the same direction. That makes me proud because you only need one or two people not in the boat, or rowing in the wrong direction, to upset it for everyone else. I'm proud that everyone is sharing the vision.

What's been your biggest challenge at Longleat?

The sheer amount of work that we needed to do in a very condensed time scale. We're doing about 30 years' work in around three years.

What does your role as CEO of Longleat Enterprises involve?

I spend a lot of time travelling around the world, visiting different parks and looking for ideas.

I tend to look to the US for inspiration rather than the UK, as I feel it's more customer-focused.

What do you do in your leisure time?

I love cars so I have a few of them. I golf, I run and I play tennis.



"We're a private estate but there was a general feeling that we were open to the public at any time of day or night. You can't operate that way," he says. "The place was littered with dog walkers, and not all of them pick up their dog mess. We're a family park and people like to sit on the grass and have picnics here.

"Also we are an extremely valuable estate. Inside the house, there are very valuable chattels. The value of what we do needs to be protected. I don't apologise for putting tighter security in, I don't apologise for protecting the house and its contents and I don't apologise for improving the consumer experience for the people who pay to come here. Outside of the formal grounds and gardens, there are thousands of acres within the estate where people are free to roam."

Bradley is also behind plans to build a cable car at Cheddar Gorge.

"Cheddar Gorge is one of the great wonders of England, geographically speaking, but it has been in severe volume decline since the 1970s," he says. Plans to "freshen up" the area include a relaunch of the attractions and a redesign of the caves entrance.

"I don't apologise for putting tighter security in and I don't apologise for improving the consumer experience for the people who pay to come to Longleat Safari and Adventure Park"

The most important part of the plans, however, is the idea of building a cable car across the Gorge with a viewing platform at one end.

"It would give breathtaking views across the Mendips, Glastonbury and the Gorge," says Bradley. "What we're doing here is building a legacy. If the cable car goes ahead, people over the next 20, 30, 40 years will be able to enjoy the spectacular views there."

Not every shares his enthusiasm for the idea, however. The National Trust, which owns the land on one side of the gorge, has said it would object to the cable car plans on the grounds that they would have a negative impact on the beauty of the area.

▲ Longleat Enterprises' plans for Cheddar Gorge include a cable car across the gorge

"The National Trust objected before they'd even seen the final scheme – the planning application hasn't gone in yet," says Bradley. "I think it was an emotional objection. We have been working with other bodies, including Natural England, who have been very constructive throughout the process."

For better or worse, Bradley is putting himself firmly behind the scheme. "I am unshakably and unequivocally the champion of the cable car project," he says. "I really believe in this."

One thing is for sure, there's plenty more change to come, and it's clear that Bradley wouldn't have it any other way. "I've always been attracted to businesses that need some sort of change," he says. "I'm not interested in custodial businesses."

So, how long does Bradley see himself staying with Longleat Enterprises?

"As long as I feel this passion and excitement," he says.

"I've never had a day here where I've felt bored, and I can't envisage one. Longleat genuinely excites me." ●



SAFE IN THEIR HANDS

With a new company set-up and a successfully completed contract with the London 2012 Olympics, the managing director of RD Health & Safety, Joe Ryan, explains how his consultancy is modernising service delivery in the sector

What is RDHS's background?

We formed in March 2012 following the merger of Right Directions (Management) Limited, with the aim of providing effective health, safety and quality management support services.

Our team has been involved in the sport and leisure industry since the early 90s, working operationally in venue management before progressing to consultancy roles. As the previous co-founder and director at Right Directions, I've been managing a consultancy business since 2004, working with clients across a range of private companies, local authorities, contract management organisations, the voluntary sector, national governing bodies and most notably event delivery organisations.

More recently, RDHS spent 18 months contracted to the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) delivering the baseline health and safety management system for all London 2012 Olympic Park venues.

What's your approach to H&S?

We're committed to resetting the direction of health, safety and quality management by providing a more dynamic, modern and effective method of service delivery.

Everything we do for clients is bespoke: while we operate to recognised health & safety systems, we support clients rather than imposing a fixed solution. We've a reputation as a company that can be trusted, that listens before solving clients' problems.

What services do you provide?

We aim to provide a core framework of services which we know will create a solid foundation for clients. Our health and safety support service is offered 365 days of the year and is tailored to the needs of each client's business. Our service includes offers such as an emergency and accident support line; H&S support days; accident and incident investigations, and advice relating to personal injury insurance claims.

Our Health & Safety (HSMS) and Quality Management Systems (QMS) are designed to meet the operational requirements of our clients. We work hard to make them 'user-friendly', ensuring they remain fit for the future.

Our health and safety support service is offered 365 days of the year and is unique to each client

Our QM services also include: helping to achieve Quest (or higher scores); benchmarking for quality audits and mystery visits; operational manuals and email surveys. Our Client Assurance Programme provides detailed reporting of health and safety, and quality management processes.

We also offer a Recognition Award Scheme called 'Assured'. Results of quality and QMS audits, mystery visits and H&S audits are collated, with an average performance score identified.

Our Event Safety Services includes health and safety support through safety officer and advisor roles. We've built a reputation of being the best.

What's your team's experience?

Russell Cavanagh is one of our most experienced consultants with over 20 years' experience in the leisure industry, working for major management contractors and private companies such as Cannons Health and Fitness.

Tim Waller has wide-ranging experience in both public and private sectors in sport, leisure and health club management. He also worked for Nuffield Health & Wellbeing, leading on health & safety across 160 health clubs, corporate fitness and local authority leisure sites.

He is vice chairman of the UKactive's Technical and Health and Safety Forum and sits on its Code of Practice Working Group. He's also part of the IQL Programme Development Board for the National Pool Lifeguard Qualification.

Andy Waters has over 17 years' experience in the leisure & hospitality industry, previously employed with four star hotel chains, and private and public sector leisure operators. He offers experience as a troubleshooter in many areas, including athletics, swimming, food and beverage, gyms and tennis clubs.

I've worked in the leisure industry since leaving the Royal Navy in 1991. I was group health & safety manager for Leisure Connection in 2000, leading on H&S across 120 sports, leisure and entertainment venues across the UK. I have extensive experience of quality management, managing and delivering quality audits, Quest assessments and mystery visits.



The company's experience at London 2012 has informed its mode of operation

What is your approach to the company-client relationship?

We recognise our clients are in the public eye, with the venues being operated in a difficult climate, under public pressure for effective services.

We have successfully guided our clients down a road which has seen health, safety and quality management performance increase, with risks minimised. The key to this success has been in the development of effective working partnerships with our clients.

Tell us more about the Olympics contract and what you learned from it

I joined LOCOG in March 2011 to carry out the baseline function for the Olympic Park venues, which included the writing of the Park Operations HSMS. I also acted as H&S advisor for Eton Manor during the May 2012 test events, moving into a Games Time role as advisor for the Main Media Complex (MMC) and Eton Manor.

Andy Waters was heavily involved in the H&S planning for the last mile function at the Olympic White Water Centre, which involved regular meetings with the Safety Advisory Group (SAG), planning and writing the incident management plans (IMP) and acting as H&S Advisor

for Lee Valley Regional Park Authority in their management of the last mile.

The experience has changed our perception on how health, safety and quality management can be delivered, and we now focus much more on a 'people-based approach' – really getting people involved, and especially influencing those who are sceptical of health, safety and quality.

Are there H&S changes due that will affect leisure operators?

This year we're expecting to see the continuation of the government's drive to de-regulate H&S legislation. The aim of this is to remove H&S burdens from employers without impacting on outcomes. We continue to observe this review and will, where necessary seek consultation with our clients to align their HSMS and QMS accordingly.

One of the major developments we're involved with is the review the HS(G)179 Managing Health and Safety in Swimming Pools. We expect this review to have a significant effect on our clients' operations with a key focus on supervision levels.

What projects are due in 2013?

These are very exciting times for RDHS. One of our main projects is to

re-build our brand which starts with the development of our new website. This will open the door to the use of social media platforms in a greater capacity.

We're also developing a wider training service to clients, which will see us providing a greater range of courses – for example IOSH, CIEH, fire safety, first aid, and RLSS courses.

We'll be working on our Operational Readiness programmes providing clients with mobilisation plans for new builds and refurbishments covering the health, safety and quality requirements for our operations/start-up, to ensure clients' preparation, testing and staff training are optimal, and that the projects are delivered effectively.



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POP-UPS

HOTELS

PARKS

SPAS

RESTAURANTS

ENTERTAINMENT



From parks to spas, and hotels to cinemas, the pop-up trend has taken the leisure industry by storm. Magali Robathan takes a look at some of the world's most innovative projects



The Pop-Up Hotel offers a glamping experience at festivals and events

POP-UP HOTELS

The hotel industry has got into the pop-up trend in a big way. Pop-up hotels range from cheap temporary accommodation often set up to provide lodgings for events and festivals to luxury high end facilities.

The Snoozebox Portable Hotel is created from stacked shipping containers, with each room featuring a double and a single bed, an ensuite wet-room, air conditioning, a flatscreen tv and free WiFi. The hotel provides temporary accommodation at a range of events and festivals across Europe – it will be appearing at events during 2013 including the Edinburgh Festival, the Formula 1 British Grand Prix and the Isle of Man TT 2013.

Sleepbox Hotel mobile capsules, created by Russian design studio Arch Group, can be installed into existing buildings to turn them into temporary hotels. Customers can book the capsules for a night or by the hour, and pay at a shared terminal, which issues them with an electronic key. The first Sleepbox opened at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport in 2011.

Somerset company The Pop-Up Hotel creates a pop-up hotel experi-



The Snoozebox containers are easy to transport, and don't require mains services

ence in luxury safari tents at events and festivals across the UK. Guests get a tent already set up for them, with beds, towels, duvets and pillows, electric lighting and access to luxury showers and toilets, a hair and make up parlour and a restaurant and bar serving breakfasts and light snacks.

The Pop-Up Hotel 'popped up' at various events during 2012, including Glastonbury Festival, Goodwood Revival 2012 and the Big Festival, and is set to appear at a range of festivals and events this year.

Coming in with a slightly different take on the pop-up hotel idea is Berlin-based sales and marketing consortium Design Hotels™, which has trans-

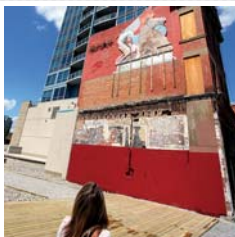
formed two existing hotels into Design Hotels for a short period of time. This allows hotel owners to try a luxury product on a temporary basis to see whether the demand is there.

Design Hotels launched its first pop-up resort at Papaya Playa in Tulum, Mexico in 2011. Eighty five cabanas were refurbished by the Design Hotels™ team, with the temporary resort open for six months – closing in May 2012. On the back of the success of this project, Design Hotels™ launched the San Giorgio Mykonos, a 34 bedroom hotel on the Greek island of Mykonos last summer. The San Giorgio Mykonos will reopen for the 2013 summer season in May.



