



No.1 UK coffee chain (Bev-e awards, 2009)

Boughton's

Jan/Feb 2010

COFFEE HOUSE



Follow the plans for this big coffee year with Max - page 4

Puccino's saved – but losses hit £11 million

The kiosk and cafe company Puccino's Ltd, one of the pioneers of the railway-platform trade, has gone into administration, with the administrator reporting that the company incurred losses totalling £11,099,289 in the last three years.

However, most of the outlets will continue trading. Of 86 franchised businesses run by Puccino's Ltd, 14 were closed in recent months, and the assets and leases of 43 have been sold to a new company, Puccino's Worldwide, which was registered on 7th December. The sale was concluded on 8th December, and administrators to Puccino's Ltd were appointed on 10th December. The remaining 29 stores closed.

The new company is registered at an address near Edinburgh, which is also the site of the roaster Brodies. A year ago, Brodies became a subsidiary of Zanetti Industries, which already controlled Puccino's Ltd, and Brodies was recently asked to help put the kiosk chain's affairs in order.

"The easy thing would have been to throw in the towel," said a spokesman, "but we tried to keep as many stores trading as possible. The insolvency practitioner has been extremely helpful, and we now know that 27 of the 29 closed stores will begin to trade again as private businesses.

"We have met with the 43 remaining franchisees, and have been struck by their enthusiasm and hard work."

Private engineers create combined repair force

There is a new co-operative body of service mechanics for coffee machines. The Association of Independent Espresso Engineers has been formed as 'a national network of highly motivated and passionate local espresso engineers'. There are to be about 15 operators in the new body, forming a national network of engineers which will shortly be found through a single portal website, www.aiee.org.uk. The new organisation will benefit both customers and engineers, say the members.

"There has long been an unofficial network of engineers who know each other and help each other out," a spokesman told *Coffee House*. "We all feel the same way about customer service, and we all believe that the customer will always get more support from an independent than from a corporate... and some of the engineers who have joined together really are among the tops in the country.



credibility. It has to be in everyone's best interests."

The companies known to be involved so far are: Caffeine Fix, Northern Central Espresso, Espresso Repair, Uno Coffee Service, Coffix,

Dave Harvey, Kent Coffee, Universal Espresso Care, Roy Ireland, Espresso Technical Services, and Xpress Coffee Commercial.

In response to this magazine's online announcement of the launch, one critical comment received from the supply side of the trade said: "One of the main complaints we receive is of 'independent' engineers arriving on site and then selling coffee... this problem has got worse in the last 18 months."

The new AIEE responded immediately: "One of the rules set in stone to anyone involved in this project is that they must not sell coffee; engineers can only have their link on our website if their own site does not offer coffee."

By coincidence, the company which has been working on the availability of spares since Gaggia UK went under has also begun a co-operative. David Lawlor of Watermark, based in Dublin, tells us:

"Customers are impressed with the contacts we have made, and now we shall probably put together a Gaggia service network.

"It's similar to the idea from AIEE... but that's just a coincidence."



Starbucks 'flattie' makes its debut

Starbucks has confirmed that the 'flat white' coffee is now available in some of their London stores, and will go nationwide next year.

The formal announcement carries the interesting claim that Starbucks customers in London had been heard asking for 'a new drink', and that 'our highly trained baristas rose to the challenge and taught themselves how to make it'. Readers may recall that Starbucks was in fact invited to consider the item after the Allegra Summit in London early last year!

Others have pointed out that it is not at all new, just one which has recently come to prominence - Jeremy Regan of Muffin Break has put in probably the longest bid, saying that he has been serving it in all of his UK branches since 2001.

Starbucks' flat white' is an 8oz drink made with two espresso shots and 'creamy, steamed whole-milk'. It sells at £2.25. Costa has also been reported to be launching the item in an 11oz size, which raises interesting questions concerning the formulation, but has not replied to enquiries.

Allegra Strategies has finished its latest study on the UK branded coffee shop market, and reports that although growth in both store numbers and sales has halved, the coffee chains are still expected to outperform the retail sector in general.

This 'branded' sector is estimated at around 4,100 of a probable total of 11,000 coffee shops. The total coffee shop market is forecast to be 12,500 outlets by December 2012

Meanwhile, the Local Data Company has researched 705 town centres, and says that the number of independent coffee shops in its researched centres has grown by 12.5 per cent to 9,441, compared to just over 2,000 chain outlets. The company says the UK's coffee hotspot is Camden Town, with 66 outlets; London has one coffee shop for every 1,105 shoppers.

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Reported figures say the number of extra shots asked for by Starbucks' UK customers has increased from 105,000 shots a week to 125,000.

Steve Richards, a Manchester entrepreneur who runs 40 Subway franchises is reported to be launching Green Cauldron coffee from Byron Bay, New South Wales. His Fast and Fresh Restaurant is aiming to operate 150 food and coffee outlets by the end of 2011.

The SCAE has created a research group to look again at the standards for filter coffee brewing. Leader of the project, Paul Stack of Marco Beverage Systems, tells us that the existing Gold Cup standard for filter coffee is based on work done fifty years ago.

Violet Weston of the Ye Olde Worlde tea room in Bosherton, Pembroke, has been awarded an MBE, for working in the business for 70 years.

The Brew tea bar in Liverpool is offering to take in any other café chain's loyalty card and exchange it for one of its own, with the same number of stamps. Meanwhile, world barista champ Gwilym Davies has created the Disloyalty Card, which exists to encourage drinkers to try various high-quality coffee venues in east London – a stamp from each of eight coffee houses in the area gets a free

drink from Gwilym's own business. Meanwhile, in Seattle, the tour guide company Seattle On Foot has created a 'coffee crawl' of the best venues, which is apparently doing good business. A tour guide made the interesting comment: "I think it's causing people to drink a lot more drip coffee, and they're experiencing all the different flavours from all over the world."

Thieves in Keighley, Yorkshire, have stolen an entire café, including all equipment, seats, tables, and stores. The Tip Top Tasters café, a 20ft x 8ft sit-down layby business, disappeared overnight. Police say that the thieves must have used a heavy-duty industrial crane; the owner has been told by her insurers that because the business was not secured to the ground, they will not accept a claim.

