

Boughton's

COFFEE HOUSE



Scoop Malone, the trade's finest reporter, brings you another magazine full of trade news and issues!

June 2014

The water-quality problem - now the world of science gets involved

The fraught subject of water quality and its influence on coffee flavour has received its biggest attention-getting boost so far – barista champion Maxwell Colonna-Dashwood, a café owner from Bath already known in the trade for his investigation into the problem, has become co-author of a scientific work on it.

The trade has argued for years about whether, and how, local water quality has an effect on coffee taste, and about whether water quality can be 'controlled'. Now the subject has been formally laid out before the world of science.

The paper 'The Role of Dissolved Cations in Coffee Extraction' has been jointly written by Maxwell and Lesley Colonna-Dashwood and Christopher Hendon of the department of chemistry at the University of Bath, and published to the scientific community.

Maxwell showed his serious interest in water while winning this year's barista championship – he dressed in a white lab coat and goggles to demonstrate that serious water chemistry is involved in understanding what happens to the taste of coffee.

The paper has already achieved a great deal of interest from the popular press, who not surprisingly have announced that 'British scientists have achieved a formula for the perfect cup of coffee'.

The importance of this for the beverage



Coffee in the lab - Maxwell Colonna-Dashwood gets to work with Chris Hendon

age trade, however, is the argument that the trade's general assumptions about water treatment may be too simplistic.

In general, the industry's received wisdom holds that very 'hard' water is bad for both taste and machines, and that water should be measured for parts-per-million of hardness – a reading of 130-150ppm is often said to be best, and a big industry has grown up around 'water-softening' equipment.

However, in the scientific view, this

simple terms, Maxwell told us:

"The whole project we are doing basically distinguishes that the measurement of the amount of minerals in a given water is very inconclusive, as the types of minerals can vary wildly.

"This means that you could brew two cups of coffee with waters that have the same TDS reading (total dissolved solids), as much of the industry does now, but the coffee could taste very different because the content of the TDS is different in each water.

“ It is not 'hardness' of water which affects taste, but 'the type of hardness' ”

- Christopher Hendon, University of Bath

may be inadequate. The reading of 'hard water' which the industry generally reckons to be correct may not be helpful, because it is the composition of that hardness which may make all the difference – literally, as Mr Hendon has explained, it is not just 'hardness' of water which affects taste, but 'the type of hardness'.

Coffee is such a complex thing that, as Chris Hendon has written, a 'bad coffee' can be the result of any combination of many variables going wrong... and it doesn't matter how careful the barista is, it is 'almost impossible' for the barista to control the chemical composition of the brew water.

Asked to summarise the paper in

"The published paper establishes that different mineral content will extract differently from the coffee.

"It is the types of mineral content in the water that impacts on the flavour of the coffee, not just the amount. The discussion of hard and soft water is flawed as it doesn't recognise that two waters of a similar hardness or softness can still be very different.

"This explains a lot of the mystery in why coffees taste different with seemingly similar waters.

"The paper itself is one part of a larger project that Chris and I are doing, and will culminate in a book on water and coffee which we hope to release later this year, which will act as a users' guide to water and coffee."

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It is a big year for charity rides by people from the coffee trade. Steve Prime of the Esquires chain in Coventry is to cycle the 1,400 miles from Seattle to Los Angeles in aid of Coffee Kids, the organisation that creates projects to reduce farming communities' dependence on the coffee market. Chris York of Marco Beverage Systems will be trying to raise money for Kidney Research by cycling from London to Brighton in September, and Simon Law of the Handmade Cake Company is cycling from London to Paris in July, in aid of Action Medical research.

The Welsh School of Coffee has been created by roaster Scott James of the Coaltown company of Ammanford. Coaltown, which was named in recognition of the area's mining history, is his second company, following the Roasted Joe's online retail coffee subscription company.

TheANGES de Sucre patisserie of London has launched its own unusual coffee brand – the Miel blend is from the Naranjo Valley, Puerto Rico, and is roasted in Paris. The founder ofANGES de Sucre, Reshmi Bennett, said: "the Miel blend is just the first in one of many sensational coffee blends to be offered by us this year."

Fracino has reported a turnover of £4.1 million, which includes a fourteen per cent increase in sales in its 50th anniversary year. The company reports producing almost 4,000 machines a year, and that 28 per

cent of its business is now in export.

Bettys, the extremely famous chain of northern tea-rooms, has been forced to defend the status of its 'fat rascal', a kind of fruity scone. A bakery in Yorkshire introduced its own Fat Rascal premium scone three years ago, but has now accepted that Bettys had a prior claim to the name. The newcomer has now been re-named Yorkshire Scallywag.

Jurassic Coast Coffee has been named Costa's top franchise for the second year in a row. It has stores in Sidmouth, Honiton, Lyme Regis, Tiverton and Teignmouth.

A survey of domestic coffee machine users in New Zealand has produced the finding that 60 per cent of them prefer the coffee they make at home to that bought in a café. The researchers also found that owning a home coffee machine has the result of increasing the consumer's overall coffee intake. The most reliable home machine was reported to be the Nespresso.

This year's UK aeropress brewing champion is Gabrielle Von Koss of Square Mile roasters, in a contest which drew a quite impressive 41 entrants. Peter Garcia, also of Square Mile, was third, with Oliver Bignall of Workshop Coffee separating them. The winner of the first Scottish Aeropress Championship was David Robson of Association Coffee.

Qualitasse gives its blend figures

The Qualitasse company of Basingstoke has acknowledged the industrial heritage of its headquarters site, an old foundry, with the name of its new coffee – and, unusually, it has designed a packaging which gives the names, origins, and even the percentages of the coffees which make up the blend.

"We used to sell Italian coffees, and we did have a very Italian-esque brand, which was roasted in the UK," sales director Martin Parry told us. "But we felt it would be more important, rather than having a fancy name and tag line, to tell customers what's in it, including the percentages... we're not treating this as a mystical blend!"

"There will be single origins to come. The majority of the roasting is by Masterroast, who have always done a great job for us, but we're also working with guest roasters, and we've also been working on roast development. We have done all the courses and we may even end up as a roaster ourselves. But we're learning, and if we do roast, we're going to make sure we know exactly what we're doing before we put it for sale!"

The same attitude has gone into Qualitasse's decision to get actively behind the Fiamma, the Portuguese espresso equipment brand which it describes as 'bullet-proof'.

Qualitasse has been working on a policy of buying direct from manufacturers for over thirty years, and discovered Fiamma about fifteen years ago. The company's MD, Brian Layton, bought many of them in the 1990s, and reports that they 'never went wrong'.

"We have been in business for thirty years, and this trade has too much of the 'same old' in it," Martin Parry told us. "We too have sold the same old machines, but now we're working with people who really do want to keep innovating."

"There are many things about the Fiamma machines which make them



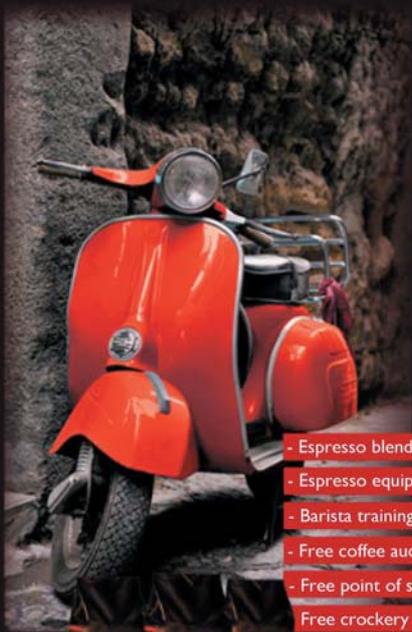
No secrets on the Anvil label

simply easier to use – the touch screen makes it much easier to change your brewing parameters on this, and where you would normally dispense hot water and see it flow everywhere, on this machine you can adjust the temperature of the water for your tea, without it affecting the brew temperature of the coffee, and it pours steadily, without spraying. The shot timer works automatically, for each shot."



This is the Cinni pen, which allows for a new kind of latte art – it is a pen that uses a ground material as its writing medium. The inventor is seeking crowdfunding for development, and says it is the first kitchen gadget designed to make creative drawings with all-natural ground materials such as cinnamon, coffee grounds, cocoa powder, or ground sugar.

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Popcorn made a surprisingly big appearance at this year's Caffe Culture show, and this was one of the most unlikely products of all - it is the Handmade Cake Company's toffee popcorn cake.

"We've had more interest in the toffee popcorn than anything else - because there isn't any competitive cake anywhere!" the company's Parry Hughes-Morgan told us. "The take-up in its first week produced a surprising eagerness from buyers."

The creation of a popcorn cake turns out to have involved some puzzles.

"Were we going to do this as a pile of popcorn stuck together, or did we need a base? Customer opinion said we should go with the base."

"The other big decision was getting the right popcorn, because the wrong ones go soggy, and you also need one with a slight saltiness. Even the pre-portioning was difficult."

"It's an interesting-looking traybake – it was always going to be a knobbly, rustic kind of product, and we have pre-cut this in triangles, which you can only do with a product which isn't scarily fragile. Now we have done it, we may consider whether to bring it out as a pre-packed single portion."

It is a cake to be promoted to the younger market, says Handmade.

"The general perception is that popcorn is a 'lighter' product, and therefore 'better'. I would jazz it up, because this is a product which would give you a competitive edge, and aim it straight at the under-25s."



The popcorn cake

Starbucks has submitted plans to open at the Peel Centre, Yeovil.

