

HANSOM FEELINGS OF NOSTALGIA

We say goodbye to a respected old colleague; the smell of tarmac takes us back to our Olympic glory days; we remember when folk gave to charity; plus, nothing beats a good old cup of tea and a building made c

Nice cup of tea

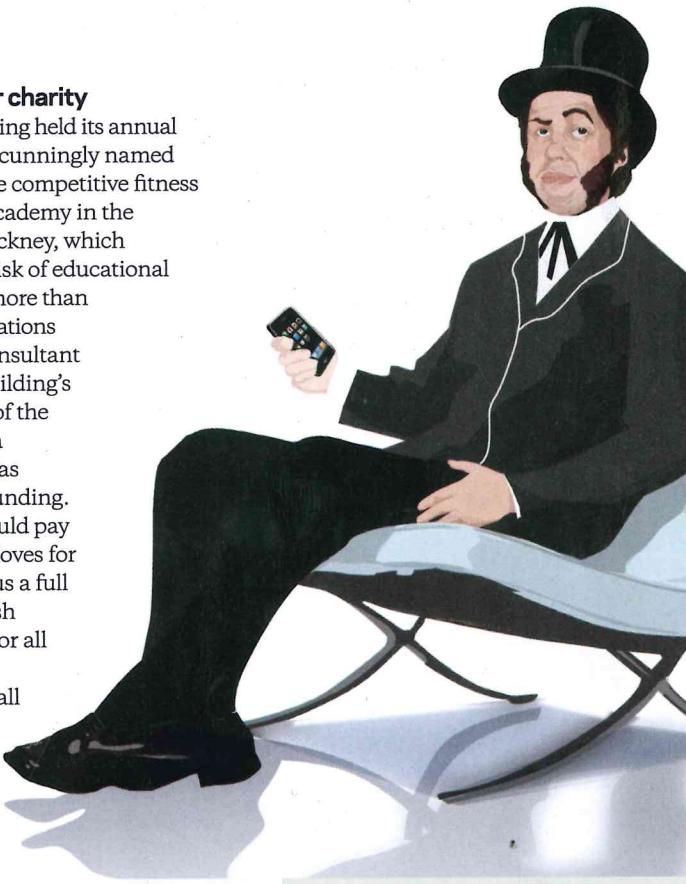
Producing Britain's best-loved construction title is thirsty business. So my hacks were pleased to find on their commute into the newly-revamped Blackfriars station just outside Building Towers that client Network Rail was handing out free cups of tea. The stunt was to demonstrate the high level of electricity generated by the station, which is the world's largest solar bridge, producing enough energy to make almost 80,000 cups of tea a day. Now what we want to know is how many pints of beer you can brew using that power.

Hit the road

There's nothing quite like basking in the glory of successfully building part of a venue that hosts a global sporting event. Just ask anyone who worked on the London 2012 Olympics. That event may be long gone but the organisers of the Tour de France have announced they're going to splash out £4m on resurfacing roads in Yorkshire, Cambridgeshire and London for the race's Grand Départ this summer. Laying blacktop isn't as glamorous as building the Olympic stadium but you'd still be creating a world stage.

A lot of good work for charity

Before Christmas, Building held its annual charity fundraiser - the cunningly named Boxing Day appeal. The competitive fitness event, for the Boxing Academy in the London borough of Hackney, which helps young people at risk of educational exclusion - has raised more than £2,800, with recent donations including £250 from consultant Rise and £500 from Building's publisher UBM. Head of the Boxing Academy, Anna Cain, told Building it was "very grateful" for the funding. The money donated could pay for 30 pairs of boxing gloves for the Academy's gym, plus a full set of Maths and English GCSE revision guides for all the year 11 pupils, plus breakfast every day for all students for a year. Thanks to everyone who contributed or took part.



LET US EAT CAKE

Such is construction's insatiable appetite for baking cakes shaped like buildings, I am considering launching a spin-off magazine named Cake Building. In the meantime, I will continue to highlight the best examples of constructed confectionery in this space. The project team for a new £90m Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners-designed building for the London School of Economics - which includes Deloitte Real Estate and AKT II (see page 10) met for a "kick-off meeting" this week at which teams were challenged to make a fully edible model of the project (see left). Deloitte partner Neill Morrison claims his team did not win because someone from LSE "kept eating key components". "It did, however, provide me with some inspiration as to how we might make economies in the facade of the building!" he says.

✉ Send any juicy industry gossip to
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Alistair McAlpine

14 May 1942 - 17 January 2014

Former Building columnist Lord McAlpine died Friday at his home in Italy at the age of 71. A McAlpine, part of the McAlpine dynasty and grandson of the contractor's eponymous founder Sir Robert McAlpine, sadly came into the public eye recently for the false allegation of child abuse that he faced in 2012 and the subsequent legal actions to restore his reputation. McAlpine became a director of Sir Robert McAlpine at the age of 18 and was still involved with the firm up until the early nineties. However, he spent most of his time in politics (he was deputy chair of the Conservative Party during the premiership of Margaret Thatcher) and also spent time collecting art and writing. Indeed, his writing career included serving as a columnist in this magazine up until the mid-nineties. In one of his last columns, he reminisced about the drive and initiative of the industry in the fifties and sixties. "Construction [today] is a grown-up industry, a far better place, but not much fun," he wrote.