James Hoffmann of Square Mile Coffee has created a jobs website for the speciality coffee trade - <http://www.londoncoffeejobs.co.uk/>

Milligans of Newcastle, which recently developed from a bakery into a coffee shop operator, has opened four cafes in the past year, and has plans for five this year. Managing director Stephen Milligan has said the shift towards coffee shops has played the major role in helping his company grow through the recession.

Plan for change at Caffe Culture

The SCAE's conference programme at the Caffe Culture show will be divided into three theme days, covering different aspects of the modern coffee bar trade.

The first day is based on 'managing change', which can refer to such hazards as fluctuating markets and changes in consumer spending habits. The speakers will be Buck Hendrix, regional president for Starbucks, Doug Zell of Intelligencia and Paul Ettinger of Caffè Nero.

"Starbucks were largely responsible for shaping the modern day coffee bar, and are now going through more changes than before," organiser Gary McGann told us. "They are openly questioning their methods of interacting with customers and the way they do business. I would hope that attendees will learn from what their vision of future changes are."

The second day's theme is 'a whole new world', which refers to an understanding of different markets. Speakers include several multi-national players. "We are increasingly influenced by overseas trends as the 'Ryanair generation' travel more frequently," explains McGann.

"Each country has its own version of modern coffee culture - so, with a high percentage of overseas visitors in the UK, what is there from their home markets that our operators should embrace?"

The third day is hoped to provide an insight and understanding of the evolution of coffee bars, and how this fits with consumer trends. "We are recruiting three leading design experts to tell us of emerging trends and where they see these translating to café bars of the future. It should be an insight into leading design without having to fork out huge fees for it!"

Twinnings to take its work overseas?

Twinnings, a British name with 300 years behind it, has plans to move its packaging operations to China or Poland. Twinnings has said that the reason is to save unnecessary transport, because two-thirds of its business involves tea being imported to be exported. Mike Parsonage, of the shopworkers' union Usdaw, has said: "If we allow this to happen, no manufacturing jobs will have a future in the UK." If the plan goes through, it will take effect in 2011. In December, 17 MPs put their name to an early-day motion calling on Twinnings to think again.

Big brands fall foul of ad watchdogs

Beverage-related advertising standards cases in both Britain and Italy have raised some odd items in recent weeks. Here, the ASA Authority has upheld a decision against a TV advertisement for Tetley.

A 2009 TV commercial showed a woman at home preparing to go for a jog. When she saw it was raining she made a cup of tea instead. A voice-over said: "For an easy way to help look after yourself, pick up Tetley Green Tea. It's full of antioxidants". On-screen text stated "As part of a healthy diet and lifestyle".

Four viewers said the ad implied that Tetley green tea had the same or similar health benefits as exercise. Tetley pointed out that the ad clearly said 'part of a healthy lifestyle', not that green tea could replace exercise. Although the ASA appears to have accepted this, it still said that Tetley's evidence, in the form of medical research studies, was insufficient to substantiate a claim of general health benefits, and that the ad must be withdrawn.

Meanwhile, an advertising-trade magazine reports that Nespresso is arguing with Lavazza over a campaign theme. Nespresso's European ad involves its star name, George Clooney, visiting heaven where he encounters God and has a conversation about coffee. Lavazza has apparently complained that the theme is pinched from its own campaign, which featured coffee with angels and St. Peter. The matter has been referred to the Italian equivalent of the ASA. Nespresso is reported to have made the delightful comment: "The after-life is not particularly linked to just one brand."

Instant coffee, it has been revealed, is the drink which will save the planet, and may help humans live longer. An Edinburgh scientist has said that instant coffee is better for the environment - Dr Dave Reay, a specialist on carbon emissions, says that filter coffees put 50 per cent more carbon into the atmosphere than soluble coffees. He also says that it takes 200 litres of water to produce the coffee, milk, sugar and paper cup for one conventional takeaway latte. Meanwhile, Nescafe has launched Green Blend, a highly-unusual combination of unroasted beans. The unroasted green beans are naturally rich in antioxidants, which can help protect the body from day-to-day damage, and fight against some ageing processes.



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Two big names to re-design their cafes

Coffee bar design has moved into the spotlight, with two of the big names changing their appearance - Starbucks has opened its first re-designed store in London, and Coffee Republic has appointed a big-name design consultancy to create a new look. Lavazza has also created its own eye-catching international cafes, and the organiser of a style award wants entries from cafe-bar owners.

The first of Starbucks' new looks is in Conduit Street, London, and shows that the chain has been watching the new breed of 'cool' venues a few streets away in Soho. There is much use of plain wood, and matching earthy, rustic colours... even the outside sign and logo are in brown, instead of the usual green.

Coffee Republic has hired the Conran organisation, which began its work by saying that 'design quality is sorely lacking in the other high street coffee shops'. We challenged this, but Conran did not detail their criticism, saying only that they thought Starbucks and Costa to be 'all beige and green and brown with some sort of vaguely South-American wall-paper... bland and safe'.

Meanwhile, eye-catching new café design has come in a new international chain, Espresso by Lavazza. Ten of these cafés have been opened worldwide, one winning an American design award, and the UK launch site was Belfast City Airport.

The Restaurant and Bar Design Awards have asked us to invite the cafe world to enter its 2010 series. These are judged by writers from the design and lifestyle press, and organiser Marco Rebora has told us: "I am looking for exciting new cafes." *Details: www.restaurantandbardesignawards.com*



From the top: Lavazza's striking window and an interior furnishing; what may be a trial new Coffee Republic look, and Starbucks' wood-theme design for its Conduit St store.



The Grumpy Mule brand, devised by Bolling Coffee for sales through delis and speciality food shops, is now available to foodservice.

"We've won around ten Great Taste awards in the last few years, and the retail sales generated from this have, honestly, been exponential," Bolling's Ian Balmforth told us. "Our sales are through farm shops, delis, and the kind of store where people are looking for 'something more than the supermarket'. We're now bringing high-end retail coffee to foodservice." Grumpy Mule will be available to foodservice as six single estate Arabica coffees, six espresso blends, in 500gm bags of beans and a range of filter and bulk brew pack sizes.

Some imaginative work is appearing in the preparations for the Bath Coffee Festival, due in May.

Marshfield Bakery is a new major sponsor, and several other supporters have shown their plans - Metropolitan Coffee has promised to train six local unemployed youths as baristas, and to help find them jobs before the festival, to show the employment potential of the beverage trade. Heather Thompson, of the local mobile coffee company Carpuccino, will be going into local schools before the event to develop youngsters' understanding of coffee. The local business community is planning business breakfast events around the festival, and now that stand bookings are open, enquiries have even been received from Australia.

