

Boughton's

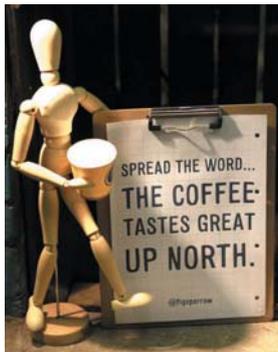
COFFEE HOUSE



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

November/December 2014

New trade show in Yorkshire



There is to be another coffee trade event in the north – a two-day show, the Coffee House & Tea Room Expo, is being planned for next September in Harrogate.

The organiser is not a beverage trade organisation, but Stansted News, a company from Bishop's Stortford which publishes specialist magazines and handbooks.

The Harrogate event promises the expected mix of products and seminars, and the Expo will host the finals of the UK Chocista Awards, which appears to be kind of barista contest for hot chocolate. The organisers suggest that the show will attract those operators who might not have travelled farther for other industry shows.

In Manchester, the recent Cup North coffee event (for which one of the posters is pictured) is reported to have done well, drawing around 700 paying customers over a two-day period.

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It is often suggested that the baristas in the big chains aren't as good at latte art as the baristas in the independent cafes... but we have been looking at some of the entries to the recent Costa in-house latte art competition, about which the chain has said nothing at all in public. Entries appear to have been allowed by both free-pour methods and by etching and sculpting... and this is our favourite. Unfortunately, we have no idea which Costa barista did it – nor do we know who won the overall contest.

Takeaway coffee lids are a serious hygiene problem, says inventor of new cup seal

An American inventor has finished seven years of research into a product which is probably now going to be highlighted as a scare aspect of takeaway coffee – the hygiene hazards of the plastic snap-on lid. This has already been researched in America, and a study by the University of Arizona concluded that 17 per cent of the lids it took from cafes for testing were already contaminated by unpleasant substances.

According to Bill Levey of New York, the conventional plastic lid is a hazard to hygiene because of the casual way they are stacked on café counters, and because of the way in which baristas handle them with bare hands when fitting to the takeaway cup.

In response, Levey has now created the Clean Coffee product, which consists of a peel-off seal that covers the sip-through hole and is applied to the lid at the time of manufacture. The lid is therefore hygienically sealed until the consumer 'unpacks' it for use, as is the requirement in America for plastic cutlery.

A pull-tab allows customers to remove the seal, and offers the assurance that, in Levey's words, 'their mouth is the only thing to have touched the lid'.

His research and prototype work



The seal in place

was based on supplies of lids which he pocketed from various coffee shops, and his experiments involved asking volunteers to wear bright lip-gloss and lipstick, to show exactly where their mouths made contact with plastic lids.

Supporters of the product have pointed to the Arizona research, which identified various horrifying organisms being transferred by way of takeaway lids; others have suggested that many

people remove the lid before drinking, so there is not so big a problem as has been suggested.

Bill Levey told *Coffee House* that predictably, the main hurdle is cost: "in general, manufacturers in the cup and lid trade love it, but the smaller manufacturers can't make it at scale or add the seal in-line, and the larger manufacturers are more risk-averse – though they love the concept, they are reluctant to invest until they are positive that customers will pay for it.

The product will now bring the hygiene issue to public attention, he believes.

"A lot of people haven't thought about this before, but once they see it, they get it immediately. As people become more aware of this issue, the shops will want to provide this to their customers."

INSIDE

As always, more trade news than you will find anywhere else. And also, this month...

CHANGING TIMES

– the problem of 'inheriting' suppliers

NOT BY ACCIDENT

– a trade supplier who has now opened his own well-regarded coffee house



NEW KIT

– a surprising amount of new filter coffee equipment is on the market

Pope Francis is raffling off his espresso coffee machine. We don't know what kind it is, but it is part of a campaign in which he takes many of the gifts he is given in his official capacity and uses them to raise money for the needy and homeless in Rome. Tickets for the raffle cost 10 euros.

It's unusual for a coffee shop to host a farmer's market, but that's what Skittle Alley Coffee & Pantry does in Hammersmith. The cafe is based in the old skittle alley of The Black Lion pub and the Saturday market attracts local suppliers and farmers from as far as Somerset.

A café owner in Maske, Teesside, has received an award for his work supporting the Water Aid charity. Stuart Wilson of the Masquerade bought the café eleven years ago, but found it uneconomic to continue as a conventional business, so he turned the entire activity over to fundraising. There is no price list, but customers are invited to make a donation to Water Aid. The award, which carries the signature of the Prince of Wales as president of the charity, recognises that the café has now raised tens of thousands of pounds for the cause.

We have yet another case of sporting people turning into coffee-shop owners – Jon Wilkin and Mark Flanagan of St Helen's rugby league team have opened Pot Kettle Black in Deansgate, Manchester. They have already spoken of a chain of half a dozen shops in four years.

Jon Wilkin first experimented with a pop-up café in the area, and has spoken of wanting to avoid dark-roast espresso in favour of lighter and more delicate roasts. His opening coffee is from Workshop of London. Meanwhile, the Jika Jika coffee shop of Bath, which was also opened by rugby stars, although of the other code, has opened a London café near Euston Square.

Allegra is seeking sixteen baristas to compete for for the Coffee Masters barista competition it will hold at next year's London Coffee Festival. There will be what it calls 'the much coveted title' (perhaps a slightly-curious claim for something which does not yet exist!) and a £5,000 cash prize. The contest will include slightly unusual features such as the requirement to fulfil an assorted order of drinks, probably with unexpected ingredients, against the clock. Equally unusually for a barista contest, there will be a task involving various filter brewing methods. Entry is by uploading a one-minute application video.



Starbucks at Abbey Road? This is a typical work by Korean artist Soo Min Kim, whose speciality is in altering the mermaid character on Starbucks coffee cups..



For the first time, the extremely classy Lavazza calendar will go on general sale. The item, which is always produced by the world's most famous (and most expensive) photographers, has until now been a rather prestige giveaway item, but the 2015 one will be sold in support of the '10,000 gardens in Africa' project. The theme of the calendar is 'The Earth Defenders', intended to respect those who actually work the land in adverse conditions. The lady above is a coffee farmer in Ethiopia.

Hot baristas from contract caterers

The big contract caterers have been getting more into the concept of barista contests, with some impressive results.

Sodexo recently had ten finalists competing for its title, which was sponsored by UCC coffee; novel additions to the usual requirement for standard and signature drinks was the test of customer service skills, and a palate-testing 'triangular' coffee tasting, which usually involves telling the odd one out from three coffees. The winner was the barista from Thales in Crawley with a barista from the Scottish Parliament coming second.



Meanwhile, Douwe Egberts backed the in-house contest for Millennium Copthorne hotels. This also appears unusual in that the baristas are reported to have had 30 minutes, twice the usual time, to prepare their drinks. Miroslav Fabry, of the Mayfair Copthorne, won with his Berrycino (pictured), created by extracting an

espresso and submerging the shot glass in a flask of ice, thus chilling the coffee without diluting it. Fruit syrup and then fruit puree were added, and topped with cream.

One of the entrants' signature beverages will be added to the menu across the Millennium Copthorne estate.

La Marzocco show for London

La Marzocco is bringing its trade event 'Out of the Box', to London. The event, which is a collection of talks, debates and presentations, has drawn thousands of trade visitors every time it has been held in Italy or in the USA, and this year will be held at the Blank exhibition space – yes, that's right, the Blank! – in East London, on December 13th.

"Out of the Box is intended to be a community event for baristas, roasters, and generally a day of sharing information and knowledge," the brand's Paul Kelly told us.

"It is a platform to get people together for what will be a great deal of 'educational' content – lots of inspirational talks and panel discussions. There is free registration, anyone can attend, and the motto for the event is 'all who come as guests will leave as friends'.

"It is all intended to be an accessible event which will support the coffee trade, with a Meet the Makers feature, a coffee panel talking about direct trade and other green-coffee issues, and a technical summit.

"We also host the UK Latte Art con-

test, and the reason we are so keen on this is because we think that the ability to pour a drink is where it all starts.

"We believe that because this contest is not so intimidating as a full barista championship, the entrants are those who may well go on to become entrants in other contests, and we want to encourage them. We are looking for the biggest entry list yet for a UK latte art contest."

Lincoln & York is continuing its programme of training coffee tasters and buyers; the opportunity is open to an A-level school leaver or graduate, and rather notably, the training period finishes with a trip to origin, probably Colombia or Brazil. The most recent trainee, Rebekah Kettrick, will act as mentor to the next one.

CV to: liza.williams@lincolnyork.com

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Starbucks sy'n ei gael yn anghywir

Starbucks, which always claims to try and integrate itself with local communities, has come in for some derision in north Wales, where the chain made the brave attempt to create signage in Welsh, which is widely spoken in those parts.

The branch is the 21st in Wales, but the first to attempt the local speech, with menus and blackboards giving Welsh precedence over English. However, local people have said that sentences are left unfinished, some have words misspelled, and some 'make little sense'. One typical sign read: 'Starbucks blonde is light of body and taste our coffee to most easy to drink.' One complainant was puzzled by a sign which read: 'nourishing the human spirit, one person, one cup and'... but nothing else!

We suspect that may have been intended to be something to do with the old Starbucks slogan of 'one cup at a time', but the sign pictured here is similarly incomplete and reads: 'a mission to inspire and...'

It is reported that the Co-operative chain recently made an even worse



mistake in Wales, using signs which were in Scottish Gaelic.

However, a local Welsh language campaigner has been sympathetic, quoting the phrase (and we hope this is correct!) "gwel Cymraeg slac na Saesneg slic". It translates as "better slack Welsh than slick English"!

