



Boughton's

COFFEE HOUSE

Sept/Oct 2010

More worthwhile hot-drink trade information than any other paper – and in less pages!

Scalding – one more will be one too many

The hot-drinks trade has been told to review safety procedures inside coffee houses.

The Coffee Council, the relatively new think-tank comprising several senior managers from trade companies, has been tracking stories in the news media concerning customers who have suffered scalding injuries from hot beverages. Compared to the millions of drinks served every day, it is a small problem - nevertheless, the Council has discovered some shortcomings in the trade's safety training and practices, and has recommended that it is in café-owners' own interests to review their own precautions and working practices.



This picture of takeaway coffee appeared in a business magazine. Can the trade live with this image of how hot drinks can be handled?

The project was compiled with the assistance of many trade companies, and the Child Accident Prevention Trust. The mother of a baby recently scalded in a café has contributed her story and called for greater education of staff in first-aid for scalds, while the Trust has invited the public to report their experiences of scalding, but equally, in fairness, has also invited reports of good practice in cafes.

A very general review of recent cases suggests that there are relatively few cases in which blame could rest with the person actually serving the coffee. However, for the reputation of the industry and for the protection of individual operators, the Coffee Council says that the matter of injuries caused by hot drinks should attract the attention of every catering-trade employer or manager, and calls upon the catering industry to express its determination that one more scalded customer is one too many.

The full text of the report is available at www.coffee-house.org.uk



Eco-cup issues - our public are confused

The amount of wrong or confusing information given out about paper cups and the environment is such that neither the café trade nor the consumers know what, or who, to believe. At a seminar held by Solo Cup to mark its tenth anniversary in the UK, environmentalist Leigh Holloway told cup suppliers that the trade has to make its environmental message more accurate, and clearer.

Story is on page 6

An era of TV ads – is coffee promotion ‘coming of age’?

The modern-day high-street coffee market hit the television screens with advertising in October, with both Costa and McDonalds unveiling new ads in support of espresso coffee. The trade welcomed the promotion of speciality coffee on the small screen – a typical reaction was from Jeffrey Young of the Allegra research house, who said “the coffee industry is coming of age – now that TV advertising is a reality, the out-of-home coffee market is competing at a very serious level.”

Costa was the first up from the high street, with its appearance during *Coronation Street*, although the rather odd theme had a mixed result. Its first TV commercial is based on the old saying that an infinite number



Costa's monkeys prepare for service

of monkeys, given an infinite number of typewriters, will eventually reproduce Shakespeare.

Costa's rather daring theme was that the same does not hold true of monkeys and Costa's espresso machines. Its film showed monkeys playing havoc with machines and cups. However, five animal charities protested that the work contravened recent welfare guidelines, and suggested that the Rainforest Alliance should withdraw Costa's certification. (By coincidence, Beyond the Bean's new promotion for Cosy tea says 'trained monkeys aren't involved at any stage..!')

McDonald's TV campaign is to promote its new sub-brand Full Bean, and to show it now serves espresso; the commercial is a more conventional series of pictures of people drinking espresso in various situations, with the line 'small, dark and handsome' to promote its espresso, and also the less imaginative 'full of beans'.

That 'small, dark and handsome'

raised eyebrows at Tudor Coffee, which had already come out with its latest ad campaign on a similar theme – 'tall, strong and reliable type seeks coffee-lover who appreciates a good-sized portion!'

Several in the trade have suggested that we might now be in for an interesting brand war on the high street, with McDonalds and Costa the likely main protagonists. McDonalds says it sold 84 million cups of coffee last year and, since re-launching its coffee business three years ago, coffee sales have gone up 39 per cent.

Other coffee companies have also moved on to the small screen - Emmi, the maker of iced caffè latte, has launched its first UK television ad in support of 'the ultimate cold on-the-go refreshment'. Clipper has planned its TV debut for October/November, with a tea ad designed by Aardman, the Wallace and Gromit people.

Meanwhile, *Ad Age* of New York reported the advertisement which, from all industries, is the most-watched one on YouTube. The answer is surprising - it is Blendtec, whose blender is widely used in the UK for smoothie-making, and whose *Will It Blend* series has scored 134.2 million views.

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We are delighted to bring you one detail of the Pope's UK visit which eluded the general media – we know what coffee he drinks! Supplies for his London appearance were provided by Capital Coffee Roasters of Wimbledon, and was brewed for him by Mimmo Coppola (pictured) of Aromatica Deli, who apparently worked under conditions of great security, with every brew guarded. Roy Grey of Capital Coffee, who has accepted that a 'by appointment' mark is unlikely, tells us that his Holiness' favourite drink is... an Americano.

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Eight hundred commuters signed a petition in support of the Epsom station franchisee of Puccino's, who was about to be forced out of business by a rent increase of about £6,000. The local council increased his small business rate relief to even things up.

Work has started on the first Starbucks drive-through in Greater Manchester, a 2,000sq.ft. site near the Trafford Centre's Barton Square.

A novel promotion is being run in Gwynedd, where hotels and B&B operators are invited to show how imaginative they are in promoting Fairtrade products in that sector.

The new Sorriso coffee shop in Luton, in the old BB's Coffee site, was put out of action after only ten days - a fire broke out in a dishwasher.

London's café and roastery Nude Espresso has opened its roastery as a visitor site - customers can have the roasting process demonstrated, before they buy anything. Similarly, but farther north, Atkinson's roastery in Lancaster has opened its Music Room café, which features the first BunnTrifecta machine to be used in a cafe in Europe.

The director of the International Coffee Organization, Nestor Osorio, is

leaving in November after thirty years in the job for a position with the United Nations.

Coffee Republic has reached a deal that will see their 'To Go' coffee served from self-serve bars in 450 Shell forecourts over the next twelve months.

The 'best coffee house ambience in Newcastle' is the claim for the new Flat Caps coffee bar, opened by Joe Meagher. The name comes from his usual headgear - which is of course, the same image as 2009 world barista champ Gwilym Davies. Gwilym tells us that he did not trademark the look!

The latest in the twin-business idea, which pairs a café with some other activity, is a move to protect local post offices from closure. The first is the Pillar Box Tea Rooms, located at Thorngumbald, near Beverley, which has been launched to provide a continuing venue for a local post office.

Starbucks is to offer its staff the chance of studying for NVQs in customer service and food hygiene. Under new training plans, staff can also apply for a fund to spend how they wish on items (we quote) 'unrelated to the workplace, such as learning to speak Italian'!

Cafe management skills still low

The Coffee Boys, the Irish-based café consultants, have reported that over 400 coffee-bar owners responded to their recent survey about the pressures on small catering businesses.



John Richardson

It has now become clear that a great number of café owners who have followed the dream of their own coffee house are still short on practical knowledge - many cannot read a balance sheet, and a surprising number say that they have doubts about their ability to manage their own staff. The biggest demand by café owners is to 'find new customers', even though marketing wisdom says it is always cheaper to capitalise on existing ones than find new ones.

As a result of this, the latest of Coffee Boy John Richardson's videos is on that subject: www.getanewcustomer.com/lessonone.html. In the ten-minute talk he discusses different customer types and what they may really want.

The first international barista contest of the year has been won by a British entrant - the Caffè Ritazza contest for its international staff was won by Jurate Skarzauskaite, a barista at East Midlands Airport. Her signature drink was Tropical Paradise, consisting of espresso coffee, coconut and bananas, presented in coconut shells. Unusually, finalists were also given the chance to compete in making a flat white - Ritazza introduced the drink to its menu in October.



Residents of Muswell Hill, London, have taken the new Café Rex as an example of 'garish' shopfronts which present an 'ongoing threat' to the area's Edwardian shopfronts. The milkshake shop next door has also been criticised. The residents' association said: "They devalue the character of the conservation area - it's to do with respecting the architecture." The owner of the new Rex chain, Mark Ashley, said he had followed council guidelines exactly. The venue is the first of a proposed chain of 50 from a man who was formerly head of hospitality for Marks & Spencer and operations director at Benugo.



We have had a couple of 'most expensive' stories in the past few weeks. First Coopers of Huddersfield devised another of their charity blends, producing the UK's (but not the world's) first aphrodisiac coffee in aid of the Macmillan appeal. The coffee was a monsooned Malabar, the other ingredient was a liquid oyster essence. At the same time, a dining club in Manchester began serving the Sacred White tea from Sri Lanka at £25 a pot. The tea is supposedly farmed at a secret estate in Sri Lanka and 'according to ancient tradition', only women can pick the leaves, using golden scissors. We had to consult Robert Wilson of Crewkerne, our favourite expert on Ceylon teas - he said: "my Ceylon tea antenna tells me that this is a marketing ploy... we know who grows it, and the bit about women is a red herring as women have always made the best pluckers. The scissors may have been gold plated as a gimmick but it does absolutely nothing for the tea!"

