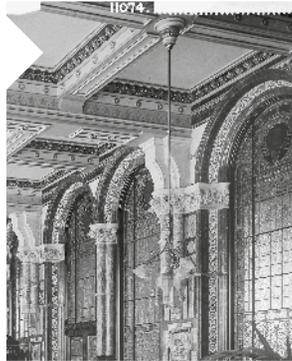


in this issue...

Did You Know?

We take a look at the history of The Grand Hotel on Colmore Row.

18



*Grand Designs
AHR Architects*

We chat to AHR Architects to find out more about their work at home and abroad.

10



City Of Food

Our guest writer Joe Schuppler from Independent Birmingham looks at the food scene in the District.

21



The Minorities

Discover the various shops, health and beauty services and cafés on offer.

24



*Learn Something
New*

From making your own jewellery to baking artisan bread and yoga.

25



**EDITOR'S
welcome**

Welcome to the spring edition of Colmore Life, Colmore Business District's magazine.

It's great to see so many new businesses moving into the area, including Bar Opus at One Snowhill and Diplomats Barista at Two Snowhill. Whether you're new to the District or you've been here for many years, we've got lots going on over the next few months for you to get involved with. Don't miss our Charity Quiz Night on 11th March, the ever popular CBD Food Festival on 3rd and 4th July and the CBD Community Games which will be returning later this year.

We'll also be welcoming Moseley Arts Market back to the Birmingham Cathedral Grounds between 9am and 5pm on 27th March, 22nd May, 11th September and 11th December – make sure you pop the dates in your diary!

If you would like to get in touch about any of our projects or to feature in the magazine, please contact Liz Newton on 0121 236 4686 or email liz-n@colmorebusinessdistrict.com.

Michele Wilby
Managing Editor

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
www.colmorebusinessdistrict.com.

Activity update

Read on to discover what CBD has been up to recently...



Colmore Square Wins National Award

We're delighted to have won a national award for our delivery of the much-improved Colmore Square, the first area enhancement civil engineering project to be undertaken solely by a Business Improvement District (BID) in Birmingham.

Beating competition from across the country, including schemes in London and Manchester, we received the top accolade in the Place Management (Large Location) category of this year's British BIDs' Proud Projects Awards, which celebrate the achievements of BIDs across the UK.

Colmore Square, which is our second large-scale public realm enhancement project, was praised for its bravery and comes ahead of a number of future planned improvement projects in the District.

CBD Food Festival Date Announced

We're pleased to announce the date of this year's CBD Food Festival: Friday 3rd and Saturday 4th July, 11am to 7pm daily.

The hugely popular event is returning to Victoria Square for the fifth year, with visitors getting the opportunity to sample taster dishes and drinks from top venues across the District.



Two New CBD Board Directors

We've recently welcomed new CBD Board Directors:



Alex Tross

Associate Director for commercial property consultancy Lambert Smith Hampton.



The Very Reverend Catherine Ogle

Dean of Birmingham Cathedral.

CBD Charity Quiz Night

Our Charity Quiz Night is another chance for your office to pit your wits against teams from across the District.

The event will take place from 6pm till 9pm on Wednesday 11th March at the Studio on Cannon Street. Tables must be pre-booked, and the event's sure to sell out fast, so don't delay!

Teams of six may enter and it costs £15 per person, which includes entry, buffet and a drink. All funds raised will go to Birmingham Citizens Advice Bureau.

For more details and a booking form, please call 0121 236 4689 or email liz-n@colmorebusinessdistrict.com.

CBD BESPOKE IMAGE

Mike Mounfield / Sarah Rennie

At the start of the second five-year term of Colmore Business District (CBD), in April last year, it was decided that the graphical aspects of the CBD brand needed a bit of an overhaul. We'd previously used various graphical approaches but we wanted something that was consistent and could be used across many platforms including web, print and presentations.

Our Place Marketing Working Group, made up of representatives from various companies in CBD, decided the image should be an artwork in its own right. An artwork implies an artist, so we set about looking for one.

We asked for a strong, positive image or suite of images that captures the essence of the District and helps distinguish CBD from other bodies in the city. We wanted the work to reflect the District's identity: professional, iconic and dynamic.

Our search elicited Jan Bowman.

Originally from Scotland via Canada, Jan trained as an architect and is now a freelance artist. She is a member of the Society of Authors and the Association of Illustrators and her book 'This Is Birmingham' is now in its second edition. Jan's prints are in private collections in the UK, Europe, the USA and Australia, while her past clients include Royal Mail, the BBC, Delta Airlines, Waitrose and the National Trust.



Jan's background as an architect shows through in her careful depiction of some of our most interesting buildings.

We asked Jan what her vision for the artwork was. Jan said she wanted to capture the civic aspects of Birmingham, allied to the heritage of industry and art. The two characters in the centre can be seen in quite a few places in Birmingham, not least on the city's coat of arms and on the Birmingham and Midland Institute building.

Jan wanted to characterise the life, the range and variety of people, as well as the professional ambience of the District. She is interested in the tension between the cityscape and people 'doing their own thing', such as going to meetings or sitting in a café reading.

Jan's background as an architect shows through in her careful depiction of some of our most interesting buildings. Jan admires the architectural

narrative of Colmore Business District, which she describes as "hanging onto the best bits whilst encouraging new buildings that keep the overall 'quality' feel of the District... Birmingham is regenerating itself in a civilised fashion." All the buildings and architectural elements shown in the image are inside the District – though some may be harder to spot than others.

On inspecting the artwork you might be forgiven for thinking that it was done 'old-school' using pencils, watercolour and other traditional artists' materials. Nope. If you were fortunate enough to catch Jan on one of the days she was sketching in the area, you'd have seen her using a tablet! We think Jan's style reflects the nature of her subject: a stimulating juxtaposition of old and new.





BATTLE OF THE BUSINESSES...

CBD COMMUNITY GAMES

Why not get an office team together and join businesses from across Colmore Business District (CBD) in a touch rugby tournament?

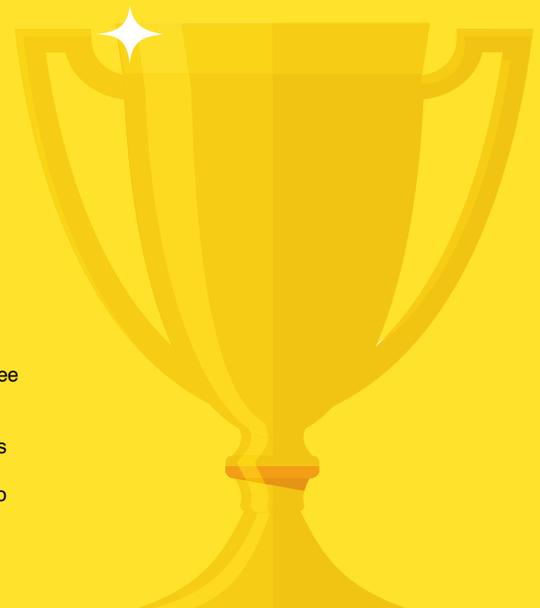
This year we will be holding our fourth annual Community Games event in Victoria Square, and we'll be announcing the date soon.

CBD has again partnered with the Rugby Football Union to provide the main sporting tournaments with pre-submitted teams from across the District. This sporting event has become a firm fixture in the calendar, with over twenty teams taking part last year.

The games will be four-a-side with squads of seven or eight members and rolling substitutions. There will need to be at least three female members in a squad and at least one female member playing in a team. There is a £25 entry fee for each squad, with all proceeds going to Birmingham Citizens Advice Bureau. Squads will then be allocated to one of the two tournaments (either morning or afternoon).

So, who's game?

To find out more about entering a squad, please call 0121 236 4686 or email liz-n@colmorebusinessdistrict.com.



COMMUNITY GAMES WINNER



Two Cornwall Street



Family-owned property company Bruntwood has submitted a planning application for a £14 million redevelopment of Two Cornwall Street. Situated on the corner of Cornwall Street and Livery Street at the heart of Colmore Business District, the redeveloped building will provide 110,000 sq ft of much-needed Grade A office space in 2016 – when high quality office accommodation anywhere in the city will be in short supply.

