

BIG IT UP BULLETIN

Major news and updates for Leicester and Leicestershire

April 2009

Here is the latest update for Big It Up campaigners on major projects and good news stories for Leicester and Leicestershire, brought to you by Leicester Shire Promotions.

If you have any more Big It Up stories to tell of how you, your colleagues or organisation have championed the cause of Leicester and Leicestershire, please feed appropriate details through to Simon Gribbon at Leicester Shire Promotions on 0116 225 4001 or email simon.gribbon@l-p-l.com

To help inform new developments in the ways in which the Big It Up Bulletin is produced and delivered, it would be greatly appreciated if you could spare a few minutes to complete a quick and simple feedback form. Details of your identity are not required.

Please visit www.goleicestershire.com/surveys/bigitupmembersurvey/ to complete the survey.

imago wins Silver at 'Britain's best' tourism awards

Loughborough-based imago - one of the UK's leading conference venues - came away with Silver in the Business Tourism category at the 20th Enjoy England Awards for Excellence. The national awards ceremony, organised by VisitBritain, aims to recognise businesses whose efforts of delivering a memorable visitor experience set a benchmark of outstanding quality in British tourism.

Congratulations to local sporting stars

Local sporting stars have been making the headlines recently. In rugby union, Leicester Tigers finished top of the Guinness Premiership and now have a semi-final play-off and a European Heineken Cup semi-final to look forward to. Tigers and England scrum half, Harry Ellis was also included in the British Lions squad for the forthcoming tour of South Africa. Leicester City were crowned League One champions and were promoted back to the Championship next season. The Jelson Homes DMU Leicester Riders will be battling it out in this weekend's BBL Championship Playoff Finals, Leicester-born Mark Selby made the quarter-finals of the World Snooker Championship in April and Leicestershire County Cricket Club have just begun their new season.

First BSF school in East Midlands opens in Leicester

A new £14 million school has been opened in Beaumont Leys, six weeks ahead of schedule. Beaumont Leys is the first of Leicester's secondary schools, and the first in the region to be completely transformed as part of the Government's Building Schools for the Future programme (BSF). As well as providing more than 1,000 students with state-of-the-art buildings and equipment, the school is now able to offer all local people the chance to use its facilities, for the first time.

World premiere of new show at National Space Centre

Did you know the National Space Centre is home to one of the world's most prolific creators of fulldome and planetarium shows? Currently, shows created here in Leicestershire are showing at over 140 venues in 17 countries. Staff at the National Space Centre Creative have been busier than usual this month and are putting the finishing touches to a brand new show that will showcase at the National Space Centre in May. We are Astronomers, narrated by David Tennant, reveals the global collaboration, technology and dedication required to answer the unresolved questions of the Universe. If any Big It Up members would like to join the National Space Centre team and see this amazing new 360° experience before the rest of the UK, email malikaa@spaccentre.co.uk to find out how. Places are limited and allocated on a first come basis.

Record-breaking success for Leicester Shire Promotions

Leicester Shire Promotions has revealed that its short break marketing activity during the financial year 2008-09 attracted a record-breaking number of overnight leisure visitors to Leicester and Leicestershire. The Destination Management Organisation has revealed that overnight stays booked at local accommodation - influenced by the company's strategic marketing activity - exceeded 8,550 in 2008/09, an increase of 266 per cent on the previous year.

Leicester involved in new space telescope that 'looks back in time'

The next generation of space instrumentation - which will effectively allow scientists to look back in time - has been discussed at a meeting of international scientists and engineers at the University of Leicester. The University's Space Research Centre - one of the biggest academic centres of its kind in Europe - has hosted a three-day conference to discuss future planning of the instrument and early astronomical observations.

A good night for Leicester at BAFTAs

A programme about a Leicester-based choir has won a BAFTA. The Choir: Boys Don't Sing, followed pupils at Lancaster Boys School in Knighton, Leicester. The show beat The Apprentice, Celebrity Masterchef and Top Gear to take the BAFTA award for 'Features'. Meanwhile, naturalist Sir David Attenborough, 82, who grew up in Leicester, won the specialist factual award category for the series Life In Cold Blood - 48 years after picking up his first BAFTA.

Local university achieves research breakthrough

Researchers at the universities of Leicester and Oxford have made a discovery about plant growth which could potentially have an enormous impact on crop production as global warming increases. Dr Kerry Franklin from the University of Leicester led the study which has identified a single gene responsible for controlling plant growth

responses to elevated temperature. The work has been published in Current Biology and was funded by the Royal Society and the BBSRC.

Leicester pub one of country's 'greatest'

Staff members at The Black Horse pub in Aylestone were celebrating after it made the Daily Telegraph's list of the '70 greatest British pubs'. The pub, which is based in a 16th Century coaching inn and has a traditional feel, was noted for its live music.