Meanwhile, also in Bath, Angie Faulkner of Squeeze Juice Cafe has begun a petition to persuade the local council to turn Pulteney bridge into 'the city's café area'. This ancient bridge is one of only four in the world which has shops for its full length; buses and taxis are allowed to cross it, but there are fears that more motor traffic use will damage it badly; the new campaign aims to make the bridge a pedestrianised café-culture area.

The IT media has reported that Caffè Nero is ready to introduce cashless payments in its stores - we have no information yet on the system it will be using.

While most of the financial press have reported Whitbread's £36 million bid for the Coffeeheaven chain in terms of Costa's presence in eastern Europe, one writer thought to look at founder Richard Worthington's stake - he concluded that the chain founder would get £275,000 for his stake and £300,000 from options.

The north-western media says that Starbucks' 'first drive-through coffee shop in the country' could be built in Blackburn. Strictly speaking, they're correct - the other one's in Wales. Starbucks has made no comment.

Café du Monde is celebrating its 20th anniversary year. The two partners, David Latchem and Mike Osborne, have said that they have learned several major lessons - always be hands-on, and always stay in regular contact with customers, so you are aware of market changes; treat staff with fairness for long-term results, and (this is a novel one) treat suppliers with the same respect you reserve for customers.

A disturbing story has cropped up in the western regional press. It concerns an allegation by the owners of Café No 9, in Bishop's Cleeve, that members of a rival Costa outlet stood directly outside their front door, offering free Costa coffee to their customers - the local press quoted one No 9 customer as saying she had to 'battle' her way into the café. We have received no response from Costa to an enquiry on the matter.

The makers of Lancashire Tea have bought their company back from the administrators. Curiously, the company operates from Newton-le-Willows, which is not quite in Lancashire.

An American scientist has published findings showing that coffee does not help to sober up a drinker. Dr Thomas Gould, of the Temple University, in Philadelphia, has also said that the increasing popularity of combining alcohol with 'energy drinks' featuring caffeine is particularly dangerous, because the effect is to make the drinker fail to recognise the effect of the alcohol - typically, to make someone think they can drive when they are unfit to do so.

Dinkum, the company which introduced the concept of the thick shake to the UK, has re-branded by taking on the name Shmoo Thickshakes, to replace its old Dinkum Fresh Shakes.



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2010 - the contest signs are looking good already

The independent barista championships, which we all hope will draw a wider entry into the national contest, are showing some very promising results. Already, 2010 is beginning to look the great year we all hope for.

The Krispy Kreme contest has been run as part of the donut chain's distinct move to establish itself as a 'coffee destination'. The winning barista is Becky Jane Marlborough of KK in Reading. "She is ready to be entered into the UKBC - although I'm not sure the UKBC is ready for someone as entertaining as she is!" we were told by KK's coffee supplier, Drury. "She was absolutely hilarious, has a great rapport with customers, and had the audience in fits. Her signature drink was a white chocolate praline macchiato." The second-placed was Michelle Gregory from Portsmouth, and both will go into the UKBC as KK entrants.



Howard Barwick

Richard Dixon-Teasdale from Coffee Aroma in Lincoln and Naveen Bisht from Carluccios in Reading.

Howard has quickly entered the UK championships. He told *Coffee House*:

"For the signature drink I did a fruit macchiato. I infused raspberry in water to a paste, with a little bit of blood orange, sliced and juiced. Then I squeezed some lime with Demerara sugar; surprisingly, they worked to give the espresso a quality which shone through."

Costa's in-house contest has been won by Gabor Kamondi of its Dorking branch. His signature drink was Pick Mint, inspired by his liking for After Eights. The runner-up was Jonathan Scott from Carlisle.

We always knew the Brasilia contest, run by Caffe Society of Leeds, was going to be interesting - this was deliberately aimed at baristas who are not part of the competing community, but 'average street café baristas'. The set-up was imaginative - there was a lecture on single-origin coffee, by Masteroast, after which the entrants had to pick a couple of those coffees to blend and work with. There was a requirement to create a signature drink from a prescribed set of ingredients - it included such curiosities as golden syrup, various fruits and herbs, peanut butter, juniper and nutmeg.

The winner was Howard Barwick of J & S Ventures, which is a Costa franchise in Leeds. This was the first competition he had entered. Howard wins a trip to the Brasilia factory in Italy and a training session at the 9 Bar Training Academy.

Second was Hannah Davies from Broderick's Love Coffee at Manchester Airport, third was Will Corby from The Caffeine Kid in Cardiff, followed by

Advance entries for the UK barista championships have, for once, shown very promising numbers in the early stages after entries opened. We've been asked not to publish names yet (they'll all be up on our website by mid-January) but already we see two names from notable cafes in Edinburgh, and three from one of the newest cafes in the south-west. From the north and midlands, we see a couple of names who were in for the BSA's recent café awards, and to our astonishment, we see that the London heat, which in the past has been cancelled for lack of interest, has already achieved 19 entrants for this year's contest... including four from one of the UK's top contract caterers, a couple from the new 'cool' coffee bars, a couple from roasters, and a couple from big name distributors. This could be a cracker of a regional heat.

The first few examples of regional companies using publicity to good effect for the big promotional year have cropped up. Ian Steel of Atkinsons, the roasters in Lancaster, got himself included in the *Independent's* list of the nation's best fifty food and drink shops. "I love the idea that we are punching above our weight," he told us. "The zeitgeist is swinging our way - towards the independent, the quirky, the heartfelt passion of the individual producer. That's what people are looking for."



Alice Rendle

Meanwhile, Alice Rendle of Edgcumbes in Arundel appeared in the *Telegraph*, and tells us that she is already promoting 2010 at local events. When we asked about it, Alice told us that she gives talks to business groups and the like... and that she always promotes the speciality coffee trade, the UKBC and WBC.



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It's time to get ready for one of the biggest promotional spots of the year - but does this year's Fairtrade Fortnight theme fit the coffee trade?

The theme for this year's Fairtrade Fortnight has raised a few hackles within the coffee trade. The theme is 'The Big Swap', in which the Foundation aims to persuade one million consumers to swap their usual beverage for a Fairtrade one.

It is a basic marketing maxim that 'the market loves a choice', which is why so many sectors have what are called 'me-too' brands and 'compatible' brands - and simply the option of putting an alternative product in front of the consumer does appear to have a lot going for it.

