

# Boughton's

## COFFEE HOUSE



Once again, the top reporter in the beverage-trade press, Scoop Malone, brings you all the news that counts!

October 2011

## Pub trade moves still closer to the speciality coffee market

The south-western café chain Coffee#1 has been bought by a brewery – it has been taken over by SA Brain, the Welsh pub group. The acquisition is considered a significant step in the growing interest of pubs in business other than alcohol.

The Brain business has pubs throughout Wales, and also several just across the English border.

The pub trade press reported that Brains had secured a new funding package which includes a £70 million revolving credit facility, and almost immediately afterwards came the news of the coffee acquisition. The purchase of Coffee#1 brings Brains' fifteen cafés in England and Wales, with a combined turnover of £5 million. The price of the acquisition has not been disclosed.

The brewery's chief executive, Scott Waddington, said that Brains is seeing a steady increase in the amount of coffee sold through its pubs, and that continuing changes in consumer eating and drinking habits made coffee a sensible progression for a pub chain. He added that Coffee#1's managing director, James Shaplund, would continue with the business 'in the short term', and that the chain's recent performance of opening two or three new cafés each year would probably continue. Brains has hitherto sold Costa coffee in some of its pubs.

The interest in speciality coffee from

pubs continues to be seen in many ways – notably, as part of the recent Macmillan 'world's biggest charity coffee morning', two baristas broke the

world record for the most cappuccinos made in an hour... and both came from pubs (the Black Horse in Woburn and The Swan at Salford).



*We always like a good point-of-sale display, and were fascinated by this to-the-point one from Street Coffee of London. Worked 'with the tribe', indeed? It turns out that Street works with Ethica Coffee of Australia, who do source directly from growers in Papua New Guinea. Apparently the coffee support so far has furnished 52 classrooms in eleven schools, with desks, chairs, and book shelves, 400 school packs, 14,000 library books, four laptops, medical equipment, medicines and school fee assistance. At the moment the coffee is roasted in Australia and shipped here, but we're told the intention is now to roast in the UK.*

## Bewley's makes its move to win serious business in the UK

Bewley's, the Dublin coffee roaster which has been a major force in hot beverages for around 170 years, will almost certainly increase its activity in the UK market significantly following its acquisition of Darlington's of London.

Darlington's has built up a turnover of around £5 million over the past twenty years, and supplies an intriguing range of beverage operators – some classy hotels and restaurants, some food chains (Eat, Caffe Uno, Bagel Factory),

pub chains (St Austell brewery), and also has a foothold in the well-regarded new-wave café-bars, such as Sacred Coffee of Soho.

Bewley's has also reported an increase in profits, up to €1.74 million last year on a turnover of €77.7 million, after a drop in 2009. Its star performers were its American interests, in Boston and California - its American business accounts for 51 per cent of its turnover, having overtaken the Irish business for the first time.

However, half of the tea and coffee produced in Dublin is already exported to the UK market, and the purchase of Darlington's is expected to increase this by providing a full warehousing and delivery service.

"We definitely see this as a spring-board for further development in the UK," Bewley's managing director Jim Corbett told us. "Darlington's will continue to trade under its own name and brand."

Asked whether Darlington's client base would now be supplied with coffee roasted in Dublin, the company made the tactful but indirect response: "Currently these coffees are produced by a number of different roasters.

"We believe that access to Bewley's procurement, blending and roasting expertise will enable Darlington's to expand the range of services they offer, to the benefit of all their customers."



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A few years ago, the financial world created 'the latte index', by which the cost of living was related to the price of a latte on the high street. Today, we are advised by Allert Elema of the Maxabel cup company that sizes of coffee in the workplace may perform the same function. He has turned up a press report which said that staff at the Goldman Sachs bank heard alarm bells when the size of coffee cups at their New York office were reduced from 12oz to 10oz... and indeed, shortly after, it was announced that a thousand jobs would go. Coffee cups, Allert tells us, "may be a good barometer for the working population in the UK to keep an eye on to see if their jobs are under threat!"

A cafe owner has been ordered to pay £1,300 to a teenager who was fired because she turned 18. A tribunal was told that the youngster spoke to her boss the day before her birthday, mentioning that this would mean an increase in her minimum wage - the response was to be told she had been 'cheeky' in asking for a pay rise and there was no more work available for her. The tribunal judged that "this was a most upsetting turn of events for a young person beginning her working life" and ruled that the cafe owner, who did not attend the hearing, should pay compensation.

Two small tea-rooms have been reported to be fighting on after near-disasters. The ARTea Room, Pottersbury, was broken into just

three days after opening, and around £200 stolen. The owners, who gave up jobs and spent six months preparing the business, said: "it's disheartening, but we will be fine, we're determined." In Gloucester, the partners of Lily's in College Court watched their business flooded when a storm drain in the courtyard exploded following heavy rain. In ten minutes, the water was four inches deep. "Six years of hard work just went down the drain in an instant," said one partner in what was perhaps an unfortunate turn of phrase. "More or less everything is a write-off, but we will re-open and come back from this."

An operator in Suffolk who had planned a new external-seating patio has instead discovered a historic construction which he will now promote as a feature of his business. Richard Palmer, of the Number One in Clare, was clearing the area when he discovered a well - Suffolk County Council's archaeological department think it dates back to the 13th century, and they know of only one other surviving example. Mr Palmer has abandoned plans for a patio and has now decided to highlight the well as a feature of his site.

Norfolk craft bakery chain The Bakehouse is rebranding its shops as Flour & Bean, with a greater focus on freshly prepared coffee. The company has already refurbished four of its 14 shops under the new coffee shop brand.

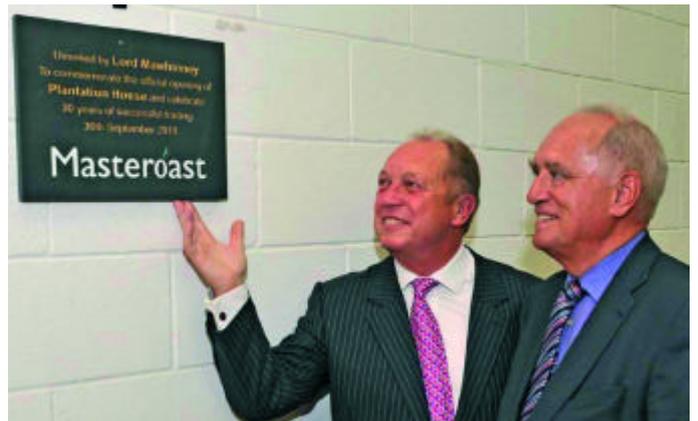


## Union flags at the new Greggs

Greggs, the north-eastern takeaway bakery chain, has now made a decisive move towards the hot-drinks market - it has opened Greggs Moment, its first shop to concentrate on tea and coffee instead of bakery, in its original home of Newcastle. "It's a one-shop test" said a spokesman. "Overall, we intend to keep our prices about 20 per cent below the major chains - a 12oz cap-puccino or latte is £1.85, and a muffin is £1.15."

The theme of the new café is 'just how you like it', which means that Greggs is attempting to serve its produce in as bespoke a manner as possible. The teas are served using the 'pyramid-bag' process. With a nod to its roots in bakery, Greggs has devised some entirely new snack items such as the 'Brekkes Cake', a breakfast adaptation of the traditional Eccles cake, but with a topping of yoghurt and fruit.

There is a notable British theme to the design - the union flag appears in several places, including on the backs of chairs.



And behind the plaque is a time capsule where we've buried the details of our best blends... Lord Mawhinney was the guest of honour when Masteroast, probably the most significant roaster of private-label coffee in the UK, had its 30th birthday in business at the beginning of October.

One of the most important aspects of Masteroast's work is its blending of coffees, which is largely why so many private cafes and large brands alike can both claim to have 'their own coffee blend'. As well as creating specific bespoke and unique blends for trade customers, Masteroast also has a vast library of off-the-shelf coffee blends, numbering into thousands, from which trade customers can select 'their' blend, and have it packaged with their own identity.

This is the latest in eco-friendly coffee cups - it is the Kit café, by Portuguese designer Joana Carvalho, and is made from a biodegradable biopolymer that can be planted for compost after use. It is a single-injection mould process which forms a cup, saucer and spoon, and it stacks to save space.

Meanwhile, Vegware, the British supplier of compostable cups, is offering half price artwork for any customers ordering a festive design by the end of October, on runs of 5,000 or more cups. The cup in question is the compostable double-walled cup which won 'best new product' in the Climate Week Awards.



Birmingham Botanical Gardens has installed a new Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee plant in its tropical house. The tree was planted by Senator Norman Grant of Jamaica, who is involved in the coffee industry, and it was given to Birmingham because the Jamaican team will be based in the city for the Olympics.



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# Spotlights at Starbucks

Starbucks opened a giant new 'flagship' store at Times Square in New York – the site is so 'futuristic', to quote one metropolis newspaper, that the *Gothamist* website began its report: 'People of Earth... a futuristic coffee wonderland!'

The features of this remarkable site include 'an Interactive Photo Booth and NY Times timeline that enables users to toggle between a Times Square historical timeline and photo booth applications on one of two touchscreen monitors'. We are also told that 'using the Photo Booth application, users can take a Times Square-themed souvenir photo, which can be retrieved with a QR code using a smartphone or through an email process... users are encouraged to share their photos on their social media sites'.



Another report tells us that 'a Social Media video wall features a live feed of Starbucks posts on Facebook and Twitter both in-store and outside' (the *Gothamist* notes sourly that "it would be a shame if you missed out on any Starbucks-related news while inside a Starbucks"!)

There is a large product-promotion video wall, on which customers can be sold at. Another report from New York tells us that Starbucks is merchandising very heavily: 'hoodies and t-shirts that I've never seen at any other Starbucks'.