Work begins on Paradise

Construction has now started on the first phase of the new Paradise development on the site of the old Birmingham Central Library.

The project is being delivered through Paradise Circus Limited Partnership (PCLP), a joint venture between Birmingham City Council and Hermes Real Estate, with Argent as development manager. Paradise is a major development for Birmingham city centre, creating up to 1.8 million sq ft of Grade A office space, outstanding public realm and a mix of new retail and leisure. The development, due to be completed in 2025, will also include a 4* hotel.

To enable the work, new traffic arrangements have been put in place. You can keep up to date with diversions by visiting www.paradisebirmingham.co.uk or emailing liz-n@colmorebusinessdistrict.com to request to join CBD's mailing list.

The pedestrian walkways through Paradise will remain open throughout the works.

103 Colmore Row



The new owners of 103 Colmore Row have applied for permission to begin demolishing the 1970s office block this spring.

The tower, which was occupied by NatWest, has been vacant since 2003 and in 2014 was acquired by developer Sterling Property Ventures and funders Rockspring.

The site already has planning permission, however plans for a smaller scale development, similar in size to the existing structure, are being drawn up. Following further stakeholder consultation, it is intended a full planning application will be made in April 2015, which could lead to a new tower being built by the end of 2017.

Architectural gem welcomes new tenants

In our last edition, we explored the architecture of 122 - 124 Colmore Row. The Eagle Insurance Offices, known to most of us as Hudson's Coffee House, are owned by District-based property firm Evenace. The building recently underwent a sympathetic upgrade inside as well as exterior restoration.

Following on from the £500,000 investment, tenants have now started to move into this iconic space. First to move into the building is Clive Reeves PR. This well-known PR agency has been building its business successfully and, whilst celebrating its fifth anniversary, has joined the District from their previous base at Birmingham Science Park Aston.

CBD looks forward to welcoming more new businesses as this classic piece of architecture reclaims its place as one of the District's prime office locations.

Space Race at Embassy House



Property agents from across Birmingham battled it out on static smoothie bikes to see who would be crowned the smoothest agent in town.

Held at Embassy House, on the corner of Church Street and Cornwall Street, the event was organised by the building's agents, Jonathan Carmalt from Jones Lang Lasalle (JLL) and David Rigby from DTZ, in partnership with The Business Desk.

At the event, over 20 property agents from across the city took it in turns to compete against each other to clock up the highest amount of pedal rotations on a custom built smoothie-making bicycle.

The winner of the challenge was Will Sherlock from CBRE who was awarded a voucher for a tailor made pair of shoes and belt from Crockett and Jones.

Embassy House currently has floors of 4,090 to 7,545 sq ft and suites from 3,543 sq ft available to let. Contact JLL (0121 214 9935) or DTZ (0121 710 4636) for more information.



MEET THE DISTRICT

We ask three people, "As a newcomer to Colmore Business District, what are your first impressions of the District?"



"There's a real vibrancy to the District and it's fantastic to be in the middle of the hustle and bustle. I've been really impressed by the friendly atmosphere and the number of people interested in peace and justice who've had a chat and taken part in our actions. It's also great being at the heart of the transport network, bringing so many people from across the region to our doorstep - I can't wait for the trams to be ready!"

Peter Doubtfire
Coordinator
Central England Quakers' Peace Hub



"As a newcomer to the District I'm delighted to have moved into such a lively and exciting part of the city. I love the fascinating history of the area, but also the fabulous new architecture and exciting projects that are coming up. There are some wonderful bars and restaurants, and I look forward to recommending places to visit to our guests. 2015 is going to be an exciting year for the District and the city and I feel very privileged to be a part of it."

Joanne Gray
General Manager
Holiday Inn Express Birmingham - Snow Hill



"Springboard is delighted we chose to relocate our office to the Grade II listed Cathedral Place. For our clients, the District is readily accessible and offers them the range of professional advice and funding that is often required alongside our corporate finance services. For our team, our new office is ideally situated to enjoy the full amenities of the city. As we reach our 10th birthday later in 2015 we look forward to continuing to build Springboard in the heart of the District."

Simon Ward
Partner
Springboard Corporate Finance

GOVERNMENT EXTENDS SUPERFAST VOUCHER SCHEME



In the Autumn Statement, the Chancellor announced the extension of the Connection Voucher Scheme, a funding programme that assists SMEs in accessing superfast broadband.

The scheme was intended to end this year, however additional funding was allocated to the scheme, allowing it to continue until March 2016.

The Connection Voucher Scheme is available in key cities in the UK, including Birmingham, where the scheme is being administered by Digital Birmingham. SMEs are able to apply for a grant of up to £3,000 and this money can be used to pay for infrastructure improvements to allow access to superfast broadband.

There are a number of providers available in the city offering a range of solutions, from traditional fibre to wireless broadband. The upgrade to superfast speeds can make you more efficient and allow businesses to consider new technologies such as The Cloud to help grow their business and reduce costs.

Colmore Business District (CBD) has teamed up with Metronet, one of the top national providers, to give businesses an improved deal on pricing. To find out more, contact Jonathan Bryce by emailing jonathan-b@colmorebusinessdistrict.com.

www.colmorebusinessdistrict.com/superfast-broadband

CAREER INSIGHT **LAWYER**

ALWAYS WONDERED WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A LAWYER? HERE'S AN INSIGHT INTO LIFE AT TWO OF THE TOP LAW FIRMS IN COLMORE BUSINESS DISTRICT...

Meet David Browne from SGH Martineau

"I came to law a little later than most. Following postgraduate studies I tried (and failed) to get a job working in intelligence. I decided that I should focus on getting a 'proper' job and undertook a law conversion course. I was attracted to law because I thought it would utilise the same skill set as working in intelligence: excellent analytical and research skills, just with fewer James Bond connotations and more time recording and billing. After joining the firm as a trainee in 2005, I qualified into the employment team. I act predominantly for employers and this provides me with a good mix of contentious and non-contentious work. I enjoy the fact that there are constant changes to the employment law landscape and adapting to these changes presents an interesting challenge. Beyond that, it is a practice area where you can forge excellent long-term relationships with clients who genuinely see you as an extension of their team. Finally, and crucially, no two cases are the same and what some employees can get up to in the course of their employment never ceases to amaze me!

"Law is highly competitive and it's always challenging for graduates to secure training contracts. I can only speak from experience, so for those who want to qualify as a solicitor in a commercial law firm it is important to get your face recognised, for example undertaking work experience or attending a vacation scheme. In a competitive environment anything that can set you apart from fellow applicants, including work experience at the target firm or something a little different on your CV, will put you at an advantage. That said, there are various routes into law these days beyond a law degree and training contract, so you shouldn't necessarily admit defeat if you can't get into law that way. One of our partners at SGH Martineau first qualified as a legal executive.

"How do I unwind after work? By leading a double life - I am also Morrissey in a Birmingham-based Smiths tribute band!"



Meet Catherine Elliott from Clarke Willmott

"From about the age of 15 I knew that I wanted to become a lawyer. I started my training at Bramleys in Nottingham and, since being qualified, have worked at a number of companies including Edge and Ellison, and Hadens. I'm currently a partner in the private capital team at Clarke Willmott. Based on Edmund Street, we specialise in a variety of law including serious injuries, family law, corporate and commercial, litigation and private client. As part of my role I advise people on estate planning including wills and trusts, powers of attorney and estate administration. The majority of enquiries from people in the District tend to be regarding estate planning to ensure their families are properly provided for, this includes tax planning and long-term care issues. From my own experience, I'd say that the top skills you need to be a private client lawyer are integrity, empathy and communication. I'm currently undertaking training through the STEP (Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners) training programme to increase my skills in advising vulnerable clients.

"What is the most important advice I'd give to anyone reading this article? Many people don't know that a spouse does not have an automatic right to access their partner's bank accounts and that banks have the power to freeze a joint account if one party loses capacity. Lasting Powers of Attorney are more valuable than people imagine and not just for the elderly – anyone can get run over by a bus resulting in a loss of capacity.

