

- Business Updates
- Food + Lifestyle
- City Events

# COLMORE LIFE



Free

MORE THAN JUST BUSINESS

Spring 2018

# HERE COMES THE



*Sun, sun, sun, here it comes*

# Editor's WELCOME



As we leap into 2018, we look forward to a year of campaigning for our third BID term.

Levy payers will vote in the autumn to decide if Colmore BID will be delivering projects and services for a further five years. The new term will start on 1 April 2019. One way to decide if the BID is doing good work is to have a look at our Ambition magazine. You can view this online; it highlights our work from April 2009 to date.

If you'd like to join the discussion about what you think the priorities of the BID Team should be for the next term, why not book on to one of our focus group lunches? Your ideas could form part of our business plan. Contact Lucy for more details (contact details below).

To view our current projects and find out what we're working on, have a look at our brand new website, which is now easier to navigate at [colmorebusinessdistrict.com](http://colmorebusinessdistrict.com).

This year will also see progress with our Snow Hill Public Realm programme. These exciting projects will dramatically change the look of Colmore Row near Snow Hill Station and Cornwall Street, making better use of space, incorporating more seating and planting and generally making two tired-looking locations beautiful again. More detail about the Snow Hill Public Realm programme can be seen on page 10.

**Michele Wilby**  
Managing Editor

## THE TEAM

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Colmore Life: Journalist

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# OUR UPCOMING EVENTS

Find times and locations at  
[colmorebusinessdistrict.com](http://colmorebusinessdistrict.com)

## MARCH

- 14 – Wellbeing Series: Managing A Busy Family Life
- 21 – Wellbeing Series: Food For Exercise
- 23 – Moseley Arts Market
- 30 – Colmore Security Network

## APRIL

- 18 – Wellbeing Series: Creating Balance – Body Language
- 19 – Food Festival Fringe Event
- 25 – Wellbeing Series: Stress Box
- 25 – Spring Quiz

## MAY

- 16 – Wellbeing Series: Digital Detox
- 18 – Community Games
- 23 – Food Festival Fringe Event
- 23 – Wellbeing Series: Creating Balance – Drama Workshop
- 25 – Moseley Arts Market

## JUNE

- 20 – Food Festival Launch
- 23 – Cinema Club at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

## JULY

- 6/7 – Food Festival

## SEPTEMBER

- 7 – Moseley Arts Market
- 11 – Annual Meeting
- 13 – Cinema Club at Birmingham and Midland Institute

## OCTOBER

- 17 – Autumn Quiz

## NOVEMBER

- 15 – Christmas Light Switch-on

## DECEMBER

- 7 – Moseley Arts Market
- 8 – Cinema Club

## #FabToFollow

**Sometimes it's hard to keep track of who you need to be following; thankfully we take the stress away and let you know who's posting the most interesting, fun and informative content in the city.**

### Loake Shoemakers

  LoakeShoemakers  LoakeBham

Give Loake Shoemakers a follow to keep up to date with the new shoe ranges and their latest offers.

### Sifa Fireside

  sifafireside

In 2017, we did a fantastic job of raising over £14,000 for SIFA Fireside, so give them a follow and keep in the know about all the fantastic work they carry out and how you can support them.

### Liquor Store

  LiquorStore\_est  LiquorStoreClothing

Stay on trend with Liquor Store and take a look at their incredible displays and gift offering.

### Cycle Republic

  CycleRepublicUK  cyclerepublic

Give Cycle Republic a follow and keep up to date with new cycling trends.

### Up and Running

 UpAndRunningHQ  @upandrunninguk

Whether its gait analysis, clothing and running shoes or finding a group to run with; Up and Running can help.

# COLMORE BID UPDATES

## DISTRICT CLEANER

### *Taking care of the District*

One of the main roles of our Ambassador Team (the guys in the bowler hats that you'll see around the District) is to report issues of cleanliness to help try and keep the District tidy. As part of a busy city centre, it will be no surprise to readers to know that the volume of reports was quite high last year. It was clear that the basic cleaning level being provided was no longer sufficient to keep the District up to standard. We decided to pilot having our own dedicated cleaner for 20 hours a week and the results speak for themselves.

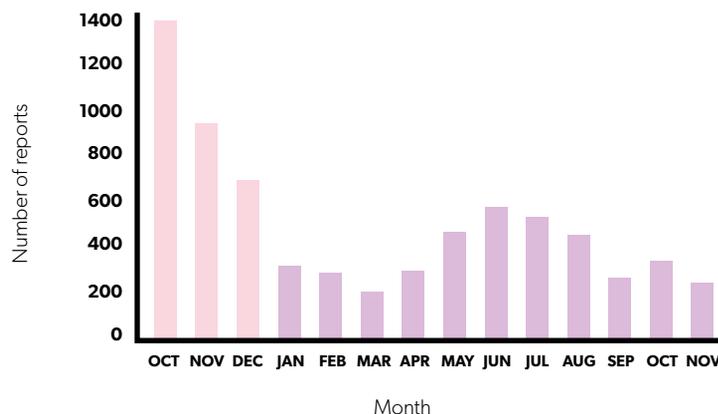
In January, when the pilot started, reports dropped from just under 1,500 in October 2016 to around 300. We ran a short procurement exercise in May to decide on a provider that would be able to give us 20 hours of dedicated cleaning each

week. In the short period of not having a cleaner, the numbers started to creep up again, showing the real impact that having a person focused on the District can have.

Our cleaner, Garry, now patrols the District each morning for four hours cleaning the public footpaths. As well as the usual mess and detritus he is trained to pick up needles and has access to a range of equipment for more complex tasks. If you spot a serious mess or spill on our pavements, give the office a call; we'll either arrange for it to be reported to Birmingham City Council, or for Garry to come and clean up!

### CLEANING REPORTS OCT 2016 – DEC 2017

Key: 2016 2017



WORDS  
JONATHAN BRYCE



# ALTERNATIVE GIVING

*Put your change into action*

In December 2017, Andy Street, the West Midlands Metro Mayor, announced the launch of his first major initiative to tackle homelessness in the region. Change into Action is a scheme that is being piloted in Birmingham to help to try and tackle rough sleeping.



The scheme was developed by Fjord, part of the Accenture Group, and was based on a concept researched and developed by the team at Colmore BID and partners. Between 2014 and 2016 rough sleeping in Birmingham increased by 175%.

This is a trend which is being seen across the region, however Birmingham has the highest levels of rough sleeping in the West Midlands, with more than twice the number of people without a roof over their head compared with Walsall, which has the second highest levels in the region. Nationally, Birmingham has the tenth highest number of people sleeping on the streets in England.

The Alternative Giving scheme gives those who see homeless people two practical ways to help.

Firstly, it allows people to tell support services about someone sleeping rough via the 'Street Link'

function, the national rough sleeper reporting service.

This report is sent directly to Birmingham's outreach team, so that they can deliver vital services to those who need them.

People are also able to donate to the scheme. Change into Action is more than just a website; it's a coming together of local organisations who work with those who are sleeping rough.

Donations made through the scheme will be put into a pot for organisations to access to deliver those interventions that can't normally be covered by funding; anything from a new pair of boots for a rough sleeper, to a rent deposit.

Homelessness is a complex social issue – and it is more than just people sleeping on the street – however, this scheme is a step towards helping people off the street and back into housing.



**Nationally, Birmingham has the tenth highest number of people sleeping on the streets in England.**

[changeintoaction.org.uk](http://changeintoaction.org.uk)

WORDS JONATHAN BRYCE

# Community BUILDING

The Community Building group has another great year planned with loads of activities and workshops taking place.

