

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!

January 2015



The coffee brands which sponsor tennis contests have been intrigued by the report that Serena Williams, having a bad time in an Australian contest, ordered a double espresso to be served to her on court - following which, she went on to win her match.

At 0-5 in the first set, she asked the chair umpire if she was allowed to have coffee - the request amused both the officials and her opponent, but the umpire did indeed tell a ball girl to go and fetch a takeaway.

Segafredo was the coffee sponsor at the ATP tennis event at the O2 last year, and British managing director Ralph Lutton told us: "interestingly enough, quite a number of athletes are using espresso as a stimulant. I know that quite a few rugby players have an espresso before they go out and even at half time, but I'm not sure if it is a fad or something which will become widespread."

The coffee brand at Wimbledon is Lavazza, whose marketing director Barry Kither remarked to us: "I don't know whether the All England Club will be up for it... but I am going to enjoy asking!"

The amount of land suitable for large-scale coffee farming may be halved by 2050.

The results of a climate modelling study by Humboldt University in Berlin and the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture suggests that climate change will have a severe effect on production in all of the world's growing regions. This comes two years after a similar study said that wild arabica could be extinct in sixty years' time, news which hit headlines all round the world.

EXCLUSIVE

The Sainsbury's explosion - what really went on in the HSE investigation?

In 2010, an espresso machine exploded on the counter of a cafe at a Sainsbury's store in Hampshire. Several people were injured, and the matter was referred to the Health and Safety Executive for investigation. The coffee trade has constantly said it wants to know the result of that investigation - not to point blame, but to find out if any helpful information or guidance can be gained from it, and also in the hope that the HSE would help communicate the importance of machine maintenance to the wider catering trades.

Four years later, the HSE dropped the matter quietly, saying nothing. This magazine has been the only organisation to pursue the matter, and now, through the Freedom of Information Act, can report on how the investigation proceeded.

Our report begins on page 8.

Coffee trade's favourite charity closes suddenly

Coffee Kids, the charity set up to support coffee farmers and their families, and which is supported by many in the British coffee trade, ceased operations at the turn of the year. In a rather curiously-phrased message which astonished the world's coffee trades, the charity's directors have said that they have decided to 'cease programming', but will look for another charitable organisation with which to merge, and which might carry on their work.

Coffee Kids was founded in 1988 by Bill Fishbein, who once told Coffee House magazine that as a coffee-house owner in the far north-east of the United States, he had become relatively well-off from coffee without ever giving a thought to the situation of the farmers.

He then made a visit to Guatemala, was horrified by what he saw, and set up what was effectively a self-help organisation.

In practical terms, he helped create ways in which farmers and their families could improve their incomes - "it doesn't matter if we're helping them make and sell tortillas," he once told us, "so long as we are supporting them in making a living."

In formal terms, Coffee Kids existed "to assist self-determination, and cultivate the power of coffee-producing communities to determine the terms of their future."

"We envision a world in which coffee farmers thrive, in which the farming

communities are self-sustaining, and families have a life of dignity, and a global coffee community in which everyone has an equal seat at the table."

Coffee Kids' president Mike Ebert told us: "For 26 years, Coffee Kids has partnered with the coffee-growing communities as they build their own visions of a healthy, resilient community."

"Over the past several years, Coffee Kids has experienced challenges in raising funds sufficient to support its mission. These challenges have come to make it impossible to continue working as we did previously... we realised that we did not have a sustainable business model that balanced disbursements of grants with our administrative and operational costs in doing so.

"As individuals, the staff are completely committed to the mission, and hope that another organisation will take on our work."

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The continuing story of 'suspended coffee' has taken an unusual turn in Lincolnshire, where three cafes in Boston have taken part in a free-coffee scheme begun by the police. A Community Support officer started the campaign off by donating £10, saying that the entire campaign would be of benefit to bringing the community together.

Brigg Town Council, Lincolnshire, has granted an application for change of use of retail premises to a tea shop, on the curious grounds that in the afternoon, the local cafes are winding down, and so a tearoom would be a valuable addition to the high street's late-afternoon trade.

The fraught question of charges for outdoor seating has raised its head again – this time in Northampton, where some cafes face a vast increase in the annual charge for external seating. Hitherto, the charge has been a basic £170, but now any cafes with 16 or more outdoor seats will incur a charge of at least £560. A spokesman for the county council said the increase would also apply across the county. A councillor said that the new charges would put all cafes on a fair scale - those who have more chairs will pay more. Those who have four seats on the pavement will be charged £200 a year, and the tariff rises according to the amount of external furniture. An opposition councillor said that the council had just spent £6 million to reconfigure one town centre street: "the whole

reason for the scheme was to enliven the street, but this proposal just deadens it."

The Crowdcube funding project by Taylor Street Baristas, intended to help the chain fund new sites, entered the new year by continuing to raise pledges - the fundraising appeal needed to hit a target of £1.5 million, and entered the first week of the year at £1.2 million, pledged by 350 investors. The company has reported a turnover of £3.3 million from its nine existing shops.

Meanwhile, the Harris and Hoole chain, in which the founders of Taylor Street work with Tesco, has reported an operating loss of £11.2m in the 52 weeks to February 2014. Turnover was £6,648,270. The chain invested in a new app which allows customers to pay through their smartphones, and since its launch last summer this app has been downloaded 22,000 times and used in 200,000 transactions.

A two-month-old coffee house found itself at the top of the Trip Advisor listings for Liverpool - Barley & Beans scored 51 "excellents" from 59 reviews.

Ringtons, the hundred-year-old north eastern tea brand which grew from a unique concept of doorstep delivery, has begun two distributorships in America - one is in North Carolina and Michigan, and the other in California.



Starbucks' immense new roastery-cafe in Seattle

Starbucks' flattie puzzles America

Readers will almost certainly recall the ludicrous situation a few years back when Starbucks decided to introduce the flat white to its British stores, a project which was given the backing of some quite ridiculous publicity stories, and which turned into a brief fight between Starbucks and Costa over which would be first to come out with this 'new drink'... which many coffee houses had been serving for years.

To the unrestrained enjoyment of the international media, Starbucks has started the whole thing again, with the announcement of the launch of 'a new drink' in America – the flat white!

Four or five years ago, in the UK, Starbucks and Costa produced improbable promotional stories about their development of the flat white – Starbucks claimed that its baristas had 'noticed people asking for a new drink', and that its baristas had taught themselves to make it. By contrast, Costa said it had spent a million pounds and spent a year training 6,000 baristas to make it.

Now Starbucks has begun the new year by getting American food writers into a tizzy as they try to communicate what constitutes a 'flat white'.

Some writers have called the flat white 'the next big thing in coffee' while others have claimed that the existing American latte is what the rest of the world calls a flat white, and that the Americans have been ahead of the game for some time. One magazine reported that several cafes said they saw little difference between a flat white and their own cappuccinos, and a major American newspaper said that a flat white 'is just a small latte'.

More thoughtful commentators have said that the launch is a deliberate



The big question for America!

part of Starbucks' strategy to be seen to be moving upmarket, as demonstrated by the opening of its massive roastery and 'tasting room' in Seattle, and its plans to open a hundred stores which will sell only its Reserve coffees.

The American situation does recall the cynical but accurate remark of Street Coffee of London: "can you tell me the difference between a flat white and a latte? Yes - 50p!"

Dark roasts - better for your health?

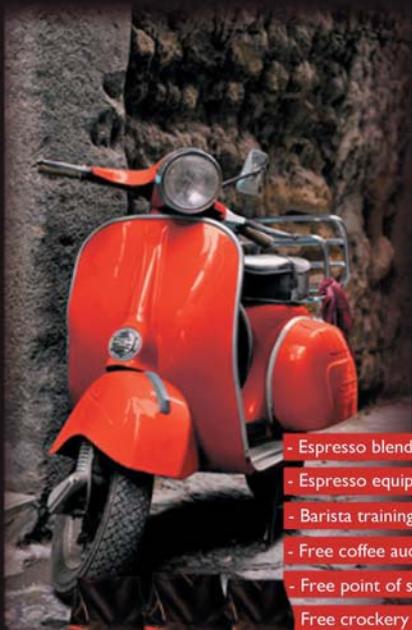
The argument over light and dark coffee roasts has taken an unexpected turn, with research suggesting that dark roasts are actually better for health.

Light roasts have become a feature of the rapidly-growing movement of new independent 'artisan' roasters, and have divided opinion sharply – some people say they enjoy the brightness and higher acidity, others complain that a light roast gives too much of these features.

It has also long been alleged that certain coffee house chains roast far too dark, to mask the taste of average-quality coffee in a milky beverage.

However, a health website has now re-started the argument by repeating the conclusions of Veronika Somoza, from the University of Vienna, and Thomas Hofmann from the Technical College of Munich whose studies concluded that dark roasts are easier on the stomach because they produce less of the acids which cause stomach discomfort.

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UKIP annoys the coffee trade – twice

Although the UK Independence Party raised immediate criticism of the European Union rule that will require all newly-manufactured coffee machines to have an energy-saving 'switch off' feature, the coffee trade has been more sympathetic, and the EU itself seems to have spotted that the proposal may be a good one for coffee quality.

The idea is that drip filter machines with non-insulated jugs must 'power down' 40 minutes after the end of the last brewing cycle; machines with insulated jugs which keep the coffee warm without further heating, must switch off after five minutes.

UKIP immediately grumbled that the EU now expects us to drink tepid coffee, but the alternative point was quickly made that we might now see the end of the notorious hotplate machines which some pub owners still use to keep coffee going for an hour or more. To their credit, even the EU commissioners noted that artificially-heated brewed coffee becomes 'undrinkable' after a time.

One of the pioneers of insulated flasks, Marco Beverage Systems, approved of the rule:

"We are strongly in favour of stricter laws governing energy regulations, and every single Marco product on the market today would easily comply with even the most stringent rules.

