

News in brief

Staccato reports from the cultural typeface

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Homecoming brings home the bacon

An independent report has found that Scotland's Year of Homecoming in 2009 delivered a string of benefits to the country and bolstered Scottish tourism during one of the toughest economic downturns. The key findings in the Ekos report were that £53.7 million of additional tourism revenue was generated for Scotland, some 22% above the target set for the year; 95,000 visitors to Scotland were influenced to travel to Scotland as a result of Homecoming; and £154 million of global media coverage was generated by the multi-award winning PR campaign. Speaking at the announcement of the findings, Alex Salmond, first minister of Scotland, said: "Scotland's first ever year of Homecoming was a great success, demonstrating the power of partnership and what can be achieved when the country unites behind an inspirational campaign. Our year-long celebration created legacies that will benefit Scotland in the coming years as we work towards 2014 when Scotland hosts the Commonwealth Games and the Ryder Cup. I am delighted to announce that 2014 will also be our next year of Homecoming, when we extend the invitation to the world once more to join our celebrations."

The tender trap

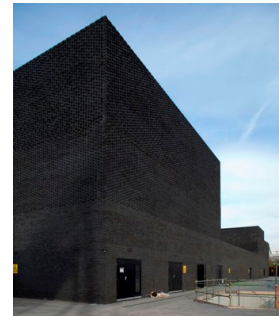
Phil Collier at Coachwise has confirmed that "following a competitive tendering process" the commercial arm of Sportscoach UK has been offered a new contract for the management and development of the Runningsports programme. Although only for an initial one year period (2010/11), there is the possibility of two further one-year extensions subject to performance and, presumably, budget cuts. Created by Sport England, Runningsports offers resources, workshops and advice to sports volunteers who are running clubs and organisations.

Palace lands £1 million investment

Crystal Palace national sports centre is benefiting from a £1 million investment programme thanks to a partnership between operators GLL and the London Development Agency (LDA). The money has gone in to a state-of-the-art health and fitness suite and is part of a planned, ongoing programme of improvements totalling £20 million over recent years. This latest investment places Crystal Palace at the heart of sporting excellence in the capital according to Tony Wallace, GLL partnership manager. "With the London Olympics and Paralympics on the horizon, our aim is for the Crystal Palace national sports centre to be a hub of excellence in sport both leading up to 2012 and beyond – providing a lasting legacy for London," he said. The LDA's Peter Bishop added: "These investments demonstrate GLL's commitment to Crystal Palace, which remains a vital sport and leisure facility in South London."

Number crunching Aussie style

Research into the Australian fitness industry highlights some interesting disparities between what customers think and what fitness club operators think they think. It would never happen in the UK, of course, but down under when asked to say what was the best form of marketing 52% of operators plumped for member referral while 68% of responding customers said they had referred friends. When it came to ranking customer motivations for making these referrals the clubs were again out of synch with their customers. One month's free membership was held to be the best method by 64% of clubs but only 55% of customers agreed. Following this, for free personal training sessions the numbers were 44% versus 38%, club



POWERFUL PRIZE: An electricity substation that will help power the London 2012 Games has won a Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) award for architectural excellence. The substation, which was the first completed building on the Olympic Park, was named Commercial and Industrial Building of the Year and as shortlisted for Project of the Year. The RIBA Awards jury said: "The architects developed a brief for a team of client, engineer, architect and contractor prepared to go the distance necessary to make a lasting local monument. The close collaboration has produced a thoroughbred, a beautifully detailed and executed scheme where function becomes sculptural landmark; a convincing celebration of energy infrastructure." The substation's eastern tower is lower in height to avoid blocking a viewing corridor from the north-east corner of the Olympic Park to the Olympic Stadium in south-west, as well as a view out towards central London, to St Paul's Cathedral and the Swiss Re tower.

merchandise 38% against 18%, and entry into a prize draw scored with 37% of clubs but only 14% with customers. You can prove what you like with statistics but these numbers just don't seem to add up. Mate.

Boscombe waves goodbye to surfer spend

The artificial surf reef commissioned by Bournemouth City Council and covered in depth in TLR in October 2008 was meant to bring hordes of hip, young surfers – and their tourist pounds – to Boscombe but it has been found to be failing on seven of its 11 targets. The constructors of the reef, New Zealand company ASR Ltd claim that it fails on only one criterion, that of wave length, but Plymouth University and the surfing public beg to differ. Dr Mark Davidson of the university's marine institute said that the reef "does fall short in a number of ways – in particular the ride length is a little too short. The wave length is rather too intense and challenging [and it] is not quite as consistent as it should be." And the word on the beach? The wave the reef produces is a "slab" not a "peeler". Which, of course, is a bummer. Mate.

