

# Boughton's

## COFFEE HOUSE



Scoop Malone, the coffee trade's ace reporter, once again brings you the best read in the entire beverage trade...by miles!

October 2014

### Colonel Grumpy's Guatemalan coffee bus is up for sale

One of the country's most distinctive mobile coffee businesses is up for sale – Colonel Grumpy's Coffee Bus, which is doubly distinguished in being both a genuine old Guatemalan bus, and in being operated by a genuine colonel, is on the market after ten years of service around British events.

"We have had ten seasons of fun, and now think it is time to get on with other adventures," retired colonel Ian Blair-Pilling told us.

An interesting aspect is that he believes he never exploited the commercial potential of the bus, treating the project more as a retired man's hobby than a serious commercial enterprise, and suspects that a 'serious' coffee operator would make far more effective business use of it.

He also observes, as other outdoor traders know, that the novelty aspect of a coffee business is a useful protection against some of the hazards of street and event trading.

"Had we worked on a cold, hard, business approach, we would have gone for charter business, because that's where the money is – and we have done some big ones.

"We have only operated six months of the year, we have only attended events we thought would be fun, and still 95 per cent of the time we have attended events by invitation and been paid to be there, because of the attraction value of the bus.

"I have seen too many traders in tears because they have paid high fees to be at an event, and also a percentage of takings, and have not made enough to cover it.

"We have never had to pay full fees to be at an event, and never ended up out of pocket."

A 'serious' coffee operator, he suspects, would capitalise more effectively on such opportunities.

However, the colonel may not leave the coffee business – he has another old American bus that he may prepare for a similar business.

Details and price are available from: [colonelgrumpy@cafeguate.co.uk](mailto:colonelgrumpy@cafeguate.co.uk)



What time's the next bus, asks Ringo Starr. This is one of a collection of celebrity photographs being made available to coffee-house owners – see page 11

## A new espresso maintenance group says: don't risk quick but shoddy repairs

**There is a new organisation of espresso machine service and repair men, the Confederation of Independent Espresso Engineers. The new body has been launched with a warning against the use of under-qualified people to work on espresso machines.**

This appears to directly follow the Association of Independent Espresso Engineers, which was formed at the beginning of 2010, and many of the engineers who began that group are now founder members of COFIEE.

"COFIEE is intended as a renewed association," says Stuart Menges of Universal Espresso Care, who has helped form the new body. A feature of the organisation will be a particularly demanding set of criteria for those who wish to become members.

"The industry has far too many 'barista technicians' who have gained a certificate after a one-day appreciation course, but lack any real competent skills," Stuart Menges told us. "The COFIEE members come from high-end service industries, having obtained various related national qualifications and full apprenticeships, and all are committed to excellence in engineering.

"Whilst, respectfully, baristas have a



Stuart Menges

far better knowledge of coffee, COFIEE engineers are far more competent to work on equipment both safely and legally.

"Customers always have choices, and the most simple one to make is – do you want fast and cheap or do you want good quality? London has a particularly acute problem of engineers racing around to give blistering fast responses, but upon arrival they make repairs which are usually very temporary and can be, in some cases that we have seen, dangerous.

"Our members have to have served a minimum period of time in the industry, have high-quality test equipment and tooling, and a good understanding of customer service.

"We appreciate we don't have blue lights and helicopters, and won't

always win the race to be on site, but our clients can be assured of a very proficient service.

"I'm sure that most reputable coffee shops and restaurants want to work within all legislation, and our organisation promotes adherence to PSSR 2000, Proof of Maintenance, Electrical Safety etc.

"We also promote a pro-active approach rather than a reactive one – with a good planned maintenance programme in place we will give a much better 'up-time' result."

## INSIDE

**Coffee museum:  
Bramah collection  
unearthed**

- page 10

**The pedal-power  
coffee trike  
is ready**

- page 8

**The pasty and the  
coffee shop**

- page 12

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Lavazza will publish another of its prestige calendars for 2015 – for many years, these have been notable for the sheer quality of the pictures, always taken by world-famous, and highly-expensive, photographers. The 2015 one has a joint theme of slow food and Africa, under the title 'The Earth Defenders', and will go on general sale for the first time – up to now, Lavazza calendars have been given away as a prestige item. This time, the calendar will be sold to raise funds for a project which hopes to create 10,000 food gardens in Africa.

Costa Coffee will open its first Warwickshire drive-through coffee shop at Leamington, next to the Morrisons supermarket. The store is going to be run by a franchisee. Starbucks is to open a drive-through at Wolstanton, Newcastle under Lyme in November, part of a plan for a chain of 200 drive-throughs.

There will be British screenings of A Film About Coffee next month. This item, which has already achieved international attention, is a film which traces the production of coffee from farms in Honduras and Rwanda through to the international café market, and features interviews with players at all parts of the chain, from farmers to baristas. It will be shown on November 7th at the Arnolfini arts centre in Bristol, and on November 10th there are two screenings at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London. At the London event, the film's director

from San Francisco will take part in a question-and-answer session.

The operator of the Wired Café in Nottingham has been nominated in the Nottingham Post Women in Business awards for the second year in a row - last year Vanessa Gretton-Roche was runner-up, and reports seeing a tangible improvement in business. She told her local paper that her average transaction value is almost double the national average for a coffee shop.

Starbucks has combined with Pod, the café chain which is known for its office delivery service from 23 London stores across London, to offer breakfast and lunch ranges at three Starbucks stores for a trial period. The trial menu ranges from scrambled eggs to bagels and wraps.

The Route 2 eco-friendly cycle cafe in Topsham, Devon, has been sold to the operators of a specialist tobacco shop in Exeter. The cafe is in a listed building, and is linked to the independent Route 2 bike shop next door. The café was highlighted by the Guardian as being one of the top ten cycle cafes in the UK. The business has now been sold in a confidential off-market transaction, by licensed property specialists Stonemith of Exeter. The property agents say the business was sold off a guide price of £99,950.

There have been 180 letters of protest to the local council over a proposed Costa opening in Belper.

## Big Irish chain may move into the UK

The extremely well-known Irish coffee bar chain **Insomnia** is likely to arrive in the UK next year. The brand has already made a quiet entry, installing self-service coffee machines in ten Spar shops in Britain, something it already does in its own country.

The owner, who is also a well-known TV personality there, says that the first Insomnia café will open here during the first quarter of 2015. He added that progress in the UK would be carefully planned and 'at a measured pace'.

The chain has increased turnover by 20 per cent in the last year, and 'retail industry sources' suggest it is worth around 25 million euros. By the end of this year, Insomnia will have over a hundred sites in Ireland, half company-run and half franchised.

## Chains sued over cancer claim

A pressure group in California has taken legal action against several coffee chains, with the incredible aim of getting them to label their coffee as carcinogenic.

According to the Council for Education and Research on Toxics, a state regulation requires warning labels to be placed on products that contain chemicals linked to cancer. The ingredient in this case is acrylamide, a by-product of roasting coffee beans which can also be found in cooked vegetables and baked goods.

The pressure group alleges that when the coffee sold by certain coffee chains in California was tested, even a single cup of coffee contained up to 100 times more acrylamide than the 'no significant risk' level set by local environmental health officers.

In reply, the coffee chains have produced expert testimony to show that acrylamide in coffee does not pose a significant risk of cancer.

A professor of nutrition and toxicology in America has suggested that it would take consumption of a hundred cups a day to reach a dangerous level of acrylamide.



**Ecky thump, and I'll go t'foot of our stairs... the latest tea-room owner to get involved in street food is actress Jennie McAlpine, of Coronation Street.**

She recently cropped up at a market stall in Manchester to promote a new online ordering service for her Annes tea room, a development which came from a curious observation. Her staff had noticed that customers were 'squirrelling away' leftovers from the afternoon tea service, which led to the idea of making her preserves, chutneys, biscuits and cakes available for takeaway and online – this has now become a collection which ranges in price from £3 to £64 for hampers.



There has been another imaginative attempt to create a searchable database of independent coffee shops in London – this is the 100 Cups site, which appears to show 300 independent cafes between, more or less, Tolworth and Walthamstow. It can be seen at [100cups.blogspot.co.uk](http://100cups.blogspot.co.uk).

## New moves against 'bull' science claims

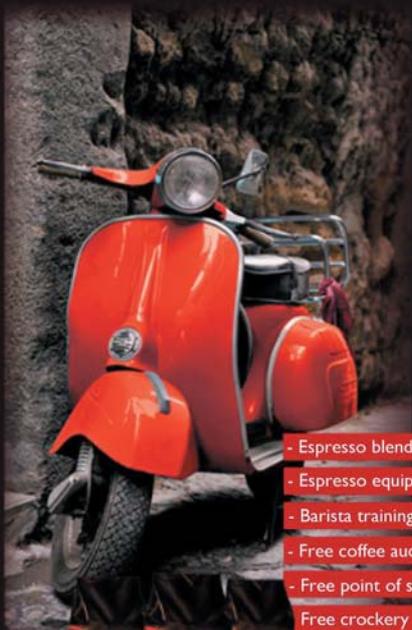
**Steve Slark, a well-known consultant in the water-treatment sector, has joined European Water Care as managing director. The company has already been 're-branded', with an emphasis on the British-made aspect of its products.**

"Water quality is now a high-profile subject in the café trade, and everyone seems to have ideas or think they know a bit about it," he remarked to us.

"We are also up against certain manufacturers that promote alchemy and science which is mostly bull."

"The new rebranded European Water Care will now introduce a range of targeted solutions which will still be the most cost-effective, the most environmentally-friendly and very proudly made in the UK. We aim to be the premier provider of water solutions to the coffee trade."