"Our machines are insulated to the highest degree possible for consistent

temperature delivery and energy efficiency and to make the best use of the power consumed. Bring it on!"

UKIP has also caused annoyance in the café trade over Nigel Farage's recent radio comments on the debate about breastfeeding in public cafes. He suggested that nursing mothers could 'sit in a corner', a comment which inspired the Cakeadoodledo coffee shop in Exeter to put up a notice suggesting that UKIP supporters should "eat in the corner".

The café owner, Kate Shirazi, author of several bakery books, says she put up the notice to show support for mothers, but has received so many complaints and 'veiled threats' that she replaced it with a sign saying 'we welcome everyone – come in, eat cake, feed your baby'.

She added: "At the risk of poking a viper's nest with a big pointy stick, I really do refuse to be bullied about this. I have changed the poster, but if you choose not to come to the cafe, that is absolutely fine: we want our customers to feel welcome."

Printed cups for lonely hearts

The ideas for imaginative use of short-run takeaway coffee cups continues to increase, endorsing what suppliers say about cups being as important for advertising as they are for holding liquid.

The Printed Cup Company of Clitheroe has won an award for outstanding export achievement, from the East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce. This is the company which created its own cup factory specifically to avoid importing, and now reports that 22 per cent of its business is now in export, a figure which it intends to grow to sixty per cent in the next three years. It is selling as far north as Iceland, and as far south as Portugal, with biggest export trade coming from Germany.

The company's MD Mark Woodward has told us that his most recent move has been to small quantities of the more extreme sizes – espresso cups at 4oz, and pint-size 20oz takeaways. He is, he says, unusual in being able to offer short runs in these sizes.

"Short-run prints are becoming more popular as coffee shops increasingly



The printed takeaway cup used as 'dating profile'.

see the opportunity to do brief campaigns," he told us. "We had a big run on designs for the Movember charity event, and for Hallowe'en designs."

One of the most unusual uses for a short-run cup occurred in Scotland last month, when a Glaswegian lady had a thousand cups printed with her picture and 'dating profile'; the cups were used at the Cup coffee shop. The idea came up through the online dating agency Match.com. We have no news yet of whether the lady's quest succeeded.

Mediterranean coffee roaster

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The matter of coffee-related litter has arisen again, with campaigners in Chiswell Green, Hertfordshire, with local residents now making a complaint to Starbucks and insisting that the chain begin its own litter patrols. The Starbucks store there is a 24-hour site, and residents have complained that litter is so bad, one local woman took it on herself to clear up, and collected two bin-bags full in the area around the café. She said that complaints to various store managers over the years has brought no improvement, and eventually recruited the assistance of the local paper. In rather typical corporate language, Starbucks responded that "we have identified an issue with the wheelie bins..." and promised that a team from the store will now work to clear litter from the areas near their store.

The latest scalding case has allegedly occurred in Britain – a woman is to sue McDonald's after hot takeaway tea spilled on her leg. The customer had picked up a tray of drinks and alleges that the lid to the tea cup was not properly fitted.

At the same time, Costa has been reported to environmental health officers in Dorset after a customer found a shard of glass in the bottom of her drink. The EHO visited the café, and decided that staff were following company procedure in respect of any breakages, but also determined that the piece of glass did not match any glass used on site, so took no further action. Although the customer said

she would never go back to Costa, the chain gave her a voucher worth £100 by way of apology.

The singer Ronan Keating, formerly of Boyzone, is proposing to open his own coffee house in Dublin, working in partnership with Grind Coffee of London. The founder of the Grind roastery is himself a former rock drummer.

Costa has agreed terms for its 25th British drive-through store, which will be at Marsh Mills Retail Park in Plymouth. Costa opened eight new drive-through locations across the UK during 2014, including its first in Birmingham city centre. Costa will also open in Crowborough next month, on a high street where Harris and Hoole closed down three months ago.

Starbucks and Coffee Republic will both have sites in the new Northampton railway station, a £20m redevelopment.

One of the most notable cake suppliers to the coffee-house trade has been acquired by a French company – the Handmade Cake Company of Maidenhead, whose title alone gives independent café owners a very attractive, and perfectly accurate, opportunity to promote their cakes as 'artisan-made', has been bought by the French group Européenne des Desserts. One effect, we are told, will more cheesecake products appearing in the range of the British company.



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One of the most famous coffee houses of all in the British Isles has closed 'temporarily' until autumn – Bewley's Grafton Street Cafe in Dublin is to be shut for renovation and refurbishment, with 140 staff made redundant. This extremely famous coffee house has been the subject of a financial dispute for some time, over an annual rent of €1.5 million which the company refers to as 'a legacy of the unsustainable Irish property bubble'. The company went to court to have the rent ruled unrealistically high, but lost. The café is currently losing over a million euros a year, will shut for about six months for renovation, and will open in what is termed a 'simplified focus'.

The Fairtrade Foundation has created a three-year project intended to support women coffee farmers in Kenya. As is reported from many coffee origins, women in Kenya contribute 70 per cent of the manual effort of coffee growing, but rarely own the farm assets, and are unable to join farming cooperatives or earn a formal income. However (as has also been noted from elsewhere) it has been shown that when women are in control of the finances, there are improved outcomes in areas such as health, education and investments.

Fairtrade has been involved in one transfer of ownership of coffee bushes to 300 women who are now receiving agricultural training, and is now engaged on the 'asset-transfer' of plants to another 150 women. They will also receive 'green energy' biogas units for their homes, which will reduce exposure to smoke and, in a very practical sense, reduce the time the women are expected to spend collecting firewood.

The Growing Women in Coffee project has received a grant of £389,831 from the Big Lottery Fund, the first such grant made to Fairtrade.

Rhode Island Coffee, the north western café chain, has re-opened a site in its home town of Altrincham. The original site was in the town precinct centre, but closed three years ago; now managing director Raj Ruia says that his return 'shows our confidence in the economic recovery of the town'.

Caley's Cocoa Café in Norwich has devised an unusual series of attractions – it is screening Monday Movies, a collection of silent archive

films, including locally-shot footage from around East Anglia. The tea room was taken on last year by the Norwich Heritage Economic and Regeneration Trust, the body's second project in helping to keep alive well-loved local brands – the Trust also owns the Colman's Mustard Shop & Museum. Caley's was a major chocolate maker for many years – it made the first Rolo and Munchies chocolates.

An attention-getting pre-Christmas promotion by the River Parrett Cafe in Langport, Somerset, was a present-wrapping service. Customers could bring in gifts to be wrapped, on a sliding price scale from 50p to £1.50 depending on the amount of giftwrap being used; revenue was put towards the café's fund for flood victims on the Somerset Levels, for which the café has raised £5,000 in the past year.

At the same time, the Bridge Café in Millom, Cumbria, used a wagon-load of logs to create a Santa's grotto for children of the town... and held a Sunday open day which attracted around 500 visitors.

Pubstuff, the hospitality trade company which specialises in the supply of reconditioned furniture to the pub and café trades, has created a scheme which donates 'grants' of furniture to community-orientated venues which support their local social groups. An early recipient has been the Gingerbread café of Falkirk, which supports exhibitions by local artists, shows by local musicians (only unsigned music is played in the café), has a cooking course for single dads, a book group and a breastfeeding drop-in group. Pub Stuff Director Sally Huband said that: "a sense of community is vital for many groups today and a café is a great environment for social interaction." The Gingerbread application succeeded in achieving some leather sofas and low tables.

The major ingredient for this spring's flavoured lattes will be... peanut butter! The latest Sweetbird 'selection box' of flavours from Beyond the Bean has taken a rather unexpected course with its choice of flavours – the spring 'selection' is of peanut butter syrup, raspberry, and butterscotch. The logic, says Sweetbird, is that as the days get milder, the right commercial flavour is something that 'lightens things up a bit'.

Herbals and fruits are behind growth in tea sector

It is growing demand for herbal and fruit teas which has put Twinings into second place in the country's tea brands, according to figures from the *Grocer* magazine. This endorses the recent view of Allegra, the research house, which suggested that brands are responding to declining black tea sales by introducing a wider variety of non-traditional teas.

Allegra pointed out that the amount of tea sold in coffee shops is still extremely small, while 53 per cent of consumers indicate they would spend more on a premium tea, and two thirds of consumers said that they would like to see 'specialised tea chains' on the High Street.

Teapigs too has recently said that the performance of its new flavours such as apple & cinnamon and chocolate & mint have supported its belief that café customers will pay a decent price for a speciality tea product.

Tetley has now attempted to stake its place in this sector by working with a nutritionist to endorse the uses of its new Mood Infusions range, which features four blends, Pick Me Up, Serenity, Warmth and Calm. The nutritionist has suggested the familiar idea of a 'tea pairing' with food, to promote the idea of speciality tea fitting differ-



ent 'emotional need states'.

The theory, says Tetley, is to market meal-deals on a 'mood' theme, and combine infusions with foods which follow the appropriate health theme.

Twinings sales rose by nearly five per cent to £107 million in the past year, whereas Tetley suffered a 12 per cent drop, to £102 million. The leading brand in tea remains PG Tips, with sales of £149million. Yorkshire Tea is the fourth most popular brand with £76.8 million in sales. The next biggest brand is Typhoo, at £18.9 million.

No coffee cliches at Dark Woods



The world of smaller roasteries continues to expand rapidly and one of the newest, Dark Woods of Yorkshire, attracted over 200 visitors to its Open Day, despite only having referred to the event on social media.

The roastery has been opened by Paul Meikle-Janney, one of the UK's most experienced consultants and trainers, and Damian Blackburn, who formerly played a major part in building the Grumpy Mule brand at Bolling Coffee. It operates in an old mill beside the highest navigable waterway in Britain, working on a 1950s Probat roaster discovered in Croatia. Quite deliberately, they avoid the most over-used terms of the trade... including the word 'artisan'!

