

COSY IN

COLMORE *life*

*More than just
business*

Autumn/Winter 2015

www.colmorebusinessdistrict.com



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EDITOR'S
welcome

Welcome to our Autumn / Winter edition of Colmore Life. I love Christmas in Birmingham; the city really comes alive, and this year is no exception! For a rundown of some of the great things you won't want to miss, head straight to page 20.

With all the excitement however, it's important to make sure you take some time out. For this edition, we have invited Victoria Osgood, also known as blogger Brumderland, to give us her pick of places to take time out from the Christmas melee; see page 18.

We're conscious, of course, that business continues throughout the festive season. We have a number of projects focused on sustainability for businesses in CBD; find out more about our bee keeping and recycling initiatives and how you can make 2016 a cleaner, greener year for your business on page 5.

We're always on the look out for interesting stories and ideas from around the District. If you have something that you would like featured, please contact Jack Tasker: Jack-t@colmorebusinessdistrict.com I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you all a wonderful festive season and the team at CBD look forward to working with you all next year.

Michele Wilby
Managing Editor



COLMORE BUSINESS DISTRICT UPDATES MEMBERS AT ANNUAL MEETING

Sarah Rennie

On 8 October 2015 we had the pleasure of hosting the Colmore Business District (CBD) Annual Meeting in the Round Room at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery. The well-attended event represented an opportunity for our levy payers to hear in greater detail about the projects and services that CBD has delivered over the first 18 months of our second BID term.

We were delighted to welcome so many key figures from the District as well as those who travelled from London and other offices in the UK especially for the event. Attendees heard directly from our Executive Director, Michele Wilby; CBD Chair, Gary Cardin; and the CBD team, and had the chance to ask questions about CBD's plans for the rest of this BID term. Michele said: "I always look forward to our Annual Meeting; I'm always keen to demonstrate to levy payers how their investment in us is achieving positive results in the District."

Informal drinks preceding the event gave attendees an excellent opportunity to network with industry colleagues and business

representatives from CBD, as well as our stakeholders, CBD Board Directors and the CBD office team.

The event also saw the launch of our Annual Report 2014-15. The report covers our activities and projects during this period under each of CBD's six key themes of work. The report sets out some of the significant projects that CBD has completed this year, including the launch of our Property Owners' and Agents' Forum; a concept unveiled in our last Annual Meeting in 2014. It also covers the co-launch of the Snow Hill Masterplan in early 2015 and delivery of our biggest Colmore Food Festival to date in the summer of 2015, as well as snapshots of the Ambassadors' work monitoring the presentation of the area. Additionally, it looks forward to CBD's continuing work to improve the area around Snow Hill Station. The report has since been distributed to all levy payers.

If you haven't received a copy and would like one please contact the CBD office on 0121 236 4689.

COLMORE BUSINESS DISTRICT

Colmore Business District (CBD) is a business improvement district (BID) established to deliver improvement projects and services to the business quarter of Birmingham.

A BID is a defined geographical area within which local businesses collaborate to invest in projects, services and initiatives that improve the environment in which they work. BIDs deliver additional services to those provided by the local authority and police. A BID is funded by businesses and organisations in the defined area through an annual BID levy.

The CBD area is the commercial heart of Birmingham, with around 500 companies, employing up to 35,000 people and occupying approximately 5.6 million square feet of office space. As well as being a hub of business and professional service firms, the area has a fantastic leisure and hospitality offering, with a high proportion of independents.

Colmore Life is Colmore Business District's magazine.

**Follow us on Twitter @ColmoreBID and Facebook: ColmoreFoodFestival
www.colmorebusinessdistrict.com**

More than just business.

BIDS FACTFILE

Michele Wilby

I know most of you are familiar with the BIDs concept as many of you work in one of the five BIDs in the city centre.

But did you know that we have suburban BIDs too, of which there are six – no wonder we are called the BIDs capital (outside London of course!). So the chances are that you may live in or near a BID as well as working in one. This month we are going to focus on Kings Heath BID.

On my recent visit to Kings Heath I was pleased to see how thriving and buzzing it

was. The shopping centre is flourishing with quirky independent shops and cafés. Kings Heath was the recent subject of an article in the Guardian titled 'Let's move to Kings Heath'. The article highlighted the parks, tea rooms, good schools and of course Hare and Hounds, which any music aficionado will be familiar with.

The BID plays a key part in the vibrancy of the area and has been instrumental in the Community Centre Edible Garden in Heathfield Road designed by local author and broadcaster Alys Fowler. They also organise the excellent summer and Christmas Big Party street fayres and are responsible for the festive lights, and much more.



Don't forget to visit enjoykingsheath.com, as every week they highlight the top picks of things to do in Kings Heath.

For further information talk to **Kate Smart, Kings Heath BID Manager** on 0121 444 5166

WORK EXPERIENCE IN CBD

Marissa Chauhan

In July, Colmore Business District (CBD) hosted its first work experience placement. Marissa Chauhan joined the office for a week. Here is her unique perspective on the workings of CBD.

"I'm a Year 10 student from Alderbrook School in Solihull and between 6 and 10 July I enjoyed a week of work experience with CBD. I'm proud to be CBD's first placement. The experience has cultivated my confidence and ability to work in a different environment compared to school.

I attended several briefings and meetings, such as the Britain in Bloom Steering Group. My fly on the wall position enabled me to familiarise myself with how meetings are conducted and, on my last day, I put my newly learnt skills to use by delivering the daily Ambassador briefing session.

One of the projects assigned to me was to compile the feedback obtained from people who attended the brilliant Colmore Food Festival. I had to input the data, analyse and evaluate it, and produce a presentation that will be used to improve the festival next year.

"I'm proud to be CBD's first placement."

I was tasked with identifying key actions from the Colmore Food Festival manual and I produced a Gantt chart that will be used to deliver a communication plan next year. I also produced a record of attendance of the Board Members who participated in working groups over the past seven months. This showed me the commitment they have to CBD.

Throughout the week, I worked independently, learnt to prioritise my work by using Project Management Software, showed my professionalism and improved my communication skills. This opportunity has really helped me better understand 'business' – a sector I can see myself working in. I truly believe that BIDs are valuable to Birmingham as they improve local areas by delivering greener, cleaner and safer projects – making a difference in the quality of life for residents, visitors and businesses.

Thank you to the CBD team for making my placement unforgettable!





CBeeD

Joanne Davies

Colmore Business District (CBD) is excited to announce the installation of its first bee hotels on top of key buildings in the District.

The press regularly reports that bees are in danger of disappearing from our environment. The honey bee is under attack from the varroa mite and it is only the treatment and care provided by beekeepers that is keeping colonies alive. Most wild honey bee colonies have died out as a result of this disease. Many of CBD's fine dining restaurants feature local honey on the menu, but did you know that a third of the food we eat would not be available were it not for bees? This means the need for conservation goes far beyond mere sentimentality.

It isn't just honey bees that are at risk. Our environment is heavily dependent on a variety of pollinators such as solitary bees, bumble bees, butterflies and ladybirds, yet these receive far less media attention.

Mass agriculture has vastly reduced their populations but surprisingly the diverse flora in urban areas makes them potentially attractive places. By increasing the number of pollinator-friendly plants, reducing pesticides and providing nesting space it's possible to make a real difference to the population of these docile insects.

Over the winter and throughout the year, the bee hotels in CBD will provide nesting space for a variety of pollinators and in the spring we will report on the demographic of our guests. We will also be asking our business community to get in touch with their photographs of plants that are proving attractive to bees, butterflies and ladybirds, so we can increase our planting efforts. In the meantime we are asking businesses with outdoor space or roof gardens that may be interested in the project to get in touch.

The project page at colmorebusinessdistrict.com has further details and follow #CBeeD on Twitter for all the buzz, or email Joanne Davies Joanne-d@colmorebusinessdistrict.com

RECYCLING: DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME AND MONEY

Joanne Davies

Many businesses in Colmore Business District recycle and, with commitment to environmental sustainability being a marketable quality across a range of sectors, it's hardly surprising. The Priory Rooms on Bull Street is one such business. Beth Sadler, Business Development Manager, said: "A commitment to creating a better world is a cornerstone of our company ethos. Recycling is a key part of that." Unfortunately many businesses believe that seeking out recycling services will be time consuming, expensive and unworkable.

A reduction in the value of secondary (recycled waste) materials and negative press about materials ending up in landfill sites has meant that many people mistakenly believe recycling is worthless. Additionally, the challenge of recycling for multiple tenants in office buildings has meant that recycling hasn't been as prevalent among our businesses as the attractive surroundings would imply.

Last year Colmore Business District consulted businesses and put together a project as part of our Outstanding Places Working Group to address this, with a view to procuring a collective purchase agreement for recycling that fits the needs of our diverse businesses. First Mile won the tender, offering the most flexible options, value for money and high customer service standards.

