



Trade news, insight and comment from the Beverage Standards Association

<https://www.beveragestandardsassociation.co.uk>

No. 7, May-June 2020

# Will outdoor seating be a key to re-start?

There appears to be wide support for greater use of the concept of 'continental' outdoor seating for cafes and coffee houses as a first move out of the Covid-19 crisis. This has taken off throughout Europe, and there are demands for a new appreciation by local councils of the value of such seating, and more practical help for cafes who wish to offer it.

Typically, the UnHerd online think-tank has reported: "There appears to be growing evidence that Covid-19 is far less infectious outside than indoors, so let's make it far easier for shops, restaurants and cafés to trade on the pavements outside their premises."

As all cafe owners know, street furniture is a bureaucratic nightmare. Applicants must ensure that pedestrians' rights are not affected, it is quite typical for permits to cost £300 or more for a few tables, the processing of applications is a drawn-out process, and there is an annual renewal.

"Let's change the rules," said UnHerd. "In public squares and pedestrianised high streets of a certain size, there should be a blanket permission to make use of the public highway up to a certain depth. No permission required. No permit. Just put up your stall or your tables and get selling and tempting customers to come where they may feel safer – outside, and further away from other customers. Councils should allow restaurants to trade on their own doorsteps without unnecessary form-filling."

This has also been taken up in other countries – the authorities in Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital, say they are turning the city into 'one giant open-air café' by giving restaurants and bars free use of its squares and parks. The mayor has said that cafes will be able to set up outdoor furniture free of charge, and two hundred businesses applied immediately to be part of the scheme.

In Lithuania's plans, cafés can only have outdoor seating, with tables at least two metres apart. Customers may only gather in groups of two, or as families, must use contactless payments, and, in one particularly delightful rule, must wear masks 'except when eating or drinking'. The Irish restaurateurs' association has put up a similar idea.

There has long been a big debate in Edinburgh on the same subject, which the crisis has made more heated. It is reported that licensing specialists, architects and caterers are in discussions over how to 'make a significant food offering in a socially-distanced area'.



*The Portuguese were quick off the mark with a 'clean and safe' badge for cafes.*

One party to the discussions said: "We have an industry desperate to get back to serving. With a bit of innovation, it could really happen and get this city back up and running – we've created the continental cafe scene here before, so there's precedent in this city for doing it."

In Portugal a 'Clean and Safe' mark of approval has been created; it is free, and is not a strict overall guidance, but is flexible enough to create protocols for different businesses. It was introduced quite quickly, in late April, and by late May nearly four thousand businesses had applied for it. Singapore was even quicker, with its SG Clean certification in March.

Cafe owners made their feelings felt in Greece, when they created an 'empty chairs' silent protest against lockdown – in one action, they placed 200 empty chairs in front of the Greek parliament, and in another protest, there were a thousand chairs. There was a similar action in Berlin.

A Dutch hospitality industry lobby group has drawn up guidelines for cafes who are allowed to partially re-open from June. Guests must reserve in advance, with a maximum of four to a table, will have to wash their hands when they enter a cafe and answer questions about their health; staff can refuse entry if they suspect coronavirus symptoms. Staff must take orders while standing 1.5 metres away from customers. Once customers have left, tables, chairs and menus must be thoroughly cleaned.

The Dutch prime minister said that there would be fines if the rules are broken, but that he did not expect this, as most people are behaving considerably. "This is not a police state," he said.

## Lockdown - a time to plan?

**Operators must use lockdown as a time for investment and forward thinking, a chef has told Caterer magazine. Michael Wignall of the Angel at Hetton said he brought forward refurbishment work to make the restaurant better suited to distancing measures.**

"The toilets have been completely redesigned. There will be no cloth or paper napkins and the taps, soap dispenser and hand dryers will all be automatic so there is no contact at all. It's all on the back of coronavirus - we wouldn't have done it otherwise."

The chef suggested that he anticipated changes to customer behaviour.

"What seemed alien and ludicrous will become the norm. You used to have a giggle at people in masks on holiday, but it will have to be the same here with staff in masks and screens between tables. You've got to rethink and swallow your pride. If you think 'my staff aren't wearing masks', you won't survive.

"If customers feel confident and safe, they'll come back. You've got to give them something to come back for."

## Middle-class poverty 'shocking', says cafe boss

**The head of a biker organisation who runs the Chicago 1935 American Diner in North Wales says he has been 'shocked' by the number of people, from all walks of life, who have suddenly found themselves in need of food parcels.**

Stuart Dawson says that he is now sending out free meals and food parcels six days a week, and that his volunteers, who include three chefs, have now helped 'hundreds' of local people. On a typical Saturday, they did eighty deliveries.

He told his local press that he was shocked at the way working people who were comfortably self-sufficient until April have suddenly found themselves helpless. "We are getting calls from people who live in the big houses" he noted.

Interestingly, with regard to his own business name, he has pointed out that in Chicago in the early 1930s, a notable soup kitchen served 120,000 free meals every day. It was set up by, of all people, Al Capone.

The owner of the Cafe do Colombia in Worcester has spent £2,000 on shower curtains and air purifiers in a bid to keep his customers distant; he has used 35 curtains around sixteen tables. As the curtains are all clear, customers will still be able to see each other and a certain ambience may be retained. He has also imposed a rule of tables being cleaned and left vacant for 15 minutes between customers.

The owner told his local paper that serving between layers of shower curtains did feel 'a little bit weird', and added: "We cannot sit down and cry - we need to stand up and keep going. But we believe if we are very creative, we are survivors."

## Restart is a moral decision, say seaside cafe owners

**Cafe owners on the east coast have told their local press that there is 'a tough moral judgement' between opening up or not. The town of Cromer relies on day-tripper business, but the town's chamber of trade has said there is a thin line between business survival opening up the town against government guidance.**

The president of the chamber said that his cafe could legally have been open for takeaway trade all the time, but believed public mood was not in favour; a nearby operator said that he 'could not morally be party to encouraging a massive influx of visitors'.