"At the Manchester coffee festival, it was noted that our branding avoids all the current clichés of the industry," Paul told us. "The word 'artisan' has been banned, so has 'seasonal', and so has 'direct trade'! There's a lot of over-used phrasing around – I challenge a lot of those who talk about 'direct trade' to prove that they are!"

Dark Woods has been roasting for four months, and only formally opens for business this month, but already

has some impressive customers. "We have the Northcote country house hotel (run by chef Nigel Haworth), and Alan Yau's place in Soho (he founded Wagamama). Locally, we have some of the best high-end cafes, hotels and restaurants, without having started 'selling' at all.

"We have three espresso blends, one filter coffee, and several single origins. For a northern roaster, our pricing is on the upper side, but then we are buying distinctly better beans than many roasters I know. Our Under Milk Wood blend is £15.50, which is not terrifically expensive, except that we are up against a lot of roasters whose prices are £12-£14.

"We are already having distributors ask if we will roast for them, but they are expecting to pay less than we pay for our green beans... which just shows how much cheap coffee people are currently selling at £12 a kilo."



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Several brands familiar to the coffee-house trade have done well in this year's 'Best Brands' survey from the Guild of Fine Food. Each year, the organisation invites buyers for delis and food halls to report their best-selling brands in various categories, and this year's sections involved tea and coffee brands.

In the savoury snack vote, Pipers Crisps was voted 'best savoury snack' for the third year in succession. "It's important because it's voted for by retailers themselves," said the brand's founder Alex Albone (above). "It shows that independent retailers believe that we're doing things consistently well for them, and that they appreciate a point of difference – we don't supply the major supermarkets, so our crisps are not seen everywhere, so retailers can offer a point of difference at a sensible margin."

In the coffee section of the vote, Grumpy Mule was voted top, ahead of Taylors, and Union Hand-Roasted – a notable double 4th place went to DJ Miles, the roaster and tea-blender from Somerset, which also took fourth in the tea section. Top of that tea vote was Teapigs, followed by Taylors and Twinings.

Americano getting big at mobile vans

The growing drink in the mobile coffee trade is the Americano, according to a small piece of research by Cafe2U, the van-based chain. Rather predictably, the chain's customers showed a general preference for the latte, the favourite for 68 per cent of them. Cappuccino and flat white were each the preferred drink for 18 per cent of customers... but 14 per cent voted for the Americano.

"We have seen this double in the past twelve months," managing director Tom Acland told *Coffee House*. "The appeal of it may be partly health-related, in that some people have been told things about drinking too much milk, but we prefer to think that it is growing because of taste – it is the neatest practical form of coffee, one step from espresso."

Part of the Cafe2U business model involves 'taking the coffee to the customer', in response to which 52 per cent of customers said they bought from their local van 3-5 times a week.

Many cafes' water treatment is still not entirely eco-friendly

The water-treatment industry continues to be largely unfriendly to the environment, according to one of the biggest players in the sector. We recently reported that Steve Slark, a consultant in the field for some time, has joined European Water Care as managing director, and one of his first moves there has been to highlight to the trade the relationship between water-treatment products and the environment.

"I still can't get my head round the idea that many people in the coffee-house trade who profess their ethics and sustainability, are also the people who throw away pounds of plastic as waste!" he told us.

"We need to ask big questions about this – everyone is promoting the concept of 'sustainable' coffee, and yet they brew it with water which comes through a great lump of plastic which they throw in the bin. You cannot argue sustainability credentials if you are using disposable cartridges, or those which get sent abroad to be recycled.

"There is a lot in this product sector which is designed to go to the skip."

Recent changes at European Water Care have involved new manufacturing capacity, which has increased its capacity to make cartridge products, a new emphasis on renewed and 'regenerated' products, and a better look for the old 'blue bottle' products.

It has also been working to reinforce its 'made in Britain' status.

"There are two major products in this sector, bottles and cartridges.

"The 'bottle' format is typically a larger vessel that needs exchanging, which requires some manual input, if only turning off the water, and is in our case regenerated and returned to service. (Ours is no longer the old 'blue bottle' because we've had coffee shops saying they want to change from it 'because it doesn't look good!')

"The cartridge format is typically in smaller vessels that are supposedly quick-fit, quite like a light bulb, and the cartridge market began getting traction because they were disposable – the old one is typically put in the waste.

"We had not previously been in the position to make cartridge filters. Now



Steve Slark

we have one of our own manufacture, and this is not a one-way, disposable product – we can remove the inner refill from the outer cartridge and regenerate as normal.

"So we are now in both markets, and nothing now goes to waste – we can take the resin back and handle it without creating 'black water', and we simply put the hardness back where it came from."

(In water terminology, there is white water, which is drinkable, grey water which is rain, and black is foul water.)

Of the thousands of coffee houses that now exist, how many are taking water treatment seriously?

"This is a simple but challenging thing – we are passionate about water quality, and have the interests of the coffee-shop operator at heart. It is money that makes the world go round, and if you're running a coffee shop, you are doing it to make money.

"The top baristas now know exactly how much they can tweak their brew water, but the average beverage operator still needs help, and how the café operator can know the difference between good science and bad salesmanship is the fantastic question.

"You have to admire those brands who have brought the subject to public attention, but we think it is now up to us to promote a message of knowledge about water, environmentally-friendly products, and about sensible preventative maintenance in the cafe sector."

Chocolate - pricing crisis on the way?

There may be vast increases on the way in the price of chocolate – it has been suggested that some basic crop prices might be up by 60 per cent during the course of this year, and even the two biggest chocolate processors in the world have said they expect increases of at least eight per cent.

The problem appears to be threefold – increased demand in the far east, falling crop yields because of pest damage, and the problem of sourcing from the part of the world where the ebola disease is most active.

Among all this, it has now been reported that around 30 per cent of the world's cocoa supply is destroyed as unsatisfactory before it even gets close to the chocolate manufacturing stage.

There is now a new research centre in the UK which is preparing to show subsistence farmers the way to grow healthy crops. This is the International Cocoa Quarantine Centre, which has a giant greenhouse in Reading that houses 400 cocoa varieties. The project leader has said that small farmers really need new and more efficient varieties, which will be resistant to disease.

"If we do nothing, then there will be a crisis," he added.



Another single-cup tea brewer has appeared, this one featuring a built-in steeping timer.

It is the Tealightful Timer, intended to sell at about £19. It is seven inches long, can be loaded up with tea leaves, and will automatically stop the steeping process when set. The inner bottom section holds the tea bag or leaves, and the user closes the timing mechanism, before dropping it into the water. The timer beeps to alert the user to remove it from the water.

Coffee houses now take over from pubs

The Daily Mirror has suggested that coffee shops will outnumber pubs by 2026 if current rates of openings and closings remain constant.

The paper worked on figures produced by Allegra and the British Beer and Pub Association, and concluded that while the recession had been hard on pubs, of which 4,500 closed between 2009 and 2013, the number of coffee shops had increased more sharply.

Another pub chain has reported its in-house coffee brand to be increasing – Shepherd Neame says that fifty pubs from its tenanted estate of 299 have now taken on its Coffee & Ale House concept. The amount of coffee sold is not yet large by café standards, but growing, in that each now sells around 600 cups of coffee a month.

Elsewhere, the Kimbo coffee offer has been taken up by 240 pubs from the Star chain.

United Coffee has launched a new foodservice coffee in aid of a wildlife cause – its orang-utan coffee is grown on plantations which are worked by farmers who previously culled the apes for eating their banana crops.

The problem for both farmers and apes, observes UCC, is that the tropical rainforests in Sumatra are very desirable to both sides – they provide both a perfect climate for high-quality arabica, and also an ideal environment for the wild apes, of which only 6,000 remain.

Now UCC will pay the Orang Utan Coffee Project a premium which encourages farmers to commit to operate ecologically-friendly coffee plantations without killing apes.

Chemex pourover gets its own water brewer



It has been a busy time for new equipment launches, and the Chemex Ottomatic is a development for one of the most popular pour-over brewing methods in top-level coffee houses. On the face of it, this would appear to be simply a water-heating device, but among its features are programmable key brewing variables such as pre-infusion, programmable water temperature, and a hot plate which holds the brewed coffee at the International Coffee Organisation's recommended temperature. There is also a new sprayhead which is designed to efficiently cover the entire coffee bed for an even extraction.



No hands holding the Aeropress

The subject of hands-free Aeropress brewing continues to take curious turns, with several new devices appearing.

We reported recently on the launch of the Coffeeasy, a simple but practical device which allows for various items of drip-filter equipment to be held securely on a worktop.

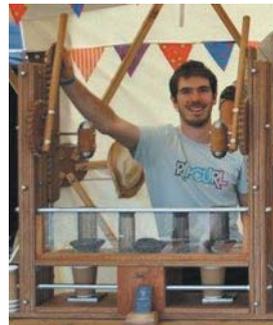
The inventor, Patrick Joseph, tells us that the product has now been taken on by Has Bean, the Staffordshire roaster, which rather uniquely has the item in red (it is a footballing preference of the roaster himself).

"It's a fine pourover stand," Has

Bean's Steve Leighton (above) told us. "It also keeps all the brewing stuff together so nobody else shouts that you're taking over the kitchen. It's well put-together."

The product has also drawn the attention of the noted trainer Paul Meikle-Janney, who told us: "it's not rocket science, but I think it will particularly find favour with those who use an Aeropress who need that non-slip sturdy housing to push down on."

Elsewhere, the matter of securely holding an Aeropress has been approached uniquely by Brewbar, an event catering coffee company working from the back of an ancient Citroen van.



The partners realised that their service was getting regularly backed up waiting for Aeropress brewing, and that at the same time, the baristas were getting weary from the effort. They created an astonishing cog-and-lever apparatus which allows for more than one Aeropress to be pressed down at the same time, without any effort from the barista.