This offer will be available to any business within the District and information sessions will be held this Winter/Spring.

Visit the recycling page of colmorebusinessdistrict.com, or contact Joanne-d@colmorebusinessdistrict.com for information.



Attendees of the Inaugural Property Owners' and Agents' Forum

CBD LAUNCHES PROPERTY OWNERS' FORUM

Jonathan Bryce

Colmore Business District has launched a Property Owners' and Agents' Forum. The inaugural forum was attended by 20 of the city's top property businesses, providing a mix of both owners and agents, bringing the experience, knowledge and skills of this important sector together to identify ways of working with Colmore Business District (CBD) to further improve the city centre.

Gary Cardin, Chair of CBD set the scene for the group, talking about a desire from the District to further engage with the property sector, whilst better understanding the nature of the challenges and opportunities within the city.

Rob Valentine, Vice Chair of CBD, continued by updating attendees on the work of CBD. Rob focussed on the District's public realm, looking back at our award winning Church Street Square and Colmore Square schemes, as well as looking to future schemes, which have been made possible through an additional £10m of funding that CBD, together with our partners Birmingham City Council and Centro, has been able to unlock. It is hoped that the public realm schemes based around the Snow Hill area of the District will also result in an improvement of the transport infrastructure arrangements.

"I'm immensely proud of what Colmore Business District has achieved so far in terms of improving the public realm for all in the city centre."

The group will form an important part of the strategic work delivered by CBD. As Birmingham city centre undergoes a significant period of upheaval, the group was eager to understand how CBD fits into the strategic tapestry of the work being undertaken, making sure that the District remains a key influence on the city. Even at this early stage, the group was keen to have discussions on how to potentially direct resources in future in order to see the realisation of a coherent vision for the District and the wider city centre.

The group acknowledged the strong brand that CBD has built up over the last few years, through successful events such as the Colmore Food Festival, as well as highly visible initiatives such as the Ambassador Service. The group discussed how best to harness the marketing

power of the property industry to drive the impact of CBD outside of the city boundary.

Gary Cardin said of this first meeting:

"I'm extremely pleased with our first Property Owners' and Agents' Forum meeting. We've always been confident that CBD is delivering to a high standard, but it's important to check this belief with businesses that own property and invest in property in the area. This first forum meeting has opened a helpful dialogue for both parties that I look forward to continuing and developing over the next four years."

Rob Valentine echoed this statement, adding:

"I'm immensely proud of what CBD has achieved so far in terms of improving the public realm for all in the city centre. Working for a company who owns property in the District, I know the importance of making sure the public realm matches the quality of properties in the area. I'm looking forward to working with colleagues in the sector to continue to develop this in a coordinated and strategic way."

The forum will meet twice a year to discuss the developments within the District, and we will continue to update you about this in Colmore Life.

UNSEEN IMAGES

EXPLORE HISTORY OF BIRMINGHAM IN NEW EXHIBITION

Chris Brown

As Birmingham city centre continues to undergo a major period of transformation, a new outdoor photography exhibition, looks back to a time when the city was undergoing an equally significant period of transformation following World War II.

Nicklin Unseen, which launched on 1 October in Snow Hill Square, features over 50 images of Birmingham between 1953-69. During this time, city engineer Herbert Manzoni helped lay the plans which transformed the city and included the construction of icons like The Rotunda, the Bullring Shopping Centre and the Inner Ring Road.

The images featured in the exhibition were shot by Phyllis Nicklin, a staff tutor in geography at the extra-mural department at the University of Birmingham, and were taken over a 16-year period as part of a long term, structured project.

In 2014, Brumpic, a community orientated website and Twitter account which promotes awareness of the city's heritage, approached the University of Birmingham about Nicklin's work and was granted permission to use and promote the archive. The selected images witness the clearance of nineteenth century slums and their replacement with new estates and tower blocks; old and new shopping facilities and related services; the city's key transport networks and the heart of the city centre, including Colmore Business District.

Nicklin Unseen is a collaborative project between Brumpic, Colmore Business District (CBD) and the Library of Birmingham. It received a Heritage Lottery Fund Sharing Grant in August and has received additional funding from leading transport consultancy JMP and support from Reuben Colley Fine Art.



Mike Best, Board Director at Colmore Business District, said: "This year is a significant one for Birmingham's ongoing transformation. As New Street Station is reborn and the redevelopment of Paradise gets underway, Nicklin Unseen allows us to look back at how far as a city we have come in 50 years. CBD has a history of exhibiting photography in public places and this provides access to the widest possible audience for a unique body of work."

David Oram, Director at Brumpic, said: "For many years these visually arresting and historically important images have remained largely unknown outside the confines of the lecture theatres at the University of Birmingham. It wasn't until 2003, when a selection of around 450 images were digitised and put online that Nicklin and her work gained attention, almost 50 years after her death. Nicklin probably had no idea how significant her work would become and how widely it would be seen. We're excited to be able to offer this opportunity and allow people to discover and appreciate her unseen work."

Nicklin Unseen opened in Snow Hill Square on 1 October 2015 and will run until January 2016. It is free to visit.

For more information visit www.brumpic.co.uk or follow @brumpic on Twitter

JACK TASKER JOINS CBD



Colmore Business District has expanded the team, welcoming Jack Tasker as a Projects Maker. Jack has experience in marketing, communications and events and has previously worked for Associated Architects and Seven Capital as Marketing Manager. He is also co-founder of Birmingham's Hidden Spaces, which is a collaborative Lottery funded project. In his spare time he plays music in a number of groups, writes and enjoys cycling.

Jack said, "It's a privilege to join the team at the BID, their positive effect on the district and city is undeniable. Birmingham is currently going through a huge period of growth and change. It's exciting to be a part of an organisation that is at the heart of that change."

Gary Cardin of CBRE and Chair of the CBD Board, said, "We're thrilled to have Jack join us. His previous work, especially with Hidden Spaces, shows his commitment to creating a positive change within the city. We're excited to see his role grow with the BID as we progress through our second successful term serving the District."



DEVELOPING THE VISION: CHATHAM BILLINGHAM

Mike Mounfield

The first few minutes of my interview with Alan Chatham and Mark Billingham were dominated by talking about what makes good public realm. They are pretty passionate about good design, and not just around their new development, Post & Mail; they're pretty passionate about the look and feel of Birmingham in general.

Chatham Billingham have been involved in some landmark developments in Birmingham: Brindleyplace, Mailbox, The Cube, and now the conversion of the former printing works of the old Post & Mail complex. The other half of that complex, John Madin's striking modernist office block design from 1966, was replaced by Colmore Plaza in 2002.

For the development to continue carrying the epithet 'Post & Mail' is a remarkable execution of an unpromising notion: turn the old printing annexe into something useful in a corner of Birmingham city centre recently pushed into the spotlight with the media interest generated by the Snow Hill Master Plan.

You can't deny that Alan and Mark have imagination in bucket-loads. The printing annexe is basically a two-storey building with a six-storey basement; like an iceberg, most of Phase 1 of Post & Mail is out of sight. Chatham Billingham have turned the basement levels into a state-of-the-art 750-space car park, with ANPR (automatic number plate recognition), bookable spaces, bay monitoring and free-wifi. If you become a member it becomes a kind of fuss-free 'Uber-for-car-parking'. The parking tariff is also very competitive for the city centre. In addition to car parking, Post & Mail includes high security cycle parking as well as shower and changing facilities.

If you thought that was it; that the new Post & Mail building is all about a smart underground car park with some retail and office use on the surface, you'd be mistaken.

"Timing is everything in the development world and Alan is bullish about the fact that, investment permitting, they will be bringing the largest floor plates in Birmingham to market."

Phase 2 of the building, for which quite a lot of infrastructure has already been put in place as part of Phase 1, involves adding 14 storeys, with a mix of residential and office use above ground. From the CGIs and from walking around the nascent shell, it looks and feels like the first step towards the Snow Hill Master Plan vision that caused a media stir this year, with comparisons being made with Canary Wharf.

Timing is everything in the development world and Alan is bullish about the fact that, investment permitting, they will be bringing the largest floor plates in Birmingham to market very quickly, and just in time to meet the rocketing demand for Grade A office accommodation in Birmingham.

The Snow Hill Master Plan connection is not accidental. Alan is unequivocal that Post & Mail opens up the north-east end of the Snow Hill area, improving the east-west permeability. Mark sees it as having a key role in making future regeneration of the heritage buildings on either side of Steelhouse Lane much more attractive to sensitive development.

Colmore Business District's involvement in co-producing improved public realm fits well with Alan and Mark's ideas for 'linked spaces' that will invite new build and regeneration projects to the District.

They see London examples like Broadgate as a great template. It's hard to argue with their logic, which is why CBD has put £1.4

million of levy-payers' money on the table to help unlock nearly £5 million of new money to invest in public realm. A combination of the enthusiasm of developers like Chatham Billingham and investment by CBD, Centro and Birmingham City Council can make the vision behind the Snow Hill Master Plan start to become a reality.