Design Hotels™ has temporarily transformed the San Giorgio Mykonos into a luxury property





Last July, volunteers in Calgary, Canada, turned a disused plot into a temporary park, complete with planters and benches

POP-UP PARKS

Pop-up parks are an ingenious idea for temporarily regenerating vacant or underused land in urban areas crying out for more green space. These projects can help reclaim unsightly areas of land, bring vitality to an area and encourage community spirit.

In the Victoria Park area of Calgary, Canada, community volunteers have transformed a privately-owned vacant plot of land into two urban open spaces. The site was originally meant to be used for the creation of a high rise condominium tower, but has been left vacant since 2008 and was fenced in, decrepit and covered in graffiti. The owners gave not-for-profit association Victoria Park Business Revitalisation Zone (Victoria Park BRZ) permission to use the site as a temporary park for between two and five years.

As part of a one day event in July 2012, volunteers helped build benches, paint over graffiti, plant

native grasses and plants, and create pathways and decking areas.

"The site is no longer an eyesore encouraging illegal activities, and has provided a space for community members to sit outside and enjoy a coffee and good company along a popular retail and restaurant strip in Calgary's city centre," says Julie Brache, urban planning and development co-ordinator at Victoria Park BRZ.

"Some of the community members have assumed a sense of ownership over the park; watering it and watching over it in the summer months. The site was used for several community events in summer 2012, including an outdoor arts market curated by a local not-for-profit organisation and another smaller scale design/build event constructing more benches for the park in collaboration with the Faculty of Environmental Design from the University of Calgary."

Victoria Park BRZ has plans for other pop-ups on privately-owned, vacant land over the coming 18 months, ranging from multi-use plazas to food markets and restaurants.

In May 2011, Australia's first pop-up park opened in Melbourne, featuring

two synthetic soccer pitches, a bar-beque area with picnic tables and a community garden.

The Pop-Up-Park in Dandenong, which was built for a minimum of two years, was created by the Victoria government's sustainable urban development agency VicUrban. The agency partnered with Mission Australia Urban Renewal, employing unemployed local young people to build the park. The construction of the park took seven months, and funded 28 jobs.

"A combination of factors make the Pop-Up-Park a whole community space – location, accessibility, no cost, informal and formal activities and a sense of belonging," says Jacquelin Saultry, social and cultural planner, Places Victoria. "The development process of the park involving young people has contributed to a sense of ownership and respect for the space. To date there has been no vandalism or anti-social behaviour at the park, a sign that young people respect it."

The park has been used for events including festivals, soccer competitions, community gardening programmes, youth radio show broadcasts and school holiday programmes.



The Urban Retreat at Harrods was transformed into the Caudalie Pop-Up Spa in July 2012

POP-UP SPAS

The idea of the pop-up spa seems to be a fairly new one, and most tend to be set up by product houses or existing spas as a way of promoting their product. Recent events include the Caudalie and the Maradiva Villas Resort & Spa Pop-Up Spas at Harrods in London last year and the Ainhua City Spa at London St Pancras International Station, run from November 2012 to January 2013 by Spanish skincare brand Ainhua.

One particularly interesting project comes in the shape of the Barking Bathhouse in Barking, London – the project is so interesting, in fact, that we decide to write a separate feature about it (see Hotseat, p32).

Set up during the summer 2012

as part of the Create Festival – the London 2012 Olympic art festival – the pop-up spa was created by design practice Something & Son and was open for 12 weeks from July 2012. Located in a car park, it resembled a giant beach hut from the outside, with its dark stained timber frame. Inside, it featured ‘the gravel pit’ – a shingle beach where spa goers could sunbathe, three treatment rooms, a wood-fired sauna, an ice room, a relaxation yard and an organic bar. Treatments were affordable and it became a highly popular social space, hosting events ranging from yoga sessions to comedy nights.

“Setting up a pop-up spa enabled us to be more innovative than if we were running a permanent spa,” says Paul Smyth, founder of Something & Son. “We didn’t have the pressure a permanent spa might have, so we could try out new ideas and focus on getting people in and having a great time. We learned what worked and what didn’t.”

The spa was funded by the local council, and was such a success that it is going to make the move from pop-up to permanent facility. The original spa was dismantled in October 2012, but Something & Son transformed four rooms into treatment rooms at the Barking Learning Centre so that the concept could continue over the winter. Later this year, a new Barking Bathhouse is set to open on Barking’s Cambridge Road.

Something & Son is currently in talks with Bristol City Council and Brighton Council about recreating the concept there. “They are interested, because there’s a real need for community spaces that are accessible for people on a range of incomes,” says Smyth. “We’d love to hear from anyone who might have innovative, sustainable ideas for spa design, or who could help us create a Bathhouse in every city.”

For an in depth interview with Paul Smyth about this project and others created by Something & Son, see p32.



Facilities at the Barking Bathhouse spa in east London included a café and a relaxation garden





Dinner in the Sky was launched by entrepreneurs Michael Gallant and Taj Jordan in July 2008

POP-UP RESTAURANTS

The pop-up restaurant scene is now so well established, it hardly seems like a trend anymore. Pop-up restaurants are cheaper to set up than permanent restaurants, with fewer overheads, and they allow chefs and proprietors to be more creative and experimental.

They range from inexpensive supper clubs run from people's homes to high end experiences catered for by Michelin-starred chefs. Often using social media to publicise themselves, these restaurants have been hugely popular with the public.

At the fine dining end of the spectrum, Electrolux launched the Cube in 2011 – a glass structure temporarily installed on top of famous landmarks in Stockholm, London, Milan and

Brussels, serving gastronomic meals cooked by Michelin-starred chefs.

The Cube ended its seven-month run on top of London's Royal Festival Hall on 31 December 2012, when chef Simon Rogan cooked a seven course menu for 20 guests, who had a stellar view of the New Year's Eve fireworks.

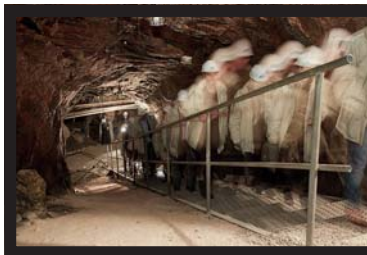
Before London, The Cube was open on top of the Royal Swedish Opera house, in Stockholm; the Parc du Cinquantenaire in Brussels, Belgium; and Number 1 Via Ugo Foscolo in Milan, Italy. The next location is currently under discussion, but we are assured that The Cube will be back sometime this year.

New York-based Guerrilla Culinary Brigade and German company Pret a Diner are just two of the hospitality companies who specialise in organising temporary culinary events. As we reported in the last issue of *Leisure Management*, Pret a Diner creates events with Michelin-starred chefs, art, music and social clubs – 2013

sees events taking place in Berlin, Basel, Rio, Frankfurt and London. The Guerrilla Culinary Brigade's past events include The Pop Art Pop-Up, which saw New York hotel The Sanctuary transformed into a work of pop art, while 15-year-old chef Greg Grossman created dishes inspired by the work of artists including Andy Warhol, Damien Hirst and Roy Lichtenstein.

Celebrity chefs have also been quick to get in on the act. Jamie Oliver is behind a range of temporary venues, including a four day pop-up version of Fifteen in John Lewis, a pop-up café on Southend Pier and a festive pop-up restaurant and bar at Brighton Pavilion Ice Rink. Meanwhile Gordon Ramsay launched a pop-up 'hunting lodge' at his York and Albany restaurant in London's Camden. Running for a six week period until February, the space was decorated with tartan, animal skins, tweed and antlers.

And of course pop-up restaurants don't have to be indoors. Dinner in



Temporary Finnish restaurant Muru Pops Down in Tytyri attracted huge attention when it opened in September 2012

In Finland, a 'pop-down' restaurant ran for 10 days in a former limestone mine. Diners put on hard hats and descended 80m underground, where they were served a four course meal



The Cube by Electrolux had a seven month run on top of London's Royal Festival Hall

the Sky has been serving food to diners suspended 100-ft up in the air for several years now. Up to 22 guests sit around the table before being hoisted up into the air, where a chef prepares their meal in the centre of the platform. Events have now taken place all over the world, from Monaco to Las Vegas.

While that might seem high, it's nothing to an event that took place in

February in Tanzania – 3,810m above sea level. Billed as the highest ever pop-up restaurant, it was set up on the top of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania as part of a charity climb to raise funds for non profit organisation Mama Hope. Senegalese chef Pierre Thiam was flown from New York to prepare the meal for the diners/climbers, who each paid \$5,400 for the experience.

In Finland, meanwhile, a 'pop-down' restaurant was launched for 10 days in September in a former limestone mine in the town of Lohja. Diners put on hard hats and descended 80m underground via a series of tunnels, where they were served a four course meal. The restaurant was set up by popular Helsinki restaurant Muru as part of World Design Capital Helsinki 2012.



PHOTO: DANNY NOTES

Chamber Made Opera's past performances include *Ophelia Doesn't Live Here Anymore*

In October 2012, Secret Cinema launched Secret Hotels, allowing film-goers to stay in accommodation inspired by the film they have just watched

POP-UP ENTERTAINMENT

Melbourne-based Chamber Made Opera organises a series of small-scale, edgy operas in people's living rooms around the world. The Living Room Opera Series will see five specially-commissioned operas taking place during 2013, with the first in a sitting room in Bristol's Clifton area. Other operas taking place this year include an interactive puppetry and animation opera inspired by the works of street artist Banksy and an Edible Flower Opera taking place in houses in Melbourne, Australia and in the countryside in Belgium.

Transforming unusual venues for theatre performances has been hugely popular in recent years, with British companies Punchdrunk and Shunt putting on immersive theatre events in

locations including disused factories, railway arches, tunnels, an old distillery and deserted office blocks. These shows allow theatregoers to roam around the venue, choosing where to go and what to watch.

Punchdrunk's current performance, *Sleep No More*, tells the story of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in its own unique way. The company has taken over The McKittrick Hotel in New York, and has transformed more than 100 rooms in cinematic detail, allowing the audience to move through the building and the story at their own pace.

Future Cinemas also creates immersive experiences, using films instead of theatre. Founded by Fabien Riggall in 2005, the company takes over buildings and large spaces to stage 'cinema events' in which film-goers become part of the story. Last year, Secret Cinema – an offshoot of Future Cinemas which sees the public buy tickets without knowing which film they will be watching – screened *The Shawshank Redemption* at a former hospital and old school

in London's East End. More than 13,000 people, who had all signed up online and paid £45 for their tickets – were 'sentenced' at Bethnal Green Library, then driven to the Cardinal Pole School in 'prison vans' driven by actors. The school was meticulously transformed into a prison complete with prison guards, laundry rooms and a prison canteen, and the audience were handed cold beers at the same moment the prisoners in the film cracked open a beer.

In October 2012, Secret Cinema launched Secret Hotels, which allows film-goers to continue the experience overnight, staying in accommodation inspired by the film they have just watched. At *The Shawshank Redemption* screening, those who had paid an extra £30 for the Secret Hotel experience stayed overnight in 'cells' in the school, and were made to do exercise in the 'prison yard' in the morning.