Sign of the times - a new traditional-style deli in the centre of Birmingham, Anderson & Hill, is promoted as 'the only truly independent outlet of its kind in the city centre'. "I would have to agree that it is indeed an astonishing comment, but we do believe it to be true," director Gary Anderson told us. "While Birmingham is blessed with a growing number of fine dining restaurants, it is bizarre that the Second City is so far behind London in delicatessens. We are currently dealing with Cherizena for coffee and All About Tea for our tea. We sell on a rotating 'coffee of the day' basis, and we do not offer latte or cappuccino."

It is likely that a new consumer event dedicated to tea may be launched by Yael Rose, who has run similar events dedicated to chocolate on London's South Bank; meanwhile, we expect the Bath Coffee festival to run on 21-22 May next year. The 2010 event was shortlisted for a PR industry award. Allegra's London Coffee Guide website (www.londoncoffeeguide.com) has appeared, with a printed book to follow before the end of the year.

Boughton's Coffee House

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by Ian Boughton and Trudi Roark.

The office is at 11 Lansdowne Road, Falmouth, TR11 4BE
Tel: 01326-311339 Mobile: 0702 348866 ianb@coffee-house.org.uk
The news website is www.coffee-house.org.uk
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We cannot resist repeating the remark made by a coffee roaster who was recently interviewed on radio, speaking on the coffee price trends while pitched against a spokesman from the biggest ethical trading organisation. After the broadcast, the roaster told us: "It was like being mauled by a sheep. Apparently there isn't a shortage of coffee in the world, and its not just Fairtrade farmers who are defaulting on their contracts. Also the moon is made of cheese and extra terrestrials have taken over the Royal Family..."

Starbucks, which always jumps on alleged copycat names remarkably quickly, has forced Boulders coffee shop in Wales to take down its green sign, which might in fairness be thought to be quite similar. The owner of the Welsh business, Derek Edwards, made a delightful tongue-in-cheek response to his local press: "We do an excellent cup of coffee at very reasonable prices, with good service... I hope those who visited us were not too disappointed to find they were not in a Starbucks."



A pro snooker player, Dave Harold, has opened the Apple Coffee House in Stoke, after saying that whenever he comes home to the city, he cannot find a 'proper coffee'. Curiously, the player's major tournament win was in... the Nescafe Asian Open!

It had to happen - a report in the American press says that a customer was thrown out of a Starbucks in New York for not talking the right language in giving her order. The customer, a linguistics professor who apparently has a history of refusing to use the coffee-house's terms 'grande', 'venti' and so on, ordered a bagel but objected to the counterperson's response of: "do you want butter or cheese?" on the grounds that she wished neither. The customer told a newspaper: "The barista said, 'You're not going to get anything unless you say butter or cheese!' and called the police. The barista told the newspaper: "butter or cheese was a reasonable question..."

Pubs go down, cafes go up...

We all know that pub numbers are going down and coffee-house numbers are going up, and it has long been said that the licensed coffee-house will eventually take over as the national 'third place' - but an interesting comparison between the performance of the two sectors has just come from the market analysts Datamonitor.

According to this analyst, between now and 2013, pub numbers will fall by 2,000, and around 300 cafes will open, as will 1,900 restaurants. Effectively, the loss in one catering sector will be made up by another, thus fulfilling many predictions from the speciality coffee trade.

However, the actual numbers have been questioned. For 2,000 pubs to close in three years would be a slowdown, as they have been dropping by around 1,500 a year for some time to the current total of 52,000.

And in return, it is expected that the number of cafes - whatever definition you care to use for the term - will almost certainly rise by more than the reported 300.

Allegra suggests that Costa alone will be opening more than 100 outlets per year, Nero will be opening 40, and Starbucks 30 per year. It is expected that at least another 50-100 of the highest-quality independent coffee shops will open over that period, and many other chains have predicted numbers which boost the figure even more.

The likely prediction, then, is that coffee-houses and cafes will replace pubs at a far faster rate than has been suggested.

Situations vacant:

Peros is seeking coffee machine engineers, for Birmingham / Bristol/ Glasgow.

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*

Lincoln and York is seeking a coffee taster /buying assistant.

The successful applicant will grade and roast green coffee samples, evaluate competitor products and help with coffee buying. The position involves developing new blends and roasts, and advising clients on quality and product information. While training is offered, the ideal applicant will already have worked in the industry, perhaps as a barista, or in a coffee shop environment.

To apply, e-mail your c.v to jts@lincoln-and-york.com or call 01652 680101

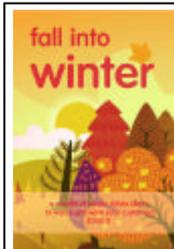
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James Gardener of the Coffee Cart Company, Hereford, says:

I'm looking to recruit somebody as a 'manager' to work alongside me to help operate my small business.

Over the last couple of years I've ended up taking more and more on and ended up with a super busy job! I would dearly love to recruit a quality individual who is passionate about the coffee business.

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Beyond the Bean can usually be relied upon for a specific winter-drinks brochure - this is the latest, now available.

Price continues to put consumers off organic goods, says a survey from YouGov, although adding that many organic items are now equal or lower than their 'normal' counterparts. Apart from perceived high price, the main objection from consumers was that 'organic' is simply a marketing status symbol'. By coincidence, another survey found that 'organic' came 27th on a list of commonly 'looked for' product claims.

The new Cadbury Cocoa House café chain, operated under licence from the big brand, is to follow its first site at the Bluewater shopping centre, Kent, with 50 branded cafés within five years. Several London openings are planned for 2011.

Percol instant coffee is now the fastest selling product in the Fairtrade sector, says managing director Brian Chapman. Percol also supports Coffee Kids and its own Good For Life charity.

The Old Bakery coffee shop in St Cyrus, Aberdeenshire, was badly damaged when a car struck it; two people in the car were killed.

The European and American speciality coffee associations have formed a joint venture, World Coffee Events, to run barista championships and the like.



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After the explosion – the implications are immense

For the high-street hot beverage trade, the first effect of the recent explosion of an espresso machine in a coffee bar is that the health and safety spotlight will be on the trade as never before, and every cafe operator will be forced to look to their safety and machine-maintenance procedures.

The general trade reaction has been that although the recent accident was a very rare event, it reinforces what machine suppliers always preach about maintenance, and several machine companies have now said that they have been warning the hospitality trade for a long time about the legal requirement for espresso machine care.

The national news media took great interest in the story of an espresso machine which exploded in a Sainsburys café in Farnham, sending 17 people to hospital.

The BBC was the first to identify the machine in question as an Elektra, and quoted Sainsburys as saying that a design change was probably behind a fault with the relief valve. Sainsburys added: "thirty-two of our stores have the new design and these machines will remain out of service; the environmental health officer has agreed that the machines in the remaining 126 stores, which are of the original design, are safe to use and can be brought back into service."

Meanwhile, suppliers and maintenance organisations all said that the incident should remind all beverage operators of the nature of espresso machines. The immediate formal reaction has of course been to refer cafe-owners to the pressure-vessel regulations, but the fact is that these are not straightforward.

"The accident has massive implications for the industry - every single caterer or retailer with an espresso machine should now expect their local H&S inspector to have them very high on their hit list," said Duncan Gaffney of Coffeetech, a company extremely well-known for its experience in espresso machine technology. As with several other companies, Coffeetech warned café owners not to take short cuts on the matter, and to be very careful about how their inspections are done - it is widely suggested that not all those who offer inspection services are qualified to do so. Specifically, a cafe operator's normal espresso engineer may not be allowed to inspect and certify the machine.

"Parts of the appropriate Act are ambiguous," says Gaffney. "This is true of the requirement to have tests and assessments carried out by a 'competent person' - the Act itself does not define the necessary qualifications of a 'competent person'. However, The Health & Safety Executive's own Approved Code of Practice is explicit in doing so.

"I emphasise this because there is much confusion in the market. We see

"Every single caterer with an espresso machine should now expect their local H&S inspector to have them very high on their hit list"

- Duncan Gaffney



various companies and some very experienced self-employed engineers promoting boiler inspection and maintenance services. But do they satisfy the qualification criteria, and are they suitably independent? In most cases the answer is 'no'.

