

leisure opportunities

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Varney: Shrek will “mark a new level” for IP attractions

Merlin Entertainments CEO Nick Varney has revealed the latest developments for the Shrek-themed attraction set to open in London next year and believes it will “mark a new level in the way location-based entertainment and intellectual property work together.”

Speaking at the company’s London Dungeons attraction, he said the Merlin Magic Making team are already working closely with Dreamworks Animation to create entirely new content, including fresh storylines, scripts and animation.

He said the Shrek attraction – of which Merlin plans to roll-out five further sites worldwide between now and 2023 – would be situated at County Hall on London’s South Bank, slotting in next to the Dungeons, Sea Life Aquarium and London Eye to form a formidable phalanx of Merlin attractions.



The Shrek franchise has generated more than US\$3.5bn (£2.1bn) at the box-office alone

the rides that we put into it,” said Varney. “It will mark a new level in the way that location-based entertainment and intellectual property work together.”

The 2,000sq m (21,500sq ft) attraction will be based around a completely new story written by the DreamWorks team and will include characters from the Shrek films, as well as others from Madagascar, Kung Fu Panda and How to Train Your Dragon. In addition, there will be a rotating exhibition area for various DreamWorks releases and a branded retail outlet.

Varney and the Merlin team were the subject of an in-depth and exclusive profile in the Q1 edition of *Attractions Management* magazine entitled “How to build a \$6bn company.” Details: <http://lei.sr?a=w7c4x>

Penny off pints and more in the 2014 Budget

Chancellor George Osborne has cut 1p from the price of beer for the second year running, as well as scrapping the annual alcohol duty escalator, which will instead now rise with inflation.

In his penultimate Budget before the 2015 general election, Osborne sought to reward “hard-working people” with a number of leisure concessions.

In addition to alcohol duty escalator abolition, the chancellor announced that duty on Scotch Whisky would be frozen, with both moves offering welcome relief for Britain’s pubs and restaurants. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=e4e9T>

Fitness First’s Balfour invests in gym chain

One of the founders of Fitness First is investing in a new chain of American-inspired “high intensity” gym studios using the “pay as you train” business model.

Mike Balfour, the man who helped grow Fitness First into a worldwide franchise, is becoming a non-executive director and investor for One Rebel gyms.

One Rebel hopes to secure £2.7m from investors, to be spent on 10 to 20 gyms and allowing investors to exit after five years.

The “pay as you train” model will be adopted by One Rebel to compete in an industry where low-cost gyms, eschewing joining fees or monthly subscriptions, are becoming the norm.



The chain aims to cash in on interval training demand

The first club is expected to open in London this September and will include two or three studios for cycling and treadmill classes, plus either “hot yoga” or a “fight club.” Details: <http://lei.sr?a=r4F9B>

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SPORT

Poor pitches lead to grassroots decline

The poor state of grass playing pitches is having a negative effect on grassroots football in England, according to a survey by Sky Sports.

The survey, completed by 2,500 people regularly playing 11-a-side football, showed that 46 per cent of players rated facilities in their area as "poor" or "very poor".

Meanwhile, 65 per cent said local councils did not do enough to improve the state of pitches, with one in three (33 per cent) being put off playing 11-a-side football due to poor playing surfaces. There was also a frustration towards the lack of funding to improve facilities.

When asked for the best solution to improve pitches, 28 per cent of those surveyed suggested the installation of artificial turf pitches.

According to figures from Sport England, grassroots participation levels within football have been falling over the past decade. Sport England's latest Active People Survey, published in January 2014, showed that football suffered the steepest fall (90,000) of all sports in the number



Councils have been blamed for the lack of investment in facilities

of people playing the sport regularly during 2013.

Last month, a senior Football Association (FA) official called for more artificial pitches to be installed to improve grassroots facilities.

Peter Ackerley, the FA's senior national game development manager, said many pitches run by local councils were in an "abhorrent" state and that the future of the game at grassroots level was under threat unless there is a move from grass to artificial pitches.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=e7y5V>

London mayor invests £100m in cycling fund

Boris Johnson has allocated £100m of funding to create 'mini-Holland' cycling hubs around the capital's outskirts to encourage Londoners to be more active in a safe environment.

In a speech at City Hall, the London Mayor said "the rubber is about to hit the road" as he announced which areas would receive a share of the pot.

Of the eight outer boroughs shortlisted for the 'mini-Hollands' programme – which will emulate the cycle-focussed Netherlands to create Dutch-style roundabouts – Enfield, Kingston and Waltham Forest will each receive £30m to develop cycling hubs and around key destinations and segregated superhighways.

The remaining five boroughs will receive a share of £10m to develop the most impressive aspects of their proposals and have been encouraged to work with Transport for London in applying for extra funding through additional channels.



The London Mayor said his office was determined to go "as Dutch as possible"

"The boroughs that have won funding have demonstrated that they understand what a vision of a true cycling nation looks like," said British Cycling policy adviser Chris Boardman.

"Almost half of London households do not have a car, and around a quarter of journeys in inner London are now by bike, so it's logical that infrastructure and resource for this desirable form of transport reflects this."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=y8d8b>

New Lord's stand gets green light

Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) has been given planning permission for a new 2,922-capacity stand at Lord's Cricket Ground.

Designed by Populous, the new £21m structure in London was given the green light by Westminster City Council and will replace the historic but ageing Warner Stand, built in 1958.

The innovative design has a number of eco-friendly aspects, including solar panels and a waste water collection system. The stand will be covered by a semi-translucent fabric cover supported by an oak-beamed roof structure.

Facilities within the stand include a 135-seat restaurant with views over the Ground. The project will be funded by MCC.

The new stand will be the first phase of a £200m, 14-year redevelopment of the "home of



An artist's impression of the new stand at Lord's Cricket Ground in London

cricket", which will increase the venue's capacity from the current 28,000 to 32,000 - making it the largest cricket ground in Europe.

The MCC hopes to complete a significant amount of the work at the Pavilion End of Lord's in time for the 2019 World Cup.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=2S7Q8>

Further £20m earmarked for Inspired Facilities fund

Sport England has released an additional £20m worth of funding to be distributed through its Inspired Facilities fund.

Aimed at helping grassroots sports clubs, schools and local authorities renovate and modernise their sports facilities, the fund has already distributed £71m to fund 1,300 projects since 2011. In total, £110m will be made available to redevelopments through the fund.

It has, however, been suggested by some applicants that receiving grants from the Inspired Facilities fund is a time-consuming exercise, not helped by the amount of red tape attached to it - and its original format of being tied to yearly cycles and set deadlines.