Secret Cinema is hosting simultaneous secret film screenings in London, New York and Athens in April. ●



Future Cinema has just finished a run of *Casablanca* at the Troxy in London's Limehouse



Secret Cinema's *Shawshank Redemption* experience saw cinema-goers bundled into prison vans

CREATING MEMORIES

With activities ranging from rock climbing and performing to DJing and photo editing, WTS's two holiday programmes should keep even the pickiest child and teenager happy

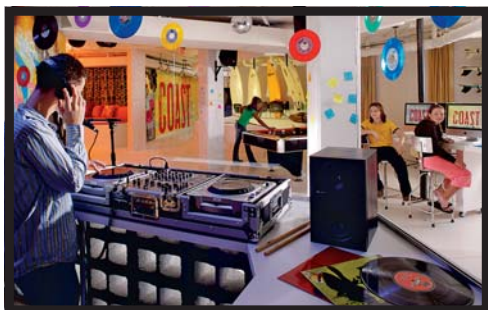
For many years, WTS provided recreational services, activities and programmes for residential communities that wanted to have a broad array of programmes for their residents. It became evident over time that many hotels and resorts also had a desire to provide similar services, activities and events for their guests. Our RESORTlife™ division is focused on executing management and consulting services specifically for resorts, timeshares, and hotels that are targeting the leisure traveller.

RESORTlife™ experts are committed to creating delineate experiences that transform the traditional activities and amenities department into a business unit that creates lasting memories that drive repeat business, brand loyalty, and name recognition.

Two of our programmes under the RESORTlife umbrella include the AquaNuts™ and Coast™ programmes offered at The Ritz-Carlton, Palm Beach in Florida, US.

RESORTlife services include:

- Full service resort recreation management and consulting
- Kids' clubs
- Beachfront activities
- Poolside activities and cabana service
- Teen programmes
- Tennis lessons
- Outdoor adventure
- Wellness workshops
- Life enrichment experiences
- Event planning and corporate team building



The Coast™ teen lounge features a DJ booth, teen beauty salon and a range of activities

AquaNuts™ provides a variety of supervised physical and creative activities designed especially for children aged five to 12. This uniquely-designed facility has an underwater theme, and is all about discovery and creativity, both indoors and outdoors.

For children who enjoy activity, the facility has a dedicated playroom, an 'underwater', glow-in-the-dark cave with a rock climbing wall, Wii and Playstation games, and an interactive pirate ship to explore. Those who are more creative can work on ArtNuts projects, use Mac computer stations, create their own stuffed animal with the AnimalNuts programme or take the stage in the performing arts sand castle theatre. Other activities include swimming, nature hikes, YogaNuts, movies and games. Lastly, a day at AquaNuts™ is not complete without a visit to the Pucker Power candy station.

Coast™ sets itself apart as the new model for teen programming at the resort level for ages 13 to 17. This first-of-its-kind teen lounge offers amenities like a fully-operational DJ booth, Mac work stations, a teen beauty salon (Beauty@Coast), and several different lounge areas. Guests at Coast™ can create their own DJ mix to upload to an iPod, participate in professional-level photo shoots in the studio, and edit

photos and videos to send to friends. Teens who just want to hang out and relax can play pool or Guitar Hero by day, or enjoy dancing, glow parties, and movies with Coast@Night.

AquaNuts™ and Coast™ are not just offered for family vacations, they also reach locals by providing Summer Camp programming. AquaNuts™ and Coast™ truly have something to suit every child, teenager and family.

WTS International (Rockville, MD, USA) is a worldwide leader in the delivery of spa, fitness and leisure facility consulting and management services. Clients include hotels and resorts, residential projects, private clubs and a wide array of real estate developments throughout the US and abroad.

WTS specialises in providing feasibility studies, concept and design services, pre-opening and daily management. Our array of leisure divisions enable us to provide these services for our clients' specific needs. These divisions include Spa, Fitness, Recreation, Tennis, RESORTlife, COMMUNITYlife and CREW (Campus Recreation). ●

RESORTlife

For more information visit
www.wtsinternational.com
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WTS International RESORTlife™ experts are committed to creating delineative experiences that transform traditional activities and amenities into lasting memories that drive repeat business, brand loyalty, and name recognition. We offer:

- Full Service Resort Recreation Management and Consulting
- Kids' Clubs
- Beachfront Activities
- Poolside Activities and Cabana Service
- Teen Programs
- Tennis Lessons
- Outdoor Adventure
- Wellness Workshops
- Life Enrichment Experiences
- Event Planning & Corporate Team Building

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PAUL SMYTH



Set up during the Olympics as an affordable pop up spa, the Barking Bathhouse has been so popular that it's returning as a permanent facility. Paul Smyth, co-founder of Something & Son, tells us more

What's your background?

I trained in engineering design at Warwick University between 2003 and 2007. There was a strong emphasis on sustainable and simple engineering in my studies.

I worked on various environmental campaigns while at university. After university, I worked for sustainability consultancies Inbuilt and Beyond Green, as a senior sustainability consultant and associate respectively.

I met Andy Merritt three years ago through a mutual friend, and we set up Something & Son shortly afterwards.

Merritt comes from a background in graphic design. When we met he was working as a sculptor and in schools

teaching about art and design. I was at the stage in my life where I wanted to work a bit more creatively, and Merritt was also looking for different types of work, so we set up our eco-social design practice, Something & Son, together with Sam Henderson [who has now left the practice].

What's the philosophy of Something & Son?

We're interested in environmental and social design, and in exploring how to bring ideas that could be a bit abstract to people, by anchoring them to something they already know. For example, with the Barking Bathhouse, we took the spa as a central idea, and used it

to engage people around the issues of sustainability, wellbeing and happiness.

It's not like an art installation where people aren't sure how to respond – everyone knows how to react to a spa and engage with it. It's about trying to find those points of connection between an idea and your audience.

FARM:shop was your first big project. How did that come about?

It grew from an interest in food and the future of the supply chain. The idea we had was to put a farm in a shop, and see how much food we could grow – in doing so we were hoping to reconnect people with the food they eat.



The Barking Bathhouse featured a gravel beach area for customers to relax in

Paul Smyth
(right) with
Something &
Son co-founder
Andy Merritt



We're interested in bringing ideas that could be a bit abstract to people. With the Barking Bathhouse we took the spa as a central idea and used it to engage people around sustainability, wellbeing and happiness

How did the idea develop?

We applied to a competition in 2010 – the Art and Empty Spaces Programme, run by Hackney Council – and won the chance to take over an empty building on Dalston Lane in east London.

In July 2010 we began the transformation of a four storey empty shop into an urban farming hub.

FARM:shop launched in March 2011, and is now a sustainable business growing food, breeding fish and chickens and running a café, work-space and events venue. The business is run by us with the help of several partner organisations and also a dynamic team of volunteers.

Since launching Something & Son, we've worked on a range of other ideas, including CAR:park, which saw us transform a car into a small park for the London Festival of Architecture; the Rotting Compost Tea Bar, which involved converting rotten kitchen waste into heat, which was used to brew tea at the V&A Museum; and the Floating Garden, an installation for the

Gwangju Biennale in South Korea. Plus, of course, the Barking Bathhouse, which is our biggest project to date.

How did the idea for the Barking Bathhouse come about?

We were approached by the arts commissioner Create in 2011. At that point there wasn't a set project, they just wanted us to work with them on designing something for Barking as part of the Create Festival [which showcased art and design in east London in the run up to the London 2012 Olympic Games.]

Together with Barking and Dagenham Council, we worked up a funding application for a green pavilion, which would act as an events space. We quite quickly decided that the pavilion wasn't the best idea, because we were worried about what would happen to it once the Olympics were over – we didn't think there was much chance of it continuing. Also, we don't find event spaces particularly interesting; we'd rather do a

living, working space that can also act as an events space.

Merritt and I had been thinking about spas and how they could be more interesting for some time. We pitched the spa idea, and everyone loved it.

What is the concept of the Barking Bathhouse?

It is a social spa and it is accessible for everyone – the treatments are very affordable. We wanted to create somewhere that people from all parts of the community could use, without a drop in standards.

It was built for the duration of the Olympics, in order to raise the profile of Barking. It was initially supposed to run for eight weeks, but we got an extension for a further three weeks, and it closed in October 2012.

The idea was based on the old bathhouses – Barking had a public bathhouse which closed in 1986 after 87 years of operation. We asked ourselves, how were the old bathhouses operated? They were right at the cen-



Last year's pop up Barking Bathhouse was made from black timber and featured a wood-fired sauna

tre of the community; people used them from all different backgrounds. They were social spaces where people could talk and hang out and sometimes get a bit merry.

We wanted to incorporate all of those elements of a spa. Most spas in this country tend to be about escapism and self-indulgence and perhaps about more of an individual experience than a collective one. We felt we could try something different.

It's maybe a bit more fun and riotous than a normal spa – you hear a lot of laughter at the Barking Bathhouse.

How much did it cost to set up the initial facility?

It cost around £230,000. It was mainly funded by the Outer London Fund, which was set up by [Mayor of London] Boris Johnson at the time of the Olympics. The fund was designed to give the outer London boroughs additional support and to help strengthen their high streets and town centres.

Looking forward, we're working on a figure of around £300,000 to build, develop and set up a Bathhouse.

What were the biggest challenges of the project?

Our role was to design and oversee the operations at the spa, and when we started, we'd never run a spa before, so that was a bit of a challenge! The construction was also quite challenging, as we'd never done a building before either.

We did have a good knowledge of business, however, which is quite unusual for a design practice, having run FARM:shop for nearly three years.

What were the advantages of it being a pop up?

We actually wanted it to be permanent, but the nature of the site meant that wasn't possible. There were some advantages to it being a pop up, however – it gave us more freedom to experiment, for example. We were also really cautious about investing too much into the building, because we knew it wouldn't be there for long. It felt unethical to spend too much on it, which meant we ended up with this simple, bare bones aesthetic, which was actually very popular.

How would you describe the design of the Bathhouse?

We were partly inspired by Barking's industrial past and by the idea that an old warehouse had been converted into a spa with trees growing through the building and furniture crafted from reclaimed materials. The design was very simple – I would describe it as eco-industrial chic.

You're launching a permanent Barking Bathhouse in the summer. What will this feature?

We are still finalising the plans, but it will feature three and a half treatment rooms – the spaces will be flexible, with partitions that allow us to transform them into larger spaces for classes and events.

We'll have another wood-fired sauna and we're looking at bringing in some very clever, low-energy, low carbon systems to run some hot tubs. We want people to spend a bit longer there than they did last summer. We're planning an outdoor area with very cold bucket showers, which will replace the ice room we had last year. We also hope to have some sort of greenhouse/solarium, which will be a standalone space.

It will have a bar and café. Last year the bar served drinks, salads and sandwiches, but we'd like to expand the food offer this year.

