

# Boughton's

## COFFEE HOUSE



Scoop Malone, the best writer on the cafe and beverage sector by far, brings you another terrific issue of the trade's top news magazine!

January 2013

## The stars come back to fight out the UKBC

There has been a fascinating development in the entry lists for the 2013 UK barista championships – not just one, but three previous champions have re-entered for this year's event, the first time that such a thing has happened. By the turn of the year, over forty contestants had put their names forward for the 2013 contest. Their incentive, other than the glory, is that the UK champ is invited to go on to compete in the world championship, which this year is to be held at a massive coffee show in Melbourne at the end of May.

Initial attention goes to three of this year's contenders - Maxwell Colonna-Dashwood of Colonna and Small's in Bath, who is the reigning champion, John Gordon of Square Mile Roasters, who is a two-time winner, and Hugo Hercod of the Relish Deli in Wadebridge, who won in 2008.



*Aiming for the world – Maxwell Colonna-Dashwood*

"I am looking forward to it - I am enjoying it more than before," the reigning champ Maxwell Colonna-Dashwood told us. "I would suggest that John, Hugo and I all have roughly the same motivation behind re-entering – to place higher in, or to win, the world championship. And we need to win the UK to have another go at the world.

"I didn't think I was going to enter again, but I found the world's very energising and rewarding. Should be an exciting year!"

The earliest look at the entry lists suggests that the 2013 barista championship has an extremely distinguished line-up. Apart from the appearance of three previous champs, there are many who have already won attention:

Peter Attridge of Colonna & Small's in Bath is the reigning UK latte art champ; also in the south west, Dave Jones of the Origin roastery has consistently finished high in competition without taking the top spot, and his Origin colleague Dan Fellows is a 'Coffee in Good Spirits' champ (that's for drinks with an alcohol content).

Barry Cook of Cafelicious in Swindon is the reigning holder of the 'best hot chocolate' title from the Beverage Standards Association; Steve Dyson of Spring Espresso not only won the 'best latte' in the same awards, but when he was a Cafe2U franchisee, won their

'barista of the year' title. Joe Meagher of Flat Caps Coffee in Newcastle has already won the North East Culinary Trade Association's barista contest.

Stuart Lee Archer of Pumphreys is not only a highly-experienced competition barista, but a tutor for the City and Guilds barista VRQ; Alex Sargent of Strangers in Norwich has previously taken a regional second place in the UKBC. Estelle Bright was the highest scoring female semi-finalist a couple of years ago. Jose Melim has been the south-western champion.

This will be a hard-fought year!

*More on the UKBC - page 6*



This really is the exterior of a coffee shop - it is Frescoes in Bedford, which is now topped by a 115 sq ft re-creation of the Libyan Sibyl, a priestess with the gift of prophecy, painted by Michelangelo in the 16th century. The original is in the Vatican. This one was done by a local artist, who took three months to finish it – the job cost £12,000, and Frescoes' owner Kevin Kavanagh tells us that a local fundraising appeal covered the cost.

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An intriguing new aspect to the arrival of the Pettigrew Tea Rooms in Bute Park, Cardiff, is the illustrated blog by the owner, David Le Masurier. As part of his 'I want to bake free' online work, he has a collection of 'bake the menu' videos, which show how he goes about such items as his scones, carrot cake, and even, perhaps illogically, his 'secret recipe' scones. An equally entertaining part of the videos is the patriotic red dragon apron worn by the cook!

A Manchester café owner opened on Christmas Day to feed the homeless - Mehmet Tasdemir, of the Middleton Café, opened up his business with friends and family volunteering to work a shift, serving free full English breakfasts to homeless people and pensioners, and gave away bags of clothing and other useful items. He later said, rather modestly: "it was the first time we have done something like that and it wasn't brilliantly organised, but next year hopefully it will be bigger and better."

An American writer reports that the Tim Hortons coffee business of Canada has experienced another 'random kindness' chain there. Hortons itself started Random Cups of Kindness this holiday season, paying the tab of random customers. However, this unintentionally started a chain in which customers 'paid forward' for the person next in line - the chain lasted three hours and 228 orders. The writer said: 'could such a

thing even happen down here in grumpy ol' America or is it just the magical amiability of Canada?' Well, it has, of course - the longest such chain we know of was in the US, and lasted for well over two thousand customers.

The new owners of a previously run-down coffee shop in Pembroke found themselves as TV stars last month - Jen and Gwilym Evans bought the property for their Goodwick's Farmhouse Kitchen café last year, getting a property which had been unsuccessfully offered for £270,000 four years previously for well under half that at auction. The BBC had cameras at the auction for its Homes Under the Hammer programme, and approached the couple wanting to show the property in the distressed condition at purchase and then again as a restored, working coffee shop.

Another scalding case has arisen, with a court action in Texas that may be the first arising from the relatively new breed of self-service espresso machines in filling stations. The claimant says that although she knew she had to operate the machine herself and pay at the counter, the machine carried no visible warning to say that the dispensed drink might be hot enough to require double-cupping or an additional sleeve. We have asked British operators for their policy on this, but have achieved no responses.

## More shops give way to cafes – but joint ventures save others

**There have been two signs of the times this month, with more news that local shops are closing to become coffee-houses – but with different attitudes. In Hampshire, the last newsagent in one community is reported to be turning into a Costa, but in another village, a new coffee shop has saved the local post office.**

It was in Totton that dissatisfaction was expressed over the last newsagent in the area closing to be replaced by a chain coffee shop.

A local councillor said: "Totton stood still for many years - it's changing now, but not in the right way." The landlord, who decided not to allow the newsagent's lease to continue, preferring to work with Costa, claimed that the move would 'improve the overall impact of the shopping centre for the benefit of all'.

However, in the same county, Sarah Fannon has opened the House Twenty8 coffee shop in Sherfield-on-Loddon as a way of saving the local post office – the new business now combines both. An unexpected bonus was that Microsoft liked her renovation enough to use it as the location for a video promoting the Windows 8 operating system, making her new business instantly world-famous.

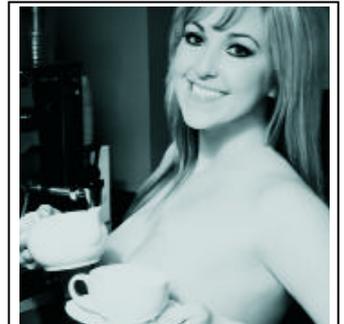
In Somerset, a coffee house has been incorporated into a new health centre in Frome. The new Bayfield's Coffee intends to have at least 85 per cent of its produce locally-sourced, and has said that in an attempt to cater for everyone who comes through the door, it will brew anything from instant coffee or builder's tea to flat whites and cortados (espresso with a little milk – probably unique in a doctor's surgery!)

We have recently come across more curious joint ventures involving coffee shops – we have seen a video/DVD shop which says that the addition of tables and good coffee has turned it into a 'destination' venue, and a florist-café whose owner says that the two businesses effectively promote each other. We have found tattoo parlours with added coffee-shop businesses, and in Canada, a fashion boutique which added a mini-coffee lounge has

discovered that so many women were bringing their menfolk in, that it made sense for her to then enlarge the business a second time and add vintage menswear.

In another example of imaginative coffee-house development, Hartlepool Borough Council is transforming its Stranton Cemetery Lodge building into a new café. In formal authority language, the idea is 'to generate additional income at a time of unprecedented budget cuts', although it's an idea that has often been thought to be a facility needed in such places.

The council has promised that 'espresso-based coffee drinks will be prepared by experienced baristas to strict preparation guidelines', but the local paper recorded the idea with the rather less respectful two-word headline: 'coffee mourning'.



*It was only a matter of time before the Calendar Girls idea reached the high street - this is one of the staff at Pappa Caff's Cafe, in Hartlepool, who 'dressed down' for a calendar to raise cash for the Kay Smith Fund, which raises money to help the families of cancer victims, and the local Children's Bereavement Service. The calendars were sold for £8.*



This could be considered politically very incorrect, but there is still an espresso-and-smoke culture in many places, which inspired the Solo e Solo from Shapeways of America - just \$59.

We are always interested in new ideas around the takeaway cup - this is from Solo Cup, working with the pioneer of the caramelised saucerside biscuit, Lotus. It allows for the giveaway biscuit to be added to a takeaway coffee.



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There is a stroke of surrealist genius to this window seat at Espressini, in Falmouth. Take another look - the chair back is actually set into the window ledge! It does function as a chair, because the ledge allows for legs to go under the table. Customers have sat there without realising how odd it is.

## Swift apology gets a cafe off the hook

**The owner of a new coffee house in Frome appears to have defused a campaign of complaints which appeared in his local press and in online mothering blogs, by being very quick with an explanation and apology.**

The new Crocker and Woods café is run by Chris Woodage, a professional photographer, and he inadvertently caused a storm of protest by remarking on Twitter that the cafe did not welcome breastfeeding or baby changing and that children must be kept under control.

Within minutes, he was being bombarded with complaints – his Twitter message board received so many complaints, he had to close the account, and a group of 30 mothers gathered to stage a peaceful demonstration outside the café, and even planned a 'feed-in' protest.