"And any user or owner of espresso machines is taking one hell of a risk by using inspection services provided by a company that is operating outside of the HSE's Approved Code of Practice."

To illustrate the situation, Coffeetech itself applied to be an inspector - and, quite correctly, was turned down.

"We must certainly rank as one of the most experienced specialists in this field. We asked the HSE if we might be assessed for providing inspection services, based on our provable and documented competency and experience.

"Their answer was unambiguous - even with our qualifications and experience, it would not be possible for us to inspect and certify, due to the potential conflict of interest that would exist between being both the maintainer and safety inspector of the same machine!"

(Coffeetech actually subcontracts a qualified independent inspector - but, says the company, this just shows the average café owner that they must be sure about who does what work).

At Fracino, Adrian Maxwell added that café owners should be very careful of their documentation - because some of the authorities who are supposed to enforce the rules "seem to be very slack... probably due to ignorance of the equipment."

And this magazine can also report that one very big insurance company was at first inspired by the accident to produce a guide on the matter for caterers... but then decided it was too risky to put its name to anything in writing, and scrapped the whole idea.



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The biggest challenge facing the takeaway drinks industry is the communication of environmental messages – nobody really has a clue what to believe with regard to paper cups and the environment.

At the recent Solo Cup think-tank, environmentalist Leigh Holloway of Eco3 spoke of the vast number of misconceptions which exist in the retail trades. Not least, he said, is the problem that consumers are now encouraged to see virtually all retail packaging as a bad thing, which means that those who sell coffee in takeaway cups have a hard message to put across.

However, he said, there are truly exciting prospects ahead.

"In the takeaway cup sector", said Holloway, "the challenges are of what people have been told. There have been too many environmental statements that are just too wide to mean anything, such as 'paper cups are not recyclable'. Even 'environmentally friendly' is too woolly a term."

Consumers are now encouraged to campaign against over-packaging, but this leads to the misconception that all disposable packaging is a bad thing, Leigh Holloway told his audience.

"In fact there is a legal requirement that packaging has to be 'minimal'... but deep in the rules is a line that says 'subject to customer acceptance', which is the biggest get-out you could imagine. What this means is that the consumer likes the end result of packaging, except that they are then told to complain about it!"

By contrast, there could be a movement towards more sensible 'minimal' packaging - China has introduced a rule that packaging can only reach a certain size in proportion to the size of the item inside it.

Consumers are also constantly told that packaging waste is all the product supplier's fault.

"It is not," said Holloway firmly. "Packaging is a cost, so of course the producer won't over-package."

The danger of nonsense talked about packaging



Consumers are always told that product packaging is excessive... it is not, and yet the beverage trade has yet to put a clear message across to the consumer

"But we keep hearing reports about cucumbers wrapped in clingfilm, and how unnecessary it is - but Asda say it gives the cucumber two more weeks of life, which people would understand if they were told! There was an infamous over-packaging complaint about a shrinkwrapped coconut, which turned out to be protection against fibre migration.

"And organic produce, which is usually held up as a good thing, is often more packaged than other produce - sometimes it has to be, to segregate it!

"Other campaigns are misguided... when we were told that lightweight packaging was good, companies did away with glass jars and turned to metallic pouches. And that screwed up their opportunity to recycle!

"No reasons are properly communicated, so consumers just see what they are told is 'too much packaging'."

This, he told his audience, presented the takeaway trade with a straightforward job to do – to communicate the message 'this is why we package our drinks the way we do'.

Solo Cup had asked Leigh Holloway what new environmental messages we will all have to consider next.

"The next big thing will be your 'water footprint', and what is called 'upstream impact', or what happened before the packaging.

"A study has looked at the water usage 'embedded' in foodstuffs - six eggs take 1,200 litres of water to produce. A glass of milk takes 250 litres. A burger uses 2,400 litres of water, and

it takes sixteen thousand litres to get beef into a supermarket pack. Bread takes 40 litres a loaf, and it takes 140 litres of water to bring you an apple!"

What other issues cause problems?

The idea of 'recycling' is the one the consumer continues to grasp best, said Holloway. But some recycled products are more carbon-intensive than those of virgin materials, and material availability and cost fluctuate massively, so it isn't that straightforward.

Recyclable products are also popular, but difficult to dispose of because we still face the problem of councils working to different rules - some collectors of 'green' waste have been told not to take degradable cups.

The consumer's favourite message, said Holloway, is of 'biodegradable' packaging - but something which is biodegradable may feature a GM ingredient, which is unpopular.

The cafe trade is not helped by messages from its suppliers, he added. "We have even seen a cup maker say: 'this product is made from at least one hundred per cent recycled paper' - what does 'at least one hundred per cent' mean?!"

"So, if you are going to make claims - make them clear. Better communication with your customer about your packaging is going to be vital."

However, he told the Solo debate, some big advances are on the way. Typically, the average consumer doesn't have a clue about the difference between PET, PLA and PVC, so at present, any general vague encouragement to 'recycle plastic bottles' remains meaningless.

However, big progress is being made - typically, 72 per cent of milk bottles get recycled, and soon, the UK's processing capacity will be able to handle as many as we expect to collect.

Here comes the exciting move - we are not far off from a scanner which will tell waste-collection machines the difference between PET and the other materials. And that will bring the day when all kinds of plastics can be put together in waste.

Private waste collection may be the best

For the average coffee-shop, the green choice in takeaway cups may soon become the cost-effective way of doing things.

"Businesses of all sizes can save money by recycling organic waste such as food and compostable packaging," says Lucy Frankel of Vegware, the pioneer of compostable drinkware and tableware. "Landfill charges are set to double by 2020, and it is also looking very likely that from 2012, food waste will be banned from landfill. That means that within a few years, organic recycling will be standard.

"If used compostable coffee cups, napkins, coffee grinds, milk that has gone off, and stale muffins can all get composted together, it makes a cafe's waste cleaner and easier to recycle."

Even single-site cafe businesses will find that they can save money by sending waste for composting, says Vegware.



Lucy Frankel

Some caterers can already be paying council rates of £100-£120 a tonne for general waste including food waste, and those council services still tend to use landfill.

The compost option, she says, benefits even the single-site cafe.

"There are now many companies all over the UK who pick up small amounts of organic waste from such businesses. Cawleys is one of a growing number of operations offering this service around the Midlands through to London, and Shanks tell me that while a 1,100 litre bin would cost around £13-£15 per lift through local council collections, they themselves would charge around £7 per lift."

As such, the move towards this kind of collection now seems inevitable.

"The private companies already have the capability to offer alternative waste management. Councils tend to still rely largely on landfill, and will probably be the last sector to move away from it - eventually, they will be forced to, though."

Realistically, to what degree does 'doing the right thing' incur a cost on the small coffee-house?

"Some of our compostable products cost more, some cost less, but overall it balances out. Add in the potential savings to be made on waste management, and doing the 'right thing' becomes an attractive option rather than a chore."

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The cup problem - what do we do on the high street?

Two new 'dynamics' are about to influence the cup market, says Huhtamaki, the major cup manufacturer which has just celebrated its 90th year. High street operators are beginning to take the matter of cup litter seriously, and the result of this may be that certain trade distributors will stop offering cups as if they are a meaningless commodity only to be sold on price.

"The pressure on recycling and waste streams is now hitting us from a number of different avenues," says managing director John Young.

"Our major customers really are keen to find a way through the question of 'what do we do on the high street?' They're not abdicating their responsibility."

The reason, of course, is that those major customers are the ones whose names are regularly seen in the gutter.

"Yes, and the MD of one very big chain has already said to me that he does not want to see his brand name littering the streets. This is the big topic of the day, because the growth in takeaway is still increasing - and yet you can walk through many areas, particularly stations, and not find anywhere to dispose of litter, since the bins were all removed because of terrorism. What does the consumer do?"

"Everyone now wants to find solutions, right down to sponsoring bins in the high street, to show they're tackling the problem."

At the same time, Huhtamaki is one of the makers to be very annoyed at the way that cups are sold through the trade



John Young

distribution route. Very little is said to promote the quality of such an essential product. Very few suppliers to the trade make any attempt to say 'this is a good cup'.

"This is bitterly disappointing, and is something we talk about with enormous regularity. We maintain that the integrity of a well-made cup product is everything, and yet an enormous amount of product is now coming in to the UK, from all over the globe, that might be questioned regarding its quality."

"The quality requirements which apply to us do not apply in other countries, which is sad - so we, and the other major brands, cannot compromise on our quality, and yet we are competing against inferior cups which, sadly, some customers buy on price rather than 'fit for purpose'."

And yet, says John Young, attitudes are changing.