Alan Chatham



Mark Billingham

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MEET THE DISTRICT

We ask three people, "How will you be celebrating Christmas in the District?"



"That's easy; the same way as every year since Mott MacDonald crossed the Queensway in 2012 and joined CBD – as a member of the Colmore Chorus. Each autumn, staff from various businesses in the District get together and spend a lunchtime (or two) a week learning a repertoire of seasonal songs. In the weeks before Christmas we perform at a number of venues around the city centre. Come and listen to us, we're actually rather good."

Steve Holder,
Surveys Manager,
Mott MacDonald



"It's been a great year for Core so I'm sure there will be lots of celebrations throughout December. On the last day before the holidays it's tradition that we all get a breakfast sandwich from Dave and Jon who run Bon Bon on New Market Street, followed by a fish and chip lunch in the office, before heading out to some of the local bars for a few cocktails. This year, I'm also really looking forward to bringing my two year old son, Theo, to the District to see the Christmas lights."

Richard Clews,
Head of Operations,
Core



"I love Christmas, and the District is a great place to work and socialise throughout the festive season. As usual I will be out and about at meetings, braving the cold weather, but at Christmas there is the added bonus of all of the lights and decorations! I love that there's always delicious smelling Christmas treats in every café you walk past; very tempting, but if you can't order a treat with your coffee at Christmas, when can you?"

Beth Sadler,
Business Development Manager,
The Priory Rooms

MULTIDISCIPLINARY ENGINEERING AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANCY FIRM MOVES TO COLMORE BUSINESS DISTRICT



Nick Taylor

Waterman Group Plc, the award winning engineering and environmental consultancy business has moved into its new office at One Cornwall Street.

The newly refurbished office will initially be home to nearly 50 people with plans to expand in the near future. Waterman staff have built a solid reputation in the provision of advice and expertise at all project phases, working on many high profile schemes across the Midlands including the Bullring, the Manufacturing Technology Centre, Moor Street Station and Highcross Leicester.

The company is currently working on a number of significant appointments including the West Midlands Highways Alliance, MIRA Technology Park and

the provision of multidisciplinary engineering services on the Temple Court development in Birmingham.

Nick Taylor, Waterman Chief Executive commented:

"As part of our plans to develop our business within Birmingham and the wider West Midlands, we required larger premises in a central location. One Cornwall Street offers us the high quality space we have been looking for, with room to support our anticipated growth. We are excited about the move to our new office and look forward to welcoming new and existing clients to our new home."



SUSTAINING SUSTAINABILITY

Joanne Davies

We have all heard the words 'sustainable' and Sustainability Plan but how many of us know (or care) what that actually means in practical terms? I certainly didn't, until I found myself on the roof of No.2 Colmore Square looking at a wild garden and wondering why on earth it was there*.

Building Manager Christine Boyle kindly explained this overused and misunderstood concept to me.

"In 2009, we finished the refurbishment of 2 Colmore Square and Cannon House, we were the first refurbished building in Birmingham to be awarded BREAM Excellent (the most widely recognised measure of a building's environmental performance).

"Think of sustainability as a tree: you have the roots which are your values and intentions, your trunk which are core basics like LED lighting and

recycling (less than 15% of our waste goes in to landfill), then you can branch off in all sorts of interesting directions. We chose the species garden to support wildlife like birds, butterflies and bees.

"Our green travel plan supports our tenants to cycle, walk or use public transport to get to work. We provide up to date public transport information, cycle racks, showers and a drying room for all year round cycling. Less than 20% of our tenants drive to work.

"It can be little things like replacing anything that breaks with the most effective green options on the market. You also need to ensure you revisit your sustainability plan. The most important thing about sustainability planning is to think long term about the planet and our impact on it, making bitesize changes as green technologies improve along the way."

*For anyone wondering why I was up there, turn to page 5 to read our article on the CBeeD project.



ECONOMY HEALTH CHECK

As 2015 draws to a close, we look back at some of the local economic headlines from the first half of this year, using the data provided by Marketing Birmingham.

Birmingham has fared well in 2015, despite concerns that a worsening global outlook, especially in Europe, could have a significant impact on the recovery of the UK. Whilst EU

exports in Quarter 1 were down 3% this was in comparison to a 13% drop nationally, and non EU exports rose 5% outstripping national trends.

Employment within the city has now reached pre-recession levels after the most substantial period of growth for more than a decade during 2013 - 14. This makes Birmingham one of the country's employment hotspots, with figures three times that of Manchester and seven times that of Newcastle.

A fall in public sector employment was offset by the creation of 13,300 net new jobs in the private sector, with legal services, accountancy and recruitment driving the growth. Large scale infrastructure and public realm projects such as the opening of Grand Central and the redevelopment of the Mailbox have helped boost growth in retail throughout 2015.

Inward investment into the city and a robust jobs market should provide the perfect conditions for the region's continued strong performance and a prosperous start to 2016.



CHANGING FACES

Jonathan Bryce

It's no secret that public realm is an important factor in the look and success of the District. Colmore Business District (CBD) has already invested heavily in this area, delivering two award winning public realm schemes. This investment continues with our improvement works planned for the Snow Hill area of the District. However, it's not just public spaces that bring character to the District; our fantastic architecture plays an equal part in defining CBD's ambience.

There are a number of important schemes happening in the District. On page 8, we focused on the Post & Mail development, which is part of the Snow Hill area and joins Three Snowhill, which was approved earlier this year.

The Snow Hill area will be further enhanced by Bruntwood's £14 million development plan for Two Cornwall Street and the surrounding public realm, further increasing the stock of available Grade A office space.

There are also changes happening in the heart of the District - 55 Colmore Row has been undergoing significant work; three floors

“Making Colmore Business District a place where the outdoor environment can be enjoyed for many years to come.”

will be added to the Grade II listed Victorian terrace facade and the banking hall will be brought back into use as a fantastic reception space. A few doors up, the demolition of the opinion-splitting NatWest tower is also underway, with a vision of replacing the tower with a new 26 storey building, producing a further 196,000 sq ft of Grade A office space, crowned with a restaurant with views across the city.

The theme, however, that connects all of this work is linked back to my opening paragraph. Those of us involved in developing the District share a desire to deliver improvements that are good for business and that are pleasing to the eye, making Colmore Business District a place where the outdoor environment can be enjoyed for many years to come.

WHAT'S IN YOUR IN-TRAY

Joanne Davies



As well as heading the Birmingham office of national law firm Mills & Reeve, Steve Allen is a partner in the firm's commercial litigation practice. Colmore Life takes a look at what's in his in-tray this Autumn.

I'm client partner for Jaguar Land Rover, Shell and Elster. Getting to know them and ensuring we are in touch with what is happening in their industries is an ongoing priority.

I am currently project managing a number of large multi-national disputes. We have also recently added three lawyers and secretarial support to the department, so I am working closely with them to ensure they integrate well.

I sit on the Council of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and we are patrons of their junior division, Future Faces. We are also corporate partners of Marketing Birmingham.

In May I was elected president of the British American Business Council, and I also sit on the Executive Committee of the BABC Midlands Chapter. This new role involves several trips to the US this autumn, starting with our Transatlantic Business Awards Dinner in New York in October.

I am currently overseeing a major refurbishment of our Colmore Row premises, which is a priority for the final quarter of this year.



JACOBS OPEN NEW OFFICE IN CBD

Colmore Business District (CBD) is welcoming Jacobs Engineering Group as the company opens its offices at 2 Colmore Square. The firm is consolidating expertise from two locations across Birmingham into a new central office, which provides capacity for up to 300 employees.

One of the world's largest and most diverse providers of technical professional and construction services, Jacobs delivers major programmes of work across highways, rail, aviation, automotive, utilities and other sectors, both locally and globally.

Jacobs Group Vice President, Bob Duff stated, "This new location in the heart of Birmingham and close to the region's leading education providers furthers our long term commitment to the Midlands. Our larger premises enable Jacobs to continue to grow our local service provision next to our core customers, supported by our local education partners; and we are well positioned to service the developing HS2 programme. We are investing significantly in our Birmingham operations, with further phased expansion planned, which will support the region's exciting vision to be a thriving economic hub."

Sir Albert Bore, the current leader of Birmingham City Council said: "Birmingham is at the heart of HS2, the UK's most ambitious transport infrastructure project. There is already a strong sense of opportunity around HS2,

"This new location in the heart of Birmingham and close to the region's leading education providers furthers our long term commitment to the Midlands."

and its forthcoming arrival is drawing global firms like Jacobs to the region.

Mark Rogers, Chief Executive of Birmingham City Council continued: "Birmingham has spent the past decade transforming itself into a global city, and we're attracting record investment as a result of this hard work. Birmingham's business district showcases the fruition of this investment, and Jacobs' new office will be in the heart of this thriving area."