The Reading branch of WH Smith is the first in the chain to open an in-store franchise from the Soho Coffee Company. There are plans for three similar sites inside WH Smith high street stores during the summer. The cafes are staffed by Smith personnel, who have had barista training by Soho. Soho has become known for seeing opportunities in some perhaps unexpected places – among its partners are Butlins.

A new small roastery has opened up in Chelmsford – it is Mac & Me, and is a venture between Grant Whitaker and Dave Macdonald, who say there is a gap in the Essex market for artisan coffees... one of them has a history in selling Italian coffee to local catering businesses. The roastery's first three blends are Home Blend, Boom and 666.

Caffé Nero is to open in St Albans, despite strong opposition from campaigners. The local planning committee gave permission in spite of 184 letters of objection following a campaign backed by the local civic society, which maintained that there are already too many coffee multiples in the city. The civic society said that so many letters clearly showed the depth of feeling in the area, criticised councillors for the lack of debate on the issue, and asked why the council was now breaching its own policy on retail use. A 'rudderless' council, it was said, will only allow independent local cafes to go under. In Swansea, Costa has been given approval to open in Uplands, despite a 900-strong petition in protest.

This is not an entirely new idea, but the novel aspect of the Just Add Strawberries product is that the couple behind it are café owners. The product is what might delicately be termed an 'adult' hamper, which is aimed at 'established couples aged over 25', and features champagne, luxury chocolates, massage oil, candles, feathers and adult toys. It comes from Simon and Wendy Baird of the Picnic Basket deli café in Carrington Street, Nottingham, who are selling the hampers online at prices from £49.95 to £135. The last time we saw one of these, it was by an American company and certainly did feature an erotic coffee...

The 'suspended coffee' scheme at Java & Co in Oxford has raised £1,366 in its first year; the money goes to a local drop-in refuge for the homeless.

The 23.5 Degrees retail operation, which is a Starbucks franchisee, is to open its tenth site in fifteen months. Its first was at Liphook in Hampshire, and the tenth will be in Bournemouth.

Coffee man may have invented the next superfood

The 'coffee flour' project, which could possibly both remove a problem of food waste and create a new food source, may achieve a production tally of 350,000lb this year... and now turns out to have been masterminded by a man who once worked for Starbucks.

The company producing the entirely new product is CF Global, which was started by Dan Belliveau, an engineer who has worked on factory design for Starbucks. It was while doing so that he learned about the problem of coffee waste, in which billions of pounds of cherry pulp is left over at origin. Some of this is worked back into the soil as fertilizer, but most of it goes to landfill.

Mr Belliveau had the idea of turning it into a kind of flour, and he has now invented a process which results in a nutritious, gluten-free flour that can be baked into biscuits or cakes. Considering the amount of waste created by the coffee manufacturing industry, the inventor has been lauded as someone who has done the rare thing of creating 'a new food'.

After two years in development, Coffee Flour has now been officially launched as a partnership between the inventor and a Seattle-based venture capital company, which itself is led by a man who is a cook and co-author of a five-volume cookery book. Two coffee trading and processing companies are also investing in the idea.

In Seattle, America's coffee town, a well-known chef who has worked with the new product has said: "coffee flour is the rarest thing I've ever cooked with – the most exciting part is how customers are seduced by the robust flavour, which was unexpected".

It is the nutritional profile of coffee flour which has drawn a lot of interest – Dan Belliveau says that an ounce of it has more fibre than whole grain wheat flour, more iron than spinach, more potassium than a banana and more protein than fresh kale.



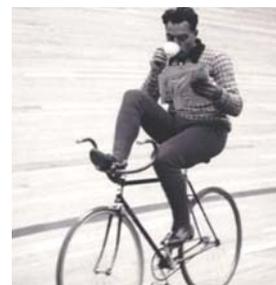
Dan Belliveau

Belliveau and Intellectual Ventures plan to offer the ingredient first to chefs, then to speciality baking companies and chocolatiers, and to North American food companies. In theory, it can be used equally well for tortillas in Latin America, noodles in the East, and naan in India.

The man in charge of the BSA's café accreditations scheme is, for the first time, a coffee-house operator. He is Gordon Howell, of the Northern Academy of Coffee and the Attic and Harlequin coffee houses in York.

An American business student has created a coffee brand which raises money to save unwanted dogs from being put down. The Grounds & Hounds brand sells six blends of Fairtrade organic coffee, and donates 20 percent of its sales to 'no-kill' animal shelters. After nine weeks, the business was already reporting international orders from pet-lovers, and had arranged its first donation of a thousand dollars to a local shelter.

Newcastle-based Choclateas, a luxury chocolate-infused tea range, is to re-brand as Oh My Teas, and has reported that it is in discussion with Debenhams and Selfridges. The company achieved a lot of public attention in the north-east by winning a competition to sponsor a Newcastle United match.



The latest combination of cycle shop and coffee house that we have come across is the Velo House in Tunbridge Wells, to whom we are obliged for this picture. Please be careful of the takeaway coffees, cyclists!



This is an example of 'Coffee Time', a series of artworks on discarded coffee cups. The artist, Rob Draper, is a typographer, and his work is based on lettering styles.



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It is now practical for small cafes to offer an authentic Italian gelato made on the premises, says Regency Coffee of Manchester, which has introduced an ice-cream machine and ingredient mixers from Toschi of Italy.

"Toschi Gelateria is a fast product which is phenomenal," says sales director Philip Rundlett. "All you now need is a small table-top machine to produce a soft Italian Semifreddo, which is firm enough to serve in a cone."

The new system, says Regency, overcomes the problems of food manufacture regulations.

"There are two types of ice-cream. If you're a traditional ice-cream shop with scoop-out freezer cabinets, you're going to be into big machines and pasteurisation, but a 'semi-freddo' soft Italian style is different - this does not require pasteurisation.

"The old machines were also bigger and slower, but the new breed of table-top machines are only 18in square, and capable of producing 50 servings in 45 minutes. You can now make up a batch at the beginning of the day or during the day, and you'll be happy to have the machine in view of the customers.

"You mix the base powder with water, or milk, or a combination. Toschi also have a frozen yogurt, which actually tastes like yogurt, that goes in the same machine, and it can make a sorbet-style product as well. We've been working with people who have done very extensive testing in the market, and we're confident that this product will stand up well as an authentic gelato."

Elsewhere, Da Vinci has introduced a frozen yogurt mix.

"Frozen yogurt is a very good guilt-free alternative, and versatile," says the brand. "You would not normally serve ice-cream for breakfast, but a frozen yogurt with muesli works very well. It's also very good for affogato."

The coffee-house trade annoys the mother-and-baby market... again!

It has been another testing month for mothers and babies in cafes – but, in a reversal of the usual kind of breastfeeding complaint, there has in one case been praise for a café manager's handling of the matter.

It was in Purley, south London, that a young mother was abused by an elderly couple for breastfeeding in Costa, a café she had chosen because it was baby-friendly. When the couple said they found her actions 'very offensive', the mother complained to the café manager, who responded by confirming that she was welcome to do so in the venue, in accordance with the Equality Act, 2010.

Elsewhere, however, cafes have upset mothers.

A security guard at the O2 Centre in West Hampstead ordered a mother to stop breastfeeding her baby son at an Apostrophe cafe because it was 'not allowed'. He told her to use a folding chair next to the nappy bins in the baby-changing cupboard.

The mother turned out to be an award-winning TV news journalist and film-maker. She reported the matter through Twitter, and with remarkable speed, Apostrophe's head office responded within ten minutes, instructing staff to apologise. The management of the shopping centre also apologised, blaming a badly-trained security guard.

In Gillingham, a mother complained to the local authority after a council-owned café refused to help her heat a baby bottle, even though she had just spent £10. When told they had no bottle-warming facility, the mother

asked for a jug of hot water, and was told that she would be charged 80p for it, the same price as their tea.

The café is run under a lease from Medway Council, who said that while it had no control over the café's charging, it would speak to the operator and advise them that they might do well to reconsider their attitude.

In Leeds, there has been a row after a café-bar in Chapel Allerton posted a 'no prams' notice, and advised parents to leave pushchairs outside. This, local mothers have said, means that those whose babies are asleep are effectively barred from the premises, unless they choose to leave their child outside as well.

The café staff claimed that they had counted 13 prams inside the premises on occasion, causing a safety hazard; several mothers who have complained say that they were told to leave even when the venue was empty.

Boston Tea Party grows with food

The Boston Tea Party chain has reported that significant growth is coming from the leisure dining market, and that food sales have overtaken coffee sales.

Managing director Sam Roberts has always maintained that food has been an essential part of his business, but recently told his local press that whereas trade five years ago was sixty per cent coffee and forty per cent food, those proportions have now been reversed.

It is, he says, a migration from traditional coffee shop food to 'dining and plated meals'.

It is also reported that his newest site in Cheltenham, still less than six months old, is now the chain's busiest store, with business mainly dining-led, and a high average transaction rate of over £10.

The branch has also benefited from opening until 11pm - with a good beer and wine offer, Sam Roberts told his local press, it no longer makes sense for a café to shut at 6pm.

Will food-waste monitoring save cafes money?

The mayor of London has said that hundreds more cafes and catering venues will be invited to join his Food waste scheme, following reports that the early days of the project have put fifteen catering establishments on track to save more than £100,000 a year in food waste, and save 70 stoness of food going to waste weekly.

The average likely annual saving for the first 15 venues to report is thought to be £6,000; one pub has reported that it is likely to save £10,000 and prevent almost one tonne of food waste a year. The scheme is essentially an educational one, in showing food businesses how to use stock better – the pub looking to save £10,000 has begun offering different portion sizes and planning better ways of using leftover food, typically for the next 'soup of the day'.