To assist applicants, this year Sport England has adjusted the applying procedures and clubs and authorities will now be able to apply for funding all year round.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=k8g5k>

DNA profiling helps athletes avoid injury

DNA profiling is quickly becoming a top trend for high profile sports athletes who are using the revolutionary technology to analyse whether or not they are getting the most out of their sporting genes.

The DNA test, which was pioneered by DNAFit, provides information on 18 key genes linked to areas of sporting performance such as power, endurance, speed of recovery and susceptibility to injury as well as tolerance to various food types such as carbohydrates and saturated fats.

The results are then used to create a bespoke training and nutritional programme for an individual genetic profile.

Two anonymous Premier League clubs and a top European football club have reportedly used the test to discover the best training methods for individual footballers and who is most likely to pick up an injury.

The profile looks at 45 genes which determine players' power, endurance and likelihood of injury.



Footballers hope profiling can keep them fit for the World Cup

The results, revealed by taking swabs from the athletes' mouths, also gives an indication of whose muscles have less resistance to inflammation.

DNAFit is also working with athletes in boxing, cycling and rowing, while a trial with swimming is also planned. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Y6d2R>



The programme is aiming to get kids more active

Physical literacy programme officially launched in Wales

The Welsh government has launched a £1.78m Physical Literacy Programme for Schools (PLPS) designed to meet Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson's Schools and Physical Activity Task and Finish Group's recommendation that all young people in Wales should become physically literate.

Targeted at delivering a long term improvement in physical literacy - and an increase in physical activity amongst children in schools in Wales - PLPS aims to help get young people hooked on sport for life and to adopt healthy lifestyles.

The initiative will develop a draft Physical Literacy Framework and increase sport and physical activity in schools, with a focus on those in deprived areas.

While the initial £1.78m grant will cover the 2014-15 school year, further funding of up to £2.35m has been agreed in principle to continue this work in 2015-16 - subject to a review. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=E7s5j>

Bridlington gets first temporary pool facilities from legacy project

Bridlington is the first town in the UK to benefit from the Olympic legacy pool scheme that has seen Olympic-standard training pools dismantled and relocated across the country.

The project, funded by East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Sport England, is the first

of nine pools to be moved. The 25m temporary swimming pool will remain at Bridlington Sports Centre for the next two years, offering swimmers a way to keep active while the £20m redevelopment of Leisure World, the local leisure centre, is carried out. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=J4R6n>

Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre goes green with equipment

Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre in Bedfordshire has become the first local authority site to install an eco-friendly line of equipment that harnesses human energy and feeds it directly into the facility's power grid system.

As part of a £2m refurbishment, the Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) operated leisure centre has opted for a wall-to-wall installation of Technogym's ARTIS Line with its Renew energy harvesting technology.

The council is investing heavily in its entire leisure provision, which includes six leisure centres. As part of its leisure strategy, it has allocated more than £6m to enhance leisure offerings for residents. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=F9B4C>



A boost to your work out could banish the flu virus

Strenuous exercise best for preventing flu virus: study

Moderate exercise does not protect people against the flu in the same way that strenuous exercise can, according to the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

The online Flu Survey, now in its fifth year, attempts to track details of peoples' symptoms in order to find patterns for flu contraction.

This year's data shows that 100 cases of flu per 1,000 people could be prevented by taking part in some form of vigorous exercise, categorised by the survey as running, fast cycling or competitive sports.

Dr Alma Adler of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine told the BBC that although these results are only preliminary, they are "consistent with findings from other conditions and really show the health benefits of exercise."

Researchers also said this year's survey found some of the lowest reports of flu-like illness in recent years.

Over this winter flu season only 4.7 per cent of reports were positive for flu-like symptoms compared to 7.9 per cent last year. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=F6h8c>

Industry "marketing like it's 2004"

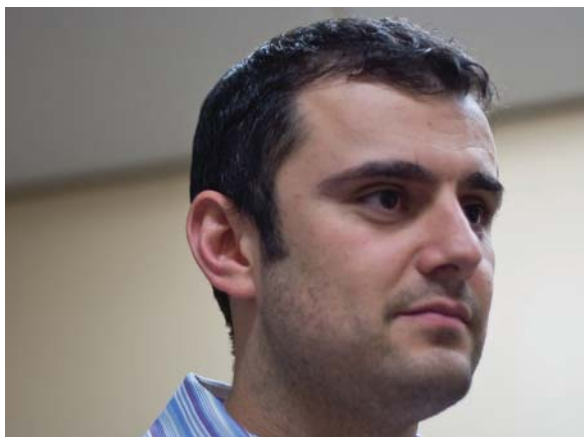
Social media and marketing guru Gary Vaynerchuk has issued a wake-up call to members of the fitness industry at IHRSA 2014 in San Diego, telling them to stop marketing "like it's 2004."

During his address on Friday, he said large swathes of the fitness industry are currently using obsolete marketing methods and that they must future-proof these channels to attract younger members.

Vaynerchuk, who owns Vaynerchuk media and has invested in hundreds of new companies, including venture-funded startup and transportation network company Uber, said: "I researched a bunch of businesses (that are here) and the biggest takeaway is this room is marketing like it's 2004."

"You are like many other businesses. You need to market in the year you are in. I actually market 18 months ahead."

The 38-year-old, who was born in the former Soviet Union before moving to America as a child, said conventional advertising methods like fliers, newspaper advertising and



Gary Vaynerchuk has made his name as a social media and marketing guru

billboards are not the way to reach prospective members in 2014. By building a substantial presence on social media platforms, he argued, businesses can attract their current target market, as well as teenagers who will be their members ten years down the line.

He explained that providing useful content for both members and prospective members on social media – both through obvious channels like Facebook and Twitter, plus up-and-comers like Instagram, Vine and Snapchat – is the best way to engage. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=u3d6b>

Precor partners with YMCA in new scheme

Fitness equipment manufacturer Precor has announced a new corporate partnership with YMCA, the youth charity and largest provider of fitness training in the UK fitness industry.

Throughout the year-long partnership, Precor will support the development of a new YMCA Health and Wellbeing regional network – a forum for YMCAs to collaborate in further developing and delivering fitness and health activities in their local communities.

Precor, which is part of global sports equipment company Amer Sports, will also raise funds for the charity through a series of fun-filled events.

These efforts got off to a colourful start recently, when staff at Precor UK's Frimley head office took part in a 'More Than Just A Song' day, where teams dressed up as The Village People as they learnt more about the work of YMCA, as well as donating goods to be sold at YMCA charity shops.



Precor will raise funds for the YMCA charity through a series of events

"From a business perspective, Precor sees YMCA sites as key to improving the nation's health and fitness, and we are looking forward to building partnerships through the regional network groups and YMCA's bi-annual physical activity conference," said Precor UK marketing manager Jonathan Griffiths. "The amazing work the YMCA are doing has been reflected today by how many people are already involved in fundraising efforts." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=M2w7n>

Truth behind cancellations revealed

Moving house or changing job is the number one reason given for quitting the gym, but failure to meet expectations and a loss of motivation is the true reason behind most cancellations according to a new study.