The owner decided to face the issue, and apologised, explaining that he had reacted badly when a breastfeeding mother allowed her other child, a toddler, to run unsupervised around the café, and then left mess from the baby's nappy over the café cushions.

One protester, who is a breastfeeding 'peer supporter' for the local NHS, said: "People need to know the law before they say these things. We had a chat with the owner and made our feelings clear, but he was really nice, listened to our concerns, and apologised unreservedly."

Chris Woodage later said that nobody would be banned from his café, but did point out that it was reasonable to ask that customers supervise children and dogs, and refrain from changing nappies on his upholstery.



Vegware, the compostable foodservice packaging pioneers, has launched the market's first compostable sugar stick. This, it says, is the market's first plastic-free sugar wrapping - whereas most sugar sticks use paper with an oil-based PE plastic lining so that the package can be heat-sealed, Vegware's sugar sticks use a plant-based heat-sealable coating. This means that after use, Vegware's sugar sticks can either be recycled either with dry paper, or composted with food waste.

The Chinese region which produces some of the most expensive tea in the world is reported to be undergoing a steady change towards the cultivation of coffee. The Yunnan region is famous for pu-erh, a variety of dark tea in which the tea leaves undergo a microbial fermentation process after they are dried and rolled, and which is often compressed into a cake or 'brick', and aged for some years before sale. There are suppliers in the UK who currently quote from £5.85 to £25 for ten grammes. More and more local farmers have taken to coffee, because it grows well in the high altitude, and in good times, the raw crop achieves three times as much money as their tea. Nescafe is said to have invested heavily there, and even sends farmers a twice-weekly message telling them of current prices. Starbucks is already active there, and it is said that when the brand's chief executive Howard Schultz visited in 2010, it was the first time a foreigner's private jet had been seen in the region!

A coffee-house in California has been created specifically as a meeting place for women who want to work on projects for global harmony. The See U cafe is the meeting place for the Silicon Valley Women Federation, which is made up of 2,000 Californian women, mostly Chinese, who want to be involved in community projects. The name comes from the Chinese word xiyou, for 'valued friend'. The café was designed to feature a large meeting room, which has now been booked up for months ahead by community groups.

Ringtons, the northern tea company which has been delivering on a door-to-door basis since 1907, is working with Northumbria Police to offer crime prevention advice to householders, handing out leaflets to raise awareness of doorstep criminals, such as bogus officials, high pressure sales people and rogue traders.

The latest anti-Costa petition is in Bakewell,

Derbyshire, where permission for a franchised café was granted last month. However, not everyone is against the chain - some traders have said it will contribute to the re-generation of the town. Despite protests, the new Costa in Burnham should open by the end of January. The operator, who runs 12 Costa franchises, heard that his application had been met with three separate petitions in protest, but councillors said the business would revitalise the town's high street. Costa is to open its fourth Worcester site. In a move to be seen as 'part of the community' there, the brand has said that it will be making contact with parent and toddler groups, church groups and youth projects, and offering to host their events.

Permission has been given for the Coffee Cup mobile business on Eastney beach, Portsmouth, to be replaced with a single-storey building with decking - but not without some harsh criticism in the council chamber. One protester told the council: 'there is a similar seaside cafe in Littlehampton and it looks beautiful, a display of craftsmanship, made of driftwood and fits in with the shape of the sea. The design of this cafe does not show any of those attributes. The Natural England organisation also recommended a refusal. The chairman said permission should be granted because the council's chief planning document says efforts should be made to help small cafes and restaurants grow.

The new chief executive at the Fairtrade Foundation is Michael Gidney, who takes over following the departure of Harriet Lamb. He is to lead the organisation's new three-year strategy '2013-2015 - Unlocking the Power of the Many' which will be launched this year.

Ken McMeikan, the chief executive of Greggs and a supporter of the bakery's move towards quality coffee, is leaving the baker to take up the same role at Brake Brokers, the catering supplier

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Takeaway coffee is a phenomenal contributor to business expense accounts, according to Certify, which acts as a sub-contractor to handle expense claims for American corporates. Certify analysed expenses claims for a few weeks recently, and found that Starbucks accounted for 21,000 transactions, averaging \$7.54, higher than the nearest takeaway brand claimed for, McDonald's, with an average sale of \$6.73.

Readers will remember that we recently reported the new Japanese phenomenon of 'cat cafes', where customers can pay for the relaxing experience of stroking a pet. The movement has spread to Austria and Russia, and now, Lauren Pearse has decided to try and 'crowd-fund' the investment to start Lady Dinah's Cat Emporium in London - of £108,000 needed, she raised £4,000 through online funding requests at Christmas. It is, she says, a proposition of 'the whole experience... come in from the cold to a comfortable chair, a hot cup of tea, a book, and a cat'. The Food Standards Agency raised no objection, so long as the feline staff are kept out of the kitchens.

Andy Downey, who opened the El Café coffee house on Plymouth Hoe last summer, in the middle of a recession and the area's worst summer weather for years, has said that his plan of supporting local artists and having constantly-changing art exhibitions has worked so well that he now wants to use his venue for a full arts and crafts festival. There is, he says, a massive community of artists in Plymouth with nowhere to show their work.

The founder of Andronicas has said that the surprise acquisition of his company in December will probably have the effect of expanding the company's reputation as a custom-roaster of fine coffee. Andrew Knight, who has sold his company to the European giant United Coffee, is the man who made the notable move of introducing Harrods' customers to the concept of roasted-to-order products. He has told us: "United will roast our ongoing requirements. I hope to expand the consumer sites, and it is my plan to take the custom-roasting idea we created at Harrods, and make it work." Andrew Knight retains the UK agency for Novoroast roasting machines. Elaine Higginson of United Coffee has said that the acquisition of Andronicas now allows her to deliver bespoke blends and niche products in small volumes.

The local authority in Glasgow says that it intends to develop the idea of coffee bars at its refurbished stations, following a 15-year deal with Tinderbox to run a site at its Byres Road station. The lease is reported to be worth a total of £400,000, which will be re-invested in the city's subway network. The local transport executive has said that coffee bars complement the new look and feel of

the revamped station, and that it proposes to look at the idea further as all 15 stations come to be refurbished.

The latest attempt to roast coffee beans grown in the UK has been made in Devon - a small number of beans harvested at Paignton Zoo have been served to delegates at a local tourism conference. The zoo's head gardener created an improvised drying patio on her office window sill, dried them for five months, and took them to the Costa Rica Plantation Company of Torquay for roasting and inclusion in a new English Riviera Roast blend.

Starbucks has come in for some derision in America over its attempt to make political points on coffee cups - the brand's baristas were instructed to write the words 'come together' on takeaway cups, to illustrate a point in the country's current financial debate about the 'fiscal cliff', a proposed series of tax rises and spending cuts. Starbucks says that the words 'use our company's scale for good by sending a respectful and optimistic message to our elected officials'. One American magazine writer compared the idea to the coffee - 'foamy and lukewarm'.

Pukka Herbs, the favourite organic herbal tea brand, is marking its tenth birthday with a conservation partnership with WWF UK. The aim is to raise £50,000 through donations from the sale of FairWild licorice tea - WWF helped in the creation of the FairWild Standard for sustainable use of wild collected plant ingredients.

A relatively new coffee company, Beans the Flavour Co of Durham, is the latest to work on the theme of a range of flavoured freeze-dried instant coffees in response to what is said to be the growing consumer taste for flavoured coffee. The long-established Smith's roastery did exactly the same a few months ago, and both Little's and Cherizena are well established in the sector.

Two local residents have launched a plan to open a coffee shop in an abandoned pavilion in a Norwich park - the bowling pavilion at Heigham Park has been empty for some time, and two local residents have begun talks with Norwich City Council about refurbishing it for business.

Indication of more competition in London coffee supply was given at a working breakfast in Dublin recently, when the speaker was David McKernan, founder of the city's Java Republic roastery. Despite having acknowledged that he did not know what he was taking on when he founded the business, McKernan reported that Java Republic now has a turnover of eight million euros in coffee supply, and that with support from the Irish food board An Bord Bia, is preparing to bring his brand seriously to the UK market. He told the business breakfast that he was aiming at "London in particular".

## Trade dismisses hatchet-job story of the 'artisan chain'

**The trade has reacted with general unconcern to an extremely critical story which recently appeared in the *Guardian*, suggesting that the new Harris and Hoole coffee business has been pulling the wool over people's eyes, by hiding its links with the Tesco organisation. It has been observed by several members of the coffee trade that the same newspaper might have been equally expected to praise Harris and Hoole for insisting that its Tesco partners respect its artisan practices and direct-sourcing policies!**

In a slightly over-the-top piece in early January, the newspaper claimed to be reporting 'a growing number of customers discovering that the new, independent-looking, stripped-back coffee shops popping up on high streets across London and the south-east are part of a chain that is up to 49 per cent owned by Tesco'. The writer found several customers in Crouch End apparently willing to say they had been 'duped', and also reported protests against Harris and Hoole in Whitstable.

