

## News in brief

Staccato reports from the cultural typeface

Edition number 47; dateline 31 January 2011

### Tripping the Leeds fantastic

Dance in Leeds has been given a massive boost with the completion of a £12 million purpose-built venue which will provide a new home for Northern Ballet and Phoenix Dance Theatre. Housing one of the largest dance rehearsal spaces outside London, the venue features seven dance studios – including a 230-seat studio theatre featuring work by artist Jo Fairfax – plus a health suite, wardrobe facilities, office space and a public exhibition space. The six-storey building was funded by £6.6 million from Leeds City Council and £4 million provided by Arts Council England. Northern Ballet raised more than £1 million and their chief executive, Mark Skipper, said: “Our new dance centre will help establish Leeds as a powerhouse for dance in the UK.”



Inside the 2012 handball arena: shedding light on the action via the tube

### Handball teams make London 2012

Somewhat against the odds the British Olympic Association (BOA) has confirmed that Great Britain’s men’s and women’s handball teams will be able to utilise host nation qualification places in order to compete in the London 2012 Olympic Games. Commenting on the decision that was put at risk by her own organisation’s “no compromise” approach to delivering performance success, UK Sport CEO Liz Nicholl said: “UK Sport is pleased that our investment in British Handball – which will total almost £6 million for the period from 2006 to 2013 – has helped the sport to meet the BOA’s qualification criteria for London.”

### Swimming summit set for Soho

The latest in *The Leisure Review* series of debates – and the last before the TLR symposium at the end of March – is on the blocks and ready to take a racing dive on February 21 at an undisclosed venue just round the corner from the iconic and highly relevant Marshall Street Baths. The TLR swimming summit will bring together key figures from across the aquatics world to debate the state and the future of swimming in Britain. Sponsored by industry behemoths Wilmott Dixon and chaired by industry veteran John Eady of KKP, the lunch will cover three courses and three topics of conversation, all of which will be reported in our March issue. Confirmed guests include representatives of the Swimming Teachers’ Association, GLL, Cornwall County Council and the ASA.

### Coaching seminar set for Nottingham

Thanks to its ongoing partnership with Sport Nottinghamshire, The Leisure Review is pleased to announce that the next of its Coaching Insights, to be held at Nottingham Trent University (NTU) on the afternoon of 23

February, will be free of charge to denizens of Nottinghamshire and people who coach in Robin Hood's county. Even incomers will only pay £15 for what TLR's coaching correspondent, Mick Owen, has described as "a really exciting combination of presentations under the theme 'Coaching the hard-to-coach'." Speakers include SSP PDM Lindsay Gray on using parkour and other "alternative activities" to engage young people turned off by traditional sports; NTU's own senior lecturer in performance analysis of sport, Athalie Redwood-Brown, on the use of objective information in the coaching process; Liz Jones, a business consultant who specialises in working with Generation Y; and nominated coach educator of the year 2010, Simon Kirkland, whose coaching social enterprise delivers a coaching communities programme which works with the long-term unemployed in the West Midlands. The Coaching Insights programme gives coaches operating at Level 2 and beyond the chance to get out of their NGB silos to meet and share information, experiences and insights with like-minded individuals.

• *To book your place on this seminar contact Mick Owen at [mickowen@tlrcomms.co.uk](mailto:mickowen@tlrcomms.co.uk). Full details of the event are available via [The Leisure Review event page](#).*

### **GLL to stay put in Merton**

Following what has been described as "a rigorous re-tender process", charitable social enterprise GLL has been awarded a 15-year contract to manage three local leisure centres on behalf of Merton Council. As part of a £3.5 million investment programme Wimbledon Leisure Centre will benefit from an upgraded health and fitness area and Canons Leisure Centre will see a dedicated junior activity zone opened. The management contract has a strong focus on performance targets, including increasing participation, customer satisfaction, consistency in cleaning standards and delivery of maintenance projects. Merton's cabinet member for community and culture, councillor Martin Whelton, said: "We are happy to be continuing our working relationship with GLL over the next 15 years. We know that our leisure centres are important to our residents, offering them many activities to keep healthy and to have fun. GLL has a proven track record providing sport and leisure activities to Merton residents. We want to encourage as many people as possible to use our excellent leisure facilities and take advantage of the many programmes on offer."

### **Yoodoo to counter disability barriers**

Sport England and the charity Leonard Cheshire Disability have committed £312,000 to a project called Yoodo Sports and are looking for people "who enjoy sport, conversation and exercise" to act as buddies for disabled would-be sportspeople. To quote the media release: "Yoodo Sports will bring disabled people together with activity 'buddies' – people who may or may not have an impairment themselves but want to help others play sport or be active." Sport England chair Richard Lewis launched the initiative, saying: "It's a concerning fact that if you have a disability, you're three times less likely to play sport than if you don't."