The next notable 'origin' in the coffee world may be... California.

A reporter for a Los Angeles magazine has written, with some surprise, of having found coffee trees on sale in a local farmers' market, and having then discovered that a southern California ranch already has a plantation of 550 coffee plants.

The grower is Jim Shanley, who has been making something of a habit of cultivating crops which were previously not thought to be possible even in that most famous of all fruit-growing areas. He has created businesses in growing limes, 'gator eggs' (a kind of avocado), kiwi fruit, and now says that he is probably the world's most northerly grower of coffee.

The idea of growing coffee came from a conversation with a university professor who told him that farmers in central America were having to move their farms to higher altitudes in order to achieve better quality – Jim Shanley realised that those countries had climate conditions very similar to those on his own ranch.



The trade body for group travel organisers has discovered some fascinating variations on the afternoon tea concept – the Drink, Shop & Do vintage tea shop in King's Cross, London, now offers a Man's Afternoon Tea, which features a pint of lager, savoury scone, pickles, pork scratchings and a Yorkie bar. (It is not an entirely original idea - the Mandeville Hotel does something similar, replacing the tea with malt whisky, at £26.50 a head). The travel group has also highlighted Hey Little Cupcake of Manchester, which has created the giant cupcake - it's a group-sized sharing item (as above) made to order, usually priced at £50-£60.

Another Italian-style espresso bar for Soho

As we have previously suggested, the man who pioneered the arrival of Illy coffee in the UK has now opened his own coffee and aperitivo concept bar in Soho, London. Marco Arrigo of Eurofoodbrands, who is also the founder of the University of Coffee, is opening Bar Termini in partnership with Tony Conigliaro, the experimental cocktail specialist who runs the Bar with No Name, the Drink Factory collective of bartenders, and who wrote the book *Drinks: Unravelling the Mystery and Flavour*.

Bar Termini in Old Compton Street is intended to recreate the atmosphere of the Italian culture of Soho in the 1950s. It will offer an authentic Italian coffee experience in that there is a limited menu of just four espresso-based coffees and classic pastries, with no takeaway option – drinks are to be taken at the bar in the Italian style.

The drinks list features a unique collection of Prosecco, and four house Negronis, priced at £6.50. There will be a small changing selection of house cocktails, and a simple menu of Italian bar food.

Starbucks expects to introduce the Powermat wireless charging device to its European stores within a year. Powermat is a tabletop 'ring' on which users can recharge phones and similar devices. Some models require a tiny attachment to the phone, others do not. The Powermat is already on sale to the public, and in California Starbucks is both offering free use of in-store rings, and offering the rings for sale at \$9.99.

The Coffee#1 chain has reached its 46th site by opening in a former pub in Henleaze, Bristol. Brains, the brewer which acquired the coffee shop chain three years ago, says it is on track to reach fifty stores by the middle of next year, and sees eventual potential for a hundred stores stretching from Wales across the general south of England.

Fortnum & Mason has begun to sell the Scottish-grown tea which we featured in a recent issue - Dalreoch is offered at £35 for a 15gm tin, which comes out at about £10 a cup. Not surprisingly, a Fortnum's tea buyer commented that it is the second most expensive tea the shop has ever sold.

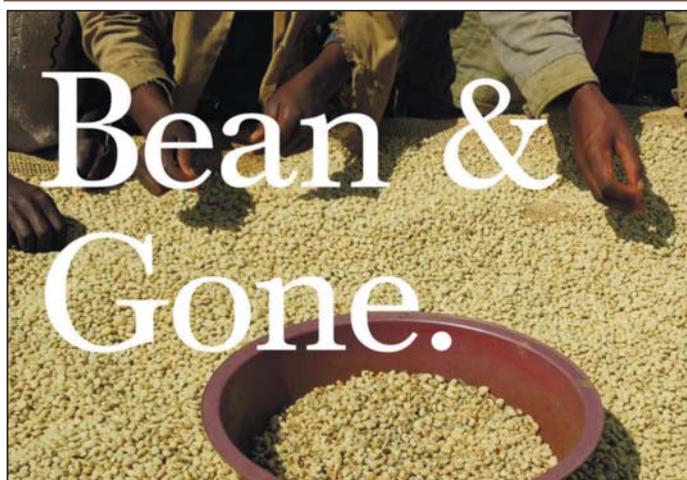
AMT Coffee, best known for its coffee concessions at transport hubs, has reported that it has returned to growth this year after closing its Belgian and loss-making sites last year. The company suffered a drop in turnover of £2.7 million in the year to December 2013, recording a loss of £179,000, against a pre-tax profit of £757,000 the previous year. This

year, by contrast, the group has reported success from significant new site openings.

Mondelez has also put £200 million into 'a new way of approaching sustainability in the coffee industry' with the development of a new 'honest' way of evaluating the impact of its global sustainability programme. The Coffee Made Happy scheme intends to increase farm yields and engage more young people and women in coffee farming. The new measurement is not based simply on crop figures, but on yearly reporting of farmers' net income and the relative 'attractiveness' of coffee farming. Concentrating on real outcomes instead of 'standards' is, says the company, a far more realistic way of creating sustainable coffee farming.

The Metricks coffee house in Southampton has suffered its third break-in of the year, and the most dramatic – thieves arrived on a motorbike, and hurled a heavy drain cover at the café's glass doors. They took only £100 in change, but caused thousands of pounds' worth of damage. In spite of this, the café opened again within a few hours, and the owner has said: "we are not going to let this stop us."

The daily press, in its continuing interest in 'celebs', has reported the rather unusual preference in tea of actor Benedict Cumberbatch - the blend devised by his father is two parts Earl Grey, and one part Lapsang Souchong. Who is going to try it on a menu?



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There have been many complaints about the way the Food Standards Agency operates its 'scores on the doors' hygiene ratings scheme, and a new complaint has been raised by a coffee house operator in Croydon, who was given a zero rating, which means that 'urgent improvement' in hygiene is needed. The café owner has told her local paper that the inspector acknowledged that the business's kitchens were kept in good order, but that the owner had recorded the fridge temperatures in the wrong way - thus, while keeping a spotless kitchen, she was rated as 'unhygienic'.

There has been a remarkable response in the Far East to Tamper Tantrum, the coffee-themed sessions of talks and debates devised by Steve Leighton of the Has Bean roastery in Stafford. The event was launched four or five years ago as a series of online video conversations between Steve Leighton and barista Colin Harmon of Dublin, and only comparatively recently was experimentally tested as a 'live' event. In recent days it has been taken 'on tour' to Busan, Shanghai, and Taiwan, with a quite astonishing result. "There has been a huge response, and some stunning talks," Steve Leighton told us. "From £200 to £400 a ticket, every show apart from Taiwan sold out in hours - Taiwan had a 300-place venue, and sold 200 tickets. I'm very proud of the beast that Tamper Tantrum has become."

The Scottish-based coffee chain Beanscene reached the lowest point in its chequered existence by finally applying to be put into liquidation during November. The company did well to begin with, some ten years ago, but went under for the first time in 2008, with the Insolvency Service going on to investigate the company's accounts and charging the founder with incorrect financial procedures. The employees' jobs were saved when the Scottish entrepreneurs Fiona Hamilton and Alison Fielding bought it, but they could not make the chain work, and sold it on. The latest owner has also struggled with it, and although very recently the chain announced the opening of a new branch, a winding-up petition was lodged with the courts immediately afterwards.

The planning authorities have approved plans for the West Bromwich Albion football club to

knock down part of a neighbouring pub to create a drive-through coffee shop. The pub used to be a favourite matchday venue for fans and is a listed building, except for the wing which is to be renovated. Supporters had wanted the building to be turned into a club museum, but it is generally accepted that the building is an eyesore and has to be changed.

Two baristas in Newcastle have created one of the tiniest open-air pop-up coffee shops - Joe Meagher of Flat Caps Coffee and Josh Thompson of the Speciality Coffee Company have launched Lola's on the smoking terrace at the Science Bar, beside Newcastle's central station. The two have spoken of an idea of transforming under-used spaces effectively at low cost, and in this case are working for the rush-hour commuter traffic until 3pm.

Bubbleology, the pioneer of bubble-tea cafes, is to open its eighth site in Islington, London. It already has stores in Soho, Westfield Stratford, Notting Hill and South Kensington, and concessions in Topshop at Oxford Circus and Harvey Nichols, and a kiosk in Bluewater Shopping Centre. Bubbleology opened first in Soho, and is now active in seven countries.

The tea company Keith Spicer has devised eight fruit and herbal flavours for its Dorset Tea brand, which builds on its local countryside heritage. The brand's new packaging includes the slogan 'Live, Breathe, Drink', and will feature as part of a marketing campaign entitled 'Discover the Taste of Dorset'.

Following our report last month about the Bramah collection of tea and coffee machines, there is now news from Australia that the Bersten Antique Coffee and Tea Collection will go up for auction on 1st January. This is a collection of 1,600 coffee makers, grinders, roasters and tea makers dating back to the late 1700s. Ian Bersten himself came to attention in the UK four years ago, when he exhibited at Caffe Culture, showing a product which questioned the established belief that loose-leaf tea is better than tea-bag dust, and that tea should be brewed for 3-5 minutes. He produced a one-cup filter system with which he argued that the best extraction was achieved by 'leaching', in which the water flows past the tea leaves and takes the flavour with it, rather than the conventional steeping.

More pubs look to coffee business

The latest move in coffee by a pub chain is from Anglian Country Inns, a group of half a dozen inns in the south.