Interestingly, some other media were equally dismissive.

The *Spectator* was fairly sarcastic: 'it's official, this country is going to the dogs. Tesco has been insidiously infiltrating the coffee shop market with a chain of shops that look independent'. It went on to argue that Harris and Hoole are creating skilled employment, and added: 'believe it or not, there's no rule that says you can't pack out your local independent coffee shop with customers if it serves better coffee than a chain can'.

The *New Statesman* was also critical, if slightly off the mark, in saying: 'Harris and Hoole didn't mislead. Purposefully or not, making yourself look like an indie coffee shop is not the same thing as telling customers you are an indie coffee shop. These things are only going to get more common.'

Curiously, of course, neither the original *Guardian* story, nor the responses from other magazines, nor the avalanche of comments which appeared online afterwards, realised that the family behind Harris and Hoole, the Tolleys, are indeed a perfectly legitimate 'artisan' business - they are, as the coffee trade knows perfectly well, the founders of the very well-regarded Taylor Street Baristas chain.

When we reported their tie-up with Tesco on our front page last August (first again, if nobody minds us pointing it out!) several members of the trade agreed that if the Tolleys were truly insisting that big investors accept their artisan principles and quality, then this must be a good thing for the standard of high-street coffee.

The Tolleys themselves took the scandal story philosophically.

"I was hardly surprised by the *Guardian* piece," Nick Tolley told us. "The interview was a most unpleasant experience - it was clear from the very beginning that there was an agenda for the article before we'd even met. The principal argument appears to be that we're being deceptive in display -



Nick Tolley

ing all the hallmarks of a local coffee shop, which is incongruous with our having Tesco as a shareholder.

"He repeatedly asked why we didn't put 'Tesco' on our menus or signage, and suggested that, in failing to do so, we were deliberately deceiving everyone who walked through the door.

"The fact is, we're behaving like a local coffee shop because that's what we want to be - it's in our DNA. Our managers are encouraged to engage with their communities, we look to source product locally and we hire locally. "We're keeping quality coffee at the heart of our mission, by training our baristas beyond anything dreamed of by the current crop of high street multiples, and by using directly-traded, speciality-grade coffee - we're the only high street operator to do so.

"This is not some pre-fabricated, soulless template that's ubiquitously stamped on every high street in every town across the land. Ironically, we're looking to do everything that the big chains and corporates are accused of not doing... and in taking this approach, we're being accused of 'deception'!"

Among the reaction this magazine has received from players in the coffee trade was one delightful enquiry about whether the *Guardian* would now seek to 'expose' the Dobbies Garden Centre business - which is, of course, owned by Tesco!



*Velopresso, the coffee bike which we have reported on before in these pages, and which uses pedal power to achieve grind-on-demand, is now likely to go into general production - it is expected that the first orders could be fulfilled in early summer. There is now a website: [www.velopresso.cc](http://www.velopresso.cc)*



## Starbucks and Tea Monkey to franchise

Tea Monkey, the brand which has launched a new kind of modern café based on tea, has now spoken of franchising its format for a nationwide extension of the business.

Tea Monkey was set up by Tracey Bovington in 2011 to provide a wide range of teas served in a more modern environment than the conventional tea-room, and the company intends considerable growth in the next five years.

The *Which Franchise* organisation has predicted that Starbucks will open its first Starbucks franchises in the UK shortly, and have 200 franchises here by 2017. Starbucks currently operates its own stores and through licensing; the franchise route is thought to allow stores to be opened in small towns.

Euro Garages, the forecourt group which is working with Starbucks on drive-thru coffee bars, credits coffee with its earnings for the year to July being up eight per cent to £13 million. Its fuel volumes were marginally down, but its Starbucks franchises went up radically.



Readers will remember the recent 'pleb' case of the authority figure who had a row with police at the gates of Downing Street, over whether he could open the gates for his bicycle. It seems that the beverage trade is regarded in a more friendly way by the armed guard – this is Jonathan Jones, head gardener of Britain's only commercial tea plantation, Tregothnan in Cornwall, on his way up Downing Street to present the prime minister with some tea. Mr Cameron was interested in the fact that Tregothnan is now selling tea to China. After their meeting, Jonathan remarked that "no prime minister has taken tea this seriously since Churchill - he wanted it grown in the UK, and now we do it!"

The 'celebrity' magazines have been going ga-ga over the news that the American coffee brand Tully's has been bought by a heart-throb TV actor - Patrick Dempsey, from the series *Gray's Anatomy*, under his business identity of Global Baristas. He paid \$5.8 million for the business, outbidding Starbucks. However, what the starry-eyed fan magazines have not noticed, and which would have completely ruined the story for them had it happened, was that there was a third bidder... it was one of the American bikini-barista chains!

Coffee # 1, the chain now owned by the Welsh brewery Brain, is proposing to open in Pershore in March. It was granted permission over local objections, and will open seven days a week. Although residents and local traders gathered 1,032 signatures on a petition against the opening, a councillor said: "I hope existing traders will not look at this as a threat to their business but an opportunity to look again at what they provide as a benefit to the town as a whole. We have no reason on planning grounds to turn this down."

The south-western chain Boston Tea Party has its first Birmingham site - a former Yates's Wine Lodge in the city centre. It also has one other Midlands outlet, in Worcester. Managing director Sam Roberts remarked: "Birmingham has a great reputation for supporting independents and is fast becoming a real foodie destination so we felt we would fit right in."

The Paper Cup Company, which is now one of the most active makers of short-run printed takeaway cups in Europe, has won the 'newcomer to international trade' award from the East Lancs chamber of commerce.

A curious action against the Ghirardelli brand in America has been allowed to proceed, by a court in California. A consumer has claimed that five Ghirardelli products that are labelled as 'white' or 'white chocolate flavoured' contain no white chocolate - he says he bought a pack of chocolate chips, thought that they did not taste like chocolate, and then found that the ingredient list made no reference to white chocolate, cocoa, or cocoa butter. He brought an action for misrepresentation which included all Ghirardelli 'white' products. The court ruled that he could not pursue a claim across a whole range, as he had only purchased one product, but allowed him to register an amended case over the one product which he did buy.

In a turnround of the previous situation, Nestle has been sued in Paris by the maker of a Nespresso-compatible coffee capsule, for allegedly using unfair practice to damage the rival's business. The Ethical Coffee Co claimed that Nespresso had engaged in 'a systematic smear campaign', and said: "It would have been fairer and far better if Nespresso had tried to beat us on quality and price - however, where the consumer opts for our products, Nespresso clearly tries, through unlawful means, to influence their decision."



Café du Monde, under its Chez Toi range, has designed a tea infuser on a stand, as a way of serving mess-free leaf tea. It is made from perforated stainless steel with green plastic trim, and after infusion the infuser goes back on its stand to drip. It costs £10.95.



This is a battery-powered espresso maker. It is the Coffee To Go from Trisa, it uses ESE coffee pods, and will serve 16 espressos from one battery charge. It is Swiss, and the price appears to translate at around £335. From what we can understand, the battery is not a removable one, but an internal one which is charged from mains or even a car cigarette lighter socket.



It is always worth remembering that not everybody knows about things much of the coffee trade takes for granted... such as latte art. The press in Hull has been getting very excited about the appearance of drinks served by Oakley Wheelwright of the Crema espresso bar in Bridlington, who has begun to develop seasonal and 'occasion' designs, for times such as Halloween - his Valentine's Day coffee carries a heart, of course, but his Christmas coffees had an etched turkey or snowman, and Easter ones will have a rabbit.



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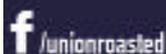


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# How widely can the UKBC spread a coffee message?

A major aspect of the UKBC, but one which is often overlooked, is that the contest is not just about one winner. It is supposed to promote coffee, for the benefit of the industry in general. It should help bring the subject to the attention of the public, the wider coffee trade, and the general catering trades.

But does it? And can it? Is this the year that some person or brand launches a promotional initiative that seizes the opportunity to put baristas and speciality coffee into the spotlight beyond the relatively narrow confines of our own trade?

"I have mixed emotions about this – the UKBC still hasn't achieved what we wanted to," says Steve Penk of La Spaziale, one of the original team who re-invented the contest after we came last in the world one year... as a result of which, the UK had two world champions in the next three seasons!

"It is still elitist, in that we have 25 top baristas, two or three of whom have travelled the world on the back of it. When we started this work, one concept was for it to bring the average barista up to a certain level... but that hasn't happened. And we have not succeeded in interesting the wider catering trades at all!"

Coffee has still not made it on to the TV screen, except as an occasional novelty.

"Baristas are not that exciting as TV personalities!" suggests Penk. "The big difference is this – you can watch the TV chefs, and then go out and buy the ingredients and make it at home. By comparison, most baristas talking about coffee go over the heads of a general audience, and the general consumer can't make it for themselves at home."

Yet it is still quite possible to take coffee to a wider audience.

"Just look at what the Great British Bake-Off has done - it has taken that subject back to basics, and it has inspired people, from grandmothers to young girls, who have got back down to baking."