We are currently in the middle of our 2018 Wellbeing Series. This is a programme of activities to support our wellbeing agenda. We've already had an introduction to yoga and workshops in 'wellbeing for a successful career' and 'food planning – positive choices for a positive lifestyle' and we have some great activities coming up including:

**Wednesday 14 March, 1 - 2pm**  
Workshop 4 – Managing a Busy Family Life – Make work, work for you

**Wednesday 21 March, 1 - 2pm**  
Workshop 5 – Food for Exercise – Food to complement your workouts, maximising results

**Wednesday 18 April, 1 - 2pm**  
Workshop 6 – Body Language – What does yours say about you?

**Wednesday 25 April, 1 - 2pm**  
Workshop 7 – Stress Box

**Wednesday 16 May, 1 - 2pm**  
Workshop 8 - Digital Detox – Put down that iPad and mobile phone!

**Wednesday 23 May, 1 - 2pm**  
Workshop 9 – Creating balance – Do something for you – Drama workshop

We do have a few free spaces; if you'd like to book any of the workshops, please email [katy.paddock@colmorebid.co.uk](mailto:katy.paddock@colmorebid.co.uk)

"If you have happy, healthy employees, that has an impact on staff motivation, engagement and retention" says Dianne Hol, Director of HR at healthcare company, Roche.

In a couple of months, we'll also see the return of the popular Colmore BID Community Games. This is a team event that is loads of fun and has a real competitive edge. We'll be delivering the event with Sport Birmingham again, so you can expect loads of variety in the team challenges. For more information and booking details, see page 24.

The Community Building group continues to actively fundraise for our nominated charity SIFA Fireside and we've got a long way to go to match our total for last year, which was over £14,000. This year we'll be abseiling down Holiday Inn Express, holding two interactive quiz nights and much more. See our website for more details.

Our first quiz of the year will be on 25 April, so get the date in your diary and we'll send out more details in a few weeks' time.

**WORDS** LUCY ELVIN

# INDUSTRY INSIGHT

*Paul Brown, Director at EY, Government and Public Sector, and visiting Professor at Birmingham City University talks Brexit, Devolution and economic forecasts.*



**I think it was about three years ago when I last contributed to Colmore Life, at a time when there were words and phrases not yet common in our vocabularies that have since become mainstream.**



Brexit, Customs Union, Article 50, remainers, single market, WTO, Trump and so on. Cameron was still on course to carry on until the 2020 general election with a smooth transition to Osborne. Corbyn was nowhere to be seen as Ed was still at the helm of Labour, UKIP were on the rise and the SNP were soaring.

Fast forward to the present day and we are almost back to two-party politics, something we haven't seen since the 1980s, where the share of votes in the last general election for Conservative and Labour exceeded 80%.

Talking of Brexit (it's difficult to have a conversation with either colleagues or businesses without Brexit dominating, isn't it?) it is interesting that the discussion has moved on to re-vitalising the links we have with the Commonwealth to help deliver new trade deals once we leave the EU.

As it stands today around 40% of our trade is with the EU and according to some analysts our trade with the Commonwealth countries is around 9%. Therefore there is not only a lot at stake but there should be opportunities to develop and grow – the debate and negotiation continues.

That said, UK inbound investment has remained steady, boosted by the weak pound, and export opportunities are encouraging with the CBI reporting the strongest order book for UK exporters since 1988. Devolution still remains part of the government's agenda as we see the second devolution deal agreed for the West Midlands.

Metro Mayors were also the big winners in the Autumn Budget where it showed that mayoral city regions, due to more transparent and direct accountability, will be given priority ahead of other places when it comes to government decisions on investment and policy making. It is also important to note that the Midlands Engine was mentioned in the very first clause of the second devolution deal, where it will be a key growth centre for the UK.

The prize for the region is huge; if the existing £207 billion Midlands economy were as productive as the rest of the UK average then it would add a further £54 billion to the economy.

The recent EY Regional Economic Forecast expects the West Midlands to be the fastest growing region outside of London and

the South East, with strong performance in the real estate and business service sectors. Employment in the region has also seen a resurgence according to the study, seeing a larger increase in jobs than any other region, compared to last year.

It would be remiss of me not to mention two recent key announcements for the region at the end of last year. The first is Coventry being announced as the City of Culture in 2021.

The second is the recent announcement that Birmingham has been awarded the host city for the 2022 Commonwealth Games. This is fantastic news for the city and the region, which will attract investment and promote economic growth as well as providing a legacy for aspiring athletes to be inspired by. I am sure the BIDs across the city – including Colmore BID – will no doubt have a key role to play...

# MEETINGS & SECURITY

Colmore Business District is an exciting and vibrant place to work; we have a bustling business community, supported by fantastic coffee shops, bars and restaurants and the city centre is on our doorstep.

You would think, therefore, that with all this activity, criminality would follow. Fortunately, Colmore Business District remains a relatively safe part of the city and Colmore BID facilitates a number of groups to help keep the District as safe as it can be.

WORDS JONATHAN BRYCE

## Pubwatch

As the number of bars and pubs in the District has grown, we have brought our Pubwatch scheme back together. Licensed premises are encouraged to join us for a monthly meeting to discuss issues that affect them and their industry. The meeting is currently attended by West Midlands Police and we are hoping to be joined by Environmental Health Officers during 2018. We are also looking to provide briefings on topics that impact on the whole city.

To join, please contact John-Jo: [john-jo.vonjohnson@colmorebid.co.uk](mailto:john-jo.vonjohnson@colmorebid.co.uk)

## Property Owners & Agents Forum

As well as bringing people together to discuss topics that relate to security, Colmore BID also facilitates a Property Owners' and Agents' Forum, which meets twice a year. The forum seeks to bring together managers, owners and agents to discuss issues of strategic concern to the District. Previous discussions have included subjects such as tackling homelessness and improving access to Superfast Broadband in the District. In 2018 we hope to bring you a regular mailer of relevant information about BID activity. If you would like to join the forum, please contact Jonathan in the office:

[jonathan.bryce@colmorebid.co.uk](mailto:jonathan.bryce@colmorebid.co.uk)

## Getting Ready for GDPR

Data Protection is nothing new; we have had the Data Protection Act for almost 20 years, but as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) comes into force this year, businesses will be expected to be even more careful about how they manage their customers' information. Colmore BID works with First Mile to provide cost-effective recycling solutions, however, this isn't limited to just glass and plastic. First Mile are able to provide a confidential waste disposal service, charged on a bag-by-bag basis, rather than a monthly or annual fee, meaning you only pay to dispose of the confidential waste that you produce. If you're planning to upgrade your computers, First Mile can help you to make sure that any sensitive data stored on your drives is properly disposed of, using specialist equipment to shred IT hardware. This covers anything from the hard drive in your computer to a small USB drive or CD. They are also constantly looking at ways to help businesses become GDPR compliant.

More details at [firstmile.co.uk](http://firstmile.co.uk)

## Colmore Security Network

The Colmore Security Network is aimed at facilities managers, property managers and those who are responsible for business continuity and resilience in their organisations. Traditionally, the group has met two or three times a year for a briefing on relevant topics. In October 2017, the group received a counter-terrorism training session aimed specifically at those who are likely to be responsible for groups of people in an incident. Over the course of 2018, the Colmore BID team will be looking to run sessions on other security related topics, as well as considering ways to keep the group interacting online. If you would like to join the network, please contact Jonathan in the office: [jonathan.bryce@colmorebid.co.uk](mailto:jonathan.bryce@colmorebid.co.uk)

# SHOW US YOUR CV

# MICHELLE

# BISHTON



**Michelle found her calling in Intellectual Property after studying law at Southampton Institute and then gaining her Master's degree...**

Fast forward to 2018, not only is she a Chartered Trade Mark Attorney with 20 years' experience, she also has a successful company under her belt.

