

BIG IT UP BULLETIN

Major news and updates for Leicester and Leicestershire

AUGUST 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

Comedy Festival makes significant economic impact

A new report published by Leicester Comedy Festival focuses on the impact that the popular festival has on the area. The report says that 46 per cent of the festival's 4,000-strong audience members stay in hotels across Leicester and Leicestershire and 73 per cent of the audience enjoy drinking and dining in Leicester restaurants and bars before they attend a performance, making a significant contribution to the local night time economy.

Major event attracts international businesses

A festival celebrating the vibrancy of Indian culture and the musical heritage of the Gujarat region in India has attracted international interest. The Village India & Experience Gujarat festival is taking place at Leicester's De Montfort Hall and Gardens on 10-13 September 2009. The three-day spectacle will showcase the best of Indian culture, cuisine and both modern and traditional Gujaratian entertainment to the thousands of visitors expected. Two major Gujarat-based companies have agreed to sponsor the event and a large number of Indian-based businesses will also be represented at the festival. It is hoped this latest interest in Leicester will further encourage investment in the city from the Indian business community.

Drug tester could save lives in developing world

A hi-tech device which could save lives in the developing world by helping governments crack down on counterfeit medicine is being created in Leicestershire. The machine, designed by Spectral ID, will be targeted at countries where mass production of fake drugs is a big and potentially lethal business. The device, called a spectrometer, works by flagging up illegally-produced drugs within seconds by examining them under light.

Spin out company bags national industry award

Loughborough University spin out Phase Vision has scooped an award from the British Business Angels Association (BBAA). The optical inspection solutions company won the Early Stage Investment of the Year award after it was nominated by business support organisation Connect Midlands.

Local dance group in 'Thriller' world record bid

Leicester dance company Desi Masti was joined by over 500 fans of legendary pop-superstar Michael Jackson to smash the Guinness World Record for the most people to simultaneously dance to the hit song 'Thriller' at the same time, in the same place. The record attempt was recorded at Orton Square outside Curve theatre in Leicester on Saturday 29 August on what would have been the star's 51st birthday. The group was joined by the cast of Michael Jackson 51 - a local tribute show that has been showing at Curve for the past month celebrating the life and music of the late icon. Organisers are still waiting for an official declaration from the Guinness World Record representatives that the record has been achieved.

Community project receives Olympic recognition

A campaign led by Loughborough College and supported by the British Heart Foundation and the National Centre for Physical Activity and Health at Loughborough University has been awarded the Inspire mark by the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG). Loughborough Flames: Lighting the Way is a programme designed to improve the health of young people in Loughborough ahead of the 2010 Olympic Games and is one of only two projects in the East Midlands and 17 nationwide to receive the much sought after Inspire mark.

Marked improvements in primary education

Results of national tests for seven-year-olds show that Leicester schools have managed marked improvements in reading, writing and mathematics amongst its pupils. In reading, the percentage of children achieving the levels expected for their age has bucked the national average by rising by two per cent (an overall increase of four per cent over the past two years). There has been a good improvement in writing of four per cent (an increase of six per cent since 2007) compared to a national improvement of one per cent. Results in mathematics have improved by one per cent, bucking the national drop.

Ashes hero tells of Leicestershire inspiration

Ashes hero Stuart Broad has revealed a pep talk by a former Leicestershire teammate inspired his Ashes-winning performance. Broad's match-winning spell of 5-37 in the final Ashes Test Match helped England towards a 2-1 series victory against Australia. After receiving criticism for his bowling in the first few Tests, the former Oakham schoolboy turned to former Leicestershire pace bowler and current England bowling coach, Ottis Gibson - with whom he played at Grace Road for two years - for advice and promptly ripped through the Australian batting.

Double silver and bronze for Loughborough athletes at World Championships

Loughborough University's athletes are celebrating after helping claim three of Britain's six medals at the World Athletics Championships in Berlin. Lisa Dobriskey, Martyn Rooney and Harry Aikines-Aryeetey were on world-beating form as they romped home to double silver and a bronze - all three collecting their first ever medals at a senior World Championships.

Local man wins 'Globe Trotting' role

Online travel agent lastminute.com has offered the role of Globe Trotter to unemployed Leicester man Richard Conway. Richard is the first lastminute.com Globe Trotter tasked to travel the world and report back via a travel blog. Richard, who was recently made redundant, will have the opportunity to spend 60 nights away, visiting eight cities across three continents. Travel dreams had always been placed on the back burner as he forged ahead with his career but his passion for

exploring and his natural writing skills particularly impressed judges at lastminute.com.

NBA player says Loughborough camp is best

Britain's best known basketball player Luol Deng has praised facilities and staff at Loughborough University where he recently hosted his annual one-week basketball camp. More than 260 young players aged 11-19 from across the country have flocked to the Luol Deng Basketball Camp - the brainchild of NBA Chicago Bulls player Deng who said of Loughborough: "The training facilities are just as good as anything I've seen in the US. It's a great place to be and we hope to return next year."