Research has suggested that 1.3 billion meals are wasted annually in the foodservice sector.

British indie roasters score high in US

Several independent roasters from Britain have been highlighted in a recent issue of Coffee Review from America, the regular coffee report compiled by the acknowledged expert taster Kenneth Davids. The publication rates coffees from all over the world, and yet, oddly, has never reviewed any coffees from the UK.

Now it has done so - and of the 21 British coffees the reviewers tasted, they chose to write reviews for six coffees that they rated at 91 points or higher. And all of them came from relatively small independent local roasteries.

The top-rated coffee was a Kenyan bourbon by Artisan Roast of Edinburgh, with 93 points, just ahead of two Ethiopians, one by Clifton Roasters of Bristol and another by Horsham Coffee Roasters, both on 92 points.

Climpson of London took both of the next highest places, again with one Kenyan and one Ethiopian, and the same score of 91 was also achieved by North Star Micro Roasters of Leeds, with a Rwandan coffee.



Vegware, the compostable food packaging company, has relaunched its Green Britain cups. These compostable 8oz and 12oz double-wall cups are lined with cornstarch instead of plastic, and feature a green Union Jack heart. The original was on sale in 2012, but not repeated until foodservice clients asked for the design to be brought back. The cup won 'best new product' in the Climate Week awards.



A brewing system which we reported several years ago is making another attempt for acceptance in the UK. The Grower's Cup system is being re-launched. The system is a kind of disposable filter system; ground coffee is held in quite a heavy-duty container, into which hot water is poured. The brewed coffee comes out of the container through a filter, and is poured direct into a cup. The inventor is from the delightfully-named town of Middelfart in Denmark.

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The takeaway coffee glass

The most famous of the various reusable takeaway cups to appear in recent times has been the KeepCup – and in a very unusual move, the makers have now created a glass version.

The KeepCup Brew and KeepCup Brew Limited Edition Cork are said to be 'a design response' to requests from the modern speciality coffee consumer, and 'for people who are serious about their coffee ritual, as well as their tea'.

The new lid, say the makers, has been one of their most technically difficult achievements... placing a hard lid over a hard cup with an adequate seal was the problem. The limited edition cork product features a holder from 'the ancient cork oak forests of Portugal'.



Elsewhere, a company in Seattle says it has achieved a new kind of plastic lid to fit on the top of traditional takeaway coffee cups. The Viora company says that the most disappointing aspect of buying takeaway coffee is the cheap lid; by contrast, the Viora has been designed with an angular shape which makes spills less likely.

There are two reasons for this – one is that the angles direct any spilled liquid back into the cup rather than allowing it to splash onto the person drinking from the cup. The second aspect is that the lid design is said to mimic the use of a ceramic cup.

This is achieved, we are told, by the coffee draining into an upper well before reaching the mouth - the maker says that it is 'blind tipping' that leads to burnt lips or tongues.

British Food Fortnight will run this year from 20th September to 5th October. Readers may remember that we suggested last year that coffee prepared by roasters in the UK really should qualify as a 'British Food'. The organisers of the event liked the idea – but no British roasters responded to our suggestion that they take part. The offer has been made again this year, and the organisers are surprised that there is no national coffee organisation which would co-ordinate the industry's participation in such a project. Have we not often pointed this out...?

Cup recycling - can it now happen?

There has been another claim of a 'first' in the fraught matter of takeaway cup recycling – Simply Cups, a partnership between Closed Loop Environmental Solutions and waste contractor Simply Waste Solutions, says that it will launch a 'cost-efficient, collection and recycling service that will reduce operators' costs and improve their environmental credentials'. The scheme will begin within the M25 and Thames Valley area in August, with a view to expanding nationally.

The organisers of the scheme have said that "this will be game-changing for cup manufacturers and beverage outlets that have been caught in the media spotlight due to the absence of any recycling solutions".

However, the new organisation has declined to identify its list of founding members, and has been a little vague in its estimate of the amount of paper cups in circulation.

At exactly the same time, Starbucks, which uses four billion disposable cups a year, has demonstrated the problems with cup recycling by saying that five years into its environmental programme, the company has only managed to implement customer

recycling at 39 percent of its American company-operated stores.

The almost-unbelievable problem, an American business writer has observed, is that Starbucks customers don't throw away enough cups to make recycling viable.

Four years ago, Starbucks ran a pilot programme in which it collected three tonnes of cups from stores and sent them for recycling – only to be told it was not enough to interest the recycling industry.

A big American papermaker commented that the paper in all the Starbucks cups used in a year amounts to less than a week's worth of production at his paper mills.

This may well be one of the more unusual café seating ideas that you've come across – it's at the Playground Coffee House in Bristol, described as a play cafe for grown-ups. The idea came from Greece, where some venues offer a range of games for customers to play, but the Bristol business has developed this into a collection of Chesterfield sofas and piles of board games - in time, the café is likely to start holding tournaments and games parties. The swing-style seats attached to scaffolding poles in the front and rear windows are strong enough to take the weight of an adult, and have apparently proved extremely popular. The coffee is by the local roaster Clifton.



Photographer unknown

There has been another series of cases in which train operating companies have refused to renew the leases of independent café owners working on station premises, usually so that a big-name café can be brought in – and last month, the same train company was involved in two such cases.

The operators of The Froth On Top at Chelmsford station expressed their feelings openly – they posted a notice saying that the Greater Anglia train operating company 'doesn't seem to like independent local businesses, and seems to think big national companies are the way forward'. The poster included an email address at which customers could complain to the train company, who did not change their decision.

At Witham in Essex, the Bean and Gone café closed after serving the station for three years, after Greater Anglia imposed an increase in fees. The café operator said that she had received a great deal of support from customers, "but the support I needed was from Greater Anglia".

The railway company claimed that it was the café operator's decision not to re-tender, but it has been reported that the MP for Maldon and East Chelmsford has now complained to Greater Anglia following a series of protests from his constituents.

In yet another scalding case, in California, a woman has sued a drive-through operator for the injuries caused when an 'excessively hot' coffee spilled into her lap. The major aspect of this case is not just the scalding, but that the operator refused to call the emergency services and gave the customer a pack of ice, which is not recommended treatment for scalds.

In the UK, the owner of a Canterbury restaurant has been reported to be surprised to receive a threat of legal action over a matter in which a customer allegedly burned herself on the side of a cafetiere. The incident allegedly happened last year, and no complaint was made at the time.

A tea shop owner in Leicester has taken part in Heston Blumenthal's TV programme *Great British Food*. Louise Bushell of Miss B's tea shop was selected as the guinea-pig for the chef to serve his own version of afternoon tea. She says that as the chef thought cucumber sandwiches were the quintessential element of a British tea party, he served up everything accordingly – cucumber tea, bread tea, and then put the two together to create 'cucumber sandwich tea'. She was then told to eat the tea pot, cup and saucer as they were all edible. Her mother, who took part in the event, said: "it was a little disconcerting."

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There is a curious echo of the past in the opening of the new Bean Encounter coffee house in Stafford. The café has been opened by Jonathan Cushing of California, who is opening a micro-roastery, and who has told the local paper that he has wanted to bring artisan coffee to Stafford ever since he moved to the town. About twelve years ago, someone else said that he wanted to bring an artisan café to the same town, but that the town wasn't ready for it... so he went and started a roastery instead. That turned into one of the UK's most famous roasteries, Has Bean!

Coffee Central of Nottingham, currently a supplier of coffee and machines, has told its local press that it is to start a roastery. The opportunity comes after a move to new premises in Giltbrook, and the company has spoken of becoming the only fully integrated machine and coffee supplier in the area.

The new Gordon Street Coffee business in Glasgow made what seems a very well-judged promotional move to mark its opening - staff visited a nearby taxi rank to hand out free coffee to drivers, including a limited edition re-usable thermos cup. During the first week of the new business, refills were offered.

Councils get stroppy over cafe signage

More coffee shop owners have been in trouble with a local council over signage – Café Copia in Henley erected a new fascia, only for the local council to say that changes to a Grade II listed building do not conform to the council's official shopfront design guide.

Councillors asked a meeting of the town's planning committee why businesses do not come to them in advance for guidance on what is acceptable; the café owner said he had applied for pre-application advice four months previously and no objections had been raised.

In Devon, the owner of a remote coffee stand has been told she must have planning permission for three small signs pointing to her stand in a reservoir car park. The Karumba Koffee Kart put them up with the permission of South West Lakes, which manages the area - but the county council ruled that she required planning permission.

A Cornish coffee shop owner is reported to be facing a £5,000 fine over his signage - although it has been there for fifteen years! Coffee Traders was reportedly ordered to remove the neon sign above its café door after a complaint was made, and the planning department threatened a daily fine of £259 for non-compliance. The sign simply reads: 'open, espresso'; a neighbouring trader who also

uses two neon signs in his window says he has received no similar ruling or complaint.

In Ludlow, there is a move to retain a historic tea-room sign, even though the business it advertises has closed down. The De Grey's hanging sign has been in place for almost ninety years, but the café business closed in January to the shock of the town's residents. Last month it was announced that national restaurant chain Wildwood would be taking over the building, but have been asked to retain the sign as part of the town's heritage.

If this drink only made it to joint third in the Esquires coffee house group barista contest, then the overall



standards must have been high... this is a lemon meringue latte made with lemon syrup and topped with whipped cream, lemon curd and meringue.

