

Boughton's

COFFEE HOUSE



Scoop Malone, the top writer in the beverage trade press, here each month with all the news that counts!

March 2012

Regional coffee festivals are on the up

The concept of out-of-London coffee festivals continues to grow – it has been confirmed that the Bath festival will be back in 2013 after an enforced break this year, and plans are already under way for a repeat of this year's successful Norwich event. The newest one will be in the home counties, and in a stately home - it will be the Indie Coffee, Tea and Chocolate Festival, which will run on the 29th-30th September at Waddesdon Manor, near Aylesbury.

The event is being run by Elliot Wallis of Monkshood Coffee, which is both a coffee supplier and an events caterer, trading from two VW vans.

"There will be no big companies at our event," Elliot Wallis told *Coffee House*. "Several small companies like us have been left disillusioned by the kind of event where the big companies can afford to give out no end of coffee, while we're trying to sell it.

"We have suggested that it would be easy for independent companies like us to do it for ourselves.

"We are concentrating on the 'holy trinity' of beverages, coffee, tea and chocolate. We're going to be very strict on who takes part – exhibitors will have to be those who own and run their own company."

The venue is a big stately home, partly owned by the National Trust. It has immense grounds, to which festival-goers will have free access, and the event will be held in the Glass House, a big covered area. The venue has a track record in food festivals.

"Waddesdon always seems to attract vast numbers," said Elliot Wallis. "Their Christmas bazaar drew 23,000 in seven days! It's a different demographic to other festivals, it's a very central and easy-to-read venue, and it's not expensive at all – exhibitors will cover

their costs very quickly."

By coincidence, the Thame food festival is on the same weekend, and so we expect to do some joint marketing, so that people will go to them one day and us the other day. This is a whole new untapped part of the world for a coffee festival."

As with the recent Norwich festival, charges for exhibitors are minimal – tens of pounds rather than thousands. However, exhibitors will have to prove that they have something individual to offer.

"The intention is to build a new out-

of-London event, to be built on year-on-year. We're looking for specialists, not direct competitors, and we don't want lots of stands showing the same thing but with different labels.

"So we shall have several tea companies, but they will all be showing different teas. We shall have several coffee companies, but they will probably be showing different origins and different brewing methods.

"We want the very finest producers, creators and artisans, and we want to give the public an insight to the speciality, gourmet industry."



The Norwegian 'kitchen barista', Torstein Bjorklund, has created what he tells us is now 'the most high quality coffee film' in the coffee training sector. Most unusually, this is aimed at the domestic market – it is a full 45-minute instructional film designed to teach home consumers how to make good coffee. There is a launch campaign to consumers which offers the digital download version for £6.99, and there is a DVD version. For himself is an actor, which perhaps accounts for the fact that his speech on the film sounds remarkably British, but he does have one very notable qualification as a barista – he trained in one of the world's most northerly coffee bars, sitting above the arctic circle, and in a championship in his native country, he once came out ahead of the national coffee hero Tim Wendelboe! Details: <http://thekitchenbarista.com>

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ON...

This month's tea - page 9

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The flavoured syrup brand Monin will celebrate its centenary this year, and intends to ask the trade and the general public for ideas for new flavours. The brand has done something like this before - last year it asked its own staff for suggestions, and received 40 new development ideas. Monin has doubled production during the past five years, and sold 40 million bottles in 2011.

An intriguing story comes from the Clissold Park Café, in Stoke Newington, on the dangers of going too upmarket. They dropped traditional food from their menu, and introduced things like couscous with spiced carrots and chorizo and chick-pea stew. A local pressure group protested and even the Evening Standard's restaurant critic gave the new menu a bashing, as a result of which the operators have brought back cheese on toast, sausage and mash and pasta, and sandwiches with simpler fillings such as cheese and pickle. The manager pragmatically said that he would always look at what sells and what doesn't, but continued to refuse to serve chips on health grounds.

Smallholders in Nicaragua will benefit from a Big Lottery Fund grant. Twin, which was a pioneer of the Fairtrade movement and is involved in such brands as Cafedirect and Divine, has received £504,909 to run a project in Nicaragua in which small-holder coffee farmers will adapt their production systems and build resilience to climate change threats, and will also be trained in 'price risk management' in a volatile market. The intention is to then establish a premium coffee brand based on environmental credentials. Ten thousand coffee-farming families will be affected.

A venture capital firm is seeking investors in what is described as 'a British producer of single-serve coffee capsules', citing a market worth twelve billion euros. A company called CafePod - which we think is not the Scottish supplier of the same name - is said to have invested in production facilities and established a partnership with a major British coffee roaster, and to be 'currently engaging with leading retailers, coffee brands and high street coffee with regards to product development and distribution networks'. The manufacturing site is said to be in north Lincolnshire. The management team includes a former Starbucks marketing manager.

Meanwhile, Tchibo has told the financial press in Germany that it sees its future in capsules. There is a new single-serve coffee maker which has deliberately been pitched against Nespresso, and priced at 99 euros.

The Hungry Hobbit café, which we recently reported to have come under fire from the holders to the rights of works by JRR Tolkien, may have discovered a way to avoid legal action - it is suggested that a simple spelling

change, to Hungry 'Obbit, or putting one 'b' back to front as in the Abba logo, may see off a challenge from the lawyers. Perhaps rather pompously, the lawyers have said that trademark law dictated the firm 'had' to act against infringements of its brands. The café owner has said the lawyers are 'sad and petty', and it has been pointed out that attacking business in the area where the author grew up might not be the most respectful attitude to his legacy. The same lawyers have also threatened a pub in the south of England, which is being defended by the actor Stephen Fry, who has called the action 'self-defeating bullying'.

It is now very common for coffee companies to open up subscription accounts, by which their private customers receive samples of different coffees every month. The process has moved to tea, from the Tea Horse brand. The Tea Horse Taster boxes, at £11.95 a month, offer four 15gm or 20gm packs (depending on the size of leaf) and 40 bio-degradable, unbleached throwaway filter brewing bags. A typical month's delivery, such as April, is a first-flush Darjeeling, a Lapsang Souchong, a black tea Ceylon and a Japanese sencha.

The latest coffee shop in the busy area of Bath will be the Society Café, the first of a proposed chain by the former owners of the Dial House hotel in the Cotswolds. Adrian and Jane Campbell-Howard will open in Kingsmead Square on 26 March, with a view to a second site in Bath next year and two in Bristol by 2014. The concept is described as 'urban living space designed with all of us in mind - come park your bike, buggy, dog, and also feed your mind with art house books and magazines, exhibitions, from time to time artists in residence'.

Three Suffolk coffee shops worked together on a fundraising idea for Suffolk Breakthrough Breast Cancer, timed for Mothers' day. The Coffee House in Bury St Edmunds, Wild Strawberry in Woodbridge, and Saints in Ipswich all put up customers' personal messages to their mothers in their windows, for a charge of £1 each. A volunteer fundraiser came up with the idea in the Coffee House, and remarked: "as a county of coffee drinkers we probably end up saying thank you more times to our local barista than our mums, so through a simple handwritten message we could show how much we care."

The 75th anniversary of Bettys Café Tea Rooms, York, will be celebrated at a unique afternoon tea on Thursday, April 26th. Customers will see a presentation in costume by The History Wardrobe, entitled Tea Gowns and Tea Time, showing how an afternoon tea party would have been held in the 1930s.

New brewer claims filter coffee in 'a fraction of the usual time'

Following our report last month about a machine which claimed to brew tea faster than other methods, we now have news of a new coffee machine which makes a similar claim. Strix says it has patented its Waterfall coffee brewing technology, which it says will 'transform' the coffee-maker market, and that the system produces brewed coffee 'in only a fraction of the time' expected.

The first appliance to feature this patented system is the Morphy Richards Cascata domestic coffee maker, but Strix says it will shortly introduce another machine for commercial and catering use.

The system circulates water through the grounds at the user's chosen temperature and brew time, and operates rather like a conventional pourover, but the maker says it achieves separation of brewed coffee and spent grounds, and avoids 'stewing'.

When challenged by this magazine over the claim that the brewing of coffee can be speeded up so dramatically, Strix' marketing manager Nick Mawby replied:

"The user selects the correct temperature (85°C or 95°C) for their chosen grounds and the length of brew cycle. The water is quickly heated using a high-power element to the correct temperature, which is electronically measured for accuracy - most coffee makers use less accurate mechanical methods. Crucially, the heating element is then turned off and the hot water is circulated via a pump through the handle and into the grounds in the specially shaped brew basket.

"The water outlet and brew basket design is optimised to have the great-



est agitation of the grounds and optimum coffee/water contact time, akin to stirring a cafetiere, which results in much more efficient extraction than from a drip filter system, where the grounds are not agitated.

"When the chosen brew cycle has been completed the pump switches off and the grounds are retained in the basket, preventing further brewing or over-extraction. Our testing of the system in development showed excellent rates of Total Dissolved Solids and both Morphy Richards and ourselves conducted extensive consumer testing before launching, so we are both very confident in the machine's ability to make great coffee."

Hayley invites a prince for coffee



Hayley Draper of the Window in Norwich, which uses the tag of 'Britain's smallest coffee shop' appeared on the Alan Titchmarsh TV show in mid-March. She had been invited to speak about the help she has gained from the Prince's Trust, before a big awards ceremony in London. Hayley told us beforehand that she would invite the Prince for coffee - and she did. "Hanging out in the green room with all the celebs and spreading the word about my coffee shop made such a change from brewing coffee all day," she told us afterwards. "Then I met Prince Charles... he said he would do his best to visit one day when he is next in our area, and it turns out he loves coffee too!"

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New trade association co-ordinator envisions a united industry

A storm of perhaps unexpected enthusiasm has greeted the appointment of Lynsey Harley as the new UK National Co-ordinator of the Speciality Coffee Association of Europe.

There was a most unusual amount of interest in the recent election for the position, more than is usually expected for a trade association post.

This was because the winning candidate is an extremely well-known barista, competition entrant, trainer, and advocate of industry training.

Members of the barista and roaster sectors of the trade took part in what was probably an unprecedented social networking campaign in support of her candidacy, as a result of which it is reported that she won the position by 'a landslide'.