Another operator there said that he opened up with cautious social distancing precautions in place, perspex screens between staff and customers, and outdoor queue markings, and that the positive and helpful customer reaction made it 'a really fulfilling exercise', resulting in 500 sales a day.



The Tea Terrace chain in London is reportedly planning to staff its venues with tea-serving robots. The business is believed to have seven of the items on its staff, including Theresa Maybot, named after the former prime minister, which wears a grey wig and has been programmed to say 'breakfast means breakfast'.

It is reported that the robots feature 'autonomous navigation, automatic obstacle avoidance, and automatic dish delivery, integrating multi-sensor perpetual collision avoidance'. In practice, this means that the robots can carry heavy loads to table more safely than humans; a tap on the robot's arm instructs it to return to the serving area. If the robot encounters a customer in its way, it will stop and ask the person to move.

The cafe owner discovered the robots in Japan; they cost over £9,000, and were ordered as a gimmick, before the virus crisis happened and their full usefulness became recognised

There has been a probably-unique lockdown problem for a cafe in New Zealand. The Wuhan cafe, whose name is clearly familiar as the source of the coronavirus outbreak, has raised eyebrows – but the owner says he has been trading for a long time, and has no intention of changing the name now.

Pret A Manger has launched its first coffee range for home consumers; it is available to buy online. The three products are all organic, and can be bought on Amazon



**British lockdown humour has made its way across the Atlantic, with the media in America getting very entertained by what has been promoted as a serious video showing how a cafe should serve customers under social distancing.**

The video from the Salt cafe near Portsmouth shows a waitress emerging from the kitchen, identifying the right customer at a distant table... and then carefully throwing items from a distance of two metres. American newscasters observed that the technique worked rather better with muffins than with cappuccinos.

A little more success has been reported by Paul Grothier, who runs the Cross Keys pub in Norfolk. He has experimented with deliveries by drone; his lockdown takeaway and delivery menu actually does offer beer by the pint, and he tells us that his drone delivery has more or less worked with a closed bottle of beer. A cup of coffee has turned out to be impractical!

## Street traders 'will bounce back quickly'

**The chief executive of Kerb, the association of street food traders, has said that the crisis has hit his members particularly hard – but that street food could well bounce back quickly.**

Simon Mitchell has said that street food traders fall through the cracks in terms of applying for government help - they cannot be furloughed, they cannot get a grant because they do not work from fixed premises, do not qualify for loans, and so can expect to be completely wiped out.

Within 72 hours of the lockdown, Kerb had created the Keep the Wheels Turning initiative, a community portal for all street food traders to discuss how to navigate through the crisis, and also a scheme by which customers can buy vouchers to support our traders. However, he added, some street traders have come up with new business ideas, just as cafe owners have done - one has created make-your-own-taco kits - and once there are sufficient numbers of lunch customers back in offices, street food traders could be back almost instantly, using Kerb's plan for social distancing.

And, he says, in spite of the crisis, he expects more and more independent caterers to take up street food trading. Street food is a low barrier-to-entry business, he has said, and more people have begun to see it as a fast track to a business empire - street food is now more seen as a 'livelihood', and not a short-term occupation.

In spite of having to close down three cafes, Jose Guzman of Kofra in Norwich has said that he will go ahead with the opening of a fourth site. He has reopened some business with a click-and-collect service – customers order and pre-pay on his website, specify a collection time, and their drinks are served at the front door of the cafe. In Trowbridge, the Free Range cafe-deli re-opened by moving its coffee machine and other equipment to allow service to be given through the doorway of Trowbridge town hall. The owner says that his idea allows for customers to reach his service counter without actually entering his cafe.

A cafe owner in Arizona has got into trouble for staying open, despite the American lockdown. The owner of the Horseshoe Cafe said she was three times visited by police, and threatened with jail, but that she refused to ask her customers to leave.

Similarly, in Colorado, health officials closed a cafe when its owner hosted a Mother's Day event in which the entire dining room was opened to 'hundreds' of customers, only one of whom wore a face mask. The state governor commented acridly that he loved his own mother too much to put her at risk by attending the event.

The Bookstop Café, in Steep Hill in Lincoln, is offering a coffee-on-your-doorstep service. Customers phone in their coffee order, and the cafe's new mobile coffee van is sent out to brew at their front door. The cafe did not have a mobile service until lockdown - they invested in the development as soon as they realised their cafe had to stay closed.

Ten people have been arrested in Turkey after the discovery of a secret passage leading to a coffee house. Police raided the cafe after a tip-off, and found a tunnel that led to a nearby rooftop; customers came along a passageway through a casino and climbed down a ladder to reach the cafe. The cafe owner has been charged with breaking the lockdown rules and the customers were fined around £400 each.

An unusual lockdown problem has occurred in Tokyo. It is well known that a vast number of people spend almost their entire time in internet cafes; about four thousand people sleep in them regularly. With cafes now shut, they are out on the street.

In Hong Kong, there are an estimated 400 'McRefugees', who sleep in fast-food outlets; they too are out on the street.



The Cafe & Konditorei Rothe in Schwerin, Germany, has achieved attention across the world with its invention of straw hats fitted with two swimming pool floats; these are given to customers to wear when they take their seats, and effectively enforce social distancing. Another idea has been to make all customers wear sombreros!

**Hygiene concerns have inspired a cafe owner in St Albans to create an entirely new product. Gotz Kaul of Cafe Roma has invented something which allows him to put lids on takeaway coffee cups without touching them.**

He decided to open up as a takeaway business only, but was worried about handling the lids, and said that he certainly didn't want to ask customers to put the plastic tops on themselves, for fear of spillage and scalding. His solution was to create a little plastic holder which houses a small fan. The fan creates enough suction to pick up a lid and allow him to press it into position on the takeaway cup.

As yet, the invention has no name : it is referred to as 'the cup-lid-putter-onner'.

In New Zealand, the owner of the Cyclista espresso bar and roastery has decided to pass takeaways to customers by a different method - he has created a short model railway line which runs from the coffee machine to the delivery window. Owner Steve Stannard had the inspiration when he came across a train set at home during lockdown; it had been unused for twenty years, but now, he says, puts a smile on the faces of his customers.