The company already operates a coffee bar concept, but at the Hermitage Road bar in Hitchin has developed into a 'coffee, bagels and shopping' situation - it has added another 30 seats and placed them next to a selection of interior accessories, furniture, homeware, lighting and gifts. The directors report that in its first three weeks, coffee sales were double those forecast.

Elsewhere in the pub sector, the Fuller's brewery of London was reported to have opened its first

stand-alone coffee shop, The Fields, in Ealing. The brewery was quick to tell us that it has no plans for a chain, and that the new business is part of one of its existing pubs, and is being used for training staff as baristas in a real 'live' location.

Writing about The Fields, Fuller's own website includes the bizarre and perhaps short-sighted remark: "we will also be serving drip and filter coffees, perfect for mild coffee drinkers or ladies that lunch".

In a very creative move, the Brakspear brewery has helped an Oxfordshire village transform a failing pub into a coffee-shop and sub-post office.

The Four Horseshoes pub in Checkendon was closed after having had a number of tenants in recent years, and the local post office has also closed, so Brakspear has taken up a residents' suggestion that the building be transformed into the Checkendon Tea Rooms and support a new sub-postmaster.

Brakspear's chief executive said: "These things need to be looked at in a practical way - it's great that we can turn it into what works for everybody as a good community facility."



We don't know who spotted and snapped this inviting sign in a bakery... but if we find out, we'll buy them a drink.

Canadians pick Manchester

A well-established Canadian cafe franchise has chosen Manchester for its first UK site. Second Cup has opened in the Arndale centre.

Jim Ragas, the president of Second Cup, told *Coffee House*: "next year, the brand will have been in operation for 40 years, and we are trading in a good part of the world. We feel we compete well with all the UK brands as we already compete with them in several countries - the UK coffee brands all do a great job but are almost all corporate locations... our strengths are based on working with committed local partners that are a part of their communities. Our offering also has a wider breadth than most of our competitors."

The coffee, curiously, is shipped from Canada.

"All our coffees throughout the world are roasted at our facility in Toronto, and are only roasted in small batches and shipped to order. We never roast and shelve, waiting for regions to order - we roast on demand."



First bike cafes, now a bike tea brand

While cycling cafes have become an increasingly big part of the trade, a Yorkshire bike business has gone a step farther by producing its own brand of tea.

Drink Tea, Ride Bikes is a shop for tea-drinking bike enthusiasts on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales. One of its main teas is Peatea, which refers to Steve Peat, a professional downhill mountain biker from Chapelton. (Peat himself also promotes his own Flat Cap espresso coffee, roasted by Hands On of Cornwall).

The bike shop's range shows that cyclists have a wider taste in tea than might be expected - there is a chamomile, described as 'blended specifically for cyclists, to beat those pre-race nerves', and a peppermint, 'to refresh weary bodies and aching limbs after a great day in the saddle'.



The American car plate that so many in the trade would like...

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Well-meaning signage gets cafe in trouble

The latest in a long line of rows over breastfeeding in cafes has shown the importance of careful wording of signage.

The Tillings cafe in Gomshall, Surrey has come under a tirade of press and online criticism for its sign, which indicates that it offers suitable facilities in its 'spacious disabled toilet', but this has been interpreted as 'discrimination' by some mothers, and provoked a complaint from the National Childbirth Trust.

As is always the case in these things, the press went overboard and reported mothers supposedly being 'disgusted' and 'furious' and referring to 'bigotry' and 'a breach of human rights'.

We have baby changing facilities, spacious disabled toilet. There is a chair nearby which can be taken in mothers who are breastfeeding reserve the right to ask GROUPING breastfeeding mothers to use the

The owner of the café has pointed out, probably quite reasonably, that having always supported the practice in her café, all she intended to do was indicate that more spacious and comfortable facilities were available. "Perhaps we have not expressed ourselves correctly about the facilities we have on offer", she told her local paper. "This is only an option for mothers who may feel more comfortable breastfeeding in privacy, for their comfort as well as other customers."

As everyone involved in customer service will know, you can do your very best to help customers, but make a small error in your communication, and the world falls in around your ears...

Cafe gets travellers moved on... by closing

A cafe owner in Brighton has recommended that other business owners understand the law concerning travellers, and his local paper has reported how he managed to have police move on an encampment of caravans extremely quickly... by closing his business.

The café operator experienced the arrival of over a dozen caravans on a council-owned car park outside his establishment one Saturday night.

The owner was advised by police that if he closed down, officers would be forced to move the group on under a section of the law. Sussex Police explained that closing the cafe enabled the police to act under Section 61 or 62 of the Public Order Act which can be enforced if it can be shown that the presence of the encampment is seriously disrupting the ability of the settled community to make use of facilities or conduct their business.

The operator said that if he had stayed open and waited for the council to serve an eviction notice, it would have taken a long time, and could have been catastrophic for his business. As it was, police moved the group on very quickly.

"It would be handy if residents knew the law themselves," he said. "It's something that every business should look at."

Guide to south-western independents

In keeping with the almost nationalist pride of its region, the coffee trade in the south west has made an admirable display of independence with a new guide to the region's independent coffee houses and roasters.

This is a very comprehensive paperback of 112 pages – in the famous Cornish phrase, it's a 'proper job'!

All coffee guidebooks have fallen into a kind of expected design format, and this one is very much the same – each coffee house gets a page and a picture or two, with a listing of their coffee supplier or roaster(s), their espresso machine and grinder equipment, and a collection of logos showing whether each café caters for gluten-free diets or will make drinks with soy milk, offers wi-fi, has disabled access, and so on.

What is quite notable is the number of coffee houses which now rank as cycle-friendly, and although there is no specific dog-friendly notification, which worried us, we do see that the 'family-friendly' logo also includes an image of a dog, so we do hope they count as the same thing. There is also a note of the various specialities available (we do wonder about the coffee-infused meatballs at one venue!)

What is also notable is the number



of coffee houses deserving recognition – fifty get full descriptions, and another twenty or so are noted briefly. If that were not enough sign of the healthy coffee business in the region, one chapter devotes a page each to no less than sixteen coffee roasters in the region!

The volume does restrict itself to 'independents', so although the Boston Tea Party cafes are included, as 'an independent family chain', the numerous Coffee #1 cafes of the region are not, being owned by a big brewery.

The South West Independent Coffee Guide is published by Salt Media at £7.99



An extremely novel promotion has come up from Teapigs, pioneer of the pyramid tea-bag. The company has branded a London taxi, and on the roof there is a message saying 'snap me and tweet me for real tea!'. Apparently, people are actually doing it – the company gives some tea to everyone who posts a Twitter picture of the cab. The exercise was "not that expensive", Teapigs tells us.

The Revolucion de Cuba chain of café bars says that it has launched its own bespoke blend of Cuban coffee, brewed in the Cuban way, which involves pouring espresso over Demerara sugar – we are told that in some places there the sugar is even mixed with the coffee in the portafilter, in spite of the danger of blockages.

Phillip Oppenheim of Alma de Cuba, the man who has invested in the regeneration of the Cuban coffee industry, tells us that allowing a strong Cuban espresso to drip onto the sugar is it comes out of the filter produces a sweeter and different taste to simply adding sugar to the cup.

Meanwhile, Oppenheim himself has now brought out his Alma de Cuba in Nespresso-compatible capsules.

The West Country coffee shop chain Cafe Grounded has applied for planning consent to open its sixth site, in Keynsham. The site is a listed building in a conservation area of the town but is currently empty, and while there has been some local opposition over the number of cafes in the area, the council has to decide on the familiar question of whether creative use of an empty building is preferable. Grounded said in its application that it proposes to use the site for acoustic music performances varying from jazz and folk to classical.

The Boston Tea Party chain is reported to have shown 11.5 per cent like-for-like sales growth in its latest financial year: managing director Sam Roberts has said that each of his 15 cafes is making 'a very positive contribution' to the group.

There have been the usual protests over an imminent Costa opening, this time in Broadstairs, and again the subject raises the question of filling an empty shop. One café owner in the area has raised the direct question: "if someone could prove they will bring more people into the town I would be for it." Another café owner, of the delightfully-named Intolerant Wife, told his local paper that the charm of his town is its independent shops. (That café's name comes from its policy of positively catering for customers with all kinds of food intolerance).

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Readers may recall the recent TV ad in which Kenco suggested that young people in coffee-growing countries could work on farms to escape the temptation to join street gangs. It is now reported that the brand has taken its first steps towards actually doing this - in Honduras, it has enrolled its first twenty 'at risk' youngsters in a programme that will teach them business planning, computer skills, maths and English. The programme co-ordinator has said that gangs control the major Honduran cities, in a country with the highest murder rate in the world.

Euro Garages' latest application for a Starbucks drive-thru is at the Bangor service station on the A55 in North Wales, replacing a lorry stop.

The Zest coffee shop in St Andrews has been named micro employer of the year in a Scottish apprentice scheme. The owner has trained five modern apprentices in six years, and has employed and trained people with special needs and ex-offenders. She has said that "anything is possible if you give people the right opportunities."

There have been applications to sell coffee in car parks at Crawley. CuppaGoGo has applied to create coffee bars created from shipping container units.

Gary and Mila Romans have opened The Hungry Artist in York, as a coffee shop with art gallery. The start-up programme Ready for Business has supported the café's project of life drawing classes and exhibition space.

Research by Greggs and the University of Stirling suggests that the residents of Brighton now spend the most on coffee per head compared to the rest of the UK. They spend an average of £177 per person on it, which is £25 more per head than consumers in London. Meanwhile, the local press in Nottingham noted that with the opening of the new 200 Degrees café (linked with the local roaster of the same name), the same survey showed its local consumers to be the UK's second-highest spenders on coffee, paying £151 a year, the same as in London and Norwich.