Mark Davies, Head of Operations for Highways said: "Since confirming our new office in 2 Colmore Square, CBD has provided practical assistance ahead of our move to the District; help with aspects like meeting venues and participation in CBD events has been very useful. We are really excited about our move to the new premises in Birmingham and look forward to developing our relationship with the District."

WE'D RATHER BE OUR OWN BOSS, FINDS NATWEST



Who'd want to be their own boss? Over half of the West Midlands (53%), new data from NatWest has revealed.

The news comes as NatWest welcomes a new cohort to the Entrepreneurial Spark business accelerator based in Colmore Business District. NatWest has already supported 120 fledgling firms via its Entrepreneurial Spark programme, which offers a free package of support including desk space, ultra speed wifi, mentoring and regular events.

Lee Currier, Entrepreneur Development Manager for NatWest, said: "Birmingham has always been a city of a thousand trades, so it's little surprise that as the economy improves more people are considering self-employment.

"However, it is a big leap to take, with many saying they feel they lack the knowledge and support to do so. NatWest wants to fill that gap and, in partnership with Entrepreneurial Spark and KPMG, is offering another round of our free business accelerator in Birmingham."

**For more information contact:
hello@entrepreneurial-spark.com**

A conversation with ...

PAUL BROWN

GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC SECTOR DIRECTOR, EY



Michele Wilby

I first met Paul Brown, Government & Public Sector Director at EY, back in 2010 in my early days at Colmore Business District. We had a lively discussion about local government and the issues and pressures it was facing and have continued to meet every six months or so, for what have always proven to be interesting chats... well at least on my part; Paul may beg to differ!

We began by discussing the Combined Authority, which Paul, along with many others, thinks is a great opportunity for the region.

Devolved powers will offer additional funding for the region. In order to access this and to compete with the 'northern powerhouse', we need to work together as the West Midlands region. Paul agrees with Andy Street, Chair of the GBSLEP, that the Combined Authority needs to have Birmingham in the name in order to have the appropriate global presence.

Paul explained that a draft timetable could see the Combined Authority in place by April 2016. However, the key is not just creating a legal entity, but for the willingness of the Councils in the area to make a difference regionally. There will need to be absolute clarity around the priorities.

We still have a lot to address regionally; we have an economic activity rate of around 74% compared to a national average of 77%, which means that there are some 80,000 people out of the labour market. Only 27% of people in the region have degrees, whilst nationally it is 35% and 49% in London. There is work to be done around skills, apprenticeships and housing and Paul stated that unless you have the kind of powers being offered in devolution you are hampered in how much you can do.

George Osborne is clearly looking for the region to elect a Mayor as part of any devolution deal. The question on everyone's lips is "who is it going to be?" Paul was quick to point out that this should not become a political football and, if the region elects a mayor, it should be someone from the business world. They should have a broad agenda delivering strong leadership and accountability. The focus should be on infrastructure, housing and economic growth. They should drive the region forward, creating a working environment that represents the region on a local, national and international stage.

"If the region elects a Mayor it should be someone from the business world."

Paul feels the city has lots to celebrate, but there is still much to do to make the city a truly great city. He cites the start of the Paradise re-development, and developments on Colmore Row, Snowhill and Cornwall Street amongst many others. He was also complimentary about Mark Rogers, CEO of Birmingham City Council, who he feels has grasped the issues and is taking the Authority forward. You can read more about Mark's work in my interview with him on page 15.

Paul feels we have strong higher and further education sectors, which are essential anchor points for economic growth. He feels that apprenticeships are not currently treated with the right level of respect and that they are something companies need to think about in terms of providing opportunities for young people.

Paul is a Board Member of the Black Country LEP and is Regional Chair of Common Purpose, a leadership organisation that gives people the skills, connections and inspiration to become better leaders both at work and in society.

Paul has a passion for local government and national politics and if he wasn't working in this arena it would most certainly be a hobby. To be honest I am not convinced it isn't his hobby! I'm already looking forward to our next lively chat, same place, same time?

See you in January....

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

A trip to the bar



Jonathan Bryce

Last edition I was talking about cop shows and forensics, so in this opening paragraph I also have to admit that I'm occasionally partial to a courtroom drama. There is definitely a theme to my viewing preferences. I decided to speak to No5 Chambers to get a more accurate picture of barristers off the screen.

No5 Chambers is an award winning chambers, located on Steelhouse Lane. As I sat waiting to meet Tony McDaid, Practice Director for No5, I reflected on the nature of our legal profession. You may not be aware, but legal practice in England and Wales is split in to two bodies: solicitors and barristers.

The main difference between the two that people see is that the role of a barrister is to act as an advocate for their client in court. Traditionally, clients would seek the services of a solicitor who would handle their legal issues until an appearance in certain courts was required. At that point, the solicitor would engage the services of a barrister.

Unlike most solicitors, barristers are self-employed. Their offices, known as chambers, represent a pooling of their resources. Tony's role is to run the business side of chambers, which includes anything from strategic business development to recruitment of the supporting staff and of barristers into chambers. He also sits on the Professional Practice Committee of the Bar Council, the organisation that regulates barristers; is an executive member of the West Midlands Irish Business Group and is the Chair of Birmingham Law Society's International Committee.

Tony has been with No5 since 1980 and in his time he has seen the industry go through significant change. He told me how No5 likes to stay at the forefront of these changes. This has led to its expansion into one of the largest chambers in the UK, with 28 Queens Councils (QCs) within its number; the largest concentration of QCs outside of London.

They have achieved this by keeping a careful eye on local talent, inviting the best to join No5. As a result, from their four locations across the UK, they are able to provide services in almost all areas of practice, supported by a team who are trained to ensure that the barrister with the right skills gets matched to the right client.

One of the significant changes in recent years for barristers has been the ability for the public to instruct them directly, rather than relying on a solicitor. No5 has approached this head on, setting up NoVate, a not for profit company, which makes referrals for members of the public to barristers.

"We've been in Birmingham for 100 years. We very much see Birmingham as home, despite having a London, Bristol and East Midlands presence. We hope we're opening our clients' eyes to the opportunities within this city."

I challenged Tony to explain why he felt we still needed what appears to be an archaic two-tier system especially in the light of so many changes.

"Our barristers know the law in their area of practice" explained Tony, "however, the real skill that you get from a barrister is advocacy; that ability to press your client's interest to obtain the best outcome".

No5, as an organisation and the people working there, are clearly committed to Birmingham and Tony said:

"We've been in Birmingham for 100 years. We very much see Birmingham as home, despite having a London, Bristol and East Midlands presence. We hope we're opening our clients' eyes to the opportunities within this city."

No5 has made its commitment to the city clear, sponsoring Birmingham City Football Club shirts for this season and becoming a corporate sponsor of Love Brum. The company is also a corporate member of THSH.

Last year, The Lawyer magazine named No5 Barristers Chamber of the Year; the first chambers outside of London to win the accolade. Let's hope the business continues to make Birmingham its home for many years to come.

CBD TALKS TO MARK ROGERS



Michele Wilby

I have known Mark Rogers for a number of years, from back in the days when we both worked for Solihull Council. At Solihull I experienced the leadership of four Chief Executives. Without doubt Mark made a great impact, like no other at Solihull Council, and there was genuine dismay among staff and Councillors when he announced his departure. But every cloud has a silver lining and Solihull's loss was Birmingham's gain. A former Solihull Council colleague who worked for Mark still hasn't forgiven us. I try not to gloat.

For our interview, my first question to Mark was about how the first 18 months have been for him. We both acknowledged that his tenure as Chief Executive of Birmingham City Council (BCC) seemed longer, but very much in a good way! At the outset of his new career at BCC he knew that he would be dealing with serious issues around Children's Services and the constrained budget, but what was unexpected was 'Trojan Horse' and the ensuing maelstrom of publicity. So, last year, Mark felt very much in reactive mode; he would have liked more time for important strategic thinking around the future direction of the Council and the vision and values required to take the organisation forward.

Mark remains focused on the people of the city and his need to make a difference to their lives and experience of living here. His second important focus is also on people – those people who deliver services at BCC.

Mark knows that staff are feeling vulnerable because of budget cuts and redundancies, and feel continued uncertainty about their future. Mark has huge empathy for those leaving BCC and is clear that the people who remain should not feel like 'survivors'. They need to feel positive and need to understand that they are going to be part of a very different organisation. He wants them with him, shoulder to shoulder to face the new challenges.

We moved on to talk about BIDs. Mark likes the ethos of BIDs, given that they are business led and business managed and that they are largely about empowerment through taking responsibility beyond your own business environment. His view is that councils should not think that they should do everything and that businesses are now becoming more socially responsible.

We needed to talk about the proposed Combined Authority and I was interested to hear Mark's view about the name. He is very forthright in his opinion that the name doesn't matter, it's a name for 'some governance' and that it won't be a 'trading name'. He believes the Combined Authority will drive economic growth for Birmingham.