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This month's best blackboard sign. Yes, we can all sympathise...!

# Coffee festivals coming up in Manchester and Glasgow

The Cup North event, billed as 'the first major coffee festival to take place outside of London', is to run at the Greengate area in Salford on 1st-2nd November. There is also to be a new coffee event in Glasgow.

The Manchester event includes a latte art competition with La Marzocco, tastings by roasters including Grumpy Mule, Extract and Atkinsons, and even a history talk with writer Piers Alexander, whose novel *The Bitter Trade* was launched in a London coffee shop recently.

The main attraction for the trade will be a live Tamper Tantrum, the talks-and-debates event created by Steve Leighton of Has Bean, in which realistic trade situations are debated. It was to host this that Cup North turned to a crowd-funding website, and ended up raising £900 more than was needed.

There is to be a coffee festival in Glasgow, and unusually, it is not being run by the coffee trade - it is organised by the fundraising manager of a Glasgow hospice.

"This will very much be a more 'intimate' coffee festival than others," we were told by Chris Brown of the Prince & Princess of Wales Hospice. "We are very much aiming this at the consumer.

"We have festivals for everything these days - chocolate, beer, wine, cheese, and so on. In Scotland there hasn't been anything to cater for people with an interest in coffee although we've noticed that the scene here has really started to grow, especially in Glasgow, which is why we have cho-

sen to host it here, with a view to taking it to a different location year on year.

"We want to make it more about the customer, and make it a real family day in which people feel comfortable and relaxed, and in which it doesn't matter whether you know little about coffee or you're an expert. We shall learn from the first event.

"It will be a day of tastings, sampling, demonstrations, barista master classes, latte art, cupping, art, music and live entertainment. We have handpicked what we believe to be the best cafés in Glasgow and best roasters in Scotland to take part. There'll be a team of experts available to give advice to anybody who wants to expand their knowledge of the coffee scene.

"We shall take learnings from it and then look to grow it. Glasgow is a wonderful city for events and people here are always willing to try new things. If it doesn't work out how we imagine, then at least it wasn't through a lack of trying."

The Scottish Coffee Festival will be at the Drygate Brewery on Saturday, November 29 from 11am - 6pm. Tickets cost £8, of which £1 goes to the hospice's Brick by Brick Appeal, to build a new facility.

## Dodgy doings by the railway char-wallahs

There have been a couple of beverage-related bribery and fraud stories from faraway countries this month.

The situation of street coffee traders in the UK is probably more comfortable than that of the char-wallahs of India, where there has been a big row about the behaviour of tea stall operators at Mumbai's main station.

In theory, tea-sellers are allotted enclosures or cubicles from which to sell, but in practice they tend to 'creep' into bigger and better spaces - and, bearing in mind how incredibly crowded an Indian railway station can be at peak times, there have now been complaints that tea-wallahs have started berating rail passengers for standing too close to their stalls and blocking their business!

A press reporter was told by one tea-seller that railway officials are bribed to overlook the actions of char wallahs: "the owner pays extra money to station officials, who in turn share it with higher officials to turn a blind eye. We are informed in advance of inspections by senior railway officials, so we avoid using the exterior part on those days."

One understandably-anonymous railway official said that if his colleagues kept taking backhanders and allowing char wallahs to sell where

they liked, "there will soon be hardly any space left on platforms for the passengers."

In Kenya, coffee farmers have been turning more and more to processing their own beans, as a result of alleged fraud by mill-owners and coffee traders.

Farmers made various allegations including the charge that up to a third of their coffee simply gets 'lost' when figures are added up, and that centralised mills routinely downgrade much of the coffee delivered to them.

In one example, a co-operative which delivered 2,000 bags of AA grade coffee was told that half of it was graded AB, which means the mill owner pocketed the difference in value, over £100 for each of a thousand bags of coffee.

The mills have also been accused of offering farmers loans and advances at double the interest rate that would be offered elsewhere on the financial market.

One co-operative has now reported that since it began processing its own coffee, its stock losses have improved by twenty per cent.

This year has been notable for the large number of 'coffee concepts' announced by non-specialist caterers and suppliers - pub chains in particular have enthusiastically taken up the idea, with their own brands. The latest to appear is Beans and Steam, which is the new coffee 'concept' from 3663, the extremely big catering products supplier to all kinds of food business, from pubs to B&Bs. It would appear that 3663's move is an attempt to bring the concept of speciality coffee down to this kind of non-specialist coffee outlet, which is a perfectly reasonable strategy, but the detail of the range is a fraction vague, not least because 3663 has declined to give us even an approximation of the price range in which their four new blends sit, saying only that they are a 'competitively-priced premium product'.

Bar Italia, the London coffee shop which is a favourite of Soho's showbiz and Italian communities, raised £10,000 for the Great Ormond Street Hospital for sick children at the café's 65th birthday celebration.

The theme of a new coffee-house in Southgate, north London, has come from the unexpected discovery of a collection of antique furniture by the two brothers who are preparing the premises. Joseph and Franco Tzouvanni found posters, ledgers and even stained glass windows which showed that the property had once been the office of Claud W Dennis, the architect and developer who reconstructed Southgate in the

1940s. As a result, the new café will be named after him. The brothers have said: "He was the ultimate local man. We intend to stick around and become a part of Southgate's local heritage and history, the same way Claud W Dennis was."

Tea is the beverage with the most successful worldwide growth over the last five years, according to the Zenith research house. Of 24 beverage categories assessed worldwide, tea experienced the highest growth in consumption, up by 62 billion litres since 2008. Coffee, by contrast, was up by sixteen billion litres. The researchers noted that coffee even out-performed beer in this period. Meanwhile, the founders of the Mighty Leaf tea brand, which is available in the UK through Somerset Distribution, have said that they expect the tea sector to show even more growth.

Over twenty staff and friends of the Lincoln and York roastery have taken part in a sponsored cycle ride from Lincoln Cathedral to York Minster. The whole team finished the 85-mile ride and raised over £16,000 for the regional air ambulance services.

Kaylee Clark of the Purple Cherry coffee shop in Workington has won a regional 'young person in business' award from the local Chamber of Commerce. She will now go forward to the national finals in London in November. Purple Cherry has a second string, an artisan bakery supplying other catering businesses.



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The House of Fraser stores have created a partnership with Caffè Nero, which involves a 'new multi-channel shopping concept' in Cambridge, in an existing Caffè Nero store. The idea is to provide the department store with online shopping facilities, and a collection point, without House of Fraser having to create its own physical presence. The café has House of Fraser tablet devices, allowing customers to shop from the tables (the Illy café in London used a vaguely similar idea recently). The first floor of the building serves as the 'buy and collect' department, with a fitting room.

The highly-litigious Starbucks has won another bizarre trademark case. In the Philippines, the Cafe de Manila had applied to trademark the rather odd slogan "the frap bar everyone deserves and designs" for coffee products. Starbucks successfully claimed that 'frap' was too similar to its registered trademark of Frappuccino.

A rather acid review in Time Out concerns a franchised post office in Seven Sisters Road, London, which features the on-site Café Posta. 'The espresso was watery and the croissant was as crisp as the stuffing in a Jiffy bag - but they do a mean postal order', said the reviewer.

The Office Coffee Company has suggested that a sustainability-focused business model has helped cut more than 26,000 tonnes of carbon emissions over the past year. The company works with the rainforest charity Cool Earth, which calculates each client's CO2 impact from products purchased - typically, a 500g tub of instant coffee is reckoned to protect five rainforest trees. An annual report is provided for all office clients, which they can use in their Corporate Social Responsibility reports.

In Brighton the Silo bakery and coffee house has opened its business which is intended to generate absolutely no waste or rubbish at all. The café uses an in-house composting machine, and the owner says that the business has been designed 'back-to-front', thinking from the waste bins first - the production of waste has, we are told, been eliminated by simply trading directly with local farmers and having only reusable delivery vessels. The in-house composter produces material which goes back to the farms. In its early days, Silo will use what it calls

'pre-industrial payment methods'. That means cash!

A rather imaginative argument has assisted Costa to win clearance to open in Pangbourne, a village that already has four coffee shops, in spite of opposition from residents and planning officials. A planning officer had said that the arrival of Costa could be harmful to the vitality of the retail shopping area, but a pro-Costa councillor successfully argued that the planning department was relying on local retail policy which dated from before modern-day café culture.

The Foundation coffee house, a joint venture between an interior design firm and a gym operator, has opened what is intended to be the first of a chain in Manchester. It is run by the interior design firm NoChintz and Adam Chapman, founder of the QDos Fitness gym in Stockport.

Tesco is set to close six Harris and Hoole coffee shops due to poor performance, yet still expects to have 16 high street outlets and 32 in-store sites by the end of the year.

A Forties-themed tea room in Shoreditch which is regularly used as a set for period TV productions was expected to fetch £2 million when it went up for auction last month - it did not, but is still on the market by Savills at roughly the same price. The business is Time for Tea, which was reportedly last sold for £95,000 as a derelict building in 1995, at which point it had been empty for fifty years.

A third of consumers would visit garden centres more often if the coffee there was better, according to a recent comment by United Coffee - the question of garden centres as a coffee outlet has been much discussed in recent years, and UCC now says that a quarter of customers in the sector visited an onsite coffee shop there on their last visit, and eleven per cent said they only went there to visit the café.

The Scottish coffee shop brand, Beanscene is to open its 12th site, in Perth. This is the chain which has had an extremely chequered history, the most recent episode of which being a businesswoman buying it out of administration with a view to turning it into a nationwide chain, but giving that idea up. It was then sold to Stuart Mckenzie, who reportedly was one of the bidders looking to buy it out of administration.