The Northamptonshire Food and Drink Awards results have named Ria's Rosy Lee Tearoom, of Wellingborough, as the top independent café of the year. Second was Dreams Coffee Lounge, Northampton. Rather unusually, the finalists had to take part in a cook-off, in front of a panel of judges. "I had to bake a scone and a signature cake, then serve it with a drink of my choice as I would in tearoom," she told us. "This was judged by the head chef of Convent Garden Opera House, the head of the WI, and the head of customer services from Claridges and the Savoy."

The coffee-club subscription market gathers pace... and awards

The subscription coffee business continues to grow, and the most novel new idea has come from Norwich, with the Book and a Brew service. For £12.99 a month, subscribers receive a regular 'mystery box' containing a hardback novel, and a pack of tea or coffee, according to the customer's choice. There is also a children's version which contains an appropriate book and a soft drink.

The founders are in the book trade, partner Lee Moffat told us.

"We came up with the concept as we like the mystery box idea, and have subscribed to some in the past. We have noticed there were no book-based ones and decided that nothing goes better with a good book than something tasty to drink.

"The adult boxes have a hardback novel in them. We try to find one which has been well reviewed and is maybe not that well known - we are trying to find hidden gems, and as we have been in the book trade for ten years, we speak to publishers about what's popular and we feel we can choose a great read.

"We try to match the tea or coffee to the book - if the book is a Nordic thriller set in winter, we would try to match it with a warming wintery tea or coffee. If it's a box at Christmas then we might match it with a spiced tea."

In the early days, the tea is from Teapigs and the coffee is by Taylors, although other brands were also approached.

"We offer quality products in packs of a good size... there is nothing worse than opening a mystery box and realising you could have put the contents together yourself for half the price."

Cafedirect has now entered the coffee subscription club sector, with the acquisition of Kopi. Cafedirect's chief executive John Steel has said that subscription members will get small batches of premium, bespoke coffees that Cafedirect could probably not sell in supermarkets.

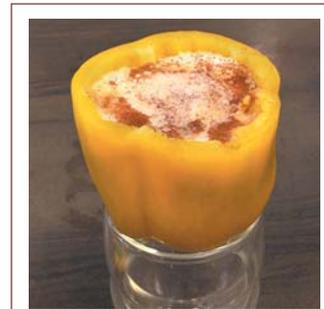
Elsewhere in the coffee club sector, Stephen Rapoport of Pact Coffee has won an 'entrepreneur of the year' award from Investec. He also won the title of 'best drink entrepreneur', and was runner-up in both the 'best online entrepreneur' and 'best newcomer' sections.

Pact is a coffee subscription service which aims to help coffee enthusiasts find coffees matched to their tastes,



through an online questionnaire. The Investec judges praised Rapoport for "genuinely differentiating in a crowded marketplace and having the courage to try something that hasn't been done before".

(Hot beverages did well in the other Investec awards - Assad Khan of Bubbleology won the 'best retail entrepreneur' title and two coffee businessmen named as 'ones to watch' were Peter Grainger of CafePod, maker of Nespresso-compatible capsules, and Gabriel Shohet of Black Sheep Coffee, the brand which has campaigned for good robusta to be recognised as a premium coffee.)



The Crave coffee house in New York has created an edible cappuccino - it is poured into a 'cup' made from large peppers. The food writer of the local paper has said "the bitter kick of the coffee is perfectly balanced by the cool sweetness of the pepper."

Glasgow coffee-house works in Gaelic

The coffee-house trade in Glasgow has contributed to the survival of Gaelic culture - the Coffee and Craic café in Glasgow concentrates on everything Gaelic. The word 'craic' is a familiar Irish and Scottish term roughly meaning good company and conversation.

The coffee house has received funding and support from Firstport Ditto, an organisation which helps start-up social enterprises. Sarah Bolland, the owner of Coffee and Craic, says that the Gaelic community is growing rapidly, since being recognised as an official language. She has now opened a crowdfunding appeal to pay for a Gaelic tutor to come into the premises.

The coffee is, appropriately, from the local Dear Green roastery - the word 'Glasgow' comes from an old Gaelic expression meaning 'the dear green place'.

A technology company in Finland has suggested that coffee-houses there will be the testing ground for a system in which customers will be able to pay for their drinks with their faces. The world's first facial recognition payment system will be tested in some Helsinki cafes early next year. To be recognised, users have to sign up at special points in the selected cafes, where their photo will be taken together with details of their credit cards. The technology company have said that they have developed the most secure system available, with a transaction time of less than five seconds. The application can identify the buyer from a distance of four metres, and to pay, the customer presses a button marked OK.

Researchers at the Lancaster University have used a kettle to test energy produced by a wind turbine - their Windy Brew kit was programmed to only allow a kettle to boil when a nearby turbine produced enough electricity to operate it. A pocket-sized computer collects a live feed of data from the wind turbine's energy output, analyses the data, and if the turbine is producing enough energy, activates the radio-controlled plug socket that switches on the kettle. The point of the project was to find out how much energy is produced in relation to the amount of energy a community needs - on the Isle of Tiree, where energy comes from a single turbine, residents adjust tasks such as using their washing machines until they know the turbine is producing enough energy. The point of it, said the researchers, is that communities have assumed for too long that energy is 'always on' and available.

The growth of speciality coffee in garden centres is continuing - the Wyevale garden centre in Hemel Hempstead has now opened its Coffee Ground artisanal café, from which it will recycle its own spent grounds, mixing them with sheep's wool and other 'secret ingredients', and turn them into a natural soil nourisher.

For the second time in two months, there has been an Italian barista championship in the UK - the latest is in the Scottish Italian awards, which exist to celebrate the achievements of Italian families living and working in the UK. Marco Caira, who serves coffee at Visocchi's Café in Broughty Ferry, near Dundee, was up against four other baristas, and in conventional contest form, had to serve an espresso, a cappuccino and a signature drink. The judges awarded him full marks for all of them.

Coffee Republic has opened in Chatham, which brings its total of franchised cafes up to 17. The company plans 20 new UK franchises over the next year.

Cold-brew coffee on tap

The Yorks bakery-cafe in Birmingham has created what it calls the first cold coffee 'kegerator'. It is a system similar to that used by keg beer - the coffee is brewed for 14 hours at room temperature, and then pulled through a pub-style pump, which even has a pump clip similar to those used for real ales.

By coincidence, another company has done the reverse, being inspired by barista techniques to create a machine which can adjust the 'hopiness' of a beer. The Hoppier, developed by Cambridge Consultants, operates on the same principle as pressure-profiling on an espresso machine.

They say that they have achieved a way of producing beer in which by adding extra hops at the point of dispense, the aroma becomes more fresh and intense, or even changed completely by using different hops.

Meanwhile, in Bath, barista champion Maxwell Colonna-Dashwood has made a more direct move towards beer - he has opened Colonna & Hunter, which is both a craft beer house and a speciality coffee house.

The business looks to break new ground, rather than just clone his successful Colonna and Smalls coffee house, he told us. "The new venture looks to draw parallels between the flavour-driven interest in both coffee



and beer. In doing so, we want to create a unique environment that transitions through the day and into the evening... a space that is neither cafe nor bar nor restaurant, but which utilises aspects of each, to be an easily-visited, valuable social space.

"We will sell more savoury food than Colonna and Smalls, and open later and close later. We wanted to explore different avenues by diversifying rather than just replicating."

The new café will have two house espressos that change regularly and two batch brew filter coffees. There will be five beers on tap accompanied by a bottle selection.

More scalding cases highlight coffee serving temperatures

It has been an active month for coffee-scalding cases in the USA - and yet again, the issue has been raised of how serving staff should be careful to protect themselves from compensation claims. In one case, the court has surprisingly put the responsibility on a caterer to be able to prove the temperature at which the drink in question was served.

In Buffalo, a five-year-old girl has been awarded \$500,000 against a fast-food chain for an incident in which the girl, who was 14 months old at the time, grabbed a hot cup of coffee and spilled it on herself, suffering serious burns.

Their case rested on the claim that waitress was negligent in placing the coffee within the infant's reach, but the question was also raised about the serving temperature of coffee. The chain was said to have a policy of serving its coffee at 180F degrees (82C) - the claimants said that the company had received more than 700 complaints from customers about this, and should have responded by adjusting their temperatures.

In Brooklyn, a man has been given clearance by an appeals court to continue a case from 2007, in which he slipped and fell while carrying a just-purchased cup of McDonald's coffee,

inside their shop.

In this case, the appeals court has rather surprisingly placed the onus on the defence, saying that McDonald's had failed to prove that their coffee was no hotter than "reasonably expected limits," and had "produced no competent evidence to establish that the coffee served to the plaintiff on the day of the accident was within the range that would normally be expected by a typical consumer of coffee."

Rather more entertainingly, an attempt to sue McDonald's over alleged coffee scalding in California has failed after the claimant was revealed to have been attempting an inept scam - she produced photographic evidence of her burns, which the defence pointed out were stock pictures downloaded from a medical website. The claimant is now on trial herself for fraud.

Cream Supplies, the wholesaler notable for its vast range of equipment and ingredients, has now come up with the Paddle, which is a coffee version of something we have seen used for beer in Germany. The item is a serving tray on which the drinks are held lengthways in cup-sized slots. Where the beer version holds pint glasses, this one uses coffee cups, with a holder for sugar at one end. In some German bars, waiters will make their way through crowds balancing these trays on one hand.