The reaction to the result was again a more enthusiastic one than is usual for a trade association appointment – 'let the revolution begin!' was one barista's comment on Twitter.

Other views on the social networking site suggested that SCAE members were voting for change, and a typically interesting one was from a company who wrote that as a result of the election, they might now re-join the association.

Lynsey's stated intention in running for office was to organise events, talks, and education, and to 'utilise the wealth of knowledge and expertise we have in the UK to bring the industry forward in leaps and bounds'.

This fits with the generally stated objectives of the SCAE, who will welcome such an enthusiastic recruit.

"Some of the plans are still to be finalised, but I have all the ideas ready to roll out," she said after the election.

"The UK coffee scene is one of the best, if not the best, in the world. However, we need more events, education, etc, where like-minded people can get together, share ideas and make things happen.

"Too much of the current focus is on competitions, which are great and create a buzz, but not all members compete, and therefore we need to engage with other members and offer some-



Lynsey Harley

thing to them which will keep them interested."

In this, she has acknowledged that there are many different levels to the trade, from the 'elite' baristas and roasters to the everyday high-street coffee-shop staff, who have to be approached with equal respect.

"Making decent coffee is absolutely key to our industry, and that's from Mr Smith my next door neighbour, my local high street chain, to the specialist independents. If everyone learns a little, makes tastier coffee, then it's only natural that people will migrate towards the more speciality end, which would be a win for the SCAE.

"There's a lot of myths out there about making great coffee, and the education will hopefully clear up a few of these."

Lynsey is currently employed by United Coffee.

"I have the full support of United Coffee to fulfil this role, and this was key to my decision.

"But I will have a committee in place to assist in the quest of taking the SCAE in the UK to a new level - this committee will be made up of a mix of people, from a whole range of companies and angles of the UK coffee industry... my aim is to unite the UK coffee industry."

Will Britain really decline as a tea-drinking nation?

The Food & Agriculture Organisation, a UN agency, has predicted that British tea consumption will continue to decline – in nine years' time, we will drink fifteen per cent less of it than we did in 2006.

In that year, we imported 136 million tonnes of it, but last year we brought in only 119.2 million tonnes, and this trend is expected to continue. And yet, tea prices will stay high, because world demand continues to be higher than supply, says the FAO's intergovernmental tea group.

Total world tea production increased by four per cent in 2010, but consumption increased by 5.6 percent in 2010, with big rises in China and India. World green tea production is expected to grow much faster than black tea, the group said - again, this reflects significant anticipated growth in China.

For all our tea-drinking history, Britain is the only one of 39 named major tea-consuming countries which will see a continuing drop in consumption, said the FAO forecast. And yet, we will still be the biggest tea-drinkers per head by 2021.

The celebrity-mad sections of the press have been having fun with the story that Victoria Beckham consumed nothing but her own peppermint tea on an 11-hour flight to Los Angeles. In one of those reports which sounds suspiciously as if it was made up, one paper said that 'fellow first-class passengers were left stunned' when the star produced her own tea-bags and asked only for hot water. The Teapigs company said they were not stunned, but rather pleased - apparently it was their tea.

The new Vanilla coffee shop at Millhouses, Yorkshire, is run by two nurses, who apparently used to share the dream of opening a café while on the wards. Suze Goodman and Sheila Clapham have told their local paper that "there's a big cross-over between looking after patients and keeping customers happy - nurse training makes perfect coffee shop training!" It probably also explains the appearance on their menu of Horlicks and Ovaltine.

There is to be a new Chocolate Café in Skegness, as a second site operated by the town's Hames Chocolates. A director of Hames said that the new business would offer speciality beverages, beside a Chocolate Theatre in which customers can watch chocolatiers at work. There will be regular tasting sessions.

There has been another scalding incident - an air ambulance was called out to a supermarket café in Evesham where an 18-month-old boy

suffered burns to his body from spilled coffee.

Small cafes and restaurants in Gloucester have been targeted by the pupils of Balcarras, a local sixth-form college whose Young Enterprise team have been working on a fruit drink made from baobab, which is grown in the horn of Africa. Students have created the Super Froo-Tea brand, which consists of five grams of baobab in each tea bag - it contains six times more vitamin C than oranges and six times more potassium than bananas. A percentage of profits go to Practical Action, a charity which supports independent farmers in Africa.

It is an idea which has been often suggested, but Hartlepool borough council has approved plans to open a commercial café inside a local cemetery.

The Dorset Coffee Company is going to be moving, nearer owner Nigel Green's home in Maiden Newton. An intention for the new premises is to give as many educational sessions as possible, without charge. "We want to do this in a better way that involves us more with our customers' businesses," says Nigel Green, "because what we find is - people do want to know!" An interesting aspect of the move will be shifting the company's 15-kilo Probat roaster and their 1949 five-kilo Probat. The current roastery has a small entrance, and the equipment only got in there by brute force - it will probably have to come out the same way!

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The party chief in Pu'er city, which carries the name of one of the world's most famous teas, has announced that he wants to promote his region's coffee as well. About 60 per cent of the 40,000 tons of coffee produced in China last year came from the Pu'er area of Yunnan province. The local administrator wants to expand the coffee plantations by around a third this year, and double it within three years. "Many people also don't know that Yunnan actually produces very good coffee," he said. "Even we didn't." Nescafe and Kraft have bought the area's coffee, and last year the city government signed a memorandum of understanding with Starbucks, who will manage a local demonstration farm. This has paid for coffee to be roasted in the area for the first time, and the city fathers now see their future in selling processed coffee.

A fascinating mission statement is an interesting feature of the new Milk coffee bar in Balham, London. The café is run by actors Lauren Heaphy and Julian Porter, and their interesting mission statement refers to 'longing for a yesterday when apples came from trees, bread from the baker, and vacuum cleaners outlived their warranty... we believe in a non-disposable future made from a wooden spoon from grandma's recipe. And yes, you can lick the bowl!'

A café owner in Croydon has been fined £4,500, plus a £1,500 contribution towards costs, after inspectors

found cockroaches in his kitchen. Croydon Council's cabinet member for community safety said: "It is hoped that others will take heed of the heavy financial penalty levied against this cafe owner."

The girl who starred in the original Gold Blend advertisements, actress Sharon Maughan can now smell her coffee. She lost her sense of smell a year ago, but while promoting Cool Earth coffee, which supports the Amazon rainforest, her sense of smell mysteriously returned.

Coffeeman Devon of Kingkerswell has opened its own coffee school, having won accreditation to run the C&G course in barista skills.

Mike Riley, former Head of Coffee at Taylor's of Harrogate, has opened his Kipanga Coffee Consultancy. He proposes to import coffee beans for the small-roaster sector.

A new artisan tea and coffee bar in Norwich has been set up to champion the cause of local businesses – everything served up in the Union Yard tea and coffee bar, run by Steven and Hannah Winter, is supplied from Norfolk.

Another Norwich cafe owner added an extra challenge to last month's pancake day - Chris Avey of the Old Bakery Cafe entertained customers by flipping pancakes while unicycling. With great honesty, he said that he rarely caught two in a row!



One of Starbucks' new store designs, in Amsterdam

Starbucks' attempts to get friendly are derided

In a series of stories which intrigued the coffee trade, the daily press's business and food writers appear to have completely missed the point of a new project in which Starbucks decided that it would from now on write a customer's name on the side of a coffee cup instead of just a code for a drink.

In the middle of March, Starbucks announced that it would give away free lattes on one Wednesday morning to all customers who introduced themselves by name.

"Have you noticed how everything seems a little impersonal nowadays?", the company asked. "We've all become reference numbers and IP addresses. From now on, we won't refer to you as a 'latte' or a 'mocha', but instead as your folks intended: by your name." The chain then followed this up by a TV commercial in which a 'friendly voice' (their description!) pursued the same theme.

The result was astonishing, and not just because there were 350,000 giveaways as a result. A BBC story online received 889 viewers' comments almost instantly. A very high number of people from the coffee trade made their views known on Twitter, with opinions which we cannot politely reproduce here, but which generally suggested that independent coffee shops already know their customers.

One serious daily paper ran a big story taking opinions from customer-service experts and a professor of marketing (we didn't know such a title existed!) about the practice of calling customers by name, and whether or not customers like that.

By contrast, one of the few who got the real point was Richard Heitmann, sales director of the J2 company, an EPOS specialist. Writing the name, he agreed, got round a known problem at the delivery point.

"What you see at some Starbucks sites is several people are all reaching for the same drink - 'that's mine!', and everybody gets frustrated.

"Very few of our big coffee houses have developed an efficient method, and I do think that it's worth suggesting to some coffee houses that they consider a change."

Meanwhile, Starbucks achieved

almost as much interest from the rest of the trade with the announcement that it would now re-launch its house latte by training 10,000 baristas to put an extra espresso shot in the drink, and to use a 'revolutionary milk steaming pitcher', designed by Starbucks, which 'spins and folds milk to velvety perfection every time'.

Starbucks said it 'has noticed UK customers adding more coffee in recent years', and that in trials, customers said they preferred the new double-shot version, and appreciated the value of the extra free shot, which Starbucks said was worth 35p.

When asked by *Coffee House* whether Starbucks had not simply realised, quite late, that it was using too little coffee, the company did not reply.

Meanwhile, Starbucks recently said that it proposed to increase its estate of 700 cafes to over 1,000 in the next five years, and showed pictures of its latest new store designs (above).

One of Starbucks' more unusual new designs has cropped up in Japan, and is made from 2,000 wooden sticks weaved together to provide 'a tranquil space' and to match a nearby shrine, which itself attracts over two million visitors a year.

The cafe can be easily disassembled and put together somewhere else, says the architect.

Starbucks has also now opened the first of its proposed chain of juice bars in America.



Starbucks Japanese shrine cafe



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HSE investigation carries on

There has been an extremely curious development in the espresso-machine explosion saga. The trade will remember that a machine exploded in a Sainsbury's café, sending several people to hospital, and that the HSE has now been investigating the matter for quite a long time.