A Doncaster cafe owner has made an outspoken riposte after people complained to the council that he was working through the lockdown. The owner of The Tattooed Goose in Stainforth has been delivering meals to elderly and vulnerable people in the community during the crisis, and told his local press that council officials who investigated the complaints said they were pleased with what he was doing. "We're not doing this for profit and we're actually losing money," he said. "We have thought about the complaints long and hard and after discussing with my family, I have taken the decision... to carry on with exactly what we're doing and feeding the people that need feeding in these difficult times."

The remarkable number of cafes and restaurants and pubs who have turned to takeaway and delivery food menus has been matched by a wide diversity in the quality of food on offer - some businesses are clearly not used to the techniques of packing food for transit, and there have been some vast differences in food quality. As a result, the Recruiting Sergeant gastro-pub in Coltishall made the neat marketing move of deliberately stressing a service of 'restaurant-quality' food, and the Supper 'posh delivery' company of London reported business up by 700 per cent. Supper uses a fleet of custom-made bikes (pictured) to deliver from classy restaurants; several customers order lunch and dinner the same day, and a bill of £1,500 is not unknown. Founder Peter Georgiou has remarked that "the landscape is changing fast and although some companies have reacting quickly to provide delivery, they have forgone quality and service in trying to make it happen. We decided from the beginning to do things perfectly."

The Missouri University of Science and Technology has said that a mask of three coffee filters has the potential to protect from 24 per cent of relevant virus particles. "They're not ideal, but in multiple layers, they add some measurable benefit," said a university engineer. Meanwhile, Country Living magazine says that a bandana and one coffee filter, with two hair ties as the ear loops, create a face mask with a couple of folds and one cut.



A mother and daughter in Belgium came up with a novel way of avoiding the lockdown rules and going for a McDonalds meal. Only the drive-thru windows were open, so the family built themselves a cardboard car which they walked into the drive-in queue.

Many other drivers gave them an approving thumbs-up, but somebody did call the police, who burst out laughing when they realised it was a ruse, and merely asked for selfies.

And yes, the drive-thru staff did serve them.



# Constant change is here to stay...

If you can't accept that, perhaps you should not be in business...

## "The high street will never be the same again..."

That was a remark made to me by a very respected small-town businessman, on the morning after lockdown was declared... the day war broke out, as you might say.

It is not an original turn of phrase. To the best of my knowledge, it has been in use for over ten years, and the shock-horror papers trot it out whenever their opinion writers can't think of anything else.

But for the first time in our generation's experience, it is beginning to mean something. Trouble is, nobody knows what. And that includes all these experts and pundits who are currently popping up on our small screens. I seem to be wasting endless time in half-hour chunks, waiting for all these talking heads to say something which will really help get us through these strange days.

But if we look through all this wasted time, we can see one principle on which we can rely absolutely.

The world changes. Business changes. And it changes faster than ever... the way the coffee market was between 1950 and 1990 was not the way it became by the millennium, and the rate at which it has changed every year since then has simply increased. The way business is done today is not the way it was done six months ago. Constant change is here to stay. If you can't accept that, perhaps you shouldn't be in this business. Indeed, you'd be well advised not to be in business at all.

And if you look around you, you will see any number of competitors who have not been ready for change, who have assumed that the beverage business would run the way it always did, and who are now flapping hopelessly in the current crisis.

So, as we plan to get out of this, make yourself a resolution. Don't just think about today's business, or next week's - take disaster planning and contingency planning seriously. True entrepreneurship is in looking for both the next disaster and the next opportunity, even when your business is stable and doing well.

Know what? Your plans for surviving the next disaster might also lead you to your next great business idea. You might stumble upon a whole new and better way of running your business.

Stay safe, as we all now say.

- Steve Slark, BSA chairman.



## The cleanliness lesson is one which will stick for ever...

**What have the big chains been doing? Only one spoke to us, and they preferred to remain anonymous!**

"We have twice-weekly webinars for everyone in HQ, which is over 200 people, and we get an update from the board," said a spokesman for that chain. "On the Monday one we have a live-streamed musician playing at the end of the serious stuff - that helps keep morale up.

"On the other session we are presented with a few examples of community work our teams are doing. Everyone is encouraged to do such work of some sort, and the store teams are kept together by their managers and area managers; they all keep in constant contact and the community actions they carry out are shared with one another and HQ."

Lessons are going to be learned, this chain acknowledges.

"The crisis has made everyone more aware of hygiene, and some lessons will stick for ever, such as that cleanliness is no longer just about being clean, but about being healthy.

"The real test of people's ability to manage their businesses and react to crisis will come later this year when we are back in reality. Everyone has to look at their business model and flex and adapt and introduce new revenue streams - we are already building three new revenue streams. On top of that I suspect we will operate with fewer people and lower rents."



The trade research house Allegra and the dairy-free milk brand Alpro have set up a support fund to help independent coffee shops in trouble during the lockdown. The assistance is only available to coffee shops with less than five sites, and only one grant per brand. Each successful applicant will qualify for a donation of £2,500, and applications and grants are handled on a first-come, first-served basis. Better-off operators are invited to donate to the fund.

# From cafe to farm shop in one day!

**In Arundel, Alice Rendle of Edgcumbes was remarkably quick off the mark when the crisis threatened – she runs both a roastery and a cafe, as well as working in tea-blending and being part of a well-known gin family, the maker of Rendle's Gin. But when lockdown arrived, the cafe part of her business was transformed straightaway into a farm shop, which quickly became a well-known local service.**

Did her company really move that fast?

"Yes, we did - we opened up as the Edge Mart farm shop on the day that we closed the cafe, and changed the cafe into a takeaway selling from a window. To begin with, we only had milk, bread, butter, plus some local eggs which we were using anyway in the cafe. The idea was to start with whatever stock we could that we already had, and add up to a much wider range of products as the weeks went by."

Does this mean that she managed to keep her existing café staff working, in different roles?