British inventors are behind the creation of the Wi-Fi Coffee Machine, presented at a technology show in Las Vegas at the turn of the year. The machine was created by Smarter Applications, which created the similar i-Kettle last year, which has not gone on to be sold all over Europe. The coffee machine has been designed to wake up users with a cup of freshly ground coffee, or to respond to a smartphone command to brew one, in which case it can also be programmed to make coffee to be ready when the user returns home. The inventor has said that he can foresee a time when the coffee-maker will work with other devices - typically, a smart wristband that monitors sleep, and which tells the coffee machine that the owner has slept badly, and needs a really strong cup of coffee. The Wi-Fi Coffee Machine will be on sale in March at £129.99.

World-first machine hits investor trouble

The world's first coffee machine to take green beans, and roast, grind and brew in successive operations inside the same table-top casing, has been unveiled at exhibitions in the far east and in Las Vegas - however, there has been a campaign by dissatisfied investors demanding their money back.

The Bonaverde is a machine invented by a German entrepreneur. It takes a very small amount of green beans which are fed into a roasting compartment at the top of the machine, following which the beans are fed down into a grinder, and thence into a brewer.

The machine is probably to be priced at \$650 (around £400), and there are said to be 3,500 pre-orders from the first batch of 5,000, due to be made in China by this spring.

The machine was successfully fund-



The Bonaverde

ed through Kickstarter, with 2,200 backers putting up \$681,461 - the inventor had only asked for \$135,000. However, since the target was reached, there has been a campaign of complaints, with over 1,600 messages on Kickstarter from investors who have asked for their money back.



One of the oldest ways of making coffee, the moka pot, has been re-designed by an American coffee company. The original Italian design has been left more or less untouched since it was invented, and has always been popular because it uses steam pressure, though not of the same power as an espresso machine, and produces a very good result. The new design, on sale in America for \$100, is made in a combination of steel and porcelain with a cork handle. It holds slightly more coffee than the conventional moka, producing a 6oz drink.

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EGRO
SWISS COFFEE TECHNOLOGY

On 14th September, 2010, an espresso machine exploded in a café at a Sainsbury's store in Hampshire. According to the local media, several staff and customers were taken to hospital.

For the national media, it was a two-day wonder; for the specialist coffee trade, it raised a number of problems.

It has already been pointed out for some time in the trade that espresso machines are pressure vessels subject to regulation and testing, or in the words of one major machine distributor: "these things are bombs".

Certain members of the trade argued that for items which come under such safety rules as the pressure vessel regulations, and yet which are used daily by hundreds of thousands of catering staff, this offered an important opportunity for a safety message.

Although the explosion was generally thought to be a unique incident, several members of the machine and servicing side of the trade said it should provide an opportunity to remind the catering industry of safety procedures, and not least reinforce awareness of the requirement for a pressure vessel to be regularly examined. This, of course, is something which is routinely ignored by vast sections of the hospitality industry.

The Health and Safety Executive did begin an investigation, and in 2011 this magazine met with the inspector handling the case.

Realising that the HSE was not experienced in the specific detail of espresso machines (not least being slightly worried by the HSE's habit of referring to espresso machines as 'cafe boilers') we volunteered to introduce the inspectors to experts from the coffee trade who could help with their understanding of the case.

The rest of the trade and business media ignored the subject completely. No relevant trade body stood up to say anything or follow the matter.

And in the following years, those who did follow the matter (just this magazine and Louie Salvini of Espresso Service, together with his partners in the informal Coffee Council discussion group), found that progress was exasperatingly slow.

*

During 2013 the HSE took legal action against the maker of the machine, the Elektra company of Italy. Their case was put to two different courts in Hampshire, both of which refused to hear a case against a foreign company.

Nothing further was heard from the HSE, until, pressed by this magazine for details of its investigation and its court case, the Agency stated that: "we have accepted the decision of the court to decline to hear the case, and as such it is not appropriate to discuss the specific issues we identified."

This magazine, and those from the coffee trade who had pursued the

The espresso machine explosion – did the HSE investigate it well?

It is now over four years since an espresso machine exploded in a public cafe. The Health and Safety Executive investigated – but have held nobody responsible, and made no statement at all on the matter.

We have asked... why not?

matter, thought this unsatisfactory, and complained that if an investigation had been held for several years into one of the most important pieces of equipment in the modern coffee trade, then the trade had a right to hear what investigations had been made and what conclusions had been reached, on the grounds that important safety issues might have been identified.

The HSE refused.

This magazine made an application under the Freedom of Information Act, noting that interested parties in the coffee trade had agreed that: "we are not doing this to apportion blame – what we want is information and instruction to prevent this happening again".

advice it issued to local authorities, environmental health authorities, and the catering trade, with regard to the matter of espresso machine safety.

The HSE was also invited to assess the cost of its work over the preceding years.



THE HSE'S RESPONSE

It is perhaps not surprising that the HSE invoked several of the clauses which the Freedom of Information Act contains, allowing a department to refuse an answer to a question.

“ ...it is not appropriate to discuss the specific issues we identified... ”

– the statement by the Health and Safety Executive which astonished members of the espresso machine trade



Under the Freedom of Information Act, the HSE was challenged to report the results of its meetings with members of the coffee trade, and what its inspectors learned from these meetings; what meetings took place between HSE and the supplier of the machine (Matthew Algie Ltd) and the maker of the machine, Elektra, and with what results. The HSE was asked to reveal the results of its investigations, of its inspection of the machine which exploded.

The HSE was required to say what legal advice it took prior to raising the court case against Elektra, the evidence it prepared to be put before the court, and what it did following the decision by two magistrates' courts not to hear the case.

In respect of what is considered a crucial aspect of the matter, the HSE was asked to detail the information, or

These rather woolly clauses allow a respondent to refuse to give information obtained for the raising of a court case, to 'personal information', and to information received in confidence.

This permitted the HSE to edit out certain parts of its response. Rather bizarrely, they even blacked out the names of those very specialists in the coffee trade to whom this magazine had introduced them!

According to the records which have been disclosed, the HSE managed to get the date of the incident wrong on the very first page of its own report. Thereafter, it was nearly six months after the event that the HSE went to Matthew Algie Ltd to 'obtain operational details' of the type of machine involved, and 'of the subsequent actions taken to protect customers once details of the Farnborough incident became known.'

By April 2011, two interesting aspects had begun to emerge. One shows that the HSE itself was having doubts about being able to handle its own investigation – an inspector

whose identity had been deleted warns that cutbacks in the organisation might hinder the investigation.

He writes: "it may be weeks before we have an opportunity to discuss this fully... this is becoming a dilemma in being able to progress the matter in a timely manner."

"I am sounding an early alarm that without adequate resourcing, the overall work of the HSE will suffer, and present a serious long-term risk for HSE credibility."

However, at the same time, the HSE was clearly sure that it had got on to something. An HSE inspector writes of "the possibility that other Elektra products with similar electrical control arrangements to those found on the incident machine may have been supplied to other UK-based suppliers".

This is the first indication that the inspectors had found something in the electrics of the machine which caused them concern.

The HSE now discovered that a query regarding those electrics had been raised before the incident, and the inspector 'expressed concern' that in his interviews with the suppliers, he had not been told about a warning e-mail from Elektra dated February 2010 relating to one electrical component, nor a follow-up e-mail after the incident also referring to a need for re-wiring.

Further, writes the inspector, he discovered that Elektra were preparing 'as a further safety implementation' a 'pre-assembled heating element safety device kit to be installed into the coffee machines'.

"Why did Elektra not tell us about their own safety alert?" he asks.

"We also need to follow up why there are apparently two different messages given out concerning the particular electrical component."

The clearly-irritated inspector adds at this point that he has been in contact with the companies involved "to ensure that there are no other documents relevant to the investigation which they may have forgotten to disclose to us..."



It was at this point, in mid-2011, that the inspectors refer to their meetings with technical experts from the coffee trade.

It is distressingly clear from the notes of these meetings that if the HSE asked or learned anything in detail of practical relevant value from these people, they either failed to mention it in their reports, or have deleted it. The notes of meetings with the coffee trade are at best vague.

However, it is suggested from these notes that one espresso engineer told the inspector that he was 600 yards away from the explosion when it happened, and that he expressed concern over some of the wiring. How he got to see it, in an emergency incident location, remains unknown.

By August 2011, the HSE appears to have asked for one of its own technical departments to inspect the exploded machine – the inspection seems to have taken place almost a year after the incident.

THE HSE INVESTIGATION

Under the Freedom of Information Act request, the HSE was specifically asked about the technical examinations made by their specialist investigators. To the HSE's credit, they supplied several reports.

The first report is by the Field Operations Directorate, Specialist Group, and is dated January 2011, three months after the incident (although the report has the date of the incident wrong by a month).

It is the first to describe the incident: "the explosion led to the machine being physically propelled from the rear counter position, where it was positioned, over the front server area, coming to rest in the public seating area... the incident resulted in a number of casualties requiring medical attention, and caused extensive damage to the café".

This report raises the question of one component, saying that: "the contactor had been found welded in the 'on' position..." and questioning whether the component was adequately rated. This inspector writes: "this in my opinion was unsatisfactory, and it was foreseeable that the contactor could fail, potentially in the 'on' position."

"If the incident machine wiring modification had been undertaken in the way shown, the contactor would have operated within the manufacturer's specified rating... it is unclear to me why the modification was not undertaken on the incident machine."

A later and more detailed report is by an HSE specialist engineer who saw the machine in place, three days after the incident. His summary is unequivocal – it says "the explosion would have been prevented had the café boiler control system been designed so that a safety function was always performed when an electrical



The machine which exploded

control circuit single component failure occurred".