After graduating, she worked for large companies such as Marks & Clerk, Withers & Rogers and Forresters, spending eight years working in Leamington Spa. She has now returned to work in Birmingham (after craving the hustle and bustle of city life) and loves being back in a metropolitan environment. She lives in Harborne with her family and the business is based on Waterloo Street, in the heart of Colmore Business District.

Vault IP has been running for three years, having initially been set up by Michelle's business partner Phil Sanger, who is a Chartered Patent Attorney. Michelle joined as a Director in September 2015, adding a trade mark side to the business. This small firm has seen a 50%

growth in the last year and Michelle predicts big things for the future. Vault IP's clients range from the 'one man band' to multinational corporations, based in the UK and overseas. They're finding more and more companies are choosing them through their competitive costing options, referrals from other businesses and their reputation for offering a service tailored to the client's individual needs.

Michelle has found that moving their firm to central Birmingham has meant that it's easier to make connections with prospective clients, "...being based in the District gives more opportunity to attend networking events and chances to meet others. When you're right in the heart of it, it's very easy to nip out and grab a coffee with people. We feel part of something here."

Although Michelle finds it rewarding to work with businesses both big and small, she particularly enjoys helping SMEs, as she can really see them develop and aid them in solving more complex issues.

As well as being a champion to SMEs, the firm is environmentally-minded too. The company is entirely paperless and relies on

cloud technology to manage their files. In addition to being leaner and greener, this "keeps costs down and means that you're not spending time looking for things, it's all searchable on the cloud. It's a lot more efficient and cost effective." This also gives Vault IP's employees a chance to work more flexibly, allowing them to have a better work-life balance.

On top of her work as a Chartered Trade Mark Attorney at Vault IP, Michelle and her husband balance family life with a gas and welding supplies business (which she inherited from her parents). In her well deserved chill out time, Michelle loves to holiday in exciting and adventurous new destinations.

**VAULT**  
intellectual property

vault-ip.com

 vault-ip-limited

 VaultIP

**WORDS** VICTORIA OSGOOD

**This small firm has seen a 50% growth in the last year and Michelle predicts big things for the future**

# UPDATE



**For those of you new to this, the *Snow Hill Public Realm* programme is a suite of projects that emerged from our BID 1 project as a draft *Snow Hill Interchange Plan (SHIP)* and *Snow Hill Masterplan*, along with partners *Centro (now TfWM)* and *Birmingham City Council (BCC)*.**

Turning the wishlist at the end of SHIP into reality was facilitated by Colmore BID putting levy-payers' money on the table with the LEP, and from that leveraging £4.66m of new Local Growth Fund money into the programme, making a total budget of just under £10m.

This project has lasted the entire length of BID 2 and will last well into BID 3. Changing the world, even on a local basis like this, takes time.

The first thing we did after appointing Broadway Malyan (with the support of JMP, now Systra, and WYG), was to develop a spatial strategy for the whole District. This gave us a wishlist of improvements that would cost around £20m, enough to last a decade or more at the BID's typical rate of spend on things like this. 'Transformational' is an over-used word, but this programme is just that. You've only got to look at the proposals for Cornwall Street, Colmore Row,

the new Steelhouse Square and Snow Hill Station to realise that.

So, where are we up to now? Well this has taken longer than expected, but we are now in a position to say that, as well as a spatial strategy, we have a prioritised list of schemes, some detailed designs ready for procurement and a tentative start identified for late spring next year.

Project 1 will be around and in front of Snow Hill Station. We have separated the Square itself (which is privately-owned) from the rest of the project and this will be our first spade-in-the-ground. Highlights include removing the right turn at the top of Livery Street and removing the short length of dual carriageway in front of the station to improve the pedestrian experience. We will move the taxis from the rank in front of the station and swap them for the bus stop on Livery Street. This will reduce pavement congestion and improve

the 'transport interchange' function of Snow Hill. The whole area will be paved in a high quality stone paving, designed to be stronger, more attractive and last many years with less maintenance than existing slabs. We hope that the owners of Snow Hill Square are able to carry out complementary works to their land, and we stand ready to help them do that.

Project 2 dates back to our BID 2 business plan where we showed a visualisation of Cornwall Street as a much more pedestrian friendly street, with spill-out opportunities for its burgeoning food venues. The redevelopment of Herbert House was partly encouraged by our plans, and we're working with Pimlico Capital to make this exciting transformation happen.

**WORDS MIKE MOUNFIELD**

# RAMBOLL MOVES INTO CORNERBLOCK

Bruntwood's successful, Glenn Howells Architects-designed, regeneration of the old KPMG building at 2 Cornwall Street, now called Cornerblock, is almost fully let already. One of the new tenants is Ramboll, a global engineering design and consultancy company founded in Denmark in 1945. I caught up with Director, Neil Harvey in their spacious new abode.

**Neil, where did Ramboll used to be located in Birmingham and why did you move?**

We were in two locations before; Waterloo Street and down by the canal. We wanted to be in one spot and to allow room for expansion. Birmingham is seen as a key location for Ramboll in terms of future growth.

**What's your role here?**

I run the Birmingham Office and lead the structural engineering team. We offer a range of engineering and consultancy services from here, including environmental, buildings, civils and transport.

**So, why Cornerblock?**

We looked at lots of places, we started off with a long-list of 14 potential offices. Being in the centre of the city, in Colmore Business District, was an important factor and was mentioned by everyone a lot in a staff survey we carried out. People wanted to stay right where we were. Everyone uses public transport so proximity to the stations was important. Most of all we wanted a high quality office space in keeping with our brand and to help attract high calibre staff.

**What are the most interesting Ramboll projects you're involved with at the moment?**

We're involved with the current HS2 works, which involves things like demolition, new road bridges and so on, but what catches the eye is our work on refurbishing the old Curzon Street booking hall as part of the new Curzon Street high speed railway terminus.

This is probably the oldest surviving station building in the world, opening in 1838. We have a strong

reputation in heritage work and one of our earliest projects in Birmingham was the refurbishment of the Town Hall. We've been involved in the Post & Mail building here in Colmore BID and the Parkside Building in Eastside.

Our major building project here in Birmingham is the Paradise redevelopment. We recently enjoyed the topping-out ceremony for the first building, One Chamberlain Square, which was officiated by the West Midlands Mayor, Andy Street and the Leader of the Council, Ian Ward. We're very proud to be involved with this complex, huge, but game-changing regeneration project.