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It has already been observed elsewhere that the Kickstarter crowdfunding website seems to have been created mainly to fund coffee machines, and there are several examples this month.

Crowdfunding is essentially a way of putting new ideas before the public and inviting small investors to lend development funds – there is usually some kind of incentive, such as ‘pledges over £100 get free coffee every week’, and the online sites which promote crowdfunding usually give inventors a set period to raise the money they need.

The new campaign for Bruvelo came very close to its target, raising \$134,000 of its target of \$150,000. The Bruvelo is probably the most complex domestic pourover machine yet seen – it accepts whole beans, grinds them, weighs the dose, pre-rinses the filter paper, and then, in the words of the inventor, ‘brews the heck out of the beans’ in accordance with three pre-set brew settings.

The inventor says that he was inspired to create it when his old drip machine broke down.

Another machine seeking Kickstarter finance has been the rather complex Poursteady, which was not successful in raising investment so fast.

The concept is of a fairly conventional brew bar holding several coffee filters, with the difference that the pouring is not manual – it is computer-controlled. The operator can change the amount of water in each pour, the timing between the pours, the patterns used for pouring, and the number of pours; the machine can accept orders to make a number of drinks and automatically puts the drinks into a ‘work queue’ and makes them in the right order.

The prototype managed 900 cups over two days at an inventors’ fair.

Also looking for funding through Kickstarter is Coffee Gourmet, a new kind of one-cup coffee filter which takes the basic concept of the cafetiere but



Coffee Cuppa – the tiny removable and cleanable one-cup filter

improves it to deliver a better tasting drink. Alex Pullman, one of the two engineers who devised it, tells us that he believed everyday filter brewers failed to deliver the entire taste qualities of great coffees.

He has already had his product praised by Douwe Egberts and the world-recognised coffee expert Kenneth Davids.

“We spent months testing various filtration methods until one emerged as a clear success,” Alex told us. “The Coffee Gourmet design has incorporated some of the best characteristics of different brewing methods.”

The most famous Thai coffee now has a new distributor here – Ben Roberts of Beanpress in Poole is now seeking distributors for the first roasted coffee under the Doi Chaang label. Previously, he tells us, Doi Chaang has been imported as a green bean and used by micro-roasters selling under their own label.

“I used to do that myself until I realised that the people behind the business have the ambition to establish Doi Chaang as a branded coffee in its own right here.”

The brand has an odd business model – a Canadian company handles the marketing, and buys coffee from the Thai farmers at a ‘more than Fairtrade’ price. The Thais own a share of that Canadian company, so they also get a portion of the profit when the coffee is sold on.

There will be a ready market in the UK, says Ben Roberts. “Asian coffee on the whole has had a bad reputation. Thailand produces both high-grade and low-grade coffee, and in the past a lot of it got mixed together as low-grade. The Canadians changed this, and Doi Chaang has now become very sophisticated coffee.”



Kickstarts for coffee machines

The craze for raising investment by ‘crowdfunding’ has resulted in a batch of new filter ideas



The Coffee Gourmet

“The first stage is to pour water into the middle of the Coffee Gourmet and onto the grinds; the grinds soak up the near-boiling water and rise up the filter. The filter is blocked by the grinds and the grinds are allowed to bloom before a head of water is built up by the distance the Gourmet protrudes above the mug.

“The distance that the Coffee Gourmet protrudes above the mug provides a constant pressure to keep the grinds against the filter surface and pushing the water through...mimicking an espresso machine. Essentially, it's the constant pressure through the grinds that is the main characteristic of the Coffee Gourmet.”

Another brewer which has topped its crowdfunding target is Coffee Cuppa – this aimed for £750, and actually raised £3,000.

This extremely curious little item is devised by Jamie Welton of Breaking Beans, who tells us: “The problem with traditional methods is that coffee machines take up a lot of room in kitchens and quite often find themselves relocated to a dark corner. French presses and Chemex are good but they take longer to clean than most can be bothered with.

“The solution is a little food-grade silicone bean-shaped capsule which has a fine metal gauze that slides right in. It uses the infusion method to produce deep silky coffee without leaving any coffee

grounds in the resulting liquid.

“To clean it, you knock out the coffee grounds and rinse quickly under a tap.”

Rather unusually, Breaking Beans also offered coffee beans to Kickstarter investors – 250gm packs for an extra £10 on top of the pledged investment.

The beans are equally unusual, being experimental smoked blends, and the company says that the blends are ‘prohibitively expensive’ on the small scale it has been able to produce them. There is a Peruvian Bacon Smoked, Colombian Cracked Cinnamon, and Karma Sumatra. With a touch of humour, another blend is referred to as Guatemala Guano, because the smoking process is so tricky – ‘guano’ is essentially seabird excrement.

The Charbrew tea company of Lancashire has exceeded its target through the Seedrs crowdfunding scheme. The founder sought £150,000, and says that while most small investors put in £50, one late subscriber promised £20,000. The brand has recently won distribution in Waitrose, and will launch through 2,500 stores in America.

The first British board game café, Draughts, has been financed by a crowdfunding campaign through Kickstarter which raised nearly £21,000, more than double the amount which had been needed. The concept, in Haggerston, London, was inspired by Snakes and Lattes of Canada, the world's first board game café. Draughts will charge non-members £5 to play a board game for an unlimited amount of time. The café is also intended to be a venue for board game workshops and tournaments.



The Poursteady (above) and the Bruvelo



One of this month's filter-related inventions was not crowdfunded – it was paid for by the inventor and his family and went through two years of kitchen-table development, to solve a very basic problem for both cafe barista and home drinker.

As the brew-bar concept has developed further into the coffee-house world, and better filter systems began appearing in the home, one basic practical question has tended to come up – how do you hold them? The operator of an online coffee subscription service and equipment supplier has now come up with an answer, and the product will be available in time for the Christmas market.

He is Patrick Joseph of Le Café Shop and Haute Culture Coffee and his new product is Coffee Easy.

The problem, he says, is that the public has now become very used to seeing top baristas working at their brew-bar stations, but not everyone has the skill to work so neatly – many of us know well the fear of jack-knifing an Aeropress.

The Coffee Easy holds any kind of filter brewing cone, or an Aeropress, firmly above the receiving cup or mug. A simple storage area in the back holds a bag of coffee and spare filter papers.

"This product needed to be invented because those who just like 'a good cup of coffee', and who just don't want to spend £200 on a home espresso machine, tend to have been ignored. From my online coffee customers, I know that consumers are appreciating more the purity of taste of filter coffee, and that they are interested in new ways of doing things – some of them email me every week about their problems in brewing filter coffee!

"We call this the one-mug brewing station. At the moment, a lot of consumers have bought their V60s and their Aeropresses... and what are they holding them with?

"I have been working on the idea of making the best coffee in the worst conditions. The Coffee Easy takes just about any filter cone imaginable, and, if you have an Aeropress, this lets you use it safely and holds it firmly.

"The target is a market of many languages and many colours, of many people being able to easily replicate that which they had been charged £4 for in cafes. They've seen the baristas pouring fancy filter coffee – now they can have the satisfaction of doing it themselves."

It is, suggests the inventor, the classic marketing case of a product which people don't realise they will need until they see it. Indeed, he acknowledges, if the people who make the simple ceramic holders, and V60s, had thought it through, they would have come up with exactly the same product.

The inventor came to the idea through his online coffee business.

"I'm English-born, but French by upbringing," Patrick told us. "On my first visit home in 1992, I had a Dunkin' Donuts coffee... and I just couldn't believe it! A 16oz cup of burning hot liquid that I couldn't drink, and I was out of there in seconds.

"I began to think – now it's time for French-style coffee as a niche thing in the UK. That's how I started Le Café Shop and Haute Culture Coffee.

"I sell relatively small quantities of coffee and accessories to consumers who are coffee club members with a difference – many of them will take our coffee one week, then Has Bean or Square Mile the next, and then come back to us again."

The idea of the one-mug brewing station came out of the blue.

"I have always thought that filter coffee is a great way of brewing. When I went to the house of someone who is big in espresso, and he made us filter coffee, I thought 'I'm on to something here!'

"The change from just selling coffee to being a

How to hold the one-cup filter in place



Patrick Joseph

product-designer was a light-bulb moment which came at the point where I saw more competition coming online... coffee clubs and micro-roasters popping up all over the place, and more retailers from Waitrose to Harrods popping up as offering 'gourmet' coffee.

"I went through a series of eight or nine prototypes, which include a polystyrene one I made on

Christmas Day, and then I was told that Leeds library holds an 'inventors' club', so I went along and found myself talking to a very different kind of people, not coffee people at all, who helped me identify the different problems which were likely to come up.

"To make something this simple turned out to be an enormously complex process. The design engineering was done in Yorkshire, by someone who does precision engineering for medical use.

"We wanted it to be all-British, but despite our attempts, some pieces eventually had to be made in China. However, as the greater part of it is from Yorkshire, and as it's assembled here, we can say 'made in Yorkshire!'

The retail price is expected to be around £49.

"This is crucial. If you Google 'filter cone holders', you will find a lot of things at £200, but everything has a price at which people will say: 'I can get into that!'

"The trade margin on this is good, but for retailers, the interest will also be in the follow-up and add-on products – they'll suggest that the customer will maybe have another V60 with it.

"As happened with the Aeropress, it is something which will probably take off slowly, and then move fast. It will be a product which users will discover for themselves and embrace, instead of seeing it in a super-powerful ad campaign... it is a product which people will begin to film and put on YouTube.