"We are competing for major contracts in which customers have said that they have previously made mistakes in going for cheaper products."

"They now believe the consumer is looking for a better takeaway cup."

Mike Gardner, sales and marketing director at International Paper, whose Ecotainer range has already sold a billion cups around the world since 2006, believes the cup-recovery and anti-litter job can be done.

"It's not impossible. You used to see more bottles and cans, until people got educated about recycling them. In PET bottle recycling, the biggest supporters are the Cokes of this world (Coca-Cola has put millions into the world's largest plastic bottle-to-bottle recycling plant). This raises the question - in coffee cups, who takes the responsibility?"

"There is a lot to be said for cafes promoting the quality and 'green' value of their cups, as well as asking the question - when you've enjoyed your coffee, what will you do with the cup?"

In common with his rivals, Gardner is concerned that café owners are badly served by commodity traders offering cheap takeaway cups.

"If there's one big frustration we always have, this is it. Cafe owners need an assurance of quality, and the people who are trading in cheap imported cups, and who don't care where they buy, aren't



Mike Gardner

doing the trade a service."

This is where the old line of 'the assurance of brand' makes some practical sense, says Mike Gardner.

"Who takes responsibility for an accident if your lid and cup are spot-bought from different sources? If you make certain that your lid and your cup are made by the same company, you have a degree of 'insurance'."

"If you think you can use an imported compatible lid, you're taking a risk."

"Nobody has as many cup-making machines and lid-making machines as we do - and 'reassurance of brand' means that we know what our cup can do, and we know our lids fits it!"

"So, don't look at price first - take samples, and do your own temperature tests. And then communicate with your customers to take care, and communicate the quality of your cups."



What do you actually put in the cup in return for the money?

One of the most remarkable pieces of work in cups has just been completed by a company which is not one of the big international names. The Paper Cup Company of Clitheroe, a five-year-old business, has been looking at what actually goes into takeaway cups, and whether the trade gives value.

Director Mark Woodward's team researched the content of takeaway drinks by visiting various coffee houses in Manchester.

Not only did the company find the expected variations in price (from £1.25 to £2.05 for a 12oz cappuccino), they also found a remarkable variation in temperature, from 53.2C to 73.1C, with chains generally producing cooler drinks than independents.

But the real fun came with their work on the volume in the cups. Working right in front of the café staff, the company measured the actual amounts of liquid which could be consumed, as opposed to froth, and then related that to price. The best value came from fairly big names - but the worst value was one of the Big Three.

The Paper Cup company manufactures in Australia and China, but will probably open a third factory in Lancashire next year.



Mark Woodward

The company has taken a stand to encourage cup recycling rather than composting, says Mark Woodward. "We feel customers misunderstand, in thinking that they can send cups to landfill, and they are going to return to the soil."

The company is however a big fan of imaginative overprinting by its café customers.

"It is sad that very few beverage companies maximise their printing - most just have a logo, whereas consumers will read quite detailed text on a paper cup. There are opportunities for competitions, product promotion and menu offers, and practical promotion of other locations - 'take this cup to any of our other stores for a half-price coffee'."

Even better, he says, is to sell advertising to other businesses. Revenue might average a penny a cup, which in quantity adds up nicely.

Colour-change lid takes American newspaper prize



The Smart Lid, a product we mentioned in these pages last year, has picked up a second-place prize in the Technology Innovation Awards for 2010 run by the *Wall St Journal*.

The product is a colour-changing disposable coffee lid, intended to alert consumers their drink may be too hot by showing a bright red when the lid is applied. Nick Bayss, the inventor, says his lid 'will fit many of the major brands of disposable hot paper cups the world over', and expects to have a distributor in the UK soon.

Very short-run printing offered by Scyphus

One of the newest companies to start making cups in the UK is Scyphus of Northampton, which says it did so in protest against the number of cups sourced from the far East. It now offers an alternative service in the low-volume overprinting sector.

"We were determined to approach the market from a totally different perspective, turning the clock back by manufacturing our cups in the UK... to the surprise and consternation of many!"

Surely, it was not as easy as that, we asked the company's Steve Morris.

"No it was not easy - we spent many months visiting machine manufacturers in various countries, together with sourcing our raw materials to suit our philosophy.

"We already had three large units on our own land, so we had somewhere to put three single-wall machines producing 8, 12 and 16oz cups, and two double-wall machines producing 8 and 12oz cups. Our current normal running capacity is about sixty million a year."

The company offers extremely short custom-print runs, from 1,000 cups.

"The price is about £100, which we are currently looking to reduce by better buying. We have produced bespoke cups to date for such companies as Landrover and the BBC Hairy Bikers - keep a look out for our cups on the TV."



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INTERNATIONAL  PAPER



What's the difference between drinking chocolate, cocoa, and hot chocolate? And, for the coffee-house, does it really matter?

It does – because they are different products of different quality, and this dictates the selling price and margin.

The simplest rule is that 'drinking chocolate' is a beverage mixed with hot milk, and 'hot chocolate' is mixed with hot water. The simplistic analogy is of a speciality coffee and instant 'cappuccino' powder.

Chocolate is the seed of the cacao tree. The beans are roasted to produce cacao 'nibs', which are ground to chocolate liquor (or 'cocoa mass'). This is rough, pure chocolate, which is then separated into cocoa solids and cocoa butter.

Cocoa solids are made into powder; cocoa butter is the fatty part, smooth and has a low melting point.

At this point, things get confusing. In some countries, 'hot chocolate' is recognised as the cocoa powder, with added sugar and powdered milk. In others, it is the richer drink from cocoa butter, and in many cases, chocolatiers will use a base of powder but also add melted or shaved chocolate bars for an even richer effect.

All these drinks are very different.

"That's why there really should be a

Chocolate and cocoa - what's the difference?

All chocolate drinks are not the same - the key is to pick the right one for your clientele.

differentiation between 'hot cocoa' and 'hot chocolate'," says the Academy of Chocolate. "There's a lot of confusion surrounding this."

More big arguments go on about the content of 'cocoa solids' in different drinks. If a drink is described as '50 per cent cocoa solids', the other 50 per cent will generally be sugar and a whitener. Some high-class drinking chocolate might be 80 per cent chocolate with cocoa solids and 20 per cent sugar. Some high-level chocolate cafes will even sell you a drink made with hundred-per-cent cocoa solids, often served in a shot size.

But the other side of the argument says that the 'British taste' is proven resoundingly to be for a milder chocolate drink at 30 per cent or less.

What does this mean for products



Pic: Academy of Chocolate

available to the café trade? What does the British consumer really want?

"There are many levels of chocolate taste," remarks Philip Rundlett of the Italian Beverage Company. "Four years ago, I'd have said that the British taste was sweet cocoa.

"Now it has matured - the consumer looks for quality chocolate drinks, not cocoa-and-sugar, and there is a huge gulf between any cocoa-and-sugar product and a melted-chocolate product, of which we now sell 200 tonnes a year. A high-quality chocolate will bring you a high selling price - a cheap cocoa-and-sugar won't."

For the café trade, there are several ways of preparing a chocolate drink. The most common way is with a chocolate powder, whipped with a drop

of water into a sauce, and then mixed with steamed milk from the espresso machine. Others prefer sauces, or pellets, and some like to have chocolate constantly rotating in a paddle machine.

"Again, there are many standards of chocolate sauce," says Rundlett. "We have one which is not so sweet, makes a very good chocolate drink, and is used by a large pub chain. By comparison with a powder-based drink, it seems to 'dispense' into the mouth far better."

The paddle machine, because it is working all day, might appear to be a wasteful method, but is not.

"It's effective, and not wasteful - at the end of the day, you drain the machine and store the chocolate in the fridge. We now have around 500 customers working with paddle machines, and if I were a coffee-bar owner, it's the route I'd take, because I'd want my customers to taste chocolate, not sweetened cocoa.

"Our pelleted chocolate is Costa Rican single-origin Rainforest Alliance chocolate, and to my mind, there's nothing that comes close to it - it is the reason why BHS has probably the best chocolate drink on the high street!"

Outside the trade, there is not a great deal of brand awareness in chocolate.

Cadbury



Source: "Allegro Strategies UK Retail Coffee Shop Market - Strategic Analysis, December 2009. Maudsley Associates Report December 2009. **Keywords are not case sensitive. Neither the service provider or Cadbury can take responsibility for incorrect text. Lines open 11.50pm on 31st July until 11.50pm 31st December. Text costs are charged at standard network rates. Cadbury may in its sole discretion cancel, terminate, modify or suspend the promotion or invalidate any infected texts where required and accepts no responsibility for late, lost, incomplete, incorrectly submitted, delayed, illegible, corrupted or misdirected texts. Cadbury has no control over any communications, networks or links and accepts no responsibility for any problems associated with them. Questions: Please contact Hot Chocolate, Cadbury House, Uxbridge UB8 3DH.