## Cafes are in fashion for proposals

A manager at a Costa branch has proposed to his girlfriend in a bizarre way - he printed the proposal on the till receipt she was given for a couple of drinks.

It might be a little unromantically nit-picking to point out that on the receipt, the words 'will you marry me?' were directly followed by the slightly less glamorous alternative offer: 'you could have earned ten points by presenting a coffee club number...'

Meanwhile, the media in Plymouth thoroughly enjoyed a popular story last month, in which a girl outside the American coffee house was picked out by a busker who serenaded her - the song was Marry You by Bruno Mars, and gradually more people joined in with it.

It had all been planned and filmed - the last person to join in was her boyfriend, who then proposed. The girl was Alysia Gimblett, and we remembered her name... she was once a contestant in the barista championships and did, we believe, once start a tea company delightfully called Happy Hippie.

And the venue concerns a name from the past, too - the Americano is run by Steven Bartlett, the 'reluctant CEO' who changed the face of the Coffee Republic chain.

## Greenpeace says the tea giants have made a big eco-move

Rather unusually, a global giant has come in for praise from an ecological campaigning organisation - Greenpeace's senior ecological farming campaigner has spoken out in support of Tata, the parent of Tetley, referring to: 'something extraordinary... a small step that might start something really big'.

The news that has impressed Greenpeace was an announcement by Tata that they would partner Unilever to 'take the tea sector on a journey towards ecological tea growing'. This, says Greenpeace, means more than just the usual 'slightly less hazardous pesticides', but is a 'big shift' in the whole farming system.

Greenpeace India recently released a report saying that even the massive global tea brands are contaminated with mixtures of multiple pesticides, many of them classified as 'highly' or 'moderately' hazardous by the World Health Organisation.

Now, says Greenpeace, Tata and Unilever together can make a huge difference to the world's cultivation of tea, working to a new global standard whereby all tea could now become pesticide-free by default.

In a very unusual compliment to a global giant, Greenpeace said: 'here's to you, Tata!'

In the UK, Tetley is now spending £500,000 behind its green teas, in a digital campaign aimed at consumers who have searched online for 'health' or 'detox'. It features a banner campaign on the sites of leading women's magazines. Moving slightly from the sublime to the ridiculous, the campaigns feature images of a semi-naked Gaffer from the Tea Folk.



Cold brew coffee remains a big topic of conversation, but even so, we thought we were being teased with this water-cooler picture... but it's genuine, and the brand happily confirmed to us: "it's fine - Illy does make the best cold-brew!" At the same time, Whittard has been running a summer campaign on iced teas which involves two specialist teaware items - the Tea Jay is for making tea cocktails, and the Cold Brew is for cold infusions. "A new way to enjoy tea is making it with cold water," says the company. "Cold brewed tea is brewed slowly over time to extract the flavours, producing a mild and rich taste with no hint of bitterness. Beautifully refreshing on hot days."



## Boughton's Coffee House

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The Old Farmyard, Mill Road, Dilham, North Walsham,  
Norfolk, NR28 9PU

01692 535660 07702 348866

ianb@coffee-house.org.uk

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## Coffee clubs see new markets

The 'coffee club' subscription concept, in which consumers sign up to receive monthly amounts of speciality coffee, continues to expand quite dramatically.

There have been two notable moves in the past month – Pact Coffee, one of the names to have big progress in the subscription business, has now launched a new service called Coffee Run that supplies offices with regular deliveries.

It is nothing new for coffee suppliers to target the office market, but the opportunity for these clients to choose from the varieties offered by modern artisan roasteries is unusual.

Pact's founder Stephen Rapoport has said: "you can bet that many of the 'Best Place to Work' companies in the UK are doing well because of the food and drink they offer onsite to their staff."

Meanwhile, in the north, Beanify of Leeds has said that it is in discussions with its first corporate client, having concentrated on subscription business with individual customers for the first few months of the company's life.

The co-founders, brothers Simon and Stuart Edwards, developed the idea last year as an entry for a local business competition – they got into the final shortlist, and have been running Beanify as a part-time interest until they decide to take it on full-time.



We are indebted to Claire Martinsen of Breckland Orchard soft drinks for this chocolate-sprinkle stencil picture – it is, she tells us, a 'cow-puccino' from the Foxholes farm shop of Hertford.

Teapigs has come up with five new blends, available this month, which as always have their unusual aspects. One is rhubarb and ginger, described as 'tasting like a crumble in a cup', and another is sweet ginger and cinnamon, which in keeping with the brand's odd packaging illustrations, carries a picture of a pair of orange specs. Probably a reference to a TV and radio personality, we think. The apple and cinnamon blend, a fruity and spicy tea, was suggested by one of their stockists, Olive and Bean in Newcastle. The others are chocolate and mint blend and fennel with liquorice. The brand has not yet managed to get Chris Evans to taste the tea!



## Northern cafe wins smoothie title with an anti-ageing blend

The Juicafe of Lancaster has not just won a prize, but has taken the title it has been seeking for years – it has finally won the British Smoothie Championships at the Lunch show, having been in the top three virtually every previous year.

This year it was Indie Wilson-Fish (right) who finally did it, with her Lucuma Matata, featuring banana, mango, passionfruit, carrot juice and apple juice, and lucuma itself.

This is a 'superfood' native to Peru, reportedly so popular there that it is the country's biggest ice cream flavour. It is said to have a 'naturally caramel' flavour. (There is also a cocktail of the same name which features gin, fruit such as plum or nectarine, honey, lemon and lime, cucumber and vanilla bitters).

"The smoothie is stuffed with beta-carotene, so it is an immune-boosting smoothie with fantastic anti-ageing and skin-rejuvenating properties," Oli Wilson-Fish told us.

Meanwhile, Oli and Indie have added a mobile element to their business, followed by an outside café contract.

"This year, business has exploded for us," said Oli. "We decided last Christmas that we would do the mobile because we had been asked by a lot of local people for an event unit. We eventually got it on the road in May, and I had approached the university to put it on their campus during term time... two weeks later we took a short-term deal to run their sports arena café.

"I am currently commuting in the Smoothie Truck, which has been used for country fairs and sports events from Carlisle to Southport. Hard work and long days, but fun."

Not taking the smoothie world too seriously, Oli and Indie recently launched a vote asking for a name for their staff – should they be called smoothie operators, blendistas, juicer/juicettes, smoothistas or smoothie maestros?

The likely winner was 'blendista', Oli told us, observing that the real value of the idea was in finding out how many people were bothered to take an interest in a smoothie and juice café.



Runners-up in the smoothie contest were ShakeTastic and Crussh, both of whom we think are former winners.

Meanwhile, an extremely unusual smoothie operation was highlighted in the Street Food awards – it didn't actually win one, but the Real Junk Food Project in Leeds was recognised for its 'repurposed fruit smoothies'. This was a smoothie made from fruit discarded by stores as being out of date and supposedly unsellable. The Project itself exists to 'intercept perfectly edible food that would otherwise not make it to plate' and serve it on a 'pay what you like' basis.

The Project has made this quite admirable summary of its work: "we aim to highlight the absurdity that the produce we use has been stripped of its monetary value but still retains its nutritional value".

Odd as it sounds, an Italian barista contest has been held in London – all the fifteen entries came from Italian coffee roasters, and the event was intended (we quote from the organisers) 'to signify the beginning of a new trend in the UK coffee market... a trend that celebrates the skill of a traditional barista and the origins of Italian espresso'. A British coffee trade veteran of Italian heritage tells us that he was puzzled by the format of the contest, which involved some aspects curious to those who are used to the British contests. Each barista had 11 minutes to produce four espressos and four cappuccinos, which might be thought a little generous, and the drinks were carried to another room where the judges tasted them in private. Also rather curiously, although there were prizes for the best cappuccino or best espresso, the ultimate champion did not win either of these titles.

The barista known for the promotion of Illy coffee in Britain for many years is behind the opening of a new espresso bar in Soho, in mid-November. Marco Arrigo, who is head of quality for Illy in the UK and also manages a linked espresso school, is opening in Old Compton Street, right in the area of the early espresso bars of the 1950s. The business will concentrate on pure espresso, as opposed to takeaway lattes and cappuccinos, and a macchiato or espresso will probably cost a pound to drink at the bar in the Italian style. In traditional Soho style, the bar will run late into the night. The coffee is said to be a 'fairer than Fairtrade'.



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The latest in coffee research from 'experts' outside the industry itself has concluded that the growth of coffee shops has had no effect on the British consumption of coffee. This one comes from what are described as 'leisure analysts' at Barclays, who have said that the UK consumption of coffee is lower than it was eight years ago, and that coffee shops have simply taken over an amount of coffee which was previously consumed at home or in an office. Barclays has not responded to requests for more detailed information on its research.

Harrison Catering Services, which is a specialist company supplying catering services at schools and universities, has moved to using completely compostable packaging, and claims that it is now the UK's biggest contract caterer to go completely compostable. It is using products by Vegware, known in the coffee trade for its compostable takeaway cups.

A contestant on the TV programme Dragon's Den has opened a branch of a cycling-themed coffee house on the Dorset coast. Hugh Roper has opened a branch of Rockets and Rascals in Poole, on a well-known seafront cycling route. He will also be selling the invention that got him on national TV, an illuminated cycle helmet. The original Rockets and Rascals is in Plymouth, and there is a link between the two operations.