However, trade suppliers, particularly craft roasters, have long complained that a direct Fairtrade equivalent of quality speciality coffee is not easily found, and there have been some queries about such a simplistic promotional approach as 'swap your usual coffee for a Fairtrade one'.

There have also already been some misunderstandings over the 'swap' theme - several trade suppliers have quite confidently told us that the theme is based on tea, not coffee. So has the Federation, which has told us that the theme project is supported by its matching campaign of Strictly Fairtrade Tea Dances.

"The emphasis is on activity that draws people in, to then hear about why Fairtrade is important in tea and to encourage them to swap," said the Foundation.

James Roberts of Peros, the leading supplier of Fairtrade products to the catering trades, is one who took the campaign to refer to tea, and planned a promotion accordingly.

"An emphasis on tea actually gives the cafe trade lots of scope for potential in maximising their profits during the Fairtrade Fortnight and beyond," he argued. "Tea and biscuits, tea gatherings for local groups, afternoon Fairtrade tea... the marketing and sales possibilities with tea are endless!"

"As the only 100 per cent Fairtrade tea brand in the UK, Cafedirect are the Fairtrade pioneers in hot drinks, and we think they have got some great events up their sleeves to promote their Fairtrade hot drinks - operators should ask them."

During the Fortnight Peros will offer a free extra case of The London Tea Company tea for every three cases purchased. Some promotional material will be customisable so that operators will be able to put forward a tailored message to encourage their customers to make 'The Big Swap'.

But it turns out that tea is not the only focus at all. There is a Fairtrade Foundation poster which clearly refers

The market loves a choice...

... but can Fairtrade beverages provide the 'swap' the Foundation wants to see?

to coffee. And that has caused upset among suppliers who say that you cannot tell the public to swap their normal coffee for a Fairtrade one because the parallel simply does not apply.

So - does this year's Fortnight theme give the cafe trade an opportunity, or a problem? As always, we put the beverage trade's complaint to Harriet Lamb, top lady of the Fairtrade Foundation - and as always, she was willing to listen.

Her response was a direct invitation - Harriet Lamb wants to discuss coffee quality problems with the trade.

"You don't compromise on quality, ever!" she told us. "If a business wants to change their coffee to Fairtrade, and cannot find the quality they want, we invite them to come to us.

"I want to sit down with the trade and talk about their ethical requirements, their quality requirements, and their sourcing requirements... and why they think they cannot achieve them. Then I want us to map out the possible origins and suppliers, together."

The situation is actually helpful in that it will encourage operators to look



According to this Fairtrade Foundation poster, coffee is certainly intended to be an item for the proposed 'swap'

went on to raise another question which gave the Foundation pause for thought.

"Here lies a complicated atmosphere of confusion, misunderstanding and perhaps even mistrust, because excellent and poor qualities of coffee both exist, whether Fairtrade or not. It is still a case of 'buyer beware'."

But, he argued, this is an opportunity. It gives the coffee shop owner an opportunity to demand that suppliers prove the standard of their fairtrade coffee - and then gives the chance to use that in their own marketing.

"If coffee shop owners are going to support the 'swap' theme, I recom-

mend they take this chance to demonstrate that coffee does not have to be inferior if it bears the Fairtrade badge."

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It is a fair comment to say that our promotions have been centred on retail (and not foodservice). There must be a solution, if we put our heads together with the coffee trade on this.

- Harriet Lamb

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The annual Ethical Consumerism report, in December, showed the total market for sustainable goods was worth £36 billion in 2008. Fairtrade products of all kinds are now £635 million a year, and the Co-op says that the figure could reach a billion by the end of this year. But the market is still only a tiny percentage of our overall spending, which is about £900 billion. The average household spend on ethical food and drink has increased to £244, and half of the surveyed adult population now say they have chosen a product on ethical grounds in the past year.



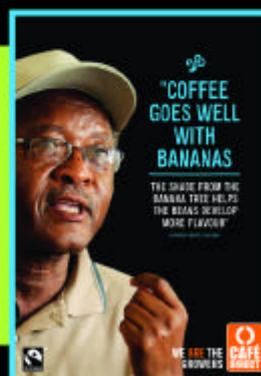
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*Millward Brown March 2009/ TGI Q1 2009



Swap to 'the real deal', challenges Cafedirect

Cafedirect has always been one of the big names in ethically-traded coffee, but not a name you see in coffee-houses. It is time for cafe owners to re-evaluate the brand, says commercial sales director Jon Marlow – his brand's business is already growing in the catering sector.

"One third of our business is now out-of-home – a few years ago we were nowhere, so it has been a pretty rapid increase. We're in 70 per cent of universities and further education, and we've become big in the workplace with the bigger employers."

What about the cafe trade? The question brings a big grin and a challenging response.

"You'll always hear that a lot of high-street operators are looking for a way to 'differentiate themselves' – well, we now see Cafedirect as their differentiating factor.

"We have the proposition, and we have a fantastic range of origin coffees, including a main Cafedirect espresso blend which is a full-bodied, well-rounded coffee. This is truly different, because we don't use any Brazilian, nor any Colombian, so our espresso tends to start from a different point from others.

"We also know that independent high street coffee-bars now expect a lot of support from suppliers, and we're now working on a project to get very close to these customers. Yes, we have good relationships with companies like 3663 and Peros, but we are also making ourselves more available to independent operators.

"Our out-of-home plans will include promotions and sampling. A lot of the big Fairtrade 'swap' is based on tea, and independent café operators can do a lot on this, because out-of-home tea is often made very badly.

"So, to have a big poster in your window saying 'you've never tried Cafedirect English Breakfast before? Well, come in and try it here!' would be a great idea which we would support. And sampling will be very big for us next year - in all we want a quarter of a million people to sample Cafedirect products.

"That's how confident we are, and if you're a high street café proprietor, you'll want a supplier to show this kind of confidence."

That confidence spreads across Cafedirect's newest sustainability arguments. The biggest recent move is the AdapCC project. This seeks to find ways to help growers adapt to climate change – coffee and tea will be among the first casualties, says Cafedirect, because the crops grow only within a very limited subtropical climatic range.

A small climate shift will have big consequences.