The British leader is a national institution, but beyond that there is little brand awareness for anyone.

Even as a national name, Cadbury has now repackaged itself to show off its Fairtrade logo, and has a trade guide which aims at helping caterers to 'stir up perfection'.

This is worth while taking time over, says Cadbury - sales of hot chocolate are growing faster than tea, and it is now the second most popular hot drink after coffee. Cadbury is investing very heavily in point-of-sale material, arguing that the British customer sees the name as 'the classic hot chocolate'.

That aside, chocolate in cafes is usually hindered by being anonymous.

"It doesn't help that chocolate is kept under the counter," agrees Philip Rundlett.

"Because people do not ask for a chocolate drink by brand, it tends to be seen as a commodity line. However, what brings loyalty is the quality of your chocolate drink. People come back to a place which serves good chocolate.

"Personally, I think that if the quality of your chocolate is worth shouting about, then shout about it! If it were up to me, I would put signage around a venue saying 'we use very good quality chocolate in our drinks'."

The newest counter-display chocolate brand for the café market turns out to come from a familiar name - it is Nero and Bianco, an independent brand, owned by the directors of Peros, the Fairtrade specialist.

The new brand features Fairtrade cocoa beans from the Dominican Republic and Peru, and Fairtrade organic cane sugar from Paraguay.

The British company has already helped send in agronomists to advise on farming methods, and helped buy processing equipment. Like some coffees, the crop is shade-grown, and when those shading trees are crops such as banana, it provides another income.

The new milk chocolate contains 39 per cent cocoa solids. The dark is 70 per cent, and is promoted as having 'complex and intense' flavours, yet without bitterness. The white chocolate is described as being creamy but not sickly.

Another useful new Fairtrade chocolate for the trade is Grand Chocolat, from United Coffee - this comes in little portioned sachets. For selling a 12oz drink, use two.

The original chocolate drink, as drunk by Montezuma, was heavily spiced - now Cream Supplies has launched a spiced hot chocolate powder, with cinnamon, almond and vanilla.

A typical very high-class drinking chocolate is offered by master chocolatier Bill McCarrick of the Sir Hans Sloane brand. This is not cheap, and one you serve at a very special price because of its remarkable hand-made process.

"My problem with drinking chocolate is that it is always powder or flakes," Bill told us. "So when I first looked at creating our house drinking chocolate I wanted something that looked rugged yet refined."

"I spend hours coating, spraying with tempered couverture (very high quality chocolate that contains extra cocoa butter) and polishing our drinking chocolate. The unique method is

The new chocolates

New chocolates for the trade - the fair, the spicy, and the high-class hand-made



Chocolates for the coffee shop to test - Nero & Bianco, Cream Supplies, Grand Chocolat, and hand-sprayed pellets from Sir Hans Sloane.



that I spray 100 per cent cocoa onto Demerara sugar, and build up layer upon layer of unsweetened chocolate over the sweet sugar.

"I won't compromise on quality, so the workability of my drinking chocolate is slow - you should make a small emulsion by spooning in two tablespoons of pearls and only topping the pearls with a shot glass full of hot milk; when the paste is smooth, add the rest of the milk."

Bill McCarrick is another chocolatier who endorses the idea of more education, trade and consumer, about real quality in chocolate. "I watched Jamie Oliver on the telly, showing American schoolkids what goes into chicken nuggets - the guts, the skin, you get the picture. I wish Jamie would also do the same with some chocolate makers... and then talk about us smaller award-winning brands."





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How green is your tea-bag?

One of the biggest recent developments in tea-bags has been the 'pyramid', or 'temple'. It goes by other names, but the principle is of a three-dimensional triangular bag which is big enough to let leaves infuse better.

With environmental claims always high, we were not surprised to receive an enquiry which asked: are these bags biodegradable? This was quickly followed up by another enquiry: 'if the teas are organic - are the bags?' Indeed, are all pyramid bags the same?

The result was a complicated argument between trade users which ran: some pyramids aren't biodegradable because they are nylon; some are biodegradable, but may not be organic, because the ones that degrade are made from American corn starch, which probably has GM ingredients. The unanswerable follow-up to that was - if an organic tea is presented in a tea-bag which was created from a genetically-modified source, can the entire product be sold as 'organic'?

So we asked several tea brands: what is the construction of your teabag? And are they all the same?

"Our pyramids are nylon, so they do not fare on the compost heap at all, I'm afraid," said Oscar Woolley of Suki Teas. "We were determined to have our teas in biodegradable Soilon bags but, after a thorough investigation, we discovered that Soilon cannot claim to be sourced from non-GM crops, as was previously thought. Our investigation resulted in the Soil Association and Organic Food Federation withdrawing their acceptance of this material for organic products."



"Nylon pyramids were the only option open to us, but we await the day that the biodegradable material can be responsibly sourced. Until then, any tea companies selling 'organic-certified' teas in biodegradable pyramids may be doing so against the advice of the UK organic bodies."

At Teapigs, Nick Kilby said that he had never come across anyone referring to the teabag itself as being organic.

"All Fuso-style bags used to be made from nylon. In recent years a new biodegradable material has been produced made from corn starch, but the supply of this new material is still limited. We changed all our production to the biodegradable material two years ago."

Jorg Muller of Solaris Herbs told us he spent 'ages' on this problem. "Ours are biodegradable, and the content is organic - there are only three producers worldwide that dominate the market. None of these offer the product as organic, so it's very likely it is made from GM corn. As far as we know there are no organic biodegradable tea bags available on the world market."

"Some pyramids biodegrade as they have a GM ingredient added to allow this process to happen - as a result their tea can't be verified as organic," agreed Richard Allan at Storm. "On the flip side, ours don't biodegrade, but as a result of having no GM ingredients, the teas used can be organic. I'd love to find a material which covers both."

We have, said Mighty Leaf: "Our pouches are indeed made from biodegradable polylactic corn starch, but Mighty Leaf USA have the manufacturer's assurance that they are GM-free, and that all the ingredients are regularly tested to ensure that this remains the case."

It goes to show that all tea bags and pyramids are not the same, said Allan Pirret at Daily Grind. "We won't touch nylon pyramids because we don't think it's right. Our pyramids are Jolly Green Giants - they're from corn, very high in starch, which is removed, and then woven into a lattice. They are biodegradable, although this material presents a far more difficult filling process."

It's easy to tell one from the other, he added. "Rub the bag between your finger and thumb, and nylon, which is man-made regular fibres, rubs nicely through. Biodegradable fabric is natural, and more scratchy. It's woven, but the fibres are less even."

Chai latte - a useful add-on to the winter menu

What is a 'chai latte'? Is it a legitimate 'tea' - indeed, because of the way that Indian roadside tea is so thoroughly brewed with the milk, is the 'chai latte' one of the most authentic teas of all?

The most recent champion of the idea is Teapigs, which says that using steamed milk with a tea creates something which is 'more than just a cuppa', and makes a legitimate stand-out offer for the winter season.

"The coffee industry has capitalised by offering a variety of flat whites and frappaccinos, while the tea industry remains a one-trick pony. There are some add-water chai products and syrups, but we think the tremendous opportunity is in serving whole leaf tea as latte - you can get a lot of flavour out, and you can certainly charge more for them than for a 'normal cup of tea'."



Nick Kilby and his tea latte menu

Teapigs has been experimenting with help from barista and coffee supplier 'Lazy Jose' Melim, and says quite openly that this idea is one in which suppliers and caterers are going to learn from each other. Typically, achieving the balance of a three-minute tea brew with the speed of latte production is an interesting puzzle - Teapigs' suggestion is that the bag be brewed in the normal way and then topped with steamed milk, which we suggested might cause a bottleneck behind the counter.

"In the context of a fast counter service, this may be a bit slow, although in a sit-down situation we think this is manageable. We learn as we go, and we're encouraging our far more experienced café customers to experiment with tea and feed back to us."

Experimentation brings out some interesting results with other highly-flavoured teas. The principle, says Teapigs, can most quickly and easily be experienced with such items as a rooibos caramel latte, and from there on the idea is just to keep testing and tasting.

Mint tea - as big as English breakfast?

Everybody says that mint has an important place on the standard tea menu, and at Daily Grind, director Allan Pirret says that his Egyptian Mint now sells almost as much as his English Breakfast.