"Out of an overall company staff count of 25, we furloughed nine, and this was due to the fact that over 60 per cent of our business as a wholesaler to the trade stopped immediately when our customers' sites were closed down. We didn't need the same number of cafe staff and we reduced our opening hours by half.

"But we did have to keep working to fulfil orders for the Internet business, which had an immediate spike in demand. I am really pleased to say that we had to un-furlough four cafe staff members."

The farm shop concept was popular with local suppliers, who were keen to have a new trade customer.

"We already have a bank of local suppliers, with whom we have worked for many years, and they were all happy to continue to supply us – it gave many of them the chance to keep going.

"Edgcumbes has always supported local producers. We have a bi-annual market day where we invite small producers to try out their products at no risk to themselves by putting up a table in the warehouse and selling directly to our customers. It works very well, and our farm shop is really an extension of this.

"We are now being approached by many more local suppliers, who see that our shop is getting more popular, and now they are keen to work with us!"

The farm shop is largely a click-and-collect service.

"We have always had this service for our coffee and tea, and although we considered doing deliveries from the Edge Mart, we just do not have the resources to fulfil it properly. It is simpler for people to come and collect from us, because our warehouse is open all the time roasting coffee and blending teas, so people can come effectively when they want.

"When we started the Mart in March we didn't advertise or promote it - we felt it was better for customers to find us naturally as they walked past or told their friends. We are now finding that our Mart is very much in demand and people are coming from an area of about twenty miles."

Has all this enhanced Edgcumbes' local reputation?



*"I'm really pleased that we had to un-furlough four cafe staff members."*

"I hope so. When the crisis hit I remember saying to my husband that I was not prepared to let our 40-year-old business fail because we had worked too hard for it, and built a strong following of people who like our products. We have grown our team from four to 25 in four years, and failure was not an option!

"By furloughing some of the staff we were at least able to continue employing the rest, and it has been incredibly satisfying to be able to bring staff back now the business can support them.

"In terms of customer profile, social media is a good indicator and it is heartening to read the feedback which is pretty well always positive and thankful that we have stayed open. I have realised just how important it is for people to feel connected – our cafe was already a popular place for people to meet, and it is clear that simply still being able to walk to us, maybe just to buy eggs, has become a positive event in their day during the crisis.

"I can't deny that it has been probably the hardest work we have ever had to do... working on everything from deliveries to making up sandwiches is almost like starting out all over again, except that this time I'm 40 years older!

"But there's nothing like being at the coffee face for really seeing into a business, and this has given us a renewed respect for the hard work of our team. We have a small key team of staff working full-time on these new services, and I call them my 'crack squad'. I will never forget what they have done to help us keep our business going."



## The bean bags of Aberfeldy

**At Habitat in Aberfeldy, Mike Haggerton has been looking for new and different ways of letting customers sit comfortably under distancing regulations. His answer may be in bean bags.**

"Will we achieve normality again in the next twelve months? If so, it will be a very different normal.

"We already have been doing some things right - we were already cashless and largely contactless. We will now need to develop new ways of working to support social distancing, and also prevent spreading the virus, through touching menus for example. I am in discussions with a supplier regarding a product that allows customers to order via an app; this could be useful going forward, as a means of virus control, but also as a step towards customer self-service, which is ultimately where our industry has to go as labour costs increase."

Among the costs which annoy many cafe owners are those levied for the privilege of outside seating, which is vital in a tourist area.

"Yes, if interior seating capacity must be reduced then it makes sense to relax the rules regarding pavement seating where it is safe to do so. I have already ordered about 30 bean-bag cubes, so customers can position them wherever they want, in order to remain safe whilst also enjoying the joys of al fresco casual dining."

Mike has also been trying to do community work, and has been organising fund-raising for various projects. Since lockdown, Habitat has been providing weekday lunches to key workers.

"Not a huge amount, but up to around a hundred meals per week," says Mike. "We have been funding it ourselves with donations from some recipients towards ingredients and costs. We have had some wonderful donations from people living in other parts of the UK who love Aberfeldy and feel a connection with the area. We are now open for takeaway coffees too, with all proceeds going to cover costs of this initiative."

Those donations from other parts of the country have been encouraging.

"My business needs tourists. Visitors to the area bring with them a broad mind and a broad smile. Donations from visitors have been heart-warming – thanks to them, we are funding around 40 per cent of the costs right now.

"But we have to do this. I cannot not do something to contribute - I cannot just put myself first when there are key workers for whom I can do something useful. At the end of this I will hold my head high and wear a T-shirt saying 'I did my bit'!

## The end of buffet eating?

Members of several big-brand hotel groups have called for 'a united approach to hygiene standards' during a recent webinar. The chief executive of Radisson said that consumers now expect a common reference to hygiene standards, and that if the hospitality industry fails to police such a thing, 'we will all pay for it'.

Meanwhile, the UK Hospitality organisation has sent a 75-page proposal document to the government with its suggestions for safe and sustainable reopening of catering businesses this summer.

One notable remark in the paper is that 'we envisage compliance checks will be carried out by enforcement bodies such as Environmental Health Officers... complete your risk assessment, compile evidence to support your risk assessment.

'And be prepared for an enforcement visit'.

In this, it is suggested that toilet areas require particular planning.

In cafe and casual dining situations, it is suggested that individually wrapped condiments and sauces should now be supplied on request, not left on tables. Cutlery should also be brought to the customer with the food, rather than customers helping themselves. Table menus and table-talkers are now discouraged.

The danger of buffets has already been highlighted in Japan, where an experiment set out to show how buffets can spread infection, as is suspected to have been the case on cruise ships.

The state broadcaster NHK created a video showing ten people approaching a buffet – one customer had been 'infected' with an invisible paint, and within half an hour, special lighting showed that the paint had spread to the hands of all participants, and the faces of the majority. It could also be seen on food, jugs, cutlery, table cloths and tongs.

# Counting the bright spots...



*"There will definitely be some silver linings to the dark cloud hanging over us."*

*- Ian Steel*

At Atkinsons in Lancaster, Ian Steel is one of the business owners who has been fretting over how best to stay in contact with furloughed staff, and keep them feeling wanted and part of the business.