The AdapCC research has already shown a link between yields and increasingly unpredictable rainfall and temperature patterns, and so the researchers are working directly with the grower communities to develop a range of technical and financial strategies to cope with unpredictable farming conditions. In some regions this means diversifying into other crops, and in others it has meant new ways of using native tree species to bind soil structures and prevent mudslides.

"In Tanzania I was shown a little stream, about ankle deep – I said it was very nice, and they told me that last year it was waist-deep. And then they told me that their crops rely on that stream.

"Rainfall is becoming unpredictable, and that means more than irrigation –



Now try Cafedirect espresso -
Jon Marlow

its doing things to their drying patios, so we've even been working on poly drying tunnels.

"The key point of it is that people we work with, our grower partners, are already facing the impact of all this, and that's why we're investing back in them. We leave the well-sinking to the charities, and we put our money into product quality, their yields, and their husbandry.

"This is not following the market - we've been doing this for three years!

"For the trade here, the long-term view is - less yield, less product, is a threat to us all. We have to be aware of this.

"We are pioneers in this, just as we were fair-trade before Fairtrade. The work we are now doing is an example of how we are still pioneers.

"So if you want a Fairtrade differentiating factor, Cafedirect is the real deal!"



Jon Hassall at AMT's Liverpool Street station site

To get the best out of the Fortnight - work on it!

For a coffee shop, what is the secret of getting the most out of promoting Fairtrade? It is in putting something into it – actively selling Fairtrade, not just having it as an option.

Your Fairtrade reward comes from effort, says Jon Hassall, chief operations officer of AMT. This is the company which built its reputation with kiosk work in high-footfall travel sites, and it was also the first significant coffee chain to go over completely to Fairtrade coffee. Many cafes demand to know what Fairtrade is going to do to support them, and complain that the organisation is hard to work with, but Hassall says that AMT gets all the support it needs from the Fairtrade Foundation.

"We've always had a good relationship with Fairtrade – they give us their time, they give us their feedback, and when we want them to help, they do so in a more than timely manner. I wonder... is this because we work with Fairtrade, instead of just stocking it?"

"I think so. I believe the effort we put in has succeeded."

The real key, he says, is to consider Fairtrade as a business strategy, not a quick-buck two week promotion.

"If you only want to do this for two weeks, don't bother! If you're going to do Fairtrade, have a strategy with longevity, and we say that comes from quality first. Where a Fairtrade product is available, and is of equal or better quality, we take it. Our brownies are great and happen to be Fairtrade, and so is our Eccles cake. We're now finalising the plans for Cadbury's Fairtrade drinking chocolate, and we've had the first lot in already. We had a different Fairtrade chocolate before, but our customers didn't like it. They do like Cadburys.

"As for coffee quality, it's true that finding a good Fairtrade was a challenge – and that's why we didn't rush it. Now we do have a better Fairtrade blend.

"I know how much time we've spent tasting some of these products, but I do believe some other operators have just said to their suppliers: 'you've got a month to give us a Fairtrade option, get on with it!' And that won't work."

Is it good for business to get involved at local level?

"I'm always surprised by the way that customers contact us with their ethical opinions – the amount of it, and within that, the quality of discussion." (AMT first went Fairtrade because of customer demand). "So we engage with as many local Fairtrade supporters as we can for the Fortnight, and typically, we invite the local Fairtrade organisers to work with us – in Bristol we handed out their local magazine, in Hammersmith we handed out their badges. We have contacts in all Fairtrade towns, and we work with them.

"I can see why other companies find it too much trouble, but we understand that some Fairtrade area managers are passionate beyond belief, and so if the Reading one wants us to give them a blue flier and the Hammersmith one wants a red one, then we do it!

"I won't disagree that there is a bonus for us in terms of PR, but our five years of commitment to Fairtrade has certainly been about more than that! We have done well out of it in business, and we have done well out of it because we put the effort in."



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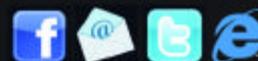
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There's far more to Fairtrade than tea or coffee – we highlight some valuable products for the Fortnight

Irish company puts Mark on wrapped sweets

We are all fairly used to Fairtrade muffins and flapjacks, but this year something very unusual has cropped up for the fortnight -- individually-wrapped fudges, toffees and boiled sweets in Fairtrade format.

They come from Wish4Fairtrade, from Kinsale in County Cork. This is one of those companies created after a life-changing experience for the founder – two years ago, Kinsale won the title of 'best Fairtrade town in Ireland', and local man Alan Clayton won a trip to the Kasinthula Fairtrade sugar cane farmers' co-operative in southern Malawi.

The result was his own confectionery company, with a pledge to invest half of his profits in Fairtrade enterprises, making sure as much as possible stays in the country of origin of the products. Big brands may be making a lot of noise about 'going Fairtrade', he observes, but still most of the retail price stays in the big companies' books.

Still a good prospect for the retailer, Alan Clayton told us.

"You can expect to make the same margins as on a comparable non-Fairtrade product, but bear in mind that these are not cheap products. The bars are 'all butter' recipes, whereas



An unusual offer - the Fairtrade box of fudge and toffees

many other Fairtrade options have a lot of vegetable margarine in - so our products may have a six-week shelf life compared to cheaper ones which may offer 12 weeks. But if you compare like for like, you make the same, and usually more, cash margin."

Some parts of the Wish4Fairtrade range are unique.

"Other Fairtrade flapjacks and

muffins do exist, but our Fruity Nut Seed bar is unique. Our fudges and toffees are unique insofar as they are 'natural' as well as Fairtrade – we have taken out all the artificial colours, flavours, and preservatives that are usually in these products.

"Everything that can be Fairtrade-certified is, so as well as the sugar, so are the chocolate, apricots, sultanas, raisins, dates, and brazil nuts. Honey is Fairtrade, from Chile, but the oats and cereals are grown in the UK - Fairtrade cereals are not available Fairtrade anywhere.

Often the crops have been grown organically because growers cannot afford chemicals – but whatever the reason, there is certainly no compromise on quality."

The theme for Fairtrade Fortnight this year is 'swap'. Does a Wish4Fairtrade box of sweets offer caterers a way of achieving the 'swap'?

"It's a perfect opportunity," says Clayton. "An assortment box of Fairtrade toffees and fudge instead of a box of Quality Street? And less fattening!"



The latest of the Limited Edition cookies from Byron Bay, distributed by Beyond the Bean, will be one to appear in time for Fairtrade Fortnight.