A notable other feature of the store is 'super-high' ceilings, and also some

extremely large lighting rigs. These are of course a nod to Times Square's theatrical history, but are probably the most powerful lighting ever seen in a coffee house. Because of the environmental credentials, all this lighting uses long-life energy-efficient equipment.

In the UK, Starbucks is to give unlimited wi-fi Internet access at its stores. Previously, Starbucks customers had to be members of the Starbucks Rewards programme, sign up for a gift card and then enter a username and password to get 1.5 hours of online time.

David Neilsen, who plays café owner Roy Cropper in Coronation Street, made a personal appearance in Loughborough to open a community centre café - he grew up in the surrounding area. It is not widely known that in a café contest some years back, Simon Martin of Quickfire Tableware had the wonderful idea of hiring 'Cropper' and his onscreen wife to present the trade prizes... however, the fee was said to be quite astronomical.

Nescafé has promised to plant four million new trees and build 48 coffee plant nurseries in Colombia. This is part of the global Nescafé Plan launched under which the company will invest £213m in coffee projects and distribute 220 million coffee trees by 2020.

A Cumbrian village bakery is reported to have won a massive contract with Costa - the local press there reports that Bells of Lazonby is now producing more than 30,000 cupcakes and 3,000 large cakes every day for the chain. According to the report, Costa demands that only right-handed staff are allowed to ice the cupcakes - left-handed bakers are unable to provide the necessary 'flick' to the frosting.

Flavours coffee house, of the Town House in Stockton on Tees, is reportedly moving to bigger premises in Wellington Street this month.

The tea shop at Trewithen Gardens,

near Grampound Road in Cornwall, has won the gold level Cornwall Healthier Eating and Food Safety (Chefs) award, created by the county health service to recognise a high degree of food safety and standards.

The Bath Deli (in Bath) has been relaunched as the Indulgence Cafe. The owner, Katherine Small, has said that she intends to pass on one new skill to her apprentice staff each day.

Two women involved with the scout and guide movement have opened the JJ's coffee house in Union St, Chorley. They finished the refurbishment of the building despite such snags as having the gas meter stolen, and have told their local press: "anything Costa or Starbucks can do then so can we."

Clipper Teas has rather dominated the beverage section of the Taste of the West awards, taking five golds, three silvers and two bronzes. A couple of western coffee companies were honoured, though - Origin got a silver for its Finca los Altos, and a bronze for its organic Fairtrade, while Rave Coffee of Wiltshire got a bronze for its Signature Blend. "This is our flagship coffee that is designed as a blend for milk-based espresso drinks," the company told us. "We are really pleased with our award – especially as it got judged as a filter coffee!"

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North West Tea of Liverpool has become an approved supplier to Superstat, the co-operative group of office-supplies dealers. Beverages for office use have become an increasing part of the office-supplies trade over the past twenty years, and that trade has an extremely well-organised collection of co-operative trading groups.

Rob Norman has opened up the Bean and Machine business in Paulton, Bristol. He has 21 years' experience in the trade and will specialise in the supply, repair and refurbishment of coffee machines, and basic barista training.

Costa Coffee has announced the opening of its 2000th store, which is in the centre of Leeds. In the first six months of the year Costa opened 145 stores around the world, including China and India, and is planning 300 new stores worldwide this year. It is aiming for 3,500 stores globally by 2015/16.

Nescafe is now sufficiently proud of its flavour to have insured its master taster's nose for £2 million. Dave Roberts has been with Nescafe for twenty years, having begun his training as a vinegar taster.

Elizabeth Darcy Jones, who bills herself as Britain's Tea Poet, has published her first collection, *Distinguished Leaves: Poems for tea lovers*. The foreword is by Nigel Havers, and proceeds go to the Samaritans.

International Paper Foodservice has begun a project to try and persuade the vending market to follow the high street coffee market, by moving away from the standard plastic 7 oz vending cup to the 8oz, 10 oz and 12 oz sizes familiar in the high street, but with a diameter that allows for them to be used in standard vending. Sales and marketing director Mike Gardner says: "We are calling for a revolution. Bigger drinks in vending mean bigger margins!"

The racing driver Jenson Button is co-owner of Victus, a new restaurant in Harrogate. The coffee is brewed through two La Cimbali M1s.

An interesting sign of the times is that even charity cafes offer free wi-fi - the newest one to do so is one in Stourbridge, which will support the Mary Stevens Hospice. The owner of a local bed store has given £10,000 for the charity to open the coffee house and tea room.

The re-design of the historic Swiss Tearooms in Belper has led to a local row - twenty-one designs were submitted by architects from all over the country, but the one picked by the council judging panel was not the one preferred in a public vote. The leader of the local Labour party said: "If the public go for something and that is not listened to, what is the point of a public consultation? I think it is an insult to Belper residents."

Margaret's Tea Room, in Wentworth

Street, Peterborough, has opened as the latest in a long list of food and drink outlets to open in the city centre in recent months. Owner Michael-Brian West said his businesses added an important element to the high street and that his aim was to add to the city's café culture by providing a specialist tea shop in an area dominated by coffee shops.

Plans for a Costa Coffee shop on Gloucester Road in Bristol have been rejected after a 3,000-name petition was submitted by objectors to the council. The protesters claimed it would "undermine the viability of independent shops", and that they did not want a "chain-dominated" street and councillors voted by eight to one to block it.

There has been disagreement over a new 'code of conduct' drafted to eliminate an overlap between guidelines used by Lincolnshire County Council and district councils' own rules on pavement cafés. The code includes a requirement for every outdoor seating enclosure to have a litter bin, clear smoking or no-smoking signs, 'high-quality' tables and chairs, a ban on music... and a ban on anyone taking their top off. There has been disagreement over the rule which says that the county council will not permit advertising outside the designated area - one café owner has pointed out that this means her A-board will now be within her seating area barriers and thus invisible.

The first spadeful has been dug for what will become an underground shop and café in the village of Exbourne, Devon - the idea is that after the old village shop closed some years ago, the residents decided to form their own business, and it was decided that the only room available was to dig into the hillside and create a semi-underground retail and café space. Supporters of the project say that an 'earth-sheltered design' will help to reduce heat loss, and will 'minimise land-take and result in multifunctional land use'. It is, however, suggested that the scheme is not universally popular.

Loopy Lorna's, the Edinburgh tea-house, has closed one of its two branches, but is undecided whether to sell, refurbish, or move to larger premises. The Morningside Rd branch has closed, but the nearby Churchill Theatre is still open. However, Gaynor Salisbury, who won an entrepreneur award for what one fan called 'the best tea-parlour in the world' and what one councillor has called 'a local institution', has told the local paper: "just because it is on the market does not mean it is not going to re-open as Loopy Lorna's again."

Tri-Star Packaging has won a gold Innovation Challenge award for its drinks carrier PortaTray, which is a flat-pack, pop-up carrier that stores in half the space of a pulp tray. It grips cups and bottles securely even at a 45-degree angle.

## Bath coffee fest postponed

**The Bath Coffee Festival, which can reasonably be seen as the pioneer event promoting speciality coffee to the consumer, will not be held in 2012 - the decision has been made to help a local project aimed at improving the town's recreation ground, where the event is held.**

The refurbishment of the area has been a topic of local concern for some time, and event organiser Linda Donaldson has said that although she had proposed to add an additional marquee for the 2012 festival, there is now a firm likelihood that the local council may wish to start work in the spring. There is also no suitable alternative local site. So, rather than risk upsetting her supporters if the council makes a late decision on the matter, she has opted to step aside now and postpone the event.

The show's sponsors and supporters are said to be very disappointed, but understanding of the situation.

There have been suggestions that the organisers should simply move the event elsewhere - it is said that there have been offers from London and as far as Edinburgh.

However, the Bath team have replied that their event is a local one, run by local people for the benefit and promotion of their local town, with the support of local businesses and in support of local charities, and so the idea of going anywhere else is not considered. The organisers have, however, been willing to speak to other councils who are believed to have asked for details of how the event works.

## BSA picks its top beverages

**The Beverage Standards Association has decided upon the winners of its new form of awards.**

Instead of the old idea of 'best café' prizes, the body has turned to rewarding beverage operators for the standard of their drinks, in what it calls 'the Michelin stars of the coffee industry'. (It has occurred to us that an equal parallel might have been Cask Marque, the body which exists to certify pubs where real ale is stored and drawn according to best practice - but, as is always the case, we didn't think of that early enough to suggest it).

In the BSA awards, the prize for the best hot chocolate drink was awarded to the Forge tea rooms, at Brompton, near Scarborough. The venue uses a Van Houten powder, and we are told that it won its place because of its range of extras (marshmallow, and chocolate and hazelnut wafers).

The best filter coffee was judged to be from the Music Room, Lancaster, which is of course the relatively new partner business to the Atkinsons roastery. Not surprisingly, the judges commented on the 'vast' range of coffees to choose from, but also the the-



*A filter table from the Attic - which eventually won 'best espresso'*

atre of production, through a V60 using a cloth filter, and the pricing, from £2.30 to £2.80.

The best cappuccino drink was judged to be from the Bottle Kiln, West Hallam, using coffees supplied by James Gourmet Coffees. Winner of the best espresso prize was the Attic, which is the upstairs part of the Harlequin at York, and which uses coffee from Has Bean of Stafford.

The award for the best tea went to the Tea Monkey of Milton Keynes. The judges commented on the choice of 40 teas, from which they preferred the Darjeeling and Earl Grey, both at £1.80 per cup.



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**Boughton's  
Coffee House**

is published  
by Ian Boughton and Trudi  
Roark

from  
11 Lansdowne Road,  
Falmouth,  
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boughtonscoffeeshouse.word-  
press.com

## Last orders for the barista balladeer

Starbucks has had a testing month, suffering the online broadcasting of a cynical song by a barista, telling of his experiences serving the public, followed by the national press reporting a barista allegedly telling a customer what he thought of her, and then a bizarre derogatory reference in the Korean press.