I wanted to know what was the most personally interesting item in Mark's email inbox. Those who know Mark will not be surprised that an invitation to Simmer Down music festival had piqued his interest! If Mark was going to give me the obvious answer he would have said an investment opportunity for the city but I had asked what he found personally interesting and – as always – you get the honest answer from Mark!

Mark is passionate about our great city and judging by social media activity he is hitting the right note; people appreciate his honesty, vitality, sense of humour and humility. Birmingham City Council is facing challenging times, but I think we have the right man at the helm.

ONELIFEONECITY



Katie Kershaw, who received the accolade of being the overall winner of Birmingham Young Professional of the Year in May, has launched her new project OneLifeOneCity.

Katie wants to be able to celebrate and share the work and events of community and cultural groups via a OneLifeOneCity online community. The other key facet to her project is about wellbeing, as Katie believes we can all be far happier if we embrace the idea that every day has the potential to be special.

I'm sure we all agree that lunchtime is an untapped resource, so Katie is encouraging individuals and companies to sign up to the OneLifeOneCity pledge to give at least one lunchtime a week to escape the desk and get out into Birmingham to experience the city; both in terms of its heritage and the wide ranging opportunities on offer all over the city.

There will also be an opportunity to attend one of the regular events entitled "Gone in 60 Minutes" that will be held as part of the initiative, that have been designed to provide quick, varied and fun interludes in the working week!

Find onelifeonecity on Facebook or follow @onelifeonecity on Twitter.





ANOTHER TRIUMPHANT YEAR FOR THE COLMORE FOOD FESTIVAL

Lucy Elvin

The conditions were perfect and the glorious sunshine ensured we had a record number of visitors come to sample the culinary delights of the fifth Colmore Food Festival. Some 32,000 people came to Victoria Square over the two days; a substantial 6,000 increase on the previous year.

Every year, the objective is simple: showcase the fabulous restaurants, bars, cafés and bakeries in Colmore Business District and to provide visitors to the festival with mouthwatering food and drinks. Birmingham has a fantastic reputation as a culinary destination and we are passionate about letting visitors and businesses know what delights are on our doorstep.

This year, taster dishes were just £3, meaning that visitors to the festival could sample the offerings from a variety of venues; cream teas, Deli Dogs, Dim Sum, amongst other delectable delights. Refreshing drinks were also enjoyed, from Champagne, craft beers, and artisan coffee, to delicious frozen gin or tequila Kalippos. The record numbers of visitors meant that some venues sold out of food and drink, but with some quick re-jigging of the menus, taster dishes were back on.

Visitors were able to relax on our deckchairs whilst venues made use of the kitchen stage, compered by the wonderful Phil Oldershaw.

Showcasing their specialities with cooking demos were The Bureau, Metro Bar and Grill, Asha's, Hotel du Vin, Jojolapas, and Chung Ying Central. Opus at Cornwall Street and new kids on the block Nosh & Quaff competed in a cook off and were joined on stage by food critic Paul Fulford, property expert Nicola Fleet-Milne, blogger Vicky Osgood and the BBC Apprentice's Jemma Bird.

Cocktail master class demos were from The Jekyll and Hyde and Bar Opus. In between the demos, there were performances from bands as part of the 31st Birmingham Jazz and Blues Festival, and on Saturday we had a special performance from the retro girl group with beautiful harmonies, The Glamophones.



"This year was by far the most successful year for us at the Colmore Food Festival, the place was buzzing and our staff really enjoyed working it too! All the businesses had a great offering and it really gave off a close-knit community vibe. Bring on next year!" said Hannah Wolsey of Urban Coffee Company.

Visitors were also invited to go on the 'History & Hospitality Bus Tour'; a free 40 minute tour on the Big Brum Buz, taking in the sights of the District whilst learning more about the hospitality venues and the history of the area, kindly hosted by Mike Mounfield (CBD) and Tony Elvin (Hotel du Vin).

Street entertainers and roaming band 'The Courgettes' kept everyone entertained and added to the fun and relaxed atmosphere over the weekend.



We're already working on the festival for next year, and so are our venues. Jackie from Hindley's Bakery told us "Visitors seem to have really embraced the unique food experience the festival offers. For next year I just need to work out how I am going to increase the number of gourmet pork rolls I can bake each day, so I can keep all my hungry customers happy – what a nice problem to have!"

Make sure you keep 8 and 9 July 2016 free to come and visit again.

CELEBRATING FINE WINE IN CBD

Michele Wilby

How could I not attend the Hotel du Vin (HdV) 'Wines of New Zealand Dinner', being half Kiwi? My dad made the journey to this country many years ago, and although I only visited 'the home country' once I feel a strong affinity with anything Kiwi.

Having been to wine dinners before at HdV, I know that they are not to be missed. Tony Elvin, General Manager at the hotel is a consummate and wonderful host, making everyone feel like a guest in his home. He was joined by Nigel Wilkinson, the Master Sommelier.

We were split into two tables, aptly titled North and South Island. I was located on South Island, not the North where my family are from, but I know how wonderful South Island is.

We were greeted pre-dinner by Tony and a very engaging photographer called Shelvey. There was a choice of four delicious canapés; my particular favorite was the Chicken Kiev and Salmon Tia, which was accompanied by Sileni 'The Straits' Sauvignon Blanc 2014, Marlborough.

The starter, one of the best I've ever had, was Chicken Fried Tortellini, Parma ham, chives, sun-dried tomatoes, parmesan and mozzarella - my mouth is watering now! To accompany this we were served 'La Strada' Chardonnay 2013, Marlborough.

The great thing about the HdV wine dinners is that not only are you learning about the wines from Nigel, Tony also speaks throughout the evening, engaging with everyone in the room. The staff are wonderfully attentive, without being intrusive.

There is a seating plan; your party always sits together, but you inevitably end up by people you may not have met. I was delighted to be by a couple who were police officers; we were all surprised by how many mutual acquaintances we shared. It has been said many times before, Birmingham is like a village, which is one of the reasons why I love both working and living here.

The meal was wonderful from start to finish and the experience is great. We are so lucky in Colmore Business District to have such regular, enjoyable themed dinners both at Hotel du Vin and Opus Restaurant.

PRIMITIVO TAKES A BREAK



Michele Wilby

I have known Prit from Primitivo for six years. She is known for owning and running a top class bar and restaurant and she has become a trusted friend to many.

So, it was with mixed feelings I was visiting Prit; it's always great to see her but I was sad to be discussing the temporary closure of Primitivo due to the restoration work at The Grand Hotel.

Colmore Business District without Primitivo, even temporarily, is not a great thought. However, Prit is taking the opportunity to expand, increasing the bar and doubling the 40 cover restaurant, enabling Primitivo to better cater for private functions. When she re-opens in 2016, Prit will be celebrating 20 years of being open in the District.

Prit will keep in touch with her loyal customer base, but hopes to acquire new friends online via Facebook and Twitter.

We look forward to welcoming Primitivo back in 2016 and will, for the first time, see them joining us at our signature event, the Colmore Food Festival; we can't wait! Missing you already...

Find Primitivo Bar & Eatery on Facebook, or follow @PrimitivoBar on Twitter.



WARM UP YOUR WINTER DAYS IN CBD

Victoria Osgood

The nights are drawing in and the mercury is dropping. These colder days and darker evenings give you the perfect excuse to dig out the snugly jumpers, grab some friends and arrange a date at one of the fantastic venues in the District. No need to stay in, here's some of our top tips to plan your night out in this Wintry Wonderland...

SNUGGLE UP WITH A SCOTCH

There's not much that goes better with winter than whisky. Did you know that, although the Wellington is famous for its ales, it hosts a darn (or should that be dram) fine selection of whiskies? Why not arrange a date with its lovely open fire and inviting atmosphere and sample a few of their top notch offerings from around the world.

CURL UP WITH A COFFEE

You are spoilt for choice with great coffee options around the area. Whether you're after a flat white or it's more of an espresso kinda day, why not spend your lunch break or those frosty evenings escaping the chill in Urban Coffee Company. Enjoy a read in their chilled out interior, or for the evening why not try their lovely cocktails? Don't worry tea fans – you can enjoy an Earl Grey too if that's more your thing.

EMBRACE THE CAKES

Cake is a wonderful comfort food for cold days. When you're feeling frostbitten, there is no better excuse than to grab a co-worker and head down to Hindley's Bakery (to buy cakes for the whole office, of course) or enjoy an afternoon tea with all the trimmings at the Edwardian Tea Room. Pair with a sneaky glass of bubbly or a warming pot of tea and I promise you'll feel warmed up in no time!