"Once there are hundreds of these in kitchens, coffee shops and roasters' showrooms, there will be no end of ideas on how you can use it."

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There are only a few people who are both coffee-house operators and suppliers to the rest of the cafe trade. One or two have cafes or interests in cafes, but very few.

One supplier is possibly unique in being a man who runs a well-regarded coffee-house in east London, and yet has also exhibited at Caffe Culture as a supplier.

He is Frank Boltman, whose café is Trade in Spitalfields, and whose Thanks for Franks brand is a collection of granola bars sold on the basis of 'an uncompromising commitment to only ever use the finest grains, plumpest fruit and nuttiest nuts'.

At the same time, he is a consultant to café and restaurant operators, to whom he preaches a favourite mantra – nothing happens by accident.

"Not in business, it doesn't," he told us. "What happens in business is either by good management or bad management.

"You do wonder how so many people in this trade part with so much money so quickly, and this is because they don't have a clue what to do when they've got the shop open. You see it all the time – a lot of common sense just doesn't exist in the café trade."

This is not intended to be an unkind criticism – it is more an acceptance that many people who start cafes are out on their own, with nobody to turn to.

"This is a job that puts you under stress and under pressure, and you often find that you have to extract yourself from deep s**t and make sensible rational decisions when you feel least able to... and that your staff are depending on you to make those decisions.

"Where can people learn café management? It's a question of how deep your pockets are – can you sustain the business long enough to find the answer, or will you die in the ambulance taking you from your café to the hospital?

"Management is a lonely place, but wisdom is always there if you don't forget to look for it."

And, notes Frank, the requirements of café management keep changing. A typical development is the modern need to cope with the phenomenon of online 'reviews' by all and sundry.

"An interesting thing about social media is that you now find out immediately how you're doing. People are now writing and publishing opinions about you while they're sitting at your tables! The writing is not now on the wall... it's on the laptop.

"You cannot stop this, but you can counter it by being very good. What people want is quality, cleanliness and value, and the danger with immediate social media is that operators can get wound up by what they read on it, and forget that they're in the hospitality industry.

"But you must not resent these diffi-

Nothing happens by accident...

One of the newest popular East End coffee-houses in London is run by a baker who supplies granola bars to the cafe trade



culties, no matter how many hats you're wearing at the same time. And you must not think that any member of staff is not working as hard as you are."

Frank Boltman learned his customer service in one of the toughest schools – the New York waiting trade, which he recalls with the humour which hindsight allows.



“ You do wonder how so many people in this trade part with so much money so quickly... ”

"I moved into food in New York in 1972, where I happened to be working in a shop.

"A man came in who was a waiter working in a surf-and-turf supper club, which needed bus-boys (the assistants to waiters, who clear away plates and do other menial jobs).

"As it happened, I had my own black velvet jacket, so I turned up wearing that, and they hired me and trained me as a waiter!

"I was a very good waiter, because I realised that the job is very simple... a good waiter sells wine, which is what the house wants him to do. And to sell wine, you just keep pouring it.

"And to know about wine, you read the description on the wine list!"

"Then I come back from New York because I had the chance to work in antiques, which I still dabble in, and I got into bakery because I had to have a second job at night to make enough

"I got into bakery because my wife's father had a chain of forty food restaurants, the Old Kentucky business, which had animated black-and-white minstrels in its windows... that stopped the traffic then, but you wouldn't get away with it now.

"He was the first man to bring over hamburgers and pizzas, which he introduced to the UK in the 1940s, and

later, my wife had the first Baskin Robbins ice-cream business here."

To his surprise, Frank took to bakery immediately.

"I loved it! I loved the teamwork, and I loved the satisfaction and pride of making something from start to finish.

"So I became a capable baker, learning from a guy who had been on the QE2 – he was ambidextrous, which meant he actually could make two things at once, one with each hand.

"When you work with people like that, you learn a lot about the 'process'... you begin to understand where you should be at any one time to get the whole job finished properly."

He got the chance to open an east-end coffee house early in 2014.

"Trade is 'a specialist coffee shop with great food'. That means that we make all our own cakes, quiches, sandwich fillings, salads, and we squeeze our own fruit.

"This is the culmination of experience in opening many eateries.

"I knew that we had to impact the menu sufficiently that we would stand out from the crowd, and so we do things that nobody else is doing – uniquely, we even smoke our own pastrami.

"We do not approach this business from 'how cheap can we buy?', we approach it from 'how much can we afford for the best ingredients?'"

"This attitude is profit-driven. I have learned over the years that what makes business successful, for me, is that if I own my own source of profit, then I can control my own quality, and I can create my own profitable signature menu.

"I have consulted for other people on this, and have developed recipes for them... I have developed burger-and-bun recipes which feature the three or four cuts of meat which gets you the 'Sunday lunch in a bun' experience of a good burger. These things don't happen by accident!"

The same, he says goes for his Thanks for Franks granola bars which have become popular with coffee-house owners.

"What makes a coffee-house work is the customer's feeling of respite from the terror of the day... and coffee is one thing the consumer can count on to take them away from that.

"What you learn quickly is that these customers will pay a little more for quality. What the customers resent is paying a lot for a little, and you underestimate that at your peril.

"But you can only charge big money if you're prepared to give something, something which will make the customer feel bowled over by what you're offering.

"So, our coffee is by Origin, and in bakery, we believe in an 86gm bar, which is a substantial eat, and in chocolate which is proper Belgian couverture, with 55 per cent cocoa solids.

"There is good caramel and there is other caramel... and our raisins are Peruvian jumbo ones, which stay moist. Customers love our bars because the satisfaction and comfort in a bar is what people crave.

"The trade loves our bars because they make money out of them. One of my customers calls the product 'gold bars' because they don't answer back, and they don't go curly at the end of the day. They just bring in money.

"These things don't happen by accident!"

Paddy and Scotts, the rapidly-growing stylish coffee brand from Suffolk, has now made its first move on to the high street as a café operator. The company already has fifty 'branded cafes' in corporate offices, and 87 instore partnerships with the likes of B&Q, but has now opened in its own right in two of its neighbouring county towns, Bury St Edmunds and Framlingham.

To have his own cafes, Paddy Bishopp told us, is the first step in a proposed chain concentrated on the brand's home region.

"We have started!" Paddy told us cheerfully. "Framlingham is not the natural place to start a national chain, but it is somewhere where we are well known. An existing café became available, and in the first few weeks we have begun well.

"In Bury St Edmunds, we are in a town with all the chains and ten wonderful independents, and the job here is to break the habits of consumers going to these other cafes. If we can make it in these two places, we know we can make it anywhere.

"We shall be opening in Norwich in February, and in Hadleigh in Suffolk. The idea is for twenty cafes in three years, and the aim is to be the top café name in East Anglia."

This has put Paddy and Scott in an interesting position. They now look at other suppliers from the café owner's point of view, a very useful experience in appreciating how they are seen by their own trade customers.

For their own cafes, they are being



Paddy and Scott's move on to the high street

'demanding' buyers.

"We've done twelve months' research into something which has been a dream for years. We spent a huge amount of time looking at the food, and while we have no onsite kitchen at Framlingham, we will eventually move to a central kitchen.

"At the moment our supplier is working to our specification – we have said 'this is the amount of chicken we want in a sandwich, and this is where the tomato goes... it goes against the lettuce, not against the bread'.

"This did get a huffy response from some suppliers, but it went down well with the supplier we chose, who saw that we could both learn and grow together."

Staffing has been a particularly big job. Paddy and Scott's has its own training room and trainer, and this has been busy.

"We tripled our staffing overnight! For our cafes to achieve the standards we want, we realised that we have to have our own directly-employed, directly-trained staff... we want the kind of baristas who are willing to look at customers and engage with them."

The new cafes have also employed a piece of equipment which is familiar in east London sites, but not yet in provincial coffee-houses.

"We may be the first cafes in East Anglia to use the Clever Dripper. (This is the filter system in which the barista can control the steeping time – the

usual practice in filter is for the water to pass through the coffee and the filter paper immediately it is poured on to the grounds, but the Dripper features a little tap with which the barista can hold the water on the grounds for as long as they judge is right, and then send the brew into the cup).

"We picked it for its great theatre, and we have found that in a busy café, with grind-on-demand beans, it works perfectly well operationally .

"The question is of how big a market there is here for filter coffee... the Clever Dripper gives better results than general filter coffee, but the mass market is still based around the main milky espresso drinks... at the moment, we are even doing more smoothies than filter coffee."

The biggest question, however, is of how a supplier can move to high-street trading. It is one thing to be a supplier a step or two removed from the sharp end of the trade... it is another thing entirely to be in the front line, operating a café and looking consumers in the eye. Are Paddy and Scotts qualified to be in the front line? What makes them think they can do this?

"Two things," responded Paddy promptly. "First, we have the confidence. We are chosen by several corporate offices, and we replaced Starbucks in the Barclays head office, so we know we can compete with big names.

"Second, I have done it before – in my last business, I won a 'best café in East Anglia' award!"



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Handling a clear-out

It is not surprising that many who buy into the café business should 'inherit' their trade suppliers from a previous owner. What is odd, and we see it on many occasions, is that many simply continue with those existing suppliers without thinking to question their status.

In many cases the existing suppliers are doing a good job. Ideally, they will be so keen to retain the business that they will approach the new owner with creativity and helpfulness.

Even so, say many operators, as a matter of principle, it makes sense to re-evaluate suppliers.

That was the attitude taken by Ryan De Oliveira when he took over one of central London's most unusual coffee-houses... he bought the Attendant, the underground café which was formerly a Victorian gents' toilet. It has achieved a vast amount of international and tourist attention because the previous owners, who refurbished it, decided to leave a lot of the original tiling and chinawork in place.