The barista who turned his grievances into song was one from California, following a particularly hard day. His undoing was in broadcasting the song on YouTube, dressed in nothing but his his green Starbucks uniform apron... the song was so popular, except perhaps understandably with his employer, that his five-year career as a barista came to an abrupt end.

What had impressed many people at the sharp end of the trade was that he put into words what many customer service staff feel: "I know you've had a sh\*\*ty day but so have I... I really don't want to care, but I get paid to try," he sang, adding: "It's just a cup of coffee. Give me a break. I shouldn't have to put up with this, making minimum wage".

According to later reports in the Californian press, he was surprisingly gracious about his dismissal. "I made this video not for the customer, whom I love deeply, and not for my managers, with whom I respect and appreciate, but for my fellow baristas," he wrote on StarbucksGossip.com. "If I was able to

provide just a few with some comedic relief after a stressful shift, then I can accept the consequences of my actions."



Meanwhile, in New York, a Starbucks customer claimed that on buying her usual frappuccino, and on pointing out that the barista had made a mistake in her order, she then found the word 'bitch' scrawled on the side of the takeaway cup. On complaining, she received vouchers for free coffee.

Even more bizarrely, the Chosunilbo paper of Korea has reported that eleven coffee suppliers have been caught 'falsely labelling the country of origin of their coffee beans'. The paper reports that several companies, including Starbucks, have (and we quote this directly) labelled their produce 'with different countries of origin on the front and back of their packages'.

What exactly is meant by that curious allegation is not clear, but the Korean customs authorities appear to have proposed a fine of around 2.1 billion Korean Won. The Won exchanges at not much below the dollar.

## Regional chain supports local roasting

**Boston Tea Party, the well-known coffee-house chain in the west of England, has chosen the Bristol-based roaster Extract to be the new supplier of its house coffee, and has said that the move will allow the chain to use high-grade coffee from the world's finest estates, rotated on the 'seasonal' principle which has become popular with many top-class coffee houses.**

Extract Coffee Roasters are a relatively new company, founded by David Faulkner. They will work together with Boston Tea Party's head of coffee, Andrew Tucker. "The new rotating house blend is built around a 70/30 split," says Andrew Tucker. "The 70 per cent will remain a constant of natural-processed Monte Christo from Datterra in Brazil, while we will use the remaining 30 per cent to explore different coffees on a seasonally changing basis. The blend to see us through until Christmas will use 30 per cent of a small farm from Nicaragua.

"We choose to offer two roasts as we always have done, and we will also be shifting to a whole bean decaf, and later introducing a whole filter brewing

service to our stores in December."

The choice of a relatively-small regional roaster endorses the growing importance of provincial speciality roasters to the regional café trade.

"We have ten sites now, with several more planned for the next six months," says Andrew Tucker. "Our volumes are therefore substantial, which definitely represents a big account for a small artisan roaster whose facility is based on hand-roasting, hand-packing and small batches.

"The topic of a whether a small regional roaster can supply a small-medium chain such as ours is a different debate - but I absolutely agree that they can."

The Big Coffee, a specialist convertor of coffee carts, has achieved two interesting deals. The most notable is to construct six Piaggio carts for a massive international soft drinks company, who are said to have got very annoyed when a local paper blew the secret of their new drink strategy; however, managing director Jason O'Neill suggests that the business could extend to thirty or more carts. The company has also constructed a cart for Jamie Oliver's restaurant in Islington - apparently the chef used to have a Piaggio Ape some years ago. Perhaps less glitzy, but equally interesting, is the business with Fred Longworth High School, which bought its own mobile coffee van as part of a project to teach pupils about business and marketing. One of the school staff had made the interesting point that schools are usually very tight for training space, and the mobile facility has effectively given them more room to work.



CNN, the international news network, has created what it believes to be a new coffee-house concept – the 'coffice', which is a business-led development of the old internet café. The customers are positively encouraged to use the venue as an office, and computers, printers, and other office equipment are all on hand, as are free wi-fi, and screens showing CNN world news content across different platforms, including a live feed on a large screen, and the latest CNN newswires on a digital ticker.

The idea comes from the realisation of just how many self-employed people and students now work at coffee shops, and Turner International, the owner of the CNN broadcasting network, has opened its first 'coffice', or 'coffee-office' in Seoul. "CNN Café is not just another coffee shop, but an information hub," said CNN.

The second version of a car partly powered by coffee waste has broken the Guinness World Record for land speed for vehicles running on organic waste, achieving a speed of 66.5mph. The Coffee Car is a modified Rover Sd1, which uses a 'gasification' system that burns wood and coffee grounds at a high temperature to produce fuel. The original attempt, a year previously, was created after the BBC wanted to design a car that would run on waste products, and (we quote) 'noticed that coffee shops were producing large quantities of used coffee granules'. The record clearly came after they moved from granules to roast-and-ground!



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## The acceptable taste of tarmac

Subjective rating is always a risky matter (which is why we don't do it at all!) and the Which? organisation has again ventured into dangerous territory in testing roast-and-ground coffees. In early October, they asked 'supermarkets and brands' to nominate an after-dinner coffee for a dinner party, and ran a blind-tasting.

The results, said Which?, showed that 'the most expensive aren't the best' – indeed, the joint winner was an Asda Fairtrade Colombian at £2.78 for 227gm, which tied for top with Taylors of Harrogate's Guatemala Cloud Forests (£3.59).

Of the next seven highest-rated coffees, five were supermarket own-labels. Apart from Taylors, the first 'specialist' coffee brand appeared only at no.10, with Cafedirect's Macchu Picchu, with Lavazza, Rombouts and Percol following.

As often happens in these things,

some of the accompanying text was a little curious, with the 'expert tasters' appearing to confuse espresso, filter, and various other terms. At one point, the report said 'the coffees tasted were all blends' – certainly not, said the roaster of Cafedirect's Macchu Picchu.

The most entertaining, if curious, comment was about Starbucks House Blend, which came 15th out of 16, with the accompanying remark: "this coffee was dominated by the dark roast which tasted burnt, and one expert described the aftertaste as 'tarmac'... none of the coffees were unacceptable, though."

## Suppliers see the practical value in opening up trade areas

There are several places where brands use a public coffee-house as their foyer or frontage - the front of the La Spaziale factory in Italy is a very classy café where even the local football stars hang out, and the entire reception area of the Java Republic roastery in Dublin is a public café.



Last month the Coffeetech Assist service organisation opened up its Insider café to the public for the Macmillan appeal - and several dozen locals who came in all said they wanted it open as a regular coffee house. It is quite noticeable how many supplier companies have now said to us that they are tempted by the idea of opening up their business premises in this way.

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## Create your own cafe wallpaper

By coincidence, two new companies have cropped up, both working on the concept of customised wallpaper for cafes and restaurants.

One concept was devised by a husband-and-wife team in Altrincham, and is available under the Oh Popsi Brand. The claim is 'any image, on any wall, any size' - this means an operator can create their own bespoke wall, using a fairly conventional roll-wallpaper product.

There is an image gallery of several thousand pictures to choose from, or the client can upload their own picture - domestic customers have created bedroom wallpaper from holiday snaps, but in a business situation, the aim can be to create atmosphere or put across a marketing message. A remarkable example is one in the bar area of the Morecambe football club, featuring the obvious great comedian.

The actual wallpaper comes in conventional roll widths, with a delivery time of around ten days, at a cost of around £30 per square metre. It is a

water-activated paper, which means that the roll is submerged for a few seconds before hanging. Once up, it is a wipe-clean item, and in time is easily removable.

Even newer, and due to launch at the end of this month, is Wall-A-Tac of Derbyshire. Again, the idea is a bespoke, peelable wallpaper that can be applied to walls, doors, windows and as we understand it, is easily moveable and removable. This is 'the ultimate in personalisation', says the company, allowing the operator's own photographs to be printed on a low tack self adhesive fabric that can be repositioned and reused, creating a 'bespoke backdrop'.

The material is flexible and very forgiving, the company tells us. Large images are supplied in rolls, can be treated as normal wallpaper, and any wrinkles can be smoothed out.

One of the biggest product advances in recent years has been the 'pyramid' tea-bag, a three-dimensional bag which allows leaves of a larger size than the conventional flat tea-bag, with what is argued to be a far superior brew and taste. There is now an even newer idea - the 'cube'.

This is a square six-sided bag, and is available from the Lu Lin range of Chinese teas. "Each tea cube contains premium whole leaf tea that is given enough space inside the cube to brew," says the company. "The cube will not lose its shape while brewing. This means you get the same great flavour from the whole leaf tea but with the ease that comes from a teabag."

Pyramid tea-bags are far more expensive than the conventional cheap flat kind, and the cubes are more expensive again - at retail, a box of eight Lu Lin bags costs £7.50. As is often the case with top quality teas, of course, each serving will steep and brew three or four times.



The winner of the British Smoothie Championships was Silvie Parcot from Crussh, with her Pomegranate Passion Pleasure smoothie which combined pomegranate, banana, mango, pineapple, pineapple juice, passion fruit and yogurt. The contest was sponsored by Magrini, in promotion of its Vitamix Quiet One blender - the winner received one as her prize.

# Barista contests – is this the year we attract public interest?

Is this the year that baristas of all levels will be involved? Is this the year that the event will help promote the trade to the public?

**Will this be the year in which the UK barista championship takes the role of the barista to national recognition in the media? Indeed, will this be the year in which the contest inspires interest from the tens of thousands who perform the barista role as a day job, but who remain outside the glory circle of the 'elite' baristas?**

The advantages of the UKBC are clear – it inspires pride in a craft, and encourages progress in quality. There is no doubt of its practical value to those working in coffee, and indeed the reigning champion said recently that every barista should try their hand at competition, for the value of the experience.