"This won a Great Taste award, and has a phenomenally strong content - it releases a huge mint flavour. Some people might think it over the top, but it has become our star product."

Mint aside, he says, the great problem for the caterer is deciding which English Breakfast tea to go with. For a serious café, any old generic will just not do.

"English Breakfast is very important to a tea menu, and you have to have a good one, and say so. We're chuffed to bits with ours, because we took a new slant on the traditional approach of Assam with Ceylon, but not with Kenyan - we're averse to the kind of English Breakfast because their tea is not really at the finer end of the market.

"The big problem is the consumers' perception of what an English Breakfast should look like. This perception has been entirely dictated by the bottom end of the market, and as a good Ceylon does not colour well with milk, it does not appear as the customer expects."

"So, what we did was blend Ceylon with three Assams - the market is full of some very dull Assams, but we found one very good one for colour, another with a very good body, and another we picked for taste."

"The result was an English Breakfast which looked good, with a very clean taste that has punch, but it doesn't choke the palate. You don't get whacked with tannins like a standard tea dustbag!"



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Canton - the accessible pu-erh

The big difference between an unusual tea and a big-brand tea, says Edgar Thoemmes of Canton Tea, is that one has a story to tell... and a good story justifies a higher selling price.

Canton has several unusual teas, and one of the useful ones for the trade might be its Vietnamese pu-erh – this is the kind of tea, traditionally from Yunnan, which came to attention when girl pop stars praised its healthy qualities. It is not cheap (some of it sells by vintage, like wine) and it usually comes to the trade in bricks, like big cheeses. This one, rather more conveniently, comes in a pack.



teas, but soft and wispy. It's a breakfast tea or end-of-meal tea, because it has a sweet caramel feel which complements desserts. It's slightly similar to Darjeeling... but don't put milk in it."

However, he acknowledges, there are many reasons why it is tempting for the hospitality trade to simply offer a standard cup of tea.

"First, the general public is comfortable with generic big-brand teas. Second, the standard teas offer a margin which is so high, it's scary! And third - most establishments don't know how to serve tea. The teas we specialise in need care, and we're not talking about dunking a bag into a cup of hot water.

"We have invested a lot of time in the right brewing equipment for tea, and we have decided that glassware, while not the traditional way of brewing fine teas, is the most effective. We love glass teapots - a green tea moving around in a glass vessel is a fine sight."

"Ours is probably not, according to the letter of the law, a pu-erh," says Edgar Thoemmes, "because it's made right on the border of Vietnam and Yunnan. However, it is a very light one - people often don't like a pu-erh the first time, just like they don't often like their first olive or their first whisky, but this is 'approachable'." Use it, he suggests, as an 'afternoon special'.

Canton also offers 'a Chinese black made in the style of a green', which sounds silly, but describes the appearance of the tea.

"It's not brittle, like so many black




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DRINK REAL TEA.

The Irish herbal tea company Solaris Botanicals has introduced an unusual sweetening agent in helping launch its entire range in Saudi Arabia.

"Consumer feedback from the area has been excellent," said company boss Joerg Muller. "Socially, tea is very important in the Middle East, where at least 15 cups are drunk daily, although much sweeter than in the UK. For this, we had to create blends with Stevia extract (an American herb used in some countries as a sweetener). We see this as an innovative product development – it is not accepted as a food ingredient in Europe, but in the Middle East it is. It is encouraging that we are seen as doing something quite unique in the tea world".

Solaris Botanicals has also won a Best Product award by Bord Bia, the Irish food organization, for its Detox Variety Box.

"Again we saw this as an innovative product development, creating a multipack that offers different detoxifying blends with different actions for specific times of the day. There is green tea chai, which is cleansing and gently stimulating, high in antioxidants. There is our King of Pu-Erh, which breaks down fat before it is digested and thus helps to lower cholesterol (there are quite a few clinical trials on this). The lemon detox is our caffeine-free herbal blend for the evening."

The arrival of the new Shinzo green tea has renewed the usual discussion about whether the best green tea comes from China or Japan. There is of course no answer - the two are simply 'different'!

Shinzo is Japanese, available in both a leaf and powdered form. The useful aspect for the café doing a little green tea is that it comes in 50gm canisters, with the leaf tea sufficient for approximately 13 pots and the more concentrated powdered tea making up to 50 servings.



"This really is about as good a Sencha as it is possible to get," says the importer. "Good quality green tea is very fresh and has a very distinctive, almost sweet smell. Green tea should be regarded as a fresh produce. Although green tea will not go bad for a very long time, it still has a relatively short 'fresh' period during which its flavour will be most distinctive. Generally speaking, unless stored in special conditions high quality green tea will last for about a year. Beware of Japanese green teas that have a relatively long shelf life, two or three years."

Japanese greens are certainly expensive, hence the advantage of buying in small canisters - some Japanese senchas reach £50-500 per kilo.

Shinzo is available from Cream Supplies.

The new Storm tea brand is as different from an everyday cuppa as premier cru is from table wine, says the company confidently.

"Organic Storm Tea is made from real chunks of whole leaf tea, fruits and flavourings and so will never leave a trail of dust in your teacup," says the brand's Richard Allan. The product uses the pyramid bag format, and features the expected standard blends and a Japanese sencha and an organic Chun Mee. There are trade packs of 1,000 bags.



Tetley is testing a children's tea, T4Kidz, in 75 Tesco stores. The product is based on caffeine-free redbush and honeybush tea brand, with additional vanilla and strawberry flavours. The product comes in re-sealable pouches of 20 bags, and can be drunk with or without milk.

Twinings has launched a limited edition Mulled Spice tea. It is described as 'a rich and aromatic tea blended with Christmas spices and full bodied Assam'.

It goes, we are told, with mince pies. Twinings is also providing downloadable point-of-sale material available at www.twiningsfs.co.uk/pos.



The London Tea Company also has some new ideas for winter - a vanilla chai, which the company says includes 'authentic Chai ingredients - organic black tea, cinnamon, peppermint, ginger, cardamom, cloves and vanilla'. The result, says the supplier, can be served to match mince pies and Christmas cake. There is also a blend of blackcurrant, raspberry and cinnamon intended as 'an uplifting, warming pick me up, especially good when the temperatures start falling'.



One of our favourite cafe maxims, coined by Christine Collins of the Cup of Tea company, is the simple: 'good teas pay'.

The maxim works for George Peacock and Rachel Lemkov, where sixty-six rare and unusual teas have turned a riverside cottage into one of the UK's very top tea-rooms. Peacocks of Ely is one of the handful of British tearooms qualified to display that most imaginative of all trophies, the stained-glass window which marks a Tea Guild 'top tea place of the year'. And they have three awards of excellence to go with it.

Peacocks is tucked away beside an antiques shop and a busy but relaxed marina. The frontage is tiny, dominated by overhanging trees, and difficult to find - but the interior is surprisingly light and spacious, with two sitting rooms full of antique tea memorabilia, including some items which defy understanding. An old poster for Bongola tea, at one-and-six in old money for a packet, has so far resisted all attempts to identify the brand. Peacocks even has two notable loos - one has a giant pair of antlers fixed to the wall above the seat, so that the

Great teas really work...

A menu of sixty-six special teas, impeccably presented, is what brings four national awards in four years

user appears to be wearing them, and the other is a shrine to tea, filled with tea-themed pictures and ornaments, including a full tea-set within reach of the throne.

The most notable feature of the Peacocks tea menu is that it features items from all continents. The vast tea menu - sixty-six items - is overhauled during the winter months.

"I was taught that there are five continents, but they seem to have added two more since I was at school," remarks Rachel, pouring an unusual French Pleine Lune from a Duchess teapot ("it's nice to buy from English potteries - I think it's rotten that so many of them are closing down.")

"They've added Antarctica, which isn't helpful - so George sent some tea to the research centre there and asked them to mail it back, so we really could offer tea which 'came from Antarctica'."

Every other international tea is legiti-



The tucked away Peacocks, Rachel Lemkov, and the mysterious Bongola poster



mate, if very unusual - the Pleine Lune is fragrant, with notes of almonds, vanilla and honey, and a reminder that France actually does have a tea indus-

try. So of course does Georgia, represented by the irreverently re-christened "Georgie Best". There is a Kashmiri described as 'very gentle, a real cracker of a chai', there is a Vietnamese Imperial ('a fantastic woody oolong'), a Gorreana tea from the Azores, and the distinctive Billy Tea from eastern Australia. "It has a bit of a kick with all that eucalyptus in it, and a lot of earthiness. I didn't like it at first, but you get used to it."