The Black Report, a qualitative piece of research conducted by Retention Guru said that while 32 per cent of respondents said their reason for leaving was because they had moved house/job, the reality was that 17 per cent felt the club didn't meet their expectations, while 15 per cent cited a loss of motivation.

16 per cent of respondents blamed a change in financial services, something which Paul Bedford of Retention Guru said could be seen as a tactic to leave without any questions.

"Respondents in our research explained that clubs put up little resistance to early cancellation of memberships when the media was full of stories of companies closing down and unemployment going up," writes Bedford in the March 2014 edition of *Health Club Management* magazine.

"Club staff find it difficult or uncomfortable to discuss the situation when you say you've



A loss of motivation is the true reason behind most cancellations

lost your job. You can use that to your advantage," said one respondent. "All you need to do is time it with a big news story. You don't even need to be working for that company – you just need to get your timing right."

A further 12 per cent of respondents blamed poor service levels as the reason for leaving the gym, while a further 8 per cent blamed general uncleanliness and 7 per cent used pregnancy or illness as the reason for leaving. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=b4H7G>

Leak offers insight into Apple's health app

Leaked information has revealed potential details of Apple's health and fitness application, Healthbook, which could be capable of recording an array of information to monitor the state of the human body.

Details suggest that Healthbook will record activity levels, nutritional information, weight and sleep patterns, as well as heart rate, blood pressure, blood sugar levels, respiratory rate and oxygen saturation.

It is believed that Apple will give its users the opportunity to retain all of this collected data on an Emergency Card, which can be presented to medical or health professionals should the user be unable to speak or communicate.

The app could be launched alongside Apple's new iOS 8 operating software later this year, as the company looks to challenge the likes of Nike and Samsung, which have already sought to firm up their positions in the health and fitness markets.



Apple is looking to make a high-profile entrance into the health app market

One detail that still remains a mystery is how all of the data will be collected, with the likes of blood pressure and sugar levels unobtainable by devices such as the iPhone.

However, more complex data could possibly be collected through a group of sensors linked to a wearable device, such as a smart-watch.

It's thought that the Healthbook application could somehow be linked to an iWatch, which is also thought to be coming to the consumer market in the next year. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=m7z7n>

PayasUgym secures £1.6m in VC funding to fuel expansion

Online gym pass provider PayasUgym has announced a £1.6m raft of venture capital funding as it seeks to continue growth across the UK market.

The funding will be used to strengthen PayasUgym's position in the UK market and to launch new products and services - including a new tool enabling customers to compare and directly book fitness classes all over the UK.

Partnering with well-known brands such as Virgin Active, Pure Gym, Energie and Hilton Livingwell, the PayasUgym website now provides access to one in three of all UK health clubs and gyms. With 12 million ex-gym members in the UK, the company sees itself as the ideal solution for those looking to get back into the gym, as well as enticing first timers, by offering flexible and discounted gym passes nationwide. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=b4H7G>



Martin Long: "The sale will secure LA fitness' future"

LA fitness creditors approve sell-off proposals

LA fitness has secured approval from the required majority of creditors for its company voluntary arrangements (CVAs) which include the proposed sale for 33 of its UK clubs.

The plans, which were initiated on 6 March, received strong support from landlords with more than 90 per cent voting in favour of the terms.

The CVAs revise lease terms at a number of LA fitness clubs, paving the way for a restructuring plan to refocus LA fitness on a smaller portfolio of 47 clubs, while reducing its debt burden to secure the chain's long-term future.

According to the chain, there has been interest in all 33 clubs up for sale, which will continue to operate as normal in the near-term with every effort being made to ensure members are unaffected. It is also expected that the majority of the existing employees will continue to be employed under a Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) structure by potential new owners. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=P7V9C>

Finding new customers is expensive.



6x It's

more expensive to market to new customers than to existing customers.

\$4,800

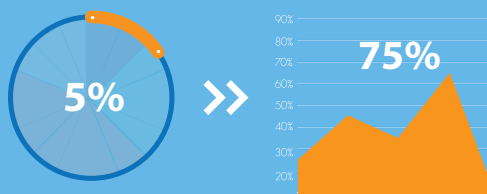
The average small businesses spend on marketing to existing customers annually.

Emailing your current customers the right way can increase your revenue.

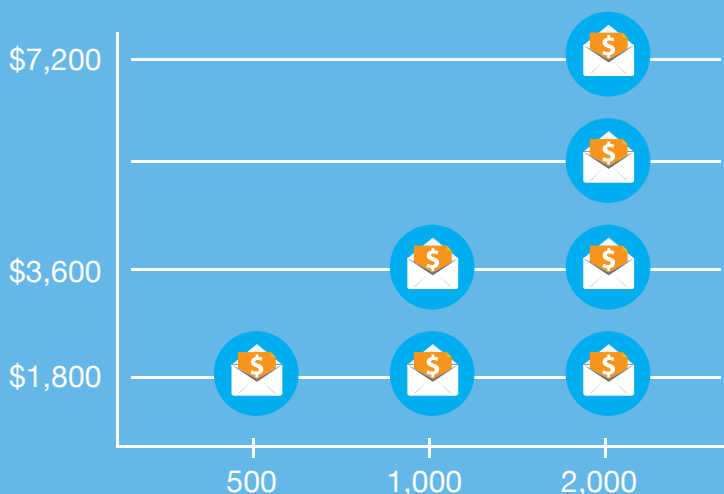
The average spa has 3,500+ customers in their email database.



A 5% increase in customer retention using email marketing can increase a spa's profitability by 75%.



The more email addresses you have in your database, the more revenue you can earn from them.



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Sources:
ISPA 2011 U.S. SPA INDUSTRY STUDY
<http://searchengineland.com/>
SpaBooker Promote Companion Guide

spabooker
www.spa-booker.com

Westin launches wellbeing scheme

Westin Hotels & Resorts has announced the global launch of its US\$15m (£9m, €10.8m) brand-wide campaign to enhance and promote the wellbeing of its guests through 2014.

The one-year initiative will introduce six "pillars of wellness" to the brand – Feel Well, Work Well, Move Well, Eat Well, Sleep Well and Play Well – and to celebrate Westin will open their doors worldwide for wellbeing open house sessions, where guests, associates and consumers can experience the brand's signature programmes.

In the coming weeks, nearly 200 Westin hotels and resorts will hold wellness events open to the public, which will include scenic guided 5km runs, Heavenly Spa mini-appointments, SuperfoodsRx Juice Bars and group yoga sessions to name a few.