However, the event has never quite fulfilled its publicity potential.

The trade, it has often been argued, should grasp this opportunity to get the subject of speciality coffee into the heads of every consumer in the UK – but apart from the odd local newspaper story here and there, and the occasional novelty local-TV segment, it doesn't happen.

Equally, it has been argued, the high-street café trade should be enthused to an orgasmic degree... every barista should be inspired to think 'wow, I can do that!' But that does not happen.

Equally, the sponsors should take the chance to get their brands into the minds of every catering operator in the UK – and that doesn't happen, either.

Coffee House asked several people who have played a leading role in the great years of the championships – looking beyond the seventy or eighty who compete each year, how can the contest be used to inspire the rest of the trade, the media, and the public?

The UK barista championship has certainly had a chequered time of this over the last ten years.

At first, there were two contests – the Brasilia one was first to provide a UK entrant for the world finals, and he came fifth, though this is generally forgotten. At the same time, the Fracino company of Birmingham took on the responsibility, and a good deal of the expense, for the Speciality Coffee Association event, for which history has given it equally little credit.

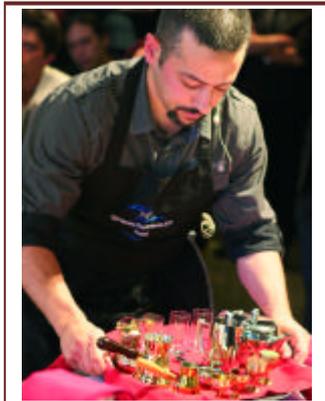
This lasted until a UK entrant came last in the world rankings, and in a coup, an assortment of industry leaders formed their own committee with the stated view of putting a Briton on top of the world – and succeeded, with the UK winning the world title in 2007 and 2009 (and a London-based Irishman taking the one in between).

And yet, the coffee trade, and our baristas, get little public recognition, other than the occasional newspaper running 'the UK's top ten coffee bars' when it runs out of other ideas.

There are those who say it is time for this aspect to change.

"Some people say it has 'lost it,'" agrees Steve Penk of La Spaziale, a main driver of the revolutionary effort some years ago. "There was a promotional vibe about it between 2004-2007, because that was the time of the quest to get the UK from the bottom to the top. I think after that, people lost enthusiasm.

"The problem with promoting it is that a barista contest is nowhere near as



*Although some of the big cafe chains consciously avoid the barista championships, some big names do support it - in one of the season's earliest contests, Ziadabin Nakhoul from Dublin Airport won this year's Caffè Ritazza barista championship, and will be put forward into the Irish national contest. Ziadabin served his signature drink Oriental Sensation, inspired by his native Middle East. It featured espresso accented with rose syrup, cardamom and fennel garnished with chocolate. Ziadabin came fifth in the World Coffee in Good Spirits contest this year, for coffee drinks which include an alcohol content.*

exciting as watching paint dry – it is not an audience event.

"It now needs some guerrilla marketing – this is no longer a table-decorating contest, and we can't approach it in a Victorian way any more."

For the whole trade to benefit from the experience, it is time to actively embrace all kinds of catering business, says Marco Olmi of Drury. He has directly supported several entrants from his client base over the years.

"It is not inclusive enough. There

should be more of an attempt to look wider – if there are a quarter of a million people in the UK who make espresso coffee as part of their living, then the entries really should be far more than seventy!

"If we truly look to get interest from every kind of coffee shop, not just the trendy ones, it would be so much better for all of us."

Another revolutionary who helped changed the face of the contest was Stephen Hurst, the 'coffee hunter' of the speciality importer Mercanta.

"We took it from a one-day event of a dozen baristas, to many regional barista events leading to a prestigious championship. Yet it has not moved from the novelty pages to mainstream. And the sponsors (like ourselves) have never quite got the bang for the buck that might have been deserved.

"Mainstream journalism still cannot comprehend the idea – it is a source of comic ridicule, as the professional barista is not seen in the same way as celebrity chef. What does the popular press still think? That Italians are the world's best baristas! Until we work to move ourselves away from the novelty coverage, we will not change that."

The aim was different originally, remarks Louie Salvoni of Espresso Service, who as head of Brasilia UK ran those first contests. Then, enthusiastic internal and external publicity deliberately supported each other.

"While I concede that the baristas' expertise has jumped dramatically since then, and the judging criteria now far exceeds anything we did, it has resulted in a soul-less competition. It does not make 'good telly'!

"An original aim was to get quality coffee recognised. We needed public pressure, so our competition was equally public-facing and trade-facing. Much of the interest we got from the trade was driven by the press we got in national newspapers, television and radio – why else would we hire a TV personality like Stuart Hall to host it? We had a centre-spread in a daily paper! (For the benefit of youngsters, Hall is a quite brilliant professional celebrity speaker who has done everything from the original *It's A Knockout* to radio football commentary).

"We need to get this kind of energy back into it," says Salvoni. "The espresso experience is something that is shared with people, not a chemical experiment performed in laboratory conditions. It has become too much for geeks and too inwardly focussed. We need less back-slapping and more looking outwards."

## Finals set for coffee fest

The finals of the next UK barista championship will be held as part of the London Coffee Festival, run by Allegra at the Old Truman Brewery from the 27th - 29th April 2012.

Questioned about the potential for publicity for the trade in general, Allegra's Jeffrey Young told us: "The Festival PR plan will integrate with that of the UKBC which hopefully will be a huge benefit in raising the profile of both events.

"The challenge of most associations such as the UKBC is that they are generally run by good-willed, but very busy volunteers who have day jobs to deal with. It is extremely difficult to retain continuity of operations year after year under these circumstances.

"With the 2012 Finals, the UKBC will have real and tangible support from Allegra Events whose day job is to organise such events. We will do our absolute best, and I am confident that it will all come together very well, to the benefit of the entire industry."

Proceeds from the public entry charges at the London festival this year were intended to support projects to bring clean water to coffee-growing areas of Africa, and in early October, Allegra wrote a cheque for £50,000 to the Water Aid charity for the first part of this work. The original aim was to raise a million pounds during a week, which Allegra has now revised into a long-term goal.

"The Allegra Foundation Charity has formally pledged £300,000 to Water Aid over the next two and a half years," says Jeffrey Young. "I was over-optimistic at first, but I do still feel that the million mark is in reach within the next few years."

Additional funds were to be raised from a voluntary 5p extra payment on coffees sold through participating coffee houses. This turned out not to be a major contributor.

"The contribution from the 5p project this year was quite small, as there were numerous barriers to getting staff and customers to understand it. We will do it again for those that want to join in, but we will focus more heavily on 'cause-related products', which is charity-speak for special products such as 'coffee of the day' or special cakes, where a larger amount would be added on.

"We will certainly create much more awareness with Festival-goers that they are actually contributing to clean water.

"This year we gave all proceeds from ticket sales to the cause, but very few of them actually knew that – in 2012 we will be donating 50 per cent of ticket sales to the cause, but this time we will ensure that every person who comes through the door knows that they are doing some good for people in coffee-producing countries."

In the coffee world, the British are an island. We do business with the Americans, we do business with the Italians. We don't understand many of them, and some of them don't understand us.

Cross-cultural business is a subject on which books have been written. And in coffee, one of the most cross-cultural workers of all is Lina Chiodo, vice-president of sales and marketing for Europe, Middle East and Africa, for Bunn, the American expert company in filter coffee brewers.

"I'm a Canadian of Italian descent - I feel in my being that I'm Italian, and I do not speak to my parents in English at all. My father is talented in languages, and taught himself Spanish. I'm fluent in five, but I learned them at university level."

That makes her fluent in four more than most Brits.

"Oh, the British are very good at the use of language - you're very good at adjectives. The reason Americans don't get your humour is that their humour is right-on, in your face, no dots to be connected... but English humour makes you think, which is why I love it."

"I live in Toronto, but it's always easier when I'm in your part of the world, because I'm in everyone's time zone, and the amount of work I can do before America wakes up is wonderful... and the Americans would have me in conference calls all day if they could."

How does a coffee professional deal with doing business in different countries?

"I believe that culturally speaking, whatever you are selling, you have to understand who you're selling at. There are cultural differences, and you must understand them and feel comfortable with them, because if you do, the discussions will be more open. Underneath, we're all more similar than we're different... getting to that point is a very enjoyable part of my job."

"When I first started with Bunn, I went to the Middle East for the first time, to a trade show. Now, I never consciously think 'I'm a woman', and certainly I never think of it as a hindrance. But the Middle East has a different way of thinking!"

"Now, I come from an Italian culture, so my colleagues wondered: 'how is this going to work? No man in the Middle East is going to talk to her!'"

"But I knew enough to realise that you have to 'feel' and respect a different culture. I knew enough to understand that in their culture, I could greet verbally, and also greet with the expression on my face, because people look for the eyes and the 'I see you', and they can read a genuine 'hello' on your face. But I knew I must pause for the man to extend his hand first, because in some countries, the men do not shake hands with women. And it all worked out fine."

Such things are truly important.

"Certainly, all the things like not showing the soles of your feet, are important. I don't kiss American customers on both cheeks - but in Europe I do."

"Culturally, Africa is different again, and then again within Africa. The African market is one that is ready to explode if only they can get rid of their internal problems. We have had great success there with the rise of filter coffee and ground coffee - they used to be instant drinkers, but now in Cape Town and Johannesburg, speciality coffee has really taken off. I was in East Africa in February, and if I could have taken a crate of Bunn equipment with me, I could have sold it all."