Coming in from outside the trade, Ryan was struck by a curious thing. Although the coffee trade is widely reported to have exploded in size in recent years, his analysis is that the industry's growth has been slower than it could have been, and that is due partly to inexperience by café operators, and partly to an unresponsive attitude by the trade's suppliers.

"I was a businessman first, a coffee enthusiast second," he told us. "One of the first things I noticed about this industry is that growth is slow because the majority of operators are coffee enthusiasts first and business people second. There isn't enough smart business knowledge to catch up with the progress from their initial enthusiasm, so overall there is slow growth in the industry.

"Yes, coffee enthusiasm is important – but so is business!

"There is also too little support from suppliers – they're all too slow. I have found that in the café trade you have to go at the suppliers' pace... because they've never had their trade clients demand anything better."

This, he acknowledges, is the viewpoint of someone who comes at a business without any preconceptions. It is a situation he is used to.

"I was working in the City, where I found I enjoyed solving problems, that I enjoyed working under pressure, and I liked interaction with people. What I also enjoyed was the situation of having to solve some problems in areas where, at first, I didn't really understand what I was doing!

"I wanted to work for myself, and I thought I might get into either coffee or organic grocery in Shoreditch. My business partner was thinking of getting into fish and chips... but I wasn't.

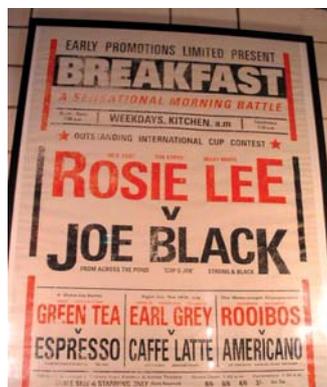
"So I did my research into coffee, and my business plan took eight months. This was very solid research, and involved meeting some very good



guys from the industry. After this, I took the plan to my backers and said 'right, rip it to bits'... and they didn't.

"However, we quickly found that in Shoreditch, landlords were unwilling to take newcomers. We almost took one unit, but I changed my mind because I did not want to take the first place that came along, just because it meant I could get my café open. That's a serious business point – do not jump in from over-enthusiasm.

"When we then heard about the Attendant, I spent a lot of time in here as a customer, sitting and watching... with the result that when the deal was finally done, the previous owners said: 'oh, it's you!'"



From the walls of the Attendant – what appears to be an old boxing poster is a hot-drinks menu!

That detailed research showed him what he wanted to keep from an existing business, and what he did not.

"Despite all the due diligence you must go through when buying, you really don't know a business until you've done it for yourself – so when we took it on, we came in here and worked, and we spoke to the staff in detail. Taking on a company's existing staff can be a very awkward thing to do, and you have to be careful."

The same goes for suppliers. "It had been going for eighteen months and was running at a loss when we took it on... a café can very quickly develop into your worst nightmare if things start going wrong.

"One of the main differences in the Attendant as a business now is that

Sometimes a cafe-owner has to take over an existing business, and decide what stays, what goes, and what has to change... particularly the suppliers



we have made massive changes in our efficiencies and our supply-chain management... the Attendant doesn't do any more emergency buying from Tesco and Sainsburys!

"And they were selling macaroni cheese with truffles, which looks fantastic on paper, but doesn't work in practice."

Some suppliers were in for a surprise.

"We had to tell some suppliers that their inconsistency was too bad to justify their pricing, and some of them took that very badly.

"With our current bakery supplier, we now have the kind of conversations which we would like to have with all suppliers. When we say 'this is what we are trying to do', they understand, and see the opportunities for themselves in riding along with our ideas. This is the kind of response which you should expect from your suppliers, and it's very disheartening when you don't get it.

"A typical product is the brownie. A lot of café owners buy commodity brownies, but we now have seasalt brownies, and an unbelievable peanut butter and oreo brownie. And again, by working together with our bakers, we have increased our carrot cake use from one a week to one a day, and exactly the same increase has happened with our Anzac biscuits and our Lamingtons.

"I've suggested lots of things to all my suppliers, like holding tastings in the Attendant – come and meet my customers as they try your product, and listen to their feedback... but no.

"And if a supplier decides to change a product, they just send you the new one without warning. I say, if as a supplier you are doing something new

or special, then you need to tell us what, and why."

This new, more demanding attitude now runs through all the staff.

"One major thing to understand is that coffee is not enough. This trade is really about customer service, and that applies from the supplier to me as much as it does from our baristas to our customers.

"I always say to my staff that ninety-five per cent of cafes in London are serving great coffee and rubbish food, or the other way round, but that we have to be good at both, because really, any customer can taste the difference between a 48-hour sourdough loaf and something you've picked up from Tesco.

"This is an important principle which now extends right through our staff... perhaps a little too much, to the degree that I think they can now be too quick to throw something away if they think it's not perfect enough!"

It is not all the suppliers' fault, he acknowledges. Some trendy coffee-house operators are not as up with the game as we might expect.

"I want to know what my rivals are doing, and a barista who worked for me, and has since worked at four or five coffee shops, tells me that a lot of people working in these cafes do not know enough about the coffee, or the machines, or about cleanliness and other things.

"I have been very surprised by this. There seem to be a lot of people talking about great coffee, while not watching their shots or being careful with their milk."

Physical changes to the Attendant were also quickly made, on the basis that novelty appeal should not overrule operational practicality.

"The interior has been redesigned – there used to be a very narrow entry between the dishwasher and the fridge, which made the café so small that you could barely see in.

What used to be the kitchen area has now been opened up for seating. And we now have room for three staff to do what four used to do!"

All this comes from a relative newcomer to the coffee-house trade,

“ We had to tell some suppliers that their inconsistency was too bad to justify their pricing... some of them took that very badly. ”

which leads to an interesting point, says Ryan – newcomers to this business have no readily-accessible source of information. Where should a newbie café owner expect to find relevant and useful business knowledge and guidance, except from the school of hard knocks?

"This is a very important subject. It would be very beneficial for the coffee trade if the industry as a whole were to give help to newcomers, even if only in setting up a mentoring scheme.

"There are some 'how to run a coffee shop' courses, and I felt I really should go on one, but it didn't teach me much... because what newcomers need to understand, apart from the espresso machine, is how to develop supplier relationships.

"Yes, you should talk to baristas, and when you reach out to coffee shop owners, you should try to talk as well to those who used to run a café and got out... what was it they found out that they didn't know at the beginning?"

In this, Ryan is willing to practise what he preaches.

"I am amenable to having my brains picked about how I run this business and what I have now learned about it. Yes, I am very busy, but if someone wants to ask a question, then I'll help.

"I think it can be very selfish to hold on to helpful information."

The BSA's annual accreditations, by which qualifying cafes get the right to display a sticker showing that they create beverages to the industry's best practice, are about to get harder.

According to the BSA's Gordon Howell and Martyn Herriott, awards have to not just reflect the standard of the industry but be seen – as more cafes are recognised as the best, the standard of the entire trade will be seen as rising.

"Our definition of 'best in class' will evolve," they acknowledge, "giving visibility of the standards on our high street. The UK beverage industry is one of the finest in the world and the venues that have achieved success in this year's programme have done so because they have excelled in every area – outstanding customer satisfaction and service, the finest equipment and ingredients and dedicated staff."

What does this mean in practice, and what can the rest of the trade take from it? Typically, Bean and Bud of Harrogate won the Raising Standards award – but how have they 'raised standards' in a way which should draw the notice of the rest of the trade?

"They worked tirelessly to create a little mecca to the perfect beverage. Their Best Tea award is testament to that – they are focused on a level of preparation that is meticulous, weighing the tea to fractions of a gramme, using filtered water at the correct tem-

The best will get better...



Look, both hands - Mike Haggerton, winner of 'best overall experience'

awards, and it was won by Mike and Jan Haggerton of Habitat in Aberfeldy – but what constitutes a 'best experience'?

"They spent 18 months researching and two years of operation to create the 'experience', and their attention to detail is breathtaking.

"And this is done not in the bright lights of a major city but in a small town in Perthshire. They have showcased the best our industry has to offer, and showed what can be done, wherever you choose to do it, if you believe in it enough."

perature and timing for every brew. They have gone in style from a four-cup rated venue last year to a five-cupper, on determination to be the best they can."

The same applies to the Best Newcomer award, won by Cotswold Artisan of Cirencester. Barry and Mandy Cook won a BSA award with a previous business – what have they done to establish a new coffee shop business in a way that stands out?

"It takes a lot of guts to up-sticks, re-invest, re-focus and re-brand a business, come back stronger and more determined and to succeed the way they have. They have also been through the mill in initial resistance (there was the usual local reaction of 'not another coffee shop')."

The Best Overall Experience award is arguably the prize that sums up the entire raison d'etre of the BSA

In spite of all this, says the BSA, there are still gaps in the industry – there are those just not trying for the best. And while the number of sites nominated in Scotland went up this year, no cafe was put up from Wales.

"The accreditation process has grown in stature, but we all know that sometimes people and businesses do not 'get it', so we have further aims to build upon. One aim now is to promote the venues that are delivering exceptional standards, to show what a good job looks like and how to aspire to it.

"There are now a tremendous number of businesses creating brilliant drinks around the country every day - everybody should be inspired to raise their standards to that level."

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It is the time for winter selection boxes, the concept pioneered by the Sweetbird brand from Beyond the Bean. The idea is to give café owners a simple way of adding seasonal beverages to their menu without spending time puzzling over which drinks to offer. Sweetbird's Winter Syrup box is made up of two one-litre bottles of several seasonal flavours, including orange, cinnamon, and salted caramel, with point of sale materials.