The company's wellbeing movement is being launched with Headspace – health, wellbeing and meditation experts – whose co-founder and Andy Puddicombe will head up the brand's "Feel Well" pillar and is the first appointee to Westin's "Wellbeing Council".



The wellbeing movement is being initially launched with Headspace

The partnership with Headspace will encourage guests to look after the health of their minds, with simple guided meditation exercises that help them smile more, listen more, worry less and sleep better.

The Council will be formed of renowned thought leaders and wellness experts, each of which aligns with a specific wellness brand pillar, forming the cornerstone to the movement while guiding and inspiring new wellness initiatives throughout the year. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=S8d6d>



£2m will be spent on upgrading wellbeing facilities

Macdonald Hotels & Resorts to spend £2m on spa upgrades

Privately-owned Scottish hotel group, Macdonald Hotels & Resorts, has announced a £2m investment programme designed to improve selected wellbeing facilities across their nationwide hotels.

Around £1.4m of the Q2 investment scheme will be spent on upgrading and extending the Vital Health & Wellbeing Club at the four-star Macdonald Craxton Wood Hotel in Chester.

The refurbishment will consist of an 18m swimming pool, sauna, steam room, 12 spa treatment rooms plus a full thermal suite.

The thermal suite will include an aroma steamroom, rock sauna, ice fountain, experience shower, two foot spas, a salt infusion room, Rasul mud therapy, dark and light relaxation areas, a Zen garden and a café.

"Our spa and wellbeing facilities have become an integral part of the Macdonald Hotels & Resorts brand and one which our guests are becoming increasingly more knowledgeable about," said Jeanette Jones, managing director of leisure & spa.

Eight of the 45 resorts owned by Macdonald will have Technogym equipment installed.

A further £240,000 will be spent on a full refit of the leisure and spa changing rooms at the Macdonald Holyrood Hotel and changing facilities at the Macdonald Houstoun Hotel will be updated. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=N3g8p>

How to unlock the millennials market

Spas seeking to attract the tough to crack millennials market can now get the inside track on securing their future clients, thanks to new data.

Global strategy consultancy The Futures Company, has identified four distinct "tribes" to help unpack what this portion of the population wants, based on their unifying use of technology and search for meaningful experiences over material pursuits.

The first "tribe" of millennials, Striders, are youngsters least affected by the economic

downturn and are still willing to pay for premium services with a show-off factor.

Steppers are more cautious after taking serious hits during the recession and are more value-conscious.

The third tribe, Satellites, are performance-focus and Spirits, the last tribe, are enthused by sustainability-driven propositions and novel meaningful experiences, such as holistic wellness treatments.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=W2N9y>

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Shard makes £5m profit in first year as tourist attraction

London's Shard has been a big hit since debuting in 2013, bringing in £5m in revenue and around 90,000 visitors over the course of the year.

The 800ft (244m) tower actually received 150,000 fewer visitors than expected over the course of the year, but gate returns from high entry prices made up the shortfall.

The pre-tax profit of £5.035m compared favourably with a £1.316 million loss made in the previous year.

Both the gallery and open-air observation deck give visitors the most extensive view in London, covering a 40-mile radius on a clear day. The open-air platform on the 72nd floor is almost double the height reached at the top of the London Eye. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=P2h2v>



More than 200,000 people will see the lanterns

Giant £3m Chinese lantern spectacle to open in Blackpool

One of the world's largest indoor illumination experiences, IlluminAsia, will open in Olympia Arena at Blackpool's Winter Gardens on 18 April.

The £3m investment means the 45,000sq ft (4,180sq m) space inside Olympia Arena will be made into six family-friendly zones, illuminated by 35,000 lights using Chinese lantern crafts and LED bulbs.

Investors - Yi Sai Culture Communication, International Special Attractions and Global Entertainment Productions - believe IlluminAsia will contribute over £1m to the local economy in the first sixteen months of operation through accommodation, trade and local business employment.

The council entered into a three-year agreement of £100,000 to refurbish Olympia in readiness for the attraction, from which they will take a cut of the profits instead of charging rent.

As many as 55 Chinese artisans have been working on the project which is creating 20 full time jobs and 40 sub-contracting roles. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=h2K7w>

Revealed: How to procure a panda

The startling costs involved in procuring pandas for zoos have been laid bare in this month's *Attractions Management* magazine, where a swot analysis finds that the complex process is far from black and white.

Experts estimate the cost of keeping two Pandas on a 10-year lease from China to be between US\$15-30m (£9-18m), and that's before you factor in the food bill for the estimated 18,000kg of specially-grown bamboo the pandas get through each year.

In addition to the financial undertaking, the arrangement is often highly politicised, with lengthy negotiations required at the highest level of government.

"I spend most of my time discouraging various institutions from trying to go after pandas, unless they have a strong commitment and a really large chequebook," said Dave Towne, president of the Giant Panda Conservation Foundation for North America.

For Towne, leasing a panda is more a labour of love than a calculated business decision.



Two pandas on a 10-year lease cost between US\$15-30m (£9-18m)

Despite these sentiments, panda leasing is booming, with both Toronto and Edinburgh zoos gaining huge gate receipts and global media attention from their recent high-profile panda procurements.

Our business model regarding giant pandas has always been extremely conservative," says Iain Valentine, director of pandas at Edinburgh Zoo, where the star attractions recently received their millionth visitor just two years after arriving from China. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=C8e6m>

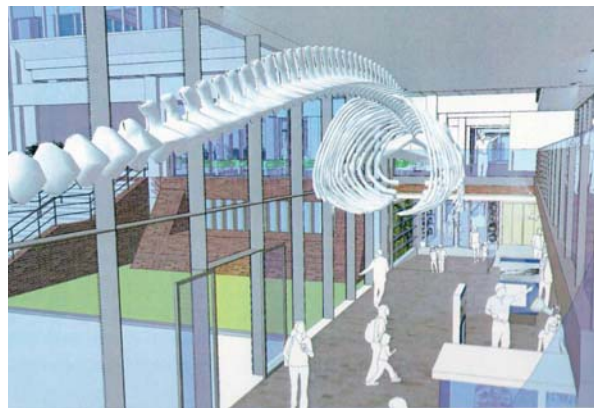
Museum of Zoology gets redevelopment funds

Cambridge University's Museum of Zoology is to undergo a complete redevelopment after receiving a grant of £1.8m from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The funding will support £4.8m plans to redevelop the Museum of Zoology with new displays showcasing the animal kingdom, as well as new stores to preserve its outstanding collections for future display and expand the museum's learning programmes, reaching out to wider audiences and increasing online resources.