The latest thing to happen is that the Elektra machine company of Italy have circulated a letter sent to them by the RSA insurance company, which says, in effect, that the machine from the Sainsbury's incident has been investigated and found to be in 'good order', and that Elektra carries no liability for the accident. There are actually a couple of letters in existence written by RSA, a couple of months apart, which appear to say slightly different things.

Together with a few curiosities in translation, some because of letters written in English by company officers in Italy, it is difficult to establish exactly what the insurers mean in their explanation of the cause of the explosion, and therefore we are reluctant to reproduce the contents.

However, the insurer's decision seems to have come as a surprise to the HSE in Britain. The HSE has refused to comment in detail, but has told us that the letter has been passed to those involved in 'the current and ongoing' HSE investigation. The words 'current and ongoing' were underlined.

However, the HSE's principal inspector on the matter will retire at the end of March, so a new man will now have to be brought to continue the investigation.

We also now learn that a technical seminar on the subject of pressure vessels is to be held for environmental health officers in Hampshire, so that they can appreciate the relevance to espresso machines in catering situations.

Roy Ireland brings in 'scrappage'

The Roy Ireland Espresso Services engineering company has devised an 'espresso machine scrappage scheme', based largely on the motor vehicle scheme which the government introduced in 2009. Ireland is offering beverage operators an incentive to give up their old machine for disposal, in the form of discounts on new Rancilio equipment - the discounts go from £450 to £1,000. "It's an incentive designed to help people get rid of the really decrepit machines out there," Roy Ireland told us. "Obviously we wouldn't encourage it with machines that are perfectly repairable, but we have seen some shockers, including some features we're pretty sure aren't allowed any more. If there are any parts salvageable we keep them for other older out-of-production machines, and we send any metal for recycling. It seems fair that the customer gets rewarded for getting rid of a machine that may have turned into a bit of a money pit for them."

Clipper Teas, the Fairtrade tea brand, has been acquired by Wessanen, a European organic foods specialist which operates in France, the Benelux, the UK, Germany and Italy, with a turnover of 706 million euros. Patrick Cairns, Wessanen's chief executive in the UK, said there is 'huge growth potential' for Clipper, both domestically and overseas. Clipper will be integrated into the UK businesses of Wessanen which currently includes Kallo Foods Ltd, which has natural and organic brands including Kallo and Whole Earth. Clipper was the first tea in the UK to carry the Fairtrade mark and has a turnover of £16 million.

The new coffee shop in Wargrave, the Old Post Office, has a curious story behind its launch. Owner Tony Colborne, who has owned the premises since the post office closed in 2007 and used it as a florist, was talking to his teenage son, a music student, about getting a job. The son replied that if there was a 'cool' independent coffee shop in the area, he would want to work there. So his father opened one!

Another 'do-it-yourself' online business is to offer customised blends to consumers. This is New Beans, which is to promote its CTAPS service. This is a 'coffee tasting and profiling system', which appears to work by the customer 'scoring' the taste characteristics of the coffee they want, with the roaster interpreting this into a blend. The roaster for New

Beans is Smith's Coffee in Hemel Hempstead. New Beans have told us that they hope coffee shops will use the service as a way of instantly creating their own private-label blends.

Miko has announced the completion of funding for its rainforest reserve in Ecuador, paid for by sales of their Puro Fairtrade coffee. Miko has been able to employ a ranger who will protect and preserve the area and its endangered inhabitants from poachers and loggers. Puro consumers will receive monthly photos and stories from Luis, the ranger, sent from his base in the forest.

Northumberland County Council has dropped plans for a charge on outdoor tables and chairs outside cafes. When the plans were announced last year, it was criticised as 'a tax on tourism', and the council's economic development scrutiny committee rejected the plan. The new idea is for a set of guidelines on the safe operation of pavement cafes.

There is a new 'app' which claims to be a comprehensive tool from which almost anybody can learn to pour latte art. 'The Art of Coffee' is an Australian product and has a 'basics' section which overviews the essential components needed for latte art - ideal crema, perfect milk texturing, free pour and etching. The app then has basic and advanced latte art sections, showing each design from start to finish, with a video, pictures of each step and written instructions. It is available from the Apple App Store.

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In launching this year's series of its awards, the Beverage Standards Association has been greeted with some rather surprising challenges – are modern contests up with the times, and do they do anything for the trade?

Since the organisation changed its name from 'Beverage Services' to 'Standards', it has adopted a new principle in its awards - instead of recognising a 'best café' as such, it now recognises the standard of drinks preparation in a venue.

Instead of 'stars', the BSA's rankings are by 'cups', which can be displayed on the doors or windows. The idea is to convey that a venue has been assessed and found to create its drinks in accordance with the trade's accepted best practices, and on top of that there are individual awards for the cafes who have been deemed to serve the best drinks of all to visiting judges.

The BSA has said, on several occasions, that the awards are 'the Michelin stars of the coffee industry', are 'prestigious', and that 'the cups are a recognised symbol on the door'.

It may, and this has been put directly to them, be considered absolutely indefensible to compare a scheme just into its second year with the internationally-recognised major award of eighty years' standing. No-one has yet, we believe, killed themselves for being downgraded by the BSA!

As has been suggested before, a parallel with the beer industry's Cask Marque might have been a better claim.

"Aspiring to be the equivalent of the best is a good target," responded chief executive Martyn Herriot. "Unlike other awards in the UK hospitality market we judge with trained mystery, unannounced shoppers, we do visit in person, we are not dependent on advertisers nor do we sell books from our accreditations. It might be said to be even more independent and objective than Michelin!"

That aside, he says, awards do play a useful role for the café trade.

"Our last awards scheme taught us that recognition of quality works for additional customer footfall and staff motivation. If our new one has created a buzz, it is a result of discussing with current members their aspirations. Consumer recognition has already been highlighted by the winners of the awards, and it is our job to increase consumer exposure this year.

"The BSA did reach a point where we had to make some tough decisions, but we are still here, we have a positive increase in members, and some really positive exposure."

Rather admirably, the BSA has been ready to say that it will address something which plagues trade awards schemes - the problem of 'old favourites', in which the same old names get rewarded. There are various reasons for this, some perfectly understandable, but the image of any

The judging of standards



Something which would not have been seen in cafe contests of recent years - the choice of filter brewing methods.

This is from the Attic, in York.

award scheme is not helped by the same old people cropping up, however good they may be.

Of the five-cup accreditations last year, two were previous BSA winners, acknowledges Herriot. Of the others, one was a new dedicated beverage café as a part of an existing business which had been recognised before, and the remaining three had never

cold, award no points'. Quite right, too!

One judge, we noted, took a picture of his flat white, which is something the Coffee House team always do, and which judges in every contest should do - there was a time when this would have been an instant giveaway, but cafes in London certainly now get very used to customers snapping their drinks. One judge noted their filter coffee being brewed on a Trifecta, which is still unusual. One judge, curiously, suggested that an entrant's prices were too low at 95p for an espresso and £1.90 for a cappuccino.

Judging is of a good standard, one entrant told us:

"We had two visits. The first arrived right at the end of a busy Saturday, due to a hectic schedule, and were nearly not served! It proved why I tell our staff: 'treat every customer as if they are a mystery shopper', and for once I wasn't blagging.

"They made a very proper and incognito visit, and it was only afterwards they wanted to say 'hi', and we gave them a tour. The buzz about the place after their visit was palpable, and motivating.

"Some weeks later I saw the familiar face of Jon Skinner (the barista trainer, from Making A Difference) in the café - so his cover was blown, but we acted normal, because we trusted the staff to do their stuff on a level playing field. I didn't tell the staff who the judges were, despite the fact that they stayed at the brew bar asking questions for three hours!"

What of the wider implications? The most important question is of how the awards may benefit the general trade. An individual award is only of benefit to the winning venue - a well-run awards scheme can promote the entire beverage trade.

"We are trying to educate the consuming public to appreciate the good

beverages provided by quality cafes," replied Herriot. "We know that some of our follow-up work in 2011 was too slow and we have addressed this. We will take the award winners and present them to their local press which will in turn create excitement about each of their businesses."

An award is always something which attracts interest from the public, one of the 2011 winners told *Coffee House*.

"So far as consumer awareness goes, the public are oblivious to all the coffee organisations - the SCAE, UKBC and BSA have not even the slightest blip on the High Street radar compared to, say, CAMRA... and I think the Cask Marque comparison is near the mark.

"Much of what we achieved was down to our own in-house effort, but we got good coverage in the local press, the regional 'county' magazine ran a two-page feature, and we even made it on to a national paper blog."

The BSA is worth some applause, added this entrant.

"The BSA is not the hippest body around, and I knew full well when we entered that the organisation is derided in some quarters, but I wanted to be involved in supporting an initiative intended to modernise. Their hearts are in the right place, and I thought these awards showed a genuine shift towards rewarding more progressive outfits.

"I think they found themselves in unfamiliar territory with some of the venues, but they had the courage of their convictions to explore outside their comfort zone - I applaud them for going out on a limb."

Entries to the BSA awards is open to include cafes, tea shops, cafes within hotels or bars, restaurant, mobiles, beverage carts and service areas. Judging starts in May; there is an entry fee. Entry forms at: www.beveragestandardsassociation.co.uk



More indications of changing times from the BSA's 2011 awards - flavour profiles, brew methods and 'best drunk black' on a menu from Coffee Fix

entered any award scheme before. In fact these three outlets entered the Awards directly. Of the first-time winners, only one is supplied by a BSA member. Geographically, the BSA is working harder on areas where it has its lowest entries, notably the south of England. (Of the fifty-odd venues recognised last year, only a handful were south of the M4).

Just how good is the judging? This magazine has in the past been critical of the criteria by which very many awards have been given, and we have now actually seen real judging notes from the BSA's 2011 series.

There are some interesting judges' guidelines, particularly with regard to temperature on all espresso-based drinks - notably 'with mouth-burn or too

The triple-press method



Here's a technique you may not have seen before - this is a contestant in a barista championship in El Salvador, using a horizontal bar by which he pressed down three Aeropress filters at once. The reason that he did it in the competition was that he used three different roasts of the same coffee, and wanted to demonstrate the differences in taste, when they were brewed in exactly the same way at exactly the same time.