Coffee is only by cafetiere, except the Peacocks special iced coffee, which is a recipe handed down from Rachel's mother, and which, almost unbelievably, uses Camp coffee.

The Peacocks staff take chilled milk, almost to the top of a tall glass, a dash of Camp, a spherical dollop of Rodda's Cornish clotted cream, probably done with an ice-cream scoop and kept chilled in the fridge, and serve immediately with a straw and spoon.

It's a simple serve at £2.95 (or with added Bailey's, £3.75).

Does it sell?

"It does," says Rachel with a grin. "We have several customers hooked on it!"

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Of all the arguments which divide players in the café trade, one of the most entertaining is the matter of the freebie on the saucer.

One side of the trade says they are a pain and detract attention from the coffee (sometimes intentionally, say the more sarcastic commentators!)

Others say they see a business benefit, and some have started using them creatively – some very top coffee bars will actually balance the taste of the giveaway with the taste of their coffee. Some use unexpected items like apricot or walnut pieces to enhance espresso.

And at a very practical level, one café owner in Wiltshire has opened up a good trade in them as add-on sales, selling speculoos by the 50-pack!

The latest player in the field is an unexpected one, but it comes in with powerful backing. It is Single Source, the pioneer of single-serve portions in sugars and milks, and now the provider of probably the biggest range of saucer-side items, all individually-wrapped and several big enough for retail add-on sale as well as gift.

This new status comes from the company joining PortionPack Europe, an immense company in the single-serve sector, and the items it has obtained as a result are attention-getting - not just

The saucer strategy...

Is the giveaway biscuit on the saucer something you have to do, or want to do? Is it something you get away with as cheaply as possible... or is it something which you can use strategically in your business?



Wood berries in chocolate (left) the 'stroopwafel', and the orange cake - all attention-getting items beside the beverage

generic giveaways, but attractively-branded items.

"Our only contribution to eating so far has been speculoos, and you do have to wonder about how this tradition still relies on one cinnamon-flavoured biscuit," remarks marketing manager Andrew Gibb.

"In this day and age you would think things might change... and when we became part of PortionPack Europe, we were exposed to other ideas.

"They make individually-wrapped portions of many styles of biscuit and

quality Belgian chocolate, and their markets have a long history of offering items on the side of a cup of coffee."

Is the accessory an integral part of building the image of a venue - just as people will say 'you get a good cappuccino there', do they think: 'you get something decent on the saucer at that café'?

"Our continental sister companies certainly see this as an important statement about the venue. Many customers will see your expensive coffee and think – so what happened to the freebies? Many cafes will give away a chocolate emblazoned with the outlet's name on it, but the quality is often quite poor, which begs the question: what are they trying to achieve? Belgian chocolate with real mint crisp pieces inside are infinitely better.

"So, if the cafe owner is smart they can vary the offer. There are opportunities to offer the freebie with the real premium drinks as a support to the pricing or to trade up as a promotional giveaway. You could be endlessly creative, including giving one away with a coffee-and-sandwich purchase as a thank you for the spend. It is a real counter to chains' loyalty cards."

A major complaint from some café operators is that giveaways are a cost to the business, not an asset.

"Oh, come on, get real! These little items can get you remembered – they are a support for the high cost of your coffee drinks and also a way to engineer an increase in prices. Consumers expect good value, and now the offering must be interesting and complement the drink – we do already see some trade customers showing an interest in varying the offer every so often, to keep the interest up.

"Talking to the trade about this has identified a cross-section of reaction. Some can only see through speculoo-tinted spectacles... but some are now opening their minds to something different, including a rotation of goodies.

"The data we have isn't scientific, but there is some information to suggest that the better the item, the more repeat consumption of coffees, and the more consumers are prepared to pay. Top notch chocolates, such as a praline, seem to help generate more occurrences of second or third cups bought, far ahead of more basic chocs and even biscuits.

"Certainly, the freebie should be seen as a strategic pricing tool to help ease your drink prices upward."

The trade price of everyday speculoos is fairly minimal – Single Source says, perhaps surprisingly, that their new range starts at the same level.

"I would expect chocolate coated beans, speculoos and little biscotti to be easily in the 3-5p range," says Andrew Gibb. "We've been getting good feedback on the tiny little chocolate coated beans, which come in different styles – with coffee bean centres, almond, and crispy cereal centres reminiscent of a Malteser.



Andrew Gibb

"The Bolero (a little mint chocolate) and the Le Carre 5gm Belgian chocolate squares would be a little more, and then the choc chip cookies, Daelmans mini wafer, the orange cake (like a mini Jaffa - everybody loves them) and Fairtrade chocs to be around 7-9p.

"They all show quality and value, and the real key is to keep the size of nibble small enough to leave paying customers wanting more, so they'll buy something else, or that they'll buy some of the snacks to take away."

This is a real possibility.

"We now have exclusive distributorship for a magnificent product, Daelmans' branded caramel wafers, the stroopwafels. This sticks in buyers minds - once tasted, the product always makes people smile and can they have another? I predict this could be a high growth product at a sensible price - singles and even duo packs can sell for under £1."

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Traditional continental coffee accompaniments



Exciting new continental coffee accompaniments



The most familiar of all saucer-side gifts has a new look. The Lotus is the original caramelised biscuit, and now has a series of individual messages on the pack. The product itself remains unchanged after 70-odd years.

"It's popularity continues to grow," says sales manager Ian Lucas. "The caramelised flavour complements the roasted aroma of coffee, and it has become a much-loved token of thanks to customers, at a relatively minor investment. The limited-edition version with a range of six messages on the wrapper has served to bring the brand to life in a playful manner and I envisage that this activity will be repeated in the near future."

The curiosity, of course, is that these are only for sit-in customers.

"Takeaway is a more difficult challenge - but we are in the early stages of a development project with a leading disposable cup manufacturer, aimed at addressing how coffee on the move can be enjoyed with a Lotus accompaniment."

Consumers are not as 'healthy' in their choice of snacks as they say they are, says Trevor Stroud at Cranberry.

"Healthy snacks are growing at the expense of crisps and nuts," he confirms. "But there is a world of difference between customers' intentions and how they actually behave - fewer people actually snack healthily than say they do. By working on a realistic interpretation of customer behaviour, we have settled on a product range that works for us. The most popular product out of 140 lines is mango chunks, a very healthy choice."

The 'whoopie' cake has arrived...

Last year, the big trendy snack product for the catering trade was the cupcake. This was the highly-decorated and extremely creamy item, for which the over-used cliché of 'indulgent' did for once actually apply. Although many products were masterpieces of design over substance, some manufacturers did try to include some genuine taste, and reduce the amount of colourings and sugars.

This year, the equivalent is, believe it or not... the Whoopie.

Like the cupcake, this trend comes to us from the States. It is a kind of cream sandwich - a top and bottom of cake, a filling of cream, and a frosting or topping on top. The cake can be a plain sponge or a chocolate sponge; a typical filling is thick butter cream. The homely story, which may possibly be remotely true, is that the Amish farmers' wives in Pennsylvania started making them to use up leftover cake batter. The name supposedly comes from the husbands' reactions when opening their lunch boxes.

We know that the Handmade Cake Company, which was quick to produce a cupcake range for the trade last year, will launch catering Whoopies very soon, although the company is being unusually reticent.

"We have been just observing and tasting for the last six months," says the company's Simon Law. "So far we have tasted some that we didn't like, and some which were nicer, but nothing which is really a 'coffee-shop product'."

"We have now decided that it is time that we offered the discerning coffee shop operator a really good Whoopie range, probably based on clean flavours with no funny aftertastes, good cake-like texture, and an artisan look.

"Having now made a few samples, we are beginning to properly understand how ours will be different - the outer 'shell' (a bit like a clam-shell) will have a proper cake-texture, as opposed to an almost polystyrene texture which is what some seem to have, and also a filling that has a flavour that makes you think, 'I'm going to enjoy this', rather than just getting a massive sugar hit.



The Dawn Foods Whoopie

"While those currently available to coffee shops are quite gaudy in appearance ours will be a little more restrained - some might say boring, but that's us, more Delia than Nigella! Our cupcakes were 'proper' cakes, not just about a pretty look, and I see Whoopies as being the same - something you can really enjoy, rather than just being seen to be eating something that is 'on trend'."