It will retain the indoor/outdoor experience, with a walled garden, but it will be designed for use all year round as opposed to the last one, which worked best during the summer. The building itself will be very well insulated, but we'll also be able to open it up during the summer.

The design will be quite iconic and industrial, but slightly more finished

BARKING BATHHOUSE

The Barking Bathhouse opened in July 2012. It featured:

- Three treatment rooms
- A terrace
- A bar and café
- An indoor/outdoor garden for relaxation (within the building, but with an open roof)
- A gravel beach area for relaxing in
- A wood-fired sauna
- An ice room with ice tiles

The spa closed in October 2012, but the team have continued to offer treatments at the Barking Learning Centre over the winter. The spa offers a range of affordable body and beauty treatments, including Thai Yoga massage, hot stone massage, reflexology and deep tissue massage for £25 for 30 minutes or £35 for 60 minutes. Manicures cost £15 and a Neal's Yard purifying facial costs £35.



The 'eco-industrial chic' design of the temporary spa will be continued in the permanent Barking Bathhouse

than the last Bathhouse. The spa will have a big chimney, centred around a wood-burning furnace, which will provide heating for the building. It will be made from timber again, and will feature fresh cut logs and black wood.

It will also feature a community garden for people to relax in. The front half of the garden will be open to everyone, while the back will feature more secluded areas. Landscaping will be very important – we're looking at using heaps of logs and gravel to create secluded spaces.

How have you considered environmental sustainability?

We want it to be one of the world's most environmentally sustainable spas.

We've employed something called the Passivhaus principle, which was pioneered in Germany. It works on the idea of reducing heating loss to a minimum by insulating your building as much as possible, meaning that you need minimal heating. We want to use natural materials as much as possible, while keeping construction costs low.

We'll use a woodchip boiler to heat the water, it will feature triple glazed windows and low energy lighting.

The team have continued treatments at the Barking Learning Centre over the winter. How did that come about?

We did that to keep the concept going and keep the team together. We created three treatment rooms at the back of the Barking Learning Centre, designing them in the style of the Barking Bathhouse. It's been great in terms of developing the treatments and connecting with the community.

We wanted to use the winter to very carefully start to connect with people in the local area, where perhaps we didn't quite have the time to do that with the pop up. Bookings have really increased recently – the team are getting out there and meeting people in Barking and really making connections.

You're in talks with councils in Bristol and Brighton about creating more Bathhouses. What do you look for in an area?

Our key criteria is a local authority or private landowner who wants to work with us, shares our vision and loves what the Bathhouse is about.

Once we've got the permanent Barking Bathhouse open, and working

really well, we'd love to find a partner who shares our vision and wants to come and work with us. We'd be really open to an established spa operator or someone who wanted to invest.

We genuinely want to change spa culture in the UK – to make spas more affordable, and to get people to use them more regularly. In order to do that, we need lots of Bathhouses out there, and we recognise that we need help to make that happen.

What are you working on now?

We've got a few projects on at the moment. As well as the new Bathhouse we're working on some more urban farming projects, some sculptures and research into a new type of care home, which would be based around young and old people living together.

How do you relax?

I play football, eat good food, hang out with friends. I like being by the sea.

What is your philosophy?

I think it's important to be really open to opportunities. Keep your eyes open, because you never know who is going to walk through the door. ●

Christine Peterson

TripAdvisor has had a huge impact on the tourism industry since its launch in 2000, but has been hit by the issue of fake reviews. Director of TripAdvisor for Business, Christine Peterson, tells us how this is being addressed and what the company has planned for the next few years

What's your assessment of the impact of TripAdvisor?

TripAdvisor has had a remarkable influence on the travel industry, and the way people shop and research their trips has changed dramatically since we launched. Traveller reviews have become an essential part of consumers' purchasing cycle.

We're also seeing more and more travel brands embracing the power of our reviews through a variety of content syndication partnerships and review collection partnerships with TripAdvisor. We now have content syndication partnerships with over 500 marquee brands around the world, including Thomas Cook, Wyndham Hotel Group and British Airways.

How was the TripAdvisor for Business division born?

We launched the division in 2010. Although TripAdvisor had been around since 2000, we realised we needed to focus more attention on the industry and have a division in place to provide more resources for communicating with the hospitality sector.



"It's important to note that the penalties for attempts at fraud can have a serious effect on a business' reputation, and most owners realise the risk isn't worth it"



ChristinePeterson, 2013



Peterson has worked her way up from marketing officer to director of TripAdvisor for Business

TripAdvisor for Business focuses on helping hospitality businesses promote themselves to travellers online. The division has been responsible for a number of initiatives to help hospitality businesses thrive online, including the launch of the Management Centre, which gives owners access to a wide range of free tools and resources for promoting their businesses.

Other initiatives include Business Listings, our paid-for service for hotel-



TripAdvisor for Business allows hoteliers to respond to feedback and thank guests who have reviewed their property

iers and accommodation owners that enables hoteliers to add their direct contact details to their TripAdvisor property page and encourage more direct bookings. We also work with hospitality associations and tourism groups to educate hospitality business owners about the benefits of managing their online reputations. We've developed a series of Masterclasses and webinars through which we speak with hoteliers.

What else does the TripAdvisor for Business division do?

Once owners have registered in the Management Centre they can sign up for email notifications for when they receive a new review, analyse the feedback they receive from reviewers and compare their business' performance with competitors.

I think one of the most important tools is the Management Response feature, which ensures that business owners are able to provide their side of the story and thank guests and customers for their feedback.

How are you addressing the problem of fake reviews?

We have a zero tolerance policy on fraud. If travellers didn't trust our content, we wouldn't have a business. The integrity of the content on TripAdvisor is fundamental to our success.

Every review or content element submitted must meet TripAdvisor's guidelines, and any content found to be in breach of our guidelines will not be printed on the site.



We have three primary methods to manage the legitimacy of reviews. Firstly our systems. Reviews are systematically screened by our proprietary site tools that are frequently upgraded. Secondly our large and passionate community of more than 50 million monthly visitors help report suspicious content. Finally our Quality Assurance Teams investigate suspicious reviews flagged by our proprietary tools or community.

The sheer volume of reviews on TripAdvisor means that travellers can get a complete picture of a property, and make an educated decision before they book their trips.

How are reviews checked before being posted?

We dedicate an enormous amount of time and resource to managing the integrity of content. We have a team of nearly 100 working on this. Our systems, tools and approach include automated fraud filters, frequently updated, which check every piece of content submitted to the site.

We also encourage our community of travellers to let us know if they feel that a review doesn't meet our guidelines and we ask businesses to report reviews they feel are suspicious or inappropriate through the Management

Centre. Our dedicated content integrity team then investigates each and every report, and any content found to be in breach of our guidelines will ultimately be removed from the site.

How do you penalise businesses who misuse TripAdvisor?

We have various measures in place, which can include affecting their popularity rating on the site and posting public warning notices, known as 'red badges' on properties that have made attempts to manipulate their rating. The red badge alerts travellers viewing that property's page that TripAdvisor has reasonable cause to believe the property may have interfered with reviews or their ranking and attempted to manipulate our system. We evaluate any situations like this on a case-by-case basis, but it's important to note that the penalties for attempts at fraud can have a serious effect on a business's reputation, and most owners realise the risk isn't worth it.

How does TripAdvisor make money?

Click-based advertising accounts for the largest percentage of revenue; this is when the user clicks on the 'show prices' (or 'cost-per-click') button, and



TripAdvisor is using social media to personalise customers' experience of the site, by joining up with Facebook

then we pass those leads onto our OTA partners and hoteliers.

The next largest segment of revenue is display-based advertising; this is the sale of relevant, targeted advertising that enriches the user experience.

Finally, we have our subscription-based revenue, including business listings and vacation rentals.

What are your day to day responsibilities?

My focus is on the hospitality industry and developing TripAdvisor for Business to make sure we're responding to the needs of the sector and continually innovating. I travel a lot and in any given month, I can be in Newton, London or Singapore, in product meetings or at a travel conference, planning launches in new markets or working with the TripAdvisor for Business team to develop an idea for a new service. No two days are the same, but I aim to connect with owners as often as I can.

How has TripAdvisor changed since you joined?

I started at TripAdvisor in 2004 to run marketing and product. When I first joined, we were located in an office near a railroad track where we were sharing space with acupuncturists and accountants, and next door to an auto body shop. We only had a few dozen employees at the time – but we had lots of passion and grand plans. Since then, we've grown dramatically – TripAdvisor is now the world's largest travel site – although our principles are still very much the same.

I launched TripAdvisor's marketing presence, including our PR efforts. Back then, it was on the phone, around the clock, just getting people

"When I started at TripAdvisor we were sharing an office with acupuncturists and accountants. We only had a few dozen employees but we had lots of passion and grand plans"

Christine Peterson, 2013

interested in the site. Over the next few years, I oversaw growth in site traffic, revenue, content and membership, increasing user engagement and user-generated content. And in 2010, I took charge of launching TripAdvisor for Business – quite a journey.

What have been the biggest new developments for TripAdvisor?

We have launched 'Local Picks' which is a Facebook app that provides recommendations on where to eat from friends and locals. It is integrated with Facebook's timeline as well so anyone who uses it can share their ratings and favourite places to eat with friends.

We've also developed new widgets and tools for business owners, including the Full Review Form and our Facebook integration application. The

Full Review Form empowers hospitality business owners to collect more reviews directly from their customers, by embedding a TripAdvisor review form in their business's website so customers can submit a review without leaving their site. The Facebook application is a simple way for owners to integrate their TripAdvisor content onto their Facebook page.

Is TripAdvisor using social networking in any other ways?

In 2010, we launched an integration with Facebook that instantly personalises the site for each person who visits. If you log in to TripAdvisor using your Facebook details, you'll see reviews from friends first, the most popular destinations among your friends and an interactive social map. Last April we deepened this integration when we launched Friend of a Friend, which surfaces reviews from your friends' friends on Facebook.

What drives you?

The travel industry is developing at a rapid pace with new trends emerging all the time – social media, mobile, new ways for people to shop and book – and TripAdvisor plays an important part in that evolution. I want to make sure we strive to stay ahead of the trends. ●



AVEX

With a focus on healthy vending, this year's AVEX show will feature a wide range of exhibitors as well as free seminars and a lively events programme. We take a sneak peek

AVEX, the UK's largest biennial exhibition for the vending and water industries, is gearing up for this year's show. With all parts of the vending industry gathered together under one roof, AVEX offers its trade visitors the opportunity to seek industry-specific advice, attend free seminars and have access to all the key suppliers in the industry. Showcasing more than 150 businesses including 3M, AG Barr, Douwe Egberts, Vivreau and Mars Chocolate UK Ltd, all areas of vending are covered including the industry's major manufacturers, leading operators and service companies.

Highlights of this year's AVEX include the FM Vending Show, which has been specially created with facility managers in mind, the healthy vending seminars run by industry experts 24Vend, the judging of the University Food Development Awards, and an engineers' fault finding competition.