**Can I throw you a curve-ball question: you've got a full order book, a fascinating project list and room here for growth; how do you think Brexit will affect the future of Ramboll?**

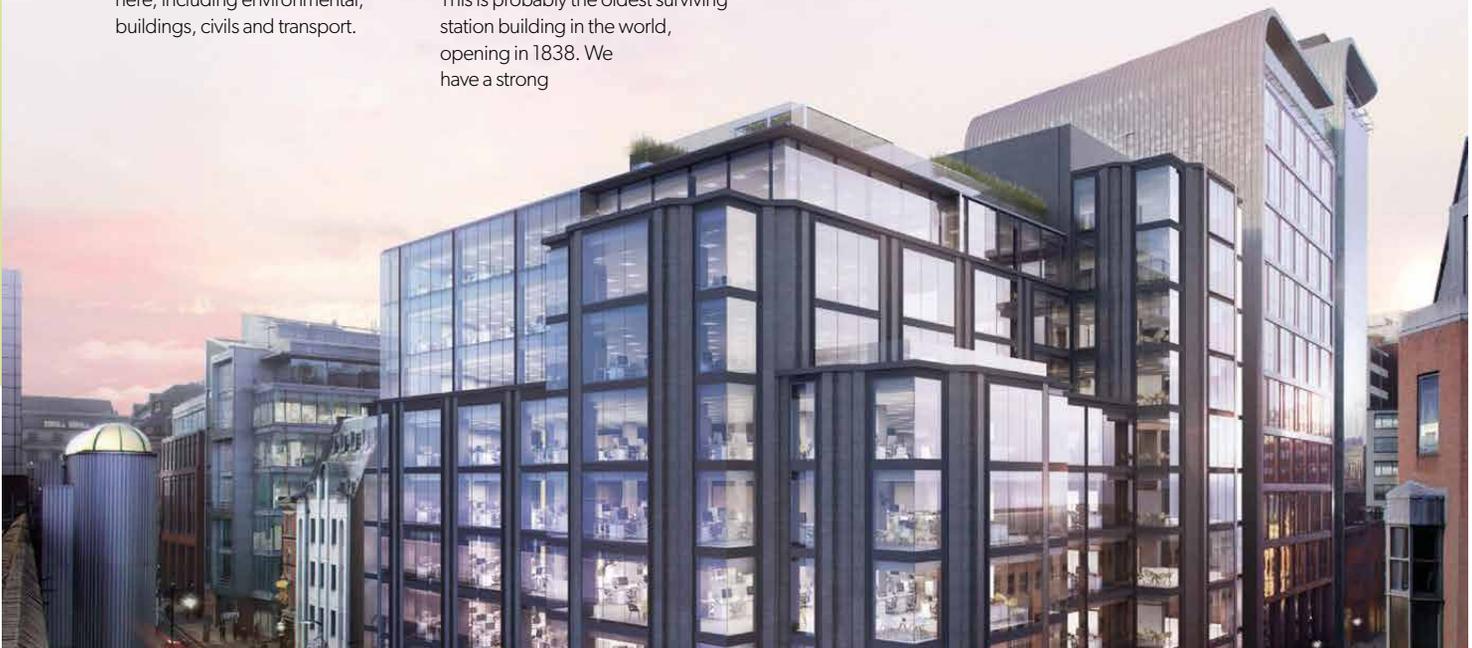
In a word: uncertainty. No business likes uncertainty when planning future investment.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**

We get a lot of important visitors from across the globe, but particularly from our origin countries in Scandinavia and they're all very impressed with the vibrancy of Birmingham; many have never been before but their initial impression has been very positive. It's an exciting time to be here as an individual, a professional and as a business – and everyone can see that.



WORDS MIKE MOUNFIELD



# WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Mackenzie Jones, a specialist recruitment consultancy with an office on Edmund Street in Colmore Business District, delivered an exclusive round table discussion with Microsoft's Commercial Marketing Director, Helen Tupper, in November to drive the agenda of hiring and retaining top female talent in leadership roles.

MACKENZIE

JONES

RECRUITMENT

Mackenzie Jones, specialist recruiters in Consumer, Retail, IT, Engineering and Digital, made a commitment to rethinking the recruitment model, challenging norms and supporting positive change in recruitment, and approached Helen Tupper to lead the discussion on the back of the Gender Pay Gap Reporting Legislation in the summer.

The leadership discussion was attended by a cross section of top businesses and also included Timewise, a community interest company promoting flexible working.

Helen began by sharing her recruitment journey at Microsoft as an example of best practice. This journey ran over several months, before a specific role was available, and enabled her to meet business leaders informally and determine cultural alignment, rather than being a hard-nosed, fast-paced recruitment drive. When Helen was approached to apply for a role and given a job description to look over, it was a job description that wasn't overwhelmed with jargon and typical language, but one that actually meant something. It reflected a company that valued her mindset, and was not blinkered about her background (which was not technical or computer-based).

As the discussion developed, senior leaders resonated with their career experiences to date

and shared some insight into what makes a great hiring process to attract female leaders (and some bad experiences too). The key themes were informal hiring processes, encouraging cultural fit and skillset matching over hard-nosed processes; flexibility to support inclusion and provide opportunities for working mothers, and confidence. The meeting predominantly discussed soft benefits in the workplace over salary, with most of the attendees acknowledging flexible and part-time working policies should be more than just a written piece of paper and women should have the confidence in their abilities to ask for flexible working.

Paul Jones, Managing Director at Mackenzie Jones says: "We are incredibly passionate about facilitating this much needed discussion in the workplace and it was a pleasure to welcome so many senior leaders from blue chip companies to talk about how to attract top female talent in senior positions and keep them on board. This discussion will be the first of many for Mackenzie Jones, as we really want to find out what's happening in the industries we support and get behind the issues affecting them."

For more information, please contact Kelly Ruston, Marketing and Communications Manager Kelly. [ruston@mackenziejones.co.uk](mailto:ruston@mackenziejones.co.uk)



# A DAY IN THE

13



**For our latest installment of 'A Day In The Life' we had a chat with a man that wants to "Change the world of energy... here from the heart of Birmingham."**

Marc Stone is the Chief Financial Officer of Energy Systems Catapult, an organisation which is changing the dialogue and activity around power, encouraging businesses to get ready for the energy revolution.

Energy Systems Catapult (ESC) is in its third year of operation, having moved from offices by Birmingham Airport to its custom designed facility at Cannon House, 12 months ago. To drive the change towards the new-energy system revolution, both purpose and place were key in the decision to move to Colmore Business District; the Energy Revolution forming in

the same surroundings that the Industrial Revolution did in the centre of the city. The innovation centre offers swathes of light and visibility, which harnesses the city's natural energy; inspiring innovation and creativity in its workforce.

Marc lives in Bromsgrove and, once his two boys are fed and watered, he commutes into the city by train, as do most staff at ESC, before heading to the company's award-winning innovation centre on the top floor of Cannon House.

There isn't a typical work day for Marc, nor for any of his colleagues, with the accelerating progress of technology and energy opportunity in the sector. He shares his time between his work at ESC with student mentoring, his work on the Advisory Board and as an ambassador for the University of Birmingham Business School, and helping the homeless. The latter is of great importance to

Marc, who during his commute walks around the city talks to rough sleepers. He's passionate about helping people; "Each person has a different story and has fallen through the cracks of the system at some point. Each is a human being and deserves dignity and respect."

Marc thinks that the answer goes further than monetary donations. He works with SIFA Fireside and the 'Safe & Sound' group of Colmore BID, practically helping rough sleepers, pushing for changes in the benefits system and helping to fix the root causes of rough sleeping.

Energy Systems Catapult works with the government, academia, SMEs, innovators and industry to promote the creation, testing and use of new business models and technologies to lead the UK into the new age of power, utilising clean and decarbonised energy systems.

In those rare moments that he's not busy, Marc treasures his down time. "The week is for running around like a mad thing, but weekends are for family, building snowmen and being with good friends. My wife thinks I'm crazy with how much I take on, but I try and mix it up to be with my family as much as I can."

Marc believes that Birmingham can be a world city by 2026. After meeting someone with his passion, commitment and positivity, I think I might be convinced too.