Tea shop makes it into the Beano



Dennis the Menace standing in front of what is recognisable as the Welsh tea shop

It is nothing new for cafes and tea-rooms to appear in their local press... but to feature in the Beano is almost certainly a 'first'. The Tu Hwnt I'r Bont tea rooms, in a picturesque part of Wales, recently appeared as part of a Dennis the Menace cartoon.

The tea-room owners only found out about it when a teacher at their local school happened to pick up a copy of the comic and recognised the building. When asked, the artist at the Beano mentioned that he had spent many holidays in their area and was paying a little personal tribute to it. The Tu Hwnt I'r Bont has appeared in many international magazines - it was on the front cover of a guide to Wales, in a Quantas in-flight magazine, and by mistake once appeared on the front cover of a Japanese guide to the Cotswolds!

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The London Coffee Stop awards, voted for by 18,000 Londoners, have named White Mulberries, of St Katherine's Dock as the city's top coffee house. The 'best new coffee shop' was The Wren, at St Nicholas Cole Abbey, a church destroyed in the great fire of 1666 (the site was restored by the architect Sir Christopher Wren). An interesting section of the awards was the 'best coffee shop for out-of-office workers' - the organiser of the awards regularly uses coffee shops as his 'office', and has even written a book on the subject: 'Out Of Office, work where you like and achieve more'.

Rather by contrast, the continuing debate over wi-fi in independent coffee shops has now taken a distinct turn against the use of computers - it is reported from America that more coffee shops are banning laptop use, in a campaign to try and re-establish the idea of a community meeting place. This has caused vast argument between laptop users who say they buy enough to warrant using tables the way they want, and café owners who report seeing many customers walk out because they cannot find a vacant table because of laptop users.

Homebase is the latest DIY superstore to open an in-house coffee shop - the contract caterer Compass has a five-year deal to introduce coffee shops into 30 of its stores. The first opened in the Worcester store.

Cafeology, the Yorkshire coffee and tea brand which has been extremely active in all-Fairtrade supply, has made two imaginative moves - it has devised a new coffee at the request of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Britain's largest conservation charity, and it has opened its first branded retail site, a kiosk in the foyer of a massive sports retail store.

For the RSPB project, Cafeology's usual slogan of 'Great Coffee, Great Cause' has been adapted to 'Love Coffee, Love Nature'.

"I don't know how they found us, but they did," managing director Bryan Unkles tells us. "So I had to do my homework, with a crash course learning about their cause.

"This is a premium product, and it will be sold to both retail and foodservice. It will not be sold through the RSPB's own outlets at the moment, because they have another coffee for that, but as they have something like 1.2 million members, we certainly expect to develop with them."

The retail site is in Sheffield, and also came about from an unexpected approach.

"We heard from Decathlon, who are the biggest sports retailer in the world, though not yet so huge in the UK... they wanted a coffee offer with a strong corporate social responsibility message.

"They don't have space for an instore cafe as such, but they did have a space in the foyer of a store

Cafeology's new cause - the RSPB



An early design for the likely RSPB packaging, showing the new slogan

that has 900,000 visitors a year. This has to be very much a grab-and-go, but we have still managed to get benches and wi-fi in.

It's a really nice retail unit, designed so the barista can work the machine and chat to the customers at the same time. The unit is made in Sheffield, we're from Sheffield, and even the milk is from Sheffield - when we order at 5pm, tomorrow's delivery is still in the cow!

"This is a student-populated area, so summer is not the best timing, but the business still got off to a flying start. The earliest response has been positive, and come September we expect the business to take off."

The sports company is not a formal partner, but has rented the foyer space to Cafeology for five years.

"It's our own business, and we've invested in six staff, so we can be open seven days a week.

"We're sufficiently pleased with it that there may now be Cafeology-owned pods elsewhere... however, we are mindful that we have our own trade customers in Sheffield, and so we shall be careful not to open anything which could compete with them. Maybe another pod within another retail site somewhere."

The kiosk was declared open for business by Francisco Herrera, a Cafeology supplier from Colombia. Bryan Unkles invited him to the UK to see what happens to the coffee grown by his co-operative members. Many coffee brands who bring a supplier over only show them off to their biggest clients, but Cafeology quite deliberately invited Mr Herrera to see a cross-section of the British coffee scene, and allowed some smaller café owners to have a visit from the farmer.

Independent café operators may never ever get to origin, acknowledges Bryan Unkles, just like farmers may never ever get to coffee houses.

"His visit coincided with our tenth birthday, and the reaction to his visit from our trade customers was fantastic. We took to him cafes, we took him to a Cafeology Piaggio van, and we took him to London to give a presen-

tation to the Fairtrade Foundation, and he helped us judge the TCG pub group barista contest as well!

"Everybody related to this. We took him to Coleman's Deli, and he even waited on their customers.

He signed and dated a picture of himself on the farm, which is now up on their wall.

"What did the independent operators learn from this? Their questions were varied - they were very interested in the workings of Francisco's co-operative, and this amazed me. It was a great opportunity for them to have a coffee farmer, and they did well from PR in local papers.

It was a little romance... and now they feel loyal to his coffee, because they know him!

"The visit to Fairtrade showed them a lot about what the group is doing with the Fairtrade premium.

"Francisco's co-op has doubled since we started working with them. We are now their second largest customer (the largest is a very big American brand) and we're probably their only outlet outside the Americas.

"Judging the TCG contest gave their staff a huge amount of understanding about the uniqueness of a direct-supply relationship with a grower.



Bryan Unkles

"In return, Francisco learned a lot more about business here, which he will now report back to 500 farmers. He achieved an understanding of the customers we work with.

"We even took him to the Crucible for the snooker - about which he hasn't a clue, but as a very intelligent guy, he certainly understood about that market sector. He understood the independents, he understood the universities, he understood the concept of quality audits. And he understood that Scotrail is now a hundred-per cent user of his coffee!"

For both sides, says Bryan Unkles, such a visit is immensely valuable.

"We have to back up what we say about ethical trading, which is something that irritates me about certain competitor brands. We are now clearly demonstrating the value of a direct relationship, right to both ends of the chain, the growth of our brand is up 20 per cent, we are seen 'out there' a lot more, and we are now showing - 'look what we can do!'"

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A free coffee at Caffe Nero was the most redeemed offer in the O2 Priority reward scheme, which was used seven million times in its first quarter of 2014, with customers taking advantage of more than 1,000 offers. The Caffe Nero drink was redeemed by around 80,000 of O2's customers.

Asda has rebranded 70 of its instore cafes as Seattle's Best Coffee sites; a Starbucks spokeswoman has said that Asda will in time convert all of its 252 in-store cafes to Seattle's Best.

A coffee house in a cemetery café has retained its alcohol licence, despite an angry council meeting in which objectors said that alcohol should not be sold in a place of rest. However, the council ruled that the Inspirations Coffee House, which is under council ownership, should be allowed to sell alcoholic beverages until 9pm.

A new micro-roastery has been established on Holy Island, by the brothers who run the Pilgrims coffee house there. Their first roast is called Holy Grail, and is already being served in the café.

Café design turns out to be a growth business for artists in Chichester – Aida Stephens, who owns Whipped and Baked, has given local artists the chance to design a mural, on what she says is 'a blank wall, doing nothing'. The plan is to bring in other artists to change it every few months. She said other coffee shops in the city had similar projects, such as Attibassi, where Marc Perry confirms to us that he too found this a convenient way to cover a blank wall: "we had a couple of local artists from a company called Odes and Ink come in and it was perfect - they drew a landscape inspired by Bologna using felt tip pens, about 65 in total!"

The owner of the Beatles Coffee Shop in St John's Wood, London, has told his local press that recent Tube strikes and engineering works left him more than £1,000 out of pocket. The café, which also sells Beatles memorabilia, sits right in the foyer of the tube station, and strikes and works have twice left the entire station deserted for up to 48 hours. An unusual add-on aspect to the café's business is that they run Beatles walking tours (the owner has written a book about the Beatles in London). The café is not far from the Abbey Road recording studio, where still, every few minutes, the traffic is halted while another collection of tourists re-creates the famous zebra-crossing picture... it's amazing that more tourists don't get knocked down there.

The council in Bolton has come in for some praise from café owners for proposing a new method of charging for street furniture. The cost of licences for cafes with outside seat-

ing could drop by as much as 80 per cent. On the basis of charges introduced in 2006, cafes would pay an initial licence fee and an annual renewal, irrespective of how many tables they used. The new scheme suggests a relatively low fee for a café with two tables, with payments going up on a sliding scale depending on the amount of furniture used.

The new fees mean less council income, but in advocating support for café-culture 'boulevard-style' shopping areas, a councillor has said that "the loss of money to the council is very small, weighed up against the benefits to businesses."

Taylor's of Harrogate has launched its first ranges of 'half-cafeinated' coffee. The Rich Italian and Lazy Sunday are now available in versions which literally blend conventional beans with decaf ones. The company takes half of the beans, which go through a water decaf process, are blended back with the others, and roasted together.

The daily press has had fun with the idea that EU bureaucracy has extended to coffee brewing – a new energy-saving rule says that domestic filter coffee machines will have to go into standby mode five minutes after the pot has finished brewing. Machines with non-insulated jugs will be allowed 40 minutes. The anti-Europe campaigners have criticised the EU for 'condemning us to cold coffee'. However, the coffee trade could have made great publicity of the question of how long filter coffee can be left – this could be the end of stewed coffee in pubs!

The latest operator of a drive-through coffee shop is likely to be... a Premiership football club. West Bromwich Albion has applied to demolish part of a former pub next to its ground which once was a busy venue before matches, but is now disused. The plan is to convert it into a coffee shop with drive-through facilities.