The FM Vending Show

For the first time there will be stands dedicated to facilities management – the FM Vending Show, which will include seminars by the Facilities Management Association (FMA) and pre-arranged 'Meet the Buyer' sessions. FM buyers visiting the show will have the opportunity to meet with operators face-to-face to discuss their vending requirements. Confirmed operators exhibiting include Snacktime, WISE group and COVER group. The FMA hosted seminars will take place on the afternoon of 11 June.



What?

AVEX 2013

Where?

NEC Birmingham, UK

When?

Tues 11 June 10am – 5pm

Wed 12 June 10am – 5pm

Thur 13 June 10am – 2pm

Awards and Gala Dinner on

Wednesday 12 June, Hilton Birmingham

Details and free registration:

Web: www.avexshow.co.uk

Twitter: @AVEX13

Focusing on health

12 June will see the focus of the events programme shift to healthy vending. 24Vend will launch this part of the show with a morning conference that will include the chance to sample a range of healthy new products, and will feature a light and healthy networking lunch. The seminar programme will focus on how to incorporate healthy options into existing vending portfolios to attract new vending consumers as well as driving profits.

The AVA and University College Birmingham have been working together on the project where final year BA Culinary Arts students were tasked to develop healthy solutions for the vending industry. On the afternoon of 12 June the students will present their products for judging by an expert panel for the chance to win the University Food Development Award. The students were asked to create new food and

packaging concepts for six different vending markets, addressing some of the key issues of today such as obesity, recycling of packaging, allergens and government regulations regarding salt and sugar levels. The winner will be announced at the inaugural Vending Industry Awards that evening.

Battle of the engineers

On 13 June is the engineers' fault finding competition, which will pit the wits of vending machine engineers against one another as they battle to repair the preset faults in a variety of machines under pressurised time conditions. Combining fun with expert knowledge, this session will highlight the importance of ongoing professional training and will be run by the AVA's training partner Vending Intelligence Ltd.

"A new team taken on the challenge of making this year's event the biggest and best yet," says Paul Howard, AVEX chairman. "The AVEX team is working hard to deliver a show that we're sure the industry will love."

The Awards and Gala Dinner will take place at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole. For details call Claire Davison on +44 (0)1622 699170 cdavison@datateam.co.uk ●



A BIG WELCOME

For some overweight people, going to a gym or exercise class is a daunting prospect. Kath Hudson talks to gym operators specifically targeting plus size customers while trying to offer a more welcoming environment

In the US and the UK, 60 per cent of people are either overweight or obese. Obesity causes many health issues including some cancers, heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure, stress, illness and depression. Some experts believe that obesity is responsible for more ill health than smoking.

Although this is a hard market for the fitness industry to reach, we are now seeing concerted efforts to meet the needs of overweight consumers.

"The opening of gyms specific to plus size people in the US is indicative of a wider change within the sector; a move towards adapting to the needs and demands of consumers and offering increasingly niche fitness facilities and programmes," says CEO of ukactive, Dave Stalker.

"A cultural shift has begun in the sector towards viewing people in a holistic way, and looking at the causes of an individual being overweight, rather than just treating the consequences. We need to continue to build on this, through further innovation and collaboration, to reach the large percentage of the population who remain inactive."

In the UK we are starting to see a change in programmes offered: LA Fitness has partnered with Weight Watchers to join up physical activity and nutrition. Fitness First has launched weight management classes, and groups such as Nordic Walking link in with local healthcare providers to deliver programmes for the management of obesity and related conditions. There is also a rise in niche quali-



▲ Operators are finding that it's important to offer emotional support to those wanting to lose weight

fications in areas such as weight management, nutrition and psychology.

Curves and Gymophobics target their marketing at women who want to get more active but may not have previously felt comfortable using a gym.

Also, the ukactive Research Institute is currently working with fitness centres across the country to build an evidence base for delivering physical activity counselling to people who may be overweight and suffering from chronic health problems, to help them make positive lifestyle changes.

Currently the successful plus size offerings are run by people who have successfully lost weight themselves and so understand the challenges and the fears that overweight people have about entering gyms and starting to exercise. To just cover fitness is not enough, so most providers look at nutrition, and give counselling support too.

US operator Downsize Fitness is aimed at people who are at least 50lbs overweight and takes a holistic approach to its members' lifestyles. Each time someone comes to the gym they work out with a trainer, who also holds them accountable for their diet.

Here we take a look at a few other fitness operations designed specifically for overweight customers.

Body Exchange

FOUNDER: LOUISE GREEN

I set up Body Exchange in Vancouver in 2008, as a lifestyle change, after having a baby. Previously, I was working as a talent agent in the film industry. It was stressful and involved long hours, and I thought it wouldn't mix well with motherhood.

While pregnant I gained around 45lbs, but I was still passionate about working in fitness, so I decided to target upper size people. I did some market research and found there is nothing dedicated to this group of people in Canada. It immediately attracted a lot of media interest, so I realised that it was very timely.

No one is banned, but the language and image of our marketing material is targeted at upper size people. To market the business we have looked at the lifestyle patterns of the ideal client and gone to them, as they won't come to us. I call places like Weight Watchers clubs watering holes, as here you find larger people, who are motivated to change. Doctors also refer people to us.

The programme is bootcamp-style, using equipment like resistance bands, bosus and agility ladders, and is run in community-based locations. Exercise takes place either one-on-one, or in

classes, which vary in size from five to 25. We don't run sessions in health clubs, because our customers wouldn't enter the buildings; they are in community halls, or outside. Body Exchange also offers an online customisable nutrition programme, as well as goal setting and lifestyle coaching.

We offer a two day or three day a week programme. To start with, people are fearful that they won't keep it up. People come with a lot of fear and lack of trust in themselves.

The sense of community in the group really builds motivation. Our customers organise hikes and snow shoeing in the mountains together. For those who buy into it, retention is really good.

Some people lose huge amounts of weight and transform their bodies. Others come off their medication and are now no longer pre-diabetic. Others become more fit but don't lose weight, because they can't control their eating. I think that we are dealing with a lot of emotional eating. Very often obesity is just a symptom of a deeper problem. Eating is the biggest struggle for most.

I have now licensed the business, so it is in six different communities in Vancouver, but I want to make Body Exchange a national company, through licensing. Alberta, Calgary and Ontario are the first cities I want to target and as I'm originally from the UK, I would also like to take it there.



Louise Green
aims to bring her
business to the UK



▲ Green runs exercise sessions outdoors or in community halls



▲ Topics covered in classes include goal setting, nutrition and emotional eating

Square One

FOUNDER: MARTY WOLFF

I've lived 25 years of my life morbidly obese and learned many bad habits, but always wanted something else. When I appeared on *The Biggest Loser*, I found my place, as well as meeting my wife.

After leaving the show 146lbs lighter I did a lot of public speaking, which culminated in launching Square One in Omaha, US last year. It is a club of like-minded people of size. Most are morbidly obese and we use a mixture of exercise, therapy, dieting and mentoring on how to tackle obstacles to help members control their triggers and craving. Most of them have no clue about the fight they are fighting, or how to defend themselves, so we help them to build strategies.

The programme is based on a mix of my own experience and research. For example, one thing obese people tend to suffer with is an all or nothing mentality. So they think that if they break



the pattern by eating a cookie, they might as well give up that day. I compare this to spending money. If you buy one thing you haven't planned, you don't have to go and empty the bank account. There is a big grey area and we help people to understand it.

Many people see incredible results with weight loss, but some people simply can't get past the emotional eating and fail to lose weight. Working out is the easiest habit to grasp, because I can watch them, but I can't watch them when they're at the fridge at home.

Even when people are obese, or morbidly obese, exercising can make

a massive difference. For example, losing 8lbs to 10lbs could mean reducing or coming off blood pressure and cholesterol medication for some.

Recruiting members is one of the things we are still learning how to do. The difficult part is working out how to approach people and we are experimenting with that, for example targeted advertising on Facebook, for those who have liked *The Biggest Loser* and *Weight Watchers*. We are also using radio and I meet a lot of people through public speaking. People hear of my struggles and can relate to them.

When compared to the industry standard, we do a really good job at retaining people. This is because we have created a community of people. We have a large private Facebook page with a community, which many people rely on as a support system.

Square One offers a number of packages, starting at \$60 and rising to \$300. Whether working out in the gym, or classes, PT or small group training, people always have to work under the guidance of a trainer.

Going forward, we are planning to franchise the concept, initially in the mid-West of the US.

Although with my skills I could teach regular yoga, I find larger people more interesting and challenging to work with. Millions of teachers work with the slender and fit, but only a handful work with big people

Buddha Body Yoga

FOUNDER: MICHAEL HAYES

I was tired of being the biggest person in the yoga class, so in 1996 I embarked on a Sivananda yoga teacher training course in Barbados. After this, I developed my own practice and worked privately with another teacher, discovering how to get my body into the yoga postures.

Buddha Body Yoga grew out of this experimentation and is the only yoga offering that I know of which caters exclusively for plus size people.

Although with my skills I could teach regular yoga, I find larger people more interesting and challenging to work with. Millions of teachers work with the slender, strong and fit, but only a handful work with big people.



I run seven classes a week at our New York studio and am just negotiating new space so that I can expand my class size. Finding clients is not necessarily easy; word of mouth and media coverage seem to be the best way.

However, many plus size people are scared to come to classes. I have had people register and not turn up, or arrive five minutes late but then refuse to join the class.

Once people start coming, retention is good, because I make it fun; it's like a community with lots of jokes and playing with postures. It's not really serious, like many other yoga classes.

Some people come because they want to lose weight, some want to be more flexible, some want to experience yoga and others like the feeling of movement. If I can stop someone hobbling, or help them move and sit more comfortably, I consider that a success. Very often large people are flexible, but they are disadvantaged by muscle tone and gravity. Some muscles are weak and others over-strengthened. My challenge is to teach the strong muscles to relax and strengthen the weak ones.

I would like to take the concept across the US and around the world by running teacher training classes. I've just set up a certified five day yoga teacher training programme on working with big people, which is open to qualified yoga teachers. ●

PHOTO: ANDREW KELLY MEDIA



Hayes adapts standard yoga poses for larger people

SHARING THE LAND

The launch of eco resort Cicada Lodge in the heart of Australia's wild north is the latest part of a pioneering partnership between the Aboriginal Jawoyn people and the Australian government. Magali Robathan finds out more



▲ Nitmiluk Tours allows tourists to participate in traditional cultural activities with local Jawoyn people

When it opened in March, Australia's Cicada Lodge fulfilled its promise of offering tastefully-designed, environmentally sustainable accommodation in spectacular, unspoilt surroundings. Situated in the Nitmiluk National Park, 300km south of Darwin, Cicada Lodge has been kept deliberately small, with 18 'architect-designed' rooms set on the banks of the Katherine River.

It's an idyllic place in a truly incredible spot, but the Cicada Lodge story is about much more than just the launch of another boutique resort. It is also the story of a plan to maintain the culture and environment of the aboriginal Jawoyn people, whose ancestors have lived and depended on the land for more than 40,000 years.