With more than four million specimens, the museum has one of the largest zoology collections of historical and scientific importance in the world and forms a major part of one of the leading international research centres for the study of animal biology.

"The museum is enthusiastically embracing this unique redevelopment opportunity to display the extraordinary richness of our collections in superb new spaces to the benefit



The fully-renovated museum will reopen in 2016 after £4.8m of work

of everyone," said Professor Paul Brakefield, museum director.

"The creation of a new conservation campus in central Cambridge will mean that scientists and practitioners from across the university, working with NGOs, will be able to showcase the past, present and future of biodiversity on our planet."

Work on the museum, which has closed during the redevelopment, will take approximately two years with plans to reopen in Q3 2016. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=u3k5H>



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BUILDING BETTER SPORTS AND PLAY

Chancellor's Budget is small glimmer of hope but not enough



UFI IBRAHIM

is chief executive officer of the British Hospitality Association

Chancellor George Osborne's 2014 Budget promised to target 'makers, doers and savers', and with much of its content shared in advance, our industry had high hopes for the outcome. Indeed, the British Hospitality Association regularly sets out the key issues affecting hospitality and tourism and offers recommendations for alleviating some of them.

With one in every ten people in the UK working in the hospitality and tourism industry, the 2014 Budget offered George Osborne an opportunity to win front line support. It succeeded on some levels and the BHA welcomes some policy changes, notably:

- Added funding for the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16- to 24-year-olds which will help to deliver the apprenticeship pledges from the BHA's flagship Big Hospitality Conversation which has so far created over 34,000 opportunities for young people across the UK.

- Air Passenger Duty branding reform which, for example, will make long distance flights cheaper for those returning to the UK.

- Cuts in Alcohol Duty rates which show that the government understands the importance of pubs as a community asset.

The 2014 Budget showed some small signs of recognition from the Chancellor on issues like APD, the Apprenticeship Grant and the Annual Investment Allowance, which the BHA welcomes, but there are other more lucrative ways to increase our competitiveness as a nation.

From a global perspective, this government needs to recognise that the UK hospitality and tourism industry is operating in the most fiercely competitive international market and we need to be looking outwardly and creating financial policies which allow us to better compete with countries who are already acknowledging this.

Small steps are better than nothing and this Budget showed small glimmers of governmental recognition of the importance of hospitality. However, there is still a long way to go and only by working together collectively, as an industry, can we make big strides.

HOTELS

Boutique hotel plans for Belfast

Planning permission has been granted to transform a listed building in Belfast city centre into a boutique hotel.

Ireland's environment minister Mark Durkan recommended planning approval for a £12m redevelopment of the Grade B1 listed Scottish Mutual Building, which sits opposite Belfast City Hall.

The development retains all of the building's original features and there will be two bars and two restaurants, along with 10 serviced apartments in addition to the hotel's 40 bedrooms. Durkan said the plans would ensure the building remains a historic landmark within the Linen Conservation Area.

"The significant investment demonstrates confidence in the local economy," said Durkan. "This boutique-style accommodation will boost tourism by enhancing choice for tourists, business travellers and local people."

The company behind the proposal is Tullymore House, which owns and runs the Galgorm Resort and Spa in Ballymena, and



The building will be transformed into a 40-bedroom boutique hotel

bought the building in 2012 for just under £2m.

Colin Johnston, project manager, said: "These plans have been carefully based on our belief that we can add real value and worth by turning this landmark building into a contemporary and stylish venue."

The hotel is expected to be open by summer 2016 and could support up to 180 full and part-time jobs once up and running. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=j4T2y>

Plans submitted for Chipping development

A mixed-use scheme in Chipping, Lancashire, which will include two new hotels, a spa, a cricket pavilion and a trailhead centre on the site of a former mill is seeking planning approval.

The Grade II listed Kirk Mill – to be operated by Living Ventures – will be converted into an 18-bedroom hotel with a restaurant and gastro pub, while the existing barn will be turned into seven holiday cottages and a new 'barn style' building will provide 20 additional hotel rooms, a gym and spa facilities.

A public outdoor area to host events including a regular farmers' market promoting local produce from the region will act as an anchor for the development.

The trailhead centre will cater for outdoor enthusiasts and feature a café, while new footpaths and cycle routes will be added in the area.

Chipping's local cricket club will also be relocated to a bigger purpose-built facility to the south of the development.



The development will include hotels, a spa and a health club

"The application represents a major opportunity for both our client and the local community," said Richard Barton, an associate at the project's developers HOW Planning.

"The proposed development will transform a significant historic building which has remained empty for a number of years, while also bringing new investment and long term benefits to the village of Chipping." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=K3F5Z>

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HOTEL INDUSTRY
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UK's first Tourism BID comes to Loch Ness and Inverness

Inverness and Loch Ness are set to form the UK's first Tourism Business Improvement District (BID) which will see them work together to boost tourist numbers and improve the general visitor experience for the area.

The model already exists in the US as Tourism Improvement Districts (TIDs), with the aim to increase the number of overnight visitors using business and services in that area.

The BID model will include marketing programs to raise awareness of the destination, sponsorship of special events that attract overnight visitors and sales programs to bring in large-group business. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=D5n7T>



The app takes you on a Bollywood tour of London

VisitBritain app showcases Bollywood UK film sights

VisitBritain is hoping to cash in on Bollywood's love affair with Britain by launching a destination movie map app in a bid to tempt tourists to visit famous film sites.

The national tourism agency launched the Bollywood in Britain (BiB) app – which features sites from famous Indian films including Trafalgar Square, Big Ben and the London Eye – at an event in Mumbai this week.

The release follows a string of recent marketing campaigns designed to bring more tourists to Britain's shores, with the BRIC nation of India seen as a key growth market.

Supported by initiatives like BIB, the agency predicts that by 2016, Britain will be welcoming some 425,000 visits per year from India – a 25 per cent rise from 2012.

The app – available to Android and iOS users – comes loaded with all the information Bollywood fans would need to create their own blockbuster-themed holiday in Britain, including a Bollywood treasure hunt.

"India has a digitally savvy, young population, with one of the highest internet usage and smartphone penetrations in the world," said Joss Croft, marketing director, VisitBritain. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=D5n7T>

STA: No to Scottish independence

Delegates from the Scottish tourism industry have overwhelmingly voted against the prospect of a split from the UK as a result of the upcoming independence vote this September.

Of those who took part in the mock vote, held over two days at the Scottish Tourism Alliance's (STA) annual summit, 59 per cent said they would be voting 'no', while just 32 per cent said 'yes' and a further 9 per cent were undecided.

STA chair Stephen Leckie recently aired his views on the independence vote, warning that Scottish nationalists had failed to make the financial case for independence and that businesses were "punch-drunk" in terms of tone and nature in the debate.