"I had visions of them all vegetating, so I tried to keep in touch with a weekly bulletin, but I was left feeling it was all one-way traffic – it may be a generational thing, but I couldn't possibly ignore a work email in my inbox, especially from my boss! So I told them I wanted a reply – and that has been a touching, heartwarming and at times hilarious response, but I am still concerned about their wellbeing. For some people, it will have been a far too comfy place, cosy in their furlough, but I find most of them are very creative and have used the time constructively."

"I want us to be seen as beyond reproach, as we genuinely do find ourselves all in this together. So I have also done my best to keep in touch with trade suppliers and customers... but in some cases I have been met with the deafening sound of tumbleweed!

"We have tried to look after all of our suppliers, despite having some badly-behaved customers of our own who have withheld quite large sums of overdue payment from us for far too long. We feel rather ill-disposed towards them, but what's the point in being churlish?"

There have been some bright spots, he notes.

"During the last financial crash we grew by 40 per cent as customers flocked to treat themselves... I see coffee as a staple of life, but others see it as a necessary luxury!

"We don't supply any supermarkets, so we have missed out on a gigantic bonanza there, but we have seen a rise in café trade customers buying our deli bags to sell in their own online shops, and we have had some surprising wholesale orders from smaller grocery outlets, like the health food store in Lerwick, the most northerly town in the British Isles – they put in a full order.

"Our own website has been seeing very high demand, taking a usual week's worth of orders every day! The best online idea we

came up with is a discounted one-kilo bag aimed squarely at the working-from-home market... it is pandering to their panic buying tendencies, but it continues to be a huge hit.

"We haven't quite got ourselves takeaway-ready yet, because we have been dealing with such a huge surge in our online sales. We've run the bakery right down, to concentrate on the roastery, and it'll take a bit of an investment in new stock and bringing the chef back before we can offer any food.

"This raises what I think is the big question for an employer regarding re-opening: how is partial furloughing going to work? We can't go straight back to full salaries if we don't know how sales are going to be at just 25 per cent of capacity because of social seating.

"So it has to be a very careful phased re-entry."

But, says Ian Steel, not an impossible task.

"We have already been drawing up our revised post-Covid risk assessment, but we can see that there will definitely be some silver linings to the dark cloud hanging over us.

"Better hygiene is certainly one of them, and generally one would hope we all come out of this as more caring, more courteous human beings who are more grateful for what we've got."

# Nescafe predicted a move to convenience-store coffee... before the crisis!

With quite remarkable, but almost certainly coincidental, timing, Nescafe has released a research report seeking to show that although cafes and coffee shops are now closed, customers prefer to buy their takeaway coffee elsewhere anyway, from those venues which are allowed to stay open. The research was published before the current crisis, in which convenience stores did indeed become a vital retail route, but for reasons which are not clear, the Nescafe work appears to have achieved no publicity at all.

In a remark which will certainly stir reaction from the specialist coffee trade, Nescafe writes that: "a coffee shop is no longer the stop of choice for a coffee to-go, with over eight in ten consumers preferring to pick up a coffee from a self-service machine in a shop or forecourt." The company adds: "while growth in coffee has been traditionally dominated by coffee-specific retailers, our research shows 83 per cent would now pick up a coffee to-go from a self-service machine in a shop or forecourt rather than directly from a coffee shop."

Their research repeats some of the rather dangerous statistics which are often used in the coffee trade, such as 'three in four Brits now drink at least one cup of coffee out-of-home a week' and 'nine in ten consumers now buy coffee-to-go'. Compared to the 'economically-active' population, such figures are widely considered to be somewhat excessive, which is why some researchers now use more careful phrases such as 'of those who drink coffee...'

Furthermore, the speciality coffee trade may point out that although this research involved the online questioning of 1,500 consumers who drink takeaway coffee, the questions were 'prompted' or 'leading' questions.

One question was: 'would you ever pick convenience coffee, i.e. from a self-service machine in a shop, rather than from a coffee shop?' In response to this, 45 per cent said 'yes', and 38 per cent said 'sometimes'; although Nescafe has added these two together to form its figure of 83 per cent, the café trade might reasonably argue that the responses could be interpreted as showing that those who positively choose self-service takeaway coffee are actually in a minority.

There is a curiosity in this, because later on in Nescafe's report, three-quarters of consumers are reported to say that they believe coffee-shop coffee to be better than forecourt or convenience store takeaway coffee. The reasons for this apparent contradiction comes from a multiple-choice question, to which multiple answers were permitted - 48 per cent said they buy convenience-store takeaway coffee because it is cheaper, and 45 per cent say because it is closest. (There has long been an argument in the coffee trade over whether drinkers will go further to find a better coffee, or whether the average drinker believes 'nearest is best'.)

And 46 per cent did say they would choose forecourt coffee if it were a known brand such as Costa or Caffe Nero - who are, of course, coffee-house operators.

A puzzling part of the Nescafe report is that 'four in ten coffee drinkers say they try to buy coffee to-go responsibly but sometimes don't feel they are able to'. This is in response to



*"a coffee shop is no longer  
the stop of choice  
for a coffee to-go..."*

another prompted question on the importance of sustainability, in which 39 per cent of respondents chose the suggested answer of 'I try to buy responsibly but sometimes I don't feel I'm able to'. Just why they should feel this is not explained.

In the same vein, and in another finding which will raise eyebrows among the beverage trade, Nescafe says that 37 per cent of consumers assume bigger-brand coffee is 'always responsibly sourced'. When questioned about this, the brand acknowledged that this was another multiple-choice question in which several answers were offered, although, to be fair, Nescafe did also offer the answer of 'I would never buy coffee from a big multi-national as I don't believe they are responsibly sourced'; however, we are not given the number of respondents who chose this option.

Nescafe's document is in support of its Azera brand, which is a relatively recent but now-familiar product in the instant-coffee sector, consisting of instant coffee with added roast-and-ground coffee. The brand has now created an Azera 'pod', which is a self-standing machine designed for the convenience shop market. An interesting aspect of this machine is that it offers self-serve customers the option of an extra shot of coffee, or a choice of three flavoured syrups - this facility is not entirely unique in automated coffee machines, but certainly unusual.