The Kona coffee house in Yeovil has reached its first anniversary - it is the instore coffee shop for Tri UK, the UK's largest triathlon retailer and mail order specialist. The owners are themselves triathlon athletes, and a curiosity of the café is that it serves only Hawaiian Kona coffee.

Nespresso France has finally bowed to pressure about its attitude to compatible coffee capsules – a French court has ruled in favour of two other brands who argued that it is unfair practice for Nespresso to warn consumers not to use other brands' pods, and to keep modifying machines to make compatible products work badly. The judgment applies only in France, but will go down well with CaféPod, the British maker of Nespresso-compatible capsules, which has won a listing with Tesco – the product will now appear in 650 stores.

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FILTRATION & PROCESS

Everybody says that this year, at last, the concept of iced tea will prove itself for good, and become an accepted part of the coffee house menu.

There are two ways of making it – one is to brew a conventional fruit infusion and serve it with ice, and the other is to use one of the increasing number of tea syrup bases now on offer.

From the 'real tea' side of the market, several options now come up from an entire range launch at the London Tea Company, where a quite astonishing range of flavours and infusions are being made available to foodservice.

A surprising feature of the range is that every product carries the Fairtrade mark.

"Everything we have is now Fairtrade, which makes us unique," the brand's Otilie Cunningham told us. "We have our own tea estates, but we have also helped the independent farmers who surround our estates to organise themselves into co-operatives, so that they get the Fairtrade premium, and we pay them an extra premium.

"Some of these smallholders are now producing very high-quality hand-picked tea, some of which is of an even higher quality than our own estates."

The great problem of trying to make up an all-Fairtrade range is the availability of ingredients of acceptable quality.

Iced teas - the gin and vodka test



"The marking requirements are different for tea and for herbal infusions. For 'tea', the camellia sinensis plant, it has to be hundred-per-cent Fairtrade to have the Mark.

"Herbal infusions are different. For a composite product, you need to be able to show that 20 per cent of the blend is Fairtrade.

"We have had a problem with this. We have created some products which we really liked, from non-Fairtrade ingredients, and then found we could not get a Fairtrade equivalent; or maybe there is a lot of Fairtrade available, but not in a format which we can work with, or of acceptable quality."

(Typically, says the London Tea Company, Fairtrade bergamot for Earl Grey can be 'near-impossible' to source in acceptable quantity and quality, and the Fairtrade Foundation is aware of the problem.

"Creating an all-Fairtrade range has been a combination of imagination, availability, and the practicalities of the rules!"

A feature of the new range is that many of the infusions work equally well as a hot drink or an iced tea.

The biggest star in this respect is probably the Raspberry Inferno: this features a collection of berry fruits, but the interesting ingredient is the chilli - this, says the company, was so popular when they had a raspberry and chilli, the only improvement to be made was to make the tea 'more berry-ish'. This works equally well as hot or iced tea.

The same goes for the peach and rhubarb, which again actually includes more ingredients than the name suggests - apple pieces, hibiscus, rose-hip, blackberry and even beetroot.

"This is going to be very good as an iced drink – and with gin," remarks London Tea's Paul Maxwell. "A good test of a herbal infusion is always whether the flavours go with gin or vodka!"

There may be a difference of opinion over whether the brand's most striking new flavour works equally well hot or cold. This is the white tea and pear tatin (with a little ginger and vanilla), which London Tea named after the caramelised dessert, because it is possible to taste 'pudding' notes in it!

Elsewhere in the range, London Tea has taken a big interest in how flavours can work together. The rooibos with cocoa, chilli and liquorice sounds an odd blend, but works well. "A clean rooibos can take flavours well," remarks Otilie Cunningham. "Orange goes well with rooibos, crème caramel works very well... so does salted caramel, which is another modern taste."

The Moroccan Mint, which is now an 'expected' tea to have on a menu, is

not a straight peppermint - it is green gunpowder tea with Fairtrade peppermint leaves. "This is very much how you would take tea in north Africa. It is very refreshing - a good after-lunch pick-me-up."

Elsewhere, the range includes a jasmine, which is often said to be a hard one to source, because there are some producers who simply spray tea with jasmine essence, and sometimes ham-fistedly. "This one is made in the traditional way: they layer the tea with jasmine flowers, and then they remove the flowers, which is the rather more complex undertaking. The result is delicate, and tends to remind people of Chinese restaurants."

How important is it to have a herbal range in today's market?

"This is the big change which has taken place in tea - a few years ago, it



One of the most unusual tea syrup flavours - the Sweetbird watermelon



At Caffe Culture, Novus showed large brewing containers and tea-light candles below

The big issues in tea at the moment are menu-writing and careful brewing, remarks Allan Pirret of Novus. And the two go together rather more than might be expected.

"In tea, setting yourself apart by flavour is the whole thing. In doing this, part of the issue is to make real-leaf tea easy, and the other part of it is in getting the correct flavour, which needs the right equipment.

"Traditionally, tea is brewed in a relatively small infuser basket, but you get a better infusion from a larger chamber. It brews quicker, the tea splays out farther, and you get a more intense flavour.

"Now, when we talk about things like precision of delivery in tea brewing, some caterers think 'Allan's lost the plot!', but the better café owners have thought about it, and get it - they have seen that if you are going to charge a premium price, then you absolutely have to get the flavour right.

"An example is Dragonwell Green. After four minutes, you will have a beautiful apricot note popping out of this tea. If you miss this, then the customer isn't getting the most out of the tea you've charged them a premium for.

"But, if you explain this on your tea menu, the customer knows what to expect. If you just see 'Persian Pomegranate' on a menu with no explanation, the customer has no idea what they're going to get... if you explain that a given tea may produce its very best flavour after four minutes' brewing, the customer knows what to look for.

"This is why we now like to write tea menus like a food menu. We are now getting more and more involved in writing them, and we are beginning to find that the more we get involved, the more we are doing something which helps everybody – the customer and the caterer."

concentrates, from the syrup brands.

Monin has now launched a new range of flavoured tea concentrates in the UK. These do have a Ceylon tea base, but the main flavourings are lemon, raspberry and peach.

There are several ways to turn a very simple iced tea into a 'special' at a premium price, says Monin – using sparkling water gives a premium effect, as do fruit or herb garnishes. Some raspberries and mint leaves top off a peach tea well, and cucumber and mint transforms a plain lemon tea. (In cooler weather, the same flavours go with hot water and different garnishes, such as cinnamon, and they will also form the base for mulled wine in winter).

The premium feel is also endorsed by serving iced tea in wine glasses... and iced teas very often go well with gin or vodka.

Another brand to see the potential for green tea as a carrier of flavour on a summer menu is Beyond the Bean, where the Sweetbird brand now has two imaginative new syrups, both using a green tea base.

One shows agreement with what others in the market say, being a cucumber and mint - the other is the extremely unusual watermelon.

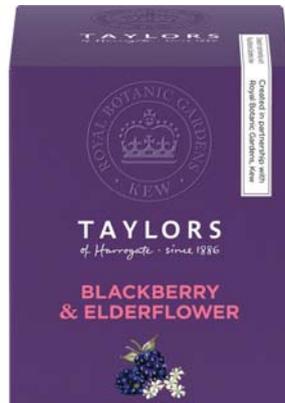
Either, says Sweetbird, will fulfil the requirement for a genuinely interesting addition to a summer menu, while being easy to prepare: three pumps of syrup, still or sparkling iced water, and a garnish.

Sweetbird's tea syrup range already has several other flavours. The jasmine lime, passionfruit lemon, and the peach and the raspberry have all proved themselves sufficiently useful on a summer menu to stay in the range.

Taylor's of Harrogate has gone for credibility in its new range of infusions by working with an acknowledged team of expert botanists – the range

carries the badge of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, no less.

There are no surprises at all in the blends, but Taylor's makes a point of saying that the Kew specialists gave advice on the selection of flavoursome ingredients - the professor in charge of Kew's innovation unit said it was 'great fun' working on the range.



The six infusions range 'inspired by classic British ingredients and world flavours' are more or less as would be expected – a blackberry and elderflower, a sweet rhubarb, a chamomile with vanilla and some additional orange leaf, peppermint leaf, a spiced apple and a lemongrass and ginger (several tea companies have pointed out that the rise in popularity of Thai food has usefully contributed to the acceptance of a lemongrass and ginger blend).

Even Tetley is looking at infusions for foodservice - the brand has introduced its Mood Infusions range, which feature Tetley Calm (chamomile with lemon and liquorice), Warmth (a rooibos with spices and orange), Serenity (lemon and honey, but with red clover, elderflower and sarsaparilla root) and Pick Me Up, which is essentially a red berry with cherry, apple, hibiscus and poppy.

The world's second and third largest coffee companies, Mondelez International and DE Master Blenders 1753, are reportedly to combine under the name Jacobs Douwe Egberts. This will create a company worth \$7 billion, which will become a closer competitor to Nestle. A curiosity of the plan is that both companies have come in for some criticism over recent, and fairly inexplicable, changes of name – Mondelez used to be the snack and beverage arm of Kraft, and adopted its new name after a contest among staff... the winner is supposedly a combination of 'monde', the French word for the world, and a made-up abbreviation of 'delicious'. DE Master Blenders is the company known for 200 years as Douwe Egberts; the original name will return two years after it was dropped.

Williamson Tea has created a solar farm on its estates in western Kenya that is said to be the largest such

installation in East Africa. It will reduce the firm's reliance on diesel engines and generators.