UK's largest sci-fi movie weekend returns

The National Space is to once again host its popular Sci-fi Movie Weekend on the 26-27 September 2009. Costumed characters will be joined by real stars of the movies, with Leicestershire's own Star Wars Icon, Jeremy Bulloch, who played Bounty Hunter Boba Fett. Visitors will be able to have photographs taken with their favourite character, join the ghost hunt with the Ghostbusters, learn some new pirate moves from Captain Jack Sparrow or help Batman defeat The Joker and his Goons. The weekend will also include an 'over 18s only' cult movie walkthrough exhibition.

Local chocolatier wins prestigious national 'taste' award

Melbourne-based Bittersweet Chocolates received a Gold award in the 2009 Taste Awards for its unique strawberry truffle concoction. 'The Taste Awards', run by the Guild of Fine Foods, is a national competition entered by many of the top chocolatiers in the country. The company, which is run by husband and wife duo Nigel and Dianne Holling, manufactures fresh cream truffles and chocolates by hand which are sold via mail order and within the shop.

Top student satisfaction rating for local universities

Students at Leicester and Leicestershire universities continue to be among the most satisfied in the country, according to the findings of a national poll. The University of Leicester was ranked joint top with Cambridge for student satisfaction among mainstream English universities teaching full-time students. The National Student Survey - a key measure of quality that reveals how students feel about their university education also found that almost 90 per cent of Loughborough University's students are satisfied with their course - much higher than the national average - and at De Montfort University, 82 per cent said they were satisfied, retaining the same level as last year.

Earth observation experts gather in city for conference

The University of Leicester is hosting a major international conference on the latest scientific developments in Earth observation and photogrammetry. The conference will see the university's celebrated Space Research Centre discuss hot topics within the field with some of the most renowned space science research academics in the world.

Swimmer sets new world mark

Loughborough University swimmer Jo Jackson set a new world record for the 400m Freestyle at the British Gas Short Course Grand Prix in Leeds. The World Championship silver medallist set the new mark at 3:54.92, as Loughborough's swimmers swam to an astounding three Commonwealth, one European and 15 British records during the four-day meet.

Pensioner claims to be Britain's 'greenest'

A pensioner who hasn't thrown a thing away in nearly three years is claiming he is Britain's greenest resident. Tony Saunders, 66, recycles absolutely everything and no longer puts his bins out. He uses his wheelie bin to collect rain water for his garden and to flush his toilet. Tony spends up to two hours a day dividing his rubbish into piles for paper, cardboard, plastics and clothing which he takes to the recycling plant near his home in Braunstone, Leicester. He has not been in a car for six years and cycles everywhere - including going on holiday to the coast hundreds of miles away.

Triumph praised by the Japanese

The Japanese have long been the thorn in the side of legendary Leicestershire motorcycle firms Triumph and Norton - but things may have changed. Leading Japanese magazine, *Motorcyclist*, has given Hinckley-based Triumph's Daytona 675 sports bike its first-ever perfect score in a review of the model. Tester Kei Nashimoto, a world-class racer, said: "The Daytona 675 provides a riding pleasure that cannot be felt in other bikes". Globally, the four-cylinder 600cc motorcycle, the category in which the Daytona sits, is dominated by Japanese-made machines but the Daytona 675 has been universally praised since its introduction in 2006.

Award-winning year for local businesses

Local businesses wanting to take the first step towards making 2010 an award-winning year are invited to attend the launch of the Leicestershire Business Awards on Thursday 10 September at Mercedes-Benz of Leicester, St Georges Way. Peter Wheeler, CEO of Leicester Tigers and Chairman of Leicestershire Business Awards will speak alongside Leicestershire Business of the Year, Mark Group, and guests will be given the opportunity to discuss the benefits with previous winners, the judges and the organisers. To book your place at the launch call Wow Effect Ltd on 0845 130 2866 or email info@bizawards.co.uk

DMU helps inventor bring comfort to medical profession

De Montfort University has been working with a former midwife turned entrepreneur on a specially designed chair which is set to transform the lives of thousands of people in the medical profession. The unique seat design is a significant breakthrough for the healthcare profession that promises to reduce osteoarthritis, improve performance and save the NHS millions through reduced sickness and health and safety claims. Cathy Topping joined forces with DMU's Art & Design Faculty and ProspectIP team to successfully develop and bring the 'Topping Chair' to market.

'A find of national significance' on show at relaunched museum

The Hallaton Treasure Gallery will be on show at the newly-refurbished Harborough Museum, scheduled to re-open to the public on 19 September 2009. Described by J D Hill of the British Museum as 'a find of national significance', it boasts the most Iron Age coins ever excavated in the UK in controlled conditions. The Hallaton Treasure boasts over 5,000 silver and gold Iron Age coins, an ornately decorated Roman helmet and some mysterious silver objects.

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