# The impressive ingenuity of a trade in lockdown

"The ingenuity of our customers has been quite remarkable" says Findlay Leask, head of Caber Coffee in Aberdeen, who says he has been impressed by the way some of his trade customers handled the order to shut down.

"I'm rather envious of their speed and the creativity. We have café customers who have barricaded themselves in their shops, trading through a counter and card reader at the door, we have restaurant clients who immediately closed, cleared their floors, and began to supply flour, pasta and toilet roll when the initial fears of pandemic seemed to have us all craving as much gluten as possible. We have pub customers who used their trade contacts to open up as off-licences. There's an air of ingenuity to it all! I do doubt any of us in the trade could have prepared any better than we did for the drought that arrived."

Caber has also been impressed by the amount of online business there is to be had.

"With all bar me and our accountant on furlough, and almost our entire customer base closed, we've had to move to retail.

"We spent a few quid on social media marketing, and we're now delivering to hundreds of homes across the UK, both locally using our own van, and nationally using Parcelforce.

"Multiple referrals have come in through forums, LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. While it can be easy to sneer at these platforms for consuming too much of our time in 'normal' life, they have certainly helped sustain our business and have helped us convert stock into much-needed cash.

"You might think a kilo bag of coffee might not suit too many retail customers, but I have been genuinely amazed at how much coffee some individuals get through at home! These people should be held aloft, carried through our streets and have rose petals flung upon them from the rooftops!"

As others in the coffee trade have found, Caber has had a cashflow situation to balance.

"Our trade customers have fallen into two camps – those who have cleared their feet with us, and those who have seemingly vanished! On the plus side, most of our customers have been doing their best, and we've been very clear that we will work with them.

"It's the same with our suppliers. We cleared all the self-employed, small suppliers almost straight away. With the big entities, we're working on paying our accounts as and when we can but, all the while, keeping lines of communication open."

That communication, he says, is vital.

"Turning our stock into cash means that we are, slowly but surely, running out of some lines. We're going to need to re-order, and we will need to be in a position to click straight back into routine ordering when demand requires us to do so.

"Yes, you can work on shifting all your stock, but if you can't work with your suppliers, then when trade returns, you won't find them easy with you, and you'll be left high and dry with your shelves bare."

## Lockdown trade 'goes nuts' for some operators

**A Norfolk coffee shop owner has reported that his business 'just went nuts' when lockdown was put into effect. Simon Nisbet of the Little Haven cafe in Norwich told his local press that his business began performing better than ever, and that he has 'fallen back in love' with the coffee trade.**

He said: "When they made the announcement of lockdown I thought 'what a disaster', but that I would give it a week just doing takeaways... by the end of the second week it just went nuts.

"A lot of people like the idea of having something to aim for in their day, or at the end of their walk - I have one guy who comes here every day on his bike just to get a flat white, and then he cycles home again and that's his day."

In the same city, Kenny's Kafe turned to food takeaway and delivery, and reported 'a huge surge' in orders.

And in the same county of Norfolk, a one-girl business specialising in home delivery of afternoon teas experienced an astonishing increase in business – she went from 20 deliveries a week to 120 a day, and had to begin baking at 5am to cope.



This ingenious device is the social-distancing equipment used by the Fish Tales cafe in Maryland, USA. It is essentially an inflated inner tube with a tabletop fitted to it; the 'tables' stand on wheels, which allow customers to move around the cafe's external area to join other customers, yet all the time keeping their distance.

## Can it be a fairly quick recovery?

The trade may recover from this crisis reasonably quickly, suggests Brad Wright at the chocolate-melt specialist Marimba.

"There will be some casualties, and we have also had conversations with cafe owners who were already thinking of maybe winding the business down in the next few years to retire, but have taken that decision early. But I think it's fair to say that the vast majority are chomping at the bit to get back again, and with the government grants and furlough scheme, I think there has been just enough support to see the majority of cafe owners through – assuming that we are able to re-open further in the coming weeks. Generally speaking, as we are able to reopen I fully expect that we will return to normal relatively quickly compared to other industries."

"The vast majority of our cafe customers closed very reluctantly – we have many cafe clients at destination or tourist attractions which the public has been dissuaded from visiting. They cannot draw enough people to trade as take-away.

"We have several other cafe clients that have operated through the lock-down by offering takeaway through service hatches to queues waiting outside, keeping social distancing through marking the pavement. As restrictions become lifted, we are taking more phone calls as cafe owners are very keen to get back to serving as soon as they are able.

"Several customers have reported diversifying. When the supermarkets were struggling to keep up with supply, we heard of our cafe customers emptying their bottle chillers of the usual chilled juices, fizz and presses, and turning their cafes into a deli style offering, sourcing eggs, meats and milk to sell as essential items instead. Some even turned into makeshift bakeries.

"One cafe operator in a local village with just a small co-op and no other amenities has done very well by changing his kitchen from baking cakes to bread, allowing one customer a time in the cafe to pick up essential items. We have seen an increase in these cafes taking up our retail chocolate products, especially our chocolate thins, to sell as a treat to cheer people up."

And so has Marimba itself.

"Online business has been particularly busy, which is consistent with the experience of coffee roasters for whom we make own-label chocolate – they have also seen a surge in direct-to-



*"There would never have been a good time to complete our improvements - lockdown provided the opportunity!"*

consumer web orders.

"We have used the rest of our time to undertake some expansion work on our kitchens; we are half-way through the build of a second large kitchen, along with improvements and upgrades to our training suite. I have started installing a new customer-experience project in our Bury St Edmunds site which will enable us to not only do training, but also give full site tours of our manufacturing facilities.

"There would never have been a good time to complete these works – but lockdown presented the opportunity, and I have been up a ladder with a paint brush redecorating our cafe too, another job I have been meaning to do for a while!"

### Sheffield suppliers launch the lockdown 'survival box'

The Sheffield Survival Box, a lockdown project created by a local brewery, has rapidly expanded into a complete range.