Staff from Burco, the water boiler company, have claimed a Guinness world record for making 1,608 cups of tea in one hour, almost double the previous record. Twelve staff used three brewing stations, and the conditions were that the teas had to be brewed to the correct temperature, and brewed for a designated time.

Kate Crozier of the Caffè Ritazza at Belfast airport has won the SSP barista championship. She was up against a hundred baristas from Caffè Ritazza, Starbucks and Upper Crust outlets in the SSP group, and took the top prize after she finished third in both the SSP contest and the Caffè Ritazza world championship last year. Her signature drink was an ice cream with raspberry coulis finished with espresso. She said it was reminiscent of a coffee morning with cream and jam scones.

Teapigs puts flavoured matcha in a ready-to-drink pack

Teapigs has been advocating the various uses of matcha, Japanese powdered green tea, for some time, and has now come up with two new ideas at the same time – these are the flavoured matcha, and the ready-to-drink takeaway version.

These are promoted as products for the chill cabinet, at the fairly standard size of 330ml, probably to sell at about £1.90. Each version includes one serving of matcha (the equivalent of 15 cups of green tea in goodness) blended with fruit juice and spring water.

Matcha continues to be a 'marmite' product, which consumers either love or do not, but the chilled and flavoured version might draw in a new audience, suggests Teapigs' Nick Kilby.

"The purist will still drink a straight matcha, but the non-purist, on their way to a fitness workout, will want a grab-and-go, so the idea is to have all three in the chiller cabinet, next to the coconut water.

"There are three flavours – elderflower is a trendy product and it adds floral sweetness. Apple is a flavour we have been sampling with matcha since we started, and we always new it would work (although orange didn't!) And grapefruit turns out to work surprisingly well with green tea... very sharp."

Teapigs will probably not extend the chilled takeaway idea to the rest of its range. "If we tried to do our other teas in this format, it wouldn't work, because the concept of iced tea in Britain is still 'ordinary tea gone cold!'"

The brand has always advocated matcha as an ingredient in smoothies and other speciality drinks – an example of a café trying the idea has come up from the Laveli Bakery of west London, with its Groovy Green smoothie, made up with apple, pear, melon, avocado, kiwi and mint, blended with apple juice and a gram of matcha.



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It's a big adventure for a coffee-shop owner to make their first trip to coffee origin, and many of them never get the chance to do so at all... but for the owners of two of west London's most notable speciality cafes, the journey was made in the opposite direction.

Rather oddly, Edwin and Magda Harrison of Artisan went to origin and met coffee farmers before it ever occurred to them that they might run a café.

"We were in Uganda as bee-keepers," comes the unexpected explanation from Edwin. "We had decided to leave corporate life for something more challenging, and we were young enough to think that we could just go out there and do community work for an agency... rather hoping that the agency actually existed when we got there!"

Of the two, Magda's role was the more conventional – her job was to set up educational programmes. When she arrived, schoolwork was being done under trees, and by the time she left, she had organised supporters into creating a properly-built college which could cater for two hundred students.

Edwin's project was rather less planned, but required just as much initiative.

"The job was to show coffee farmers how to keep bees as a secondary income, which is a tried and tested business model which had already been rolled out in the Sudan. However, the problem was that I knew nothing about bees at all!

"So I decided to be taught by some of the best bee-keepers in the world. I got in contact with thirty of the world's top bee people, who taught me about bees and more importantly, showed us how to teach others about bee-keeping.

"We went out with the attitude that whatever projects we set up had to work after us, and without us, after we had left. So we took the bee-keeping from three farmers to three hundred, and from fifty kilos of honey to three and a half tonnes... and since we left, they've now grown their numbers to 700. The thing I'm most proud of is leaving behind a system which allowed them to do that."

This is, he acknowledges, an example of a long-established management maxim - that a poor manager worries only about keeping his own position, but a good manager has the courage to set up a system which will work perfectly well without him.

"That's right. For the last few weeks before we left Uganda, we spent most of our time watching – we were reassuring ourselves that things would continue without us."

At this point, the idea of working in coffee had not occurred to them, but they knew that something entrepreneurial would be their next step.

"While we were working out there,

Artisan – working back from origin to cafe

What is the secret of growing from one store to a second? Having the courage to step back and trust your staff, say the owners of two respected coffee houses in west London



Magda and Edwin with a well-known feature of their Putney cafe – the spinning wheel from which customers can win a prize. The top prize is five free coffees... the bottom prize is a glass of tap water!

we found that we preferred setting up and controlling our own projects, and learning from our own mistakes, to working for other people.

"We also learned, by accident, that we could work together! A lot of couples have to work hard at being in business together, but we discovered that we could do it, and because we did it in Uganda, we thought we could do it in Australia or in Britain."

Having an Antipodean heritage on Magda's side, the couple knew about

The launch happily coincided with the latest big surge in public interest in coffee.

"It used to be Earl's Court that was known as Kangaroo Valley, but it turned out that a lot of Australians had moved out to Putney, and they got what we were doing straight away.

"At the time, the English still preferred to go to cafes which were on their normal route, and they wouldn't deviate by two minutes to go to a different coffee shop... but now, they will

"At the time, the English wouldn't deviate by two minutes to go to a different coffee shop... but now, they will walk an extra five minutes, and go down the alley to find the shop they like. This is probably the most exciting thing that has happened in the independent coffee sector."

the modern-day coffee culture, but were not prepared for the discovery that it had extended rapidly into certain areas of London, and not into others.

"While we were in Uganda we didn't realise what was happening with coffee in the UK, and when we left Uganda, it was from Australian friends that we first heard about the London scene.

"So we got back here in 2011, and found that west London was still a dry and barren area for good coffee. We decided to open up in Putney, and we also decided that good coffee would be the centre of our business, right from the start."

walk an extra five minutes, and go down the alley to find the shop they like - this is probably the most exciting thing that has happened in the independent coffee sector."

Quite quickly, just a year and a half later, Edwin and Magda opened the second Artisan in Stamford Brook, which is fairly close, but the other side of the Thames. Is opening a second site really such a quantum leap as everybody says it is?

"This is a tremendously important subject," says Edwin.

"You need a different skill-set to open up a second site, and that's something you have to realise before you start. Where most people get it

wrong is in learning how to let go and let your staff have ownership.

"When we opened Putney, we decided that our main skill had to be coffee, and so we worked here every day to be on top of our coffee and our customer service.

"But then we had to establish that Putney could work just as well without us when we took ourselves out of the business... which is the same management principle as the bee-keeping.

"Some owners say: 'how can I do that? My staff will never do as good a job as me'. But that's not right - here, our view is that our staff should be able to do a better job than we can, and that's what makes a business successful."

The point has been proved, recalls Edwin.

"A friend of mine told me that he had come into the Putney shop and had said 'hello' to my wife – I said she hadn't been there, and he apologised and said that the person he spoke to had looked as if she owned the place.

"I was very pleased at that - it showed that they have confidence in running the Putney café when we're not there."

Artisan's coffee is from Allpress, which Magda knew from her home at the other side of the world, before either she or they moved operations to London; they also serve coffee from Nude.

"We knew that choosing the coffee would be our biggest business decision. We knew the top roasters and we visited them all - we took this very seriously, because we wanted to taste the coffee from the best in the industry.

"The Allpress is not a blend specific to us, but we did play with it! We also liked their attitude in support and guidance, and it was in helping us with the steps of starting a coffee shop that they really proved themselves.

"At the time, they were new in the UK, too – I think they had eight customers, and we really liked the way that they were interested in both of our businesses growing together."

Allpress also worked with the Harrisons on water-quality management, which has been recognised in the latest issue of the London Coffee Guide with a reference to the 'advanced water-filtration systems' in both Artisan cafes.

"Nice of them to say so," remarks Edwin. "This goes back to putting cof-

feet at the forefront of the business. It became apparent to us that if water plays such a great part in coffee, then we needed to control the water.

"This is not an exact science, but we worked with our roaster on finding the best level for our coffee, and we went with a 3M reverse-osmosis system, which was a big expense, but which means we can influence the water."

The problem is in the mineral content of mains water – it has to have a certain mineral content to bring out the best taste, but not so high as to cause scale in the machines and pipework. Artisan and its roaster concluded that a mineral content of 120ppm (parts per million) would be best, and Edwin notes that he can now measure the incoming water at 350ppm before the filtration system does its work.

"There is a practical way of approaching this, and a geeky way. The usual way to do this is to put the filtration unit right at the water input – we decided to put it right under the machine, because that extra twenty feet of pipework might make a difference. It's still a constant balancing act between the water quality you want to achieve, and the quality you can achieve."

In a kind of parallel existence, Magda and Edwin write about their experiences in creating and running a coffee house, in a blog which appears on Caffe Connect, the news site allied to the trade show. Is this therapy, or entertainment?

"To begin with, it was a reflection on the challenges we faced. Looking back over two years, we see how much writing it has made us reflect on our own business, which is a good thing.

"If we get something wrong, we say so... and we do! One of the things we got wrong was our first attempt at a barista manual - it took us a month to write it, and less than half an hour to realise that we had got it all wrong. We turned to doing barista workshop sessions instead, which are much better."

Explaining these experiences has made them a target for would-be café owners.

"We do now get coffee-shop wannabees visiting us and wanting to meet us, and if we can, then we'll sit down and talk, and give them our honest experiences. We were given the same help when we started – the owner of the Tom Tom cafe in Pimlico told us a lot about what this life would really be like.

"There are many dreamers coming into this business, but it is not a romantic notion. It's hard work, early starts, late finishes, and no weekends.