By coincidence, two of the world's leading coffee chains have come up with new coffee blends, for virtually the first time in their existence. Costa has produced its first new blend in almost 50 years, with the Old Paradise Street No.3. The brand says it spent 18 months on it before ending up with something 'predominantly Colombian'. Meanwhile, the Canadian giant Tim Hortons, which has also used only one blend in fifty years, has also devised a new option, observing that forty per cent of its customers are looking for a darker roast.

Beyond the Bean has come up with a couple more of its Sweetbird 'selection boxes', intended to make the creation of winter 'house specials' easier. The Seasonal Syrup box offers three flavours, toasted marshmallow, pumpkin spice and toffee apple, with point of sale materials and a window sticker, and recipe cards. There is now also a Chocolate Box, which offers Zuma dark and white hot chocolate, with two appropriate matching syrups, tubs of fudge crumb and ginger truffle toppings, and a bag of mini marshmallows.

A survey of students for PG Tips suggests that 45 per cent of them are more likely to buy takeaway tea if it is a brand they drink at home. Rather more surprising is the suggestion that 46 per cent would be prepared to pay more for it.

## Capsules - the 'point' format comes into wider favour

**There have been a couple more new moves into capsules, both of which use the 'espresso point' format, already used to some effect by Lavazza and Illy. Rancilio, whose machines are distributed in the UK by the Coffee Machine Company, has shown the prototype of its new machine, which uses the recently-popular concept of a conventional portafilter handle designed to hold a capsule.**

Marco Olmi of the Coffee Machine Company tells us: "The capsule machine is £1,600-ish. I went out to Rancilio for a meeting this summer, had a wander around the production area, saw this, and said: 'I want one!'"

We have been under pressure for a capsule machine, because people have been asking for them. It was something missing from our arsenal. It fills a gap, but at the same time, it means we can also put our own best-selling blend, Cuidado, in capsules.

"I have tested several capsule formats, and this one seems to deliver the quality. This is for the market which does 50-60 coffees a day - and this gives them a choice of coffees."

The Point capsules are also being used by Roy Grey at Capital Coffee, the Wimbledon roaster, who has seen the same idea: "we're trying to put our own roasted coffees in the capsules, but we're not quite there yet."

"We can already fill them ourselves, and the idea of putting our own roasted coffee into a foolproof system is very appealing - we're putting together a no-contract, free-loan machine offer around it."

Barry Kither of Lavazza has told us: "Point is out of patent, and so it has been cloned - but it pre-dates Nespresso. Lavazza bought the system from the man who made it. It is widespread in offices, and very big in France, and it's the most reliable machine I've seen - basic, reliable and cheap. It's a great system - many of the new generation haven't matched it."

The consultant who is a specialist on capsules, Andrew Richardson, reports: "The Point capsules have been around since the mid 1990's - I remember first coming across it in Colorado and Arizona."

"There are over 22 million original espresso Point machines in use in Italian homes and offices. Most recently, I have personally encountered demand for Point style capsules for a new catering service machine with multiple drink options (coffees, teas, other beverages)."

"Lavazza apparently estimates between 300-700 of these machines being placed in small catering and hospitality environments around the UK in the next 12 months, which is a good start."

"The Point capsule's biggest disadvantage is that it is more expensive to make the empty capsule than for example, Nespresso or Nespresso



*The Rancilio portafilter and capsule - the Point capsule is not so deep as the Nespresso style.*

compatible capsules. Its potential advantage may be in beverage quality, in its capacity to potentially contain a greater throw weight of coffee and allow for pre-infusion."

Elsewhere in the capsule market, one of the longest running legal rows seems to have been solved - Nespresso has promised the French competition authorities that it will now co-operate with companies who make Nespresso-compatible capsules.

According to the French competition authority, Nespresso's market share made it subject to 'dominance' regulations, which prohibit it from excluding its competitors from the market unfairly - this of course is the very argument which has been raging in the courts for years.

Under the agreement announced by the French anti-trust regulators, Nespresso will give competitors four months' warning about changes to its machines and hand over prototypes for testing. Nespresso said it would share the information with manufacturers selling outside France as well.

The former Nespresso executive who left to start one of the biggest compatible companies commented: "Everything is compatible today, but Nespresso acted as though it were legal to obstruct competition."

With what may be interesting timing, an Australian entrepreneur has put two million dollars into a Nespresso-compatible factory in Adelaide. Australians reportedly consume capsule coffees at a rate of three million a day, and the businessman began his business by importing Vergnano capsules from Europe, but became worried about the quality drawbacks of shipping a perishable product around the world.

He has set a sales target of 30 million units for the first year.

One of the various café businesses working to help people back into employment has been visited by the Staffordshire police and crime commissioner. He went to Langan's Tea Rooms, in Burton, which works with the Burton Addiction Centre to support recovering drug and alcohol addicts. The commissioner said that his eyes were opened to the kind of work being done to rehabilitate people through work placement in the café trade.

A McDonald's site in Arizona has become the first to scrap the 'golden arch' sign, replacing it with a single turquoise letter 'M' on the side of the building. Local officials refused to allow the chain to open with its usual signage, under a strict by-law in the city of Sedona which says that no building is allowed to ruin the views of the surrounding desert. There is an equally strict colour code for commercial buildings. Some years ago, in a very flash shopping mall in Italy, McDonald's came up against a similar regulation, and exchanged its red and yellow signage for a more discreet gold and black.

Starbucks is launching its first global brand campaign, which takes up a theme that many other coffee shops have spoken about - the value of face-to-face conversation in coffee houses, as opposed to impersonal laptop use. The "Meet me at Starbucks" campaign is intended to result in an increase in dwell time in the stores, by promoting Starbucks as a social location. It features a YouTube video shot in 59 different stores across 28 countries as 'a day in the life at Starbucks', and shows such café activities as a meeting of a scrapbook group, and even a band in Japan using Starbucks as the venue for auditions. It follows an American campaign with the imaginative slogan: 'sometimes the best way to connect is to get together'.



There is another development in the sector of heat technology as applied to coffee mugs. Blue Leaf is a start-up company that is designing a mug which shows the temperature of the liquid inside it. The mug does not need batteries, but draws energy from the hot liquid. Our picture is of a prototype - the company is interested in feedback from the trade (we'll gladly pass on any comments).



A new roastery in Yorkshire has been set up by an engineer who met and lived with coffee farmers in Sumatra, and was so affected by their stories of life being difficult on the price they earned for their beans that he resolved to try and sell them in the UK.

The Rounton Roastery is named for its village, a little north of Northallerton, and its Granary blend has already been a finalist in the local Deliciously Yorkshire and Flavours of Herriot awards. The majority of its customers are cafes and restaurants in the immediate area.

"We started off with a sample roaster, and now use a 10-kilo Toper," he told us. "I was a chemical engineer before I went to Sumatra, and the principles of roasting are fairly familiar to me from that."

"I saw roasting for the first time in Sumatra, and originally tried to help the farmers by sending samples to British roasters, but then I realised the pitfalls if you don't know enough about the trade. I then tried to buy some direct, but a lot of the farmers wanted to sell me kopi luwak, which I'm not interested in."

"Then we met Falcon, the importers, who now help me buy coffee from a little north of the farm I stayed at. With this, I now know that Sumatran farmers are getting a fair price from me, even if it is not exactly the same farmers."

"I'm still in touch with the farmers I met - by Facebook, which sounds bonkers, but a lot of coffee farmers there use it. If we get big enough, I hope I'll be able to trade with the farmers I met."

**Bio Bean of London, the company which has proposed to recover vast amounts of coffee waste from London catering businesses, has been awarded £400,000 from the Dutch Postcode Lottery Green Challenge.**

The company's aim is to turn waste grounds into biofuel products, such as biodiesel and biomass pellets, used for powering buildings and transport systems. The Dutch Postcode Lottery is an annual international challenge for sustainable products and services that reduce carbon emissions.

The founder of Bio Bean, Arthur Kay, has said that he has already approached the major coffee chains with a view to collecting their used grounds, which would be made into energy at a factory in Sussex.

He says that in eighteen months, he has succeeded in collecting perhaps two per cent of the estimated 200,000 tonnes of coffee grounds disposed of in London each year. His aim is to recycle 40 per cent of the capital's coffee waste within a year.

Meanwhile, in Cape Town, Truth Coffee has said that it is now the first coffee roaster in the world to be powered entirely by biofuel. It has gone over completely to oil power using waste chip-fat and the like, which it says is oil that would have had otherwise to be disposed of in an environmentally-unfriendly way.

The flavour of the coffee is, the roaster stresses, not affected.



**Starbucks may change its rules on visible tattoos worn by baristas – it has been reported that the brand's chief operating officer has promised to look again at dress codes, which currently permit a maximum of two ear-rings per ear (!) and no other piercings visible.**

In Canada, the Tim Hortons coffee and doughnut chain has also recently announced a tattoo policy change, which was timed to coincide with a recruitment drive in which it sought high-quality baristas. The inference is that those baristas are likely to be tattooed.

The Gloria Jean's chain has been the only one to speak candidly about the subject.

Its head of staff told local media that a no-tattoo policy had led to them turning away too many potentially good people, and it was when they adopted a policy of hiring retired military staff, many of whom had discreet tattoos, they realised that they had to be more flexible in their attitude.

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There has been an interesting advance in mobile coffee carts – Velopresso, the eco-friendly coffee tricycle in which the grinder is worked by pedal power, has for the first time become available to the general market. Its maker has said that now prototype trikes have been operating for some time, he is ready to make and sell units to the trade.

It has taken three years to bring the Velopresso to this point. Up to now, the prototypes have been working in Montreal, in Covent Garden on loan to the Look Mum No Hands bike café, and Coffee House has now been able to see one in operation in an east London market.