TAKING CONTROL

In 1978, the Jawoyn people lodged a claim for land rights to the area that was then called the Katherine Gorge National Park, where they had lived for thousands of years. In 1985, the Jawoyn Association was launched, and in 1989 the Jawoyn people finally won



their land claim under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. Many Australians were worried that the park would be closed to tourism, but the Jawoyn Association insisted that they were keen to share their country and show others what it meant to them.

"The Jawoyn people do not believe that they own the land but rather that the land owns them and they have an obligation to care for it," says Mandy Dwyer, director of Dwyer Tourism Consultants, which is promoting Cicada Lodge. "By sharing the land and their culture with others they are caring for and extending the awareness and knowledge of the



Jawoyn people. They are also helping their own young people identify with the land and sustain their culture. It is also viewed as a commercial venture that is profit-orientated, with all profits being returned in welfare programs for the Jawoyn people."

After winning their land claim, the Jawoyn people immediately leased the land back to the Northern Territory Government, to be operated as a national park. The Nitmiluk National Park was established under a joint management agreement between the Jawoyn People and the Northern Territory Government's Parks and Wildlife Service, with the park run

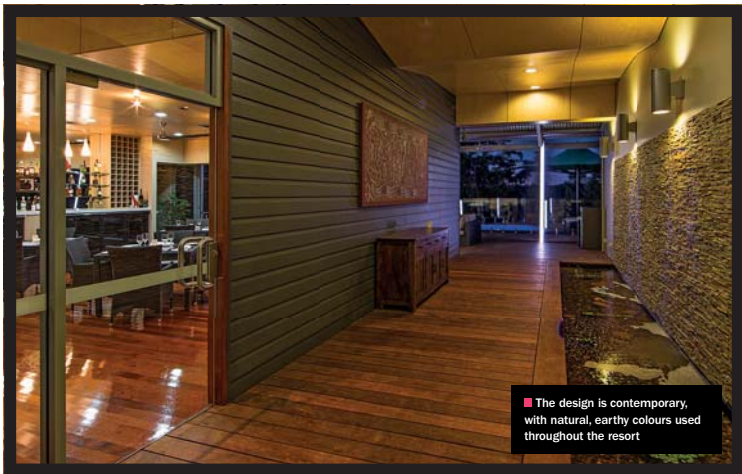
by a management board made up of Jawoyn and government officials. "The park management is heralded as a model for joint management between Aboriginal people and governments across Australia," says Dwyer.

In 1993, the Jawoyn Association made its first move into large-scale tourism, setting up a joint venture called Nitmiluk Tours with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commercial Development Corporation (CDC) and Travel North, and co-purchasing the boat operations at Nitmiluk Gorge. The following year, the Jawoyn Association bought out CDC's share, and in 2006 it bought out

▲ Floor to ceiling glass windows give guests views of Cicada Lodge's pool, and the Katherine River beyond

Travel North's shares, making it the full owner of Nitmiluk Tours and sole operator of the boats, canoes, caravan park and visitor centre at Nitmiluk National Park. The company also runs educational tours of the park, teaching visitors about its stories and history and the history of the Jawoyn people.

In addition, Nitmiluk Tours runs the annual Barunga festival, one of Australia's longest-running indigenous festivals, which showcases a wide range of Jawoyn culture and sports.



■ The design is contemporary, with natural, earthy colours used throughout the resort



■ Natural materials have been used where possible at Cicada Lodge

Today, around 250,000 people visit the park each year. Since 1989, new roads have been built and other infrastructure put in place. A \$3m visitor centre, the Nitmiluk Centre, opened in 1997, with a display centre and heritage museum and a restaurant – it has since won several architectural prizes. In June 2006, Nitmiluk Tours carried out a major programme to upgrade the caravan park at Nitmiluk Gorge and build new self-catering cabins, and took over operations at the Lelyn Falls campsite on the western boundary of the Nitmiluk National Park.

Profits from Nitmiluk Tours are put back into the Jawoyn Association to support training and employment in tourism for Jawoyn people.

CICADA LODGE

The concept for Cicada Lodge was developed around five years ago, explains Dwyer. "The plans were developed in recognition of the need for quality accommodation in the Katherine area to cater for the upper end of the market, in particular the UK and European market sectors," she says.

The lodge was designed by Darwin-based MKEA Architects. It features 18 rooms with large open balconies and views over the surrounding rock country. It also features a welcome area



▲ Private boat tours will lead guests through the maze of sandstone waterways that make up Nitmiluk Gorge

with a bar leading out to an open deck pool overlooking the Katherine River.

The rooms are contemporary, and feature original artwork from leading indigenous artists. The natural history of the area has been referenced in the use of colours, with rich ochres and earthy browns being used throughout.

While many resorts close for the wet season, Cicada Lodge is going to open year-round. It will actively celebrate the monsoon season, promoting the lush vegetation and the increase in wildlife during these months.

Cicada Lodge is a 100 per cent indigenous-owned operation and will employ and provide hospitality training experiences for the local people.

Private tours will offer guests the chance to explore the area. "Air touring will allow them to experience the waterfalls and indigenous rock art, cruise boats will guide them through the ancient waterways, and indigenous guides will lead them through the rugged terrain in search of age old bush foods and medicines," says Dwyer.

"Cicada Lodge offers an opportunity to truly experience the heart of Australia's timeless north." ●



▲ Nitmiluk Tours is run by the Jawoyn Association Aboriginal Corporation



Jawoyn Association Aboriginal Corporation

The Jawoyn Association Aboriginal Corporation was established in 1985 as the representative body for the Jawoyn Aboriginal traditional owners.

The Jawoyn Association's comprehensive human services, cultural and land management programs, business enterprises and forward planning with a vision for economic independence provides support, employment and training for Jawoyn people.

The Jawoyn people have been involved in the tourism industry for more than 20 years. They see tourism as a long term and sustainable form of economic activity, with the

potential to give widespread benefits in employment and wealth creation for the Jawoyn people as well as the whole region.

The late Jawoyn leader, Bangardi Lee, is often quoted on this topic: "Land has always been part of our traditional economy. That doesn't mean we see it as something to be exploited. It's not just there to make money out of and then be left behind. We have responsibilities to our land, which are responsibilities to the old people, the present generation and our children and grandchildren. We have to use the land wisely."

BREAKING NEW GROUND

With the acquisition of DC Leisure in December 2012, housing giant Places for People became a new player in the leisure arena. Julie Cramer talks to the heads of both companies about what the future holds



David Cowans (left), chief executive of Places for People, and Steve Philpott (right), chief executive of DC Leisure

The health and fitness industry has seen its fair share of mergers and acquisitions over the years. The majority of those deals have been between fitness groups, or between fitness operators and larger leisure plc's eyeing a more diverse portfolio – but one recent business deal appears to mark a new departure for the sector.

Leisure management company DC Leisure, which operates leisure facilities for almost 30 local authorities across the UK, was taken over by housing giant Places for People in December 2012, for an undisclosed sum.

One of the largest property management, development and regeneration companies in the UK, Places for People – a not-for-dividend organisation with over £3bn in assets – currently owns or manages more than 80,000 homes in 230 local authorities.

It's believed to be the first time – in the UK at least – that a housing provider has taken over a leisure company. However, given the way the market is moving, with fitness facilities



reaching out from their sealed boxes into more parts of the community, perhaps it's not so much a surprise as a sign of things to come.

ADDING VALUE

The chief executive of DC Leisure, Steve Philpott, and his new boss, the chief executive of Places for People, David Cowans, certainly see it as a mutually beneficial deal.

"Places for People is an owner that understands local government and community development – and that's essentially what we're about too," says Philpott. "But it had no leisure provision and no understanding of leisure and that's what's exciting both for Places for People and for us. The company has taken us over to deliver

▲ Places for People is one of the UK's largest property management, development and regeneration companies

that and to expand, which is obviously a very positive situation for everyone in the organisation."

David Cowans sees the deal as an opportunity to enhance and add value to the Places for People (PfP) portfolio, which he says is both "socially and commercially" driven.

"We are a place-making business, so we're always looking for opportunities to add value to existing places," says Cowans. "For example, we established a chain of nurseries alongside some of our housing developments. It wasn't that we particularly wanted to go into the nursery business, but we



have listened to what people were telling us they wanted."

BIGGER POND

It may be natural to assume that the bigger organisation approached the smaller one, but in fact, says Philpott, the deal came about because DC Leisure was actively looking for a company to take it over.

While it may be some time before we see leisure integrated into PFP developments, the direct benefits of the takeover to DC Leisure (now a subsidiary of PFP) were instant, with the company immediately able to go out and bid for more contracts.

Philpott says: "We were looking for the right kind of buyer and it was an approach we made to PFP. When we

▲ **DC Leisure runs 95 leisure facilities across the UK in partnership with almost 30 local authorities**

started to talk to them about it they absolutely understood the fit and were extremely excited about what we could do together. Because we are now owned by a not-for-dividend organisation, with no shareholders, it means we will be competing for contracts on a level playing field with the leisure trusts.

"That's been a serious handicap to growth over the last four to five years. Before we were operating with a significant tax disadvantage. It meant that we've had to tread water in the past few years and remain static in terms of the number of councils we work with and number of sites we manage."

So does that mean that big changes are afoot at DC Leisure? According to Philpott, yes...and no.

"In terms of our organisation and the way we're structured and everyone's individual roles it's pretty much business as usual," he says.

The only visible changes have been the replacement of two of DC Leisure's non-executive board members – a part-time chairman and a representative of the company's previous owners – with the PFP group chief executive David Cowans and group chairman, Chris Phillips.

BUSINESS CREDENTIALS

The main change will be the significant growth opportunities that come from the backing of a bigger player.

“Every individual part of the group is strong in its own right, and when you combine all these strands together you have something really unique”

In the immediate future, says Philpott, DC Leisure is recruiting to expand its business development department to bring the required capacity to cope with the expected new flurry of tenders.

Cowans adds: “We are very keen to see DC Leisure thrive and succeed

as it bids for contracts; it now has the strength of the group behind it.”

Philpott is no stranger to acquisitions. In the 1990s, he was marketing director for Whitbread, where he was charged with looking into the broader leisure market. It was Philpott who persuaded Whitbread to buy David Lloyd Leisure. He led the acquisition of DLL in 1995, running the health and fitness operator for five years before joining DC Leisure as chief executive

in 2003 as part of a management buy-out from the original owners.

He’s also been involved in a number of successful businesses, including the creation of Energie Global Fitness Management with Jan Spaticchia (Philpott remains a shareholder).

Places for People started life as a housing association in 1965. While it still has a housing association in the group, PFP now builds and runs large scale developments in areas of need, involving the regeneration of existing sites and the building of new ones.

David Cowans has solid experience in the housing and community sector, having been the housing director and also director of public affairs for Birmingham City Council before joining Places for People in 1997.