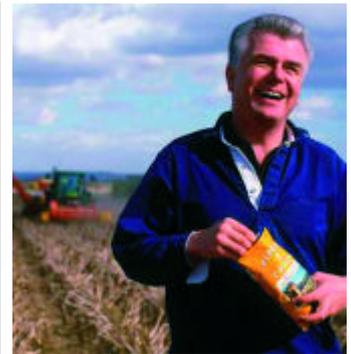
Meanwhile, Dawn Foods of Evesham has produced the trade cake-mix version.

"I believe this is more of a fad, and not as long-term as the cupcake," remarks the company's Jacqui Passmore. "Whoopie pies have had the headlines but seem to be very slow to get off the ground - I don't see them having either the impact or the longevity of the cupcake."

This is described as a 'just add water cake mix'.

"This is for businesses who want additional product lines without having to commit to more production time. Preparation is 5 minutes, baking is 30-45 minutes depending on size, cooling is an hour, and finishing 10-20 minutes depending on the detail.

"Selling price depends on the result, but prices for cupcakes made with our bases and toppings are anywhere between 95p - £1.75."



Alex Albone - the crisp-maker down on the farm

The 'artisan crisp' influences the big names

If any proof were needed of the move towards the 'artisan crisp', says Alex Albone of Pipers Crisps, look at the way the big-name brands have suddenly started bringing out new ranges under different names, with nothing to suggest they come from the industrial crisp-makers.

"There must be a growing consumer perception of the 'artisan crisp', because customers do tend to seek us out. We now employ 30 people, and we trade from Scunthorpe to Saudi Arabia.

"But we still don't supply supermarkets - other artisan companies have said they would not, and ended up doing so, but we haven't. The consumer couldn't care less, but it's the retailer and café operator who like the difference, because they always want a way to be different from the supermarkets. Coffee shops love a highly-packaged, premium-price product which can't be found in Tesco.

"But we retail at a higher price, and the consumers are prepared to pay it. We always tell retailers and coffee shops that no, we will not be selling in to them at a comparable price to other crisps, but to be aware of the cash margin. And many of them do try and make the most of artisan crisps."

Typically, he says, every Pipers flavour has won a Great Taste award, so cafes can say 'we have chosen these crisps because...', and even when crisps are used as a garnish to something like a panini, they make a point of saying 'these are premium crisps...'

An example of a response from the giants is that Walkers has now decided to launch an Extra Crunchy. This is intended for the retail market, in large sharing packs, on the grounds that (and we quote) 'staying in is the new going out...'

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The passionfruit butterburst

More cookie ideas from Byron Bay

Beyond the Bean's work in promoting the new British-made cookies from Australia's Byron Bay brand has been sufficiently successful for new launches to become, quite genuinely, waited-for events.

The latest idea is Butterbursts, a product which has ambitions to reach the hotel sector as well as the café trade. They are in twin packs, in three varieties: citrus, described as 'packed with the aroma and zest of Mediterranean lemons', choc hazelnut, and passionfruit, promoted as having a 'real tropical taste'.

It took almost a year to get this range ready, says the company's Paul Maxwell. All three flavours have been approved by the Vegetarian Society.

Byron Bay's 'limited edition' cookies have also become expected events, and the winter one is the white chocolate chunk and cranberry cookie.

"This Limited Edition cookie has been developed to marry the classic flavours of white chocolate and cranberries into a treat for winter shoppers," says the company. "Each cookie is packed with chunks of premium European white chocolate and over a quarter of the cookie is made up with cranberries to give a moist and delicately chewy cookie.

Byron Bay was launched in Australia in the 1970s, and because of 'food miles' concerns, opened up production in England in 2008. The UK-baked cookies use locally sourced ingredients, free range eggs and premium European chocolate.

The British-made triple-choc fudge cookie won the Vegetarian Society's 2009 'best snack' award.

Coffee Republic has devised a fundraising cupcake to be sold in aid of the Teenage Cancer Trust.

Proceeds from sales of the Teenage Cancer Trust cupcake, available in Coffee Republic bars across the UK, will go towards improving the lives of young people with cancer. The cake was designed by a seventeen-year-old currently recovering from cancer.

Pack takeaway snacks well - and don't forget the savoury

There seems to be no end of traybakes on offer to the trade - so how does a coffee-house operator distinguish between them? And what counts as 'value for money' in the snacks trade?

"When I was a retailer, I heard 'value for money' roll off suppliers' tongues far too easily," says Nigel Grumbar, marketing manager at the Peck and Strong trade bakery. "Its meaning is often not 'unpacked' - the real meaning is of how far you can squeeze upward the quality and the margin.

"Value for money does not mean 'cheap'. We are at the more pricey end of 'value for money', and there are surprises - you would think that student buyers would save every penny, but we have universities taking our product and student customers come back and back.

"Value for money means the customer has not one tiny shred of resentment for whatever they paid for it - instead, the reaction is: 'heavens, that was worth it!'

Peck and Strong stays away from the trends and fads in snacks, preferring to offer the trade a reliable long-term relationship.

"The problem with trends is that they have a timespan - this can be great for short-term marketing, but a problem for quality when a product is brought out to fit a current trend. That's why you see so many rubbish cupcakes around.

"Our approach is the long run - if our traybakes have a point of difference, it's not a trend, it's in mouthfeel, discernible tastes, and different layers of taste as you chew through it.

"Typically, we make our caramel from scratch - many bakers buy theirs

in, so a lot of them are probably using the same caramel."

Although Peck and Strong sees the potential in the takeaway trade, it has resisted the temptation to pack its products singly.

"Something is lost in prepacking, in perception and other ways... it is possible that poor retail packaging can affect the taste and texture," he suggests..

"The more inventive approach to takeaway snacks is to say: 'you enjoyed that, so now please let me cut you a slice to take away'. But

then you must package it properly - don't just slap some clingfilm on it. Make it something special for them to buy and take."

Peck and Strong also makes pies and flans for the café sector, and is very strong in vegetarian ones.

"Our savoury pies and flans are vegetarian, but are still geared to the meat-eaters, who refer to them as gutsy, though that's a non-vegetarian term, and 'full of oomph'. At Caffe Culture, we had an exciting response to this range - it was as if the trade had been starved of such things.

"It seems that very few people do cutting-style quiches, flans and pies, and so this seems to have turned out as a fairly low-risk win-win for a caterer.

"We produce them to order, so they leave here chilled with a true ten-day life... and if you can't get through twelve slices in a ten-day life, then perhaps takeaway snacks aren't the business for you!"



Don't miss the takeaway potential of the savoury pie...

Takeaway snacks can be Fairtrade too...

The Fairtrade angle is the promotional point from Peros with additions to its One World range.

It now has three new cupcakes, two new chewy cookies and an assortment pack of mini muffins. The ever-growing One World bakery range combines Fairtrade credentials with great taste and quality. The cupcakes qualify for the Mark with three flavours that each contain over 46 per cent Fairtrade ingredients. One of the chewy cookies is 35 per cent certified, the other is 50 per cent. The mini muffins are in an assortment pack containing about 43 per cent Fairtrade ingredients.

Around 20% of roast and ground coffee sold in the UK is now Fairtrade, and this growing trend is also positively affecting complementary products such as bakery and snacks. The opportunity to demonstrate an ethical stance in take-away and add-on sales is all the more important, says Peros, when a large number of similar products carry no certification.

Shortbread - still the classy biscuit

Shortbread is always positioned as either a 'luxury' or certainly 'better than average' retail item, says Dean's of Huntly, but it does help for a coffee-house operator to be able to promote an item as being a particularly good shortbread.

Although there is one giant brand which gets all the press, Dean's turns out to be the best-selling retail shortbread in Scotland - how does a café put this across?

The Dean's proposition is to do all baking in a time-honoured traditional manner, producing a strong 'home-made' visual identity," says the bakery's Sylvia Grant.



"We are very much a small-batch producer and hand-bake all our lines, as opposed to our high-volume, high-automation competitors. I suggest the coffee house owner promotes Dean's as traditional honest-to-goodness home baking, produced in what can only be described as a scaled-up version of a home kitchen.

"Offering shortbread such as the Dean's petit four as a complimentary saucer item, will certainly create a point of difference against the conventional caramelised biscuit."

And don't leave it there, says Dean's. Giving a piece away is only half the business.

"Remember - use the complimentary shortbread to promote the retail packs!"

Dean's foodservice range has developed because of a demand for smaller packs - there are now twin packs of shortbread fingers (40gm) and shortbread rounds (25gm), and the unusual flavoured 'petit deux' shortbread.



Moy Park has come up with a novel versatile snack item - the thaw-and-serve mini-donut, which has three flavours, and can be sold as a take-away, a saucer item, or as a full dessert with ice-cream and a topping.

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