This is operated by We Walk The Line, a new start-up social enterprise which seeks to open up self-employment opportunities for those who have the drive to work for themselves but no chance to do so. The barista and trainer on duty was Tom Harris, who has a lot of experience in the trade both with well-known independents and the chains, and with him was Amos Field Reid, one of the designers of the Velopresso.

The rise of the machine, he told us, came from an interest in manually-powered energy as a wider subject, not specifically an interest in mobile coffee trading. The designers were surprised by the enthusiastic help they got when they showed their idea to both the coffee and the bike trades.

"There are a lot of nice stories to this. At the Royal College of Art, we were industrial design students, and I had been considering pedal-power design for years - not just for coffee, but for energy in general. Since the OPEC crisis in the 90s, there had been a lot of thought given to power and energy, and my dissertation was on 'human power'.

"The next question was, how do I make the concept of pedal power visible and attract attention to it? As I love coffee and had followed the coffee scene, the idea of a coffee stall came up – but this was based on being a showcase for the concept of the energy and power, not as a coffee business first."

From this point, several interesting adaptations of conventional ways of working came up.

The most notable, and clearly visible when the trike is working, is the idea of the pedal-powered coffee grinder: the operator, sitting on a bike seat behind the espresso machine with the machine static and held in place by brakes and chocks, effectively shifts gear to operate a chain which can be seen to lead to the grinder.

"We bought Mazzer burrs, but this is not a Mazzer grinder. We designed the rest of it from scratch, and the belt is not the chain belt you're used to in your pedal bike, because there can't be any oil involved. This is the Gates belt drive, which was designed for

# Pedal-powered coffee trikes are now ready for the street

It has taken three years of development to get the Velopresso coffee trikes from prototype to production – now these unique machines are available for street trading



industrial use, but which is now taking over for bike use."

The pedalling operates the grinding burrs at 300rpm, which is less than many electric models, but certainly adequate, and produces enough for a double shot in about seven seconds.

"The grinder speed is the result of the gearing, not the result of the pace at which the operator is pedalling. There is a three-speed gearing on the bike, but that's for travelling, so you can pedal over a hump-back bridge."

The effort to grind for a shot is surprisingly little.

“ The Velopresso will get into certain trading situations where a petrol-based machine might not be allowed. ”

- Amos Field Reid

"The simple fact is that it is harder to ride a bike along the street than it is to do this, because there is no resistance. On a road bike, you have factors of wind and weight, which don't apply on this.

"It's not about effort, it's about smoothness. When you hand-grind coffee, you can feel a little first resistance, and it's the same with this. We have done eight hours non-stop of this at shows, and with no physical problems."

It was when the partners began looking for eco-powered espresso machines that the coffee trade got

actively involved, the most notable of them being Fracino in Birmingham.

"We realised quickly that there was no way in hell that we were going to operate the entire thing by pedalling - you could put an Olympic cyclist on this, have him go full-tilt, and you still wouldn't get an espresso! Yes, you can create power to operate the grinder and charge batteries and do several other things, but not run an espresso machine.

"We had wanted to work without any fossil fuels, and we looked at bio-ethanol and some more nutty ideas,

"It was Adrian who first said this would be a raging success. He knows what he's talking about, and he's willing to take challenges, but when he said he would build us a prototype, I said 'he's kidding'. He wasn't, and he said 'it'll take us three weeks...'

"So he built a machine based round a fantastic burner, and we used that prototype for a year, until it became clear that what we needed was something smaller.

"We went back to Fracino and said: give us one of your existing dual-fuel machines, and we shrunk it, by taking it apart and removing everything we didn't need. By eliminating a lot of the electrics, we kept it to the same basic machine, but with a smaller chassis.

"Fracino were very good about us doing this to one of their machines, and we think the result is probably the most robust espresso machine you'll ever see."

Further generous help came from another unexpected direction.

"We wanted to develop a rattle-free, easy-to-remove and wash drip tray, and this came about by a coincidence. We had got a call from France, from a bike engineer whose family once invented the puncture repair kit – they said 'make us a machine and bring it to the vintage cycle festival we run in Napoleon's barracks'.

"We got there and found that they make specialist spares for Formula One racing, and just like Fracino, they decided that they would like to make things for us. We ended up bartering a Velopresso against some tooling they did for us."

Having invented a new type of grinder and got the espresso machine how they wanted it, Velopresso began thinking about the operation of a coffee business in a minute working space.

"We knew the manageable footprint, and we knew the amount of room the cyclist would need. From that, we could work out a manageable rate of drinks in a session, which came to about 300 drinks.

"There are four large locking drawers. We developed 15mm insulated foam liners which are ten times as efficient as the cool bags you get from a supermarket, and when you put blue freezer blocks in, you'll be able to carry a maximum of 24 litres of milk. Whether that is a lot or not depends on the trading circum-

stances, and the same largely goes for cups and beans.

"The question of water brings in a whole other side to the subject, and a surprising amount of thought had to go into the plumbing.

"The fresh-water tank holds 20 litres of water, is made for NATO use, is approved for drinking water, and is indestructible. The fresh water is in a blue tank, and we use the same tanks in black for the waste liquid from the drip-tray and the pitcher rinser sink, and a smaller one for the knock-out coffee puck waste.

"We have special quick-release locking valves for the water tanks, which make it very quick and efficient to fill the tank at the start of a day – you don't have to take the trike to the water source, but you can quickly remove and fill the tank on its own, and then return to the trike and reconnect it."

The water is also pumped by pedal action.

"There's a unique transmission and clutch that allows us to switch between powering the wheels and the coffee machinery when stationary.

"The fresh water is pumped through a Brita filter before going to the espresso machine; the water for the sink bypasses the filter.

"The espresso machine boiler is auto-filled as you grind, because the pump is pedal-powered and linked to the grinder, and calibrated to push



The grinder operation - it is not a normal bike chain

50ml of water into the boiler each time you grind a double shot of beans.

"The milk jug rinser is also powered by pedalling. You close the water inlet valve on the espresso machine and it diverts the water to the rinser fountain and sink on the worktop.

"Ten quick revolutions gets a head of water under pressure in the rinser mechanism, you push down with the inverted jug as you would a glass in a pub and it rinses the jug clean. Very efficient and utterly reliable.

"The hot-water hand-washing is achieved with the optional Tealwash portable thermos sink that is located in the front of the trike.

"This is a great little product made in Birmingham – you fill up the tank at

the start of the day with hot water and it keeps warm in the container which also has a built-in sink and tap. Enough for 10 hot-water hand washes.

"So, with the boiler full at starting, and 20 litres of fresh water on board, you have capacity for more than 300 drinks, and for rinsing."

The cost of a Velopresso is just under £10,000. So far, the partners have had enquiries from 92 countries.

Is the machine practical for getting to and from trading sites? In the case of things like the Piaggio motorised trikes, some operators do not drive to their pitch, but tow or carry them.

"A major point about the Velopresso was always that you had to be able to ride it," replies Amos.

"I've ridden one of these for twenty



Amos Field Reid

kilometres, and the guy in France does that regularly. OK, the hills slow you down, but it's quite comfortable to ride at 12mph... my business partner has ridden much faster than that, until we told him to slow down!

"You certainly do feel comfortable on it – the turning circle is in its own length. Cambers are not always nice... and of course you can't reverse."

Several mobile operators say that the way to make money from mobiles is 'catering' or 'chartering' – that is, the situation in which the vehicle is paid to attend an event as part of the attraction, rather than an outside spot where the operator has paid for the pitch. The ideal business, we are always told, is a balance between this and street trading, which gives the operator both an enjoyable lifestyle and a living.

"That's true, and the Velopresso will get into certain trading situations where a petrol-based machine might not be allowed," says Amos.

"We were asked about getting one into Macchu Picchu in Peru, because motorised vehicles are not allowed there.

"We were asked to put one into the interior of an architectural exhibition here, and we managed it, even though we had to take the wheels off to get it in.

"You wouldn't be able to take the wheels off a Piaggio, would you?"

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The scene is a series of underground corridors in London, just south of the river. The editor of Coffee House and Russell 'Doctor Espresso' Kerr, the renovator of vintage espresso machines, are being led through a series of low-ceilinged basements, on a route which clearly takes us through the foundations of one south London block and under another.

Two doors later, our host signals us to wait as he goes ahead, torch in hand, to open yet another door and flick the light switch, giving us a few dim lights in another low basement room.

And there, incredibly, are the artefacts from the Bramah Museum of Tea and Coffee.

Edward Bramah's museum was a probably-unique collection which effectively covered 400 years of commercial and social history through the theme of hot beverages; it was opened in 1992, and closed in January 2008 when Edward Bramah died, aged 76.

Doctor Espresso, who had earlier remarked: "I've been waiting years for this!", now gives a low whistle. "Where do you start?", he mutters to himself, unslinging a camera and a video recorder and preparing to start a detailed record of the artefacts.

As he proceeds, there is a continuing stream of muttered commentary.

"That La Pavoni is from the dawn of coffee... seeing two side by side is rare. This Gaggia with the 'without steam' sign was Italian, but made for the UK – I had one, but some b\*\*\*\*\* cut out the boiler to sell for scrap!"

There is ancient brewing equipment of all kinds, including some extremely early siphon machines, and brewers from Ethiopia which pre-date both the Ibrik and the Baghdad boiler.