The UK Barista Championships have moved into their final stages with some notable achievements this year - not necessarily in the obvious matter of who might win and go on to represent us in the world finals, but in the surrounding issues of how trade championships can support the general coffee trade.

What has been extremely encouraging this year is the number of entrants who have come from beyond the accepted high-street coffee-house environment. Of the seventy-odd names who made up the entry lists, perhaps fifteen came from well-known, significant, and progressive coffee houses, and were entrants who were expected to do well.

However, the rest of the entry lists told an interesting additional story - four from SSP, the giant international organisation which specialises in travel catering; four from Baxter Storey, the influential contract caterer; a couple from catering colleges, and several from cafes which to the best of our knowledge have been open for less than a year.

(There were, uniquely, expected to be two entrants from milk-farming communities supported by the contest's milk sponsor, Arla, but when it came to the time, neither actually competed).

This encouraging state of affairs has rather supported the project run by Union Hand Roasted, who have put up a prize for the 'best newcomer' in the event. This in turn has endorsed a comment by UK champion John Gordon, who commented some months back that he recommended that every serious working barista should try their hand at competition, for the remarkable quantum leap in understanding which it brings.

Indeed, earlier this year, John put on a workshop event designed to help baristas understand 'how to compete', and commented that he 'wanted to give something back to a very large part of my life that gave me so much joy and not only helped, but accelerated, a never-ending learning experience.'

The Union Hand Roasted initiative offered a generous cash prize and a trip to origin for the best performance by someone making their first competition entry, who is already working as a frontline barista serving and talking to the coffee-drinking public every day. (The top baristas have a different ambition, Union noted - they are looking for a place in the world finals, whereas the new prize is designed to encourage those who realistically will not yet reach that point).

"We have been quite clear on our intention," Union's Jeremy Torz told Coffee House. "This is a tool to draw new people in and show them this is an industry to stick around in. We are encouraging the idea that it is worth 'having a go' in competition, without having to aim for the world title - there are a lot of people around the country who are very capable of 'having a go',

Wider range of entrants for 2012 UKBC



A pleased Howard Barwick (right) is interviewed by Jeremy Torz of Union Hand Roasted after winning the Norwich regional event. Pics by Liz Bishop Photography.

and our prize is their reward.

"If this is seen to be a good thing for the trade, we'll repeat it - if it is seen not to be making a ha'porth of difference, we won't!

"But we think it has. We were encouraged by the entrant from a catering college in Norwich who brought his tutor along - he was man enough to do it, his tutor came up to the microphone to speak about him, and we think this



A delicate judging technique which protects both left and right tips of the moustache!

showed how the trade really should be networking with training institutions.

"This gives people a chance to see what our trade is all about - this is what should be happening."

Equally interesting was the interest from the contract caterers - Tim Sturk, the training manager for Baxter Storey, has actually competed two years in succession, just to prepare his baristas for their own participation. When one of them, Don Altizo, appeared in the Top 20 leader-board after competing in Norwich, Tim understandably called us to proclaim: 'mission accomplished!'

"The coffee industry has not taken contract catering seriously," he told us, "but I don't blame the coffee folk - it really is the contract caterers who need to 'up' their game. The catering industry's indifference towards coffee led the coffee people to throw their hands up in the air a long time ago.

"I think the coffee industry is now responding to us as we raise our game and being the Baxter Storey 'coffee specialist' has enabled me to ask questions of our suppliers regarding quality and consistency that we never asked before. We always trusted our coffee suppliers to tell us what was good - we would never dream of doing that with food suppliers!"

Illustrating that, Don Altizo used a coffee from Greg Costello of Workhouse Coffee in Reading, for his entry. The coffee used in Baxter Storey's everyday business is a 'great commercial coffee', but does not stand up to the other coffees used in competition, notes Tim Sturk.

Baxter Storey has now put a thousand staff through its own barista training course, in which it was helped by former world champ James Hoffmann, and runs an Appreciation of Coffee course for its clients.

Another notable big brand name to crop up this year was Marks and Spencer, whose reigning in-house champ, Luke Evans from their Worthing store, took third place in his regional qualifying event.

SSP, the international specialist in travel catering, has often put entrants in, and this time was rewarded with the success of Laura Timpany, who won the Glasgow event. She works at Glasgow Prestwick airport and is the manager of a Caffe Ritazza and a 'food village' self-service restaurant. This is her second UKBC entry.

Several entries were from names which rang bells. Howard Barwick, who won the Norwich heat, is the only winner there has ever been of the 'street-level' contest imaginatively run by the Caffe Society company; Steve Dyson, who took a third place in Newcastle, was a champion when he worked for the Cafe2U mobile coffee vans. In an entertaining little twist, he was the mystery judge who evaluated Atkinson's of Lancaster in the BSA awards - he liked their coffee so much,

he became a customer and used it in his UKBC presentation.

Among the other unusual or unexpected entrants were two under the name of Equal Exchange, the ethical-sourcing organisation which is now over thirty years old.

"Our two entrants are volunteers who have been with us for some time supporting the development of the 'coffee for women farmers' project," Equal Exchange's Andy Good told us. "They both work in café environments in Edinburgh.

"We are using this as an opportunity to profile a revamped range produced by our new roaster and the opportunity to sell into food service/café environments.

"But above all, we entered to use it as a platform to communicate the Fairtrade-plus values.... Fairtrade has become ubiquitous in recent years with little enough attention to quality or social innovation."

Sadly, one of the much-fancied entrants, Will Corby, has been forced to drop out following a cycling mishap. He told *Coffee House*: "the ligament damage in my hand has not cleared as was expected, and I am still suffering back pain which is fairly preventative in terms of standing by an espresso machine for any period of time. I'm really just glad that I walked away from the accident."

The finals of the UKBC will be at the London Coffee Festival, 27-29 April.

Full details of the finalists can be found on this magazine's website.

There is a surprise addition to the competition calendar - the Caffe Culture show is to launch its own Barista Challenge.

The interesting aspect of the project is that it has been designed to recognise baristas who understand the commercial element of their work - entrants will have to devise a signature coffee beverage which is commercially practical.

"While we recognise the fantastic skills of baristas in the UK, we want to deliver a competition that relates to the commercial world in which they work," said event director Elliot Gard. "We are looking for someone who can translate barista skills into devising drinks that are consistently quick and easy to deliver within a working café bar setting, and represent good profit margins."

The winner will receive a trophy, a cash prize of £1,000, and a range of equipment and products for their business.

Entry is free, through an initial written submission which details the method and costings of the proposed drink. Entrants must be aged 18 or over, and currently working in a British café bar. Further details are on the Caffe Culture website, and entries are open to the end of March.

It has been predicted for many years that the age of the roaster-retailer would soon be upon us, and indeed much of the coffee-house news in recent months has involved the growth of operators roasting their own coffee under the same roof as their café.

But a trend which has been quietly growing for a couple of years now is that of the local roaster. These people have always existed to some degree, but there has been a notable acceleration in their numbers over the past year or two.

One of the first to do so, and quickly enough to avoid accusations of being caught up in a trend, was Origin Coffee of Cornwall, where managing director Tom Sobey had thought of roasting his own coffee since the late 1990s, but established the brand's reputation, as so many brands have done, with blends roasted for him by a trade house. It was not until 2008 that he and his roaster Phil Gevaux, a UK latte art champ, kicked off their own attempts with a 'miniature' roaster.

Things grew fast – with the arrival of what was probably only the third Loring SmartRoast in the UK, Origin is now in the position of expecting to roast 120 tonnes of coffee this year. (The capacity exists to roast 200 tonnes a year, but Sobey is wary of expansion just for the sake of it.)

As roasters, Origin Coffee has some unique, if unexpected, distinctions. A couple of years ago, the food writer for one of the most snobby establishment daily papers named them as 'the only coffee roaster in Britain', which may have raised eyebrows among the rest of the roasting trade. More recently, the company actually declined the offer of a royal visit to the roastery. (The Cornish are not so much anti-Royalist, although they do consider themselves an entirely different nation - in this case, Origin pragmatically had better things to do than close the business down for a day!)

Far from being the only roaster in Britain, has Tom Sobey noticed that roasters are now cropping up in virtually every town?

"Very much so - we're in the year of the roaster!"

The reasons for this are something he is inclined to explore.

"Things do go in cycles - are we discovering more about how we used to be, or is it just time for the cycle? Did everyone shelve their own roasting back in the 50s and 60s because they couldn't do it well enough, or was it because it suddenly became easier for the trade to buy-in roasted coffee?"

"I think it was because the age of convenience came in, along with supermarkets. In those days, the idea of getting your potatoes from Poland was impossible to conceive - in Cornwall, the idea of getting anything from anywhere else always has been hard to conceive! So I think the disappearance of the local roaster was down to the coming of the age of convenience.

"So, is it now a good thing that independent roasting has come back, in that it gets the trade out of buying mass-produced coffee, or is it a bad thing, in that a lot of these people are saying they are 'artisan' roasters, when some of them may not be all that good?"

"On balance... I think it's a good thing."

The rise of the local roaster has, however, brought in some problems. Several trade distributors have complained about rivals who claim to roast their own, when they do not; others have complained that not all roasters are experienced enough for the speciality trade, and just because someone advertises that they buy the world's best coffees, that doesn't mean they achieve a good result from them.

"It's quite true that a lot of people are now buying in Cup of Excellence coffees and turning out roasted

The year of the Roaster



Tom Sobey - according to one high-quality broadsheet newspaper, the only coffee roaster in Britain!

The COFFEE HOUSE interview

rubish," acknowledges Sobey. "The big word at the moment is 'buying direct', and this can be misunderstood, too. Just like you can't believe all the people who say they're roasting their own coffee, can you believe that all those who say they are 'buying direct' are actually visiting the farmers? We have a lot of grey areas."

At the beginning, he says, neither he nor Phil Gevaux qualified as experienced roasters.

"Neither of us knew the first thing about roasting, but that's not to say we weren't any good at the start! We were pretty good - but the difference is, we took

the time and the trouble to go on courses, and to learn. Phil started with the London School of Coffee course, we bought the Probat, a dozen sacks of coffee from Mercanta, and Hugo Hercod (the barista champ who owns the Relish Deli in Wadebridge) said he would give us feedback. Mind you, he wanted eighteen kilos a week, and we were having a night-mare keeping up!"