The Heist Brew Company thought of offering a selection of items from local companies which have all felt the effect of lockdown, and very quickly found itself able to include beer, gin, chocolate, snacks, tea, coffee, crisps and 'smoked food' (scratchings and the like). Within a very short time, the box range has expanded from a £30 set to a range going up to £300, including even a non-alcoholic box.

Several local authorities have complained about the amount of 'lockdown litter' they are now experiencing, with face masks simply being thrown by the roadside, and even human waste fouling the pavements and paths.

By contrast, in several towns there have been public protests about councils being too quick to close down public lavatories, for no good reason



# Guarding against the health hazards of re-start

A great deal has been said recently about the business issues of restart, but very little has been said about the practicalities of serving coffee. What state are coffee machines going to be in after several months of lockdown - and, indeed, what state are baristas going to be in? Many of the coffee-enthusiast baristas will step back into their roles instantly – but what of the vast number of staff for whom operating an espresso machine is just part of their job? Will they be match-fit?

## And what dangers lie in machines which have been left idle?

Many of the usual trade pundits have been quick to issue their pronouncements about how to get going on start-up day, but in the eyes of some trainers and machine engineers, start-up day is a little too late. In the almost unanimous view of engineers we have spoken with, every espresso machine should have been kept working reasonably regularly throughout lockdown, even if it only made coffees to be given away and not sold.

"Even if your cafe is closed, you should be in there firing the machine up at least twice a week," says engineer Richard Norman at Mad About Coffee.

"Many of my clients are doing just that, because this really has been a damned good opportunity to have a good spring-clean of your business. I have many clients who have been in their sites every day, redecorating and cleaning, and sorting out the jobs that don't usually get seen to... the amount of cleansers being bought is unbelievable! And all these people have had their machines working, which is correct.

"A lot of my conversations with clients have been about how to make sure their machine is in the best state for re-start."

Some of the issues which have been highlighted by engineers are surprising. In one case, when we asked what the biggest problem would be with machines restarting after several months idle, one tersely replied: "legionnaire's disease and listeria".

His argument was that machines left for an extended period may well have 'old' water in them, and of course good water hygiene is listed as a precautionary measure against legionnaires'. At the same time, he added, a machine left idle for a long time risks the perishing of washers and so on.

This is not cheap scaremongering, say several engineers.

"This is correct in that there could be a potential problem," comes the careful response from Louie Salvoni, head of the Espresso Service network of engineers. "On May 19, Sky News reported Public Health England as saying that all businesses, including dental practices, hairdressers, gyms and hotels, as well as office buildings, are required to undertake a detailed review of all aspects of their water management system before re-opening after the lockdown.

"This is to stop bacterial growth. Sky News said: 'businesses have been told to flush out the water supply in their buildings before they reopen, in order to prevent spreading the legionella bacteria'.

"Interestingly, we have already been in the process of having a paper written, by a lead witness for the NHS on legionella, in respect of our Hydracs unit."

(Hydracs is a system by which telemetry provides a real-time

*"Public Health England said that all businesses are required to undertake a review of their water management before re-opening."*

*- Louie Salvoni*



monitoring of water flow and mineral content through a filter; the theory is that balancing the various parameters can tell an operator the exact point at which a filter should be changed).

"There are three main indicators to the possibility of legionella," notes Salvoni. "Stagnant water, water temperatures between 30C and 50C, and a build-up of mineral content (TDS). When we invented Hydracs we did not consider the legionella issue, but it came to light with our work with a water utility company in the UAE, where the ambient temperature from the tap is 36C... hence their interest!

"Here, we are confident that flushing of all parts of a coffee setup will alleviate risk. Brita have issued instructions on this, and we have our own procedure where stagnant water may be in the boiler of the machine that has not been used for some time."

At Mad About Coffee, Richard Norman agrees that good machine maintenance and practice should avoid any risk, but says that cafe operators do simply need to know the danger of stagnant water.

There is another re-start issue that has arisen: certain manufacturers have issued instructions that if machines have not been used for a period of time, safety valves should be checked or changed

"Some are saying this applies after five weeks of no use, some say eight weeks," remarks Louie Salvoni. "We also have the situation that water deposits on components in the machine can cause oxidisation and therefore gaskets may need to be changed and valves/solenoids, etc. should be checked, cleaned and possibly changed."

Essentially, say all the engineers we have spoken to, one principle applies – you do not come into a cafe after several months' inactivity and just cross your fingers as you switch on the espresso machine.

You have to be sure in advance that both your machine and your staff are match-fit.

## Even if you are closed, stay in the minds of your customers!

At the trade supplier Beyond the Bean in Bristol, owner of such brands as Sweetbird, Zuma and Cosy, director Gary McGann has always been an enthusiastic observer of the international beverage trade. He can see several bright points.

"Sales of self-service coffee in rural Ireland are 55-60 per cent of normal, which is a very decent figure; a chain outside Dublin says it is taking more than it did this time last year. One of the three big chains said it had a significant upturn the second week in May.

"There are some ideas I have seen that I admire. There are cafes who have turned to selling Sunday roasts and who have done well; in Belfast, there were some guys driving round with a beer keg, offering to pull pints outside your door. The police didn't like it, but the publican in the car said 'I'm doing home deliveries!'

"And I have seen a coffee guy in Ireland doing most of his home deliveries in a vintage Porsche! And it's getting attention – people love stories, and they'll remember him.

"What these people are really doing, of course, is 'keeping in touch'. When all this is over, those who have kept in touch with their customers will see the benefit."

This, says McGann, has applied to Beyond the Bean as well. One of the brand's social media feeds recently referred to 'opening up new markets' during the lockdown, and this was down to staying in touch with the market.

"We decided that staying open, with lesser people and lesser hours, was preferable to shutting up shop. And we are now surprised at the number of people who are ringing us and saying: 'oh good, you're open!'

"Korea, which was one of our first export markets, has come back well for us. Scandinavia has begun to re-open for us, and Greece, Germany, Belgium and Holland are all ordering."