The inspector observes that Elektra had said they saw "no obvious cause" for the incident, but that at one meeting, with Matthew Algie's technical services manager and Sainsbury's head of engineering, the general opinion was that the pressure relief valve failed.

"A major contributory factor was the working condition of the pressure relief valve. Tests on the valve recovered from the incident machine concluded that a pressure 75 per cent over the stated opening pressure was required to open it... the valve was not functioning within the tolerance specified by the manufacturer."

This inspector also raises the matter that the explosion was caused by a combination of two factors or faults, the relief valve and a secondary component, a 'contactor', which is believed to have been inadequate. In effect, this failed to switch off the water heater, so the water in the boiler just kept getting hotter and hotter.

"A significantly under-rated component had been used to switch the water heating element on and off..." says the inspector. "The quantity of heat energy required to increase the pressure inside the boiler to a critical level would only have been delivered by the heating element if it were permanently on... the physical evidence supports the conclusion that the contactor had become stuck in the closed position... resulting in the heating element being permanently on."

“...in my opinion it was foreseeable that the contactor could fail, potentially in the 'on' position.

- HSE inspector's report

"The control system made no provision of any standalone or second channel safety features... which are commonplace and represent state of the art for similar machines. The addi-

“ The explosion led to the machine being physically propelled from the rear counter position, where it was positioned, over the front server area, coming to rest in the public seating area... ”

- HSE inspector's report ”

tion of this would have reduced, if not removed, the likelihood of the machine exploding."

However, says the inspector, the inadequacy of that component may have already been known about. He writes that: "when Algie installed the boiler on 15th October 2009, they followed the instructions... it wasn't until February 2010 that they received an e-mail from Elektra to modify the contactor... which advised they could wait until the boiler's next service".

(That advice would have arrived seven months before the explosion; the next service would have probably been due a month after the date of the incident).

This inspector said that one safety feature was not enough.

"In my opinion, the design of pressure equipment should not primarily rely on safety accessories such as pressure relief valves. In my opinion the boiler exploded due to a combination of the contactor being stuck in the closed position which resulted in the water heating element being permanently on, causing the element to deliver an unregulated amount of heat energy... and the pressure relief valve not functioning when required.

"The explosion would have been prevented had the boiler control system been designed so that a safety function was always performed when an electrical control circuit single component failure occurred."

The inspector added two more observations. One was that the HSE considered putting out a safety alert on the subject as far back as March 2011, but did not – because "Elektra assert that only the machines supplied

to Algie contain the under-rated contactor, and Algie had confirmed it had recalled all the relevant machines."

The importance of an opportunity to highlight the need for safety practices with regard to espresso machines in general, throughout the catering industry, seems to have escaped the HSE.

At the same time, the inspector notes that he saw no evidence of a written scheme of examination covering the incident machine, and makes the rather odd comment that: "Sainsbury's should ensure that they have robust systems in place to ensure that before equipment such as boilers are taken into service that they comply with applicable legislation".

This would appear to suggest that it is the user's responsibility to comply with the pressure-vessel regulations, create the written scheme of examination and do the appropriate tests, before the machine is installed.

Some manufacturers say they do this on installation, but not all.



THE PROSECUTION

It is in August 2012, two years after the incident, that we find the first reference to solicitors becoming involved, with a view to prosecution.

The notes are extremely vague, but include certain telling phrases: there are references to having examined randomly-selected similar machines at Matthew Algie, following which the inspector writes that he is "satisfied they had followed guidance from Elektra."

Probably as a result of this, there is also the phrase "it is unlikely that any further action will be taken against Algie," and very interestingly, we now find the second instance of someone within the HSE querying whether action can be taken against an Italian company.

This is a question which arose very early in the HSE's investigation, when a question was raised as to whether legal action was likely, and if so, against whom. It was much later, in March 2013 that the HSE's solicitor advised that there were 'no issues' regarding raising a case against Elektra.

The notes report: "it was decided to prosecute this company for an offence under the Health and Safety at Work Act, Section 6(1)... there has been no response to our communications via their UK lawyer." The HSE noted that: "this case is being taken because of the extreme risk gap arising from the failure by Elektra to do all that was reasonably practicable to supply an article that was safe."

The case first went to court in October 2013. Curiously, according to the HSE's records, the magistrates

ruled "no case to answer", but this may not be entirely accurate – according to the local paper, who were kind enough to keep this magazine abreast of what happened in court, the Basingstoke magistrate had indeed actually expressed concern over whether he was able to try a case against an accused company based abroad.

The case was brought again, this time at Aldershot magistrates. There was again argument over whether that court had the jurisdiction to hear the case, and at the same time, the defence raised the additional novel point that "Algie had picked up this particular delivery from Elektra's site in Italy, and Elektra cannot therefore be considered a supplier."

The case was dismissed.

At this point, another rather odd issue appears – according to the HSE notes the defence appears to have been represented by a barrister, whereas the prosecution was represented by a solicitor. The two sides seem to have treated the matter with differing degrees of seriousness.

Following this, the HSE's solicitor wrote to the inspectors saying: "... the sale itself took place on the shores of Italy with the machine being transported to Great Britain by another party.

"The defence argued that 'actus reus' (the guilty act) was the supply, and that supply took place outside UK.

"Our submission is that the 'actus reus' isn't either the design, manufacture or supply, but that the machine is not 'safe and without risk to health at all times when being set, used, cleaned or maintained by a person at work'.

"The act is a continuing one, which in our submission does not end because the act of supply has taken place. This was a submission that the district judge rejected.

"This is an odd approach to take in our view... this means that a machine can be unsafe for an extended period of time, exposing many to risk, without prosecution, simply because the physical act took place outside the UK."

They referred to a precedent case, HSE v Junttan Oy from 2003. This appears to be a case in which someone was killed in an accident involving drilling machinery which had been supplied by a foreign company – it went to the Lords, who said that prosecution in the UK was permitted.

What should the HSE do next? The solicitor wrote debating the legal points rather than offering a strategy:

"The option open is to case-state this decision (that is, to have it seen as a precedent) ... the reason would be to deter further argument in similar cases... this is only a first-instance decision in a rather unique case, however it is one which is being reported and therefore no doubt others will attempt to use the rationale in the future.

“ There must be advice to everybody in the industry, and this hasn't been handled well.

The big question is – why did the HSE not send out an alert at any time? Why did they not put a message out? And has still not done so?

- Louie Salvoni, Espresso Service

"The problem with any case-stated application is the financial side and the greater public attention should we lose..."

In the documents supplied under the Freedom of Information Act, there is no further communication following that letter. We have been given no information to show what the HSE decided next, or whether they simply gave up, quietly.

We do however see a note of four solicitors' bills totalling around £6,600.



THE TRADE'S REACTION

The coffee trade's view of the HSE's work has been less than enthusiastic – those who took part in the interviews, having been recommended by this magazine, were not impressed. One even told us that the HSE's notes of his meeting with them were 'not entirely true'.

At Fracino, managing director Adrian Maxwell gave the inspector a lot of time: "they wanted to learn how we do things as a manufacturer of pressure equipment, to learn how our machine works and how we comply with legislation. We hope that they went away with a good understanding of how a machine works and a few ideas on what could possibly have caused such a catastrophic failure."

At Espresso Service, Louie Salvoni also gave time, and reported: "Their visit didn't bring much to us. No practical recommendations, but I suppose

“ Do we now change the way we do boiler inspections? A boiler test should be carried out when a machine is installed, and that is done by some installers, but not all. It should be 'best practice', and manufacturers have to take responsibility on this.

that is par for the course."

Mark Allen of Espresso Test, the engineer who created an entirely new business to advise on pressure-vessel best practice in the espresso world, observed that the HSE did indeed seem unaware of the specifics of espresso machines:

"Their objective was towards finding out current industry practices and we spoke at length about my operating procedures and reporting methods... when I fished for information about what he thought of my set-up the response I got was 'what you're doing is probably better than any of our guys would be able to do'.

"I did afterwards hear they had passed my details to a local authority environmental health officer, who got in touch for me to confirm his suspicions about a report that had been issued to a user by an engineer, and which did contain points that were outside of guidelines. This EHO contacted me because the HSE had suggested that it was probable that I knew more about the regulations than anyone else!"

The most detailed response on the matter from anyone in the coffee trade has come from Louie Salvoni of Espresso Service, who has issued a statement on behalf of his engineers, entitled 'The Mysterious Incident of the exploding coffee machine... and the subsequent inaction by the HSE'.

"In summary, the machine had two faults: an under-rated electrical contactor, and a pressure relief valve which did not lift at its pre-set pressure of 2 bar.

"This raises a number of questions – should a pressure relief valve be tested before the machine is put into service... that is, tested on installation?

"The manufacturer was aware of a potential fault with the contactor and notified their agent seven months prior to the incident, stating that a modification was necessary but not urgent and could be carried out at the next inspection. Should any modification concerning the safety of a machine be carried out as soon as possible?

"If a manufacturer, or agent, identifies a fault within equipment that can result in a potential hazard, how should this be communicated to operators using the equipment?"

There is an aspect to this that both Elektra and the HSE missed, notes Louie Salvoni – the second-hand market. Machines do get sold on, and so

there is a need to communicate data wider than just the distributor and the immediate first customers.

"There must be advice to everybody in the industry, and this hasn't been handled well. The big question is – why did the HSE not send out an alert at any time? Why did they not put a message out? And has still not done so?"

It is also suggested by Espresso Service that a change in practice might be brought in as a stipulation.

"Do we now change the way we do boiler inspections? A boiler test should be carried out when a machine is installed, and that is done by some installers, but not all. It should be 'best practice', and manufacturers have to take responsibility on this.

"Where possible, we should have a 'hot lift' test on the safety valve. Some people test with a hand pump, and that is not enough – it should be tested 'hot', with the machine working."

What became of the baristas who were involved in the Sainsbury's incident?