Should old acquaintance be forgot

The Scottish FA have called time on "one of the most enduring" sponsorship deals in football with SFA president and acting chief executive George Peat announcing the end of their relationship with Tennents lager after 36 years. Peat risked misunderstanding when he said: "It has also been one of the most enjoyable." But he picked himself up with: "These are exciting times for the Scottish FA, with a new manager, a new kit and a new ethos. In keeping with this, we have a new approach to sponsorship and commercial activity." Tennents have moved on to sponsor both Glasgow Rangers and Glasgow Celtic so will not lose their association with the Scots' national game.

Cash injection for Welsh coaching

Sports coaching in Wales is set to benefit from an extra £1 million a year with the money aimed at providing 1,500 extra coaches and increasing the standard of coaching across Wales in communities, clubs and elite sport. Minister for heritage, Alun Ffred Jones, said: "I am pleased to be able to announce this extra money to help develop and support the many coaches and volunteers who are essential to the development of sport in Wales. The extra funding will be invested to recruit, train and support more community coaches and to develop our talented coaches at the regional and national level." As well as the 1,500 new coaches, the plan is to support a mentoring programme for talented and high-performance coaches, training for coaches working in disadvantaged areas, three regional coaching hubs for coaches working with talented athletes and a high-performance coaching conference. Professor Laura McAllister, chair of Sport Wales, added: "People are our greatest assets. We need to have more coaches available at all levels of sport; from introducing children to the basic skills of a game, to fine tuning the performance of top-class athletes."

The eye of the beholder

Leisure facilities company David Lloyd Leisure has commissioned research which suggests that parents' refusal to drive their children to leisure facilities is a major contributor to the nation's weight-related health problems. The press release heralding the research says: "A staggering one in five children aged 6-11 years do not receive any support from their parents when it comes to getting involved in sport outside of school", a finding which the release then calls "shocking". However, the RAC Foundation, a pro-car lobbying organisation, says that for "80% of the population, living in a house with a car is the norm", which would mean that 20% of households do not have a car. If being too poor, too green or too smart to be seduced by the marketing hype is a failure of parenting then clearly every fifth parent is tantamount to being an abuser. Alternatively, someone is pressing the PR button a little too hard in an attempt to get more parents to drive more nice middle-class kids to their nice middle-class centres.

Operator comes up to the mark

GLL has become the first leisure operator in the UK to be awarded the prestigious Social Enterprise Mark following the scheme's launch earlier this month. The mark identifies businesses that meet defined criteria for social enterprise and is designed to reassure consumers that businesses displaying it are trading to benefit people and the planet. GLL's managing director, Mark Sesnan, told TLR: "This is a strong endorsement of the fact that we are meeting our social goals and clearly distinguishes us from purely commercial enterprises."

News for which there proved just too much news

Britain's Got Talent finalists Strike have teamed up with ZigZag to launch an innovative martial arts programme for children and young adults. The Department of Health figures show that the number of decisions to admit patients to hospital in the first quarter of 2010 has increased by 64,000 (5.2%) to 1.3 million since the equivalent quarter last year. Carshalton College's new leisure complex is ready for the fit-out. Team GB's Olympic taekwondo star Sarah Stevenson is spearheading the search for the future stars of British Taekwondo by inviting the country's top young talent to join her Excellence Tour. One of the greatest works by the Italian Baroque master Domenichino (1581–1641) is to remain in Britain and is now on public display in Room 32 of the National Gallery, having been acquired by an anonymous private collector. The 2010 FIA State of the UK Fitness Industry report shows "growth in the fitness industry despite the recession". Liverpool's celebrated Hope Street Hotel is using the slogan 'A summer of culture' as a centrepiece of its advertising campaign. At the recent Sporta AGM leisure trusts voted unanimously to support the National Skills Academy employer protocol.

London 2012: haven't they been busy

Badminton and rhythmic gymnastics have agreed to have their Olympics at Wembley rather than in a temporary venue at Greenwich; one of these venues is quite close to the Olympic village and one is about an hour and a half away if you go by tube (which is probably the quickest ground-based route). Mondo has become a tier three supplier to London 2012 and becomes the official supplier of sports flooring and equipment. The Olympic flame will arrive in the UK on Friday 18 May 2012 and will travel around the UK for 70 days, arriving in London the weekend before the 2012 Games begin. ArcelorMittal is now a tier two sponsor and official steel supporter of the Games. Universal Music has signed a deal to exclusively release London 2012-branded music, including compilation albums; the deal also covers the composing, publishing and recording of London 2012-related music. On the second anniversary of the start of construction on the Olympic Stadium, work began on the field of play and the first batch of seats is being manufactured. Those mascots will apparently "inspire young people to take up sport". The transport plans for the London 2012 Games have achieved the British Standard in sustainable event management. There are 6,442 people currently working on the Olympic Park and 3,228 working on the Olympic Village. Eurostar has become a tier three sponsor of London 2012, the 30th domestic sponsor. Sainsbury's has become first Paralympic-only sponsor, becoming a tier one partner of the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

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