"But still we see people in here with their notebooks, counting our customers and noting down our prices... good luck to them, we don't mind at all!"

If there is a major growth area in the beverage industry these days, it must surely be the emergence of the small artisan coffee roastery. Historians might say that this is really a 're-emergence', in that all towns used to have their own roasteries, but the fact remains that today, you can't move without falling over yet another new one.

One of the very newest is born of a speciality café which has been running for thirteen years – this is Bean Brothers, run by James and Jeremy Perkins, working from an old textile mill in Huddersfield. They also run Coffeevolution, a café in the town.

What does an independent roaster business bring to the beverage world, which can not already be supplied by an existing bigger brand? Should local caterers now take more seriously the services of their local independent roasters?

"I suppose artisan micro roasters can offer a bespoke service to customers with a strong emphasis on face-to-face meeting," Jeremy told us.

"We also tend to buy our speciality coffee in smaller batches so that traceability becomes a reality for our customers, and we offer all of our customers the chance to cup various beans with a certain amount of guidance, so that we can help them when they are trying to create an espresso blend which is appropriate for their business."

Has thirteen years of café management taught the brothers a lot about what customers really want from their coffee, and influenced the products that they are now roasting?

"Despite being different businesses, Coffeevolution and Bean Brothers have a somewhat inter-dependent relationship. It gives us a direct perspective by providing us as roasters with feedback from the end user, and if 13 years of running a speciality coffee shop has taught us anything, it is that there is no such thing as 'one size fits all' when it comes to flavour preference. Some customers notice the slightest changes in our espresso blend and some wouldn't notice at all.

"We wanted, as a coffee shop, to be able to 'ride' the 'third wave' movement (although we're not fans of the expression) and in order to do so fully, and to use V60 and Chemex brewing options properly, we needed to have greater control over coffee offerings... what might be appropriate for an espresso machine might not be successful when brewed using an Aeropress."

There is a certain idiosyncratic aspect to the brothers' roasting - for reasons which are not entirely clear, the 10-kilo roaster is called Elsie, and the main espresso blend is called Derek. The blend was not a conscious effort to reproduce the coffee which they were previously serving in Coffeevolution.

"We have used coffees from various suppliers during our 13 years in the

The rise of Elsie and Derek



One of our newest regional artisan roasteries has fourteen years of cafe experience behind it

café – some from larger mainstream suppliers and some from more speciality roasters. We wanted to move away from the mainstream 'traditional' style of espresso blend that was very dark and gave flavours of the roasting process rather than flavours of the beans themselves.

"We created Derek as a blend that



Jeremy Perkins in cupping action

could cut through milk in a latte but also show the more delicate fruit flavours that we enjoy when drinking it as an espresso.

"As a new company we are just looking to hit a hundred kilos per week, of which the Coffeevolution cafe accounts for around thirty kilos."

Coffeevolution refers to itself as a Fairtrade establishment; the roaster is not necessarily the same.

"The coffee shop is a Fairtrade establishment that offers some Fairtrade products including some coffee, teas and sugar. However, the roastery is what might be described as a 'sometimes Fairtrade' business... but always a fairly-traded one.

"In essence, we won't buy beans if their only virtue is that they are certified Fairtrade but because we buy coffee from smaller lots, we are more assured that the transaction has been completed fairly."

One advantage of a local roaster, it turns out, is contributing to the promo-

tion of speciality coffee to a wider catering industry market.

"I think 'great coffee' is largely confined to coffee shops, and to be honest, not to many coffee shops that are not within the purview of the London Coffee Guide," remarks Jeremy.

"Whilst trying to aim to be near the forefront of 'coffee culture', we do not want to promote an esoteric sub-culture that is only understood and enjoyed by the few... so do we now have a few clients that are not coffee shops, like car dealerships, branding companies or design studios, that insist on serving their clients excellent complimentary coffee.

"They now see the quality of the coffee as reflecting the quality of the products or services they are providing."

One essential question remains – why is the roaster called Elsie, and the blend called Derek?

The answer comes with delightful Yorkshire directness: "Our grandmother was called Elsie and we quite liked the name anyway.

"But the blend is called Derek because it seemed to us to be a name that was the antithesis of anything 'hip' or 'cool!'"



The most interesting writer in the trade press - Scoop Malone in Boughton's Coffee House !

There was an extremely unusual visual introduction to this year's Caffe Culture show – in the foyer of the exhibition hall was a static display of vintage espresso machines. It drew a lot of interest, and those who delved deeper into the hall discovered that the man who put them there was running an exhibition stand of his own.

This was Russell Kerr, also known as 'Doctor Espresso' of south-west London. He is unusual in several ways – he may well be the only espresso engineer in the country to run his own coffee house, and he probably has the biggest collection of old espresso machines in the UK.

Just like coffee roasters and top baristas, espresso engineers do tend to be an opinionated bunch. They are very proud of their skill, and in Russell's case, equally proud of the Doctor Espresso Caffetteria, on the corner approach to Putney Bridge station.

This café sits on an otherwise undistinguished junction, yet with the provision of outside seats and umbrellas, the area has been turned into a nice little triangle that now draws people. The railway authorities, apparently, are extremely happy to see a neighbouring business take responsibility for keeping the area neat and tidy.

Inside the tiny café space, which does have a certain Italian atmosphere to it, the sound system plays smokey jazz, and the coffee is drawn through a 1957 lever-action Gaggia which may well be the only one of its kind.

"I always like the idea that creating an espresso from a lever machine takes some effort on the barista's part to get it right," muses Russell. "It was at the London Coffee Festival that we realised that so much of the coffee we get today tastes very much the same – so we use a coffee that nobody else does, roasted in Sicily.

"And most of my old machines work. They are not just polished up for a display, and the 1957 one in the café is still knocking out 2,500 coffees a week."

Doctor Espresso is a commercial espresso maintenance business. The vintage collection is his personal interest.

"The story of the collection is that three or four years ago, an old Gaggia came up for sale on Ebay. I had had one thirty years before, but hadn't been capable of working on it at the time because I wasn't experienced enough... but thirty years on, I said 'tell you what, this time, I'll have a go at that!'

"It sat on Ebay for a week with me watching it, and with thirty seconds to go, I put a generous bid in, and bought it.

"It was stuck up in Newcastle, and I said: 'I want this delivered properly, carefully palletised and wrapped, not just thrown into a Transit'.

Doctor on show

An unexpected exhibitor at Caffe Culture this year turns out to be both an espresso engineer and curator of a unique collection of vintage espresso machines



Part of the collection which greeted visitors in the foyer of Caffe Culture

"So of course it arrived in the back of a Transit, with the irreplaceable plexi-glass thrown away because they didn't think it was necessary, and it was 'walked' into the workshop and left on its side panel as if it was a load of scrap.

"I complained, and the courier said 'can't you just buy another bit of plexi-glass?' I said 'are you serious? Do you know what this is?'"

Russell Kerr is still exasperated by the memory, and that what a delivery driver regarded as a heap of old metal was, in the view of an enthusiast, a priceless piece of espresso history.

"Unusually, that Gaggia had been made in France. Because certain patents apply in one country and not another, you do get some different materials, and different badges, and you find some old machines have no serial numbers at all. But, if you know these machines, you can usually trace where they really came from.

"So I took it to a trade exhibition, where I opened it up to show how I had restored it, and some people who know about these things said 'well done'. We decided to exhibit it, running and working, at a festival in south London, and I got the thing set up and finished at about 5am on the day... and while I had a quick sleep in the van, somebody stole it!

"I was so angry at this that I phoned all the major espresso machine collectors in Europe and said: 'what have you got?' One said he had ten in a barn, and for a thousand euros, I could collect the lot.

"Well, we drove over into Europe to collect them, and I found that I had to strip most of them down just to get everything in the van! But from those ten, the collection started.

"Then I thought 'right, it's pretty cool to have these things... what am I going to do with them?'

"And this was the beginning of a serious interest in restoring them. I didn't want old machines polished up to look nice – I wanted to make them work."

Is there any business benefit in this?

"Oh, yes. This year, Caffe Culture invited us to provide the gallery in the foyer, and that showed that we can do it, big-time – people have now said 'if you're good enough to do this, then you're good enough to have our machine contract', and so yes, the collection has got us business."

Is there serious value in renovated old machines?

"These are machines of which there are maybe ones, or twos, still in existence... I have twice been offered a huge lump sum, but I didn't build this collection to sell it. I do it because I like them."



The Doctor - a fan of lever machines

There is a big difference between having an old machine as a display item and restoring one to working order, says Russell Kerr.

Nor is every engineer qualified to do so, he says carefully.

"There is a big difference between the kind of engineer who can build or re-build a machine, and the kind who only knows how to pull out a circuit board and change it.

"You would be surprised at the number of newer machines I see that have been scrapped quite unnecessarily because engineers have done the

wrong things to them... when you compare the insides of old machines beside new ones, you realise how over-complicated these things have now become. You look inside some modern machines and think: 'oh, what a mess!'

"I learned my espresso engineering by making my own mistakes – I began when I was 23, I have my qualifications... and I also know what kind of engineer I am.

"I'm not the kind of engineer who sits at a lathe – I know what is right and wrong in engineering, I understand how things are made, I know how to adapt things, and I know I'm the kind of engineer who is very good at restoring things that other people have made, rather than making things from scratch."

How difficult is it to work on old machines?

"Having a vintage espresso machine is a nice romantic idea, but restoring it is a lot of work. Many people are scared of taking them apart, because getting into these things is not easy – sometimes you're looking at things which haven't been taken apart for sixty years, and it can take you a day just to open one up.