When the HSE was beginning its investigation, the inspector told us, face-to-face: "had the barista been standing a foot to one side, they would have been decapitated..." We have asked Sainsbury's what happened to their staff injured in the incident; they first replied that the store manager has since changed, but they do not know of anyone being injured.

However, parts of the HSE papers refer to 'multiple casualties', and at the time the ambulance service reported fifteen people treated at the scene for minor injuries, of whom six were taken to hospital.'

A member of the coffee trade was actually in a queue in the store when the explosion happened.

He reported at the time of the incident that he had written to Sainsbury's saying that he had been a witness to the event and had expected Sainsbury's to get back in touch, wanting to speak with him – but he received no reply. He now tells us that on enquiring some time afterwards, he was told that one member of staff who was hospitalised had 'never returned to work'.

This brings up the important question of duty of care to staff, and we asked Sainsbury's whether the incident in Hampshire caused them to make any changes to its own operational procedures, or staff training, with regard to espresso machines?

They replied: "as a result of the incident, we have reviewed our processes for accepting changes to coffee machines and have introduced a new process whereby we only accept designs signed off by our in-house safety experts.

"We supported our colleagues at the time to ensure they had all the help and care they needed."

At Fracino, Adrian Maxwell was in general agreement, and even added a new aspect: "we do carry out a pressure test on installation of all new machines as they are installed, and we are probably one of the few that do."

"But most equipment sold in the UK is not marked correctly, have boilers without serial numbers, have safety valves not sealed or certified, have no boiler test certificates, and yet they are allowed to be sold and we can do little about it."

"We have to be whiter than white and all of our machines are properly marked, tested and certified."

But, he added, what about the growing market in mobile espresso coffee, and gas-fired machines?

"Fracino is the only company to have the correct test in the world for gas machines, as yet again, most use just a bolt-on kit, uncertified by a proper test lab and with no technical file. They are allowed to be sold... and may be dangerous."



WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

What have these years of investigation achieved?

There are those who believe that the desirable target was to prosecute someone for the incident – that has not happened. If anyone was 'to blame', they will not be brought to account.

It might however be thought that a more important service which the HSE could have performed would have been to communicate its findings and advice to interested parties.

Espresso engineers would have wanted to hear what the technical investigators had to say about espresso machine operation, but the HSE could have taken the opportunity to communicate widely a message about the safe maintenance and handling of espresso machines, throughout the entire hospitality trade, to attract the attention of hotel managers, restaurant operators, and pub owners.

It has not done so. A specific question put by this magazine asked:

"What information/advice/guidance or other communication has the HSE made or issued to local authorities, environmental health authorities, the beverage trade, the hospitality and catering trade, or other interested parties, following its investigations, with regard to the matter of espresso machine safety?"

This has not been answered at all, except for a vague reference to a very generalist information sheet on pressure vessels, accompanied by a note saying that it may or may not have been published with reference to the Sainsbury's incident and contains some very vague references about who can inspect an espresso machine.

"It is my belief that there has been no

official communication on the matter to local authorities," agreed Mark Allen at Express Test.

"I think the affair did increase awareness within the industry to a degree, but still there remains apathy, and I really think that distributors and suppliers are responsible here. Often, on sale of a machine, a supplier will send someone to train the staff, and the training covers how to make the coffee, but rarely touches on the safety of the operator."

"The regulations require operators of pressure equipment to know the safe working limits and to know what to do in an emergency. A duty of care should be considered by all distributors... indeed, potentially, it should be imposed on them. It is, by various health and safety regulations, but once again we meet apathy from the ones who should know better!"

"I assume the remit for the HSE was to investigate in order to bring a prosecution. I wonder if it would have been a different outcome if they had brought the case against the local authority for failure to enforce the regulations?"

(The local authority involved in the Sainsbury's incident, Rushmoor, tells us that it has highlighted the situation to all health and safety departments in its area).

This magazine has suggested that at the very least, the HSE might now convene a conference on the subject with the coffee trade, to share the useful knowledge arising from its technical investigations, and to highlight the importance of espresso machine preventative maintenance among the wider hospitality trades.

The HSE has not replied.

WHAT NOW?

Espresso Service has suggested that several best-practice items should be stipulated as requirements when working on espresso machines:

1. The pressure relief valve should be tested before the machine is put into service, on installation.
2. It follows that all PSSR testing should be carried out at the point of operation.
3. A pressure relief valve should be tested using steam pressure, where possible (not all operational environments will allow).
4. Where possible the test should show that the valve should have a flow rate sufficient to avoid over-pressurisation of the boiler.
5. Any modification notified by a manufacturer concerning the safety of the machine should be carried out as soon as possible.
6. All operators of any equipment requiring a modification as notified by the manufacturer concerning the safe operation of the equipment should be notified immediately by the manufacturer or manufacturer's designated agents.

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There are a lot of awards schemes in the coffee world – some are taken seriously, and some are treated with a very large pinch of salt.

But a string of recognitions from entirely different sources would seem to be more than just coincidence - and during the course of 2014, one London coffee house picked up a 'best independent café' award, a 'best coffee experience' award, a 'best coffee shop for out-of-office workers' title, a 'best independent coffee shop in Europe' prize, and both 'best espresso' and a five-cup rating from the Beverage Standards Association.

This happy café is Timberyard, which has two sites, one in Old Street, pretty much in the 'cool coffee' area, and one in Seven Dials, which is a stone's throw from Soho. There will be a third opening in the heart of Soho this year.

A Timberyard slogan is 'tea, coffee, work and play... re-imagined', and this is a clue to how Timberyard has positioned itself in the market. It is quite definitely planned to be a welcoming hangout for those who work from coffee shops, with an emphasis on technology which welcomes those who work away from conventional offices; it will even offer meeting-room space.

This suits the Soho area well.

One online review said something which will puzzle those from outside London: it referred to 'a look that would be quite at home out east, but rare here in Covent Garden'.

That 'out east' means a relative stone's throw away by anyone else's standards - three or four stops on the Underground. Does this mean that there are significant and noticeable regional differences within London that dictate a café's approach?

"It really is a city of different areas and tastes," remarks co-founder Darren Elliott. "Seven Dials is a very close community of boutiques, which works well for the area. It is not all about tourism - we are only one street away from the tourist area, but we also have a lot of residents here, and the Google and Facebook offices are here. We also have the buzz of the theatre district, so everything collects around here, and we play to that collective vibe."

But this is very different from the east end, the accepted centre of cool coffee.

"This is the perfect example of different territories in London. Much of the east-end hipster thing is over-designed and over-trendy, the barista culture there is instantly recognisable, and I feel out of place at the London Coffee Festival!

"There is a very arrogant barista attitude which runs deep in coffee circles, and this was apparent when we did our grand tour of research, when we were setting Timberyard up. We spent around six months visiting three or four coffee shops every day. We looked at what people did well, and we looked at what they did badly.

Social media as a major business plan



"We saw great coffee being brewed, in places where the service was appalling. We desperately wanted to redress this, because we judge the experience of a café according to how welcoming the service is, and I really did not want to be seen as bringing that kind of attitude here.

"Now, we run Timberyard as a welcoming business, not a laboratory where baristas go to play with coffee. As a result, we were recently the subject of a beautifully-written blog - they wrote about feeling immediately at home here, and that although they managed to smash a glass, a member of staff immediately cleared it up and made her feel at ease about it. The writer said that when she left, she felt happy for no particular reason, and that is what it's all about, the customer feeling at home and looked after.

"But of course there is more to it than that. The quality of everything we have, not just the coffee, has to be of equally high standard, including the décor. We are often amazed to watch people come in, and see the 'wow' expressions on their faces - we ask ourselves, what is it about this place that has such an effect? Then you go out as a customer and sit in another café elsewhere which doesn't do that to you, and you find it readily noticeable how the environment has an effect on customers.

"It would be a fair summary to say

that we have balanced the subject of great tea and coffee, with the 'experience' for the consumers. Many coffee shops are owned by people of love and passion, who insist on being behind the espresso machine - but it is difficult to run the 'experience' from there - you can only manage the 'experience' of the café when you step away from the machine and see it all from a different viewpoint."

The Timberyard emphasis on working space and conditions has more to it than meets the eye. For customers to be readily connectable online is



Darren Elliott

appealing – but as other café owners have noted, that is a hazard in that an adverse online review can appear instantly, while the customer is still at their table. So Darren Elliott makes sure he is as connected as his customers are.

"This has been a very steep learning curve, because there really is a strategy to our online work.

"I was very aware when we were building technology in, from our iPads to our EPOS, that we were becoming a high-tech building for people who work on a nomadic basis and carry their office with them.

"So we have just finished making a film for social networks, as an 'aid' for customers, and for when we talk to investors and the like. A lot of what we do really has to be 'witnessed' to be understood, because we are so much more than a coffee shop. We are a meeting-place, a working-place, we have iPads, free wi-fi, and we are trying to build a community.

"Previously, I ran a brasserie at the Maritime Museum in Greenwich, and they had a whole department devoted to their social media presence. So for

Timberyard, I went to a social media course and wrote a 'social media training plan'!

"I have written lots of marketing plans for various projects, but this one was about learning how different networks are affected by what you are trying to say at different times of the day. You learn what to say, and when, and also how to avoid the things which irritate people online... and there are lots of these, from bragging to the general tone of your talk. You will also find that too-frequent posts will get you 'unfollowed'.

"I am regularly told that Twitter is the best promotional medium of all, so we follow it avidly, and we don't miss a thing. I carry several devices which will flash up when something is said, because it is part of my job to keep rigidly on top of social media, while managing a café business at the same time. A lot of what is said there does require a response, and we do this instantly, but I am also encouraged to monitor it because we get a lot of pleasure from so many good comments there.

"We serve the drinks on flat wooden boards, which always prompts customers to get out their phones and take a picture – on Instagram, which tends to get picked up a lot in searches, the focus is all photography, so we now have a whole gallery of pictures taken by real customers, which forms a kind of visual recommendation."