"As with any career, it's important to strike a work-life balance. To help me relax after work I enjoy spending time with my family, going to the movies and a good book or three."





Emporium Mall in Pakistan

GRAND DESIGNS HOME AND ABROAD

Jonathan Bryce

The architecture of Colmore Business District provides a varied backdrop to the business and activities that happen in the area. From the grandeur of The Council House, to the modern glass of One and Two Snowhill (and the occasional brutalism in the middle), all you have to do is look up. With architecture having such a great influence, I decided to meet with Susi Powis from AHR Architects to find out more about their work at home and abroad.

“I’ve walked past here loads of times,” I confessed as I sat down with Susi Powis in AHR’s office in Colmore Plaza. And I had; I’d walked past, peered in the window, but never taken the time to find out more about the company who, as I would discover, had a considerable influence on the District I spend most of my time in.

Susi told me that where we were sat was an open space that AHR often use for events, both their own and for other businesses. AHR designed the building knowing how useful a multi-purpose space like this could be.

AHR is a global firm of architects. Prior to 2008, the company did a lot of public sector work, however as the recession hit, and work started to reduce, AHR refocused their work on global markets, and with great success.

Susi supports Equity Director Marcus Wilkins, architect by trade and person responsible for driving growth in the midlands office. He is focusing on the Emporium Mall, a three million sq ft development in Pakistan. The work has been so impressive that AHR has already been contracted to design other malls in the region. Previously AHR have also won awards for the Al Bahr Towers in UAE, the new headquarters of the Abu Dhabi Investment Council. It’s easy to see why; as Susi and I spoke, impressive pictures of various AHR projects flashed up on the reception screen. In fact, foreign business has been so successful that Marcus will be setting up a partnership in Dubai this year.

Despite this global outlook, the focus is still very local. Work from the Dubai and Pakistan offices will be passed through the team in Colmore Plaza. The Birmingham office now also includes an interior design team who deliver interiors for AHR projects across the world.

Many of AHR’s projects are also set in Birmingham, for example they are due to start work on various commercial projects including a new development consisting of 160,000 sq ft of Grade A office space that is set to transform part of Colmore Business District.

AHR are driving the design, and with it, the architectural history of the city. I’ll be paying more attention to that ground floor window of Colmore Plaza next time I walk by.

ADVICE COLUMN

FAIL TO PLAN, PLAN TO FAIL (AND PAY MORE TAX!)



Lee Turner
Managing Director, Titanium Accountants

We've all heard this adage but what if your failure to plan meant missing out on saving money, wouldn't you do something?

Make time to check you're utilising all of the tax reliefs available before the end of the tax year on 5th April.

Here are some examples of the tax reliefs available, there are many more...

- If your spouse earns less than £10,000 per year and helps out in your business, you can reduce your taxable profits by paying them a small weekly wage, this has other advantages too.
- A sole trader or partner paying 40% tax whose spouse is a lower rate taxpayer and helps out in the business, could consider making them a partner to allocate some profits at a lower rate of tax.

- 40% higher rate tax payers can reduce their tax bill by making an additional pension contribution by 5th April.
- If you haven't taken advantage of your ISA investment limit this year, invest up to £15,000 before 5th April. The income and capital growth is tax-free.

Speak to your accountant to guarantee you always take full advantage of the tax reliefs available and never pay more tax than necessary ever again.

Titanium Accountants is dedicated to providing a proactive and innovative service to maximise the profitability and personal wealth of their clients.

For a copy of their 100 point 'tax busting checklist' email info@titanium-accountants.com or search on their website: www.titanium-accountants.com





a day in the life of...

TIM ASHTON

PARTNER OF TRADEMARK AND PATENT ATTORNEYS, FORRESTERS



It can take three to six years for a patent to be granted, so it's a long process that involves advising the client along the way.

"I'm not an early morning person, although times have changed with the arrival of my now three year old son and 10 month old daughter! I'm a coffee fiend; I have to have an espresso first thing or the day goes downhill from there!

After taking my son to nursery, I collect my bike and ride into our office on Edmund Street, usually arriving before 9.30am. I only live four miles away and always ride my bike unless there's snow or ice.

My first port of call is to sift through emails and post for urgent matters, but there's no typical day past 10 am.

Around 90% of my work is with patents, which protect technical innovations. It can take three to six years for a patent to be granted, so it's a long process that involves advising the client along the way.

Most aspects of my job are deadline driven, so I largely know what's coming up but I'll check my emails constantly throughout the day as other things emerge. We're constantly receiving instructions from associate firms across the world who need us to file patents in this country on behalf of their clients. Often those instructions come in the day before the deadline, so you need to be ready to act fast. My day often involves new client meetings, dealing with trademark issues, new inventions, commissioning 'freedom to operate' searches and chasing clients to make sure they don't forget something or miss a deadline!

As for lunch, I'm a big fan of food, especially with all my cycling, and if I don't eat I'm a very moody chap. I would like to say that I usually bring lunch in with me, but I tend to grab a sandwich in the District somewhere – we're spoiled for choice.

My job is stressful but fun and I can honestly say since I started, after leaving university in 2001, I've never not wanted to come to work. There's so much variety in this profession with clients from sole inventors to multi-national corporations, and no two inventions are ever the same, of course.

To get into this profession you have to have an engineering or scientific degree (mine was mechanical and materials engineering) and be the type of person who gets excited by technology – all patent attorneys are geeks at heart. You learn about Intellectual Property (IP) law on the job, and it usually takes four to six years to qualify as an attorney.

A client will come in with an idea and you have to understand and ask relevant questions to make sure they file the appropriate patent. Every day I get to tackle inventions from helicopter blades and jet engines to vacuum cleaners and wound management devices.

A lot of referrals come from knowing people in Colmore Business District, and Forresters has seen a real benefit after moving here two years ago. As a firm, we love being in the District as there are lots of other professionals based here and it's easy to get out and about and meet new people.

I like to get home for 6.30pm or 7pm so I can catch the children before they go to bed. One of the benefits of cycling is that I get home in 15 minutes no matter what traffic there is.

In the summer evenings I try to get out a couple of times each week to ride my bike with friends or retreat to my man cave; I've an outhouse in my garden where I've set up a turbo trainer. I set up a fan to keep cool, put in my earphones and watch a film to take my mind off the pain. All the training is to prepare for time trial races in the summer months."

www.forresters.co.uk



Computer generated image showing Great Charles Street

PLANS FOR SNOW HILL AREA TO BECOME GLOBAL PROFESSIONAL SERVICES HUB

Birmingham City Council and Colmore Business District (CBD) have unveiled a £600 million masterplan to transform the Snow Hill area and win further investment from global business, professional and financial services firms.

The 20-year Snow Hill Masterplan seeks to attract firms to join growing investors such as DTZ and RBS, and provides a framework to create 10,000 new jobs, generate over 200,000 sq m of new office space, and boost the local economy by over £600 million each year.

Sir Albert Bore, Leader of Birmingham City Council, said: "Birmingham is putting in place the building blocks for a global business and financial centre.

"Along with the transformation of Birmingham New Street due to complete later this year, plans such as the revitalisation of Snow Hill station will strengthen Birmingham's position as a destination for national and international firms that want to expand, attract skilled staff and join other successful companies in their sector."

Birmingham's professional services sector, the largest in the UK outside London, is critical to the city's economic future. Across the wider region this generates £15 billion annually, with more than 21,000 companies employing some 220,000 people. Operational costs in Birmingham can be up to 55% cheaper than London, while the arrival of HS2 will bring the city to the equivalent time away as London Underground's Zone 4.

Gary Cardin, chair of CBD, commented: "Birmingham's cost-effective office space, world-class transport links and abundant supply of local talent has created the ideal environment for investment. The city has also become a fantastic place for professionals to live. It is uniquely international, with a vibrant cultural, culinary and social scene that is helping make Birmingham unrecognisable from a decade ago."