WRAP YOUR PALMS AROUND A PIE

Pie is the perfect winter food. Delicious hearty fillings wrapped in layers of buttery pastry; it's time to indulge. Whether you're a veg lover or a meat fanatic, be sure to head down to the Old Joint Stock and try their fantastic selection of pies. For those who can't decide on just one, why not try a pie and ale taster board to really warm your cockles? Alternatively, follow the recipe opposite to try making your own!

WARM UP WITH A GLASS (OR BOTTLE) OF WINE

Whether you're catching up with old friends or welcoming someone new to the team, the District has some great venues for you to schmooze, chill and enjoy a lovely glass of red, white or bubbly. For those wanting to try something new, why not challenge the fabulous sommeliers at Hotel du Vin's Bubble Lounge to find you a new favourite tipple.

DEFROST OVER DINNER

Whether you have the post-work hunger or want to enjoy some supper after a hard day's shopping, you are spoilt for choice with all the cuisines available in the area. Loving some lobster? Why not try Nosh & Quaff for a treat of an evening. Craving a curry? Asha's has some fantastic lunchtime offers as well as a warm and inviting atmosphere for dinner diners. Dying for Dim Sum? Make a date with Chung Ying Central.

MAKE IT MULLED!

A certainty for winter is that many of us will end up indulging in a mulled drink at some point. Whether you prefer a warm cider, wine or something a little bit different; head down to The Jekyll and Hyde and Bar Opus to see what's hot! You can always check out their fantastic range of snacks, meals and seasonal dishes whilst you're there to really soak up the ambiance.

You can follow Vicky's adventures in Birmingham on her blog: www.brumderland.co.uk

Alternatively, find her on Facebook: search Brumderland or follow her on Twitter @Brumderland



make your own

STEAK AND ESB ALE PIE

If Vicky's tempting description of The Old Joint Stock's pies wasn't enough to tempt you outdoors this winter, you can try making your own at home! The kitchen team has kindly adapted its recipe for their Steak and Ale pie. The quantities here will make fillings for five individual pies, so you can eat them all at once, make one big one, or freeze the filling for use later!

Method

1. Heat the oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Fry the onion and garlic until soft. Remove the onion and garlic, but keep the oil.
2. Add the meat in batches to the same pan and brown on all sides.
3. Return all of the meat, onion and garlic to the pan, adding the bay leaf, cinnamon stick, star anise, thyme, sugar and beef stock cube. Stir and cook for 2-3 minutes before de-glazing the pan with the ale.
4. Allow the liquid to reduce by a quarter, then add 1 litre of water to the pan and bring to the boil. Reduce the temperature to a low heat and allow this to simmer gently for 2-3 hours until the meat is tender. Use Cornflour to thicken the gravy.
5. Whilst the meat is stewing, caramelise the shallots until golden and starting to soften, then season.
6. In a separate pan, melt the butter and cook the mushrooms until the liquid has evaporated, then season.
7. Prepare your pastry. You can make your own, or cheat and buy it pre-made; we won't tell! You will need enough pastry to line your pie dishes, and to put a lid on each pie.
8. Once the meat is cooked, you are ready to assemble your pies. Remove all of the whole spices and the thyme. Layer each pie with mushroom at the bottom, then meat, with shallots on top, ensuring that gravy is included.
9. Cover the pie with a disc of pastry, which will act as your pie lid. Brush the pie with the beaten egg and bake at 180°C for 25-30 minutes.
10. Serve with mashed potatoes, seasonal greens and gravy.



INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbs oil
- 200g onion, diced
- 5g garlic, chopped
- 750g chuck steak, diced
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 star anise
- 1 – 2 springs of thyme
- 15g light brown sugar
- 1 beef stock cube
- 370ml ESB Ale
- 1l water
- 50g cornflour
- 25 whole shallots
- 12.5g salted butter
- 500g flat mushrooms
- Shortcrust pastry
- 2 eggs, beaten
- Salt and pepper to season

1-5 small pie dishes (or one large one!)



Sweeney Todd - Welsh National Opera

HAVE YOURSELF A CULTURAL LITTLE CHRISTMAS

Victoria Osgood

Christmas is a time for spending time with your loved ones. Traditionally that means dragging your feet (and your partner/housemate/kids) around shopping for those all-important bits and pieces, but what if you were to introduce a new festive tradition and enjoyed a night of culture? Birmingham is brimming with fantastic live music, plays and dance all year around, but here are just a few of the highlights you can expect to catch in and around the area this season.

PETER PAN

Blue Orange Theatre
19 December – 2 January

Have you ever felt like the little kid who didn't grow up? See this adaptation of the classic work by J. M. Barrie and get ready to believe in fairies once again. Remember to pack your toothbrush, a sensible pair of exploring shoes and be prepared to take an epic journey to Never Never Land (complete with pirates, tick-tocking crocodiles and a liberal sprinkling of magic). Suitable for all ages.

SWEENEY TODD

Welsh National Opera
Hippodrome
19 - 21 November

Originally produced on Broadway, watch the "Demon Barber of Fleet Street" take revenge on his unsuspecting customers. Be prepared to be shocked, thrilled and awed in equal measure as the gruesome deeds are performed to the backdrop of the Welsh National Opera and a full orchestra in the gorgeous setting of the Hippodrome. Be warned though, you might be put off pie for life!

GRIMM TALES

Crescent Theatre
5 December – 19 December

We were all told the Grimm Tales when we were young, but how much do we really know about them? In this adaptation by Carol Duffy, the old tales are re-explored via a trip to the pub, an interesting use of scenery and the creeping uncertainty that there might just be more mystical and magical creatures in our midst than we know about. A great show for little ones or grown ups, after all, as the playwright herself said "We're all ex-children". Suitable for ages 5+.

YAMA

DanceXchange
26 November – 27th November

Created with the dancers from the Scottish Dance Theatre, YAMA is based on choreographer Damien Jalet's experience of meeting a group of mountain hermits in Japan. The highly revered piece explores the mythology associated with mountains inspired by the pagan and animist rituals practiced among the mountains of Tohoku. Expect to be mesmerised by the dancers as they contort, twirl and glide around the space. Suitable for ages 12+.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

The Old Joint Stock Theatre
15 December – 23 December

It just wouldn't be the festive season without a showing from Ebenezer and little Timmy, would it? After a sell out in the West End last year, this run of the play (adapted by Maverick Theatre's artistic director Nick Hennegen) comes to the fabulous setting of the Old Joint Stock Theatre to celebrate the group's 21st birthday. Marvel in the use of puppetry, music and physical theatre and delight in the appearance of the Christmas spirit(s). Suitable for all ages.



BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL

*The Very Revd Catherine Ogle,
Dean of Birmingham*

This Christmas at Birmingham Cathedral is going to be particularly special not only because it is the culmination of a year of celebration of the Cathedral's 300th anniversary, but also because of the completion of the months of work to beautifully relight and redecorate St Phillip's on Colmore Row.

Christmas is always a very special time for us as neighbours, friends, city organisations and charities gather in the Cathedral to celebrate and reflect on what is most important in life. As always we will have concerts and carol services throughout December with beautiful choral music from the Cathedral choir. And Christmas 2015 comes at the end of a very busy year when we have had so many opportunities to form new friendships across the city, celebrate the heritage of the cathedral and offer the churches of Birmingham Diocese an invitation to make a pilgrimage to their mother church with the Bishop of Birmingham.

To mark this special moment the Cathedral has commissioned Soul Boats as a spectacular addition to its Christmas celebrations – the installation of over a thousand paper golden boats made by communities across Birmingham and suspended in the central nave in a giant flotilla.

Artist Jake Lever has created the flotilla as part of the Something Good arts programme, which took place this summer, with artist residencies in neighbourhoods across the city and the diocese of Birmingham. Jake held community sessions where participants created their very own Soul Boat, each one representing its creator's life, journey and faith. It is these boats which will adorn the ceiling of the Cathedral from December.

The tercentenary arts project has woven together the highest artistic aspirations with participation of communities of all faiths and backgrounds across Birmingham. Visual and mural artist Mohammed Ali led a series of one day open air residences in public spaces across Birmingham in which he live-painted sculptures inspired by his nomadic journey across the city. Poet and writer Mandy Ross worked alongside Mohammed, exploring faith traditions and writings about light and dark through a series of community collaborations. These writings in turn influenced the themes of Mohammed's work. There has been a special focus on projects in Erdington, Sparkhill, Handsworth, Longbridge and King's Heath and the city centre which led to six stunning paintings inspired by the people of these neighbourhoods.

The summer of activity culminated in six key performances in October as part of the Something Good festival. At dawn, solar noon and dusk the award winning sound designer and composer Dan Jones presented

the world premiere of Skyline Symphony. Blurring the boundaries of music and sound, Dan created a musical tapestry, taking visitors on a sound journey through the 300 year history of Birmingham Cathedral. The sounds from neighbourhoods and the Cathedral's award-winning choir joined as tribute to the Lunar Society. As our city's history of imagination, innovation and inventive people transformed Cathedral Square, and members of the audience, local business community, visitors to the Cathedral and passers-by all participated in the musical spectacle through music tracks which they downloaded to their mobile phones.