"Are we scared of doing that? No, we're not!"

Would there be any significant trade or public interest in an open museum showing a collection of vintage coffee machines? The most recent such project to open is the La Cimbali museum in Italy, and the only comparable thing in the UK was the Bramah Museum of Tea and Coffee, which operated in South London until the founder died a few years ago.

"Yes, and I too have searched to find what became of the Bramah collection, without success. We're working towards an idea like this, but although we're the only collection of our kind in the UK, it is only recently that we have begun to get enough machines.

"There are collectors in Germany, the Netherlands, France, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and we all know each other, because we all need bits that the others might have, so I still have some rare stuff in Europe yet to be picked up."

But there is enough widespread interest, he says.

"We always post our machine updates on Facebook, where we have 3,600 followers, which is good for someone who's not selling sex!

"And I don't expect any of the other exhibitors at Caffe Culture got visitors coming up and actually hugging their products..."

More and more cafes that have a food speciality are looking afresh at their coffee offering, to see whether a concentration on seriously good coffee will benefit their business as a whole.

When Daniel Spinath, founder of the Crepeaffaire chain, did so, he followed it up with a survey to see whether consumers approved of what he had done – to his own surprise, his company came top of his own survey, to which he cheerfully concluded that there is now a Big Four in the high street coffee world... Crepeaffaire, Caffe Nero, Starbucks and Costa!

And that was the order in which the companies appeared in his research - three hundred consumers were invited to rank ten of London's coffee chains in order of preference, and 57 per cent named Crepeaffaire in first place, with 63 per cent naming them in their top three. Caffe Nero was second with 49 per cent, and the other top chains ended up a long way behind.

It justified the small chain's new slogan of 'we know coffee', he tells us.

"Our business is sweet and savoury crepes, but we knew that our coffee wasn't great - it was 'OK', but we needed more emphasis on it. We had experienced some very poor barista training, after which I went round all our stores, tasted the coffee, and instructed that nobody was to use the machines until they had been re-trained.

"Now, objectively, we see ourselves as not far from the top players in terms of quality, and certainly very close to the big chains.

"We now feel confident about our slogan. We're not saying we are 'the' experts, we're saying we know our subject, and we are also saying that our coffee is not produced by just pushing a button.

"Today, people come to us not just for crepes, but for our coffee."

How difficult is it to keep a business going on one specialism?

"It's a good question. The answer is that a crepe is very much comparable to a sandwich, maybe more so, in the number of things you can do with it - you can have your morning crepe, your snacking crepe, and your sweet or savoury crepe.

"But we did not want to be seen as a one-trick pony. We didn't want to be seen as a crepe business which does a bit of coffee, but as a place where the customer may well come in principally for the coffee as for the crepes."

How difficult a product is crepe to get right?

"It is not easy. The skill is in ingredient definition, and in the right flour. It need not be made by chefs, but it has to be made by people who like and care about food, and while not wishing to trivialise it, I can say that we have created a system which makes it 'a little easier'.

"The analogy with coffee is that we make some of the best quality crepes

Coffee – vital to the progress of a non-specialist

How a cafe business based on crepes beat the major chains in a poll of consumers' favourite coffee



Crepe Affaire in east London - the espresso machine is on display to reinforce the 'we know coffee' billboards

in the UK today, and the standard of our crepes across all our staff is such that a good crepe does not depend on whether Johnny is in the store making them today.

"The same now applies to coffee.

"Beside crepes, we used to have bean-to-cup machines. Then I came to the conclusion that there is a huge difference to be experienced in quality and speed, and I realised that a bean-to-cup is not necessarily faster than a traditional espresso machine. We now have the coffee experience as high as the crepes experience."

The new training programme, which used the acronym 'crema' to stress the importance of 'cleanliness and checking, recalibrating grinders, espresso knowledge, milk knowledge, and assessment', has been supported by a new audit system. There is a dedicated head-office phone which receives text messages, twice a day from each site, confirming that full quality audits have been carried out, following a fairly complex checklist.



Daniel Spinath

The Crepeaffaire stores have been reconfigured to make the espresso machines more prominent, and at the old Spitalfields market in London, an espresso machine stands outside the store – not operationally, just as a visual back-up to the 'we know coffee' message.



Just like coffee, today's crepes are designed for a takeaway business

The in-house barista contest featured some novel aspects - staff were invited to put themselves forward, and forty volunteers wore 'vote for me' badges with a QR code on them.

"We then took the top three before three judges – that was me, the head trainer from Miko, and Victor Frankowski (the noted coffee bar entrepreneur, barista and photographer). Now, I think I know coffee, but I was generous compared to the other two – where I gave a seven, they'd give a four, but what Victor did, along with his scoring, was to explain to our baristas the little things they can do which turn their coffee from 'good' into 'really good'."

It is Miko coffee which won the Crepeaffaire coffee contract, with the Puro range – this is the one which acts in partnership with the World Land Trust to invest directly in the protection of rainforests and the support of coffee producers who work in those areas.

"When I started, I went to what I thought were the big brands," explains Daniel Spinath, "but I found that their quality was not different enough for the kind of price they wanted.

"So, instead of making a branded coffee the hero of my business, the question became – can I get a coffee I like, from people I will like to work with, who will not demand that their brand takes up the front line?

"I believe that Miko have a true relationship with their aims, and I don't think they are in the environmental side just for a quick marketing buck. The Puro principle of using natural resources in the right way, and preserving nature, makes total sense to me. Their behaviour towards the growers, based on building a long-term approach which will outlive all of us, is something I'm all for."

Does this work offer Crepeaffaire a promotional angle to consumers? Miko's work has achieved the discovery of unknown species of trees, frogs and orchids, and Puro protects the only place in the world which is home to the 'critically endangered' golden poison arrow frog (this creature provided the poison which local people used to put on the tips of their blow-pipe darts).

Does this work resound with customers, and does Daniel promote Puro's work?

The answer is a careful one.

"We do display Puro bags, and we do have the Puro video on our website, so they do get credit. We did once try showing their live webcam feed from the rainforest - we had a screen showing it in our site at Stansted, and hearing the birds was nice, but after a while it felt like watching a meditation screen!

"Is it a good thing for me to use point of sale which says 'these are the ethics behind the coffee we serve?' Yes it is, and we must improve this - but we also have to appreciate that first and foremost, people are interested in 'a good cup of coffee', and while the ethical angle is important, it must not be pushed in a way that might appear gimmicky.

"The customer does not come to your café because of your ethics... they come because your coffee's good."

For the best coffee trade news - read Scoop Malone every month in Boughton's Coffee House!



Astonishing as it may seem in Britain, this roadside coffee bar poster has caused an absolute furore in Spokane Valley, Washington. The poster promotes the nearby 2nd Base Lingerie Espresso café, and features what is at worst a relatively-unclad model – she clearly wears a G-string as well as her angel wings, if very little else. However, the locals have risen up to express their disgust at 'nudity' on the public highway, and what is equally funny is that some of the American press have blocked out parts of the picture to avoid offending their readers. The model herself has said, perhaps quite reasonably, that the ad shows nothing more than could be seen at the beach.

A Texas café's refusal to serve gay customers has met with a quite wonderful response by protestors. A row had broken out when the media reported how Big Earl's Galley Café had told a gay couple not to come back because "we don't serve fags here". The owner said on TV that his requirement was for "men to act like men and women to act like ladies". In response, gay protesters posted approving notices on review sites recommending the venue as a gay hangout.

In the UK, Costa was surprised to be criticised for blocking in-store wi-fi access to the Pink News and Stonewall websites, using a 'sexual orientation' firewall. Costa protested that no such block was in place – it turned out that some Costa franchisees use their own choice of wi-fi provider, and some of those providers use a standard firewall which itself includes the block.

A San Francisco coffee shop has bowed to public pressure and given up its practice of scanning and tracking the wireless devices of customers and passers-by. A project between Philz Coffee and an analytics company aimed to monitor customer behaviour, such as the dwell time of customers who 'camp out' with their laptops.

The café owner had apparently argued that he was not 'spying on customers', because his collected data was anonymous – however, a local liberties organ-

isation maintained that his scanning could theoretically establish a device-owner's identity. The café owner said that this theory was too technical for him to understand – but adverse consumer reaction to a news report of his scanning project appears to have been sufficient to make him abandon it.

A Starbucks customer in Dallas has set a record for the most expensive coffee drink ever served – it was, believe it or not, a 128-ounce frappuccino which included 60 shots of espresso. It was a conscious attempt to beat the previously-held record of \$47.30. Curiously, the customer did not have to pay for it – according to Starbucks' loyalty program, he had earned the right to one free drink, and simply made the most of it. The order was pre-planned, in that the customer knew what ingredients would take him to the record, although he insisted that the result 'had to be drinkable'. Starbucks themselves said that they do not recommend other customers to try to match it, on the grounds that sixty espressos is not a safe level for human consumption; the buyer agreed, and drank only a little of it before keeping the rest 'for later'.

In the latest example of a hopeless coffee-related crime, a Leeds man has been jailed for attempting to rob a café in which he worked, and which was downstairs from the room in which he



Kaldi

lived. The staff member walked into the café wearing a balaclava, threatened his employer with a knife, and took £300. The proprietor called the police, and directed them upstairs to where her employee was still sitting with the money. He was jailed for four years.

There was a slightly odd aspect to the recent TCG pub group barista contest. Very imaginatively, the organisers invited contestants to submit not just a signature drink, but recipe, costings and photography for a new signature drink which might be put on the group's menu. The curious aspect of it was the prize for a craft contest – a Nespresso machine!



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