One major attempt to look beyond the 'elite' is the 'best newcomer' idea, in which Union



*"The UKBC should make caterers question why they do things the way they do"*  
- sponsor Allan Pirret

Hand-Roasted recognises the top performance by a barista in their first competition with a big prize – a trip to origin.

"The majority of baristas are not aware of the UKBC, and a great many others think there's no point in going in for it as they have no chance of winning," observes Union's Alan Miller. "But you've got to start somewhere – we accept this is a slow burn."

"There was a lot of talk about our prize last year, so I would hope that people working at high-street level would now know of it, and I do hope that first-time entrants will be more encouraged because of it."

"This is probably the only coffee trade competition that everybody can get involved in, so unless our outreach grows and we widen the interest, what's the point?"

Cravendale, milk sponsor for several years, also wants to widen the appeal.

"We think the way to get more baristas interested and engaged is to create much greater awareness through relevant online media. We're going digital to help encourage new people into the barista world by creating a training manual, and an app that brings the manual to life."

At Novus Teas, sponsor Allan Pirret says he is 'uncompromisingly realistic' about what the UKBC should achieve.

"The focus on champions is good for foodservice in general, as it shines a spotlight on the importance of skill, of quality of ingredients, and offers a hint of science as to why we do these things. This should make caterers

question why they do things the way they do – too many who serve coffee do it very badly, when a bit of this focus may be all they need to do it well."

As 'outreach', Steve Kelsey of Café Trade, hosting the Chester heat as part of the local food festival, may hold an amateur barista contest to inspire some public interest.

"We want to capitalise on the 30,000 visitors that come to the Chester festival every year. The wider festival includes celebrity chefs and cooking classes for children, etc., so now we'll be there, telling the story of coffee."

Whether or not we target the outside world, what does the UKBC do for its sponsors? They pay money to have their names up – how well do they exploit the potential?

Very few sponsors use the event outside the coffee trade, but concentrate on using it to build contacts within the industry.

"It is difficult to measure the benefits in terms of sales," says Cravendale. "However, we get to see our product in action, by people who work with it day in and day out. To listen to these people is priceless feedback for us."

Monin is looking for some of that feedback this year, and typically is at the Chester heat to demonstrate new ideas with flavours. Yes, there is an elite set of top baristas, says Monin's Darril Ling – but what Monin can do is take the ideas of the elite and re-interpret them in more practical, cost-effective ways for use by frontline baristas all across the catering trade.

Union Hand-Roasted takes the same attitude. "As much as we think we support our trade customers closely, to be out and about among them is vital."

"Last year we took a brewbar along to each regional event, and this got a great response – there was genuine appreciation of something else to do other than 'just watch a competition', and great conversations were started. So we contributed another interesting aspect to the event, which led to a lot of contacts being made, and we'll do that again this year."

*This year's regional heats are at Exeter (6/7 February), Newcastle (15/16 February), Bury St Edmunds (5/6 March), and Chester (30th March-1st April). The finals of the UKBC and the various other contests will be at the London Coffee Festival, 25-28 April.*



# Cravendale MAKES THE PERFECT COFFEE



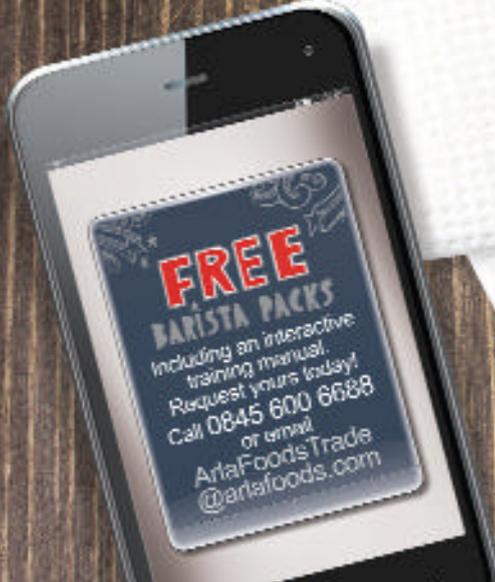
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Love, Cravendale

Unexpected as it may be, one of our stories which aroused most differences of opinion last year was of the Coffee Boys' analysis of product pricings in coffee houses.

They commented on being surprised that more coffee houses did not see the potential of soup, that its average price is £3.20 - £4, the margin is high, and that it is easy to 'whip one up'. This drew two kinds of trade response – one sector scoffed at the idea of soup in a coffee shop, and the other side enthusiastically supported it.

Much the same difference happens with porridge - some cafes saw this years ago, particularly with regard to the morning commuter trade, and some still have not considered it at all.

In both, suppliers have no end of sales talk about flavours, but very little talk of practicality in a catering context.

Not so at the Grasshopper brand, says managing director Helen Cooper. She feels very close to understanding the need for practicality in a catering situation... because her products were conceived by two sisters who are mountain-climbers, and wanted an add-water item which could be made in uncomfortable situations.

This is why Grasshopper porridge is ready-dosed in the cup.

"Our standard pots have the porridge already in - it is a sealed unit. Your process is to look at the filling indicator on the cup, fill to that level, stir, leave for two minutes, re-stir and ask the customer if the result is the right consistency for them. If they're in a hurry, you stir, put the lid on, and tell them to

# The other hot stuff...

*Are soups and porridges really practical for the coffee house trade? They are loyalty winners, say operators who serve them with care.*

re-stir in two minutes.

What is the price point?

"An interesting thing to think about is that if you sell it 'unmade', there's no VAT – that's probably £1.20. If you've poured the water on, then that's probably £1.59, but you'll still find that very competitive against £1.99 on fore-courts and over £2 in the chains.

Both porridge and soup lend themselves to a little profitable customising, says Grasshopper.

"We recommend flavours with porridge! Remember, yogurt was thought to be a very boring product until some brands began doing interesting things with it.

"From anecdotal evidence, it is said that one of the big coffee chains is responsible for producing the only porridge known to be so awful that it was left on the tables... but any independent worth their salt will be able to do great things with what they've already got on the shelf. Use flavoured syrups



and sauces, and you can use dried fruit - with a good quality chocolate sauce or flavoured coulis, you can achieve a remarkable increase in selling price."

(There are various selling strategies in this - Caffe Nero gives complimentary syrup or brown sugar, but charges for compute.)

Her soup product is slightly similar, and uses the same sealed-cup form. Grasshopper is already on record as saying that it was 'horrified' by the standard of other instant soups on the market, and thus places itself on a quality pedestal.

"Your big question is of quality - are you talking of a 'cuppasoup', or do you think that might not reflect the quality image of an artisan coffee shop?

"We are talking of a powdered base, but bases made to our specifications, and it took us months of trial and error to get it right. You can go too thick, or too watery, and as we use no artificial thickeners, we needed to make it as idiot-proof as possible."

With both products, she says, it is not enough to 'stock' it - they need to be shouted about and thought about.

"You'll need a sustained and systematic campaign of posters in and outside your shop, and maybe 'porridge tickets' to give away with your coffees. I am looking closely at the idea of a coffee-and-porridge combination deal which highlights the calorie values.

"And you have to be open at the right time – the optimum hours for porridge are from 6am, for commuters who have left home without breakfast, and soup is from 4pm onwards."

One of the trade's acknowledged pioneers in soup is Elaine Mason of Union of Genius in Edinburgh. She works with takeaway soup in both her own cafe business and supplies coffee-shop customers such as the nearby Brew Lab artisan coffee shop.

"I remember hearing of coffee places who prided themselves so much on their coffee that they wouldn't stock soup, in case the smell over-rode the smell of coffee. Well, that idea has been knocked into a cocked hat by the huge success of Brew Lab here in Edinburgh – their artisan brew bar is going like a rocket, and so is their soup, made by us."

What are the practicalities?

"There's no 'correct' temperature for serving soup at, provided the legal 'hot holding' minimum is adhered to. For soup, that is 63 degrees, which is actually too cool to serve soup at.

"Our soups are held at 85 degrees, which is too hot to eat immediately, but we do it deliberately – most sales are takeaways, and there's a cooling effect in the container, so we deliberately serve our soup so it will still be hot by the time they get to their destination. It's better too hot than too cool!

"Our takeaway soup containers are Vegware, made from plant starch and are double-walled. The containers have a lid fitted to them in the shop, and the whole lot, the soup container, bread, napkin and spoon, are put in a small brown paper carrier bag for the customer to take. I don't have grip-wraps for the soup pots, although I do for my takeaway coffee cups which are not as thick-walled as the soup pots."

Elsewhere, Solo heavy-duty containers are the choice of Soho Coffee, the fast-growing business which has outlets in such diverse places as Butlins and airports, and which is a very active player in both soup and porridge.

"We enjoy good success with soup," says managing director Penny Manuel. "This is due to simple but good homemade soups. We benefit from being able to make our own soup, but I would suggest that if you are in a coffee shop, then you may not have the facilities to 'whip up a soup.'

"It is often likely to be a secondary product and so does not receive the love it requires... but, soup made and served lovingly will generate a following of its own, and repeat custom.