The secret of gaining experience in roasting, says Sobey, is to accept constant trial and error, and to be prepared for constant tasting to a scale which would amaze many caterers. It is also necessary to have the initiative to discover solutions to problems which won't be found in any 'how-to' guides.

"When you're training people to brew coffee, you're condensing the experience you've learned over many years into a session a few hours long. It can be very difficult to explain exactly what you're looking for. It's the same with roasting.

"We had a de-gassing problem - it wasn't degassing at all! We found that we would leave coffee for a week, and it was still as if it had just come out of the roaster. We discovered that where we were storing it was freezing cold, and was an area which didn't have people constantly working in it, and the cold had prevented the de-gassing. This is probably a problem that no other roaster has ever had!"

It has been said by several people that developing your own blend takes a lot longer than you expect – it isn't a case of fifty per cent this and fifty per cent that. It can take months.



Sobey with roaster Phil Gevaux

"Yes, and our first blend was very interesting. We tasted eight espressos, and decided that everyone in the company would make their own blend, and we would taste them all to see who had done the best. The first-ever Origin blend was called 'Steve's', because he was the one who came up with the best blend - it was a Costa Rican, a Brazilian Da Terra, and a Gethumbwini.

"But the important thing was that we tasted, we tasted, and we kept tasting."

Gaining experience in speciality coffee is all very well - but what does it mean for a supplier's relationship with his trade customers, the people who are serving his coffee day in and day out on the high street?

"What have we done for our trade customers? We have led them on a journey... which, to be honest, a lot of them didn't want to go on!

"I think some of them felt that they had an existing coffee which their customers liked, so they didn't want to change... and when times are tough, you do not want to change from what your customers like. We pointed out to them that we had their best interests at heart in offering better coffees, lighter roasted, sweeter, and with more taste characteristics... and some of them said 'I don't know why you can't just carry on with what we've got'.

"I did wonder if I was cutting off my nose to spite my face, and we did lose a few customers over it... but some of them in faraway places were a nightmare to get to, anyway.

"When a supplier is taking the trouble to work on what they consider to be a superior product, and is then willing to go to trade customers, brew it for them, and explain what they are trying to do, you would hope that the customers would be willing to listen and taste it. In fact, you find that some of them get it, and some don't. Some can be very rude, and the only thing you can do is grit your teeth and try to smile.

"Many of those who came on the journey with us have successfully developed their coffee business as a result. The Fifteen restaurants (that's Jamie Oliver's business) have done so very successfully. We supply a typical beach café in Cornwall who went from instant coffee to a bean-to-cup machine, to a two-group traditional, to a four-group, and who are now serving phenomenally good coffee."

Farther afield, Origin does find itself in some very respectable nationwide locations - typically, the Hotel Malmaison and Hotel du Vin chains.

As Origin has developed, so has the curious character of its packaging. Tom Sobey acknowledges with a grin that some of his packs are almost as off-the-wall of those of Teapigs - what on earth is a paint tin falling off a ladder to do with coffee? There are some glorious Edward-Lear-like pictures, some quite excellent abstract espresso cups painted by local artists, and a series of white-on-black line-drawing labels which have puzzled observers, who have assumed that Sobey himself is a devotee of modern art.

"I'm not!" he laughs. "I don't have an interest in art - I'm led by artists, and I believe in giving them a chance.

"The original white line 'roasted in Cornwall' was a lifestyle design - it's the roaster, the country, the hills and the sea."

Although Origin now supplies customers right across the UK, the defiant character of the south-west which comes out in all Cornish businessmen is

never far below the surface with Tom Sobey. Quite typically, he has very little time for the kind of coffee fashions which are expected in the east end of London - but, it turns out, this is because he believes the trade should be putting its efforts into a different job.

"I do not think the Rockstar Barista model is one we should concentrate on," observes Tom Sobey mildly. "I do not think a concentration on a relatively tiny group of people and cafes, however good they may be, is good for the industry."

The current fascination with Antipodean coffee culture is, he thinks, something which holds a deeper and more important meaning. From his own experience in Australia, he thinks too many people are concentrating on the obvious identity of the cafes, and not the deeper significance for the trade.

"A lot of Australian and New Zealand cafes serve amazing coffee, but the thing we should take from this is that they do so without 'superstars'. We should ask ourselves why it is expected that you will get good coffee as a matter of course in Australia and New Zealand, not just that you expect it in some 'star' places.

"Throughout the provincial UK, our concentration should be on raising the broader coffee standards, not just on admiring a few elite coffee bars. Our concentration should be on those hotels and restaurants who already know about good wine, and yet just take a very ordinary 'big-brand' coffee - we'd do better to be focussed on educating these people to a standard."

It would be unlikely that any Cornish businessman would miss the opportunity to rate his own region against the national stars, and not surprisingly, Tom Sobey stands up for many of the coffee houses in the west.

"I don't think that London has such a good coffee scene that it should blind us to what's happening elsewhere - you go to Colonna and Small in Bath, and you'll find a welcoming place with as good a coffee experience as you will find anywhere in the UK.

"A lot of people didn't expect Relish, a high-class deli with great coffee, to work in Wadebridge, but it did. We can see more of this across Cornwall - 108 in Truro, the Courtyard Deli and Provedore in Falmouth, have shown just how good coffee shops can be in the south-west."

And yet, adds Sobey, even some of those who recognised the success of these venues still misunderstood how it had been achieved.

"There were some who thought they just had to put an Origin sign outside their door, which was very flattering for us, but the truth is that the coffee shops which succeed do so because they understand that there is much more to it.

"Business owners like Hugo at Relish got where they are because they learned their trade of brewing fantastic coffee, and this is what the job of a coffee supplier has to be - we have to show the techniques that lead to improvement, so that in time, well-made coffee will come to be generally accepted... and generally expected."

But, he agrees, for every caterer who goes on the coffee journey and sees the light, there are some who just do not get it.

"I recently went somewhere where they put my espresso in the microwave, because they didn't think it was hot enough coming from the espresso machine... I didn't know what to say. I just told them I thought it was a very interesting technique!"



Two unusual Origin pack artworks




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Takeaway cup grips from coffee sacks

A remarkable new idea in carrying and holding takeaway cups has come from Simon Carey, who is involved with the Remploy organisation - he has re-worked coffee sacks into takeaway sleeves and carrying handles.

"I work in the food business, and I feel sad about the amount of packaging waste we create and throw away after one use," he told Coffee House. "In a small effort to do something about it I have created the 'sleeve for life' from up-cycled coffee sacks to replace the disposable cardboard ones.

"I work with Remploy to make the sleeves so we also help a little in creating some employment."

Sacking is not the ideal material to work with, he acknowledges. His breakthrough came in finding guidance from the people who work on jute sacks for a big supermarket.

"When you cut sacks, the material is quite difficult to work with. We use two layers of fabric to ensure the heat protection is right, we then sew in the tag in the join."

This is an own-branding opportunity, he thinks.

"We have played around a lot with this to get it right. We have to ensure there is sufficient allowance on the tag at the part that is sewn in, to make sure the logo isn't compromised. We also took some time to find a tag that can give the detail of logo that people require. This means the tag is quite expensive but it is very good quality."

There are two designs - one is a simple like-for-like sleeve replacement, and one features carrying handles. Following testing feedback, Carey is making the handles a bit shorter than illustrated, and will probably offer them in one-cup and two-cup versions.

The suggestion is that the coffee trade sees the item as a profit-making one. A rough pricing guide at the moment is that the items will probably cost around £1 to trade; the acceptable selling price seems to be £1.50-£2. It is likely that the inventor will now make a fundraising Coffee Kids version.

<http://about.me/sleeveforlife>

Thinking outside the pot

As so often happens, several manufacturers find themselves thinking along similar lines at exactly the same time - this time, their subject is takeaway container lids

With remarkable unanimity of opinion, the newest products in the cups and packaging sector are all concentrating on one feature - the usability of the lid. This is not entirely new - a few years ago, there was a design for a kind of takeaway cup lid which was made with shaped spaces for sugar, spoons, milk jigger and the like, but that one never really caught on.

A slightly similar new idea comes from Joe Fogel of Vaiopak, which is also the Printed Cups Company, and involves creating a lid with a recess which can be used for 'some other ingredient'. The lid has a push-through hole for a straw, which means the user is drinking from the cup while the item in the top stays in place.

It is, says the company, surprising that nobody has done it before - the concept is not that hard for people to grasp, nor is it difficult to make.

"It's only a lot of work if you have to outsource your design and vacuum-forming," Joe Fogel told us. "That means you could be looking at a lot of money and a lot of grief, because things which seem to be great design ideas can turn out to be impossible to make. For us, already knowing and having the manufacturing process was helpful - a mould is not cheap, but it's not amazingly hard."

The first version of Vaiopak's combi-lid has been made for very big takeaway cups, the American 'bucket' sizes, because initial interest has come from the cinema trade.

"They see it as a whole new idea, which they can promote with a specific name," confirms Joe Fogel. "It's great for upselling, and that's what cinemas are good at - they're very good at creating 'deals'. From the discussions we've had, they see a completely new potential in this.

"So the first version is for large cold drink cups, and you can see how you create the promotional deal of a drink and an ice-cream, because you can get five or six scoops in this lid. Or bag of M&Ms or other sweets fit into it nicely; popcorn fits into it. You can see the idea of Wimbledon, with the Pimms in the cup and the strawberries and cream in the lid.

"So we designed the top for food, as a 'container' rather than a 'lid'. With the lid on, the cup still holds 32 oz of liquid; put it on a 12oz or 16oz cup, and it might become pointless. We think it will go well in America, where they're already into jumbo sizes - I don't know why they haven't thought of this already."

For the coffee house market, Vaiopak has considered the equivalent summer takeaway market.

"We've tried it with hot drinks, and the nice idea would be a coffee with a muffin, but we think you can't really drink a hot drink through a straw. However, a large iced tea with some-



The new idea by Vaiopak - note the mark and funnel where the straw goes through to the cup below



thing in the lid sounds like a very good idea."