**CATAPULT**  
Energy Systems

 [energysyscat](https://twitter.com/energysyscat)  
[es.catapult.org.uk](https://es.catapult.org.uk)

**WORDS** VICTORIA OSGOOD

# LUNCH WITH A BANG

## BAR OPUS

BAR  
OPUS  
AT  
ONE  
SNOWHILL



They say that the way to a person's heart is through their stomach, so how better to seal a deal or treat a hard working co-worker than with a fabulous lunch? There are so many fantastic options in the District, but a trip to Bar Opus on Snow Hill Queensway ticks all the boxes to delight and impress.

The polished and slick exterior gives just a mere hint of the calm, welcoming and tranquil vibe which can be found inside. Having served thousands of business and leisure visitors since 2014, it's easy to see why it was so bustling on a Thursday lunchtime.

If you're facing a full diary in the afternoon, you may want to stick to a coffee or a mocktail with your lunch, but there are a fantastic selection of inventive

cocktails, draught beers, wines and spirits on offer. Bar Manager Lee has a fantastic flair for mixing up something fanciful, so if you're unsure what to order, ask the in-house expert what they recommend. On this visit, I opted for an Americano (£3.50), which was rich, nutty and chocolatey. The perfect way to perk up before getting down to business.

Depending on how much time you have (or how hungry you are), the menu caters for those small of stomach and hearty eaters alike. If you're feeling more picky, opt for a sharer plate (three smaller dishes for £15) with options such as the sticky, decadent and meaty 'honey glazed chorizo', the fresh and zingy 'smashed avocado on toast' and the comforting, crunchy and piquant 'cod goujons with

tartar sauce', you'll satisfy even the most selective of palates. My choices were served to me within 15 minutes of ordering (and everything was cooked to order) so this is a great way to dine if you're a little pushed for time.

If you're not in a sharing mood, opt for one of the larger main courses. I sampled the 'halloumi salad' (£12.50), which was a cacophony of colour and packed with a variety of delicious seasonal vegetables. The mixture of creamy halloumi, zippy and light rocket and nutritious brown rice, squash and beetroot meant that every mouthful was a bite of veggie joy. If that doesn't tickle your fancy, other options include the classic '100% British dry aged beef burger' (£11.50), the beautifully presented 'Opus fish & chips' (£12.50) and

the ever popular 'three egg & cheese omelette' (£9). Again, my main was served within 10 minutes, so you can eat and be back to your desk in no time.

If there's time to toast your success, it's also worth noting that the venue boasts a rather good sparkling wine and Champagne list... Obviously, we can't promise the deal will be sealed; but get it off on the right foot with a visit to Bar Opus.

**WORDS** VICTORIA  
OSGOOD

DID YOU KNOW  
COLMORE BID ORGANISES THE

# Food Festival

This is the Festival that happens each summer in Victoria Square and has become a favourite event for foodies.

The 2018 event will be our eighth festival and we've already started

making plans for this year's programme. This year the Festival will be on Friday 6 and Saturday 7 July, from 11am to 8pm on Friday and 11am to 7pm on Saturday.

The hospitality scene in Colmore Business District has gone from strength to strength; when we held our first festival back in 2010 we had just 15 businesses exhibiting. Fast-forward to 2018 and we expect to have around 35 of our fantastic venues showcasing their talents. Once again we'll see a great mix of cafés, bakeries, restaurants and bars that are all based here in the District.

We always cap the price of food at £4. The reason we do this is so that you can sample taster dishes from more than one venue – and trust us, you'll definitely want to! There's so much variety and superb quality you'll want to sample delights from the many exhibitors. We'll have Thai food, American classics, Chinese, French, Michelin-starred food and so much more. Whilst the main focus of the Festival is of course the food, we'll also have a great variety of wine, Champagne, cocktails and artisan coffees.

We expect to be busy again, so we'll have plenty of seating around. Once again, there will be entertainment

galore to add to the atmosphere, with a full programme of street theatre and live music. Bands are all from the West Midlands. We welcome back Glynn Purnell, who will open the Festival on Friday 6 July at 12pm and stay with us throughout the afternoon, so make sure it's in the diary!

Keep an eye on the website for updates and participating venues [colmorefoodfestival.com](http://colmorefoodfestival.com)

 [colmorefoodfestival](https://twitter.com/colmorefoodfestival)

WORDS LUCY ELVIN



# RECIPE: A SLICE OF *home*

*Spinach and blackcurrant cake – The Blueness of the Forest*



Home is Where...Cafe and Deli is something a little different. Located on Church Street, this comfortable coffee shop offers a range of simple, hearty food to go with your tea or coffee.

This edition's recipe comes from Monika Martuzevičiūtė and is a special treat for the Easter period; something a little different from the usual barrage of chocolate.

It's a spinach and blackcurrant cake – The Blueness of the Forest.

## *Ingredients*

### **The batter**

- 200g fresh spinach
- 100ml vegetable oil
- Juice of 1 lemon & zest of 2 lemons
- 160g sugar
- 4 medium eggs
- 320g flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- Pinch of salt

### **The cream**

- 1 sachet of vegetable gelatine
- 150g blackcurrant jam
- 250ml coconut milk

### **The ganache**

- 50ml coconut milk
- 150g white chocolate, roughly chopped

## *Method*

### **To make the cream:**

Prepare the vegetable gelatine by following the instructions on the packet and mix it with the coconut cream and blackcurrant jam (adding sugar if needed). Leave in the refrigerator to set until it is thick but not hard – this may take a little time.

### **To make the ganache:**

Heat the coconut milk on a low heat until it starts to simmer, then pour it on to the chopped white chocolate and let it melt. Leave the mixture to cool down for a short time.

### **To make the cake:**

- Preheat the oven to 180°C and line a baking tin (10x30cm) with parchment paper.

- Blend the spinach with the oil and lemon juice until smooth and even, mix in the lemon zest.
- Whisk sugar together with eggs until they double in volume.
- Sieve flour with baking powder and salt.
- Gently mix egg mixture with spinach puree and then fold the flour into the mixture.
- Pour the batter into the baking tin and pop it in the oven for 45-50 minutes until a skewer comes out clean and dry.
- Cut off any excess sponge and save it to make crumbs as decoration.
- Leave cake to cool then cut it across into three even layers.

### **To assemble the cake:**

Take a layer of your cake and spread part of the cream on the top. Leave this in the refrigerator to set. When the cream is firmer, place another layer of sponge on top of the cream and repeat the process.

To finish, put on the last layer and leave the cake in the refrigerator overnight. You should still have some cream left over.

### **To decorate the cake:**

Spread the excess cream evenly around the cake. Blitz the excess sponge and stick it around on the sides of the cake. Gently pour white chocolate ganache on the top and let it drip on the edges.

You can also cut off shapes from the excess sponge and place them on the top along with white chocolate drops and fresh berries.

# ASK THE DISTRICT



**How have you and your business benefited from the BID over the last five years?**



"Being part of Colmore BID over the past five years has made me feel a lot safer; the streets are well lit and maintained and there's a good buzz around the area, creating a better sense of community. The pop-up festivals throughout the year are a great idea and provide brilliant entertainment."

**Emma Brannigan – KPMG**



"Colmore Business District's reputation and growth is something we are proud to be a part of. We have access to news and events and feel privileged to be in such a prime location. The Colmore Security and Ambassadors are always on hand to support with any issues in the area."