### **"Plinth full" signs for Trafalgar Square**

The capital's culturati now know what will be occupying Trafalgar Square's fourth plinth with Boris Johnson announcing that works by Elmgreen and Dragset, and Katharina Fritsch have been commissioned to occupy what Johnson has called an "extraordinary crucible for contemporary art". Elmgreen and Dragset's Powerless

Structures, Fig.101 will be put in place in 2012, replacing Yinka Shonibare Nelson's Ship in a Bottle sculpture and Katharina Fritsch's sculpture of a giant blue cockerel – Hahn/Cock – is set to be unveiled in 2013. Ekow Eshun, who revels in the job title fourth plinth commissioning group chair, has been quoted as saying that the spare plinth “continues to spark the imagination and there has been a tremendous response from the public”.

#### **But will it smell as sweet?**

As expected, given both organisations' financial challenges and falling memberships, both ISPAL and ISRM January general meetings voted to merge to form an institute of sport a.s.a.p. Whether anything can be read into the respective chairs' levels of joy in the quoted reactions is moot but Marc Newey's statement that “We now have a clear mandate to create the single professional body the sector needs, within a governance structure which ensures the core values and traditions of our institute will be preserved” would seem to indicate that when the new body becomes operational, and latest estimates on that happening are quoting a start date of 1 March 2011, the fact that it will be in the Loughborough offices of ISRM with the current ISRM chief executive in charge seems to argue that the IoS will be ISRM by any other name.

#### **US case raises questions**

US manufacturer of fitness equipment Cybex is facing a \$66 million jury verdict following an accident in which a New York woman, Natalie Barnhard, was rendered a quadriplegic when a 270 kilogram weight machine fell on her. The verdict in New York State supreme court presents a major problem for the US manufacturer which is responsible for \$49.5 million of the judgment but also raises a number of questions. In a statement Cybex chief executive John Agliodoro said: “This piece of equipment has been in continuous operation for over 25 years in the same facility as Ms. Barnhard was injured, to the current date, with no incidents reported other than this one event,” adding, “We strongly believe that Cybex was not negligent and is in no way responsible for this tragic accident.” Cybex's statement said Barnhard “pulled a Cybex weight machine over on herself”. Barnhard's attorney, Kevin English, said while doing a shoulder stretch, Barnhard had her hand on top of the leg extension machine, and it fell onto her when she stretched back with her shoulder and arm.

#### **Branch line from Birnham to Dunsinane**

The Department for the Environment's plans to introduce the principles of David Cameron's faltering big society to the nation's forests by selling off Forestry Commission land to private interests might prove that Cameron and Osborne have greater political bravery than their heroine, Margaret Thatcher. However, it may yet prove to be their Macbeth moment. With the great and the good mobilised to defend the quaintly old-fashioned idea of public ownership of the countryside, the consultation document on the Defra website is likely to see some heavy traffic. Details of the consultation can be found at [www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/forests/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/forests/index.htm) or on the Forestry Commission website at: [www.forestry.gov.uk/england-pfeconsultation](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-pfeconsultation).

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Lewes District Council and Wave Leisure Trust have invested almost £80,000 to install new equipment to provide savings in both gas consumption and electricity, along with reductions in carbon emissions, at their leisure centres. Over two thirds (69%) of those aged 25-34 say they want to do more exercise according to findings from the latest annual Health and Fitness Omnibus Survey carried out by Leisure-net Solutions. A new iPhone app, DisabledGo has been launched to encourage access to leisure facilities; DisabledGo, providing online information for over 80,000 venues, joins Splashpath, launched in mid-August, which promotes swimming through the publishing of timetables at swimming pools. The Fitness Industry Confidence Survey has revealed that well over three quarters of those industry professionals surveyed (83%) were as confident, or more confident, about the future of the industry than they were three months ago. On 7 January members of ISPAL and ISRM voted in favour of creating a single professional body; both ballots showed 95% in favour, a drop of 2% among ILAM members and a rise of 2% among ISRM members on a similar vote taken some six years and several million pounds previously. Gladstone Health and Leisure have announced a new partnership with Cascade3D. New tennis facilities have been unveiled at DC Leisure's Fleming Park Tennis Centre in Eastleigh following a £172,000 grant from the Lawn Tennis Association and support from Sport England.

### **London 2012: it's next year, you know**

Long jumper Phillips Idowu and newly crowned cricketing Ashes legend Alistair Cook were pressed into service to flag up ticket sales 18 months ahead of the Games. An agreement between LOCOG and the Royal College of Art (RCA) will see RCA post-graduate students design key elements of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games victory ceremonies. A target-busting 33,722 people (original target 25,000) have registered to become a London ambassador during the London Games. The London 2012 Cultural Olympiad, the UK Arts Councils and the British Council have awarded £820,000 funding to a new round of major commissions for Unlimited, the programme that celebrates arts and culture by disabled and deaf artists, for the Cultural Olympiad. The ODA reckons that of the current 12,112 strong Olympic Park and Olympic Village workforce almost a quarter (24%) are resident in the five host boroughs. Horse Guards Parade has been granted planning permission to host the Olympic beach volleyball events. Olympic tickets to go on sale 15 March 2011. Work has started on one of the last venues to be built on the Olympic Park, the temporary 5,000-seat water polo arena.

### ***The Leisure Review, February 2011***

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