"I was at a French trade show which wanted our equipment for a convention. They had brought in a great barista serving great espresso. We thought 'nobody's going to want our filter coffee here'. So a Frenchman came up for a cup, and when I saw the look on his face, I thought he was going to complain. Of course, he didn't know I spoke his language, so

# Crossing coffee's cultural divides



The  
**COFFEE HOUSE**  
interview

... with Lina Chiodo

when he turned round to talk to his party, I heard him say: 'you've got to taste this filter coffee - it's really good!'"

Just about every British distributor of Italian espresso machines will, privately, confess that the Italians are virtually impossible to understand. How does Lina cope with them?

"You have to understand that Italians must, in all of their emotional life, express themselves first... and then they'll get down to business. I don't have any difficulty in Italy, but I do understand why people from other backgrounds may find them hard work!"

And the Brits?

"I have a soft spot for the British - I love the way the British poke fun at themselves, but I do worry that you put yourselves down too much. The British media also beats your country up - in Toronto, I always watch the BBC, and if you saw only that and read only the British media, you'd throw yourself off a bridge - you guys are really hard on yourselves!"

"I was recently out with some coffee people at a venue where both the coffee and the service was terrible. And of course, when the waiter asked if everything was OK, all the British said 'oh, it's lovely'. Truly British!"

Her great business problem in Britain must be that Bunn is essentially a filter coffee company, and the modern coffee world has gone through an espresso boom. Don't customers think she's in entirely the wrong business?

Lina laughs delightedly and accepts the point.

"Europeans are very conscious that Bunn are filter people in an espresso-driven market. However, when 'speciality coffee' people realise that as an Italian, I grew up on espresso, it does give me credibility."

But the market is turning back to filter and to brewbars - Bunn's time has surely come again.

How did the filter boom come about?

"When the crash happened and everyone was hanging on to their two pounds, they decided that

they would make sure they spent it on the best coffee they could buy. This highlighted to the consumer that they could get a really great coffee on the high street at the same price as an average cappuccino.

"Today, I say that I do not drink filter coffee, or that I drink espresso. I say I drink only quality coffee, and that's what Bunn is all about - getting the quality in the cup. We're having a lot of fun selling the Trifecta machine because of this." (The Trifecta is the machine which allows for complex micro-settings to get just the right extraction from a coffee).

"More people have now begun to appreciate the complexity of filter coffee, compared to the relatively limited tastes of espresso. We're doing a lot of 'tell us what you think' tests on filter coffee, and when we change the gramme-throw - and believe me, the USA is worse than the UK for using too low a dose of coffee - then the consumer picks out the taste of a 60gm dose over a 40gm dose, every single time. You put the right gramme throw in, and you'll get the difference between night and day."

"This is where the big swell in filter coffee is coming - the realisation that the right dose gives the best taste."

"But the low grammages some caterers still use are scary. The hotel situation is exasperating... it exasperates me that I have to leave a hotel and go outside to get a decent coffee, which is ludicrous. I have a constant discussion with the heads of hotels, where I say 'you have a captive audience, to whom you can charge what you like, so why won't you give me a good cup of coffee?' We are beginning to see some hotels brewing properly, but to prove to a food and beverage manager that if he uses more grammes, he will sell more coffee, is a tough process."

Culturally, Lina Chiodo is fascinated by the different tastes in beverage, and she has recently noticed a trend towards iced tea, a drink which has yet to take off in the UK. Bunn actually has a machine for brewing iced tea, which in itself is a cultural difference that surprises many Brits - but in the southern states of America, iced tea is brewed in great quantity, hence a machine.

"Like a coffee machine, you put the tea in a funnel and programme in the appropriate temperature and time. It is hot water that hits the tea leaves and extracts the flavour - then there is the addition of ambient-temperature water, and what you then have is a brewed tea which you can dispense over ice."

"In the southern states, they drink iced tea with a meal. At a German show this year, their high-end tea houses were coming along asking us to brew their tea. They were blown away with it, and I think this was a breakthrough for iced tea in Germany."

"In the Middle East, iced tea is a big trend, and they like it sweet, in the afternoon, but it has to be freshly-brewed, from leaves, filtered, and served over ice."

"They also like a cappuccino at two in the afternoon, which we wouldn't do in Italy - but then, I think people should do what their palate tells them to."

There is a slight pause as Lina Chiodo digests what she has just said, and qualifies it slightly.

"OK, we can see a shift towards iced tea in Europe - but I still have to say that in Italy, as an Italian, I was appalled to see the young generation ordering iced tea with their lunch!"

There are many Italian espresso machine makers, but the truth is that some are far bigger than others. A few make ten thousand or a little more. And some of the flashy names make less than two thousand.

And at the top of the pile are just a couple, like Cimbali, who make well over 30,000 machines a year. La Cimbali thinks it may have a 25 per cent market share in the UK, and 38 per cent of the world espresso market - they dominate some cities, with 4,500 machines in Milan alone, and 7,000 in Paris.

In 2012, it will be La Cimbali's centenary, and it is whispered that to mark it they will open the biggest espresso museum in the world, to be a history of the entire subject, at their headquarters outside Milan. It is supposed to be a secret - but senior directors of the company seem happy to refer to it as 'an open secret' and display the plans proudly.

The company already has its own museum on site, showing Cimbali machines from close to a hundred years back.

"The 1912 machine was more like a percolator, and everything stayed like that until 1945, when pressure came in, coffee changed, and the crema appeared," explains export director Luigi Morello. "Psychologically, something blonde was more appealing than something black!"

Back in the early days, there were three leading companies - La Cimbali, Faema and Gaggia. La Cimbali now owns Faema.

"The famous Faema E61 was named because there was an eclipse in 1961. They produced 100,000 of them, and we still make it - this year we shall produce 40,000, which shows just how important that machine was, although today it's not entirely practical because there's no room for cups, and there's a fixed steam wand.

"A similarly revolutionary thing was when Cimbali used water pressure to overcome the problem of the weight of the manual lever - this was the first machine where the barista could start the espresso going and turn round to pour a beer! This was also the first introduction of the espresso machine as a 'long box'." (The first super-automatic was also Cimbali's, in 1969, and it had one control - long or short!)

La Cimbali also now has 55 people working in R & D, and new ideas are constantly coming through. All espresso makers recommend water treatment, but La Cimbali is testing sodium ion exchange - in one very bad water area where machines previously had to be uplifted three times a year for descaling, they have virtually removed the problem. There is a new 'smart boiler' technology, in which the refilling is done in small increments - it makes a noticeable saving in energy.

The Ruveco Teck technology was an innovation to treat metals which came into contact with water, to avoid con-

# La Cimbali - from history to future



One of the first and greatest espresso machine brands continues to innovate

tamination in the drinks delivered. Some years ago, Cimbali was criticised by an employee of the EU, who alleged that 'heavy metals' were found in beverages served in the European parliament - the brand was cleared, but created a preventative system anyway. "It was innovation born out of potential danger," says the company, "and it does rather insure us against the problem that different parts of the world tend to have different attitudes to water treatment."



*"Two years ago, La Cimbali may not have been seen as important in every part of the market. Now - we are."*

- Luigi Morello

The company currently has its own staff testing a prototype home machine, with, remarkably, an on-demand grinder - the price range may be €1500.

Unusually for a traditional espresso machine, Cimbali has also moved into compact super-automatics, with the Q10.

"All the competitors in automatics are Swiss or German, who are traditionally behind us in espresso technology," remarks the company. "In automatic machines, stainless steel groups are a considerable plus over plastic ones, in heat resistance and longevity. It's always a good idea to find what a machine weighs - that tells you a lot about what's likely to be inside it!"

They will produce a capsule machine, and are known to have worked with one of the world's biggest names in soluble coffee, although they refuse to say what the project was.

An extremely unusual part of all this work is that La Cimbali makes virtually all of its parts in its own factory - there used to be no bought-in parts at all.

"We still keep the most strategic parts, the group, the boiler, and the heat exchangers. Making the boiler is, for us, a very strategic policy - the weight we want is better for temperature than a lighter one, and we have our own design for seating the safety valve, so for such reasons it is very important to us that we make them here. We are manufacturers, not assemblers!"

urements for temperature, pressure, and standards for analysing extraction - we were very impressed by this."

The other move has been to create a coffee cupping laboratory, taking advice from those on the sensory side of the business - typically, a visiting south American who has not only written a book on coffee and is a former world barista championship judge, but is also a doctor of physics, and who has been leading experiments on pressure-profiling.

"This is to provide a more objective viewpoint," explains Luigi Morello. "We realise the market is changing - if the coffee in the market is getting better every day, then the equipment must follow, to get the best in the cup. So our newest machines didn't start from a design, they started from the coffee.

"We are experimenting on how temperature, grind and pressure change the performance of coffee. Eighty per cent of this is in the grind and brewing, not in the roast - roasters ask our opinions on their coffee, and with traditional equipment, it was hard to follow this.

"Now, we say that it is the pressure which changes the parameters of flavour which are not changed by temperature. You don't have to be an expert to appreciate the difference this makes!"

The result, says La Cimbali, is that one of the great old names becomes even more significant.

"Two years ago, La Cimbali may not have been seen as important in every part of the market," remarks Luigi Morello. "Now - we are."

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One of the most surprising developments in espresso is soon to be unveiled by Rancilio, distributed in the UK by the Coffee Machine Company.

A massive topic in recent years has been the ability for machines to allow for the pressure to be adjusted up or down during the espresso shot. What Rancilio is going to do is allow adjustment of the water temperature during the shot.

When *Coffee House* put this facility to several other brands (without saying who was going to unveil it) the reaction was generally interested surprise. Some said they thought it impossible, some cynically noted that unintentional temperature variation was generally considered a failing of some cheaper machines, and that planned temperature control was unheard of... and virtually everyone said they couldn't understand why anyone would want to do it.