The plan outlines how Snow Hill station's car park will be replaced with new office buildings, while a new concourse area will be created and new walking routes provided through the station. It also includes the transformation



How Snow Hill Station could look

of the A38, to create a new urban boulevard connecting the neighbouring Jewellery and Gun Quarters, and the creation of a new urban neighbourhood in the Steelhouse Lane area.

The Masterplan proposals will be supported by significant investments from the public and private sector to deliver a range of benefits, including improved public routes and spaces.

The plan was launched at an event generously hosted by Hortons' Estate at Cathedral Court, followed by a six-week consultation during spring 2015.

www.colmorebusinessdistrict.com/snowhillmasterplan

CBD FILM BUG 2015



Our partnership with Flatpack Film Festival returns for its fourth year this March. The CBD Film Bug brings innovative film-based events into Colmore Business District as part of the wider festival that takes place across the city.

The full programme is available online, but here's our pick of some of the best bits:

Trouble in Paradise
Opus at Cornwall Street
Saturday 21st March 2015
3pm - 7pm
Cost: £14



There weren't too many directors who were equally adept at making both silent and sound pictures, but Ernst Lubitsch was certainly one, gliding into talkies with ease. Trouble in Paradise (his first comedy of the sound era) is a witty romp, full of quick-fire one-liners, about a couple of thieves who plot to rob a beautiful perfume empire owner. Things go slightly awry when one of the thieves becomes romantically involved with his victim. After the screening you'll be invited to take your seat at the dinner table and enjoy two courses from Opus's delectable market menu.

A Taste of Flatpack
Home Deli, Church Street
Friday 20th March 2015
4.15pm - 5.45pm
Cost: Free

Not sure what to go and see this year? Why not check out a cherry-picked selection of Flatpack's favorites from their Shorts Competition. Take your seats and enjoy!

Edwardian Horror Show
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (BMAG), Chamberlain Square
Friday 20th March 2015
8pm - 11pm
Cost: £10

A rare chance to wander the halls of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery after hours, when distant noises and shapes in the darkness can take on a supernatural tinge. To further fuel your imagination, the Edwardian Tea Rooms will play host to some of early cinema's spookiest short films from the Edison Company's 1910 take on the Frankenstein story, featuring a creation scene to chill the blood, to Segundo de Chomon's demonic Red Spectre. Gothic ivory-tinkling and context will be provided by the versatile accompanist Paul Shallcross, with haunted show-tunes courtesy of the DJs from Sugarfoot Stomp.

Silent Fairy Tale Films
Birmingham and Midland Institute (BMI)
Margaret Street
Saturday 21st March 2015
1pm - 2pm
Cost: Free



Flatpack is teaming up with Birmingham Conservatoire's Frontiers Festival to present a selection of exquisite, early 20th Century silent shorts from the Pathé archives. Each of the films is based on fairy tales with every frame hand-stenciled with colour, bringing a vibrancy and magical quality to these forgotten gems. Providing the live soundtracks will be a group of Conservatoire students currently studying on the esteemed composition course.

Lisa Gornick's Live Drawing Show
The Old Joint Stock Theatre
Temple Row West
Saturday 21st March 2015
8.30pm - 9.30pm
Cost: Free

Illustrator and storyteller, Lisa Gornick has a unique style, mixing comedy, pathos, wet ink and watercolour to create a live drawing/comedy/anecdotal performance. Her new show about Grandma Ray, an East End cockney who sometimes 'went posh' and lived her life holding onto a secret, is a personal and comic story combining live art and filmmaking.

Man with a Movie Camera
Birmingham Cathedral, Colmore Row
Saturday 21st March 2015
7.30pm - 9.15pm
Cost: £10



Returning to this iconic venue in its tercentenary year, Flatpack presents Dziga Vertov's silent feature film, Man with a Movie Camera, with a live piano score provided by Paul Shallcross.

www.flatpackfestival.org.uk





BEYOND THE GRAVE

WHO LIES IN THE CATHEDRAL GROUNDS?

Clare Perkins

Birmingham Cathedral grounds are one of the few places in the city centre where people take the time to stop and enjoy some lunch or the (hopefully) good weather.

When walking through you will have noticed, but maybe not paid any attention to, the gravestones, tombs and headstones dotted around. The cathedral welcomes everyone to its grounds and wants the space to be used but, as a mark of respect for the individuals buried there, is keen that people do not sit on the graves.

Between 1715 and 1858, over 60,000 people were buried in St Philip's churchyard as it was called then. The burials records and remaining memorials can tell us about this great city, its people and the influence it has had on the world. There are manufacturers, adventurers, gunmakers, artists, visitors and even a fish curer!

Here are just two of the many:

Sarah Baskerville

Sarah Baskerville was the wife of famed typographer and printer John Baskerville. Sarah had moved into the home of John Baskerville, near Summer Row, as his live-in housekeeper, along with her five children. She eventually became his wife after the death of her first husband, Mr Eaves.

Sarah is credited with allowing his successful business to continue and flourish after Baskerville's death in 1775 and in 1996, in recognition of the role she played, a typeface was named after her called 'Mrs Eaves'.

Baskerville was an atheist but also a churchwarden at St Phillips, which was a prestigious role within the town. Sarah's gravestone is now located just behind the distinctive town hall memorial near to the Cherry Street entrance.

Nanetta Stocker

There is an intriguing little headstone near to the entrance to the cathedral that is covered in lichen and reads: In memory of Nanetta Stocker, who departed this life, May 4th 1819, aged 39 years. The smallest woman ever in this kingdom. Possessed with every accomplishment, only 33 inches high. A native of Austria.

It is thought that Nanetta had been working as a performer at the Onion Fair held in Aston, but the circumstances of her death are unknown. It was common in this period for people of small stature or with other physiological challenges to obtain employment by exhibiting themselves at fairs where they were regarded as wonders or marvels. Nanetta however was a talented musician and toured widely with another Austrian, John Hauptman, with a booklet written about their travels. Nanetta was said to enjoy knitting and needlework, was very intelligent and spoke German, French, English and Italian.

CHANCE TO BUY CONTEMPORARY ART

New Art WM aims to introduce new audiences to the rich visual arts created here in the West Midlands and make it easier to see, buy and collect contemporary art.

The Article Gallery, located within the Birmingham School of Art on Margaret Street, will host New Art WM's Annuale Exhibition from 20th March to 15th April, where artwork will be available to purchase with prices to suit any budget from £60 to £3,000.

Join them for a preview reception on 19th March from 6pm - 8pm. Drinks and canapés will be served and guests will have an opportunity to meet exciting contemporary artists such as Vanley Burke, Barbara Walker, Lucy Hutchinson and Rafal Zar.

For more information email Rachel Bradley, Head of Art Market, on rachel.bradley@bcu.ac.uk

www.newartwm.org

LOVE IS ENOUGH

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery's Love is Enough exhibition brings together two artistic giants for the first time – Andy Warhol and William Morris – to explore and reveal the parallels between their works.

The unconventional combination of artists' work is on show at Gas Hall from 25th April to August 2015 and is curated by Turner-prize winning artist Jeremy Deller who cites Morris and Warhol as his two greatest artistic influences.