Paddy Crerar, Hospitality Industry Trust Scotland chair, however has dismissed the findings, stating in *The Scotsman* that tourism professionals "recognise tourism and the wider economy would be better served by the aspirations described by the current Scottish government."

The STA has been highly vocal in its fight to cut VAT rates for tourism businesses



Members of the STA have voted 'no' to a split from the rest of the UK

– something the Scottish government hasn't made a commitment to, though ministers have outlined plans in the independence White Paper to cut air passenger duty by 50 per cent to boost international numbers coming into Scotland.

The STA will be staging its own discussion on the issue in May and the effects it could have on the tourism industry. The organisation has more than 250 members, representing around 70 per cent of Scotland's tourism sector. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Z3r3m>

Tourism industry toasts aviation tax reform

The tourism industry has welcomed chancellor George Osborne's announcement in the recently announced Budget that the government would reform Air Passenger Duty (APD) – an amendment it says was overdue.

Osborne pledged to abolish the higher Bands C and D of APD, making long haul flights to growing destinations like China, India and the Caribbean cheaper for those leaving and visiting the UK.

The UK currently lags most of its rivals in terms of aviation tax competitiveness, with the World Economic Forum ranking it 138 out of 140 countries in a 2013 study.

At present, the tax measure is calculated by the distance between London and a nation's capital city. Osborne said it was "crazy and unjust" that Britons travelling on eight-hour flights to Barbados paid more APD than those on 11-hour flights to California.

APD bands C and D will be scrapped from next April, so passengers on long-haul flights



The reform will reduce the cost of visiting the UK by up to £108 per person

will only pay the rate currently levied on those going to the US, a move the Tourism Alliance says will reduce the cost of visiting the UK by up to £108 per person.

CEO of online travel agency loveholidays.com Al Francis described the move as a step in the right direction and called on the government to follow Ireland's example by scrapping its equivalent Air Travel Tax completely. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=a3p2k>

Sports Floor Upgrade

Eco-Fit saves 40% in cost and down time!



Bournemouth University were overjoyed with the planned refurbishment of their Sports facilities which all parts being rejuvenated but the designs and estimates showed that their tired sports hall was going to have to wait.

The client asked Kier Construction one more time if anything could be done with the question passed on to Gerflor whilst exhibiting at Ecobuild in 2011. Gerflor had decided that the show was going to be the springboard for massive new innovations, one being Taraflex™ Ecofit™. Whilst older sports surfaces had always led to large refurbishment

costs, the new Eco-fit system gave Kier a great message to take back to Bournemouth University.

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Rick McEvoy, a senior project manager for Bournemouth University commented "We were suitably impressed when visiting a neighbouring school which had the same solution one year prior. We set the bar high, challenging the sub-contractor to produce an even better finish than our neighbours, on this they delivered. The Sport M Performance looks immaculate and feedback from users of the facility is excellent. The BU Sport department now have excellent facilities including the sports hall which matches other facilities all around our campus."

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Rick McEvoy (Senior Project Manager, Bournemouth University) ”

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The new centre will include a triple sports hall

Work to start on £55m Birmingham sports complex

Construction is to start next month on the University of Birmingham's new £55m red brick and copper-clad sports centre to be based on its Edgbaston campus.

Designed by Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands, the university hopes the 13,200sq m (142,083sq ft) sports development will reaffirm its status as one of the UK's leading institutions for sport and nurture the next generation of Olympic talent.

The new sports centre, which is being built on a former car park on the Bristol Road, will include the city's only 50m swimming pool, a triple sports hall intended to accommodate major national sporting events and a Wellbeing and High Performance research centre.

There will also be a hybrid gym catering for activities such as fencing, table tennis, martial arts, circuit training and fitness classes, as well as squash courts, an indoor climbing wall and dance studios. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=A6N8t>*

Bristol close to securing dedicated indoor arena

Bristol could be about to end its wait for a purpose-built indoor arena after the local council agreed on plans for a £91m, 12,000 capacity venue to be developed on a derelict site near Bristol Temple Meads mainline railway station.

Once built, the arena will end Bristol's stance as the only core city out of eight in the UK without a dedicated indoor arena.

Bristol City Council approved a funding budget for the project in April, with site developers expecting the arena to be fully operational by 2017.

Following on from the full Council's approval of a funding package for the arena, the council will now seek to appoint an arena operator to assist in taking the project forward.

Funds are being provided on behalf of the council in combination with the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership.

Current plans see the arena constructed in a horseshoe shape, with its 12,000 capacity made up predominantly by 10,000 seats. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=r8k8P>*

Canary Wharf development includes health club

Canary Wharf is to become home to a health club and spa alongside the site's first residential tower since the development was originally conceived in 1990.

The east London office district is the base for more than 100,000 workers, but the Newfoundland tower will contain the first purpose-built homes on the business estate, with a gym and spa incorporated into the plans.

Planning permission for the 58-storey development was granted by local authority Tower Hamlets Council, with a final approval decision being made by London mayor Boris Johnson.

Once finished, the development will include 566 apartments, as well as shops and 16,000 sq ft (1,486 sq m) of internal amenity space, which will incorporate both the health club and spa.



The development is awaiting final approval from the London mayor

The development is part of the on-going diversification of CWG's portfolio, which has seen the company move beyond the wharf with joint ventures at 20 Fenchurch Street and the Shell Centre, while also broadening the type of space it develops. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Q2N9S>*

£14.7m Atherton club plans progress

Building work is advancing on the £14.7m redevelopment of the Atherton Leisure Centre in Stratford, London.

The old building is to be replaced by a progressive structure used to house two community swimming pools, as well as gym and fitness studio facilities.

Other facilities at the new development include a creche, play area and a café.

The structure is to feature a more concerted focus on sustainability; with the building featuring an eco-friendly energy system, used to convert waste heat into carbon-neutral electricity.

The centre's roof is also to harvest rainwater, while helping to form a living surface covered in recycled soil, which will provide a habitat for plants and wildlife to flourish in.



The new structure is to feature a more concerted focus on sustainability

Newham council has decided to replace the old facility because of maintenance costs and high levels of asbestos in the old property.

The redeveloped Atherton Leisure Centre is expected to be open for use in the autumn of 2015. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=X9d5p>*

Plans approved for mixed-use development in Perthshire

Arran Brewery has got approval from the National Park Authority on plans to open a new brewery, hotel and visitor centre in Perthshire, Scotland.

The development will include a 32-bedroom hotel with banqueting hall, three bars, three

restaurants, visitor centre and a brewery making both lager and cider.