**Aimee Mullin-Pugh – CBRE**



"At The Wilkes Partnership we have Church Street Square right outside our offices; it's a brilliant example of public realm development by the BID. It is dressed with flowers in the summer and Christmas lights over the festive period. Working in this area wouldn't be the same without the work of Colmore BID."

**Laura Kelly – The Wilkes Partnership**

## Birmingham WINE WEEKEND



If you're a fan of Birmingham Cocktail Weekend, you're going to love the team's next venture: Birmingham Wine Weekend!

Enjoy a weekend of exploring the city and sampling delicious wines in some of the city's most loved venues. As with Cocktail Weekend, there will be a hub where you can pick up your wristbands and what better place to have the hub than Hotel du Vin? Let the team from this fantastic venue kick off your weekend with great wines and expert knowledge. Then it's time to make your way across our awesome city sampling £4 taster glasses of wine from any of the hand picked venues. Get to know some new bars and give some new flavours a try. There will be a whole series of great wine related events too, exclusively for wristband wearers. If you love wine then it's an event you need to be part of. This is a weekend you don't want to miss!

**When?** Friday 23 March to Sunday 25 March.

**Where?** City wide, keep an eye on the Facebook page for participating venues. Wristband and guide book collection from Hotel du Vin, Church St, B3 2NR.

**Tickets?** Available via Eventbrite, search Birmingham Wine Weekend.

This event is available to over 21s only and Birmingham Wine Weekend reminds you to drink responsibly.

**WORDS** LUCY ELVIN

# Reuben Colley Exhibition

**Landscapes have been inspiring artists for centuries, but few have tackled land, sea and sky with such visceral intensity as Birmingham-based painter James Byrne.**

In his new collection, on display at Reuben Colley Fine Art, Byrne transports us to the mountains of Wicklow and the rugged coastline and islands of Pembrokeshire. Standing in front of one of these passionately expressive paintings, one can almost feel the wild weather and hear the thud of water against rock.

Byrne immerses himself in the landscape for days on end, making drawings on location. Back in the studio, his paintings

develop over time, fed by imagination, memory, intuition and the very process of painting. These pictures express not so much what a particular place looks like, but how it feels to be there. In the artist's words, they are 'equivalents of experience rather than description'. Like Turner's late works, Byrne's paintings bring us face to face with the 'sublime' – the overwhelming and sometimes frightening power of nature. Byrne explains: "Sometimes the paintings lean more towards the abstract, and at other times are more figural, but I always want them to be evocative and to express a sense of awe. It's important, too, that the gestures are a trace of body and landscape combining."

James Byrne has had a studio practice in Birmingham since completing an MA in painting at Birmingham College of Art in 1982. His work has been shown in numerous important exhibitions in the UK and Hong Kong, including a solo show at Ikon gallery, Birmingham, in 1986. Examples of his work are held in the collections of Birmingham Museums Trust, Warwick Arts Trust and IBM.

See James Byrne's exhibition 'Between the Islands' from 27 February to 24 March 2018.

(Images shown here are oil on canvas)

WORDS JOANNA COLLEY

RC



# Exposed

*Photographs from people across the District*

Back in the summer of 2017 we held an open invitation asking people who work in the District to use our cameras to capture life in the city. Deborah Cardinal of BDP, Harriet Dufficy of RSPB, Clare Hall of Marsh, and Philip Pelligrini of Dains all rose to the challenge and used the small cameras to roam around on sunny days, seeing the place through the lens. The cameras were also passed around office teams as a fun way of looking at and recording the action and architecture. We hope to use a selection of the images in our term three publications. There is still time to get involved; feel free to submit your images of the District to [philip.singleton@colmorebid.co.uk](mailto:philip.singleton@colmorebid.co.uk)

WORDS PHILIP SINGLETON

# TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

## International Dance Festival Birmingham (IDFB)

1-24 June



The perfect start to the summer and a signature festival for the city, International Dance Festival Birmingham bursts onto the arts scene this June promising fantastic dance in the city's theatres and a takeover of Birmingham's streets and squares with exciting free performances. The festival's theme is 'Future City of the Imagination' and it will be a highlight of Birmingham's 'Year of Movement'.

The award-winning biennial festival, produced by Birmingham-based DanceXchange, is renowned for creating lots of opportunities for people to take part, get active and have fun. The last festival in 2016 had total audiences of over 56,000 with 114 free performances and 37 ticketed shows, plus social dance opportunities, workshops and a spellbinding visual arts exhibition.

Colmore BID is delighted to take a central role in the 2018 festival by sponsoring a dynamic zone, transforming Victoria Square, featuring a wonderful range of rich and exciting acts. There will be gentle interactive performances, sensory technology sculptures and lots of live music and performances from local and international talent, plus plenty of wraparound offerings such as a VR playground for families,

and interactive light and sound installations. The evening's line up will include a spectacular large scale participatory performance, live music and premiered local performances. The zone will also feature foodie favourites including Digbeth Dining Club and local roasters, as well as healthy juice stalls, creating a fresh and vibrant festival vibe right on your doorstep.

Mike Best, Board Director at Colmore BID said: "We're excited to be involved in International Dance Festival Birmingham 2018 and to sponsor the festival zone in Victoria Square. IDFB 2018 will give plenty of opportunity for those who work in the District to get involved, as well as demonstrating the fantastic cultural offering we have in the District and the wider city."

Highlights include the chance to rave your way into the day with Morning Gloryville. Pioneers of the global conscious clubbing movement, this event has expanded from its hugely popular original base in London to 14 cities around the globe and this will be its first time in Birmingham. A soul-shaking chance to exercise without the negative health impacts of alcohol, Morning Gloryville also includes yoga and massage as well as raving.

Notable DJs such as Basement Jaxx, Fat Boy Slim and Carl Cox have previously led the party, so look out for who will be announced for IDFB's Morning Glory Rave.

The festival will also bring outstanding international dance to theatres across Birmingham including The Patrick Centre, Birmingham Repertory Theatre, New Alexandra Theatre, and Midlands Arts Centre, Cannon Hill Park. Already confirmed is Elements of Freestyle by ISH Collective at Birmingham Hippodrome, a spectacular new production, delivering a fresh look at urban arts. Four skating ramps will dominate the stage, assembled in multiple ways to showcase thrilling performances of breakdance, inline skating, skateboarding, freerunning, BMX, and even freestyle basketball.

Outdoors, audiences will enjoy Origami, the unlikely pairing of a monumental shipping container and gravity-defying dance, and Didier Theron's AIR where dancers perform inside inflatable latex suits creating forms and images that are both surprising and funny.

Visit [idfb.co.uk](http://idfb.co.uk) to discover all the news and the full programme.

WORDS LIBBY ALDRICH



# New to the DISTRICT

## *The Style Lounge*

### **Livery Street**

The District's newest salon. A quirky, vintage style salon taking care of hair, nails and make-up.

[mobilehairdresserbirmingham.co.uk](http://mobilehairdresserbirmingham.co.uk)

## *BHSP*

### **Newhall Medical Practice 45 - 51 Newhall Street**

Birmingham's local occupational health provider and vaccination specialist; focusing on occupational health, vaccinations, travel jobs and GP consultations.

[newhallmedicalpractice.com](http://newhallmedicalpractice.com)

## *Anstee and Co*

### **Two Snowhill**

Offering an exciting new concept in financial design, coupled with friendly, efficient service and professional advice to create a financial plan to suit your needs.