Entry costs £7 and the exhibition is also an opportunity to see the gallery's set of Holy Grail tapestries, rare light-sensitive works that are being displayed together for the first time since 2008.

www.bmag.org.uk

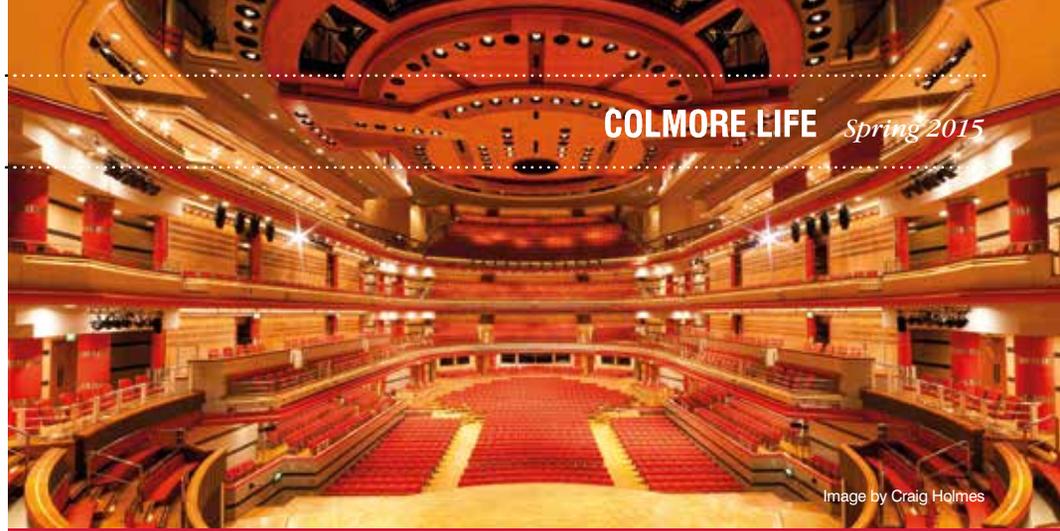


Image by Craig Holmes

SPRING SEASON AT TOWN HALL AND SYMPHONY HALL

One of the largest and most important international seasons of visiting orchestras and musicians in the UK continues apace this spring, right here in Birmingham at Town Hall and Symphony Hall.

The Birmingham International Concert Season has been bringing the world's best orchestras, ensembles, conductors and soloists to the city to perform on the two renowned stages since 1991, complementing the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra's own programme at Symphony Hall. Reflecting the city's status as one of the youngest in Europe, the season also features a remarkable number of creative young musicians in the early stages of their careers alongside artists with established global reputations.

Forthcoming concerts from emerging home-grown and international musicians include chart-topping violinist Nicola Benedetti performing with the venerable Camerata Salzburg, sensational young pianist Yundi making his Birmingham debut, rising city jazz composer and saxophonist Mike Fletcher with a trio, BBC Young Musician winner and pianist Lara Melda, and the explosive National Youth Orchestra led by Sir Mark Elder. www.thsh.co.uk

CATHEDRAL CELEBRATES TRICENTENARY

BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL'S 300-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

If someone asked you for directions to The Barley Close would you know where to point them? In the early 18th century you might have. The Barley Close is called something else now - Birmingham Cathedral.

Robert Philips donated the land for the construction of a parish church to accommodate the surplus of worshippers at St Martin's in the Bull Ring, which was bursting at the seams. The church was consecrated in 1715 and dedicated to St Philip, in honour of Robert's kind donation.

Fast-forward to this year's 300-year anniversary celebrations and we find ourselves with an opportunity to discover more about Birmingham Cathedral, with an exciting year-long programme of exhibitions, tours, talks, guided walks and new publications. There will be family events, trails, schools workshops, study days and partnerships with cultural organisations, universities and businesses in the city, as well as a specially commissioned film that will consider the cathedral's role within our vibrant, diverse city today. With over 1,000 events, there are lots of opportunities to get involved in the celebrations and discover the wealth of heritage connected with the cathedral as well as its strong links to the history and development of Birmingham. www.birminghamcathedral.com



DID YOU KNOW? THE GRAND HOTEL

Mike Mounfield

What do King George VI, Winston Churchill, Neville Chamberlain, Charlie Chaplin and James Cagney have in common? Besides being the makings of an interesting dinner party, they also all spent some time in the Grand Hotel on Colmore Row.

We've got so used to the Grand hiding behind scaffolding that we may have forgotten what an impressive sight it is. It's had a fairly chequered past, but we wait with eager anticipation for the covers to come off and the grand old lady of Colmore Row to emerge once again to take centre stage in our city's hotel and leisure industry.

The freehold to the Grand has always been owned by the Horton family; it was Isaac Horton who acquired the land on which the Grand now stands and commissioned Thomas Plevins to design and build a hotel in the French Renaissance style. The Grand was not originally intended to be very, er, grand. It was aimed at the commercial traveller market and had two 'stock' rooms designed for Victorian sales reps to demonstrate their new-fangled wares. The hotel opened in 1879 with 100 rooms (and another 60 not finished) plus a restaurant and two coffee rooms.

By 1890 the hotel operator had hit hard times and the Grand was handed back to Hortons'

Estate who decided to take a gamble and move the struggling hotel upmarket. The interior was completely rebuilt, along with building a new block on Barwick Street that housed the now famous Grosvenor ballroom that is 30m (100 ft) long with a ceiling almost 10m (32 ft) high. These dramatic changes heralded the first golden era of the Grand in Birmingham, the late 19th and early 20th century.

Later the hotel was to struggle again and closed in 1969. A new leaseholder spent half a million on refurbishment but went bust in 1976. Further refurb work by yet another new leaseholder included the application of the cement render that, in retrospect, was a mistake. The hotel was taken over again in 1982 but the leaseholder didn't spend the money that was needed and so again the hotel started to decline. An inclination to demolish the building in 2003 was reversed when it became Grade II* listed in 2004.

In 2012 Hortons' Estate set out to completely restore the Grand to its former glory including remodelling 230 rooms into 152 air-conditioned rooms, along with eight new suites and two roof terraces. A new terrace will be created in the central courtyard, there will be a hotel bar and restaurant accessed

from Colmore Row, along with a standalone bar on the corner of Church Street and Barwick Street. The main entrance to the hotel will move to Church Street, the site of the restaurant entrance back in 1879. The ground floor shops on Colmore Row will be refurbished, while the stonework façades on Colmore Row and Church Street, the Grosvenor Suites and the grand staircase will be restored.

The original Arbitration Room and Commercials Room will be converted into their modern equivalent, meeting rooms and conference spaces, where the 21st century counterparts of those Victorian business people can 'talk product' in the glorious surroundings of a truly grand Grand Hotel entering its second golden era.



THEATRE REVIEW

THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE



Jonathan Bryce

Ironically, spelling has never been one of my strong points. A good proofread and liberal use of spellcheck software is what has brought most of my written work to an acceptable level, so the idea of spelling competitively doesn't appeal! With that in mind, I decided to attend the Old Joint Stock Theatre's production for a ringside glimpse into the world of competitive spelling...

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee is a musical comedy, written by William Finn and based on the book by Rachel Sheinkin. It premiered successfully on Broadway in 2005 and counts two Tony Awards amongst its nine various awards. The overall story is simple; 10 spellers enter the Spelling Bee, hosted by former champion Rona Lisa Peretti and judged by Vice Principal Douglas Panch. There can be only one winner. The other nine leave with a juice box, dutifully provided by Mitch Mahoney, an ex-convict and comfort counselor. As the story moves through this premise, we get to know our various spellers (and our hosts), finding out more about who they are, and what drives them to become champion spellers. This musical is fast-paced and full of energy, keeping the audience engaged throughout. This is already an interactive performance, however the layout of the Old Joint Stock Theatre really accentuated this, making the stories feel even more personal.

The cast delivered an excellent performance. The well-sung musical numbers were accompanied by dynamic choreography; the audience was almost literally swept away by numbers like 'Pandemonium'. Strong characterisation meant that we were genuinely touched by the stories told under the banner of this intense spelling competition. I thought the evening was F-A-N-T-A-S-T-I-C!

Check out the Old Joint Stock website for this year's programme featuring everything from new writing to musical theatre to improv comedy and more.

www.oldjointstock.co.uk

BIG HOOT!



Liverpool had Superlambananas, the CowParade hit London and, this year, Birmingham will become a virtual aviary as a host of feathered friends descend on the city as part of its largest ever mass-participation art event.

Wild in Art is working in partnership with Birmingham Children's Hospital to create 'The Big Hoot', which will see over 100 individually designed 165cm tall owl statues appearing throughout the city over the summer. Private equity company LDC, based in Colmore Business District, is the presenting partner for the project and has previously worked with Wild in Art in other cities.

Martin Draper, LDC's Chief Executive, explained: "Using art sculptures to unite people – from three to ninety-three year olds – has, and will again, prove to be an overwhelming success, helping to put Birmingham in the spotlight as the place to be.