Through its excellent community networks, the Cathedral has worked with neighbours in the city, of all faiths and none, inviting them to help celebrate the Cathedral's role in Birmingham both 300 years ago and today, and in doing so helping us all understand each other a little better.

To hear the poetry of Birmingham people first spoken, and then sung by the Cathedral choir, from the roof-tops of Cathedral Square as the culmination of the Skyline Symphony was absolutely thrilling.

We always wanted to invite people, of all backgrounds to our tercentenary celebrations and this felt like a worthy tribute to them and to the Brummie spirit of art and invention.



CONVENIENT CONVEYANCING

Are you looking to buy a new home?

Anyone buying or selling a house will know that it can take a long time. You could be anywhere between six months and two years away from the first moment you start looking for a new home to the moment when you are given the keys.

The thought of this can be daunting but it's a very real prospect for professionals working in the District. If you are time-poor it can be difficult to even find a property, although there are a number of estate agencies in CBD who can help with that. You can approach them directly or via online search sites such as Rightmove or Zoopla.

By the time you get to the conveyancing process, you may have spent somewhere between six months and a year researching and viewing properties as well as getting an offer accepted on a house or apartment. Unfortunately, although this would seemingly be the hard part over, you then need to find a property solicitor or a conveyancer to process your property transaction. Finding a solicitor and having the time to arrange an appointment to go through the transaction can be tough for those in CBD as solicitors tend to work the same hours as other professionals in the city and therefore arranging a meeting can be difficult.

Our tip is to look for a law firm within walking distance from your office. There are several in the District offering a wide range of services, allowing you to talk to a lawyer at a time that suits your busy work schedule.

Alongside a conveyancer that deals with the legal title of the property, you will also need to commission a surveyor to undertake a valuation and property survey, such as a homebuyer's report or a building survey.

Throughout the process you should make sure that you are also keeping an eye on the costs involved with buying a property, by ensuring that you obtain a breakdown of all legal fees, expenses and survey fees.

DBS Law have recently unveiled their 158 Property Services aimed at professionals, allowing people in the District to book same day appointments with property solicitors, either online at dbslaw.co.uk/158property or by calling 0121 374 2337.

You can also pop into their offices on 158 Edmund Street.

GRAND CENTRAL ARRIVES IN BIRMINGHAM



In September, Grand Central Birmingham opened its doors to the public, welcoming thousands of customers and diners into the UK's newest premium shopping and dining destination.

Following a five-year, £150 million transformation, Grand Central now sits proudly above the magnificent £600 million New Street Station and is very much open for business, boasting 66 new shops and restaurants with well over half of them never before seen in the city.

Some of the biggest and best names in shopping have opened, with The White Company, Hobbs, Joules, Foyles, Cath Kidston, Neal's Yard, and Tiger all coming to the city for the first time. Diners can sample the delights of Tapas Revolution, Pho, Crepe Affaire, Frizzenti and Square Pie. The mix of retail and dining offering at Grand Central provides a wide ranging choice for all tastes and budgets.

At 500,000 sq ft, it can comfortably house the 66 retailers and restaurants, as well as one of the biggest John Lewis stores in the UK – a 250,000 sq ft four-floored space that comes complete with a spa and its own restaurant.

The development of Grand Central has created more than 1,000 permanent retail, hospitality, catering and customer service jobs and is expecting to attract more than 50 million visitors a year.

The build began in 2011 with an initial demolition phase – over 6,000 tonnes of concrete were removed from the Pallasades Shopping Centre to allow the remodelling of what would become Grand Central as well as opening it up to allow the natural light to filter through.

A stand out piece of the development is the newly unveiled atrium that overlooks the vibrant bustle of the New Street passenger concourse. The new concourse is five times the size of London Euston's and was rebuilt without any interruption to rail services for the 170,000 passengers who use it every day.

Whether you're looking for gift ideas this Christmas, or travelling to see friends and relatives, make sure you put some time aside to explore this fantastic addition to Birmingham's shops and restaurants.

SALON EXHIBITION COMES TO BMAG



New Art WM showcases contemporary art in the West Midlands and is delighted to announce that a new exhibition, SALON will take place at Waterhall Gallery, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, Edmund Street in the lead up to Christmas.

SALON has something for everyone and is a great opportunity to see and buy paintings, prints, photographs, sculpture or drawings.

The exhibition includes works of art by Tereza Buskova, Graham Chorlton, John Devane, Des Hughes, Oliver C. Jones, Juneau Projects, Vered Lahav, Dean Melbourne, Lexi Strauss, Michelle Taylor, Barbara Witkowska and Clare Woods.

Works of art will be available for sale every Tuesday – Sunday, from 10.00 am - 5.00 pm from Friday 13 November until Wednesday 23 December.

Prices range from £60 upwards. For further information about SALON visit the New Art WM website www.newartwm.org or find them on Facebook or follow them on Twitter @newartwm



AFTER HOURS

KAM AND CAT

Jonathan Bryce

Cake is something that is rarely out of my thoughts. Ask anyone who knows me – I’m obsessed with the stuff. And I’m not fussy; I’ve yet to come across a kind of cake that hasn’t tempted me back for another slice.

This infatuation saw me head to The Eight Foot Grocer one Sunday afternoon, where I was promised the chance to try raw cake. It was here that I met Kamila Szewczyk, owner of budding raw and vegan food business Kam and Cat.

Fast-forward several months and my colleague Jo (who has a similar interest in healthy eating) and I are chatting with Kamila. We were both keen to find out more about the raw chef who works in the heart of Colmore Business District. Kamila works for The Department of Communities and Local Government, based at St Phillips Place.

I asked her how she got into running a raw food business.

“Food runs in my family. My grandmother is a chef, my mum is a chef; food has always been a part of my life.” Kamila went on to tell me how she used to run a cafe in her native Poland with her mother. Kamila met a friend, a raw vegan, who told her about raw cakes. She looked into the process of making them and got hooked.

“I got an apprenticeship in Notting Hill at a restaurant called Nama. I worked full time at the Home Office during the week and then commuted to London every Saturday and Sunday. I did this for a month; it was an amazing experience, and what I learnt there has become an important part of Kam and Cat”.

The business has been going for nine months. Kamila has built her following through a series of pop-up events, starting with the event where I met her. Since then, friend and vegan chef Jakub Grabski has joined the business as co-owner.

Jo asked Kamila how easy it is for a person to start making raw food.

“The main piece of kit you need is a dehydrator” explained Kamila. “It’s like your oven for raw food. You can also use it for other things like breads and jam. Also, you need a really good blender – you’ll be using it a lot!”

We discussed how the process meant that the products were highly customisable. Kamila is able to use a range of natural sugars and sweeteners to suit and, by its very nature, the food is free from most allergens, including dairy, egg and wheat.

I asked Kamila what had inspired her to focus on raw food as the selling point for her business.

“Like many people, I’ve done diets in the past. I think its best to have a balance with food; be sensible, but know when to treat yourself. I found myself wanting to have indulgent but healthy treats, but I found ‘healthy’ food options frustrating. They still undergo a significant amount of processing.

“The food I’m producing is a really healthy way to treat yourself. There’s nothing hidden in it and it goes through almost no processing. I want to show people that healthy food can be really tasty and enjoyable, but guilt free.”

We asked Kamila about her plans for the future. Her dream would be to open a raw and vegan food café, but for now, she’s happy building her list of clients who pay her to prepare raw versions of food they love. She’s also collaborating on her next pop-up with Nick Astley who, as well as being a good friend and inspiration, is the founder of Two Cats Kitchen.

Before this year, I had never heard of raw cake. Meeting and chatting to Kamila has not only opened a whole new world of cake to explore, but it’s opened my eyes to a whole new style of food, being championed by local colleagues like Kamila.



COLMORE BUSINESS BAKE OFF!

Lucy Elvin

Now that the BBC's Great British Bake Off has finished for another year, some of us may be in mourning and wondering what to do with our Wednesday evenings. Well, mourn no more as Colmore Business District (CBD) has teamed up with University College Birmingham (UCB) to put on our own Bake Off competition for all baking enthusiasts in the District.

Who amongst your colleagues is the best baker? Tell us by running a competition of your own to decide; or, if you already know who the best baker is in your organisation, tell us who they are and they will go straight through to the next round.

The winner from each organisation will need to bake a creation of their choosing for the judges. These will need to be delivered by the baker to CBD's offices on Waterloo Street on Monday 30th November by 11.00am so make sure your bake is portable!

The judges from CBD and UCB will select the winners of this round, who will then be invited to take part in the live final which is to be held in the impressive state of the art kitchen facility at UCB. This will be on Tuesday 15th December from 5.30pm - 9.00pm.