Developments are usually a mix of commercial and social housing, with some properties offered on affordable rents, alongside other key facilities such as retail, social care, new infrastructure and new schools.

Cowans says: “You really have to listen to what people want. More and more it’s about the life experience of a place – a sense of community, feeling safe, family facilities and so on.”

▼ PFP recently completed an 84 home development in Craigmillar, Scotland, part of a regeneration of the area



SNAPSHOT PLACES FOR PEOPLE

The watchword at PFP is “creating aspirational homes and inspirational places” and its achievements extend well beyond bricks and mortar. The group is a strong advocate of young people, offering a variety of support schemes across some of the 600 neighbourhoods it manages.

It has helped thousands of people develop

their skills and confidence by accessing training, education and employment opportunities in the past year.

In Bristol, for example, PFP has supported the unemployed on a ready-to-work programme; while in Edinburgh it has helped establish 15 new businesses.

The creation of green spaces for all residents has been a key priority.

Last year it completed a £15.6m project which turned more than 80 acres of redundant land into 84 new green community spaces.

The PFP board offers a wealth of experience. Cathy Garner, formerly CEO of Manchester: Knowledge Capital joined in 2011, and comes with 25 years’ experience in socio-economic improvement.

PEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENT

It has clearly been on an ambitious expansion track over the years, but quality appears to remain at the heart of what Places for People does.

PFP invests millions into the research and development of low carbon technologies for both its new and existing homes each year.

In 2010 it became one of the few in its sector to be awarded ISO14001, which recognises the organisation’s commitment to reducing the impact of its business on the environment, and its development of an effective environmental management system.

In 2012 it also achieved a Platinum award in Business in the Community’s CR (corporate responsibility) Index,



putting it in the top 57 UK companies in this area – an indication of how it treats its staff, and its customers.

DC Leisure, which handles 25 million leisure visits a year, takes its social and green responsibilities just as seriously. The company sources most of its electricity from sustainable resources such as wind and hydro generation, for example.

Philpott says: "We would see ourselves – and others in the sector would see us – as one of the best operators of local authority leisure centres, and they would say that because of the quality of our staff and team, their training and the focus on improvement."

Cowans adds: "DC Leisure shares the same spirit as us – the management team has a can-do attitude and a similar approach to value creation and customer service. It's a great cultural fit and I see a lot of synergies between the two companies."

While both companies are well aware they're not going to change the housing and leisure development landscape

▲ DC Leisure's Swim4Health programme offers a range of water-based activities

SNAPSHOT DC LEISURE

DC Leisure offers a range of programming designed to create community engagement, social interaction and healthy lifestyles. It currently manages 95 leisure facilities for almost 30 local authorities, and has built 11 new facilities in the past six years – with £110m of investment through public-private partnerships and the Private Finance Initiative.

DC Leisure has made particular strides in getting more peo-

ple swimming. Its Swim4Health programme, which aims to develop pool accessibility, won the first Spark of Innovation Award from the FIA in 2011.

In the past few months it has also launched On Course, a new portal for the management of children's swimming lessons, which allows DC Leisure to more effectively allocate places for swimming lessons, while at the same time allowing parents to

know where their child stands in their swimming development.

Creating more offers in the area of healthy living is a key priority. It has successfully trialled the Get Up Get Active programme, which is now rolled out in most of its centres. For a small monthly fee, families record their eating and activity habits on a website and earn medals and awards when weekly targets are met. Health experts answer questions via the website.

overnight, the acquisition did come just ahead of rather auspicious times.

HEALTH AGENDA

The beginning of April 2013 saw the official launch of the Health and Wellbeing Boards, which see local

authorities taking charge of NHS funds, and directly delivering healthcare initiatives in the community.

With no fixed guidelines, each board will develop its own way of operation and delivery going forward – making it a blank canvas for companies like DC

► PFP's Wolverton Park development in Milton Keynes saw an industrial site transformed into a residential area

Leisure and PFP to play their part in community wellbeing in the future.

Philpott says it's a major change and a major challenge – and one that the newly reinforced DC Leisure should be well equipped to take on.

"Without doubt any leisure offering is a very important part of community health and wellbeing, happiness, and social cohesion. We're not just about sport and physical activity – we do an awful lot of stuff around community and cohesion – keeping kids active and off the streets, for example, which has a crime prevention element."

As it works with almost 30 councils, DC Leisure will now have almost the same number of Health and Wellbeing Boards to forge a relationship with.

It has already been well ahead of the game, creating a dedicated liaison role four years ago. The person in the post is currently Susan Rossetto, who was previously in a public health role at Weight Watchers.

Philpott says: "What's happening with healthy living is really exciting and the leisure industry is increasingly being seen as a legitimate part of the public health and sickness prevention programme. We're now in the phase where we need to convince people that the money is well spent. Can we prove to them that £1,000 investment in us is better than £1,000 in something else that might also have a health outcome?"

BUILDING CHANGE

For PFP, all this represents new ground – although as an organisation it seems receptive to new ideas and paths.

The organisation's small international division studies overseas examples of good practice in commu-



RECENT PFP DEVELOPMENTS

At Craigmillar in Scotland, PFP recently completed a £14m regeneration programme which created 84 new homes on affordable rents or shared ownerships and a community facility in the grounds of a former school. The school build-

ing became a social enterprise centre, which contains a theatre, gallery and 18000sq ft of commercial space. The £50m Wolverton Park in Milton Keynes involved the redevelopment of an historic railway site, and was named one of the top

five international developments in its category at the Urban Land Institute Awards in Los Angeles in 2011. The site – which used to house the Royal Train – contains a mix of new apartments, retail and office space, and 2.5 acres of parkland.

nity cohesion, while Cowans speaks at a minimum of four international conferences a year.

"We're always looking for the next idea; the next thing to add value to what we do," says Cowans. "We can learn as much from the bad examples as from the good ones.

"For example, look at the way US homeowner associations run leisure facilities in their communities. Is that a good idea? Yes. Would it work in the UK? I don't know. But these things are always worth exploring. Now we have DC Leisure, we have the exper-

tise to look at possibilities that we haven't touched on before."

Future plans are very much pre-drawing board, with neither side being able to go into specifics about how the housing/leisure mix might develop, but it's clear that the union will be even stronger than the sum of its parts.

"Every individual part of the group is strong in its own right, and when you combine all these strands together you have something unique," says Cowans of the partnership.

For DC Leisure, while it's still business as usual, the future could see housing and leisure merging on a much grander scale.

Philpott says: "We're very comfortable with what we offer and don't need to change what we do to deliver the expansion. But that said, we are constantly innovating and changing what we do. We can't change things overnight in terms of housing and leisure coming together, but the future holds enormous possibilities." ●

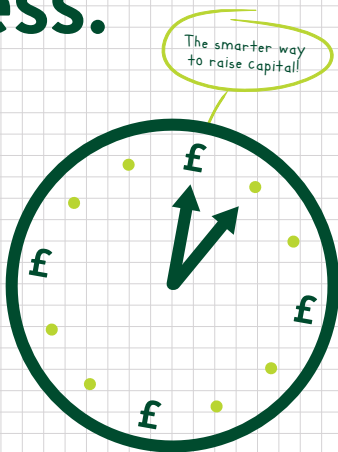
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FUNDING THE FUTURE



Cutting energy use can result in big savings, but often requires capital up front. Laura Clare Davies sets out the funding options for operators looking to implement energy efficiency solutions

There is now an abundance of solutions to cut help us cut our energy use. There are renewable energy technologies like solar panels, wind turbines and biomass boilers, as well as technologies that you can retrofit to reduce your electricity use, like intelligent lighting systems or upgraded building insulation. If these aren't viable you can also alter your building design to maximise natural light and ventilation. The possibilities are endless, but they all have one thing in common – they cost money. The unavoidable truth is that when it comes to energy management you've got to spend to save.

Let's not ignore the possibility that you might have the spare cash in the bank. If this is the case then you can turn away now. In reality though many businesses that are doing the right thing in implementing an energy efficiency strategy won't have the capital lying around to fund it themselves. Fortunately there are many practical financing solutions in the marketplace that it makes 'stumping up the cash yourself' seem like a bit of a senseless alternative.

ENERGY SERVICES CONTRACT

For some time, the energy industry has offered large energy users a funding option called an Energy Services

Contract (ESCO), whereby an organisation essentially contracts out its energy services. As an example of how ESCO funding can work, we at The Energy Desk would for instance install a Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plant at a hotel and there would be no charge for this installation. The Energy Desk would then supply heat and power to the hotel for an agreed rate – and one that will significantly undercut the inflated costs for traditional gas or electricity supplies.

The Green Deal is the government's new initiative designed to help businesses install green technologies. It's quite a new concept and one the market is just coming round to

As far as financing energy management, an ESCO is far and away the most attractive option for large organisations – you get the benefits of installing pioneering technology but without the capital expense. However, if you do want to own the equipment, you also have a range of options.

THE CARBON TRUST

Take the Carbon Trust for example. As a not-for-profit company with a sole focus on moving the UK towards

a low carbon future, it has so far helped 4,500 businesses by investing £1.6bn into energy efficiency equipment, resulting in a staggering £3.7bn reduction in energy costs. Although the Trust is restricted to projects that will yield a maximum return on investment (ROI) of four years, these interest free loans have had a huge impact enabling businesses to fund energy efficiency measures, and where the Carbon Trust has led, more have followed.


THE GREEN DEAL

Next you have the Green Deal – the government's new initiative designed to help businesses install green technologies. As with the Carbon Trust, the energy efficiency technology is paid for with the loan, however there is a slight difference when it

comes to paying the money back.

Both initiatives work on the assumption that the money you use to pay off the loan is the money you've saved by reducing your energy use. With the Carbon Trust you repay the loan yourself. However, through the Green Deal, you pay it back via your energy bills.

Though the initiative launched in 2012, the loans only became available in January this year so this is quite a new concept and one that the market is just about coming round to.



A range of different options mean operators should be able to find a deal that suits them

As an example, in November last year The Energy Desk launched a financing initiative that works on a similar basis to the Green Deal. TED Capital – like the Green Deal – offers a lump sum of financing that can be repaid in a manageable and digestible way. As a Merchant Cash Advance (MCA) a TED Capital loan is paid back through your merchant transactions – basically as a portion of your customers' credit and debit card payments.

Although the money that our clients borrow through TED Capital needn't just be for energy efficiency measures, it shows that groundbreaking financing solutions are becoming easier to access and this will ultimately enable companies to take the necessary measures to reduce energy consumption and costs without breaking the bank.

The face of money lending has of course changed somewhat over the past five years and shrewd borrowing has become the mainstay of successful business management. However, the need for energy efficiency isn't going to go away and it will continue to be a priority for UK commerce for the foreseeable future. ●



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UTILITY CONNECTIONS



Ask TED, The Energy Desk's specialist help desk, answers your questions

What would happen to the repayment of a loan if my energy saving devices weren't working?