Beside the brewers are an almost-uncountable number of artefacts from delicate coffee cups to little tableaux in glass cases – in one, a bewigged gentleman, on board a sailing ship, is watering the plants he is bringing back... could this be Robert Fortune, the adventurer who first smuggled tea plants out of China and also first brought to the West the secrets of how tea was processed? Another cabinet tableau shows a waiter bringing coffee to a gentleman in an early coffee house.

And there are ancient jars of coffee

# The underground coffee museum

Having persisted for years to try and find the artefacts of the Bramah Museum of Tea and Coffee... we are invited to see them in storage!



Russell Kerr, 'Doctor Espresso', took the rare opportunity to shoot hundreds of pictures and even a brief video down in the museum basement

beans. What would you get if you brewed these, we muse.... probably something alcoholic, laughs Russell.

The founder of this collection was a true character, regarded with great affection in the beverage trade. He actually did begin his career on tea plantations before coming back to the

became of his collection – there were sporadic reports that property developer Don Riley, landlord of the site and several surrounding areas, was in discussion and occasional argument with the local authority over matters concerning the museum, but such reports ceased four or five years ago.

“ Edward Bramah was a collector, a romantic, a social historian... I always told him that if anything happened to him, I would keep the collection alive, in his memory – Don Riley ”

UK, where he invented a filter coffee machine, before writing several books on the history of beverages and equipment.

However, he was generally regarded to be a more successful raconteur than a businessman, and it was regularly said that the museum was always in financial trouble.

After his death, the museum site in Southwark became a warehouse, and the trade has always wondered what

It was in July this year that Coffee House magazine discovered the answer. We finally made contact with Don Riley, who agreed to let us see the collection, and it was he who led us to the items in storage in a basement.

It is true, Don Riley acknowledged, that Britain's major beverage-related museum was in deep financial distress (and that in spite of donations we know to have been given by the trade, just to keep the place going.)

"Edward was a collector, a romantic, a social historian," he told us, speaking admirably fondly for a landlord who wrote off all the unpaid rent owed by the museum... seven years of it!

"I always told him that if anything happened to him, I would keep the collection alive, in his memory.

"Our agreement was that we would put the whole lot in trust, so that whatever happened to him, we wouldn't get to the stage where we would have to sell the lot off to satisfy the Inland

Revenue, and be left with the day's takings and a bag of tea."

The landlord is not entirely pleased that for all Bramah's attempts to have the collection supported by grant-giving authorities, no formal help was ever forthcoming.

"When I looked back through his files, I found they were full of negotiations about grants and finance to put the museum on a proper footing. If he had just got a couple of hundred thousand, the museum would have worked, but it was all to no avail... the organisations he applied to were not interested."

Any revival of the collection will not go down that route, he told us firmly.

"I have seen museums which have survived on grants, and many of them are museums without life – but Edward's museum was always alive, because it was attached to a tea-room, so real tea and coffee business was always going on there."

The developer does have plans to revive the attraction, but maybe in two different places, keeping the tea and coffee sides apart. The tea part may end up outside London.

"I propose to put up a couple of thousand feet of exhibition in Edward's memory. We expect it to be a series of tableaux, with figures. I found a site beside a 'yesterday's world' exhibition which is really good, run by very nice people, and I happened to pick up the site next door, so I have the right place where I can put up the tea tableaux.

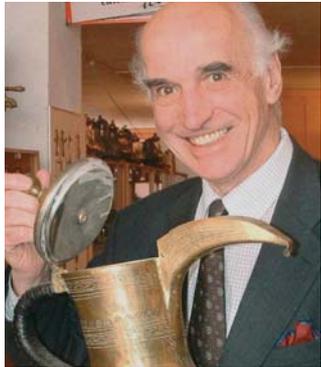
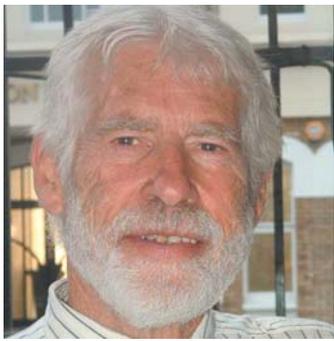
"For the coffee side, the hope is to find a basement in the City of London, and set up a coffee house in the same area where the first coffee houses



This is a French brass 'cafetiere locomotive' from 1839. The tender held sugar lumps, and the funnel appears to hold matches. It rolled along tracks to dinner guests, who served themselves. Later, ceramic versions were made – Bramah once successfully bid several thousand pounds for one, only for it to roll off the auctioneer's desk and be smashed! This brass version is probably far more rare.

One of the first great London coffee houses was Buttons, opened in 1712, and not surprisingly, we take an interest in this café – partly because of the similarity in our names, and partly because it is part of newspaper history, being the 'receiving-house' for contributions to The Guardian and the site for debate by the literary critics of the day. The clients were often drawn by the great satirical cartoonist Hogarth, and a couple of his prints are in the Bramah collection. The original Button's was in Covent Garden, and according to Matthew Green, the historian who hosts coffee-themed walking tours of London, it is still, incredibly, a coffee-house. It's a Starbucks!





Don Riley (top) and the late Edward Bramah

started. This might be the first step to bringing it back to the City in four or five years, and maybe then I can get to the position that Edward had dreamed of, in all those years he had to put up with being seen off by various organisations."

How much could the Bramah collection return to being a true 'living' museum? According to Doctor



Part of a collection of early 'counterpoise' siphon brewers

Espresso, machines which have gathered dust can be made to live again.

"Some of these machines can be made to work, safely... I believe that in time, we could get coffee out of some of these machines."

Whether the custodian of Britain's most important collection of beverage artefacts will allow this is something which remains to be seen.



One of the cabinet tableaux – the gentleman explorer bringing back his plants on a sailing ship

## Sustainable restaurant group now aims at coffee houses

The Sustainable Restaurant Association proposes to extend its work to including rating the sustainability of cafes and coffee shops. In what might be considered a surprising criticism in their launch announcement, the SRA has said: "for too long, cafés have stuck to promoting the social and environmental credentials of their coffee and tea, overlooking the significance of the other ingredients in their menus".

The coffee-house trade itself might reasonably suggest that independent cafes have actually been extremely active in stressing such things in recent years – and yet the SRA has recruited Costa to devise a "pioneering new scheme to support and guide the UK's cafes on their sustainability journey".

The first well-known coffee house name to be involved with the SRA is Boston Tea Party, where marketing manager Ben Hibbard says that the criticism may have some foundation, so far as big names are concerned.

"It is a bit of a blanket statement, but when considering the large chains whose primary focus is on coffee and tea, I think they are generally correct.

"For smaller operations such as ourselves, with a greater food offering, ethics in sourcing and sustainability have always been an important strand to our beliefs."

Working with the SRA has actually helped Boston Tea Party improve its sustainability practices, he considers.

"When we first joined, we got a two out of three stars score, so we worked with them on how we could improve and gain the full rating. They helped

us with suppliers and problems – we had an issue getting a great salmon which was UK line-caught and not extortionate in price! They also shared best practice from other operators."

Having SRA accreditation is still not easy to promote to customers.

"The awareness of the SRA in our region, Bristol and the west, is quite low. In London, if you said 'we are a 3-star SRA member' a lot more people would understand what that meant, whereas in Bristol it still doesn't mean much!

"I think that it will take another year or so for the idea to become part of the vocabulary of eating out... and when it does, I want to make sure we get the most out of our rating.

"I can imagine some operators just put the rating certificate on the wall and don't do anything with it, which is a waste of money. We are now working to really push the SRA, so talking about our rating will give us more credibility."

Rating is by a survey, in which respondents provide answers and evidence to questions about their sustainability practice. It can be tested at [www.thesra.org](http://www.thesra.org).



Esquires is to re-open its first re-branded coffee house in Durham. The new look is intended to be a 'fresh, modern yet cosy environment', and the franchise operators of the new site are a couple who have been customers of Esquires for many years. The new corporate branding, designed to give the idea of 'international premium branded coffee house', will be seen across the entire chain over the next year or so. Doug Williamson, one of the original Canadian founders of the Esquires chain, has now taken over as managing director, following the retirement of Peter Kirton.

We have recently reported on various trade-related museums and collections – now we hear that there is to be an entire coffee-themed amusement park. It is in, of all places, South Korea, at Chuncheon in the country's northern province of Gangwon. An agreement has been signed between the Tom'n'Toms coffee shop chain, the governor and the mayor, for an attraction will reportedly be eco-friendly and educational. The city is keen on festivals and attractions – it has a puppet festival, a mime festival, a noodle festival, was one of the first cities in the world to hold a marathon (since 1946) and is hoping for a Legoland. The governor made the rather curious announcement that "the coffee theme park, the largest one in Korea...", as if there are likely to be several. There appears to be a business logic in it for Tom'n'Toms, which has something over 400 sites in the country – the theme park may double as a big roastery. The chain also appears to be active in Thailand, Australia, and America.

## Celeb pictures on offer to coffee houses



We have been able to get a look at a remarkable collection of celebrity pictures taken by the photographer Gill Shaw.

The images are a collection which (we think) were first put together for a book, and then turned into an exhibition that toured the country some years ago.

Gill came across the pictures recently, and as a fan of cafe culture, realised that the prints could be used as eye-catching themes and wall art in coffee houses.

"There are around 130 in all," she told us. "The photographs are 20in square, gloss laminated for easy cleaning, and most of them have been signed and been 'personalised' by the celebrity.

"I love coffee shops and this is a wonderful idea for any café to bring people in.

"I'm happy to consider various arrangements, renting or selling, and I will come and hang them and help arrange a press launch if required."