This will be an apricot and almond cookie, which features fair-trade-certified fruit and Muscovado sugar, with locally-sourced oats, flour, butter and free-range eggs.

The entire Limited Edition concept is based around a product which can be promoted as 'something special', ideally within a specific time-frame - this, says Beyond the Bean, nicely suits the 'swap' theme for Fairtrade Fortnight, of replacing non-Fairtrade products with alternatives carrying the Mark.

Mark Perrin of Byron Bay says that he spent six months getting the recipe for the new cookie right. It is Byron Bay's first Fairtrade cookie.

Buying centres to protect farmers

Harry's Nuts, the Fairtrade-marked salted peanuts and cashews from the Liberation company, which bear the image of the comedian Harry Hill, have a story behind them.

It seems that Harry Hill devised the product idea himself, and went with his brother, an organic farmer, to Malawi to meet nut growers who would supply him, and took the idea to Liberation, a company which is supported by Comic Relief and is part-owned by nut farmers. Many of his suppliers in both Mozambique and Malawi are women looking after Aids orphans. Proceeds from the product are now helping to establish Community Buying Centres and nut stores - the importance of these centres is that at the moment buying takes place under a tree, and farmers are easily robbed or conned.



We rather enjoyed this – when Peros announced its One World range of Fairtrade confectionery, we discovered that the range of muffins also includes a Fairtrade Eccles cake. That is not the first in the market – but it did inspire director James Roberts to the idea that a company mission from now on should be to have Eccles declared a Fairtrade Town!

Peros, the specialist Fairtrade supplier, has won several prizes recently - first place in the Thames Valley 'business management team of the year' section, and a highly commendation in 'SME of the year'. The directors, Peter Goodey (left) and James Roberts, also won a Global Ethics award to mark the 60th play-pump water well paid for by their sales of One Water.

Here is your 'swap'

Quality beverages will come very much under the spotlight at this year's Fairtrade Fortnight.

The theme of the Fortnight is 'swap' - to persuade customers to change their usual drink for the Fairtrade option.

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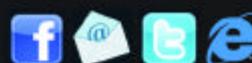
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Rather surprisingly, and almost certainly unintentionally, this year's Hotelympia show is providing an opportunity to judge an important aspect of the speciality coffee trade - just how much can an automatic machine do?

The exhibitor which has been boldest on this is **Melitta**, where Paul Hopkins has actually gone so far as to say that his machines can do, and we quote, 'anything'. The big new development in this is Milk-Jet, a fresh milk dispensing system that 'provides whatever combination of foamed, steamed, heated and cold milk is required, in whatever order - even the most demanding coffee recipe can be programmed for barista-perfect results'.

Melitta has also told us that its big mission for this year is based on hygiene. The number of mistakes in hygiene which a beverage operator can make is, the company points out, quite frightening - so, what can an automatic machine do to work towards perfect cleanliness?

The question of 'how much can an automatic machine do?' is also to be addressed by **Coffeetech**. There will also be additions to the Macco range of bean-to-cup super-automatics, and the MX3, which is said to produce 'all of the premium range of coffee drinks'.

Automatic and glowing coffees!

The Hotelympia show, at Excel from 28th February, will offer a chance to see just what super-auto coffee machines can do... and one trade supplier will also give a rare chance to understand the concept of 'molecular gastronomy'.

As you might expect, *Coffee House* teased the company with 'how about a flat white?'

"I would be inclined to say 'yes'," replied Duncan Gaffney. "I doubt if 99 per cent of people in coffee shops can, so you will often end up with a flat-white-accino-latte!"

"A flat white is not an easy trick, but



Makers of the super-auto machines, including Melitta (left) say they can now make 'anything' - but the way to give the drink a neon glow may be through molecular gastronomy and the Illuzoon (right)



super-automatics will produce hot flat milk and textured foamed milk, and definitely make good lattes... and a flat white is based on a latte... so I suggest the trade comes and discusses this at our stand!"

First Choice will also be arguing the case for what an automatic can do with the arrival of the Black and White Cool.

This argues a unique feature, based on 'extensive research and development into milk-texturing' is now claimed to 'have achieved world-class barista standards', no less. This bean-to-cup is for combining high quality with high volume, and McDonalds has recently taken it on. Testing its performance will be a couple of barista

my ingredients are texturising agents used by industry to impart some type of texture or stability to a processed liquid or food - molecular gastronomy is about using these texturisers in the kitchen to create completely new types of food or drink. Coffee can be thickened, made into a gel and even spherified!"

The company is also showing the Mypressi Twist portable espresso maker - this is powered by a tiny gas cartridge, and allows an espresso to be brewed and poured at the table.

Speciality Breads is a service which often fascinates us. Differentiating your bread offer is a very useful tactic - and this company has more varieties of bread and roll-type products than we have seen in many places, thus providing a useful way of producing 'unique' menu items.

The **Handmade Cake Company** is always worth watching. The company's Simon Law tells us that the launch of four collections of cupcakes in September was the most successful thing the company has done in 26 years - the variety includes what you



The Mypressi Twist

might expect in cupcake format, but look for Naturally Pretty, which is a very colourful collection of colourfully-topped vanilla sponges with buttercream. Very good for visual effect in coffee shops, says the company. Look also for the fruit and carrot cupcakes, which we hear Handmade occasionally refers to as 'fruit and veg' - this is a mixed box of lemon, raspberry buttercream, blueberry and carrot cupcakes.

We have reported recently the developments in attempts to create a completely-compostable bio lid for take-away coffee cups - this is the chance to see the product from **Vegware**, which the company is now confident to put forward as 'every bit as practical as standard plastic lids'.

Xing Xing is always worth a look because of its fascinating development in crockery shapes - but for cafes concentrating on the 'afternoon tea' concept, look at the newly-extended range of cake tins, either two or three-tiered, in square or round. Prices start at about £9.

champions - James Hoffman and Gwilym Davies will both be there. (It is possible to book a masterclass session with them in advance - call Tracey at 01908 275555).

On the filter side, **Bunn** will spotlight its SmartWAVE coffee brewer with the low-profile grinder, the Infusion coffee brewer with the multi-hopper grinder, and the BrewWISE dual coffee brewer with Thermofresh server. One of the big things to ask about here is the information transference technology, by which the machines communicate coffee recipes to each other, or by which recipes can be communicated among locations via a smart card, so that all brews within an organisation, at any location, will give a consistent result.