"You should have a different flavour daily and make great use of fresh herbs and spices. Always go vegetarian to achieve the widest appeal – soup without meat protein has never generated adverse comment for us.

"You can have flexibility of service style - our busier stores heat and hold in a soup kettle, and our small stores heat by the portion, which ensures fresh and hot soup, while minimising wastage."

The same goes for porridge, says Penny Manuel.

"We have promoted porridge this year as part of our winter campaign, because it sends out the message you are 'open for breakfast', and because it is a strong healthy alternative to the bacon buttie! We do not sell loads, but again it is an easy win.

"We are not fans of the pre-packed instant, heavily-branded porridge pots – we prefer organic oats made with organic milk, adding value through a mix of indulgent and healthy toppings.

"And like soup, if you make your it lovingly, you can develop a fan base through offering good porridge."

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SWISS COFFEE TECHNOLOGY

Coffee and flapjacks have been a linked item for several years now – but what has been noticeably lacking is a willingness by suppliers to argue the quality case for their product. As a result, the flapjack often slips to mere commodity status on a café counter.

This is wrong, says Frank Boltman of Thanks for Franks, who says operators need to think about flapjack quality.

Frank Boltman has a colourful history in baking. He has operated delis and high-class restaurants, and has won awards for his sandwiches. He is currently working on his own favourite product, with the Thanks for Franks flapjack range now aimed at independent café operators.

And his most passionate argument is that the coffee-bar operator must not settle for 'any old flapjack' - the commodity-level flapjack will hurt a café's business, but the top-class flapjack will help build it.

"Of all the products you can make, the flapjack has always been a favourite, for me and my customers.

"I've been doing my own baking since 1982. My first experience was in a Mafia-controlled restaurant in Manhattan – they were the best bosses you could ask for, and the best business brains you could find. I didn't want to know about the rest of their business, but in catering, they gave me a great training.

"I've also spent a lot of time as a retailer and a caterer, and this tells me a lot about how I must now serve the people who are my trade customers.

"What they want from a flapjack is a product that gives them no grief, but has customers coming back and saying: 'I had one of those yesterday, and it was great... I'll have two today! I'll take some in for the people in the office!'"

The café owner now has a vast number of flapjack suppliers to choose from – there seems to be no end of potential suppliers, and a vast choice of quality on offer. The coffee-shop owner can choose where to be in the flapjack market – to buy cheap and cheerful, or go for quality and achieve a high selling price. Will the customers notice?

The key, says Frank Boltman, is that within the simple basic recipe lies vast opportunity to go upmarket or down.

"There are a lot of flapjacks out there - it's a saturated market, and very much saturated with rubbish. Whether or not you see it as a commodity depends on where you are in business - there will always be a market for the 65p flapjack, bulked up with very few natural ingredients and lots of refined sugar.

"I understand that café operators are very cautious about what they buy, and that they don't want to be left with stock, and that it's much easier to get a box of flapjacks from the cash-and-carry... but playing that safe will only have you ticking over, not making



# The art of the flapjack



*There is a vast amount of latitude for quality differences in what is a very simple basic format.*

*Typically, flapjacks can readily be seen to be either 'sparsely fruited' or 'heavily-fruited', says Frank Boltman.*

money. The only thing that will do that for you is quality.

"Everybody has seen how the emergence of good quality coffee paid off in the end - the customer can tell the difference between the chain one and the artisan one. We see the same happening in chocolate... and there's only so much you can charge for Cadburys!

"So, have one thing in your mind - that what you sell, you are responsible for. That's what people judge you by, and cheap flapjacks give no perception of value to your business."

This leads to the question of what constitutes a good flapjack, and how the café owner judges one.

"It was explained to me by a great pioneer caterer from the 1950s and 60s, Walter Landau of Old Kentucky restaurants, that he wanted a customer to walk out of his door, with the taste of his coffee in his mouth, and savour it all the way home. Then he'll think - I'm going back to that place!

"So to judge a flapjack, the operator should look for the satisfaction feeling - what do I feel, after I've eaten this? Am I sorry it's finished? Would I like to eat it again? These are the kind of questions to ask."

In a flapjack, a manufacturer can either go very high on the fruit content, and argue taste and quality, or can go high on the oats content for economy and bulk. Much the same applies to the

honey or syrup which is used to bind the contents together.

"I work on all-natural handmade granola flapjacks, which are 'heavily fruited'," agrees Frank. "When you see granola bars in the stores, they are predominantly oats, which is an easy way to make them cheaper. These are 'sparsely fruited'."

With what fruit and oat content? Some of Franks are unexpected - his Original bar features cranberries and pumpkin seeds.

"Cranberry is unusual, in that many manufacturers are limited by their imagination! I find them nicely sweet and sour, and they add colour. Pumpkin seeds are nice and crunchy, with a satisfying texture, and seem to give you 'more to eat'."

The same goes for his chocolate flapjack, which stresses a 7 per cent content of Belgian chocolate.

"Budget chocolate has no taste," insists Frank. "It looks like chocolate, but that's where the similarity stops. A good chocolate must have a high cocoa content... I'm certainly not going to put 'chocolate flavouring' in my list of ingredients!"

And there are some curiosities elsewhere in the range, such as the peanut butter and raspberry crumble.

"You have to taste it to believe it – really, this was a flapjack that had to be done!

"The biggest-selling product in some places is peanut butter on toast. By far the most enjoyable thing you can do is buy the lousiest white bread you can get, toast it, and spread it with chunky peanut butter. Get yourself a good coffee, a newspaper, and as long as you've remembered the napkin, you'll get yourself twenty minutes of pure relaxation... peanut butter as a product has not reached its potential yet!"

Having selected flapjacks to shout about, says Frank, the coffee shop has to shout about them. The easy way to handle this product sector is to just throw them in a basket on the counter and hope that customers pick one up - the better way of drawing attention is to use point-of-sale material which says 'these are not just any old flapjacks - these are real quality flapjacks, try one now!'

"When they buy our flapjacks, they will get point-of-sale cards and price tickets which say all that, ready printed, but big enough for a message. You must do this - it's all about communication.

"Whatever you do - you must communicate your flapjack quality."

**Of all the flapjack companies we asked about their ingredients and processes, only one other responded – Honeybuns, the farm-based bakery in Dorset.**

"Some people like a crisper product, but the majority of our customers prefer a moist, soft-eating flapjack," remarked managing director Emma Goss-Custard. "This requires a slow, gentle bake.

"We use an old fashioned deck oven, an old-school, slower way of baking as opposed to the faster, drier rack ovens. While we were researching ovens, we learned that it is not uncommon for commercial bakeries to have a flapjack bake time of well under 10 minutes – we bake for 45-plus!

"We did buy one of these uber-fast rack ovens, and the flapjacks came out crisper and lost the fudge-like consistency that we feel sets us apart. The other advantages are the lovely caramelised edges and the old-fashioned subtleties of finish. The deck oven is a pain as it bakes unevenly, but the end result is charmingly non-uniform!

"A buttery taste is the gold standard to look for. The best and most expensive way of achieving this is to use proper farmhouse butter, and lots of it – resist the cheaper oil-and-butter blends.

"Another marker of quality is loads of ingredients - if it says it's a raisin flapjack, then actually look for loads of raisins. For nuts, we like our pecan halves, pre-toasted by ourselves. Yes, they're ludicrously expensive – but so much better-tasting and looking than dusty 'nut pieces'."

# PID Coffee with Control



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What is happening to filter coffee? A great many people in the trade continue to be extremely enthusiastic about business potential of filter coffee and its use in coffee shops, but in many places it now seems to be given an almost too reverential a treatment - we are now very used to watching the dose weighed to the nearest fraction of a gramme, the brew timed to the second, and several minutes later, being presented with an extremely small measure of the result.

Is there still a market for the mug quantity? And if so - what coffees are recommended for good all-day, everyday, all-purpose filter use?

Coffee in a mug produces a satisfying quantity, allows for the use of acknowledged great coffees, and can be sold at a decent price with a highly acceptable profit margin, agree all the expert suppliers.

And it does not necessarily have to be a time-consuming process - indeed, batch brewing is a perfectly legitimate process for top-notch coffees.

It was just over a year ago that barista champ and roaster James Hoffmann of Square Mile happened to make a prediction for the year which included an interesting comment about filter coffee brewed in quantity.

"I think we're going to see an increase in the quality of coffee coming out of batch brewers," he wrote. "This doesn't imply an upcoming innovation in the technology, more a shift in the places using them. They make really nice coffee when used well, and I think it is very important that we focus on just getting coffee right regularly, rather than trying to blow people's minds with clever by-the-cup techniques."

Quite right, say many suppliers - it is time to recognise that the batch brewer, properly handled, actually provides excellent coffee. It may not be the most dramatically theatrical brewing method, but the quality and business logic of it is sound.

"I am of the opinion that a good, fresh filter coffee - and it absolutely has to be fresh - will give you a good and enjoyable coffee, with many possible variations in character, that will do you well for business throughout the day," suggests Ralph Lutton of the Brodies roastery in Edinburgh.

