

News in brief

Staccato reports from the cultural typeface

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The Leisure Review launches nationwide Coaching Insights programme

The Leisure Review is continuing its commitment to the coaching profession by extending its popular programme of Coaching Insight seminars to Hampshire, Hertfordshire, North Yorkshire and Bedfordshire as well as continuing to work with its established partners, Sport Nottinghamshire, Greater Sport and Sport Cheshire. The three-hour Coaching Insights, which were launched as part of the legacy of the 2009 Hockey Champions Trophy in Nottingham, give coaches who work at Level 2 or above an opportunity to network with peers and listen to experts in the field. This year's autumn series is being run in partnership with a total of eight county sports partnerships and four of England's leading sports universities. CJ Lee, the coaching development manager with Sport Hampshire and Isle of Wight, explained why he had jumped at the chance to bring the programme to the south coast: "One of the challenges of my role is providing valid CPD opportunities for developed coaches and the Coaching Insight programme does just that. The Leisure Review consistently provides thoughtful and challenging articles on the current issues in coaching and the Insight seminar will allow our coaches to continue this debate and really get to grips with the issue of the changing demands on them in the current climate." With each local partner selecting a theme for their own Coaching Insight session, the programme will see coaches debating topics including the challenge of delivering differently in a range of social contexts, the best way to nurture talent, the coach's role in the change process, the nature of inspiration and what can be learned from coaches of elite performers. The Leisure Review's coaching correspondent, Mick Owen, is delighted to be launching the new series: "The success of The Leisure Review Coaching Insight programme highlights the value that developed coaches put on input and ideas from other coaches and other sports. That so many coaches are prepared to commit their time and resources to access these seminars is a testament to the quality of the events and the latent demand for professional development opportunities."

- Full details of the Coaching Insight sessions are available on the TLR events page.

Water Babies and IoS agreement creates waves in world of baby swimming provision

Water Babies and the Institute of Swimming have announced that they will be working in partnership to develop and provide an ASA-accredited swimming programme for children under four years of age. This partnership will link the Water Babies baby and toddler swimming programmes to the ASA's learn to swim framework, which offers the prospect of "a clear



GRASSROOTS RUGBY REVOLUTION:

The Rugby Football Union has released the interim report on a pilot study conducted with Exeter University which is set to revolutionise the way the game is introduced to children. The pilot involved Under 7 and Under 9 matches played with far fewer players and a far less rigorous application of the laws. This has resulted in more tries and more involvement for individuals. The pilot continues in Durham, Hampshire and Warwickshire and is expected to roll out to other counties for the new season.

development pathway” for swimmers from birth. Both organisations have committed themselves to a “skills pledge” that will see all new and existing Water Babies tutors trained via the Institute of Swimming. Launching this pledge, Steve Franks, Water Babies managing director commented: “A key concern for us was that at the age of four, when children ‘graduate’ from Water Babies, they need to continue swimming and developing their skills. This partnership will give the young swimmers the benefit of clear pathways into other swimming disciplines and the option of linking with the ASA-accredited partners when the time is right.” Under the agreement the IoS will also be providing leadership and management training for Water Babies head office staff.

Taking Stockport

Stockport Council is asking its residents for their views on the borough’s sport and leisure facilities as part of a full review of services relating to physical activity and leisure provision. There are currently 16 sports and leisure facilities across the borough, all of which are owned by the council and run on their behalf by Stockport Sports Trust. The council is asking for responses to a proposal that includes the closure of a number of facilities and the construction of two new ones, along with improvements to existing centres. Leader of Stockport Council, Dave Goddard, explained the context of the review: “We face a number of challenges going forward, including savings to be made by the council and the geographical location of existing facilities. With these proposals we have put forward a feasible way of making the highest quality leisure facilities accessible, sustainable and affordable to the greatest number of people.” The consultation will run until 22 November.

Sharpened pencil, sharpened minds

This month will see the Drawabout project (mentioned elsewhere in this issue) transfer from Edinburgh, where it has been part of the festival, to London, where it hopes to become an exciting part of the city’s cultural life. Created by critically acclaimed Fringe theatre director Cressida Brown and stage performer Adam Oliver, Drawabout invites people to become the protagonists in a roaming art and theatre experiment, finding individuals at random in the street willing to sit for the group, all of whom will draw their subject while the subject tells a story of their life. The model gets the first choice to pick from the resulting artwork to take home and the Drawabout moves on. Cressida Brown will be familiar to readers of The Leisure Review for her production of Amphibians, the play based on the interviews with former Olympic swimmers and staged in the derelict pool beneath London’s Bridewell Theatre, which was reviewed in the February issue of TLR. Amphibians has received six nominations for the Offwestend Awards. Full details of Drawabout can be found at www.drawabout.org

New guide explores trust option for heritage services

A new guide offering technical, legal and practical advice to local authority heritage services exploring the trust option has been published by the law firm Winckworth Sherwood in association with The Sport, Leisure and Culture Consultancy. The Trust Option for Heritage Services – A Practical Guide promises a step-by-step approach to undertaking a service review, developing a business case and conducting an independent options appraisal for heritage services, along with suggestions for implementation “if the trust option emerges as the preferred option”. Joanna Bussell of Winckworth Sherwood and one of the guide’s authors said, “The cuts facing heritage services are unprecedented and, while we do not underestimate the challenges heritage services are facing,

there is an opportunity to explore alternative options for service delivery. Careful consideration needs to be given to whether the trust option is the right option for each local authority's service but it does have a proven track record in delivering savings and acting as a catalyst for cultural change."