Away from coffee, we see some fascinating ideas for the coffee-shop operator - notably, a rare chance to get into 'molecular gastronomy'.

Cream Supplies has taken the subject up enthusiastically, and this is the place to learn about it. It is supposed to be about a detailed investigation of what goes on in cooking or brewing, but has been taken up as a 'cool' term for a style of cuisine. Think of Heston Blumenthal - but then, with regard to beverages, think of what Ferran Adria has been doing with Lavazza coffee (you can find it on this magazine's website).

Cream Supplies has added a new range of molecular ingredients & kits to experiment with - as a starter, try Biozoon, a German method of making your drink glow under UV light....!

Will this work with coffee?

"It depends what effect you are trying to achieve," answers the company's Jonathan Money. "Molecular gastronomy

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At the same time as Soho and the City of London sees the birth of so many new coffee bars, we have a notable anniversary – Bar Italia has reached its 60th year.

Bar Italia has a strange reputation. It is truly a landmark venue, in at the very beginning of espresso in Britain, and really is steeped in the history and character of Soho's Italian community.

On the other, its reputation has seen it become a tourist trap, and the pavement tables can be crammed with those who find it cool to be seen there... even Adrian Maddox in his great book *Classic Cafes* said that Bar Italia was in danger of being spoiled by 'droves of Soho media flunkeys'.

To sit in the back of Bar Italia with the current boss, Tony Polledri, is to put British coffee history into perspective. This man is the son of the founder, and has watched the development of the coffee-bar trade at every stage.

"As children, we started at the bottom, and I learned from a man who serviced the espresso machine with a long knife. In those days, the bar was full of predominantly men, and only Italian men. The place was full of smoke, because the smokers wanted the door closed, for some peculiar reason – so in the morning, the place would be like a sauna, with the steam making patterns as it rolled through the nicotine down the sides of the espresso machine!

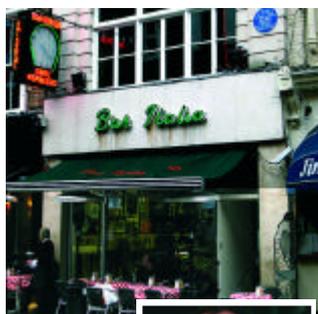
"When my father relinquished the reins to my brother and I, the first thing I did was throw the doors open, and they've been open ever since.

"Even into the 70s, this was a place different to anywhere else. All the Italians and Maltese would be standing around, men in string vests, everybody hustling to make a buck. Money was easy to make, and the bookies took it just as easily. But it was safe - the truth is that Soho was the manor of one tough guy, and while he was alive, everybody felt protected.

"Then in the 80s, Soho turned from a black-and-white movie into a colour one. We made the transition into café-culture mode, and the musicians came in - Adam Ant did an album cover here. One casting agent used to use the place as his audition room! One day the bar was full of really big guys who had come along to audition for a tough-guy job, and the agent rang me up to say he couldn't make it - he expected me to tell all these tough guys to get lost!

"But fundamental to it all is that Bar Italia has always been an Italian social centre - one habit that hasn't changed in years is that Italians come in here to watch the news on television. At those times this is just like being in Italy."

Sixty years of the real Soho-Italian cafe life



Bar Italia - the blue plaque marks Logie Baird's first showing of TV at the site



But in the 90s, British coffee was taken over by the Americans, who invented their own café culture. The latest development of that is a breed of British coffee shop operators who now sound far more obsessive about their coffee than the Italians ever did.

"I'm not so sure about that," answers Tony Polledri with impressive gravity. "For a long time this was the only place you could get good espresso, and we have always bought our coffee from Mr Angelucci, next door. The blend was developed in the 1970s for my father, but in all honesty, I have to say I can't tell you what it is... because Mr Angelucci won't tell me!

"He is now working out of Finchley, and we've now bought his old shop. But I will not take down his sign, because these places are the last bastion of Italian culture in Soho... so we've turned it into Nino's Paninos."

What can the British café operators and baristas learn from a visit to Bar Italia? Putting it politely, the traditional Italian view always seems to be - we know best, so you drink it the way we serve it?

It is rather a relief that Tony Polledri takes such a dangerously direct question with a burst of laughter.

"Well, we've never gone down the 'bucket of coffee' route! I'll serve a cappuccino in a 7oz cup, because that's the way we do it.

And of course, Bar Italia has a high proportion of customers who, in the Italian way, are simply in for a quick 'straight shot', and who expect to be served in the correct way.

"Certainly, unlike the chains, we have a lot of customers whose dwell time is under two minutes! But even if you come in here simply for an espresso and will then leave, we will always serve a little 3oz tumbler of water with

it. It cleans the mouth after the espresso. That is the correct way."

A family apprenticeship in coffee has always been a handed-down role in Italian cafes. But what would be the reaction if a British barista wanted to work in Bar Italia to experience 'the Italian way'? Tony Polledri is clearly enchanted with the idea.

"The main problem would be that Italian is spoken here, both behind the bar and with many of our customers. A second problem is that a newcomer would have trouble working our old Gaggia..."

There is more to that than meets the eye. The Bar Italia attitude to its venerable espresso machine is very Italian, and defiantly non-conformist.

"Our original Gaggia was gas-fired, believe it or not, and my first job as a boy was to fire it up every morning.

"Today, I'm not into modern things like water filters or softeners, because I don't want to risk a change in the taste of the coffee. The downside of this is that we have to be prepared, every few months, to shut the machine

down at 4am and knock the limescale out with a chisel.

"This Gaggia is 45 years old - the biggest problem we have with it is locating spare parts."

One of those replacement requests was unusual.

It is on nights when the Italian football team is playing that Bar Italia is busiest and at its most characteristic. During Italy's recent successful World Cup campaign, the crush inside Bar Italia was so extreme that someone actually managed to remove the machine's Gaggia badge as a souvenir. With the classic understatement of the Soho born-and-bred businessman, Tony looks stone-faced and says: "I was very upset..."

(More conventional souvenir-hunting is a common problem - in the most recent case, staff recently stopped a customer walking out with an entire rucksack full of its cups!)

However, confirms Polledri, his Italian heritage need not prevent a British barista coming behind his bar.

"We are only reluctant to take on already-trained baristas because our methods are not 'conventional'. But if a British barista wanted to come and train here, I'd be absolutely delighted to meet them."