The Arran Brewery project hopes to be open before major events this year such as the Commonwealth Games and Ryder Cup. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=b7s8q>*



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Mapping out the future of training



IAN TAYLOR
is chief executive
at Skills Active

On the back of a highly successful National Apprenticeship Week, where over 20,000 new apprenticeships were generated, I am delighted to share with you the news that SkillsActive will be playing a role in the next wave of government apprenticeship "Trailblazers". Hairdressers, barber shops and beauty salons are to be at the forefront of the next wave of government apprenticeship Trailblazers helping to map out the future shape and direction of apprenticeship training.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) earlier in March announced its second wave of Trailblazer employers who will work to develop and test new models for more employer-based and employer-led standards for apprenticeships of the future. The ambition is to develop apprenticeships that can be explained on a single sheet of A4, work for both small and large businesses and which, crucially, will include relevant, practical testing and grading at the end of the training.

The strategic group of 10 individual trailblazer employers in hair, beauty and barbering salons or salon chains, all leaders in their fields, have been drawn from a broad mix across the industry, drawing on employer groups already working with the National Hairdressers' Federation and Habia, the industry standards-setting body and part of the SkillsActive Group.

Habia and the National Hairdressers' Federation will provide practical support that extends to helping to write the Apprenticeship standards and developing 'trade tests', the assessments done at the end of the apprenticeship programme.

The trailblazers are a key element of the government's ambitions, as a consequence of the 2012 Richard Review, to develop and introduce new structures for apprenticeships during 2015/16 and 2016/17.

With recent research from ICM Research suggesting 44 per cent of businesses across the country will be employing apprentices by 2019, we are making progress as we look to use apprenticeships to attract the best young people to the sectors.

TRAINING

Students complete Skills for Wildlife scheme

A group of trainees working for three Wildlife Trusts in the north of England are set to complete their training following a one-year work training programme, finishing at the end of March.

The trainees were appointed through the Skills for Wildlife Scheme, which has been run across the Yorkshire, Sheffield and Derbyshire Wildlife Trusts and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), with the programme enabling ten young people, aged between 16 and 25, to gain a work-based diploma in environmental conservation and on-the-job experience of countryside management.

"The traineeship has given us a unique opportunity to develop and enhance our skills and knowledge, providing us with the chance to gain new training and experiences, which will hopefully allow us to progress in a career within the countryside sector," said student Elysha Priest.

The students have been based at the Potteric Carr Nature Reserve in Doncaster, where on-the-job work that the trainees have undertaken includes the construction



The trainees were appointed through the Skills for Wildlife Scheme

of a pond dipping platform at Potteric Carr Nature Reserve, training in the traditional art of hedge-laying and putting that into practice across various nature reserves in Yorkshire and Derbyshire, in addition to various other countryside management practices.

The Skills for Wildlife traineeship has been hosted by The Wildlife Trusts for the last three years and is available to young people leaving school or higher education, providing them with opportunities to gain both practical experience and qualifications in the conservation sector. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=v6Y6T>*

Format announced for FitPro 2014 event

The FitPro Convention is to return this summer, but with a rebranded "bigger and better" format under the slightly rejigged title FitPro Live.

The annual fitness industry trainers' convention event takes place from 18-19 July this year at ExCeL London, with organisers promising a weekend of cutting edge educational sessions, including hands-on workshops, masterclasses and seminars, presented by influential fitness professionals.

Industry figures such as John Beradi, Todd Durkin, Mike Fitch, Dr Paul Bedford, Rachel Holmes and Caroline Pearce will run sessions covering everything from personal training to nutrition, mind and body, group fitness and business advice.

For personal trainers, fitness and group exercise instructors as well as fitness fanatics, the Live Zone, now three times bigger, offers a chance to discover new fitness trends



This year's event will be held at ExCeL London in Greenwich

and see the latest product and service innovations through live demonstrations.

"FitPro Live is a great opportunity for instructors and personal trainers to network, discover new group exercise concepts and receive advice from top educators within the health and fitness industry," said FitPro director of commercial operations (Europe) Fergus Ahern. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=h2K7w>*

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Dianne Eade, Newquay Zoo
Head of Finance, Human Resources and Administration



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innovative council services facility which also incorporates a library, customer access centre, café and council offices. GLL are now looking for an extraordinary individual to run this exciting new venue. The successful candidate will be an experienced and dynamic General Manager passionate about delivering inspiring customer service. They will be able to deliver both business and social targets, including an innovative launch of the centre, as well as a range of programmes to meet the needs of the whole community.

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Swimming Teacher

Company: Everyone Active
Location: Studley, Warwickshire,

Assistant Manager

Company: Trafford Community Leisure
Location: Greater Manchester,

Duty Manager

Company: Parkwood Leisure
Location: Oxfordshire,

Membership Sales / Fitness Advisor

Company: énergie group
Location: Maidstone,

Gym Instructor

Company: Brio Leisure
Location: Neston, Cheshire,

Duty Manager

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Location: Kent,

Team Leader

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Location: Poole,

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Location: Bishops Stortford,

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Assistant Customer Service Advisor

Company: GLL
Location: Huntington,

Swimming Teachers

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Location: Harrow, London,

Recreation Assistant

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Location: Charlton Lido and Lifestyle Club,

Duty Manager

Company: GLL
Location: Cambridge,

Customer Service Advisor

Company: GLL
Location: West Oxfordshire,

Duty Manager

Company: Basingstoke Sports Centre
Location: Basingstoke,

Duty Manager - Facilities

Company: Aspire
Location: Stanmore, London,

Regional Sales Manager

Company: SportsArt Fitness
Location: South Coast,

Full Time / Part Time Instructors

Company: Kieser Training
Location: London,

Assistant Customer Service Advisor

Company: GLL
Location: Merton, London,

Assistant Fitness Instructor

Company: GLL
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Company: Central YMCA
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Physical Activity Officer

Company: Wiltshire Council
Location: Wiltshire,

Membership Sales Consultant

Company: énergie group
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Assistant Fitness Manager

Company: Everyone Active
Location:

Personal Trainer

Company: Pure Gym Limited
Location: Birmingham West,

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Fitness Motivator

Company: Everyone Active
Location: Fareham,

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Location: Stratford Contract,

Fitness Manager

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Company: Everyone Active
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Company: énergie group
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Swim Teacher

Company: Everyone Active
Location: Stratford Upon Avon,

Personal Trainers

Company: The Gym Group
Location: Various locations, UK

Sport Services and Product Manager

Company: Northumbria University
Location: Newcastle upon Tyne,

General Manager

Company: The Gym Group
Location: Southampton,

Talent Identification and Pathways Manager

Company: Northumbria University
Location: Newcastle upon Tyne,

Membership Consultant

Company: Westway Development Trust
Location: London,

Sports Development Manager

Company: Parkwood Leisure
Location: Staffordshire ,

Personal Trainer

Company: Pure Gym Limited
Location: Leeds Hunslet,

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Company: Parkwood Leisure
Location: Bristol,