With initiatives like Carbon Trust loans you do repay the loan with the money you save. In most instances energy saving technologies will come with a guarantee on their ROI. Before installing any technology, check the guarantee so that you have a contingency plan in case your energy saving is not as good as you thought.

If I fund energy saving with a loan will I pay interest?

As with most loans there will be an agreed percentage. The government is currently in the process of confirming the percentage of interest that will be incurred through The Green Deal initiative. For more information you can visit www.greendealinitiative.co.uk.

If you are looking at financing energy efficiency measures, does your credit rating matter?

The obvious answer to this is yes, your credit rating will generally matter when you are applying for credit. However, as innovative financing solutions come into play, there will be other means of establishing loan eligibility.

If I get a loan for energy efficiency, how will I know what to spend it on?

It is important to seek the consultation of an energy services company. On your behalf they can evaluate your energy use and the equipment that you use in order to best advise how and where your energy can be saved.

If I want to apply for a Merchant Cash Advance through TED Capital, do I have to spend the money on energy saving?

The short answer to this is no. As an energy services company The Energy Desk is acutely aware of the need for funding solutions such as TED Capital. The money can obviously go towards energy savings and we would strongly advise our clients to do this, however the money can be used in other ways should you so wish.

If you have any questions about how to financing energy saving technology contact The Energy Desk on T: 0800 3777 889, F: +44 (0)1282 877 081 or e-mail us at info@theenergydesk.co.uk Alternatively for more information please visit www.theenergydesk.co.uk

Whatever happened to lunch?

How to survive with a missing market

The growth of informal dining and 'foddering' has led to a decrease in sit down lunches. Accepting that customer needs are changing is key to succeeding in this new climate, says Grahame Senior

If like me you are involved in the hospitality and leisure business, you could be forgiven for feeling that we have been dealt a pretty rough hand recently.

THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS HAVEN'T BEEN GREAT

After several years of double/triple-dip recession, the leisure industry has been severely constrained. Economic pressures on all segments of society have meant that pressure on the leisure pound has been extreme. That trend shows little sign of letting up.

IS IT GETTING WORSE...OR IS IT GETTING DIFFERENT?

The other day I had lunch at Marcus Wareing at the Berkeley in London and it was as splendid as ever. It has a calm civilised atmosphere that's perfect for any kind of discussion and shows off the ravishing food to good effect. While the restaurant was pleasantly busy it was by no means full and the additional dining area was not in use. Lunch these days is apparently not quite what it was.

LUNCH, ANYONE?

If you talk to a lot of restaurateurs these days, you'll find that one question keeps recurring – "what's happened to lunch?" The lunchtime trade across most segments seems to have significantly reduced.

Of course, lavish business lunches are something of a casualty of the financial crisis and all that has happened in the service sector. But it's not just entertainment on expenses that has changed. So has the actual business of lunch. Was Gordon Gecko farsighted when he said "Lunch is for wimps"?

This phenomenon is not just something that's happening at the top end of the industry. During the past year it's been particularly visible as a trend in the middle market restaurants with which London is filled, and it particularly seems to have been affected by a change in the eating habits of workers.

Some of this was exacerbated by the government's decision in summer



2012 to encourage their workers to take seven weeks off and work from home. The impact that this had on the Central London restaurant market was considerable, with reported drops in the period of between 25 and 40 per cent.

A lot of restaurant meals have been replaced by the various forms of 'foddering' that are now delivered by different market segments. Whether it's the unstoppable rise of Subway, Upper Crust, M&S Food, Tesco Metro and Pret A Manger, everyone seems to be competing to supply food to be eaten on the hoof or at the desk. The whole business of sitting down in a restaurant for lunch has been constrained.

IT'S NOT JUST LUNCH

There's also been a significant growth in informal dining, whether because of tapas bars or 'sharing plates' or 'grazing'. All of these trends strike at the heart of the traditional 'formal occasion' restaurant business.

As I was returning from lunch at the Berkeley, I went up Great Portland Street and was struck by the fact that a huge new Pret A Manger was being installed opposite an existing sandwich business. It seemed somehow symbolic that while restaurant openings in London are apparently at an all time high, the growth in informal food provision is moving ahead even more quickly. The lower to middle end of the restaurant business is being severely challenged by the omnipresent provision of fresh, wholesome, healthy

Hard choices for hard times

Some action points to help you survive:

- 1 Revisit your customers and their needs with active conversation and measurement.
- 2 Check that your service offering meets what people actually want.
- 3 Evaluate which of your costs are creating a revenue return and which are simply costs.
- 4 Concentrate on what people want and communicating value.
- 5 Use modern media to communicate rapidly and instantly. It's an e-world.
- 6 Don't be afraid to embrace change, provided it's for a good reason and not just through panic.
- 7 Keep calm. Common sense and cost control can work wonders.

Clever cost control in a unique business

Ovington near Thetford is hardly a tourist hotspot. Nor is it a particularly favoured gastro location. Tina and Mike Pemberton have developed a market-led business with some unique selling points in their own home. With extremely stylish bedrooms, a wonderful terrace and swimming pool and a Californian style dining room complete with film set bar, The Café at Brovey Lair has an interesting location to deliver what are essentially private din-



ner parties to the public.

Tina Pemberton cooks an amazing variety of fish with flair and panache in a highly customised setting, complete with teppanyaki grill. The Café serves a no-choice menu with the freshest of fish delivered that day from Lowestoft and a cleverly informed and distinctive use of accompaniments, spices and some pretty knock-out wines. They open only when they have bookings and deliver only the food they have checked that their particular guests are looking for.

It's a clever combination that has earned them the nomination as Best Fish Restaurant 2010 in the *Good Food Guide* but it also keeps extraneous cost and waste to a minimum. They too have noticed constraints in the market due to the economic climate but their



▲ Tina Pemberton also offers cookery courses at The Café at Brovey Lair

formula is cleverly designed to work well in an adverse climate. Don't incur costs when you don't have revenue.

options which suit desk workers, travellers and time-poor metropolitan residents very well indeed.

SELF-HELP IS THE ONLY ANSWER

I think we've all experienced enough initiatives from above to realise that they mostly do not help individual businesses survive or thrive. Successful governments have for years demonstrated that they do not really understand tourism, hospitality or leisure consumers. We are on our own.

LOOK TO THE MARKET

As always, a market-focused approach is going to work best. What does the market want, when do they want it and how can we most effectively supply it? Working out which customers are available and what they are looking for is relatively easy. It is a combination of observation and measurement, questionnaires and conversations. It is also a matter for careful statistical analysis.

ENGAGE BRAIN, ANALYSE, THEN PLAN

The first thing we must do is understand and measure the trends, calculate the impact on our own indi-

The business of hospitality is not over and it's not really in crisis. It's just undergoing another of those changes that occur more and more rapidly in our trend-driven world

vidual businesses and plan our own product offering and service delivery to match. Taking time to gather the facts and then adjust our own business offering to market changes will pay dividends. It's not going to be easy but it is possible to adjust service times, service team structure and even the meal formatting offer itself to match the needs of the market.

TIME FOR TEA?

On my visit to the Berkeley, I noticed another interesting phenomenon. In between the Marcus Wareing restaurant and the lobby is a place that used to be called the Caramel Room; it was a place where people met, drank champagne, nibbled canapés and chatted. The Caramel Room is now almost the hottest ticket in the Berkeley. It is filled with tables set for afternoon tea with champagne and served from lunchtime onwards.

While Marcus Wareing was comfortably half full for lunch, the Caramel Room was absolutely rammed and had a waiting queue. It seems that ladies who used to lunch have taken to tea and the prices are quite eye-watering.

I thought I would check this trend out and discovered that the first booking for afternoon tea at the Ritz is 10.30a.m – and it's full.

It seems that our market is changing and we have to catch up and keep pace. The business of hospitality is not over and it's not really in crisis. It's just undergoing another of those changes that occur more and more rapidly in our fast-moving, trend-driven world. What happens and works in London and other metropolitan centres will ripple out throughout our society.

To survive any market shift, we have to adapt to the new climate. Find out where the market's going, put yourself in the right position and it will follow. ●

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WILLIAM MATTHEWS

Creating a striking, functional, mixed-use building was architect William Matthews' aim when designing The Shard of Glass, the towering new addition to London's skyline

What inspired The Shard's design?

It was very important to us at Renzo Piano Building Workshop that such a tall building was accessible to the public. Around the world, the tall buildings that are known and loved are the ones that people can access, such as the Eiffel Tower and Empire State Building.

It had to be functioning seven days a week, which led to the mix of uses – offices, restaurant, hotel, some apartments and a viewing gallery. The gallery is aiming for one million visitors a year and there are only 10 residents in the apartments, so they have very different uses, but are in the same building.

We wanted to create an open building so avoided using heavily tinted glass, which blocks out all life going on inside. You can see lights on inside, which show it's functioning. By inclining the sides, the glass reflects the sky and the weather, so the building changes throughout the day. The spire doesn't meet at the top, so visitors feel the London air.

How does The Shard enhance the capital city's skyline?

London isn't New York, Singapore or Hong Kong, where a tall building is just another skyscraper in the forest. In London there is no forest; the building is set against the sky. The Shard's spire shape is a form that has resonance throughout the UK as it echoes the outline of its historical churches.

It also represents the masts of boats that used to moor in the Thames – tall, slender elements that rested against the skyline in old London.

What is the design's message?

The building might be privately financed, but it's not just a commercial venture – it's a building that the public can enter: to visit the restaurant; stay at the hotel or experience the view.



The glass reflects the sky, changing with the weather

What was the brief?

The most important thing with a good building is a good client. The client listened to us and we listened to them. It was a shared vision.

Initially they didn't like the sound of a viewing gallery, but then realised it had commercial viability to it as well as a socio-political importance in gaining acceptance of the project.

What were the challenges?

The first challenge was planning. This building represents a change for the city. Not only is it substantially taller than the others, it's mixed use, which no other tall building in London is. It took three-and-a-half years to get planning. The principle opponent was English Heritage. There are protected views of St Paul's Cathedral and we're in the backdrop of two of those views. We argued that as we're replacing some pretty uninspiring views, we're improving the situation and fortunately the planning inspector agreed with us.

Getting tenants was another challenge. Fortunately the client got two tenants early on – Shangri-La took the hotel in 2005 and Transport for London took office space in 2006.

The biggest challenge was financing the building. The client had financing in place in 2008, then the credit crunch came and the funding was withdrawn. Fortunately the Qatari government had also been interested and they stepped in as both investors and financiers.

What's the evacuation process?

We use the lifts to get people out – they have a back up power generation and smoke pressure relief and are quick and safe.

How does the architecture enhance the experience?

You could argue that you could see the view from the top of a beanpole, but the building is important. Consider the Rockefeller Center and the Empire State Building. In many ways the Rockefeller's view is better, but the latter gets many more visitors because it's an iconic building.

I hope people come to visit The Shard because they're interested in the building, as well as the view. ●

William Matthews is project architect at Renzo Piano Building Workshop
Attractions Management, Q1 2013

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