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Something very unusual happened in this year's Bev-e awards, run by the Beverage Service Association - the top prize went to a tea house. And a second strange occurrence was that two of the top prizes went to companies based in Wales.

The independent operator prize went to the Waterloo Gardens Teahouse of Cardiff, where Kasim and Aisha Ali have barely finished their first year in business. The sponsor of this award was Rombouts.

"We have no experience in this - I'm a pharmacist!" Kasim told Coffee House. "The big draw was a site which could act as a hub for the community. It attracts all sorts of people, we have poetry readings, tea-tasting sessions, book launches, talks, and an art gallery with our sales commission going to charity. It is all 'community' - everything in it is by locals, they have 'ownership' of what goes on, and they use this place as their own."

The drinks are however highly specialist in its tea and coffee. Coffee is from James Gourmet Roasters, and most tea is imported by Kasim himself.

It is not easy, he tells us. But it has led to a new business idea.

"There is a great joy in acquiring a tea direct from the grower, right from

A tea-house tops the lot!



Kasim Ali in his prize-winning tea house in Cardiff - an award in his first year of trading will now be followed by a move into very specialist tea wholesaling, for the benefit of other independent cafes

the first conversation to the negotiation... but there is also the constant fear that the delivery will be different to the sample. India and China can be difficult countries to do business with, in this! We even had one Darjeeling first-flush which was awful - but now, because of our reputation, we are being offered the best lots from some estates' harvests.

"Because of this problem, we have now set up a wholesale facility for other new tearooms to order through us. We have come to realise how difficult it can be for them... and it was when we came to realise that no other teahouse in the UK stocked some of our teas, that we understood that we

were setting the pace as a tea house!"

Kasim's business always has two samples on the brew, and customers can help themselves. "We use two Instanta boilers, set at exact temperatures, sometimes with the use of a thermometer - for example, we brew Japanese green sencha at 65C, Chinese green at 75C, some oolongs at 80-90C, and most blacks at 95C."

(The independent award was sponsored by Rombouts, a brand which has long advocated precision of temperature in brewing.)

The chain award went to Coffee # 1 of South Wales, of whom it would not be unfair to say that managing director

James Shapland has been striving for a national award for years. It is that striving, he told us candidly, which has improved the business to the point where he got one!

"To keep trying makes for a better company! We're always developing our training, and that works, because our employee retention rate is now better than ever. We've had our first in-house latte art contest, we've sent people to origin and had them pass on their experiences to the staff, we've created a 'head barista' in each store, and we've sent our managers on the kind of team-building courses where they have to hang on wires!

"We've introduced brewed coffees, and we think this is the way forward - allowing customers to experience the nuances of different coffees is through 'drip', and so we've created signboards and free samples, and put our pots out at counter-front. This idea has been well received.

"It's our tenth anniversary in April 2010. We'll be introducing a new drink, the Number One... but what's in it is secret at the moment."

That chain section was sponsored by Monin, the flavour specialist - and, says distributor Darril Ling, trade suppliers can learn a lot from backing a competition.

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"We all need to be in touch with the grass roots of the trade - although we supply some giant companies, we're very much in support of small chains and independent cafes, and all suppliers really should take every chance to discuss real issues with people like James Shapland... in our case, to understand what a syrup maker should be doing and offering."

The entire trade needs to debate the question of his specialist subject, flavours, he says.

"If you think about what Costa and Starbucks do with flavoured drinks at Christmas, then you see how any independent can do the same by understanding the drinks they offer."

This means understanding what will sell - and what won't.

"Monin once created an apple-crumble drink... it was interesting, but it's not the future of a coffee-house! We also did a Turkish Delight milkshake, which was very 'creative' - but you have to be realistic as well. These drinks don't fit like the gingerbread latte, which has become synonymous with winter.

"Now, the independent cafes are the ones who can move fast when a good idea comes - they can introduce a new drink on Tuesday, having trained their staff up over the weekend, whereas for the giants, introducing a chestnut latte can take six months. And independents are the people who can try things without worrying too much if they don't work.

"So we can't do our job without understanding where people like Coffee#1 want to go - and they can't do it without understanding their own customers. James will know if his typical customer is young, old, likes sugar... and our job for a coffee-house operator like him is not to supply a flavoured syrup. It's to help him provide a finished drink."

What does the café owner do when he gets the good idea?

"Look at those great posters outside Costa and Nero, and you'll see that they're selling 'drinks', not syrups. How many independents have looked at this and learned? I wish we had the resources to produce posters like Costa, but I can certainly tell you that a menu with 'add a flavour, 20p' is not going to work.

"And yet, a blackboard is not expen-

sive - write your drink on it, and talk about it well. Serve your gingerbread latte with a little gingerbread man!"

The mobile trading section was again won by Cafe2U, with its franchisee Steve Dyson, of Barnsley. John Young, managing director of sponsor Huhtamaki, says that he looked closely at the entrants to see what he could learn.



John Young of Huhtamaki presents Steve Dyson of Cafe 2U with the mobile-operator award. Below, James Shapland of Coffee # 1 with Darril Ling of Monin



"Takeaway operators are our lifeblood, and so we must spend a great deal of time understanding many things which are relevant to them - the use of disposables and commodities, and the waste stream.

"We know that the takeaway market is still robust, but we are interested to see it finding its way into markets you wouldn't have thought of, and takeaway routes which we have not actively pursued.

"Something we have seen, which you wouldn't have done four years ago, is youths buying coffee as they pass a cart. To a degree, this is down to the decline in 'dispensed' carbonated drinks, but the more the younger generation turn on to quality hot beverages, the more we're all going to like it!

"Cafe2U have also done very well in business parks. This leads to useful research on certain aspects of our products, about how consumers see and use them."

Typical Cafe2U customers have made their feelings known about cup quality, says Huhtamaki.

"Where once print and decoration was everything in selling a takeaway cup to the coffee trade, costs have led to new thinking.

"We know for certain that if packaging is cheap and nasty, then whatever the quality of the drink inside it, your customers will not come back. A brilliant latte in a shoddy cup is not going to do you any favours.

"And yet, in the current climate, some operators are looking to down-spec certain aspects of their cups, so long as the functional aspect of it is not compromised. But you can't afford to down-spec too much, or the consumer will walk to the next cart!

"So there are more arguments going on over paper cups than ever before.

"Whatever route the operator decides to take on this, they must be aware of is the differing arguments, and it is a supplier's responsibility to make them aware of all the facts."

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