"I admire the third-wave coffee houses for creating new interest in this, although there is a fine line between creating interest and going to ridiculous extremes... and some of the methods are pretentious rubbish with no business value to them!

"In principle, there is a public taste for a good filter coffee, and in practice you can be much better off serving a good filter than a bad espresso. And it can be appropriate right through the day, from a morning coffee to an after-dinner coffee.

# The commercial joy of coffee by the mug



Yes, look closely - what are female Horse Guards doing in Cafe du Monde's training manual?

"I was always a fan of the 1980s idea of keeping timers by the filter coffee - I used to have a client with eight different filter brews on at any one time. If any brew hadn't been finished in thirty minutes, it was slung out. This guaranteed quality, because there is nothing worse than a filter coffee which is past its best. Freshness is everything.

"In bulk brew or pourover, and in five-litre quantities, the same applies. The right blend, the right grammage, and keeping it for no longer than the right time, will give you a good result. If you're in a busy establishment, you will not suffer by flinging unused coffee after half an hour - if you are not that busy, or if you want to be able to offer a wide variety of alternatives, then you are probably better off brewing in cafetiere quantities.

"Colombian, to my mind, is the best balanced for filter coffee, so is Java, and we have an Indian Mysore, which is unusual - a good, rich, nutty coffee. We also do an old-fashioned time-warp blend of Kenyan, Costa Rican and Mysore, which is the old 'mountain blend' idea from those who could not afford Jamaica Blue Mountain! But it's a good, acceptable coffee that

everybody will like, and which will serve you well throughout the day. I think this style will come back, because it's very useful in a coffee shop."

Filter preparation should be careful, but not necessarily time-consuming.

"There is a market for those really top-end coffee shops that want to weigh the coffee and the water and to exactly control the water temperature," observes Ian Balmforth at Bolling, home of the Grumpy Mule brand. "They are very good at what they do and have influenced the market... but that said, the vast majority of coffee shops can make a great filter coffee in the correct size (I suggest 12oz) by doing things efficiently.

"It should be ground immediately before brewing, so buy in bean form - subject to minimum purchases, you can have a free loan grinder from Grumpy Mule. Beans can be dosed as accurately as necessary and ground into individual filter papers - in a filter cone it is a simple job to dose hot water from a jug or Hario kettle.

"The coffee will take approx three minutes to brew but if you are well organised, you can produce some large volumes and handle a big footfall - see Monmouth in Borough Market in London and watch how they do it!

"I suggest one single origin as the 'regular' and rotating another single origin to give some variety and interest - Grumpy Mule Rwanda Mussasa as the regular house filter and a rotating selection from Ethiopian Tchembe, Panama Diamond Mountain, Guatemala Pocola as the specials."

The recommendation of Rwandan is repeated by Alan Miller at Union Hand-Roasted.

"Rwanda Maraba Bourbon, which is quite astounding - it just seems to get better and better. We now have it increasingly chosen by people who run cafes and want a well-balanced breakfast coffee. The beauty of it is that it's a great coffee for people who don't want to wait twenty minutes for the ritual.

"Our Costa Rica is also fantastic for this - a bright red-berry coffee, super-clear and wonderful for a filter. You just can't beat a straight-up proper filter coffee in a mug!"

A good mug of filter coffee is a great thing, says Rob Menzies at Glenfinlas.

"It might be a bit old-fashioned but, while I enjoy the results of drinking coffee using different brewing methods, in the office we tend to enjoy nothing more than a good, strong mug of coffee brewed for a few minutes in a cafetiere.

"People who run very busy cafes need to be able to serve good quality filter coffee to their knowledgeable customers without them having to wait an age for it. Our customers brew using a Bravilor TH quick-brew drip filter machine and flat-bottomed filter papers, brewed into insulated vacuum flasks which means they can serve it quickly and easily without losing freshness.

"It also means they can serve a hearty mug of high quality coffee without the queue stretching out the door!

"We recommend Alpenglow Mountain Blend - it's a delicious, medium-dark roasted blend from Alpen Sierra (a small 'boutique' roaster based in Nevada) and it received a gold star in the 2011 Great Taste awards and we've had great feedback on it. It's definitely something for those that prefer strong, full-bodied coffee but it also has a delicious sweetness to it,



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which Alpen Sierra say is the result of roasting at altitude."

The contrast between the customer's desire for a mug quantity and the barista's desire to serve a tiny quantity of something exquisitely prepared is a modern cafe contradiction, says Andy Gold at Marley Coffee (the brand from the reggae star's farm).

"This is an interesting subject that goes to the heart of a lot of food service - the balance between loving care and attention for the customer versus the barista with obsessive compulsive disorder and a lack of social awareness!

"There are times in current café culture when you find yourself asking if the 'care and attention' your barista is showing in your filter service has crossed over into portion compressing, price-inflating pretentiousness? The espresso machine remains a noisy whirring masterpiece of gastronomic entertainment - by contrast, the fresh brew comes from a simpler and less showy place. The customer has made a statement that says 'I'm taking my time' - so a drink too short for that is counter to the nature of the order!

"Our One Love and Buffalo Soldier both make a fantastic freshbrew gourmet filter without breaking the bank - they prepare brilliantly in a Bunn machine and served from an airport.

"If you take care brewing this way, why be miserly in your final portion? Give your customer a drink they can linger over and savour long enough to appreciate its true value!"

Where bulk brewers are not in use, the cafetiere remains a wonderfully practical method.

At Café du Monde, the Chez Toi range which was devised for hotel use has now become popular with some coffee houses - this is a collection of individually-sealed pre-portioned sachets of cafetière coffee in a size which suits for either two cups or one mug. It allows the caterer to offer a choice of Ethiopian, Kenyan, Colombian, Sumatra, Brazilian, El Salvadore and a certificated Jamaican Blue Mountain and a decaf.

"We think it's the ultimate filter coffee choice," remarks managing director David Latchem. "There's no worry about the coffee being exposed and deteriorating, and eight cases can return a gross profit of £554 on an outlay of £94.25!

"We have tags to clip on to the cafetiere to identify the coffee, with QR codes printed on the reverse - another dimension to the experience for those with a smart phone, who can find information about the coffee they are drinking."

Café du Monde has also created an extremely good but simple staff training guide on Powerpoint - it covers all the usual coffee training, in a quick six-minute presentation. And why are the pin-ups of female horse guards and Brad Pitt in there as well?

"That's to wake them up and pay attention in the middle!" says Latchem.

While a good satisfying filter coffee does not have to be an ultra-rare choice, there is still a warning to take some care in selection.

"I agree with everyone's summary of what a filter coffee should be," remarks roaster Peter James of James Gourmet Coffee. "This is the place where we can really showcase the excellence of a coffee - so if a Kenyan has acidity, flaunt it! It can be amazing.

"However, where the theory is all falling down is in roasting fashion. Current roasting practice for some suppliers is to think that they might be able to get away with one roast for filter and espresso...so the middle of the road 'one roast fits all' is big business for some roasters right now. It's the New Labour of the coffee movement!"

Therefore, he warns, make sure to pick a coffee which really has been prepared for filter brewing.

## Filter coffee in a mobile-trading arena

**The practicalities of filter coffee in decent quantities brings up another operational curiosity which was highlighted to us recently by Barbara Croce of Caffe Latino, the company which creates 'coffee bikes' for mobile trading.**

"We're trying to encourage the makers towards gas water urns in practical sizes," she remarked. "The only one on the market is too big, and I have noticed while helping at a few mobile events that the number of Americanos is now double what it used to be when I was working a van. With that and tea, and filter coffee, there is now a huge need for hot water in quantity."

This was worth putting to the machine makers!

Most espresso machine makers' salesmen will blithely say that their machine allows water to be drawn off for tea and filter coffee - but really, this is not practical as a full-time proposition. Certainly in mobile trading, the recommendation is for separate systems.

La Spaziale did once offer a dual-fuel espresso machine for mobile use, but recommends the 'water-boiler' option for water in quantity. "The idea of gas-operated machines is very big in France and Italy, but the fundamental difference is, they're only good for espresso - it's not good for a lot of hot water for Americanos, because the 'recovery' isn't fast enough," remarked the brand's Steve Penk. "The way round it is certainly to keep your espressos and your hot water separate - use a separate small boiler off a 13A plug."

Yes, says Paul Stack at Marco Beverage Systems, the very best way is to use separate systems.

"We have found that putting a hot water supply beside an espresso machine with heavy Americano and tea use can bring throughput up by over 25 per cent, by leaving the espresso machine to do what it does best! We have supplied kit for mobile carts using a range of solutions, predominantly under-counter boilers with counter-top fonts. All of these solutions are electric - we do not do gas boilers any more."

"Our Infusion brewer is now located in some of the top coffee shops in London," says Bunn's David Locker. "This system allows you to control your brew time and extraction, allows you to hold coffee for around two hours, and produce up to 150 per hour."

"For a mobile, the suggestion I can come up with



*Good old mug sizes are in evidence at this magazine's office! (The mug is one of the new Quickfire one-off custom ones)*

is our Hw2A boiler, plumbed into the container of water below the counter. This system only requires a 13amp power supply."

