

BIG IT UP BULLETIN

Major news and updates for Leicester and Leicestershire

SEPTEMBER 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

Major surge in 'staycation' visitors

UK holidaymakers' preference for short breaks closer to home showed no sign of subsiding this summer, with Leicester and Leicestershire attracting a record number of family 'staycationers' who have abandoned plans for expensive breaks abroad in favour of a high quality UK destination. Leicester Shire Promotions has revealed that overnight stays booked at local accommodation through its hugely popular Stay Play Explore family short break increased by over 160 per cent during June - August 2009, compared to the same period last year.

Summer events see record turnout

Summer annual events at three of Leicestershire's major attractions smashed previous visitor numbers this year and are now the most successful on record - attracting a combined total of nearly 14,000. Bosworth Battlefield's annual re-enactment weekend in August celebrated its most successful event in nearly 25 years this year with 5,300 visitors. The National Forest's fifth Wood Fair, which took place on August Bank Holiday Monday at Beacon Hill Country Park, attracted 5,400 - a rise of almost 58 per cent from last year. Snibston hosted its second Annual Miner's Gala to celebrate Coalville's mining heritage and succeeded in attracting 3,000 visitors.

University of Leicester celebrates 25th anniversary of DNA fingerprinting

September 2009 saw the 25th anniversary of the discovery of DNA fingerprinting by Professor Sir Alec Jeffreys, Royal Society Wolfson Research Professor at the University of Leicester. Sir Alec had his 'Eureka' moment at 9.05am on 10 September 1984 when he realised that variable patterns in the structure of DNA could be used to distinguish one human from another. The finding at the university, where Sir Alec has worked for the past 32 years, has opened up a new field of scientific investigation that has since helped to solve numerous crimes worldwide.

Rolex arrival is timely boost

One of the world's best-known watch makers has begun selling from a Leicester store in a major boost for the city. Rolex timepieces became available at jewellery store George Tarratt in Market Street for the first time in September.

Local bakery wins top regional Great Taste Award

Local pork pie baker Dickinson & Morris has been nationally recognised for its Mini Melton Mowbray Pork Pies after collecting the award for Best Speciality from the East Midlands at the Great Taste Award finals. Having won three Gold Stars for its pork pies at an earlier stage of the competition, Dickinson & Morris was shortlisted for the national awards - which are run by Guild of Fine Foods and aim to honour home-grown foods of the finest quality.

Blooming into award winning city

Leicester's efforts to brighten up the city centre with flowers and street furniture have been recognised by the 2009 East Midlands in Bloom awards. A Silver Gilt Award in the Urban Regeneration category was awarded to the city for the work carried out to welcome the athletes and supporters of the Special Olympic Summer Games by Leicester City Council, which included the planting of thousands of hanging baskets and planters. The University of Leicester's Botanic Garden was also selected for the Green Space East Midlands Award For Horticultural Excellence within Parks for its horticultural and landscaping excellence.

Energy saving firm picks up another award

A local company which sells an energy-saving device for computer users has picked up the latest in a string of awards. Bright Ideas Global of Melton has been widely praised for its Ecobutton, which allows people to save electricity by reducing power to their computers with the flick of a switch. Now the company is to be given a Green Apple Award, an annual scheme organised by non-profit group The Green Organisation.

De Montfort University shortlisted for national innovation award

De Montfort University (DMU) has been shortlisted for the 'Outstanding Contribution to Innovation and Technology' category in the Times Higher Education's annual awards that recognise the highest quality and innovation among UK universities. The recognition is for the university's groundbreaking research into alternative fibres for the textile industry.

Loughborough pair receive prestigious sport science awards

Two Loughborough University academics have received prestigious awards from The British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES). Sports psychologist Dr David Fletcher and recent PhD graduate Dr Vernon Neville from the University's School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences both collected newcomer awards at the BASES annual conference. Dr Fletcher received the Tom Reilly Memorial Award which is presented for post-doctoral research of outstanding merit and Dr Neville received the Routledge Recently Qualified Researcher Award after impressing with his presentation on upper body exercise.

Bricklayer honoured for excellence at World Skills competition

Leicester bricklaying apprentice, Sam Fairgrieve, has been given an international award for his masonry skills at the WorldSkills 2009. The international competition, which recognises the vocational skills and demonstrable talent of young people, saw the 21-year old former Leicester College learner take home a Medallion of Excellence for achieving above the WorldSkills benchmark score.

Local university highly ranked on modern university league table

De Montfort University (DMU) has been ranked in the top three of modern universities nationally in the Sunday Times University league tables. This follows hot on the heels of a significant proportion of DMU's research being rated as world-leading in the recent research assessment exercise which ranked all UK universities research activities.

Regeneration programme wins further accolades

The multi-million pound project to regenerate Leicester has been recognised with two more national awards. The Leicester Regeneration Company (LRC), which was behind the successful Colton Square scheme and Science Park project, was awarded the title of best regeneration partnership at the Regeneration and Renewal Awards 2009. In addition, Hammerson - the developers behind the £350 million Highcross Leicester centre - picked up the award of Developer of the Year.

University of Leicester shortlisted for two awards

The University of Leicester has once again been shortlisted in the Times Higher Education Awards. Over 600 entries from more than 130 higher education institutions were received for the 18 award categories. The university, which won the title of University of the Year in the 2008 awards, was shortlisted for the Outstanding Contribution to Innovation & Technology - an award that recognises and promotes technological breakthroughs at institutions, and the Support for Students category, which awards institutions that have shown excellent academic and pastoral support.

National Portrait Gallery to exhibit local graduate's work

A photographic portrait by Ali Lomas, who graduated from Loughborough University just two months ago, is to be exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery in London. The image, which Ali created as part of her University portfolio, is among 60 photographs to have been selected for exhibition as part of the Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize.

Local culinary delights televised

Leicestershire has recently played host to two high profile food and drink television shows. BBC2's hugely popular Hairy Bikers Food Tour of Britain programme saw cooking fanatics Si and Dave, who are collectively known as the Hairy Bikers, visit the Red Lion Inn in Stathern for a 'cook-off' with the restaurant's head chef, Sean Hope. September also saw Channel 4's Come Dine With Me take place in Leicestershire. The cookery competition involves five cooks going head-to-head in the kitchen, preparing for, cooking and finally hosting a dinner party at their home.

Curve production sees Marc Warren nominated for theatrical award

Marc Warren has been nominated for a Theatrical Management Association (TMA) Theatre Award for his performance in the production of THE PILLOWMAN at Curve. The TMA Theatre Awards celebrate the very best in British theatre, opera and dance, and the nomination is in the category 'Best Performance in a Play' for Warren's leading role as Katurian. THE PILLOWMAN played to sell-out audiences at Curve from 5 February to 7 March 2009.

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