The examples we have shown are Julian Clary, Maureen Lipman and Lesley Josephs. The collection can be seen at [www.gillshaw.co.uk](http://www.gillshaw.co.uk)

What is the potential for the pasty in the coffee shop? And how much does the bought-in pasty conform to the trend for 'artisan' produce in cafes?

At the recent Lunch show, there was a surprisingly large representation by the pasty sector, which demonstrated the problems of both craft and origin. Since the discovery that an Irish company ships one million scones across to the UK every week, many of which are cheerfully sold under the tag of 'home-made', one has to be careful with the distinction of 'artisan' - and as the Cornish-style pasty is produced by bakers as far east as Norfolk, that description has to be treated carefully as well.

Of the three pasty brands at the show, two were from the west country, and the marketing manager of Proper Cornish, Mark Muncey, was happy to debate both questions, and the potential of the pasty for the café trade.

"We sit in both camps," he said of the 'artisan' question.

"We recognise that if a company grows, there will be a need for 'scaleability', and for sausage rolls and slices, we do have the ability to make on an industrial scale. For pasties, we take the view that where we can speed things up to support the manual side of the operation, we will."

The manual side is of course the crimping, the distinctive edging which seals the contents inside the pasty.

# A coffee and a pasty

In the west country, more pasty shops are adding speciality coffee to their offer. Is the pasty a practical addition to the coffee shop menu?



Mark Muncey with his Cornish pasties - a product which the coffee-house can legitimately market as 'artisan'

"You might think you can learn crimping in a day, but you can't - it's a skill. It takes you between three and six weeks to get the technique right.

"So, we can speed up the mixing, and we can speed up the delivery of

the mix to the pastry, and at the other end, we can pack faster, both of which are efficiencies - but where the 'artisan' aspect is crucial to the product, we hand-do it.

"The potatoes and swedes are peeled, cut and diced at 4am, so they can be used fresh that day; the beef skirt is hand-cut. Then we have between 40 and 60 hand-crimpers working at any one time... and yes, I can do it myself!"

For marketing purposes in a café, what constitutes a 'real' Cornish pasty?

Cornish pasties finally received protected status under EU law after a nine-year fight. Only pasties made in Cornwall and following a traditional recipe can be called 'Cornish pasties'. This covers also the shape, the crimping style of 'side, not top', the texture of the filling and meat content, and the creation of the pastry.

"The attribute of a traditional pasty pastry is 'a rough puff'. It has enough shortness in it to be crispy, more so than pie pastry. The pastry itself is not that difficult to copy, although of course the Cornish origin of it has protected status."

However, the inner flavours have been extended - recently, ale, curry, Mediterranean vegetables and heaven knows what else have now been added to the pasty menu, even by the Cornish bakers.

"This has become a very interesting subject. We have found that not many things don't work, so long as they can be digested smoothly, which is the key to eating on-the-go. A lot of things which work in a pie will also work in a pasty, so long as you are careful not to make it too rich. We have tried a

Vietnamese curry pasty, which is gorgeous!

"The traditional pepperiness of a pasty does not have to carry through in all flavours, although a certain strength of flavour is needed to complement the pastry. So, you might find that in one recipe the pepper might become paprika, or dill.

"The coffee-shop owner doesn't have to look at those big displays in the specialist pasty shops and think 'I have to stock all those' - the traditional pasty is your starting point, and maybe a couple of others."

What is it that will sell a pasty to a coffee shop customer?

"From the point of view of those selling it, this is a very deep question," agrees Mark Muncey. Coffee and pasties have shown a notable coming together, he observes.

"We sell a lot to coffee shops, and we also now see pasty shops in Devon and Cornwall turning towards coffee.

"The coffee shop owner needs to understand the product, to a degree... this means appreciating that you will win impulse sales if you display it, and that the reason it lends itself to coffee shops is because it's a 'quick eat'.

"The traditional pasty shops did not always have the big ovens and displays that you see today, but you do need to have a small oven and a hot-holding area. Ideally this would be a small combi oven - a microwave is probably not ideal, in that it doesn't brown the pasty as you would want.

"We sell a lot to coffee shops, and we find that the 280gm size is 'a nice eat'. Other brands, which operate in different markets such as the multiples, make them differently - some don't 'go well in the hand'."

How many would a coffee shop need to sell to be taken seriously and to test the potential of the pasty?

"We make fresh, and freeze immediately. Coffee shops do not tend to have a lot of freezer storage space, although some are going down that route, so the thing to do is manage your assets. You don't have to fill your storage with them, and you also don't cook too many off at once until you see what your business is likely to be... on the other hand, they take 30-35 minutes, so some planning is involved, and you'll get used to that.

"We would treat a coffee-shop owner as a sensible customer if they just thought: 'let's see if we can do a dozen of these a day to start with, and see what happens'.

"After that the most important thing is - promote it as a real hand-crimped Cornish pasty!"

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## Detailed sensory tests are big at the Aussie show

The recent Sydney coffee show was, we are cheerfully informed from Australia, 'actually better than anticipated'! One very interesting feature was that so many stands were putting on cupping lessons and sensory experiences.

"The absolute best stand was Tiempo Coffee," our correspondent Janis Neville told us. (And we think that's the company run by the several-time Aussie barista champ Scottie Callaghan).

"The stand was divided into Taste, Smell, Texture and Cupping, and it took about 30 minutes to do the lot.

"You began by having to put some ground almonds on your tongue whilst pinching your nose. Note the taste - there wasn't any. Then unblock the nose and suddenly it tasted of ground almonds. Incredible! Then we had to taste tiny pieces of paper impregnated with nothing, with Thiourea and then with Sodium Benzoate. You had to note which area of the mouth sensed the "flavours" - tongue tip, left or right, roof of mouth, sides or throat.



"We all sensed the paper flavours in different areas of our mouths, and the aim was to prove that no two people sense anything in the same way.

"The next section had a dozen tiny bottles of liquids - cloves, pipe tobacco, maple syrup, cedar, roasted coffee, blackcurrant, etc. We had to say what the liquids were just by their smell. Again, everyone's smell senses are different. We didn't even get the roasted coffee one right!

"Texture was a variety of flavoured waters and two different milks. That was easier, as texture is probably the easiest taste sensation."

It was only then, our correspondent tells us, that they were allowed to get to the cupping stage. "We had to evaluate aroma, acidity, mouthfeel, bitterness, flavour, aftertaste and balance of each of three coffees. Again, it proved that everyone smells, tastes and senses things very differently.

"Tiempo said they wanted to make people think rather about coffee rather than just drink it. They certainly succeeded - the stand was easily the most popular one there."



## The Scottish tea plantation begins to win recognition

**It came as a big surprise to any people when the Tregothnan estate in Cornwall became the first place in the UK to produce tea in commercial quantities - it may now come as an even bigger surprise to many to learn that a plantation in Scotland has quietly grown to some 12,000 tea plants. The Wee Tea brand is not just a cute Scottish marketing name - it actually refers to tea from Tam O'Braan's plantation in Perthshire.**

The idea of a tea plantation in Scotland is not so odd as it sounds, he says - Winston Churchill advocated the idea a long time ago.

"People say tea is incredibly difficult to grow, but it isn't... it's just 'difficult'!

"We originally bought our place in Scotland as a platform for our agronomy business. We had gone round the world in agriculture, we worked in the Amazon basin with the Rainforest Alliance, and we worked in the coffee business in Jamaica.

"So when the idea of tea came up, we had an idea of what we were going to have to do. Initially, we bought some mature plants and took an incredible number of cuttings, and it turned out that within ten or twenty days, we had roots developing."

Is Scotland hot enough for tea growing? It's a bit more complex than that, says O'Braan.

"We knew that tea-growing countries do suffer cold weather, so the question was, how much cold can it stand? Well, *Camellia Sinensis* can withstand minus fifteen.



Scottish tea in retail packs

"But at the same time, we had to protect them with a tree-guard that has a UV blocker in it, which is a patented agent used in nearly all the sunglasses in the world. By surrounding the tea plants with this, we safeguard the leaf, which turns out lighter in colour.

"We also had to consider the water. If you have a tea plant at home, water it with rainwater, because tap water will give a calcium deposit that affects the leaf. Here, we have good quality



Tam O'Braan

water, lots of hills giving lots of rain, and a natural spring... so the kind of water that will cost you £8 in some restaurants is the water I feed my plants on all year round!

"We also grow our own mint, chamomile and lavender, which goes in our teas. We harvest roses for our Darjeeling and Rose tea, we grow the cornflowers which go in our Earl Grey, and we are also going to grow the other ingredient - there is a flower which grew up in America around the time of independence which mimics bergamot, and we've got some of it.

"So we are processing all the teas ourselves, and then withering, oxidation, blending and packing."

It has not been an easy journey.

"It has taken us four years to get where we are. We were harvesting in the second and third years, but we didn't say anything, because at first it was an embarrassingly small amount, and it was hard to reach the stage of 900 kilos per acre.

"And still, not all the tea in every Wee Tea product is entirely Scottish, and we're honest about this. We've been limited in our capacity, with 12,000 trees - but there are 30,000 to go in next year. So the Scottish content of what we sell is increasing."

His Scots tea is no novelty, he stresses.

"We had one retail buyer say to us: 'aren't you going to put tartan on your pack?' Well, we're proud of our Scottish heritage, but modern business is about quality as much as about origin. So the story is good, but the tea always needs to be better than the story... and it is."