[anstee.co.uk](http://anstee.co.uk)



*Snow Hill*



*Old Square*

*St Philip's Square*

## *Quality Solicitors Davisons*

Established for over 25 years, Quality Solicitors Davisons put clients at the heart of everything they do. They have experts in housing and property, family, wills and probate, employment and litigation and commercial law.

[qualitysolicitors.com/davisons](http://qualitysolicitors.com/davisons)

## *Spoke*

### **50 Newhall Street**

A creative agency with a strong background in journalism. Helping businesses to tell their stories using film and animation, design and graphics and words and advice.

[wearespoke.co.uk](http://wearespoke.co.uk)

*Victoria Square*



*CORPORATION STREET*

# Umberto Giannini



For this edition of Colmore Life, we've teamed up with the experts at Umberto Giannini to show what can be achieved by your stylist and colour technician, when you let them use their creative flair.



**Before...**

Step up Samantha Lyster. Samantha was chosen from our applicants to receive a makeover with Salon Director and Principal Stylist Mark Caswell and Ryan Drew, Colour Specialist. Samantha, a Communications Manager at a charity within the District, was very open to the stylists deciding exactly what to do with her hair as long as it didn't involved being dyed black!

Samantha arrived at the salon and was met by Mark and Ryan who discussed with her the type of style and colour that would suit her hair, face shape and skin tone.

Mark said "Samantha was absolutely amazing and had beautiful hair that just needed a little more love. She was so happy to let the Umberto team do whatever they wanted so Ryan had a blank canvas with Samantha's tresses and decided to go for a double metallic root drag ballayage with baby lights.

The effect of the darker root drag and the bright ash ends will blend in her natural colour and give a minimal regrowth, but the lightened ends are still bang on trend for 2018."

For the cut Mark decided to go a little shorter to enhance Samantha's face shape and stunning bone structure. Mark made a decision to use no straight cutting techniques and did the whole cut with a razor blade and texturing scissors, to free up weight and create a natural fall of hair at the new length. The style says no to layers but a huge hello to texture, styled with a organic wave and finished with Umberto Giannini Pouf products to enhance the cut and colour further.

Samantha loves her new hairstyle, saying "It's the human condition to be wary of change, and that's certainly the way a lot of people feel about their hairstyle. However, if you have a talented and skilled hairdresser and

colourist, then the experience can be just as transformative as a session with a life coach!

"I work full-time, and have a family, so there's little time for styling hair in the mornings. It sounds trivial, but hair is such an integral part of one's appearance, and especially as my job involves a lot of networking where first impressions count, I want it to be more than just presentable.

"Thanks to Mark and Ryan, I feel I've got hair that is easy to maintain, but stylish!

"Also, as I work in conservation, it's good to know how environmentally-conscious the salon is."

**To book a consultation, call the salon on 0121 400 0317 or book online at [umbertogianninisalons.com](http://umbertogianninisalons.com)**

**WORDS** KATY PADDOCK

**After...**



SIGN UP FOR THE

# COMMUNITY GAMES

Every year, Colmore BID has a comprehensive calendar of events ensuring there will be something that appeals to everyone. One of our fundraising events that always proves to be popular is the Colmore BID Community Games – probably due to the competitive element at this team event! Last year, Peter Brett Associates were victorious and took home the gold medals. They beat 13 other teams from the District, but will they retain their metaphorical crown in 2018? That's up to you! We are inviting teams of four from businesses within the District to take part in the event on Friday 18 May in Victoria Square. We will once again be working in partnership with Sport Birmingham who will be organising the overall activity, which is likely to include badminton, touch rugby, golf putting and more. We'll spend a couple of hours in Victoria Square, taking part in physical activity, so there's less to feel guilty about in the pub later on in the evening.

Why not get a team together and join us from 3pm to 5.30pm for some competitive fun? As this is one of our fund raising activities, all team entry fees will be donated to SIFA Fireside.

FRIDAY 18 MAY, 3-5.30PM

IF YOU DARE

# 15 ROUNDS OF WHITE COLLAR BOXING

ANNOUNCING THIS SEASON'S CHAMPION OF

# "AFTER HOURS"

# ADAM ROLLASON



**ENTREPRENEUR & PRIVATE CLIENT MANAGER  
FOR GRANT THORNTON LLP**

This is a relatively new role that Adam took on in October 2017. Adam's career goes from strength to strength and he was the winner of BYPY's Finance category in 2017.

In addition to having a rewarding and successful career, Adam decided that in 2017 he wanted to set goals to challenge himself physically and decided to train for a white collar boxing match. It was a tough decision to take on the challenge as a "relatively unfit person" but Adam wanted to lose weight before his wedding, so liked the idea of the 12 week training camp. The gruelling training camp along with a nutrition plan saw Adam's fitness improve significantly and he was ready for his first fight which took place at the end of November 2017.

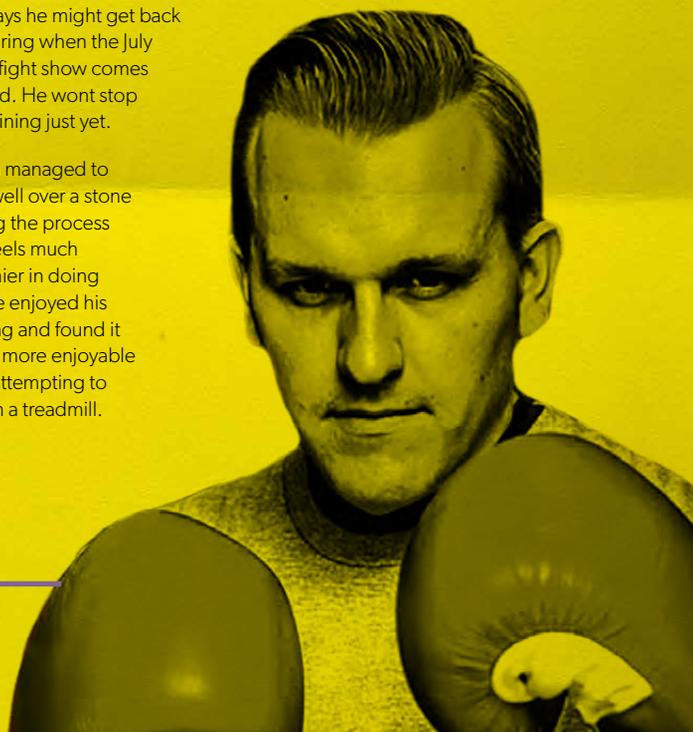
Most people take up training for white collar boxing as a way to raise funds for charity and Adam was no different. Adam was keen to support Help for Heroes; his brother took part in three tours of Afghanistan between 2010 and 2011 and he wanted to help those who hadn't been as lucky as him and his family.

Adam's first fight went well and was competitive but unfortunately he was out-pointed, 25-20. This was a disappointment for Adam but he enjoyed it and raised just under £900 for Help for Heroes.

Adam is sure that the first part of 2018 will be taken up with wedding planning but really hopes to continue training and get back in the ring. The next fight is in the middle of March and due

to Adam getting married at the beginning of April he won't be able to participate. He still plans to get back into the gym this year and says he might get back in the ring when the July 2018 fight show comes around. He won't stop his training just yet.

Adam managed to lose well over a stone during the process and feels much healthier in doing so. He enjoyed his training and found it much more enjoyable than attempting to run on a treadmill.



# INDUSTRY INSIGHT

*Anstee & Co Independent Financial Designers*



Following the launch of our Birmingham office in October 2017, we are looking forward to 2018 and are delighted to be part of Colmore Business District.

These are exciting times for us as a business and comes at a time in the financial services industry when sound advice has never been more important.