The price implications are surprising.

"We've looked at something like KFC, who sell a drink in a cup and popcorn chicken in a box, and we find that it becomes cheaper to sell the two this way. We've looked at the costs of ice-cream sold in a tub beside the drink - and again, it's cheaper to do it this way."

Elsewhere, Solo has devised the Olivine and 'press & dress' containers, intended to allow both wet and dry ingredients to be displayed for sale and served separately, with no need

recycled content in their packaging. Customers want to know much more about where the packaging comes from, how it's made and what will happen to it afterwards.

"This is a creative new range made from locally-sourced closed-loop RPET material. I can see the 'press & dress' feature being rolled out across other Solo produce formats in due course."

Solo has won the Food Packaging Association's award for sustainability, and inside its own factory has created a 'Green is the New Black' campaign. The company says it has now



More ideas that involve using the lid for a secondary storage space - from Solo (above) and Tri-Star (right)



for extra packaging. Solo says that the product is the only such container on the market to be made up of at least half recycled PET.

The shape is intended to give a comfortable hand-hold for the consumer while giving maximum visibility of the contents for display and being easy to stack.

The range consists of three sizes of food bowl with a choice of two lids. The interesting new feature allows a filled pot to be suspended from the lids. The optional clear flat lid allows for own-branding by the use of a sleeve.

Managing Director Tony Waters said: "Research shows that consumers prefer brands and manufacturers who use

achieved zero waste to landfill, and reduced carbon emissions.

Imaginative use of lids has also cropped up in the FPA awards, with the innovation prize going to Tri-Star for its Deli Pot Topper, a new deli pot designed so that the pot can be filled with the main ingredient, while the lid - or topper - is filled with a further ingredient to be added when the customer is ready to eat the product.

Tri-Star says that there are hundreds of possible recipe combination uses, from salads and dressings to strawberries and cream, yoghurt and granola, or fruit and nuts.

The topper fits five different sizes of lower pot, from 230ml to 470ml.



Printed Cup Co to make in UK

The Printed Cup Company has received European Union funding to open a new UK manufacturing facility to make paper cups in Clitheroe. The official opening will be on 10th April, by the local MP, and in a neat touch the refreshments will be by the local coffee cart company Caffeine Rush.

The company has been making cups in China since 2007; it has doubled turnover in the past year, and managing director Mark Woodward (above) has said: "customers are looking for a fast, reliable service, delivering a quality product in small quantities and the UK is the right place to base this manufacturing plant."

IP argues the trade's environment case

International Paper has produced an information booklet, 'The Little Green Book', which is promoted as offering all you need to know about the paper and paper-based packaging industry. It sets out to clarify what it sees as some of the myths surrounding the industry in relation to its impact on the environment.

"International Paper's stance on recycling is not new and it's not rocket science: the best approach to cup recycling is to educate the consumer," says sales director Mike Gardner.

"Our industry has put considerable effort and resources into this from material research and product development to forming groups to try and tackle specific issues, but I do believe the way forward includes educating consumers to take a responsible view to disposal and lobbying local authorities and Government to provide sufficient facilities to encourage people to recycle and dispose of all waste produce in a responsible way."

The challenging titles of the book's sections include such debates as 'paper packaging destroys forests', 'paper packaging takes too much energy and has too big a carbon footprint', 're-use is better than recycling', and, perhaps most interestingly, 'the industry is doing nothing'.

Copies are available from 01606 552537.

Don't just stand there - say something!

There is always a massive debate over the question of custom-printing cups - it is not so much of whether you print a cup, as to what you put on it.

Many cup makers believe that just putting a company logo on a cup is not enough - only Costa can get away with that, with their logo which is recognisable from a hundred paces. Many say that the real trick is to make a cup say something - to carry a promotion, a deal, or a message.

At Vegware, which uses the tag of 'the UK's only completely compostable food packaging firm', the great problem with using imaginative cup printing is the traditional requirement for large quantities and long lead times. Several manufacturers have made a point of promoting short runs and short leads times, and Vegware now offers custom-branding on compostable double-wall cups with a minimum order of 1,000 cups.

"Some firms offer short print runs of non-eco cups; others offer eco cups but only at high volume, and a long lead time," claims the company. "We manufacture in the British Isles, bringing our lead times down to just three weeks, or 7 days with express service. And these cups are a compostable first, the greenest insulated hot cup the market - this means that foodservice packaging has become the perfect eco canvas for branding, events and marketing campaigns."

The question of 'composting' is a tricky one, and claims do have to be checked out.

"All components of our double-walled cups can be composted," say Vegware. "The cup is made of an outer layer of high-recycled-content paper and an inner layer of sustainably-sourced paper board. The two layers are bonded together with a compostable resin and lined with GM-free cornstarch. The high printing uses water-based or vegetable inks."

"Third-party certification confirms it can be composted together with food waste, turning into nutrient-rich fertiliser in 5-12 weeks. Composting one case diverts 8 kilos of packaging from landfill."

One organisation to take this up is the Thoughtful Bread Company, two award-winning bakers who have just launched a well-received book on the craft, Bread Revolution - Rise up and Bake. (It's about making alternatives to plastic-wrapped loaves).

The same idea has been taken up by a seed company, which sees the earthy link - and this is not the only one. A similar idea has come up



Imaginative uses of cups - from Printed Cups UK (top and left) and Vegware (right). And a sign of the times which is still unfamiliar - a QR code on a cup (centre)

through the Printed Cups UK company, which has produced a cup for Urban Farmer, which supplies ingredients for stir-fries and the like. The idea is to plant the seeds in the biodegradable cup, which even carries the instruction:



Something often forgotten - you can print paper plates, too

'if the plant gets too big, just put the cup in the ground!'

An unusual use of takeaway cups for art came last month from the University of Singapore, which asked students to

paint used Starbucks cups as a demonstration of 'upcycling', the process of transforming waste materials into useful products. The idea has already been tried in New York. In Singapore, the designs went up for public vote, and the top five received Starbucks coupons.

The Planglow packaging company promotes its cups which are made from sustainable and renewable resources and lined with a food-safe, plant-based coating. "But what really sets them apart," says the company, "is their ribbed, rather than rippled, composition. This means they are flatter than rippled products, so while still double-walled, they provide a better surface for printing, with better depth, detail and clarity."

"We are the only direct provider of these specific cups, with our competitors offering either the rippled version, or sourcing ribbed products from the States."

The problem of the disposal of take-away coffee cups remains to be solved – just about every maker of disposable cups makes the right political noises, and Starbucks has held summit meetings on the subject, but the trade's special-interest groups on the subject have said nothing of any substance for several years now.

Meanwhile, the lobby arguing for the re-use of cups has grown steadily. It is still not the general case that coffee-houses in the UK will offer discounts to customers who bring their own cup, but one remarkable statistic shows how much the theory has gained ground - KeepCup, the world's main 'barista quality' reusable coffee mug, has sold two and a half million items across thirty-three countries in less than three years. In the last quarter, 40,000 were sold in the UK, and 70,000 in the EU.

The invention dates from 1998, when the Forsyth family started Bluebag cafes in Australia - they realised very early on that they were actually contributing to landfill, and that convenience in coffee incurred too high an environmental cost. They tried refilling juice bottles and salad containers, but still came up against the problem of the disposable coffee cup, for which there seemed no ready-made alternative - and when customers did bring in their own cups, the baristas got annoyed because they would not fit the espresso machine.

In 2007, they made the move to a 'barista-friendly' design, and were greeted by the general response of 'why hasn't anyone done this before?'

The case for the re-usable takeaway cup

The issue of single-use disposable takeaway coffee cups is no nearer a solution, and will not go away – is the answer going to be in re-usable products such as the KeepCup?



The Manchester University giveaway KeepCup

The KeepCup is made of four single-component plastics, to facilitate recycling. All components are interchangeable between the different sizes of cups.

Is there any taste characteristic to a plastic cup? Has KeepCup got the tangible, tactile, feel of the plastic right, and if so, how did they do it?

"KeepCup has been designed by coffee lovers," the company's Stuart Forsyth told us. "During the design process we took the utmost care to get

everything right, and great consideration and deliberation was taken with materials. We ended up choosing polypropylene for three main reasons:

"Safety - it's the safest food-grade plastic, and hundred-per-cent non-toxic. It has design potential, it is lightweight, can be colourful, and it is also dishwasher safe. For the environment, it is recyclable, takes very low embodied energy in manufacturing, and is light to transport. The design is such that in future we can make product from fully recycled polypropylene - we will be closing the waste loop entirely.

"And the other great thing about it is that it doesn't taint the taste of coffee!"

The lid, says the company, is easily removable, and the product gives a pleasing drinking sensation.

"KeepCup's design is based on the commuter lifestyle of espresso takeaway coffee. The lid is a clip-on style lid which is very secure. KeepCup does not have any thermal properties, so it isn't like a thermos, but more of an upright product, where contents should be drunk quickly."

The theory of KeepCup is a dual one. The product itself should be seen as a profit-making saleable item (minimum trade order quantity is thirty units) and the ideal tactic is then to encourage customers to bring it back for refilling. The sales strategy of a discount for takeaway consumers who bring their own container is not yet mainstream in the UK, but is reckoned to be growing.

There are other ideas – at Manchester University, as this magazine reported last year, there was a massive giveaway promotion based on the KeepCup, which the purchasing manager re-named the HugMug. The university gave away 2,500 to students at the beginning of the year, with the promise of 15p off any beverage served in a KeepCup thereafter, and additional occasional discount promotions. The result, the university told us, 'easily covered' its previous expense on disposable cups.

What is the size of the situation to which KeepCup responds? The estimates of how many paper cups are in circulation range so widely that they are clearly all guesses. What is the size and manner of the problem that we have to face in the UK?

Before considering the size, says KeepCup, there is a general principle to put across.

"What KeepCup is about is helping coffee consumers and cafes become more mindful of waste which is created

by the unconscious habit of takeaway coffee lifestyle. KeepCup is a product which encourages thoughtfulness, and personal responsibility for one's own lifestyle.

"We are hugely concerned with the environment in general, and waste is one of many serious issues that humanity will have to face. The issues of our behaviour and waste were best described by artist Chris Jordan, addressing the TED conferences."