"The simple answer is that changing the temperature mid-shot changes the flavour of the coffee, profoundly," says Marco Olmi of the Coffee Machine Company. "Now, this can be good or bad depending on your coffee and how you brew it, but it certainly has a major effect."

"We see this primarily as a tool for the *n*th-wave of espresso, or whatever our cool friends are calling it this week, as it can radically transform the flavour of single-origin coffees."

"It has an effect on blends as well. We showed how different the same coffee blend tasted at Caffe Culture this year, and we did it again at the Lunch show."

"It can genuinely change the flavour of a coffee."

The process is called Xcelsius, and is referred to as 'temperature profiling'. The argument is that water temperature is the most important parameter determining the final taste and aroma in the cup.

There is, it turns out, some agreement on this, as we have discovered the results of some testing earlier this year. An American tester reported: "Rancilio set up several shots for me, some at a 'flat' temperature, some at a 'temperature-profiled' curve. The



## Temperature profiling

Pressure-profiling has become familiar in modern espresso machines – but what is the potential of adjusting the temperature while the shot is being pulled?

flavour differences on the temperature profiled shots were stunning and immediately noticeable, even to my relatively untrained palate.

"My first tasting shot was one pulled at a straight 201F (93.8C), while the second was a 201-193F (89.4C) shot. The flat 201F shot was very bright, with floral notes. In contrast, the temperature-profiled shot brought a completely different set of flavour notes, and a thicker consistency. This was an eye-opener for me."

Meanwhile, Rancilio in the UK has also been working on the 'workhorse' concept. In this, Marco Olmi quite happily acknowledges that his Classe 9 and 7 machines are outselling his top-line and bottom-line models.

"We have recently been talking a lot about 'the right machine for the job'. The Classe 9 does incorporate a lot of the features of our top-of-the-range machine, the Classe 10, and there's a 20 per cent price difference (£5,200 to £6,300) so it has cannibalised some sales, which is what we expected. We also have a really solid workhorse in the Classe 7, which we see as noticeably superior to the 'budget' machine

below that.

"So, we now see a lot of business happening in the 'workhorse' mid-range. We now see our range compressed to some core machines of which we expect to sell a lot, and two 'occasionals' - that's the very top and the very bottom!"

This is sensible for the trade, he says.

"I remember a rival supplier telling me that they went into one of the cool coffee bars that had an extremely expensive four-group machine which stretched from wall to wall. He said he wanted to meet the man who had sold such a machine into such a small site... so he could offer him a job!"

"In the UK, the truth is that you rarely need a four-group, unless you are either very lucky indeed with your site, or you simply 'want to make a statement'. For a supplier, overselling for the sake of it will bite you in the backside... sell what is right, and you keep your customers."

"Often, the workhorse machine can be the best machine of all for a busy mid-range site with reasonably competent baristas."

## Safety – the service trade is not pleased

There have been odd developments in the espresso-safety situation.

Another local authority has now laid down the law to cafes in its area. The Plymouth council has written to catering companies in the city reminding them of their obligations under the Pressure Systems Safety Regulations, and saying that inspectors will be calling to see their 'written scheme of inspection'. The first local authority to issue a similar warning to local caterers was the New Forest council, in the summer of 2011.

Meanwhile, a coffee business in Brighton has highlighted the curious case of the insurance company which has said it will not pay out on claims caused by coffee machine accidents, unless the machines are maintained by their nominated engineers - for which they would charge up to £75 a month for a service contract.

Several engineers were wary of this. One said: "I do wonder if the insurance company demanding that an operator use their engineers to maintain a machine is legal - can an insurance company tie in with a service company? It sounds like profiteering."

Maintenance companies and machine suppliers alike have pointed out that that they are still awaiting guidance from the Health and Safety Executive, which continues to deliberate on last year's explosion. The most recent word from the HSE is that they are awaiting results of 'testing to destruction' of espresso machines.

The suggestion has been made that the HSE might call a meeting of espresso machine suppliers and professional engineers to discuss their progress. When *Coffee House* put this to the HSE, it did not go down entirely well: we received a rather formal reply saying that 'when the investigations have been concluded we will communicate the findings'.

In general, the machine and service trades were disappointed with this.

"It would be a great thing if the HSE called a meeting of interested parties," said one supplier of a very famous brand"... but they won't."

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# Marco seeks to save space on the worktop

There is intriguing work afoot from Marco Beverage Systems, the Irish supplier which made its name with 'water boilers', before branching off into the top-tier 'geek' sector with the innovative Uber, the boiler with extremely precise temperature control for top-quality filter coffees.

It has been seen in the rise of the new 'brew bar' concept, in which baristas carefully make one filter cup at a time for each customer, in what Marco's Paul Stack refers to as 'the deconstructed coffee machine'.

"The trend for one-cup brewing is fuelled by the rise in the availability of excellent single origin coffees, a consumer desire for more transparency and an attempt to put more value in the cup.

"Machines delivered the need for coffee throughout the last half century. Fed with pre-ground, pre-dosed packs, the pourover and batch brewers delivered a cup of coffee whose origin, strength, extraction and flavour profile and quality was pre-determined in a coffee roaster's lab.

"Now the barista and the consumer are demanding an input into the cup quality, the flavour profile and a transparency into what's going on in there. This has led to 'the deconstructed coffee machine' - the machine has been replaced with individual component parts.

"The pourover brewer is replaced with a manual brewing device, a hot water system, a timer, weighing scales and a filter medium. All that is needed is a knowledgeable barista who understands what to do with these component parts.

"The barista and this 'laboratory' can deliver a damn fine cup of coffee or a cup of swill, dependant on skill."

The problem, he points out, is that the barista's 'cups per hour' are now



limited to human capability, and increases the cost per cup. More and more coffee houses are doing this than ever before, but a place will always remain for the batch brewer. The question is - what is the tipping-point that makes the choice between them?

Meanwhile, Marco is about to unveil something very useful. In the Uber boiler, the main 'works' were out of sight, and only the tap appeared on the worktop. The company's Eco-boiler, created as an energy-efficient water boiler designed to be environmentally friendly and save appreciable amounts in fuel costs, has always sat above a worktop.

Now there is an undercounter version of its Ecoboiler, and a new idea whose working name is the Pillar. The idea is to give far more flexibility of use in hot-water provision, in far less space than before.



*The 'iPod of the coffee industry' is the intriguing description of the new espresso capsule machine by Mokador Castellari, an Italian roaster. The machine is £450.00, and capsules are 27.5p each. "The size and quality is astonishing," says the importer, Daily Grind.*

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Although hand-brewed filter coffee is a major trend, there is sufficient interest in really good filter to move the product into areas where one-cup brewing just isn't possible, says Paul Hopkins of Melitta. His new Alpha F is an automated filter machine working from ground coffee.

"There is a ready-made market for fully automatic machines in businesses that cannot service a manual coffee operation," he says, "The demand for good coffee continues to grow, so it is sensible to find a way of providing it without relying on extra staff."

"It works with ground coffee - the filtering process is carried out inside the machine."

The curious aspect is that the machine has 'refill' and 'discard' options - this means that new brews can be created without waiting for the old one to be entirely gone, and also that when coffee has sat for too long to be satisfactory, it can easily be emptied and readied for a new brew.

"As a machine for high-volume users, it can be refilled in a time-frame that suits the operation. The type of user for this is likely to have very busy times and also quieter times. The machine can be programmed for anticipated busy times,



## Melitta creates a fully-auto filter machine

say a hotel breakfast service, then it can go through a pre-set clean and re-brew a smaller amount, maybe for an anticipated conference coffee break.

"But these programmes can be overridden. Fresh coffee is the aim, and so the discard of old coffee can be programmed in 10-minute increments, as far up as 300 minutes after the last brew... unlikely as that figure sounds in practice.

"No, of course, nobody would realistically use coffee that has been held that long, but in an extreme, it is just possible that it might have to be topped up many times before discard.

"There is a noticeable growth in filter methods through the cool/hip coffee shops, who are using one-cup-at-a-time methods - this is a convenient way of bringing some quantity into a filter offering."

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## Not for the Danish-pastry business

Eye-catching, isn't it? Coffeegeek, the biggest (and most opinionated) coffee forum on the Net, called this 'the best espresso machine in the world'.

With admirable practicality, the guys at Espresso Works say that for simply making a coffee, some people might not reckon this is worth well over five thousand pounds. But, they add, many espresso professionals value passion, style, doing things the best possible way and revelling in it!

"You use this fact in the same way an art gallery might draw in the crowds to see fine art," says the company. "Some people walk past without a glance, some are drawn. With the Kees, the barista is the artist, performing live."

That's the kind of language you expect from Italian marketers, but the Kees van der Westen is Dutch. The machines are hand-built to order, the factory deliberately re-engineers some industry-standard items to improve them, and Espresso Works is the UK distributor.

It is not for everybody, agrees the importer: "If you would rather be selling Danish pastries or sausage rolls... the Kees van der Westen is most likely not for you!"

In promoting his entry level Gaggia LC/D espresso machine, David Lawlor of Watermark issues a timely reminder of something which can be scary – the temptation for café owners to buy second-hand machines.

There actually was, in one of the recent 'how to open a coffee shop' books, the suggestion that money could be saved by buying a used espresso machine off Ebay (even hardened espresso engineers turned pale at the thought of the likely dangers of that one).

Second-hand equipment can be lottery, he says, not least because you don't know why the previous owner disposed of it - and the previous owner probably rejected it for a reason. By contrast, he argues, reliable manufacturers are now producing machines with deliberately stripped-down design, but robust and serviceable workings, which are a better bet.

The Gaggia LC/D is almost certainly not the prettiest machine the brand has ever produced, but David Lawlor says that the economics make sense.