Handling adverse reviews is an art, according to Timberyard.

"Some years ago, at the beginning of online reviews becoming big, I worked with a pub group which received a series of very negative reviews. Now, you can take these things personally and take them to heart, and I made the mistake of entering into long conversations online, trying to justify ourselves. It can turn into a very public argument, which can be terrifying.

"So, for the two or three adverse comments that we have had at Timberyard, we have taken the matter offline, in that we didn't fight our corner in public view. If there is anything negative said, then we invite people to come and talk to us.

"When someone has an axe to grind and is backed by anonymity, they think they can be as bolshie as they like, but you can still correct these issues – we had one client who turned up unannounced for a meeting here, and was dealt with badly by a member of staff when there wasn't a manager here who could have dealt with it. We managed to solve that by e-mail, and made the customer feel special again, which is what it's all about."



The rapidly-increasing number of in-house barista contests, in places as diverse as universities and pub groups, is going to be a very good thing for the progress of the mainstream coffee industry – but the mainstream industry still has to be guided as to how it can get the most knowledge and education from the top-level contests.

The observation has come from Bewley's, which has taken on sponsorship of the UK barista championship for the next three years.

Many observers have commented that, while the national championships and top-level baristas are important, the real job to be done by the coffee trade is in promoting improvement in hot drinks throughout the industry, from cafes and pubs to hotels.

It is going to be important that the national contest should not be seen as remote from what happens on the high street, says Brendan McDonnell, managing director of Bewley's UK.

"The key thing is to 'inspire'. Seeing these wonderful competitors in action ought to be used to encourage and excite the whole barista community. Not everyone can be a world champ, but that doesn't mean you can't be inspired to raise your game.

"We have people in Bewley's who have massively benefitted in their career journey, starting as baristas and going on to make careers for themselves, and competition has

The wider value of barista contests



Brendan McDonnell

been a big part of their inspiration.

"The UKBC should be a platform for promoting the wider education work that is available, and we firmly believe that the SCAE needs to do more to promote its educational programme. The diploma system should be made more accessible and regional training centres should be advertised."

We see an increasing number of in-house barista contests, in businesses from contract caterers to pub groups. Few of their entrants go on into the UKBC, but this does not really matter, agrees McDonnell - the importance is in what their contest does to inspire interest in beverage service in their own businesses.

"We've worked on these, and they work best of all when the whole organisation from top to bottom see the value that it can have on their business. Where we find the right and willing partner at the top of the client organisation, who shares our under-

standing of just how enabling these competitions can be, then we will throw our best people at supporting their event.

"Why? Because inspiration triggers ambition, and a willingness to learn and improve quality. And in the end quality will drive till-ring."

What can be learned from the national barista championships by the one-site coffee-house owner who has four baristas on his staff? Is there any value in an owner-manager taking staff along to a championship, or from showing the staff videos of contests?

"These events can provide a trigger for baristas to recognise that there is a serious career in what many may have previously considered a stop-gap. Many of our Bewley's team were introduced to new career ideas through exposure to competition as young baristas.

"The best word of advice for an employer is not to just sit and watch – let your baristas talk to the entrants and organisers. The top coffee guys are generally a friendly and sharing bunch!"

Can anything about specific drinks be learned from a barista contest?

"Again, the SCAE could use the space and time they use for the UKBC to also run some educational workshops, but it's also up to the coffee

shop owners, who have a responsibility to seek out ways to improve their own products.

"For me and the rest of the coffee world this is the exciting thing – there is so much opportunity to improve coffee quality in the UK."

What can the average hotel or café manager learn from the 'signature drink' aspect of the UKBC? We once suggested, as did a previous sponsor, that the signature drink data from the national contest be collected and published in a kind of 'recipe book', but it never happened.

And yet, some in-house contests have made it a stipulation that the signature drink must be practical, profitable and viable, and some operators have even put their in-house winner on their menu. How can the 'signature drink' aspect of contests be used to inspire and encourage beverage operators to look afresh at their own menu?

"I have seen examples of some signature drinks, or slightly more basic versions of them, being served in some shops, but these are still isolated cases.

"I think the importance of the 'signature drink' feature is that it brings up many innovative ideas.

"And I love the book idea!"

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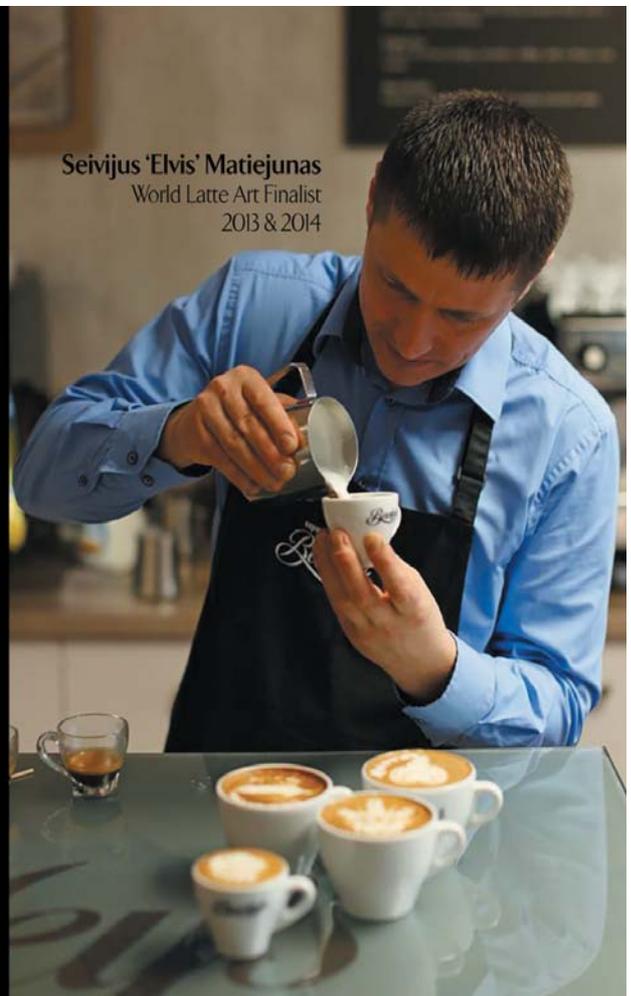
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Seivijus 'Elvis' Matiejunas
World Latte Art Finalist
2013 & 2014

It has long been said that British café-bar customers just do not drink straight espresso... nor, for all the pious reports of 'this is the way it's done in Italy', do British customers stand at the bar, down their single espresso, and be out of the café in a minute or less.

Well, they do now – or at least some of them, and quite unexpected customers, in a quite unexpected place.

One of the newest Italian-style café-bars is tucked down one end of Old Compton St in Soho, in London. It is Bar Termini, which quite appropriately for Soho is next door to a peep-show business, although that is apparently a front for an art gallery.

It has been devised by Marco Arrigo, a third-generation Italian and the man who first drove the arrival of Illy coffee in this country, and it opened a couple of weeks before the end of the year. And to his enjoyment, an appreciable part of the early trade has been in stand-at-the-bar straight shots, priced in the Italian manner at a low level – a pound.

"We have already found that people are very happy to come in late at night," he told us. "There are a lot of barmen and doormen working in Soho, and they have begun to come in here later on... they all have an espresso at the bar, and go. I may make only 70p from an espresso, but I make it from forty seconds, not from customers who sit here for twenty minutes or more!"

Bar Termini takes its name from the main railway station in Rome, and that has a meaning – it is the bar which represents the beginning and the end of the day's working journey.

Together with this, it reflects the owners' love of 1950s Italy and the film noir movement, and the result really does recreate the feel of being in an Italian café-bar. It's small, there is a ham-slicer at the end of the bar, customers come in and sit at the bar, or at just a couple of tables by the wall, and many of them have adopted the Italian habit of shaking hands with the barista as they arrive or leave.

It is certainly different from the average British high-street coffee house, agrees Arrigo

"In Italy you don't have 'coffee bars' – you have 'bars'. As a business model, we wanted to be more of an Italian bar, and that means cocktails from 11am, right through to closing. Where other cafes think they will stop selling coffee at the end of the afternoon and go home, we're still selling espresso at 11pm, and the reason that we got the first new licence in six years in Old Compton Street was because the police liked our concept!"

"I approached this business as a barman, rather than a coffee-shop owner."

What exactly is the difference?

"More respect is given to the ingredients in a cocktail bar, and cocktail bar owners tend to plan their busi-

In Soho, you can be brave!

The man who introduced Illy coffee to Britain many years ago now opens his own authentic Italian espresso bar in London



"We have already had the royalty of cocktail barmen coming in..." - Marco Arrigo

nesses to be the kind of place they would like to go themselves, instead of just copying the business next door because that's the way everyone else is doing it.

"People who have ideas in their heads open restaurants, those who just want to copy tend to open coffee houses. If you do that, what are you going to do to bring people in – drop your prices to ten per cent below the chains? Fine... and how are you going to make money out of that?"



Unusual servings at Termini - the cup without handles, with coffee served with a pour-it-yourself jug of milk, and the Bicherin.

"If every pub in England had the same menu and the same beers, how boring that would be... and a lot of coffee houses wonder why they're failing, when they all have the same menu as the café next door!"

"The way to unravel the hold of Starbucks is... have a different menu." Termini is also small.

"As an average coffee-house, we would have had to look for a place that holds 120, because we would have needed the quantity to make it work. As it is, we are licensed for 30, and at this size we can be a five-star place.

"And we have had the royalty of cocktail barmen coming in here already."

Part of the reason for that is because Marco's business partner is a cocktail star himself. This is Tony Conigliaro, famous in the 'London cocktail revolution', the owner of Bar with No Name, founder of the Drinks Factory collective, and the author of an award-winning book, *Unravelling the Mystery and Flavour of Drinks*.