"The Big Hoot will enable people from across the region to celebrate Birmingham's rich cultural diversity, extraordinary industrial heritage and unique vibrant communities, whilst at the same time raising significant funds for Birmingham Children's Hospital – an institution that has been a significant part of LDC's fundraising efforts for many years."

The owls, decorated by artists and community groups and generously sponsored by local businesses, will be taking up perch right across Birmingham for 10 weeks this summer. After this they will be auctioned to raise funds for Birmingham Children's Hospital.

To find out how your business can sponsor an owl, email info@thebighoot.co.uk

www.thebighoot.co.uk

MAKE YOUR OWN JEWISH APPLE CAKE

We all know that Yorks Bakery Café on Newhall Street serves up a mean cup of coffee and soothing pots of tea, but did you know that those tempting cakes on offer are also made on-site? Elise Hewett, who puts the baker in Bakery Café, shares with us her recipe for their top-selling Jewish Apple Cake, which you can now make yourself if the slices on sale in Yorks aren't enough (or if you're too embarrassed to buy the whole lot in one go!).

Ingredients

375g plain flour • 5g salt • 10g baking powder • 400g caster sugar • 15g ground cinnamon
225ml vegetable oil • 60ml orange juice • 15ml vanilla extract • 4 eggs, beaten • 1 Bramley apple



1. Grease and flour a 25cm cake tube or Bundt tin - if you don't have either of these, a square or round cake tin will work just as well.



2. Combine the flour, salt, cinnamon, baking powder and sugar in a bowl.



3. Stir in the vegetable oil, beaten eggs, orange juice and vanilla. Mix well.



4. Peel, core and slice the apple. Layer the bottom of the tin with half of the apple.



5. Pour half of the cake mix into the tin.



6. Layer the rest of the sliced apple over the mixture. Pour the remaining batter over the apples.



7. Bake at 180°C/gas mark 4 for 50 minutes. Insert a knife into the centre of the cake – if it comes out clean, it is baked through.



8. Let the cake cool. Turn it out and decorate with icing sugar. You can add a peeled apple for decoration and caramel sauce (it's lovely with this cake).

Yorks Bakery Café is open 7 days a week, offering a range of teas, coffees, cold drinks, cakes, sandwiches and hot food.

www.yorksbakerycafe.co.uk | [@yorksbakerycafe](https://twitter.com/yorksbakerycafe)



BIRMINGHAM...CITY OF FOOD

Birmingham is a city on the rise. A place of great scope and promise, where new projects sprout up from grassroots on a weekly basis and innovation is a way of life. Centred on this theme of innovation and creativity is Birmingham's incredible food scene, for which the city is fast becoming famous.

From the exquisite and the highly celebrated to the diverse and the groundbreaking, food captures the imagination and the attention – but best of all, it tastes so darn good! We asked Joe Schuppler, founder of the fantastic Independent Birmingham card and blog to pick some of his local favourites...

The Bureau

Hot dog aficionados listen up! Tired of grim plastic Frankfurters ruining your hot dog experience? So are we, and so are the Bureau. Redefining the simple hot dog into a masterpiece of decadence, the Bureau serves up its 'deli dogs' slathered in anything from sweetcorn and onion rings to chilli and relish. You also won't want to miss out on their delicious deli slates and chargrill menu, perfect for both an express lunch and for dinner!

Pure Bar and Kitchen

So, by now you would have heard the news that Pure Bar and Kitchen serve up a darn tasty scotch egg. Like seriously, it's ace. But in addition to this wondrous scotch egg is a menu brimming with mouth-watering treats. Pork pies, mac 'n cheese, pumpkin and sweet potato salad, grilled salmon and steak – all washed down with a colossal array of deliciously cool craft beer – this is definitely pub food at its finest. Wonderbar!

Chung Ying Central

Chung Ying Central, where dim sum is a way of life and your choice of cocktail depends on whether you're a rat, snake or ox (the year you were born that is!). Specialising in serving the best dim sum in the city (yep, the best), Chung Ying Central is a haven for the Cantonese-style small plates and definitely your first stop for delicious Chinese food and cocktails.

Opus at Cornwall Street

Specialising in thrilling taste buds with only the highest quality seasonal, market-fresh British produce, Opus is approaching a landmark 10 years old this summer. From

whole Brixham sole and venison loin to homemade petit fours and Eton mess for dessert, revel in the best of British at this ode to fine dining.

Jekyll and Hyde

Quirky, a word bandied about with reckless abandon until it has lost all true meaning, until you visit the Jekyll and Hyde that is. With gin the drink of the hour, every hour, all day, the Jekyll and Hyde is one kooky pub where gin-infused food enjoyed in the Victorian Gin Parlour and cocktails served in bathtubs are the order of the day. You won't want to miss out on their tasty burgers either. We highly recommend a visit.

Now we've inspired you, it's time to get out there and rediscover your city through the medium of food - support local, love food and believe in Birmingham! To find out more about the wonderful array of independent cafés, bars, restaurants and shops in Colmore Business District and the rest of the city, and for discounts and deals, follow Independent Birmingham on Twitter @independentbham or visit the blog.

Cards are available to buy online and at cafés including Urban Coffee in Church Street.

www.independent-birmingham.co.uk

WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR LUNCH?

Clare Perkins

We thought we would give you a tour around the lunch-to-go options in Colmore Business District (CBD), and there are quite a few!

Traditional sandwich shops are plentiful with three well-established Philpotts shops along with pre-packed nutritious offerings from Little Waitrose by Snow Hill train station. In the Minories is Tucker's, which not only offers plenty of sandwich fillings but also cooked breakfast and lunch options with a small seating area to help you make the most of that precious lunch hour.

If you have a hankering for the more mainstream then Subway could be the place to try at the bottom of Newhall Street. They also have the advantage of long opening hours from 7am to 9pm on weekdays, ideal if you need something out of working hours. If you're after a more substantial lunch then Rustic Sandwich Shop on Livery Street may be the answer, with its range of home-cooked meals such as roast dinners, pasta and stews.

Down Steelhouse Lane is Hindley's Bakery, which not only offers sandwiches, but all manner of bread, rolls and cakes as well. Inside Snow Hill station are Centenary Lounge and Thorough Bread where you can pick up a bite before hopping on a train or the Metro.

If you're short of time, jump on the Philpotts website (www.philpotts.co.uk) and place an order – the website's easy to use and you can fully customise your fillings and bread. Then simply swing by your nearest store to grab your lunch, or have it delivered to your office if you spend over £25.

Last, but by no means least, are Mr Ben's Potatoes on Newhall Street which, guess what, offer baked potatoes. Sometimes we all just need a simple 'tatoe with butter, cheese and beans (adding brown sauce is my only personal addition to this staple). And Mexican street food Habaneros' habvan on Temple Row, where you can customise your burrito, taco or nachos. And if your office fancies an end of week treat, they even deliver on Thursdays and Fridays if you spend over £25 - visit their website to order (www.habvan.com)





LUNCHTIME AT BAR OPUS

Nicola Fleet-Milne, FleetMilne Property

Being a fan of Opus restaurant on Cornwell Street and Café Opus at the Ikon gallery in Brindleyplace, I jumped at the chance to review Ann Tonks, Irene Allan and David Colcombe's latest offering, Bar Opus at One Snowhill.

Inspired by bars in Barcelona and Copenhagen, Bar Opus has a variety of sharing plates to choose from, as well as tempting lunch and breakfast menus. For this visit I decided to opt for the Slow Braised Free Range Pork Cheeks from the lunch menu, which was served with root vegetables, cheddar mash and Alsace jus.

Thoroughly pleased with my choice, there wasn't one part of the meal that I wouldn't want to eat time and time again, from the dreamy (and completely lump free) mash potato, to the pork cheeks that fell apart beautifully, it was

delicious. What's more, not being a massive fan of carrots, I was delighted to see that the root vegetables were finely diced, making it a great accompaniment to the rest of the meal. I also asked for a white wine recommendation with my lunch and was given a glass of Pinot Grigio; light and refreshing – perfect for a lunchtime treat!

My fellow diners weren't disappointed either. Rather than being an overpowering dish, the Cornish Lamb Hot Pot was a manageable lunchtime portion and again, the meat was cooked to perfection. Similarly, the Winter Kale Caesar Salad was another light lunch option and a great alternative to the classic iceberg lettuce version.