Meanwhile, Kimbo Coffee has come up with its own seasonal boxes - there are two choices, with one pack offering peppermint and salted caramel syrups with hot chocolate, and the other features toasted marshmallow and gingerbread syrups, with a pack of gingerbread sugar.



The UK's first cereal café is to open in Shoreditch, east London, in mid-December.

The idea comes from twins Alan and Gary Keery, and combines speciality coffee with a quite astonishing collection of breakfast cereals - over a hundred types of cereal sourced from all over the world, with a choice of a dozen kinds of milk, and 20 different toppings. Among the unusual cereals will be Poppin' Fruity Pebbles from America, which is a berry-flavoured mix with popping candy.

The café will be decorated with a huge collection of cereal-related memorabilia, mainly vintage boxes.

The vexed question of free supermarket coffee has arisen again, with the Central Bean coffee house of Jesmond marking its closure with a window sign which read: "we would like to give a big thank-you to our customers but sadly we can no longer compete with Waitrose and their free coffee..." The owner, the Free Coffee Group, told their local paper that "free coffee is hard to compete with even when it isn't as good!"

Waitrose responded, as usual, with bland sympathy and the claim that 'offering complimentary coffee to customers is something that businesses have done for years'.

Taylor Street Baristas raise crowdfunding bond to finance new sites

Taylor Street Baristas, the original business formed by the family which went on to open Harris and Hoole with Tesco, has created a 'coffee bond' programme through the Crowdcube site in an attempt to raise £1.5 million for expansion, with four new shops next year and six the year after. On its first day, the bond raised £179,500, and after three weeks had pledges worth half a million pounds from over 220 investors. This was the minimum threshold to allow the bond project to continue.

Bondholders can choose to have their dividend paid in cash, at eight per cent per year, or in store credits at 12 per cent. Almost all the investors opted for the cash dividend, which the chief executive said reflects the interest rate being significantly higher than that offered by the high street banks.

It has been reported that the company's most recent accounts show turnover of £3,337,000 from nine shops, with an overall loss of £276,000. However, like-for-like sales are reported to have risen by 14 per cent in the past six months, and the chain is looking to 30 sites by 2020, producing a turnover of £19 million.

The American financial press has been a little cynical about the bond idea, referring to 'crazy issues' which have been attempted elsewhere.

Earlier this year, an insurance company offered a 'catastrophe bond' to serve as insurance against a meteor hitting America, and there has been an issue of 'burrito bonds', in which investors can earn free lunch once a week during the period of their loan.

David Bowie once issued bonds backed by future revenue of his first 25 albums, paying eight per cent interest over ten years - the issue raised tens of millions before later being given very low ratings.

Singapore laptop campers told off

There has been an entertaining development of the 'camping' problem, in which workers and students take over coffee-house tables for an unfair amount of time, sometimes taking up entire four-space tables, and making very few purchases.

In Singapore, café owners say that teachers now use coffee-houses for marking papers, often sitting in the same café as their own students. The problem came into the public spotlight there last month when a student made a public complaint against Starbucks, claiming that staff had packed away her belongings when she left the café and came back half an hour later.

After 'advice' from her school, she apologised.

Optical illusion cafe shortlisted in design award

The Velo House cycle café in Tunbridge Wells has achieved a place on the shortlist of the Society of British and International Design awards, after only six months in business. It was one of only two British businesses to make the shortlist.

The Velo House opened in a former bank building, in which the bike workshop occupies the former manager's office. The coffee is a seasonal blend from Coffee Officina and tea is by Teapigs.

The other cafe highlighted in the same awards was the Milk Tea & Pearl business. This is a bubble-tea business in Boxpark, a temporary shopping centre made from cargo containers in Hackney. This design uses an optical illusion to make a long



Milk Tea and Pearl's illusion

and narrow unit appear shallower and wider.

Lonely pooch inspires new dog cafe

A new dog-friendly coffee house has been set up by a woman who was unhappy at leaving her pet at home all day - so she left the day job, and created Scooby's Boutique Coffee Bar in Muswell Hill.

Lisa Owen-Jones used to be in marketing with the BBC Concert Orchestra, and told her local paper that she began to feel more and more guilty every time she left to go to work - and eventually her dog won. She also spoke of being annoyed at having to stand outside dog-free coffee shops trying to attract baristas' attention and have a coffee served outside.

"I got tired of standing in the rain drinking my coffee, outside places we couldn't go in, and I started thinking about ways I could spend more time with her... and Scooby's was born. Now, I wouldn't have my life any other way."

Lisa is reported to have tasted everything on her own menu - even the dog treats.

Starbucks in UK had no case to answer, says US writer

The news that Starbucks is to be accused of profiting from illegal state aid, with the allegation that the company struck a deal with the Dutch government to lower the tax rate for the brand's subsidiary in Amsterdam, has been matched with an expected defence of the company in Forbes magazine.

The writer suggested that the recent scandal about Starbucks not paying any corporation tax in the UK was flawed, because the company wasn't actually making any profits, and corporation tax is a charge upon taxable profits.

Starbucks was making no profit because it had signed leases committing it to too much rent, and, says Forbes, anyone knows that the biggest profits from coffee shops end up with the landlords.

Furthermore, says Forbes, the rest of the big tax row was based on the discovery that Starbucks UK was paying royalties to another Starbucks subsidiary in Holland - but this, said the writer, is correct under international market rules.

Critics had also said that the UK company paid a margin to the Swiss Starbucks subsidiary that did all the coffee buying for the chain, and the implication was that this was moving profit out of the UK and into lower-tax Switzerland.

"The fun part here," says Forbes, "is that if Starbucks didn't pay some sort of margin over the cost price then it would have been breaking the tax laws - because subsidiaries are supposed to price things as if they are dealing with a free market transaction. Not to do so would be illegally transferring profits!"

"So, despite the allegations that there was something dodgy going on... there wasn't. No tax was due from the company at all. So the campaigners didn't really get much of anything right in this case."

Number of British artisan coffee roasters soars

How many artisan coffee roasters are there in the UK? The number has soared in recent years, not least as craft roasting has become a fashionable occupation, but nobody has been confident enough to try and assess how much the field has expanded... until now. Lloyd Burgess has begun the latest coffee subscription service, The Coffee Roasters, which has a fascinating and unusual aspect to it - he offers a collection of coffees from 17 artisan roasters, but part of his website is given over to a list of all the roasters he knows of in the UK. So far, that's 257 of them!



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In Holland, two investigative journalists recently invited food critics to a presentation of their 'new, organic alternative to fast food burgers'. What they actually served the critics had been carried in from a neighbouring McDonald's – but the critics praised it as 'fresh', 'like fine wine' and most entertainingly, 'definitely a lot tastier than McDonald's, you can tell it is pure'. The reporters concluded that if you tell the public something is organic and good, then they believe it's organic and good.



Kaldi

The sheer variety of people from vastly different backgrounds who take up coffee-house franchises is constantly growing and widening. We had better not name the managing director who recently told us that when he first entered his franchisees' annual conference, he thought he had walked into the bar scene from Star Wars...

The labels on Swiss mini-cream containers are 'collectables', so there are many enthusiasts who look carefully at the one served with their coffee. One such enthusiast, at a station café, was astonished to find that the label was one he had not seen before – it was a picture of Hitler. He sent a

photograph of it to a newspaper, and started a panic inside the retail giant Migros, which hastily withdrew all its containers from over a hundred cafes. A spokesman said that it had ordered a sub-contractor to prepare a collectable set of labels based on vintage cigar labels, and the contractor had managed to miss the image which featured Hitler... and indeed, missed another showing Mussolini, which also got out into the market. In speaking to a Swiss paper, the company's marketing man delivered the

highly original marketing maxim: "it is unacceptable to put a terrorist on a milk label..."

Ground coffee is the latest craze among professional baseball players in America. It is almost traditional for players to use chewing tobacco, although the use of it has been banned in the lower leagues (but curiously, not in the major leagues). The issue came to prominence recently when a famous player died from salivary gland cancer, and now many players have moved to a specifically-designed product called Grinds, which players chew during games. It was devised by two players who came up with the idea by chance when they tried chewing coffee grounds to stay awake during a late-night study session. It has now been widely taken up as a way to wean Americans off the habit of chewing tobacco – many players in different sports now use them, and students have adopted the product as well.

In the annual Costa barista championship, Kungku Gurang of the Heathrow Premier Inn Costa won both the speciality drink prize and achieved second overall place in the brand's world championship, which

was won by a barista from Dubai. The Heathrow entrant created a Doppio Cortado Chocolate Indulgence, featuring espresso and his homemade bend of milk and white chocolate.

On the judging panel was chef Phil Vickery, who was quoted in a later official press notice as saying: "Judging Costa's Barista of the Year 2014 competition has really opened my eyes... I now know what goes into a decent cup of coffee and will appreciate it so much more!"

Readers may remember, as Kaldi certainly did, that this time last year, we reported on the 2013 contest, after which celebrity chef Phil Vickery was later quoted in the official press notice as saying: "I now know what goes into a decent cup of coffee..."

Either the gentleman has an extremely short memory for coffee or, as we have pointed out before, certain media and PR people are not above recycling 'quotes' and hoping that simple reporters don't notice...

Kaldi reckons that it is always dangerous to be a judge at any kind of contest – and if you do, be careful what you say. Someone in the judging party of a recent contest was actually heard to say: "I don't normally drink espresso unless it's made with a La Marzocco machine..."

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