"With second-hand, the operator pays less for the coffee machine on day one, but pays the service guy a lot more over the next few years. With an LC/D the purchase price is more on day one, but the prospect is much less in terms of servicing and repair, and

## The great value of the espresso workhorse



*The LC/D - perhaps not Gaggia's prettiest, but a workhorse*

you have a machine that will last 10 years or more."

Other makers of well-known brands also respect the concept of the 'workhorse'. There is a theory, put to us once by La Marzocco, which says that buyers should be allowed to test top-range machines, just to see what they can do... not all directly agree.

At La Spaziale, the champion of the 'temperature stability' concept, Steve Penk recently introduced a workhorse.

"One of my favourite maxims is that an espresso machine is not a magic wand. Don't constantly worry about the frills, when, if you put effort into cleanliness, freshness, and proper

grinds, you'll be better off!

"Our S2 is a price-fighter, designed to compete at the coalface, because I do need to meet certain other brands head-on in this price range. Our top-of-the-range S5 actually sells more, and it sells more in a week than the 'boutique brands' sell in a month!

"We class that as a 'top of mid-range' machine, and the S2 as the middle of mid-range. It's not a digital machine, but neither are many others. But it's a solid workhorse, and the price is about £1,000 less than our top end."

At Caffè Society, Steve Mooring distributes the Brasilia brand, and also believes in workhorses.

"I do better than La Marzocco. We always allow customers to test and taste from every model! Now, there isn't a machine which will last for ever, and you could argue that a top-end machine, with far more electronics, may warrant a higher price, but may have more to break down than a basic machine. There is nothing wrong with testing every top-line machine. But unless you're absolutely sure what you want, I always say – err on the side of caution."

## The fully-auto gets smaller... and tougher

The biggest argument in favour of modern fully automatic machines, says Florian Lehmann of WMF, is seen in the way that quick-service and fast-food retailers have latched on to the coffee boom.

"High street coffee shop chains told the public about quality coffee. Sectors like QSR have seen that hot beverages are highly lucrative and have managed to establish a good value for money offer. This has encouraged other sectors to introduce a coffee offer... so where previously only coffee shops had the credibility of a quality product, it is now also estab-



lished elsewhere... petrol forecourts are a prime example.

"These operators need to be confident in their coffee because peoples' expectations have increased. Just look at the QSR's that are outselling the more established coffee retailers, and you'll see they are using fully automatic coffee machines – you won't see a barista behind the counter!"

The WMF 2000S, his latest machine, has been designed to be a mid-range machine capable of handling 200 cups of coffee a day.

"Peak performance has always been the biggest challenge in the mid range. This embraces a lot in a very small footprint, but it can cope during peak times. We have developed a new hot water and boiler system and added innovations such as Plug & Clean, and dual milk operation as well as our new under-machine cooler.

WMF already offers features such as individual temperature settings for different drinks, and the facility to use three hoppers in one machine, so a drinks menu can include perhaps chocolate drinks and a decaf option.

This customisation to suit needs is vital, says Lehmann.

"We believe that you should always assess and consider both your current and future demand before you buy a coffee machine, rather than simply letting you have a Ferrari where you might only need a Fiat 500."

# The shape of sugar to come...

Yet again, the concept of personalisation has cropped up in the coffee world. This time, it is not just the question of exactly what message can be put on to a giveaway or non-profit item – it is the shape of that item as well.

In our recent feature, we highlighted the interesting development of the 'variable' message, or random number on the base of a takeaway cup. There is still the big argument between those who use a simple logo on a cup (and some – times not even a name, because Tapped and Packed in London simply uses a picture of a bicycle!) and those who want to convey a deliberate message.

Barry O'Dwyer of Brand Reminders is a firm advocate of really using the sugar pack creatively, and has said that there are countless ways in which the café trade could progress the use of printed sugar packs.

"We have ruffled feathers in this sector, and a good thing, too!" he says. "I'm the only one who will do limited numbers of sugar sticks. I also give prices within an hour, where you can wait a week for a quote from some of them... I pray that this level of service elsewhere will continue!"

There are, he says, creative ideas in sachet overprinting which are still missed.

"There are numerous examples where the retail trade are missing a trick. They buy from the wholesaler with the sugar manufacturer's name on the sachets or sticks – these are not free, so they are actually paying to promote another company, whereas they could make more use of the stick or sachet to promote their own business!"

"The messaging service could include opening hours, website, take-away service, delivery service, phone number, or seasonal promotions."

Equally, the concept of the round or shaped sachet remains virtually unknown.

"My proposal is to see if large sporting bodies or clubs could be interested in the round one as the shape lends itself perfectly to cricket, football, tennis, golf, basketball etc, with the required branding on the reverse side. The heart-shaped sachets have yet to be promoted within the UK. I do have plans to produce a generic message for occasions such as Valentine's day, and to wedding organisers, but it's early days yet."

Another undeveloped area is the concept of the giveaway consumable pack as a social service.

"The other big potential area for potential messaging on sugar packaging is 'cause-related marketing', which can benefit both business and society. We have been involved in this area producing sugar sachets that promoted a campaign message against domestic violence, together with a helpline number. The sachets were then freely distributed amongst clubs and bars in the borough concerned.

"We do helpline sugars, counselling sugars, maybe showing a number to call for something like a domes-

tic violence helpline, and a café may get these free when the sachets are paid for by perhaps the police or a support service. For the user, it's something which can be easily carried in a handbag and not be

noticed as a helpline number. We have also created barcodes which give you a secret helpline number.

"This type of approach is something other public authorities and councils could consider putting across their own cause related message directly into the hands of their target audience, and in these austere times at a fraction of the costs spent on more traditional media."



*These really are circular sugar sachets - in the right markets, the potential could be enormous*



*Technically possible, but virtually unknown in the trade - the shaped sugar sachet*



## After cups - the short-run personal glassware

The promotional glassware sector is a familiar marketing tactic in the beer world. The big recent advance, just as has happened in takeaway coffee cups, is that that minimum order quantities for 'decorated' beer mugs are now realistically low.

"This has only become possible in the last few years," says Graham Cheesborough of Festival Glass. "What we have done is produce a minimum order of 250 glasses, at a reasonable price. The big growth we are seeing is clearly coming from small operators who haven't been able to access printed glassware in small volumes."

Like paper cups, the matter of what is printed on the glass is a big subject. A message about an ale may turn a glass into an advertisement, and a reference to an event may make it collectable and saleable. "The price is quite low enough to enable most operators to offer their own collectable glass," says Cheesborough.

The promotional use of the KeepCup, the reusable coffee mug which is now available in

espresso-shot size, has not yet taken off in the UK - but here's an interesting use from the Geelong Cats, who we believe to be a team playing that strange kind of football they have in Australia. Twenty dollars from the club shop, if you please - that's about £13.



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As the weather changes, thoughts inside the cafe turn to the winter beverage menu, and how to create the 'house special' which will draw attention and be sufficiently profitable to be worthwhile.

The answer this year, say several companies, is going to be chai. Not surprisingly, all the potential suppliers disagree about the detail, but what they all do agree on is that chai is a versatile drink which can be used in several formats, and that the secret is to avoid an insipid and weak chai, but to produce one with distinctive flavour.

Amanda Hamilton has turned into something of a popular champion of the product since launching her Drink Me Chai company a few years back on the fairly-revolutionary theory that the Indian drink could be usefully recreated for the catering trade in an instant powdered format. The purists continue to rail against the entire concept, but the fact remains that she has taken it into half a dozen of the top café chains, and four of the biggest supermarkets.

She was also one of the first to dare to play around with the basic concept, and turn it into flavours - mango, peppermint, chocolate and vanilla variations. She then experimented with chai-based smoothies, shakes, and an iced version.

Essentially, Amanda tells us, chai can be the basis of several profitable variations for limited-editions and house specials.

"We had a very successful winter trading period last year with lime, but also our new mango chai which has

# Designing the winter beverage menu

Chai could be the very useful profitable ingredient of your winter deals - it turns out to be a remarkably versatile base that can be designed any way you want it



Beyond the Bean Zuma chai

proved to be popular."

A useful trick, she says, is to know that chai combines with several familiar flavoured syrups to create different chai lattes - a pumpkin chai latte uses a shot of flavoured syrup and steamed milk, topped either with whipped cream and chocolate shavings or orange sprinkles, or served flat with a dusting of cinnamon. The idea of the Santa's Gingerbread chai latte is very similar,

with gingerbread syrup, and again either a whipped cream or flat finish.

Indeed, chai itself can come as a syrup, and that's another format which doesn't impress the traditionalists. But John Taylerson of Malmesbury Syrups says that it was coffee houses who asked him to devise the product.

"We got involved in chai at the direct request of coffee-house clients in London - we were asked to offer as authentic a chai as we could, in syrup form. Why? Well, our trade customers wanted a sweet chai flavour 'instantly', and this is so much easier to make. Being aqueous means easier handling, better portion-control and most importantly, better mixing into a drink.

"Technically it should be used on its own in milk, but we see a lot of people using it to flavour coffee."

There is, of course, an entirely different view from the tea companies, who say that chai is at its best from the tea leaf and real pieces of spice and herb.

Clipper Teas agree with Drink Me Chai on the versatility of the product.

"Indian Chai is so interesting and versatile, because it is open to interpretation. In India, it changes from neighbourhood to neighbourhood and even from house to house... the blend of aromatic spices is always different, and the serving method varies."

In the UK, notes Clipper, the recipes available to the trade change almost as frequently, so it makes good sense for a coffee-house owner to compare several before deciding on a 'house chai'.

"Clipper chai has a very specific flavour profile - naturally aromatic spices, dried lemon peel with cinnamon and cloves. Quality of ingredients is vital to deliver the right warming taste intensity."