When it comes to appealing to the local business community, Bar Opus has got it spot on. The bar is peaceful enough at lunchtime

to conduct a successful business meeting, whilst the evening is lively and relaxed (yes, I've already been back for more!), making it the perfect place to unwind after a hard day and catch up with friends or colleagues. Add to this an impeccable service and open kitchen, there really is no reason not to give Bar Opus a go.

The lunchtime menu is available between 12pm and 3.30pm Monday to Saturday. Prices start from just £7.50. Additionally, breakfast is available from 7.30am to 3.30pm Monday to Friday and from 10am to 3.30pm on Saturday. Those visiting Bar Opus after work can enjoy the dinner menu, available between 5pm and 8.30pm and the sharing bar plates, which are available until 9pm and priced at just £5 each.

www.baropus.co.uk



DISCOVER THE MINORIES

Clare Perkins

Many of you will already know the Minories (pronounced Min-ories) and its former incarnation as part of Lewis's department store. Although the rest of the buildings are now home to the county courts and offices, a remnant of retail exists with a collection of shops offering services and products from dental work to a handbag or sandwich.

At one end of the Minories is Designer Leathers. It has a range of handbags in many sizes and colours along with wallets and purses. At the moment the sheepskin coats in the style of football managers of the eighties will keep you protected from the sharp spring weather, as well as more stylish jackets to smarten up for work or a night out.

Opposite Designer Leathers are Lerae and Lemuria, two beauty salons that are perfect for a little lunchtime or post-work pick me up. They offer a wide range of services including massage, manicures and pedicures, as well as hair removal.

Also offering health and beauty services are Nails World and Dentist in Town. Nails World has a brisk trade with quite a few people taking advantage of the gels, inlays and polishes to add a touch of glamour during their lunch hour before returning to their desk. The Dentist in Town offers traditional dental work with friendly and experienced staff. One helpful service they offer is aimed at those of us who are nervous about going to the dentist. They have specially trained staff who will work with individuals to help people overcome their fear or phobia of the dentist before embarking on any required treatment. They have a range of cosmetic dentistry services including teeth whitening and also state of the art aids to help alleviate snoring issues – maybe a present for that special someone you share a bed with!

Stewart Oliver has its office in the Minories and is an estate agent focusing on Birmingham city centre apartment sales and lettings. Established in 2006, it manages large amounts of apartments in some of the newer developments in the city, making it ideal for enquiries from young professionals and students.

At the other end of the centre is Tucker's sandwich shop, a good place to stop for lunch or get a sandwich made to order whilst you wait. On the menu, along with sandwich fillings, is a large range of hot food including a selection of tasty homemade soups. The all important fry up is available, along with bacon sandwiches, ideal if you are feeling a bit dusty after the night before, particularly as they open from about 5.30am ensuring your recovery starts at breakfast time.

Opposite Tucker's is Livsstil, a cookshop with a large array of products from sets of knives, turkey basters and storage containers to bakeware including a wide selection of food colouring pastes and blocks of bright coloured icing for your cakes and biscuits. Their experienced staff can help you with enquiries and it is worth a browse for their offers and to find that kitchen gadget you never knew you needed, like the much loved melon baller.

Next time you are in the area don't just walk through the Minories, take the time to stop and see what it has to offer and, if you need to check the time, look up to find the gigantic fob watch silently keeping time above the shops.

HOUSE OF FRASER VIP EVENT



Colmore Life readers are invited to join House of Fraser on Corporation Street for their VIP spring/summer shopping event between 5pm and 7pm on Wednesday 29th April 2015.

You can expect huge discounts on the latest spring/summer trends on various brands from all departments including fashion, beauty and home. So why not take the opportunity to update your wardrobe with some key pieces from House of Fraser favourites such as Biba, Linea and Howick or indulge in some skincare products from the top name beauty counters?

There will be various activities in store, experts on hand to ensure you're making the right choices and what's more, you'll be treated to a glass of fizz on arrival.

To book a place simply email Georgia Dayton on gdayton@hof.co.uk.

www.houseoffraser.co.uk



LEARN SOMETHING NEW

Liz Newton

If you've been meaning to try something different or meet new people, here's a quick round up of local activities suitable for complete beginners...

Try your hand at making your own unique pieces of jewellery, with mac Birmingham's Introduction to Jewellery workshops. The 12-week course costs £99 (plus materials) and starts in mid-April, with a choice of Monday or Wednesday evenings. www.macbirmingham.co.uk

Whether it be learning how to make artisan sourdough bread, how to prepare shellfish, or how to find safe wild food for free, Loaf offers a whole host of workshops at their cookery school in Stirchley. You'll not only take home new skills but also your culinary creations. www.loafonline.co.uk/cookeryschool

If you've a thirst for knowledge, check out Café Scientifique, free informal science talks organised by Birmingham Museums and held at the Jekyll and Hyde on Steelhouse Lane every month. www.birminghammuseums.org.uk

Or how about the Birmingham and Midland Institute's (BMI) Monday lectures, which are £3 and held every Monday at 1pm at the BMI in Margaret Street? www.bmi.org.uk/events

Have a camera but not making the most of it? Learn how to compose better images and simple editing techniques with a four-week course for compact cameras (starts 25th April) or DSLR cameras (starts 6th June). The courses cost £50 and take place in the beautiful surroundings of Birmingham Botanical Gardens on Saturday mornings. www.birminghambotanicalgardens.org.uk/events

Got a budding business idea? Then Birmingham Entrepreneurs Meet-Up may be for you. Share tips, problem solving techniques and brainstorm ideas over a coffee or a beer from 6pm at Urban Coffee in Church Street: every second Wednesday for early stage entrepreneurs and the final Wednesday of the month for more experienced entrepreneurs. www.urbancoffee.co.uk/events

Unlike stand-up, improvisation's about working together as a team with other improvisers to spontaneously create scenes and sketches. If you'd like to try your hand, Blue Orange Theatre in the Jewellery Quarter is running an eight-week course on Thursday evenings starting 23rd April. It costs £75, or £60 if you book before 23rd March. www.blueorangetheatre.co.uk

If you prefer something more sedate, Urban Coffee on Church Street holds a monthly book club at 6pm on the last Thursday of the month. It's been going almost five years and welcomes everyone – those who have finished the book, only half way through or haven't started it and just want to hear what other people have to say. www.urbancoffee.co.uk/events

To wind down, why not try the Priory Rooms' Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga sessions in the tranquil surroundings of the 1930s Quaker Meeting House on Bull Street. Classes are £7.50 each (or £65 for block of 10) and held on Wednesday evenings at 7pm. www.sadhanaom.org.uk

Or for a touch of relaxation in the middle of the working day, their drop-in meditation and mindfulness sessions, every Monday lunchtime from 1pm to 1.30pm, may be just what you need. They are led by Gen Leksang, a female monk and cost £4. www.meditateinbirmingham.org

And finally, if singing's more your thing, Colmore Chorus, the District's choir now rehearse all year and perform at events like the CBD Food Festival. For more details, contact Liz Newton on 0121 236 4686 or email liz-n@colmorebusinessdistrict.com. www.colmorebusinessdistrict.com.

AFTER HOURS...STAGE FIGHT

Joanne Davies

By day Jonathan Bryce is a project maker for Colmore Business District but on Tuesday nights he engages in a rather unusual hobby...

Jonathan, what do you do?

Stage Fight! Based at the Blue Orange Theatre (a social enterprise in the Jewellery Quarter) we learn the art of performance combat. Aimed at actors and historical re-enactors, Stage Fight teaches us how to choreograph visually engaging, realistic but safe fights. Raph Aldis, co-founder and lead instructor of Stage Fight, uses manuals written by period weapons-masters to teach historically accurate ways to wield swords, shields, quarterstaff and daggers.

How did you get in to it?