You would be surprised just how much quantity you can achieve, says Chris Palmer of Xpress, who is also a founder of the Association of Independent Espresso Engineers.

"We look after a lot of racing teams, particularly Honda, and a spin-off from this is our Xpress Coffee Events business of mobile units. Rather than have a full van, we built a unit we can easily set up in a field.

"We incur problems with power at many shows, and we have worked out many tricks to get round this! We have tried generators, and we found that where we kept popping fuses and trips was because of the hot water need for Americanos and teas. It's when everything comes on at once that you get a problem.

"So, we now take a ten-litre boiler, which we heat up first, before we do anything else. It is easier to heat up ten litres and keep it to temperature than keep getting it to temperature... you can always top it up in a quiet period. Airpots and flasks can do it well - you'd be amazed how well a little five-litre boiler can keep water hot. As they're not expensive, we will often keep on one the go for Americano, and another for tea.

"Does it work? At the biggest bike show in the UK, we did 17,000 cups in ten days - at the Southampton boat show, we did 10,000 in ten days.

"Yes, we know how to advise on this...!"

### LET US HELP PLAN YOUR FILTER COFFEE STRATEGY!



The modern coffee shop has re-discovered filter coffee as one of the most satisfying and profitable products to put in front of the customer. Brodies has been working on fine filter coffees since 1867... and is still right in touch with what the modern café needs.

And there's a lot more to Brodies... This is the roaster who developed the great Dynamic Volcanic espresso range, described as 'not coffees for the cautious'! Brodies is also the importer of Segafredo Zanetti, said to be the world's most popular espresso coffee brand. Brodies' tea has very recently added a new collection of fruit and herbal infusions... and there are other unique items. We also make cakes and chocolates, and our hand-made Scottish berris and Exotic Fruit cakes are both Great Taste Award winners - and perfect to serve with a great cup of filter or espresso coffee.

We would love to help you to help plan your filter coffee strategy!

For information on any of our products please contact [ralph@brodies1867.co.uk](mailto:ralph@brodies1867.co.uk)  
Tel: 0131 663 4012. [www.brodies1867.co.uk](http://www.brodies1867.co.uk)

## The coffee house as a 'safer place'

The concept of the coffee house as 'a safe place' has become part of the business plan of Oslar Coffee in Wokingham, which has also begun to introduce some rather unusual coffees to its espresso drinks.

"I wanted to bring artisan coffee to a small town that has generally not seen coffee other than over-extracted chain drinks," Jason Oslar tells us.

"I now offer four different choices, all roasted by London Coffee Roasters, the customer can choose any variation, and we'll explain how the drink will come out – the Yirgacheffe in a flat white with Guernsey milk brings out such a jammy taste, people now ask for 'a jammy flat white'.

"We also brew a Monsooned Malabar as espresso, and that is absolutely fantastic in a flat white – you get some chocolate hints coming through, and it absolutely shines!"

Oslar has recently been involved in an admirable charity project, Joseph Swims.

"This was to do with a local seven-year-old who decided to swim the equivalent of 21 miles in a local pool, in aid of Syrian refugees, because he was so upset to read about them. We designed a milkshake with Zuma chocolate, whipped cream and pop-



ping candy, sold it for £2.95, and gave a quarter of that to the cause... we raised about £300 with it.

"We believe in local support. The word 'independent' means a lot round here, and if you're seen to be doing things for local people, they love it. We have disabled and baby-changing facilities, and when we are asked for breastfeeding facilities we can do that.

"We take part in the Local Loo scheme, and we are a designated Safer Place – this means we have a sticker in the window, and any vulnerable adult or child who feels distressed or in trouble, and who needs to just come in and sit down, is welcome in here without having to buy anything."

Langan's Tea Rooms of Burton, which has won an award in the Southern Stafford Regeneration Awards, turns out to be an unusual business - it is a business run by a local addiction centre, and is staffed by recovering drug and alcohol users. The chairman of the judges' panel said the award was won for an outstanding contribution to work in the field of recovery.

Langan's is owned by the O'Connor Gateway Charitable Trust and run as a social enterprise. All revenue is put back into community services to provide education, training and employment for persons who have undergone rehabilitation. The tea rooms provide work experience, training and qualifications, and doubles as a safe and



neutral social outlet for people in recovery.

The chief executive of the Burton Addiction Centre, said: "I'm really proud - in just over a year, we have done what we set out to achieve, to have a positive impact on our community. It shows what can be achieved by people who are turning their lives around."



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Everone knows how much we love imaginative external signs - this was snapped by Elke Dawkins of the Talking Food agency in Hartley Wintney. The message is a direct reference, including the choice of colour, to the rather more familiar cafe brand which can be seen in the background!



## Doing that old briefcase squat...

What does a coffee bar do to keep 'connected' with its customers when they aren't actually standing at the counter? And what will get commuters talking to each other about the coffee bar they have at their station?

The Little Italy espresso bar, which operates at rail stations in Oxfordshire, has come up with an answer – it has produced its own commuter magazine.

"Three of our branches are all at London-Birmingham commuter stations, and we see pretty much the same people from Monday to Friday. The result is a fantastic relationship build-up and many have become friends," founder Simon Keeley told us. "So when we had an idea for a 'brand-awareness' exercise, we did it without stepping out of our own shoes and becoming corporate bores!

"We decided to produce a little magazine that included our own staff and our loyal customer base, as such an exciting cross-section of people pass through here every day. We set about interviewing some customers, and the result is a true representation of us as a brand, and of the banter and great fun we have serving these guys."

The result, it can truly be said, is full of character - one interviewee is a

barista, one is the first customer the business ever had, and another is Suzanne Dando, the gymnast - astonishingly, it is 32 years since she was in the Olympics, but she is pictured at a Little Italy site with the torch she carried in last year's pre-Olympic relay.

There is, we hesitate to report, also the first public exposition of 'platforming', a series of keep-fit exercises for commuters to do while waiting for their train. These include the 'briefcase grab and squat' and the 'briefcase plank'. The best advice that can be given is 'don't try this at home', and we deeply hope that they never catch on.

As the customer demonstrator writes, the advantage of being seen doing these exercises is that nobody dares sit next to him on the train, so he gets a very peaceful commute.

Little Italy is at Haddenham & Thame Parkway station, with another shop in Haddenham itself, at Bicester North and Wendover, and will soon open at Leamington Spa.

## Flour Power turns to coffee shops

One of the most notable artisan bakery companies is now moving into the coffee-house sector - Flour Power, of London, which is the UK's largest organic bakery, supplying food markets, delis, and some Michelin-starred restaurants, will open its first café in Tunbridge Wells.

"We're excited about this!", managing director Lisa Brook told Coffee House. "My vision has always been to open high quality, welcoming coffee shops serving great sustainable coffee with exceptional cakes and pastries. We have been in Tunbridge Wells for two years as a bakery and now we have the opportunity to develop our first Flour Power Café."



The move is a direct result of meeting Mary Portas, the 'queen of shops' and the government's guru on matters of high-street regeneration. Lisa Brook inherited three retail shops when she took over Flour Power, and closed two down - then she met Mary Portas, thought again, and decided to give the high street another go.

We have seen several styles of bakery-café developing recently - the Greggs style, which was rather 'functional' until their new Moments design, and the Italian style, as used here by Patisserie Valerie, with rows of eye-catching cakes and pastries, promi-

nently 'front and centre'. In smaller towns, we have many small shops with the delightful atmosphere of flour all over the place and the chance of coffee at a corner table. What will Flour Power be?

"Flour Power will be a relaxed artisan café set within a bakery selling hand-crafted pastries and organic breads – we are determined to become a daily necessity for local coffee fans, a place to dream in, and a comfortable place to read a book. At present Tunbridge Wells is primarily a bakery shop, but we aim to build the business to 50/50 with coffee."

What is the true situation of coffee farmers, as we enter 2013, a clear twenty years after the establishment of the Fairtrade Foundation? In some places, the truth continues to be very disturbing - the horror of starvation still exists among poor farmers, to a degree which many in the British and American coffee trades just do not realise.

It has now been revealed by Rick Peyser, of Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, in his book *Brewing Change*, which has become available in the UK.

The remarkable thing about this book is that it has been described as 'a charming memoir' of the writer's time in the coffee trade, and at first it certainly seems a gentle and easy story... until, when you least expect it, the author assaults you with the bare truths of what he really found in coffee farming communities.

And that is, indeed, the way it happened to Rick Peyser himself - for him, the truth was a long time coming, and when it came, it hit him hard.

Rick works with Green Mountain Coffee of Vermont, which is just a name to many in the UK, but which is absolutely massive in the US. He has been, among other things, public relations director for Green Mountain, but at the same time has managed to fit in such jobs as president of the Speciality Coffee Association of America, and being a senior man in the Fairtrade movement.