## Bari creates the Northumberland tea blend...

**Bari Tea of Northumberland, which has a tea room called a 'tea brewery' in Alnwick, launched a new breakfast blend at the town's recent food festival.**

This new house tea has taken two years of testing. It is designed to mix the traditional strength and darkness of English breakfast tea, which is intended to take plenty of milk, with the lighter 'peaty smokiness' of Scottish breakfast teas. The result, says owner Caroline Stewart, should be the ideal Northumbrian Breakfast Tea - full strength, with a good depth of body but gentler than a full-blown English breakfast tea and which is particularly suited to the softer water of Northumberland.

So many customers were involved in the testing that the company has referred to the blend as 'the first crowd-sourced tea'.

## ... Bollands make a Chester blend...

**Bollands of Chester are now experimenting with growing the tea - they have acquired a hundred plants from the Tregothnan tea estate in Cornwall, the first British commercial plantation.**

It will be another year or so before Bollands know whether the plants have taken, but two are already on display in their retail shop, and leaves have already been taken from them and brewed.

Bollands recently supplied the city's Tourist Information Office with Chester Breakfast Tea, a conventional mix of Assam, Darjeeling and Ceylon, but with added leaves from the Tregothnan.

## ...and Birdhouse do a Peak blend

**A mother and daughter partnership, Rebecca and Julie English, have now opened their Birdhouse Tea Company in a former post office in Nether Edge, Sheffield.**

It is reported that local residents and councillors were relieved when the post office was replaced by something as acceptable as the tea delicacy store.

Unusually, the company actually does its own blending - after attending a course on the subject, they opened stalls at farmers' markets, and have now opened up business with independent food shops. They now have fifty of their own blends, including seven teas dedicated to Sheffield, including a very strong breakfast blend called Full Monty, and teas dedicated to the Peak District, including Muddy Boots - it's chocolate tea.

There has been a remarkable surge in 'best café' awards in the regional press, perhaps because reader polls can be a convenient way of filling pages in a light news period, and equally because a large number of local papers are run by the same publishing groups, which explains why they all seem to have the same idea at the same time.

Among this surge of contests, we find that Fairchilds tea rooms in Diss has won a 'café of the year' award after being open for only eight weeks. Nick Easton and Justine Staines, new to the trade, put off their wedding to get the tea rooms open.

Another 'vintage' tea room, Martha's of Shefford, won the Northants Telegraph award, against eleven rivals. Sisters Caroline Grieg and Jackie Cook started as a gift shop, but kept hearing customers say: 'why don't you add a vintage tea room to the shop?'

The Old School House Cafe in Stanton-by-Dale, Ilkeston, won its local paper's award. This coffee house is run by cake designer Alison Heath, whose cake creations and 'sugar sculptures' have been used by various celebrities, and even as part of the promotional campaign for the Sex and the City Film.

One was a 'human autopsy' cake commissioned for a medical student's birthday. Alison apparently filled each 'organ' with a rich cherry compote – you can imagine the effect when they were cut into.

Scones won attention in several awards schemes – Kim Cook of the Steyning Tea Rooms, a 500-year old building in the South Downs, won the West Sussex County Times award after having bought the business by accident. She was looking for a house

# Pride of the local press

When things get quiet, regional newspapers will often run a 'vote for your best local café' feature. It can throw up some surprising items...



This is the rather odd, and thankfully unique, 'human insides' cake made by Alison Heath at the Old School House cafe

in the area when she wanted a cream tea, heard the tearoom was for sale, and took it over. Her speciality is rhubarb scones with rhubarb jam.

Unusual scones also came to the fore in Sheffield, where the local paper had a voting tie between Cafe Creation in Millhouses, and the Ferndale Garden Centre coffee shop, which is an illustration of how much that sector has got into good coffee (it uses coffee from Pollards of Sheffield).

Lisa Puckwell and Jenny Marples of Café Creation tend to experiment with flavours of scones, such as lemon and sultana or cranberry and white chocolate. By coincidence, so does the garden centre – its scones include a regular 'creative special' such as raspberry and white chocolate.

The Ivinghoe tea room Curiositea managed to win two awards in two weeks – the Leighton Buzzard Observer 'café of the year' prize, and the Chiltern Society's 'best-loved community café'.

Hayley Wesley opened that business last year, having given up office work to enter the café trade. A feature of the café is its children's corner and outside playground. Her ten-year-old daughter single-handedly made 50 milkshakes in a very short time for the schoolchildren queuing out of the door on the last day of term.

The River Parrett café in Langport, Somerset, has been invaded by knitted yellow ducks – so far, eleven have turned up there in three weeks.

The ducks are assumed to be part of The Little Yellow Duck Project, a worldwide 'random acts of kindness' project which involves people hand-crafting ducks and leaving them in public places. Finders are invited to keep the gift, but to register the 'find' on the charity's website, in the hope that they will be encouraged to register as blood, bone marrow, organ or tissue donors. Around two thousand duck 'finds' have been registered around the world. Although the owner of the café is a charity worker, having raised thousands of pounds for western flood victims, she has no idea why she has been given so many ducks.

**Bizarre as it may sound, scientists in Washington have been working to recreate the taste of kopi luwak coffee, the one in which the beans have passed through the digestive system of Indonesian civet cats.**

This coffee commands a remarkable premium price but is criticised for alleged factory-farmed and force-feeding methods – it has been described as 'the foie gras of coffee'.

Now the scientists have found that certain bacteria ferments the beans in a way that mimics the taste of those which have passed through a cat.

In theory, they say, this means they can now use different bacteria to change the qualities of coffee bean taste in many other ways.

## How the chocolate teapot works...

The standard example of something supposedly useless has now actually been created – the chocolate teapot.

It was made by chocolatiers from the Nestle Product Technology Centre in York, and it actually did hold a hot liquid. They found that the secret was to use dark chocolate with 65 per cent chocolate solids, built up in a series of layers using a silicon mould. A little chocolate from the inside of the pot did peel off during a brew, but simply added to the taste.

Meanwhile, a chocolate inner coating also appears on this product, which is not entirely a new idea, but the international press has seized upon it – the Alfred Coffee & Kitchen café in Los Angeles has introduced the edible waffle cup, a hybrid dessert or beverage cup. The cup costs about £3 in addition to the price of the drink or dessert inside it.

It's a 4-ounce waffle cone dipped in milk chocolate (just the rim), used as a cup for either an espresso or mac-



chiato. The cones are \$5 in addition to whatever drink you buy with it.

It is not an entirely new idea – some years ago, Lavazza created a cake-like edible espresso cup.



The Artis tableware company has come up with some extremely unusual coffee cups recently. The one being modelled by espresso engineer Richard Norman of Mad About Coffee is the skull espresso cup which aroused some interest at his recent Norwich coffee festival.

The other item that Artis has now come up with is the ceramic coffee cup designed to resemble crushed tin cans.



In a story which will gladden the hearts of those who criticise our major coffee chains, a barista who has reached the final of a barista contest has acknowledged that she cannot stand coffee. Paula Lumsden, of the Costa concession in South Tyneside college's refectory, has reached the final of catering company Sodexo's annual barista challenge competition. However, she does not drink coffee, and milk makes her sick. So, she relies on instinct, sight and feel, and the weight of the finished drink – and yet has received maximum scores from six mystery-buyer judges. She has had to rely on information from colleagues about the taste of her signature drink, a mocha orange.



## Kaldi

One of the classic images from American films is of the car chase in which one vehicle hits a pavement fire hydrant and sends a fountain of water into the air. In Detroit, the American city which has been declared bankrupt, once such fire hydrant has been described by the local press as an example of the way that the city is turning to 'make do and mend' while it has no money to make utility repairs. In July, the coffee house at 1515 Broadway was left without water when a leak was detected in a neighbouring derelict

building and the water department, unable to make a repair because of the state of the property, simply shut all the water off. With the agreement of the fire department, the coffee house now gets its entire supply from a hose attached to the emergency hydrant.

Readers may recall that some years ago we reported on Winter, the chap from Texas whose life's mission

was to visit every Starbucks store in the world... well, he is now on 11,773 visits, and once again he has cropped up in the international press as a novelty story, and as always happens, the media in one country copies what the others write, so he has again become an international personality. However, what is new is that he has for the first time actually been quoted saying something about Starbucks' coffee (his rule is that he has to drink something in each store he visits). This year, he told one reporter that his preference is to visit independent coffee bars: "I respect Starbucks for its business sense, customer service and amenities... but unless I am checking a new store off my list, I would not go there for the coffee." Winter has been known for his pithy comments – referring to his mission, he once told the Wall St Journal: "pointless as it may be, a goal is a goal."

To the amusement of media around the world, Starbucks has introduced a coffee that is meant to taste like Guinness. The Dark Barrel Latte seems to have been available in a handful of test markets in Ohio and Florida, and contains no beer at all - it uses a flavoured syrup designed to taste like stout, topped with whipped

cream and a dark caramel sauce. (That of course is the American influence coming in, not the Irish). There has been a mixed reaction - one Twitter user praised the drink as 'cozy but not sweet - like a bonfire on a chilly autumn night', but others were less impressed, with one drinker comparing it to malt vinegar.

Kaldi is delighted to be able to report the true story of how Drury Tea and Coffee lost a client in Russia. The Drury corporate website includes a history of the company, going back to when the Olmi Brothers, as they then were, set up as a tea supplier. They were colloquially known in the trade as OB Tea, which in the trade then turned into the slightly less polite term of the "old buggers' tea"... a tale which is chattily reported on the company website.

A Russian client, wishing to make some kind of corporate report about its suppliers, decided to share Drury's company history with its Russian customers, and did so by using an online translation facility. When it came to the story about OB Tea, it translated the colloquialism directly as "elderly homosexuals' tea".

The Russian client blew a corporate moral gasket and cancelled its account!

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