I had been looking to learn some new skills for a while and a couple of summers ago I attended Birmingham Artsfest where Stage Fight had a stall. I got talking to Kaz, one of the instructors, and it sounded really interesting so I thought I would give it a try for one term and see what I thought. I loved

it and the time suited my schedule, and I've now been going for over two years.

Do you need to be very fit?

You need to be physically mobile but you certainly don't have to be an athlete. You'll end up getting fitter without even realising it and finding muscles you never knew you had. In that respect it's great for people who are bored with the gym or just want to try a different way of exercising. There's no special kit involved, although it's best to invest in knee and elbow pads as there can be quite a bit of falling over!

So is it just running around playing with swords?

In some ways yes, it's just really good fun. We do however work towards the European Certificate of Skilled Performance Combat (ECSPC), a recognised qualification and it can be quite challenging. It has been interesting to stretch my brain with the historical side of things and it has taught me to really think about how my body moves and balances. The choreographed pieces require some acting too so it's helpful for people who want to get over any nerves around public

speaking. It's been great to mix with people I wouldn't ordinarily have met in my day-to-day life. Probably the most rewarding thing for me was learning to be good at something that didn't come naturally.

It's not just for boys is it?

No, not at all. It's for everyone. We have mixed classes and Kaz is Raph's right-hand woman!

If you want to give Stage Fight a go, classes run at the Blue Orange Theatre, 118 Great Hampton Street, Birmingham, B18 6AD. The beginners' class currently starts at 7pm on a Monday night and the advanced class runs from 8pm. It costs £90 for a 10-week term, with the new term starting in September 2015. For more information contact info@stagefight.co.uk.

www.stagefight.co.uk

If you have an interesting hobby you would like to share with After Hours, we would love to hear from you. Please get in touch with liz-n@colmorebusinessdistrict.com.

COMMON PURPOSE TURNS 25 YEARS OLD



Common Purpose recently celebrated its 25-year anniversary of running courses to help people develop their skills and gain the inspiration, knowledge and connections to become better leaders at work and in society.

The Birmingham office of the not-for-profit social enterprise is based in Colmore Business District, with courses organised by Operations Director, Louise Teboul, who was recently announced winner of the 'Outstanding Professional Award' at the 2014 Birmingham Post Business Awards.

Common Purpose programmes are unusual in that they are outward facing. The courses bring together diverse groups of people from different sectors and offer real-life insights and experiences to give participants a better understanding of the world and context that they operate in, as well as how to lead and influence beyond their authority. There is also no course work or exams, and you can pick and choose sessions to suit your schedule.



Meridian is aimed at experienced leaders and covers different leadership issues with visits, keynote speakers and panel discussions throughout. Over six months participants choose 50 hours of sessions to explore a huge range of real-life challenges (based anywhere from a casualty unit to a charity; a corporate to a prison; a rehab centre to a radio station) in small groups, continually learning from each other, the contributors and the experience of operating in very unfamiliar situations.

Common Purpose Navigator is also available for people in the early stages of their career, as well as an intensive two-day Birmingham Profile course for people wanting an introduction (or refresher) to Birmingham, its key issues and the people. Recent graduate Amardeep Gill, partner at Trowers and Hamblins and Colmore Business District Board Director, explains more: "When you're in a profession you can live and operate within a certain bubble, and Common Purpose shows you how much more there is to the city, how it is layered and how it functions.

"The course takes you out of your comfort zone and shows you things you traditionally wouldn't have seen. It also allowed me to enhance my leadership skills and I would recommend it to anyone who wants to know the city better or even is long-established in the city."

www.commonpurpose.org.uk

WIN!



On page 21, we asked Independent Birmingham to give us their top picks in the District. We're giving you the chance to win two Independent Birmingham cards, worth £15 each, so you and a friend or loved one can enjoy a host of discounts at Birmingham's best independents.

To be in with a chance of winning, simply tell us how many years Opus at Cornwall Street has been running.

Email your answer by 8th May 2015 to jonathan-b@colmorebusinessdistrict.com
Believe in Birmingham!

Terms and conditions

The winner will receive two Independent Birmingham cards valid for one year. No cash alternative is available. The cards will be issued in line with the Independent Birmingham card terms and conditions, set out at www.independent-birmingham.co.uk/terms-conditions.

The winner will be chosen at random from all correct entries. The winner will be announced in the next issue of Colmore Life.

OUR PREVIOUS EDITION'S COMPETITION WINNER



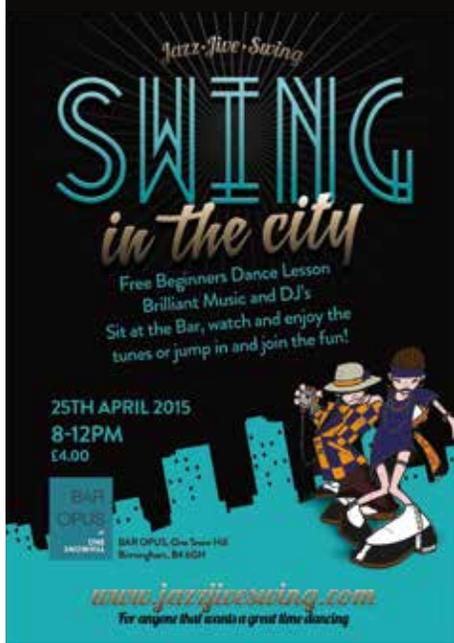
In our last edition we asked where the Staffordshire Hoard was discovered. The answer was Hammerwich. The lucky winner of afternoon

tea for two at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery's Edwardian Tea Rooms is Becky Haile.



Swing in the City

25th April | 8pm - midnight | £4
Bar Opus
www.baropus.co.uk



The Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain Explores the Cecil Sharp Songbook

10th May | 3pm | Town Hall | www.thsh.co.uk

Stomping tracks and tear jerking ballads – the origins of today’s popular music, from English dance music to dust kicking Americana – all explored with the orchestra’s customary light-hearted showmanship. Tickets £19.50.

Gadget Show Live

7th April - 12th April
NEC Birmingham
www.gadgetshowlive.net

The hugely popular exhibition returns for a seventh year, bringing the very best and very latest tech under one roof for you to see, try and buy. Tickets £22.99 to £31.99.

Birmingham Cabaret Festival



14th - 30th May
The Old Joint Stock Theatre
www.oldjointstock.co.uk

Expect everything from music to comedy to burlesque and everything in between at Birmingham’s first ever cabaret festival. Internationally acclaimed musical comedy duo, EastEnd Cabaret, are headlining.

ChordYard

Last Friday of every month
5.30pm - 8.30pm
Hotel du Vin, Church Street
www.hotelduvin.com

Acoustic live music in the open air, heated courtyard with award winning singer/songwriter Ben Drummond and friends. Come along to meet friends, relax and have fun after a hard week in the office. Half price house Champagne between 5.30pm and 6.30pm.

Behind the scenes tour of THSH

www.thsh.co.uk/tour-dates/public-tours

Join Town Hall or Symphony Hall on their monthly public tours for an introduction to the building and a backstage tour.

Strictly 9 to 5

5th June | 12pm - 6pm
Aston Villa Football Club
www.no5.com/strictly9to5

Join Anton Du Beke for a three-course meal and evening of dance entertainment. Organised by No5 Chambers in aid of the Child Brain Injury Trust. Tickets £100.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

26th May - 6th June
Birmingham Hippodrome
www.birminghamhippodrome.com

Thrilling stage play from the National Theatre based on the award-winning novel. Tickets £20 to £42.50.

Your team



Michele Wilby | BID Executive Director
Colmore Life: Managing Editor

Liz Newton | Events and Communications Manager
Colmore Life: Production Manager & Journalist

Mike Mounfield | Projects Manager
Colmore Life: Journalist

Jonathan Bryce | Project Maker
Colmore Life: Journalist

Sarah Rennie | Project Maker
Colmore Life: Journalist

Joanne Davies | Project Maker
Colmore Life: Journalist

Clare Perkins | Executive Assistant
Colmore Life: Journalist

Waterloo House
20 Waterloo Street
Birmingham B2 5TB

Tel. 0121 236 4689
www.colmorebusinessdistrict.com

Follow @ColmoreBID on Twitter