The coffee is Arrigo's department, and is approached in the direct and challenging manner for which he has become known.



Typically, he has trimmed the menu to just a handful of drinks. There is no cappuccino or flat white, but that does not mean there is a bias against milk.

"The normal coffee-house business is constipated with milk," remarks Arrigo, "and I am tired of being told that the flat white is the pinnacle of speciality coffee on the high street!"

So there is a caffè latte on the menu, at £4, but it is not served in the expected way. The coffee is served in a kind of bowl, without handles, and the milk is served with it, not in it... the customer puts it in themselves. There is no latte art to be seen, and the mere idea of that draws raised eyebrows from the management and baristas.

"The idea of latte art is similar to the idea of flair bartending, or 'twirling' – you only twirl in cocktail bars where the ingredients are rubbish! It's said that latte art adds to the perceived value of a drink, but I do not want my barmen to show off... this business is supposed to be about the customer, not the barman."

(Nevertheless, he has now devised the entertaining idea of customers doing their own art-pouring, which has become popular!)

The equivalent of a cappuccino is the Bianco (£4) and hot chocolate is available, but chocolate appears best in the Bicherin, the signature drink of Turin. It is not quite the same coffee-and-chocolate sensation as a mocha.

"I like coffee and I like chocolate, but not often together... when they mix, you often get a gritty, muddy result which detracts from the taste of either."

"In the Bicherin, you get the taste in two parts of your mouth, giving you the taste of the coffee and the chocolate separately. We mix our chocolate ourselves, from a liquid chocolate and a solid chocolate base, and we make it up in advance."

"This is difficult, so you have to know how to do it, but our people are good cocktail barmen, not baristas. The difference is that the best barmen don't get hung up on thinking they're clever, but are open to learning new ideas, and then just do it!"

Even the biscotti are unusual.

"The Biscotti di Novara are what biscotti used to be, and the recipe for this goes back a long way. There is a big difference between this and what you'd get in a chain coffee shop."

The food is equally Italian. Authentic pastries with apricot jam or custard filling have had to be specially sourced, and the meat slicer at the end of the bar is in use for equally authentic snacks. This is what you would see in Italy, notes Arrigo – "you don't see bought-in ham sandwiches there!"

It is all as defiantly 'different' as might be expected from one of the most opinionated people on the British coffee scene.

"I've always been a bit of a black sheep in my own industry," acknowledges Marco Arrigo cheerfully. "I've never been quite 'in' with what they call 'speciality' coffee. In this place, I can be what I want... and I don't mind if some coffee people say they don't get it."

"I don't care... in Soho, you can be brave!"

The worst cafe manners

A radio station in Washington, USA, has been collecting opinions from the owners of local coffee shops as to what constitutes good café etiquette on the part of customers, and has now published a list of do's and don'ts for consumers.

The main complaint from café owners is of customers who pour undrunk coffee into the waste bin, which becomes a major nuisance for staff to clean out – one has had a warning notice about it in place for two years.

The other main 'requests' to customers are to clear up litter and minor spills from tables, because most coffee-houses don't have enough staff free to do the job, and not to rearrange the furniture – a remarkable number of customers move chairs and tables, and even sofas, obstructing the passage of others.

Squatters who use the wi-fi for several hours after having bought just one drink are still universally hated. And the most offensive customer habit is still... ordering drinks while talking to someone else on their phone.

From the other point of view, a quaint tea room in the Peak District has been called 'the worst coffee shop in Britain' by some sections of the press, who have turned the owner of the Hidden Tea Room in Castleton into something of a cult figure with the discovery that he has achieved a hundred ratings of 'terrible' on the Trip Advisor website.

This adverse publicity seems to have been a good thing for the café, with a number of new customers seeking it out as a result – although one reported that "staff at the nearby tourist information shop winced when we asked for directions there".

The critical reviews generally centre on the attitude of the owner, who has typically been reported as complaining that he doesn't like customers who come in only for one pot of tea between two, but occupy a table for a long time.

Although the reviews have included comments such as "the Hidden Tea Rooms should stay hidden", and "the worst place on earth", the most recent reviews since the press coverage have been somewhat more sympathetic, although still not entirely approving.

Comments from this year already include "a unique experience I wouldn't have wanted to miss... a great story to tell!", and "just accept it and enjoy the bizarre experience".

One perceptive reviewer noted: "the owner is a down-to-earth man who does not take fools gladly... we think he must now be trading on his bad reputation, and why not? With so many template-like cafes these days, a visit here is a 'must' experience that will leave you giggling in a surreal fog of wonder."



Cappuccino Rapido man extends into artisan bakery

The link between coffee houses and artisan bakery has made another step, with the opening of a bakery in Eccleshall as a partner business to David Wiggins' Courtyard coffee shop in the town and the Cappuccino Rapido event catering business.

The last bakery in the town closed a quarter of a century ago, and the businessman says that while the area might not hold enough potential trade to support a standalone bakery, it should work in partnership with his coffee interests.

"Until three years ago, I had a partnership in a deli in the town, where I made some artisan-style breads, and they sold pretty well," he told us.

"I acquired a cafe business known as The Artisan of Eccleshall from one of my wholesale coffee customers in December of 2013, and my family and I have been running it since then.

"We have raised the bar a bit, with a 'guest espresso' (currently the Dark Woods' Crow Tree) and grated hot chocolate from Marimba, and we now have a loyal following.

"The town is a small country place, and as part of our cafe business, a small bakery could succeed, offering a community-bakery style of product, quality hand-raised bread made from stoneground organic flours, with some sourdoughs, and making a wider range of baked goods for the cafe.

"I also have a very compact coffee and tea retail shop here, for people to buy our products to use at home, which is a principle that will apply to bread flour also, for home bakers."

One of the businesses he acquired had the name Artisan, which will not be kept.

"I believe the term 'artisan bakery' is becoming over-used, and has been hijacked somewhat by commercial equipment people who now offer machinery to make 'artisan style' bread – a bit of a step towards convenience products!

"We are part of the Real Bread

movement, which is defined as bread made without the use of processing aids or any other artificial additives.

"So the bakery will be named 'Toast - The Eccleshall Bakery', and I hope to be baking for the start of February."

Cafe owners look for 'intrapreneurs'

A business couple who wish to open a chain of community coffee houses in Kent have come up against an unexpected obstacle – they cannot find enough suitable premises.

The idea behind the new Hathats Coffee company of Whitstable is to create a set of cafes in which the management of each decides how each business will support sections of its local community.

Each café will donate twenty per cent of its profits to community projects, and staff will receive a certain amount of paid time off to allow them to do voluntary work in their communities. The choice of good cause is up to the local staff.

Louis and Lisa Hurst have now appealed in their local paper, saying that they have spent six months searching for premises in Whitstable, Herne Bay and Canterbury.

"We thought premises would be the easiest thing," Lisa told us. "Perhaps this was naivety."

The Hursts have adopted a modern word to describe their goal – it is 'intrapreneurship', which can be defined as 'allowing staff to behave like an entrepreneur while working within a parent organisation'.

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It is a confusing time for hipster cafes in Australia. One of the classiest new ones in Sydney turns out to have been opened by, of all people, McDonalds. Aussie food writers have suggested that this is a testing-ground for a move upmarket and part of a billion-dollar rebranding strategy.

The Corner, in the Sydney suburb of Camperdown, has no McDonalds branding except for some small golden arches on the menus, and the uniforms are vastly different from the chain's usual appearance.

It serves corn fritters with avocado, chorizo and egg rolls, Moroccan salads, quinoa salads and one of the fashionable items of 2014, pulled pork. There is even porridge with poached pear.

With a general reluctance and air of surprise, Australia's food writers have all said that the result was very good... although one said that the burger was immediately recognisable as a McDonalds, except that the bun with it was far better.

The Australians are not above taking the rise out of their own hipster coffee culture, we learn from a new series of commercials for the Espressotopia machine brand, which pokes fun at the self-righteous coffee set in a series of spoofs by a duo called the Bondi Hipsters. Their



episodes show their exploits in their own café, including the claim that their babyccinos 'are made with actual baby tears.' With parody getting rather too close for comfort, one advert shows the duo opening a café with the theme of 'closed' – the baristas are seen self-importantly occupying themselves with coffee-brewing in the café while customers take one look at the name sign and walk away.

The news that America is thinking of re-starting economic ties with Cuba has not prevented the British coffee trade getting into trouble for using that island's coffee.

In Perthshire, customers of the Bean Shop have been astonished to receive emails from PayPal telling them that their accounts will be suspended and reported to the American Office of Foreign Assets Control if they do not sign a statement promising to make no further purchases which go against American law. One customer, who bought only half a kilo

of Cuban coffee, has raised a complaint with the Financial Ombudsman.

The Bean Shop has said that it has removed Cuban coffee from its stock, even though it is one of their most popular products.

This will come as no surprise to the former treasury minister Phillip Oppenheim, who now runs Alma de Cuba coffee from London, and who has invested heavily in the regeneration of the Cuban coffee industry. He is regularly questioned by the American authorities and has also clashed with PayPal over the matter.

The Labour shadow chancellor, Ed Balls, received a lesson in barista techniques at Small Batch Coffee in Hove recently – he was in the area to promote small businesses, and was given an instant course on how coffee is grown, treated and brewed. He said later that he did not know coffee started as a green bean.

Costa Coffee has apologised to a customer who complained about a mis-spelling on its till receipt – the store in Leytonstone, London, was rather surprisingly entered as 'Leightonston'. Costa began the new



Kaldi

year with another surprising sign, announcing the surprise closure of a site in Wolverhampton. A sign in the doorway said: "it's time for us to say goodbye – we will be back. Same great coffee, same great team, just a different location." That 'same team', the staff, told their local paper they had not been told where the new store would be, or when it might open.



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