Pension regulation over the past few years has created more complexity around both the accumulation (saving) and decumulation (withdrawing) phases of retirement planning.

The Tapered Annual Allowance was introduced in April 2016; this has the effect of potentially reducing the amount an

individual can save into their pension per year from £40,000 to £10,000 depending on their total income. However, we still see clients getting caught in the trap and being liable for a tax charge, where advice has not been sought.

The 'total income' is an important point as this does not just refer to salary; this takes into account all sources of income to include but not exhaustively, dividends and rental income plus the value of any pension contributions. Where total income exceeds £150,000 pa, individuals may be affected.

Whilst pension regulation can be complex, pensions are still an important part of an individual's overall financial planning, offering a highly tax efficient form of saving for the future.



**Pensions are an important part of an individual's financial planning**



WORDS TRACEY FOSTER

## NATIONAL CLEAN AIR DAY FOLLOW UP

On 15 June 2017, the UK's first ever National Clean Air Day helped millions of people respond to air pollution nationally through over 200 events and 550 press, radio and TV features.

A real buzz on social media saw 28,000 tweets and #NationalCleanAirDay trended at number one on Twitter for five hours – beating BBC Music Day, British Beer Day and Love Island. That represents a clear groundswell of public interest in tackling air pollution.

National Clean Air Day was a huge collaborative effort between 100 supporter organisations and thousands of individuals up and down the country.

We were delighted with the turn out and behaviour pledges at Colmore BID as Birmingham looked towards its future Clean Air Zone.

We will be co-ordinating efforts again for 2018 on 21 June. Look out for the new toolkit on [cleanairday.org.uk](http://cleanairday.org.uk) and contact [philip.singleton@colmorebid.co.uk](mailto:philip.singleton@colmorebid.co.uk) if you have great ideas for 2018.

WORDS PHILIP SINGLETON

# Charity UPDATE

## Helping the homeless and vulnerably housed of Birmingham

It never stops here at SIFA Fireside! As the winter months drew in, so did our clients. On average we're currently supporting over 160 vulnerable people every single day. Our site in Digbeth has continued to develop as a centre for excellence in supporting single adults over 25 experiencing homelessness. We host a daily drop in every day of the week and a scaled down service at the weekends and two evenings a week, thanks to the financial contributions of Colmore BID.

Clients have access to benefit and legal advice, tenancy support, health and wellbeing services, employment support through our Changing Lives team, and many other activities which include the 'Out of the Woodwork' project.

We're proud of our achievements, but as a local charity we are stretched and rely on the goodwill of individuals, community groups and corporates to keep the ship afloat. In December we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the merger of SIFA and the Fireside Charity by thanking the community, supporters and partners for their ongoing support. We had a wonderful evening and were joined by over 100 people. We're delighted that Colmore BID have partnered with us. Staff and members of Colmore BID have been busy raising funds to support our work since 2016 with quiz nights, Cathedral walks, Velo and other fundraising activities – the proactivity and commitment to our cause has been overwhelming.

We've also been given other opportunities through the connections of Colmore BID, its members and networks and our volunteering programme has really taken off with corporate teams. Visit [sifafireside.co.uk](http://sifafireside.co.uk) or email [Melissaroche@sifafireside.co.uk](mailto:Melissaroche@sifafireside.co.uk) to find out how you can support our work and sign up for volunteering opportunities.

**sifa fireside**  
◆ BIRMINGHAM ◆

WORDS MELISSA ROCHE

## CULTURE CARD

Since launching in summer 2017, the Culture Card has been hugely popular with people taking advantage of great discounts in galleries, museums, theatre performances, memberships and much more.

Now the team behind the Culture Card has launched a corporate scheme for businesses. If you are looking for staff incentives or gifts, the Culture Card is a great option. Card holders can enjoy 12 months of discounted entry, exclusive offers and events at the region's top destinations and, with over 40 partners, there is something for everyone to enjoy.

To find out more  
email [info@brumpic.com](mailto:info@brumpic.com) or  
visit [culturecard.uk](http://culturecard.uk)



WORDS LUCY ELVIN

## ROYAL BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE

A brand new £57 million Royal Birmingham Conservatoire music building officially opened its doors in September 2017, a couple of weeks before also being awarded a Royal Title by Her Majesty The Queen. The new conservatoire building is positioned on its parent institution, Birmingham City University's city centre campus, in what is fast becoming known as the 'Learning Quarter' in the Eastside of Birmingham. The innovative music building boasts five public performance spaces, including a 500-seat concert hall, a 150-seat recital hall and a 100-seat organ studio, a cutting-edge black box studio called The Lab and, last but not least, The Eastside Jazz Club – the first permanent jazz space in any UK conservatoire. The state-of-the-art facility will be officially opened by its Royal Patron, HRH Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex, on 11 March 2018, followed by a Royal Gala event in the new Concert Hall.

WORDS BEVERLEY COUSINS

# SPRING IN THE CITY

## Colmore Social

Purecraft Bar and Kitchen  
28 February 6 – 7.30pm  
[colmorebusinessdistrict.com](http://colmorebusinessdistrict.com)

If you love trying different beers and would like to explore how they match with the delicious food at Purecraft, this event is for you.

## A Night on Broadway

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire  
2 March  
[bcu.ac.uk](http://bcu.ac.uk)

Musicians and actors from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire join forces for a night at the musicals. Featuring some of the most popular Broadway hits, from Chicago, Cabaret, Wicked, Miss Saigon, Matilda... and many more!

## The Kite Runner

Birmingham Repertory Theatre  
13 – 24 March  
[birmingham-rep.co.uk](http://birmingham-rep.co.uk)

Following an outstanding West End run, this unforgettable theatrical tour de force comes to The REP. Based on Khaled Hosseini's internationally bestselling novel, this haunting tale of friendship follows one man's journey to confront his past and find redemption.

## Wicked

Birmingham Hippodrome  
4 – 29 April  
[birminghamhippodrome.com](http://birminghamhippodrome.com)

The incredible untold story of an unlikely but profound friendship between two young women who first meet as sorcery students. Their extraordinary adventures in Oz will ultimately see them fulfil their destinies as Glinda the Good and the Wicked Witch of the West.



**Here's our  
city checklist of  
some key events  
this season...**

## Gilbert O'Sullivan

Town Hall Birmingham  
11 April  
[thsh.co.uk/town-hall](http://thsh.co.uk/town-hall)

Gilbert O'Sullivan brings his new live show to Town Hall, including classics such as Alone Again Naturally, Nothing Rhymed, Clair, Matrimony and Get Down, as well as songs from the forthcoming album.

## Michael McIntyre

Arena Birmingham  
10 – 13 May  
[arenabham.co.uk](http://arenabham.co.uk)

One of Britain's biggest comedians is back for a three night stop in the city. In the UK, Michael has sold over 1.5 million tickets to date, and continues to sell out arenas around the world, so this is one gig you don't want to miss.

## Marti Pellow

Symphony Hall  
5 June  
[thsh.co.uk](http://thsh.co.uk)

One of our most loved pop icons, Marti Pellow, will return to Symphony Hall with his The Private Collection Tour. The tour celebrates 30 years in the industry, including number 1s and hit singles from his many albums as both a solo artist and with Wet Wet Wet.

## Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

New Alexandra Theatre  
26 – 30 June  
[atgtickets.com/venues](http://atgtickets.com/venues)

This well loved film is brought to the stage in all its glory. A flying car, a fantasy adventure and songs you'll be still singing when you've left the theatre.