And so, in the early part of this book, we learn such interesting things as myths of organic coffee, the comparison of open sun and shade-grown coffee, and for the first time, details of the big SCAA fraud scandal of 2005, when a past senior officer was found to have left a vast hole in the accounts - four years later he was jailed for three years and ordered to repay almost half a million dollars. We also learn some new details of the bizarre case in 2006, when Starbucks attempted to trademark certain names of Ethiopian coffee regions (and we also learn that, amazingly, some people in the SCAA at first wanted to back Starbucks in the case!)

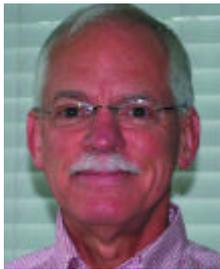
And then we hit the real story - what Rick Peyser refers to as 'a parallel reality I hadn't known existed'.

There is one extremely unusual skill which Peyser has, very rare among coffee people, and it was this which helped him uncover the truth. That skill is that he bothered to take the trouble to learn the language of coffee farmers - indeed, to the astonishment and not entire approval of his family, he left his home to travel for quite a period in coffee-growing areas, to become fluent in their language.

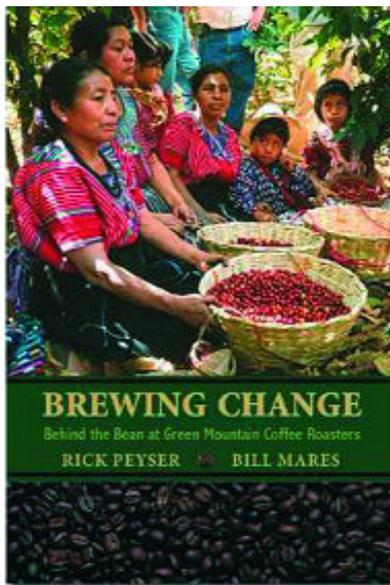
Had he not done so, he would have completely missed the true significance of a phrase which came up in conversation with farmers - 'los meses flacos', or 'the thin months'. He came to realise that this simple phrase did not mean just an inconvenient period at the end of the harvest, when the money had run out - it could mean an

# The horror of los meses flacos

Are starvation and hard times in the past for coffee farmers? Think again... a great new book exposes more truths about the crop we rely on



Rick Peyser



annual period of starvation lasting four months, or even longer.

Having worked for the Fairtrade organisation, Peyser was shaken. "These were Fairtrade farmers who were supposed to be getting a reasonable price for their coffee - and they were struggling to put food on their table for a significant part of every year?"

was Fairtrade if the farmer can't put food on the table for his family?"

He also realised that the commercial coffee industry had simply assumed that its pursuit of high-quality coffee would have a trickle-down financial benefit to the farmers. It did not.

And he realised that in general, when buyers made their VIP visits to coffee farms, they did so after the harvests,

“ I was furious. I felt stupid. How could I be in the industry for so long and not know what the farmers were dealing with? I realised I had never thought to ask... nobody had. ”

- Rick Peyser

"The family situation hit me - they went hungry for three to four months of every year.

"I was furious I hadn't known about this. I felt stupid. How could I be in the industry for so long and not know what the farmers were dealing with?"

"I realised I had never thought to ask... nobody had."

Thoroughly embarrassed by what he had learned, Peyser went on to consider that he had been promoting and believing in Fairtrade - "but what good

when the farmers had been paid - of course the farmers were smiling, because they had food on the table when the industry visitors came.

This was the awakening which led to the work that Green Mountain then put in on behalf of farmers. One of their senior managers asked the troubling question: 'do we want our customers to know that our farmers struggle to put food on their tables?' Putting it more bluntly, asks Peyser, what happens when the quality of the bean is put

ahead of the quality of life?

The result of this thinking was projects such as 'F4F', the Food for Farmers project.

And does this situation really exist, in 2013, and what does the coffee trade think about it?

"I have found surprise to be the general reaction," Rick Peyser told Coffee House. "At an SCAA Conference, I shared the results of the study that indicated that 67% of those small-scale coffee farmers interviewed in Nicaragua, Guatemala, and southern Mexico had between 3-8 months of extreme scarcity of food every year. A percentage of the industry has now been made aware of the issue, but it is safe to assume that the majority of people in the industry still are unaware of the immense challenge that many coffee farming families face, even with the advance of "sustainable" certifications.

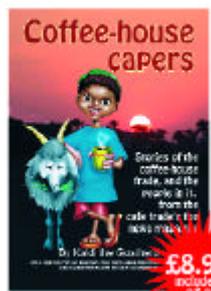
"After serving on the board of directors of Fairtrade for six years, I was personally very surprised by the existence of these 'thin months', as I interviewed Fairtrade farmers in Nicaragua as part of the study. Like others, I thought that Fairtrade would raise farmers' income from coffee sufficiently so that they would be able to put food on the table all year long, send their children to school, etc.

"Those who have not heard it directly from the mouths of farmers, may be even more surprised than I was. Hungry coffee farmers certainly doesn't seem 'fair' trade."

Furthermore, says Peyser, if the industry continues to concentrate on the quality of coffee above the people of the growing communities, then the industry is doomed. All the disease-resistant hybrids in the world will not work if there is nobody alive on the farms to tend the plants.

And everyone in the industry can make a move towards this. He begins the book with the remark that: 'you do not have to be a CEO to change the course of a company or influence an industry', and an equally good lesson of this book is how it shows that even 'just a PR guy' can have something to say, and set in motion the wheels of great change.

*Brewing Change*, by Rick Peyser and Bill Mares, was published in the US last spring, and in the UK this winter. It is available online from the Book Depository and Amazon at around £10.



May we remind readers that some copies of Kaldi's book, the funniest thing ever written about the British coffee-bar trade, still remain available at £8.99. The book supports two charities - Shelter from the Storm and Health Help International. Enquiries and orders to [trudi@coffee-house.org.uk](mailto:trudi@coffee-house.org.uk)

# Can we save foil bags from landfill?

This is the 'coffee bag', one of the most imaginative ideas the trade has seen for the re-use of the familiar one-kilo packs which are used throughout the café sector. The inventors are suggesting that the entire coffee trade could usefully take the idea up.

Those packs are nearly always sent for landfill, because they cannot be recycled in a conventional way – but work between a social enterprise company in Aberdeen and the local Caber Coffee company has created a new kind of heavy-duty and waterproof carrier bag.

The process turns out to be extremely clever, while not too complex.

To form the new bag, the used coffee packs are not cut, except for the tops being snipped off - they are folded, and stitched together.

"Ten one-kilo coffee bags make one carrier bag - three each side, and then the ends and base," explains Findlay Leask of Caber. "We can even use torn coffee bags, and the result is that you now have a carrier bag with one-way valves! There is no lining, so the waterproofing applies to the inside as much as the outside.

"The most difficult part was the handle, but the social enterprise company had a supply of webbing, which took care of that."

The idea came up after a local school had experimented with foils in its workshop. One of their first experiments was an apron made from coffee bags, which turned out to be



absolutely waterproof and splash-proof.

The social enterprise company, Glencraft, employs several dozen workers with disabilities, visual impairment or learning difficulties, and receives the used packs free from Caber, which then pays £5 each for the resulting new bags.

These are not being re-sold, but are handed out around the trade to encourage wider use of the idea.

"This is a very interesting way of re-using something which must otherwise go to landfill," says Findlay Leask. "It is a great way for the industry to give itself green credentials, so we're not insisting that this is unique to us - it's a subject which the entire industry could take up."

Kaldi is obliged to a news station in Boston, USA, for their house doctor's recent presentation on "Why Does Coffee Make Me Poop?" The doctor contends that caffeine stimulates movement of the colonic muscles, thus promoting peristalsis, the contraction and relaxation of intestinal muscles that causes bowel movements. However, he adds, dairy products, excess sugar, even sweeteners, have a similar but rather less desirable effect which we will not go into here. There appears to be a good reason for drinking coffee black.

Starbucks has explained the logic behind its curious Christmas promotion, the 'limited edition, exclusive gift card made entirely out of stainless steel'. The 'limited edition' was actually of five thousand, and Starbucks put them on sale in America in December at \$450 - although the cards were loaded with only \$400 in credit. The brand told the American press that it cost them fifty dollars to make each card - and then added the remarkable view that it expected one in every 10 Americans to receive a Starbucks Card of some kind at Christmas.

A British managing director asked Kaldi this month - why, in one chain coffee shop, do baristas wear t-shirts with 'trainee' on the back, and yet I still get charged full price? Why don't I get a 'trainee' price? (Like in



## Kaldi

a hairdresser?)

The US Patent and Trademark Office has refused to let the Dunkin' Donuts chain trademark the slogan 'Best Coffee in America'. Meanwhile the chain has speculated that it might try again to make a mark in Britain - it did not succeed the first time, but the logic is said to be that its new range of breakfast sandwiches, 'slightly milder' coffee and doughnuts will now appeal to Britons.

A consumer who complained to an American newspaper about a barista fitting a sip-through lid with her bare hands has been told that there has actually been a study on the subject of the transmission of unwanted matter across takeaway coffee cups - the University of Virginia demonstrated that half of the volunteers touching contaminated coffee-cup handles caught colds.

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