PM visits Loughborough University to launch new policy statement

Loughborough University was visited by Prime Minister Gordon Brown, as the Government announced a new strategic plan to invest in Britain's industrial future. The Prime Minister commented: "There is no better place to launch our new industry policy than here at Loughborough University. There are 16,000 students and a very high proportion of them are working in some kind of industry during their training here at this university."

County firm is shortlisted for top award

One of Leicestershire's best-known companies has been shortlisted for a prestigious national manufacturing award. Drug delivery systems specialist 3M Health Care of Loughborough is one of 20 finalists in the Best British Business category of the Manufacturing Excellence Awards 2009 - viewed as the Oscars of the industry.

Fast-growing profits earn top 100 placings

Two Leicestershire companies have been named among the top 100 private companies with the fastest growing profits. Joules Clothing, of Market Harborough, is in 57th place in The Sunday Times Profit Track 100, while Benson Group, of Bardon, near Coalville, has taken 78th spot. Joules, which has 20 stores across the UK, has seen its profit rise by an average of 62 per cent each year for the past three years to January 31 2008. Benson Group, the UK's third-largest producer of carton packaging, employs 800 people, including 300 people in Bardon.

Leicester jewellery store named 'Best new Branch'

Jewellery chain Goldsmiths' store at Highcross Leicester has been named best new branch by its parent company. The Aurum Awards was hosted by Aurum Holdings at the Marriott Hotel Leicester.

Thunderbirds are go at Triumph

Globally-renowned Triumph Motorcycles has released details of its latest new model, the Thunderbird cruiser. The Hinckley-based company said the 1,600cc Thunderbird, the fourth to sport the iconic tag, would go on sale in July 2009. Triumph, which produces 16 models, sold more than 50,000 bikes in 2008, beating the previous record of 46,700 set in the 1960s and bucking the global trend.

Leicester picked as new home for national research centre for heart disease

The National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) has chosen Leicester as the home for a new £5.5 million national research centre for heart disease at Glenfield Hospital. The quality research already being carried out into heart disease by Leicester's hospitals and the University of Leicester, helped doctors and scientists secure the NIHR funding to establish a Cardiovascular Biomedical Research Unit (BRU). The research facility will be headed by a team of over 100 doctors and scientists.

Business awards celebrate entrepreneurship in Leicestershire

Mark Group scooped a double win at the 2009 Leicestershire Business Awards. The local company took home both the Enterprise Through Innovation award, sponsored by One Leicester, as well as the Leicestershire Business of the Year 2009 trophy, sponsored by Business Link. The Mark Group has grown from humble beginnings to become the country's largest fitter of insulation in homes.

Foxton Locks scoops three national awards

Foxton Locks and Inclined Plane in Harborough was presented with an 'Outstanding Achievement' award for its three year, £2.8 million restoration project that has transformed the 20-acre site. The grade II listed canal locks, which are managed by British Waterways, won the accolade at the annual Waterway Renaissance Awards. The relocation work at Foxton has included new viewing areas and upgrading 3 km of paths, plus substantial interpretation, in addition to engineering restoration works. The project was also winner of the 'Historic Environment' category, and commended in the 'Design & Construction' category.

Local students' success in national fashion competition

Design students from De Montfort University have wowed fashion industry experts in two national competitions set by major high street store River Island. First year students Emily Andrews, Sophie Kempner and Roseanna McReynolds won the Recycling Competition by creating chic fashion pieces from recyclable scrap. The students will now see their work displayed at Graduate Fashion Week from 7-11 June 2009.

Local firm wins world's most expensive suit deal

Packaging for the world's most expensive suit was created in Leicester. Master UK provided the specialist leather covering for the £70,000 suit, designed by Alexander Amosu. The company has also won the contract to supply packaging for Mr Amosu's future luxurious creations, which start at £5,000. Mr Chauhan said the company, founded two years ago, was recommended to Mr Amosu by tailors in London's famous Saville Row, who are also customers of Master UK.

Students' innovative furniture showcased on world stage

Award-winning furniture designed by three talented students at De Montfort University was showcased at the biggest home show in the world. The DMU students featured in the 'Innovation Nation' feature at the EDF Energy Ideal Home Show.

Minister for Europe visits Melton Mowbray

Caroline Flint, Minister for Europe, visited Melton Mowbray to celebrate EU recognition of the renowned Melton Mowbray Pork Pie. The much-celebrated pork pie is to get Protected Geographical Indicator status from the EU, giving it a similar status certification as Champagne, Parma Ham, Cornish Clotted Cream and Welsh Lamb. During a busy day in the county, she met individuals and businesses across the district who have helped champion the town's most famous food in the EU.

And finally...

The Big It Up Bulletin is produced in conjunction with Leicester Mercury's 'The Business' supplement. For the latest business news in Leicester and Leicestershire, visit www.thisisbusiness-eastmidlands.co.uk/News/Leicestershire.aspx