Jordan is a photographer who uses art to illustrate social issues – typically, putting the Statue of Liberty against a scaled backdrop of the USA's daily usage of disposable cups. It is reckoned that 500 billion disposable cups are made globally every year, and that 58 billion are thrown out in the USA every year. The figure is 1.5 billion in Taiwan - but nobody has yet dared estimate the British figure. It is said that 98 tonnes of resources are used to make one tonne of paper; it is alleged that for all that is said about sustainable forestry, three-quarters of the world's paper supply still comes from diminishing forests.

Jordan addresses what he calls our 'unconscious' behaviour, or our 'industrial' behaviour - throwing away one paper cup is minimal, but several million people in the country doing the same thing many times a day gives an entirely different picture.



This, says Stuart Forsyth at KeepCup, is an issue the coffee trade must recognise.

"Issues such as peak oil, peak water, over-fishing, loss of biodiversity, scarily look like they will all come to a head at around the same time. I have no faith in the media, the politicians, economists, or corporations to envision an answer – so we need to all be aware that our tenure on this rock is not an essential, and my hope is that we continue to foster in our community ideas, products, designs, communication, discussions, which can prolong our stay for hundreds of years to come... Because it really is quite nice here.

"And it's the only one we've got!"

London - now the centre of the universe for artisan coffee?

It's always a good indication of a lively scene when people start publishing guides to it. You can't move for the glossies writing their own guides to the best coffee houses in London, we've seen the publication of another little handbook on the subject, and now we have the 2012 edition of the one which started it off, Allegra's *London Coffee Guide*.

We've always had a slight difference of opinion with Allegra over their use of language - we occasionally accuse them of going over the top, and some-times of 'hype', and they reply that it's 'enthusiasm'. Well, there's nothing better than enthusiasts, but can a coffee house actually be 'revered'? (That one was Climpsons!)

And we do wince a bit at their liberal use of cliché words, and the odd phrases which don't quite make it into pseudos' corner, such as: 'a passionate team of baristas serves coffee accompanied by a youthful soundtrack that perfectly complements the buzz of the excellent flat whites'.

But, to be fair, we really did enjoy their phrasing of a review of Leila's - 'something more authentic than the usual painfully-hip fare'. Couldn't have put it better!

And we still worry about Allegra's need to publish ratings - when every venue in the book is scored at least four out of five, why bother? If these are the hundred best venues in London, does it actually mean anything useful if someone subjectively scores one venue at 4.75 beans out of five, and the next one at 4.5 beans? And indeed, why have a 'top 30' out of the top hundred, and why the 'ten best' coffee carts? Why the need to judge, rate and award?

These gripes aside, the pleasing development of this from the previous edition is in the detail. We were interested that New Row Coffee is noted for the option of fresh almond milk; we really want to go and see the back wall of recycled packing crates in Reynolds; we rather fancy trying the signature peanut-butter brownie of Farm Collective, and the green tea chocolate gateau at Lanka, and Towpath's home-made ice-cream, and the Lithuanian hot chocolate of Fernandez and Wells. We even rather fancy the shoemaking classes at Three Little Pigs.

In the rather good section on coffee carts, we are intrigued by Coleman own-roast cart, and impressed by the idea of carts using Kees van der Westen machines (Dark Fluid and Giddy Up).

The pictures are better, too - there's one super full page picture of a siphon in full-lit action, which one suspects was at the Sensory Lab. We also enjoyed the picture inside Lantana, of a chalked message saying 'we do table



The familiar look to the London Coffee Guide - big pages, big pictures.

service, so please take a seat'. Yes, there's a point well made - many big-name cafes could make their serving protocols a lot clearer.

Helpfully, the final index is better and easier - the last edition required a double-check to get to the right page, but that has been put right this time round.

The very interesting overall thing, of course, is using this volume to chart how the London coffee scene has changed from the publication of the last edition. It actually is noticeable.

"We knew that there would be rapid growth, but I have been totally surprised by the acceleration of new openings in London," Allegra's Jeffrey Young told us. "There were nearly 50 new venues that we had to visit and I already know of six more since we published only a few weeks ago - there may be many more, it's a struggle for us to keep up to date.

"If it keeps going at this pace, London will be the centre of the universe for artisan coffee... if it isn't already.

"We are now starting to see a segmentation of the 'average', 'good', and 'really good'. The customers are becoming more and more savvy - it's no longer good enough to simply look like an artisan, you need to deliver and be really authentic.

"The focus on alternative brewing methods is bringing in a great deal of choice, but more importantly, there is more focus on coffee quality, taste and knowledge of coffee origin, which bodes very well for the future."

In a book which is noted for its enthusiastic approvals, one reference does rather stand out. The St Ali operation - which is now re-christened as Workshop - is hailed as 'a vision of what London's coffee scene could look

like in the near future'.

Why?

"This is one of the new breed of very organised (and better funded) artisan 'mini chains' which we expect to see more of as the status of coffee houses increases.

"They put a great deal of emphasis on coffee credentials, which is impressive, and has alternative brewing methods, so becomes a place for people to be educated about coffee.

"They roast their own coffee, and we expect to see more artisan roasting. They place a lot more focus on food, brunch, and the late-evening trade, all trends we expect to see happening.

"Perhaps most profoundly, St Ali is a real statement about the new confidence of artisan coffee houses in London."

In which regard, as the foreword by Louie Salvoni says. 'we urge you not to accept mediocrity... this guide will give you the chance to enjoy many new experiences'.

And that's the whole point of it. On that score (if you'll forgive the word!), this guide is certainly a case of 'job done'.

The London Coffee Guide, Allegra, £9.95. ISBN 978-0-9567759-1-7

Costa aims for 2,000 UK sites

The head of Costa has said that he wants to expand Costa by another 600 branches by 2016, taking the total number of UK sites to 2,000. Costa's sales rose 5.8 per cent in the 50 weeks to February 16, and were up 6.2% in the final 11 weeks of that period. Costa also intends to have five new drive-thrus open by the end of this year.

A most entertaining Costa story has come from Crowborough, where the brand had said that it would open up in a former greetings card shop. However, the card company has said that it is going nowhere. The local business community were puzzled, with reports that the card shop staff did not know about their future - a chamber of commerce spokesman said 'the situation seems to be a mess'.

However, the coffee trade will readily see a likely explanation.

The company which owns the premises commented to the local press that a deal had indeed been agreed between Costa and the card company's previous chief executive, who then left, and his replacement had blocked the changeover.

The card company is of course Clinton - and the new chief executive there is the man who used to be the lead of the British arm of Starbucks!



Another new volume out this month is the new barista training manual from Peros, modestly entitled 'a perfect training manual'. This is a rather entertaining 34-pager from the UK's main suppliers of Fairtrade coffee, and as well as the expected recipes, has how-to sections which make such helpful points as the distinction between stretching milk and texturing it, and espresso machine and grinder cleaning regimes.


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The latest Antipodean arrival on the London coffee scene is a roaster-retailer which has, in accord with what is coming to be an accepted design element, placed its roasting operation in full view of its coffee-house customers.

It is Ozone, which has been established in New Zealand for around twelve years, and which has now opened in Leonard Street, East London. A feature of the design is the 'roasting void', in which customers on the upper floor can look right down on the work being done.

Ozone has opened to serve as both coffee house and trade roaster for other quality coffee businesses in the capital. Its launch announcement referred to its intention of 'wholesale coffee supply to cafes and restaurants throughout London and greater England' (wherever that might be!).

The company's launch information also included a reference to the 'evolving coffee scene' in London. Is this yet another message about the tired old theme of 'Antipodean coffee is best,' Ozone was challenged by Coffee House.

"It certainly wasn't intended to sound like that - the NZ industry continues to evolve too!" responded Ozone's chief executive Karla Gichard. "I realise some Antipodean companies have come previously with the approach of wanting to revolutionise the world! We're certainly not like that, and I speak for us all when I say that we genuinely enjoy all London has to offer.

"James Gurr, the co-owner and general manager of Ozone London is originally from Brighton and, after spending the last ten years in NZ, he was keen to return to London with his fiancée Lizzie Bain. We are keen to join a dynamic and evolving café mar-

More Antipodeans roasting in the East End!



The 'roasting void' - customers on the upper floor can look down into the working area

ket and coffee industry that has diverse influences.

"Neither scene can profess to know everything, yet - there's much for all to learn still. I believe this evolution is happening as customers are becoming more and more genuinely interested in the different brew methods, origins and blends, and this is a phenomenon that is happening internationally. We see it

in New Zealand, as a traditionally espresso-focussed market now embraces 'soft brews' and showcases single origins.

"Our intention is not to revolutionise the UK coffee industry, but to be a part of it, and to grow with it."

The Leonard Street site has been rebuilt from a shell; on the ground floor, the open kitchen backs onto the

espresso bar and the basement has the roaster, training room and café seating during busy periods.

"The roastery is integrated with the café," says Karla Gichard. "Customers can talk with the roaster on the lower level, and on both levels smell and see the roasting process. Our first floor overlooks the roasting void and customers can watch the green beans being loaded into the roaster, watch James roasting, and then watch the roasted beans spilling into the cooling tray. We will also be inviting customers to join us in cupping sessions and tasting various coffees regularly."

The wholesale side will be 'competitively priced', says Ozone, but will also reflect the quality of premium and Cup of Excellence coffees.



We have always loved concepts in which a coffee house is paired with some other business, but we've never seen anything like this before - the Fab Café in Shibuya, one of Tokyo's busiest shopping areas, offers do-it-yourself laser cutting. At \$60 per half-hour, customers upload their designs and the machine cuts them in wood or acrylic. Rather closer to the familiar, the café's signature drink is a marshmallow latte.

It is reported that a thousand customers have signed online and paper petitions in support of a family-run coffee bar in Fleet, Hampshire, after the landlord's letting agent allegedly asked for the premises to be vacated, even though the lease is not up.

The local press has reported 'uproar' among customers and fellow traders over the situation of Sarah Anderson and John Bastin of More Than Coffee in the Hart shopping centre. They have been offered one of twelve empty units in the centre, but say that the cost of moving will be sufficiently high to put them out of business. The local press said that the situation 'has sent shock waves through the business community'. The letting agent has said that the landlord is acting within the terms of the lease.