Healthy Living Centre Manager

Company: Peabody Trust
Location: London ,

Sport Services Assistant x2

Company: Northumbria University
Location: Newcastle upon Tyne,

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Customer Relations Manager

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Company: Fusion
Location: Brentford,

League Operations Manager

Company: Soccersixes
Location: Nuneaton, Warwickshire,

Dry Operations Manager

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Service/Assistant Manager

Company: GLL
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Location: Various locations, UK

Seasonal Lifeguards

Company: Stevenage Leisure Limited
Location: Letchworth,

Centre Manager

Company: Trafford Community Leisure
Location: Greater Manchester,

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Regional Manager

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Company: Énergie Group
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Team Leader Sport & Leisure

Company: Falkirk Community Trust
Location: Falkirk Area,

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Company: GLL
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Group Exercise Instructor

Company: GLL
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Lifeguard

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Team Leader

Company: Finesse Leisure Partnership
Location: Hatfield,

Duty Leisure Manager

Company: Live Active Leisure
Location: Perth,

Sales prospector/promotional staff

Company: énergie group
Location: Cannock,

Full-Time Duty Manager

Company: Sylvestrian Leisure Centre
Location: Snaresbrook, London,

Recreation Assistant

Company: Everyone Active
Location: Cleveland,

Fitness Apprenticeship

Company: énergie group
Location: Cannock,

Duty Manager

Company: LED Leisure Management Ltd
Location: Exmouth,

Tenders Manager

Company: Parkwood Leisure
Location: Worcester, ,

Recreation Assistant

Company: Everyone Active
Location: North Wembley,

Business Manager

Company: Leigh Sports Village
Location: Leigh,

Swim Teacher

Company: Everyone Active
Location: Ely,

Full/Part time Lifeguard

Company: Everyone Active
Location: Ely,

Full time Pilates Instructors

/ Personal trainers

Company: Ten Pilates
Location: Central London,

Membership Sales Advisor

Company: énergie group
Location: Harrow,

County Football Development Manager (CFDM)

Company: Manchester County FA
Location: Manchester,

Apprenticeships Available

Company: Everyone Active
Location: Watford,

Deputy Leisure Manager

Company: Center Parcs
Location: Elveden Forest, Suffolk,

Front of House positions

Company: Ten Pilates
Location: London,

Fitness Motivator

Company: Everyone Active
Location: Aylesbury,

Personal Trainer

Company: Everyone Active
Location: Aylesbury,

Head of Badminton

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Location: Wimbledon, London,

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Company: Alleen's School

Location: LondonApprentice

Company: Parkwood Leisure

Location: Nottingham,

Personal Trainer

Company: énergie group
Location: Liscombe Park, Bedfordshire,

Recreation Assistant

Company: GLL
Location: City of Westminster,

Personal Trainer

Company: Pure Gym Limited
Location: Altrincham,

Team Leader

Company: Everyone Active
Location: Poole,

Crew Member/Fitness Instructor

Company: énergie group
Location: Long Eaton,

Membership Sales / Crew Member

Company: énergie group
Location: Long Eaton,

Personal Trainers

Company: The Gym Group
Location: Southampton,

Club Manager

Company: énergie group
Location: Long Eaton,

Active Communities Officer

Company: Stratford-on-Avon DC
Location: Stratford-on-Avon,

Fitness Motivator

Company: Everyone Active
Location: London,

Customer Services Team Leader

Company: Aspire
Location: Middlesex,

Personal Trainer - Freelance

Company: Everyone Active
Location: Watford,

Funding for Careers in Fitness

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Location: South East,

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Location: Nationwide,

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Company: Xercise 4 Less
Location: Nationwide,

Sales and Marketing Manager

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Location: Nationwide,

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Location: Nationwide,

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Location: Nationwide,

Receptionist

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Location: Nationwide,

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Location: Nationwide,

Training Manager

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Location: Worldwide

Operations Manager

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Location: Worldwide

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Salon Manager

Company: Zen Lifestyle
Location: Edingburgh,

Operations Manager -

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Location: Westerham, Kent,

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Location: Swindon & Amesbury

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Heritage at serious risk from floods

Experts warn that Britain's coastal heritage is at extreme risk from both flooding and coastal erosion following the year's extreme weather patterns.

English Heritage has identified 25 sites of historic interest in its Coastal Estate Risk Assessment that it believes are now at significant risk.

Sites at risk includes Dunstanburgh Castle, on the Northumberland Coast; Landguard Fort, in Felixstowe, and the Innisidgen Burial Chambers on the Isles of Scilly.

Also red flagged are Warkworth Hermitage in Northumberland, Upnor Castle on the River Medway in Kent and Daw's Castle and a sea cliff hill fort near Watchet in Somerset.

Away from the shores, Berney Arms Windmill on the Norfolk Broads, is also under threat from the waters of the surrounding marshes.

Recent flooding and heavy storms have had a notable effect on Britain's heritage. Brunel's Great Western Railway line at Dawlish saw a section



Dunstanburgh Castle is at significant risk from flooding and coastal erosion

destroyed while at Filey Brig in Yorkshire, a Roman coastal signal tower has been lost and part of the Grade II listed quay at Lamorna Cove, in Cornwall was destroyed during the storms.

Eighty of English Heritage's sites lie along Britain's coast with the body saying that 48 are at some risk of flooding, with the main 25 placed at "moderate or high" risk. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=N2agD>

Garden city must adopt physical activity

Following Chancellor George Osborne's weekend announcement that the UK's first garden city for 100 years would be built in Ebbsfleet, ukactive CEO David Stalker has called on developers to ensure spaces for physical activity are high on the planning agenda, saying a successful outcome could provide a breakthrough in reducing the UK's inactivity crisis.

The garden city concept – small, self-sufficient cities of 30,000 people that are ringed by an agricultural belt and combine the best of urban life with access to nature – was first proposed as an antidote to the overcrowding of industrial Britain in 1898. However, the concept has been revived in as a possible solution to the south east's housing shortage.

Osborne said the Kent town of Ebbsfleet was selected for its prime location, availability of land and "fantastic infrastructure" – which includes a connection to high-speed rail line linking London to continental Europe.



The Kent town of Ebbsfleet was selected for its prime location

Stalker, citing the UK's widespread physical inactivity problem, believes a physical activity strategy must form part of the infrastructure for the proposed 15,000 home garden city.

Health Club Management editor Kate Cracknell recently identified the potential for wellness cities as a "once in a lifetime opportunity" for the health and fitness industry, in the magazine's March edition. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=v7T9C>

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