The brand also researched customer preferences in drinking it - seventy per cent preferred it milky, but 30 per cent liked it black, a large enough figure to show that a café should offer the choice and ask exactly how the customer would want it.

The concept of the 'chai latte' may possibly have been invented by Teapigs, the irreverent champion of the pyramid tea-bag.

"Offering a chai product this winter is a must for the coffee-house trade. With all the big chains offering a chai latte, we think customers will soon come to expect to see it on the menu of any decent café. We say offer a chai latte - but do it better, by using real ingredients rather than the syrups and powders that most café chains use. You will impress customers with a superior product. And it's easy!"

The thing to aim for is a 'natural' taste, says Teapigs.

"It all comes down to 'natural v. artificial'. Our spice comes from the cinnamon, cardamom pods, cloves, and ginger which add genuine flavour to the black tea base, rather than using a mix of artificial ingredient to simulate a chai.

"Our black tea base is a strong quality Assam which gives weight, rather than a thin watery taste. Whole-leaf Assam and real Indian spices deliver a natural chai that is full of flavour.

"Our chilli chai is simply a Teapigs twist - it adds a real kick. The UK consumers love spices and hot flavours, ours appeals to this desire.

"There are lots of ways to promote chai in cafes. It can be positioned as a 'winter special' or 'tea of the month', it can be paired up with a cinnamon-based cake and you can offer different varieties - chilli chai latte for the adventurous, spiced winter red tea (a rooibos chai blend) for no caffeine.

"And you can certainly charge more for a chai latte than you would an average cuppa."

Another 'pyramid' bagged chai is the one from Novus, distributed by Daily Grind, although there is an option to take this in pure loose-leaf. It is based on an English Breakfast Assam blend with cardamom, cinnamon and cloves.

"It's about presentation and quality," says Allan Pirret of Daily Grind. "I would present chai in a Moroccan-style glass, with a cinnamon stick to stir it -

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the waft of this aroma would get customers excited! Provided you go for a spiced chai with taste and punch, it will keep them coming back for more.

"I would aim for 5p-10p off your cappuccino price, I would always advocate sampling to generate interest, because it is cheap and effective and can have instant results. You should have a picture of the product with price and details at the till point, which allows staff the opportunity to push it. You could always combine chai with mince pies in a deal, and it certainly beats egg-nog!"

At Beyond the Bean, Paul Maxwell argues the origin of the spiced drink, but agrees that the concept lends itself to interesting and profitable drinks on a winter menu.

"True Indian chai is a sweet, milky tea made by pouring one teacup of water with a tea spoon of black loose leaf tea, sugar, and milk into a single pan that's then brought to the boil, strained and served. Sometimes ginger or cardamom is added but generally it's just a plain sweet, milky tea.

"The majority of chai sold in coffee shops comes from an American adaptation to give a creamy, spicy and rich hot drink that can contain all sorts of spices. So unless the café or coffee

shop is making an authentic Indian chai, it would be difficult to take the moral high ground when it comes to making chai from either powder or syrup.

"Our Zuma spiced chai has been developed to be accessible for the majority of people who are going to be unfamiliar with chai as a drink. We have worked hard to develop a rich, creamy taste with the warming, spicy aroma of ginger, cinnamon and nutmeg, and it's not too demanding on the palate. For those who find a spiced chai too hot, we have the option of Zuma vanilla chai. As always with Zuma, they are free from anything nasty and artificial and approved by the Vegetarian Society.

"Sweetbird also offers a chai syrup that gives all the flavour, just without the milk. This makes it ideal for those who are looking for a dairy free option as it works well with milk alternatives such as soya. It also works well in hot chocolate, because it gives a spicy punch filled with hints of ginger, cloves and cinnamon.

"A favourite chai option is the Dirty Chai - a single shot of espresso added to a Zuma spiced chai. You get all the caffeine of an espresso with the spicy notes of the chai."

**"You can certainly charge more for a chai latte than for an average cuppa."**

- Teapigs

## Christmas season curiosities...

**Christmas-themed coffees and flavours always crop up in the autumn, and the first to appear this year was the annual Christmas blend from Cherizena. Last year, the brand's Kate Jones told *Coffee House*, it was sufficiently popular that they shifted three quarters of a tonne of it.**

"Around a third of that went to trade customers, and while the majority was sold in shops or delis, the rest went to coffee shops.

"We found that the coffee shops took it to seasonalise their beverage menu with a limited-edition house special. Rich, dark roasts and 'warming' flavoured coffees, featuring flavours like cinnamon and spice flavours, go well in autumn and winter, so some coffee shops were offering special festive deals to their customers, such as a mince pie and a Christmas coffee - it gave them a point of difference from the coffee shop down the road."

The limited edition Christmas Coffee blend features Colombian Excelsior with rum, hazelnut, cinnamon, vanilla, orange and pecan nut flavours - the hazelnut and rum are new additions for this year's blend. It can be branded for trade customers, and is available in packs up to a kilo.

Cream Supplies is offering the Taylerson Christmas Cake syrup, which has some surprising uses. This has hints of dried fruits, nuts and

spices, marzipan and icing, and apart from the obvious use with coffee, it can combine with cream, yoghurt or custard; works to give extra depth of flavour to cakes, mulled wine and even baked apples, and can be drizzled over desserts.

This is by no means the most curious of the Taylerson winter line-up - there is now a chocolate and orange one. The syrup maker has been told that for legal reasons it can not be given a name similar to a certain chocolate and orange flat cake, nor to a kind of round chocolate and orange product.

"After much deliberation we have settled on a novel, safer and legally accurate name," says the company. "We call it Chocolate Orange Flavoured Syrup."

A similar combination is behind the latest limited-edition Byron Bay cookie, now out for winter. This is the Dark Chocolate Orange Cookie, and the company say it took months of work to marry dark European chocolate with a citrus punch - each cookie is now 30 per cent dark chocolate chunks with a hint of orange zest.

"With extensive taste testing we are confident that we have the perfect winter accompaniment for any tea, coffee or hot chocolate," says the company, but there is another idea. "The cookie works well with a toffee apple hot chocolate, using Sweetbird syrup and Zuma Fairtrade chocolate."

# Drink Me Chai







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## Police back down over display of texts in Christian coffee-house

The delicate question of what themed material can safely be displayed in a public building has been highlighted by the strange case of the owner of a Christian coffee house, who was questioned by police over the display of Bible verses in his premises.

The café is the Salt and Light in Blackpool – the name is a reference from the sermon on the mount, referring to how followers should behave in the world, and the café would be recognisable by anyone of that faith as a Christian-run business.

The café features a continuous video display of verses from the Bible; the sound is turned down, and texts are shown over 'calming' pictures.

Police who visited the café allegedly told the owner, Jamie Murray, that they had received a complaint from a woman customer who had found the texts 'insulting', that displaying offensive words is a breach of Section 5 of the Public Order Act, and told him to stop the display. However, the police later told the local press they were investigating a possible Section 29E offence, which outlaws the broadcasting of offensive material intended to stir up homophobic hatred.

A legal representative for the Christian Institute responded that simply displaying Bible texts in a Christian café does not fall within the scope of either offence, that the officers could not specify which texts in particular had caused any problem, had failed to even look at the material that allegedly caused offence, and had given the café owner no opportunity to refute the

allegation or explain his position. They simply told him to stop the display or face prosecution.

The owner, Jamie Murray, said: "I couldn't believe it - the officers were quite aggressive."

(Mr Murray said he later guessed that the complaint may have arisen through texts from the Book of Romans that had been playing the previous week; in that book, the apostle Paul criticises certain sexual behaviour.)

After criticism in the local press, the police again visited the café, and apologised for the manner of the investigation, although they denied demanding that Bible texts should not be shown.

The wider implications of the matter, it has been pointed out, are that while many public businesses already consider it unwise to proclaim allegiances too blatantly – using specific football club motifs, for example – the question of what is 'offensive' is still virtually impossible to define.

The café owner himself contributed the best comment to arise from the whole matter:

"If a customer dislikes something about a café, the right response is to take their custom elsewhere - not dial 999!"

Woolley Edge South services, on the M1 at Wakefield, has been named as the UK's top motorway coffee shop - we think it's a Costa. The *Guardian's* super report tells us that the café sits right above the mine where union leader Arthur Scargill used to work, but also warns that the same area was the subject of a spoof by food writer Clement Freud, who got revenge for poor service in a nearby buffet by naming it in print as one of the five greatest eating places in the world. As the *Guardian* dryly reported: 'chaos ensued'.

Kaldi enjoyed *Shortlist* magazine for reporting the best coffee-house discount offer we, they, or indeed anyone else has ever seen. They have published the opening leaflet for a coffee-house in Glasgow which proclaimed: 'Opening offer - 100 per cent off freshly-prepared food!'

Kaldi is equally obliged to the news channel of Boston, USA, for a story this month which concerns a classic American coffee reference. The news media reported that the town's metro was completely shut down for an hour, while police investigated a bomb scare. It turned out that the suspicious equipment was a commuter's personal coffee-maker, which he had dared to plug into one of the power sockets used by cleaners. One member of the public demanded to know why, once the police had found the reason, the trains were still shut down for an hour. The Boston press retorted, with glorious acidity, that once the American police had found a coffee maker, they did of course go off in search of donuts...

From My Coffee Stop, the coffee bar on Enfield station, comes this one: a guy buying train coffee declines the plastic lid, but the server says: "You have to, it's health and safety". The customer retorted: "I've just come back from Afghanistan – I'll risk it!"

From the co-owner of Princi, the Italian bakery and coffee-house which has branches in Milan and London, comes this: Yogi Bear ordered a pizza. The waitress asked, "How many pieces do you want your pie cut into?" Yogi responded, "Four. I don't think I could eat eight..."



# Kaldi

winter limited edition

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