During the evening, the finalists will complete two tasks. The first is to produce a batch of 12 identical Christmas treats. The second is to decorate a seasonal cake, whether it's the traditional fruitcake, stollen or yuletide log. These tasks are to be completed within an allocated time period of two hours.

Whilst the bakers are perfecting their masterpieces, come along and join the festivities, and watch the bakers whilst they work. Treats will be available on the evening.

So, if you love baking and enjoy a bit of healthy competition in the workplace, enter yourself or your company in to the bake off. Entry costs £25. Tickets to watch the Final will cost £5.

All proceeds from entry, ticket sales and the raffle will go to CBD's nominated charity. Please contact Lucy Elvin for more details, to enter or to book tickets - 0121 236 4689 or email Lucy-e@colmorebusinessdistrict.com

We want to see your bakes, so be sure to post your pictures to us via social media. You can include us on Twitter @ColmoreBID, @UCBofficial or using #CBBO. Alternatively you can post to our Facebook page; just search for Colmore Food Festival and follow us!



CBD FILM CLUB

Here at CBD, we're no strangers to crashing out on the sofa with Netflix and a takeaway after a long day at the office. But we feel experiences like these are better shared with friends, so instead of inviting the business community round to our house, our wonderful hospitality venues have agreed to host our film nights for us!

2015 sees the official launch of our Film Club. We will be carefully selecting some great films, so no trawling for hours deciding what to watch. We'll have blockbusters and cult films, vintage classics and cutting edge independent films that are sure to delight. Whether you want to revisit an old favourite, or be challenged by something

new, CBD Film Club will have something for you.

There'll be no overpriced popcorn and flat Coke at our Film Club. Instead, members can expect themed tipples, nibbles or suppers all included in the price to accompany the film showing.

CBD Film Club premiers at Purecraft Bar, Waterloo Street, on 17th November. Our first 20 VIP members are already signed up but we still have regular tickets available for just £8 (which include drinks and snacks).

We have a special treat in store for Christmas too: the Art Deco Quaker Meeting House at The Priory Rooms on Bull

Street will host cult film, Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. There will be lots of little surprises (treats not tricks, we promise) on the night so make sure you book soon!

To find out more about joining CBD Film Club and to get on the mailing list for all the news, please contact joanne-d@colmorebusinessdistrict.com

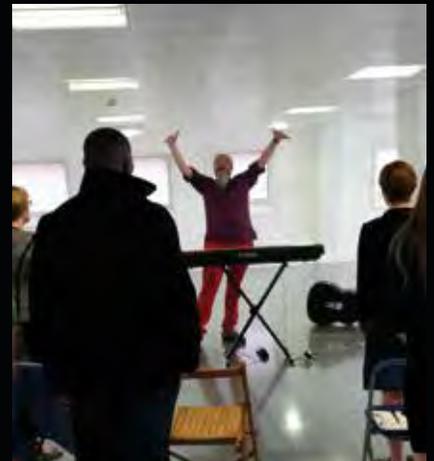
COLMORE CHORUS RETURNS!

Our popular workplace choir, Colmore Chorus, has returned for Christmas.

Colmore Chorus is made up of professionals in CBD who enjoying singing. There's no entry requirements; all you need is enthusiasm. The group does two signature performances each year. They perform on stage at the Colmore Food Festival and, over the Christmas period, they do a series of short, seasonal performances across the District.

Rehearsals are now on for Christmas, but it's not too late to sign up. Our two choir masters will be taking the group through a selection of songs, and preparing something a little different for Christmas 2015...The choir rehearses every Monday, from 1.00 pm - 2.00 pm at Livery Place on Livery Street.

Colmore Chorus is a great opportunity to get away from your desk at lunchtime, meet new people and have a bit of fun. If you'd like to join in, or if you have any questions, please contact Joanne Davies: joanne-d@colmorebusinessdistrict.com



COMMUNITY BUILDING UPDATE

Katy Baker

Behind the scenes of Colmore Business District (CBD) are six different Working Groups, made up of Board Directors and volunteers from businesses across the District. The Community Building Working Group, chaired by CBD Board Director Nicola Fleet-Milne of Fleetmilne Property, brings together representatives from different sectors in the District to build (yep – you’ve guessed it!) more of a community feel for those who work and socialise here.

In August, the Community Building Working Group hosted its first ever #ColmoreSocial, where 40 individuals took part in a tour of some of CBD’s most exciting bars. Guests were treated to Snow Hill Slushies at Bar Opus, followed by Elixer No.6 cocktails and bar snacks at The Bureau, craft beers and delicious pork scratchings at Purecraft Bar and Kitchen, finished off by cocktails and hot dogs at Nosh & Quaff. Even better, all the money raised from ticket sales at the event was donated to the CBD’s charity of the year, Birmingham Citizens Advice Bureau.

The Community Building Working Group would like to hold regular #Colmoresocial events, engaging even more people and showcasing even more bars and restaurants. If you are an establishment who would like to take part please contact Lucy Elvin at the CBD office on 0121 236 4689.

Other charity fundraising events the group organises include the twice-yearly Quiz Nights, including the Halloween quiz night that took place at thestudio in October. At each quiz, teams from across the District compete to take the winner’s prize, but ultimately, it’s all about raising funds for our nominated charity.

We’re now busy planning next year’s Community Building calendar which will include quizzes, socials and the return of our Community Games, as well as lots of new and interesting activities to take part in.



The Community Building Working Group is made up of:

- Nicola Fleet-Milne Fleetmilne Property
- Rebecca Wheatley Five Brand Communication
- Beth Sadler The Priory Rooms Meeting and Conference Centre
- Lucie Sissons Core Marketing
- Rachel Seaton Shoosmiths
- Michelle Smith Barclays
- Katy Baker UpRising Leadership

If you are interested in getting involved with Community Building please contact Lucy Elvin.



WIN!

We have 10 Season Tickets, worth £300, to give away to Colmore Life readers, courtesy of Chatham Billingham, for the new Post & Mail Car park. These tickets can be used for 25 days parking during a three month period, once activated.

To be in with a chance of winning, simply answer the following question:

How many car parking spaces are there in total at the new Post & Mail development?

Email your answer to jonathan-b@colmorebusinessdistrict.com by 29 January 2016.

10 runners up can also receive a discount of £200 off any quarterly season ticket. All winners will receive a free valet. Terms & Conditions apply.

Terms and conditions

The winners of the competition will be entitled to a season ticket at B4 Car Park, giving the recipient 25 days free parking, to be used within three months of activation. The prize is non-transferable and no cash alternative is offered. Winners will be chosen at random from all correct entries and will be announced in the next issue of Colmore Life.

SUMMER EDITION’S COMPETITION WINNER



In our last edition, we asked how many years has the Colmore Food Festival been running. The correct answer was five years. The lucky winner of a pair of

tickets was Caroline Chadwick from Forresters.



Come Stitch With Us

Saturday 1 December - 11am
Library of Birmingham (Mezzanine)

Learn a new skill and meet great people at this monthly meet organised by the Birmingham Embroiderers' Guild. All skill levels welcome and you can bring your own projects or give one of theirs a go!



The Magic Of Vienna



Sunday 3 January - 3pm
CBSO

Bring in the new year with a night of champagne, concertos and classics from the critically acclaimed City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

Skeptics In The Pub

Wednesday 9 December - 7:30pm
The Victoria

Join the Birmingham Skeptics for an evening with a difference. With different guest speakers every night covering everything from "The Chimpanzee Guide to Competition and Cooperation" to "An Unofficial History of the Soviet Space Programme", enjoy an evening of entertainment and learning in the pub!

Afternoon Play

Sunday 6 December - 2pm
Home Is Where

Whether you're a hardened gamer or just enjoy the occasional game of Monopoly, head down to Home Is Where for an afternoon of coffee, cake and gaming with like-minded individuals.

Christmas By Candlelight

Sunday 13 & Sunday 20 December - 5pm
Old Joint Stock

Join The Old Joint Stock for their annual Christmas By Candlelight Celebrations. Live Christmas music, a 25 foot Christmas Tree, mince pies & hot toddies... You never know, you might even catch a bit of snow!

Carols For The Business Community

Wednesday 16 December
Birmingham Cathedral

Join the Colmore Christmas tradition and get in the festive mood with a carolling session at Birmingham Cathedral. You don't need to sing like a songbird to join in, just bring your enthusiasm!

National Theatre Live Presents Jane Eyre



Tuesday 8 December - 7pm
The Electric Cinema

Book your seats, grab your snacks (and maybe a cheeky drink) and settle in for a classic, screened live from the National Theatre on the South Bank.

Go 8-Bit Presents Wifi Wars

Saturday 16 January - 8pm
MAC

Join the great and geeky of Birmingham for this one-off interactive gameshow where you can win prizes using nothing but your knowledge and your smartphone! Just remember to come fully charged!

macbirmingham.co.uk/event/wi-fi-wars

Your team



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Colmore Life: Journalist

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