The UK swimming industry in numbers

According to the latest State of the UK Swimming Industry Report, published by The Leisure Database Company just after we went to press with the last issue, 84% of the UK population live within two miles of a swimming pool, whether it be publicly or privately run. It seems that there are currently 4,674 swimming pool facilities across the 3,311 public and private sites with pools in the UK; 1,905 of these pools are located within private health clubs while 2,769 pools are in public sports centres. In the 12 months to 31 March 2011 the number of swimming pool facilities at private health clubs dropped slightly but this was offset by the increase in public sector pools; 37 new pools opened during the year, 10 at private health clubs and 27 at public sports centres. Launching the report, David Minton, director of The Leisure Database Company, commented: "Swimming's popularity will only be heightened with the 2012 Olympics and we need to ask whether we have the facilities and programmes for a true Olympic legacy." Having read the report, Andy Reed, chair of the Sport and Recreation Alliance and a board member of the ASA, commented: "We know that swimming remains a massive participation sport and activity but we still need to grow the market and the numbers participating regularly. Reports suggest that latent demand for swimming remains high so providing this kind of detailed information can help us all plan to meet this growth."

Eid under Scottish leaves

As part of the Eid al-Fitr celebrations, which mark the end of Ramadan in the Muslim calendar, Forestry Commission Scotland will be hosting "A Celebration of Islam and Nature in Scotland" at Castle Semple in Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park on Saturday 10 September. The event forms part of the Commission's Central Scotland Engagement Programme, which encourages people of different faiths to use the forest as a venue. It is also part of the United Nations' 2011 International Year of the Forests, a year-long celebration of Scotland's woodlands, trees and forests with a programme of events being held across Scotland. Romena Huq, Forestry Commission Scotland's engagement officer, commented, "There are over 4,000 sayings and quotations in the Qur'an about nature and there are strong bonds between the Muslim faith and the preservation of the natural world we live in. This event explores these themes in more detail while also bringing together different communities of Scottish Muslims in celebration of the end of Ramadan."

Focus on fitness with new Anytime HQ

Anytime Fitness, the gymnasium chain founded in the US in 2002, has opened a new UK headquarters in Hemel Hempstead. The Anytime UK HQ includes a flagship gym, equipped with the Precor Experience series, alongside the company's offices and will serve as a showcase for potential franchisees. It will also provide "a high-quality, affordable and accessible club that is much needed in the area," according to Anytime managing director Andy Thompson. Anytime Fitness now boasts one million members across its 1,600 sites around the world. The first UK venue, established in Bristol, now has 1,500 members and a further six sites are said to be planned "for the next six to twelve months".

White knuckles under the white cliffs

Powerboat racing competitors have returned to Folkestone for the first time in twenty years for the British National Powerboat Championships as part of the drive to rebuild the excitement of the Folkestone seafront. The races provided the opportunity for nearly 60 competitors to showcase their skills to the watching crowds and an amalgam of Thundercat racing with Offshore classes offered diversity of size and style, thereby satisfying excitement and curiosity levels for all those watching. Despite a last-minute course relocation owing to rough seas and high winds, the white cliffs offered enough protection for racing even if the first day's sea was described as "steep and awkward".

Last chance for 2012 inspiration

The last London 2012 Inspire marks will be awarded in October to innovative projects which can claim to have been inspired by, or to have taken a new direction because of, the 2012 Games. According to Katie Crozier of Merseyside Sport, who is encouraging local clubs to get involved, "Most non-commercial organisations will be able to put forward projects which will be assessed by London 2012 and the International Olympic Committee", although she warns, "Only the very best are recognised through the Inspire programme." The benefit is that successful projects can carry the London 2012 brand, through the Inspire mark, on a wide range of marketing materials and access opportunities the Inspire Mark team's communications support.

Also in the news somewhere else:

Quest courses now earn continuing professional development points with an organisation called IMPSA. Alliance Leisure have got a new website. West Midlands 2012 has launched a competition titled The Games and Me asking for examples of how West Midlands residents have been involved with London 2012 so far. Bideford College in Devon has spent £50,000 on "the latest equipment solutions" from Pulse Fitness; the college also uses "Sports for All" as their motto. Discover Leisure has launched a new caravan model; their CEO, Trevor Parker, said: "Market testing has shown that there is significant demand from consumers for a caravan that is premium quality and of the utmost luxury." The Waterside Holiday Group have announced "a new dawn in holiday home ownership" in the shape of their Waterside Lodges. Quick out of the blocks after the riots came the mayor of London, Boris Johnson, who announced a £50 million fund "to help make major long term improvements to the capital's town centres and high streets damaged by the recent disturbances". Mo Chaudry, self-styled millionaire entrepreneur and chairman of Waterworld, "the UK's leading indoor tropical aqua park", has taken over the former Esporta Health Club on Festival Heights, Stoke on Trent. Remember Leisure Industry Week? It will be at the NEC 20-22 September.

London 2012: a surprise to some...

Artistic Directors Danny Boyle and Kim Gavin are searching for 10,000 volunteers to fill a wide range of performance roles

in the Olympic opening and closing ceremonies. Pride the Lion will be the official mascot of Great Britain's team at the London 2012 Olympic Games. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Team GB will be the largest single team to represent the UK in any sporting event for more than one hundred years. The Olympic Delivery Authority has signed contracts with the joint venture of Delancey and Qatari Diar for the purchase and long-term management of the Olympic Village; the joint venture will work alongside Triathlon Homes, who will manage the affordable housing in the village. The mayor of London commented, "This is a great deal for London", although several commentators have disagreed with him.

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