When this magazine checked the poll website, 813 signatures to the petition had been recorded.



An Australian developer has invented Q-Jumper, a method of ordering and paying for coffees by text message. The point of it, says the inventor, is that takeaway coffee is a recurring purchase, often made from the same venue, by the same person, some times several times a day. Q-Jumper allows customers to order and pay for food and beverage items ahead of arrival at a venue. The customer texts the venue with a code, or the name of a menu item. At the venue, the Q-Jumper decodes the order, works out the price, and the EPOS system prints a docket with the transaction details.



The latest of the Dandelion chain of tea rooms has opened in Derwentwater, near Keswick. The interesting feature of the business is that it is owned by HF Holidays, the UK's largest walking holidays company. The first pilot café at Alnmouth drew up to 300 people a day in February and March, and the chain has already opened in HF sites in Freshwater Bay on the Isle of Wight, Coniston Water in the Lake District, and Haytor on Dartmoor. Dandelion also plans openings in Glencoe, Ross-on-Wye and Dolgellau. Commenting on such unusual features as the giant coffee-bean logo on the outer walls, Fraser Lord, HF's head of operations, said: "Dandelion is a modern twist on the traditional tea-room. It does not pretend to be from anywhere else but Britain - cheerful, light, unpretentious and with the ability to bring a smile to everyone's face."

The Atkinson coffee roastery in Lancaster is to create a 'living heritage centre' of coffee, which will be a working coffee house in which customers will be able to watch roasting going on, and see historical artefacts from the trade, with expert commentary and explanation from the staff.

The project will be achieved by Atkinson expanding from what is currently a very small roaster-retail shop into a comparatively-massive site next door. This is the old Priory Hall, a Landmark Trust building which backs on to the foundations of Lancaster Castle.

"We were bursting at the seams," explains the company's owner and roaster Ian Steel. "At the hump of the week, Wednesday, we would be full with vanloads of deliveries ready to go out - we couldn't move.

"The Priory Hall next door dates from 1730, and it still has one of the finest pieces of over-the-top rococo plasterwork in the country. It was once a grand old lady's five-story 'statement' of a garden shed, it was saved by the Landmark Trust in the 1970s, but it got neglected and ended up looking like Steptoe's yard."

The project was born of seeing how breweries and distilleries had successfully turned their businesses into living visitor attractions. It follows an earlier leap into the unknown, when Atkinsons opened its Music Room coffee house, despite having no experience at that end of the trade.

"Two years ago, we didn't know we could run a café. We felt we were charlatans, because we were helping our trade coffee customers to run their cafes without having done it ourselves!

"The visitor centre idea came from a visit to the one at the Hawkhead brewery, and Lancaster brewery, a micro-brewery, has also done much the same. I loved the idea of having a beer in the main hall and being able to see right through to the mash tuns. It all fits in with this wonderful wave of interest in coffee."

The inspiration was so strong that Steel then forced himself to do a research tour of all eight 'visitor experiences' run by the whisky distilleries of Islay. This turned into a series of notes, as he saw the parallels between the two trades.

"The building itself dictates what we can actually do. The central core has been gutted, but we have some wonderful great arched divisions, which will become warm and friendly communal spaces. It will become an 'industrial space', in which people will be able to see the sacks of coffee, and may have to move out of the way of them, because they will be wheeled through to the roastery.

"We're sitting on a coffee legacy - we've bits of old roasters and tea blenders and everything which can now be 'displayed'. We have several old roasters awaiting restoration. We

A coffee heritage centre in the north



Priory Hall in Lancaster (above) will be the site of the new heritage centre - the Atkinsons roastery can just be seen on the far right. Ian Steel will soon be doing his roasting in sight of the customers!

have some lovely old tea and coffee pictures from the Illustrated London News, and DR Wakefield have given us some lovely old wrinkled maps of origin. We have big screens of journeys to origin. We have coffee grinders going back to before electricity. It's not as big a collection as the old Braham museum in London, but we're expecting it to grow, and there's no point in keeping it all in the cellar.

"There will be a glass window looking right through to the roastery, and probably a bakery, too.

"It will be quite unlike any other retail destination. The staff will tell the cus-

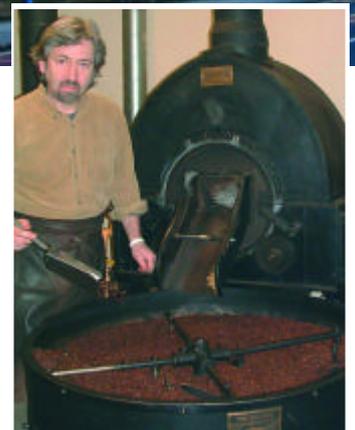
tomers the history - I'm quite confident of all twenty of them being able to do it, because they do it at the moment. I'm told it's called 'narrative retailing!'

The likely opening is in June.

"This is a big year in Lancaster - it's the 400th anniversary of the witches' trials, and the castle (which is right behind the roastery) will no longer officially be a prison."

This, acknowledges Ian Steel, brings a coffee roaster into the unlikely sector of tourism.

"Lancaster has seen a big increase in the 'visitor economy'. Putting leaflets in hotels and guest houses is going to



be a big job - we have to print thirty thousand at a time.

"People may tell you that the future is in social networking, but we can tell you - the future is in tourist leaflets!"



Villains in the coffee shop

Of all the unusual coffee houses to have opened this year, and there have been several unique ones, this is the one we least expected. Bernie O'Mahoney is one the UK's leading writers on gangland crime, which he readily acknowledges comes from personal experience - he was head doorman at one of Essex's most notorious nightclubs, founder of a violent local 'firm', and his decision to go straight was followed by the infamous execution of several of his associates.

O'Mahoney turned to writing, and has since published several books, much of which involve violence of one kind or another - he has written about his life as a soldier fighting the IRA, about his time as a football hooligan, has investigated various real-life violent crimes, and in one book exposes gangland myths and



realities, and the truth behind crime 'legends'. Some, he says, are true - some are imposters who make a living selling stories and writing books about events that have never even happened.

His new café is based on his book Faces, for which he spent three years compiling images and stories of the most notorious criminals to come from the north-east of England. The result, Bernie tells us, is now open for business as Faces Cafe, in Ferryhill, County Durham.

Although you've still got a page left, we hope you've enjoyed the latest issue of the coffee trade's top news magazine. Never miss your copy of the trade's fullest and best news magazine - subscribe now!

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Rainforest Alliance will respect cafes in its awareness week

The Rainforest Alliance, which took a certain amount of criticism last year over its Autumn awareness week, has deliberately got off the mark early this year, and has said that it wants to do more to work together with coffee shops.

The problem with its awareness week last year, as this magazine has pointed out, was that the body did not actually make enough people aware of the event until it was too late.

"We are re-running the awareness week under the name of Follow the Frog, and a big part of the tone of voice of the week is about thanking the cafes for their support," the organisation's Stuart Singleton-White told *Coffee House*.

"We are very keen to engage more coffee shops, but we confess that we don't know much about them. And at the same time, we think they are not making the most of their association with the Rainforest Alliance.

"So this year, we want to give more of them the opportunity to talk about it."

Last year's event was optimistically intended to be a low-budget affair, concentrating on social networking as an economical way of getting attention. The main theme was a continuing story about the adventures of a frog, the Rainforest logo character.

"Our Twitter frog story last year was fun - well, we enjoyed it!" said Stuart Singleton-White. "Our Twitter followers did go up, but we don't know if that was down to the frog.

"Last year's event was small, certainly when compared to Fairtrade Fortnight. It'll be a bit bigger this year. We did achieve some trade interest - we had the highest number of views on our blog that we've ever had, and highest video views, so our level of coverage did go up a notch.

"But last year's 'toolkit' was a bit clunky and



"We are keen to engage more coffee shops, but we confess that we don't know much about them."

- Stuart Singleton-White

difficult to access. This year, it will be a website with downloadable posters. At the moment, this point-of-sale material is for purchase, but we are looking to find ways of making it available for free.

"The main interest last year was from the big brands, and a lot of consumer outreach came through Mars and Magnum - critics do ask whether their heart really is in things like this, but they do get the figures!"

It is a constant criticism of awareness weeks and fortnights that the big brands get all the support and are first in line for personal promotional visits from farmers and growers who have been flown in.

"This year we want to put more effort into the smaller roasters and the independent outlets. I realise that these are the people who are passionate about what they do and what we do, and I want to get them talking about it.

"For the coffee-house trade, the proposition is that this is the chance to say 'this is good sustainable coffee we're serving'. We don't yet have plans to bring in growers... but when we do, we'd like to relate them more to coffee shop owners."

Following the announcement that the Sara Lee Corporation will be divided into two businesses, the company has 'revealed' that its Douwe Egberts business will now be called DE Master Blenders 1753. The curious aspect of this is that deciding on the new name took six months of 'intensive research, evaluation and analysis'.

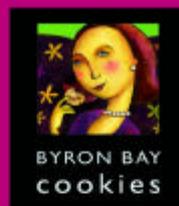


Kaldi

The MP David Blunkett has confessed in parliament to a blunder with regard to the Queen's tea. He was leader of Sheffield council when he tasted tea before a royal visit - he found it was 'absolutely disgusting' and ordered it to be thrown out. Then he discovered he had thrown away HM's favourite tea, which she had specially asked for.

A bus driver in Dorset ordered everybody off his bus when a passenger spilled some takeaway coffee - he said the spill was a safety hazard, that it was too dangerous for the bus to move, and called for a depot engineer to clean it up. A passenger said: 'it's health and safety gone mad'.

And we are extremely grateful to the member of the coffee trade who kindly snapped the following notice, seen in what we think was a big-brand coffee-shop:



All the taste of our original cookies

...just without the gluten

Gluten-Free doesn't have to mean taste free. We have produced an acclaimed range of gluten-free cookies for a number of years. They're not only popular with coeliacs but also for people looking to cut down on their gluten intake. For more information about the full Byron Bay Cookie range please visit

www.byronbaycookies.co.uk