*"Keep customers thinking of what it is they are missing, with you not being there!"*

Are British cafes actually ready and prepared for a restart?

"Café owners are being very naïve if they let the restart surprise them. There is one way of thinking which says don't be the first to open, but watch others make the mistakes – well, the final decision and detail of what you will do and how you may change your ways will depend on what happens at the time, but it is certainly important to be prepared for what 'might' happen.

"There are certain things which may well be different. Where we all wanted 'convenience' in the past, customers may now all be more prepared to wait for ten minutes in a queue.

"And interest in home barista equipment has gone through the roof, so there is no question that there has been a bigger interest in brewing fresh coffee at home. But will this be a trend or a blip? And what will it mean for the rest of the trade?

"And we are certainly seeing a growing interest in all-British produce. This is the result of the NHS halo effect, and this will almost certainly increase.

"Whatever happens, the key thing right now is to stay in the mindset and attention of your customers. You must keep them thinking of what it is they are missing, with you not being there!"

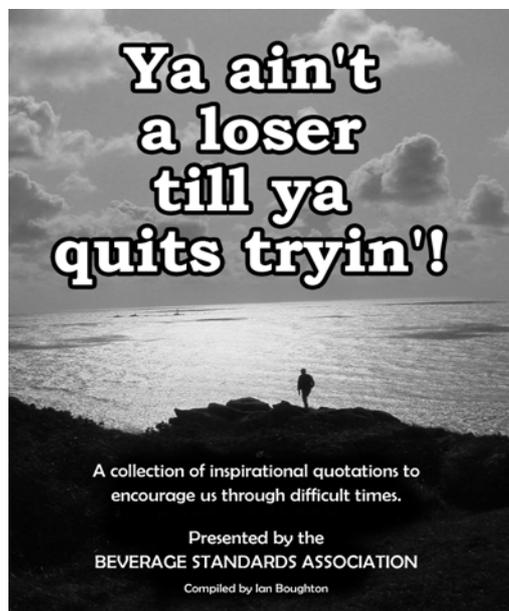
The Beverage Standards Association has made a quite unique contribution to the philosophical well-being of the beverage trade during the crisis – it has produced a branded publication and free distribution of the book of encouraging quotes, compiled by coffee writer Ian Boughton. The book is available on Amazon, but can be downloaded free from the BSA website.

An Amazon reviewer, who is actually well-known in the American coffee trade, has written: "Ya Ain't A Loser Till Ya Quits Tryin'" is a gem of a book which has arrived at just the right moment. In the midst of a global pandemic, this has assembled a number of short and inspirational quotes and sayings that represent voices from our past who provide us with the wisdom, humour, and fortitude to confront the challenges we now face.

"I enjoyed reading this inspiring book, a book I will refer to regularly as an antidote to these difficult times.

"Grab yourself a good cup of coffee, find a comfortable chair, and savour this book that will give you the strength and determination to carry on."

[www.beveragestandardsassociation.co.uk](http://www.beveragestandardsassociation.co.uk)



# Launching a new product in a lockdown!

**Launching a new product in the middle of a period when all your trade outlets are closed would not normally be a wise move – but when VE Day came around, Bryan Unkles at Cafeology decided that he could not let the occasion go by without marking it. So he went ahead with his new coffee - and it sold.**

"Yes, this was launched quite late," Bryan told us. "The idea was to ensure we acknowledged such a momentous day by producing an exclusive coffee blend with a commemorative label.

"In an effort to bring everyone together over a brew during the bank holiday celebrations, we held a 'virtual tea party' – it was a great way to try and bring together people from all walks of life across the UK and celebrate together, albeit a lot further than two metres apart!

"The event was a huge success and we received some fabulous comments on the coffee as well as great interest through our social media channels."

His trade clients have not been short of ideas of their own, says Bryan Unkles.

"Unfortunately the majority of our clients, from national accounts to independents, did have to close their doors initially – some cafes in the Peak District tried their utmost to continue trading, but they became a little unstuck as the social gathering rules were creating havoc, causing complaints from nearby residents.

"After the initial three weeks of lockdown, we saw that many chose to re-open in a more structured, takeaway manner, but it was still tough to trade profitably with two metres between individuals in the queues. Psychologically, even if you are only 5th in the queue, standing ten metres away from the service point can feel frustrating.

"A local taxi company, City Cars in Sheffield, set up an incredibly successful online delivery system which a couple of our clients have enrolled with. You order via the individual company's online store and the delivery charge is the taxi fare. It has been very successful for bulk purchases and allowed independent operators to still trade by offering a speedy delivery service.

"Other clients have turned their cafes into pop-up convenience stores, with comprehensive ranges of groceries."

Cafeology, like other suppliers, looked at sales direct to consumers.

"As a B2B company, naturally we were hit quite hard in the initial stages. Knowing that the current crisis wasn't going to be over any time soon, we ploughed our efforts into the online B2C markets. We have now seen that side of the business grow exponentially, with many of our clients setting up their own 'coffee clubs' for their students or employees.

"This has helped develop into new markets for our business including listings on main online shopping stores and even home shopping channels. We have also launched social media campaigns which allow us to connect directly with the consumer, but also keep morale up in the company.



*Bryan Unkles and his limited-edition VE Day coffee*

"Our trade suppliers have been excellent in terms of offering support to us, including different ideas on new products, and various pack sizes as we alter our focus to the online platform. Some have assisted with sharing investment with new product development and samples. We in turn have assisted many of our independent clients as they look to change their businesses into takeaway offers.

"At times like this we all have to stick together. We have kept in contact even with those clients who are closed, sharing the message 'we are ready when you are'.

"We have been active with our clients, offering services that will ensure they are ready to go as soon as they are permitted. Naturally many machines across the country have been idle since the beginning of March, but our technicians remain on hand to assist clients about starting back up, ensuring the strictest of food safety hygiene is adhered. It is vital that clients ensure their equipment is sanitised to avoid any potential build up of bacteria.

"We have also been providing online barista training videos for those who want it, even while trading under the safe distance guidelines."

## A new all-in-one machine melts and brews the Kokoa Collection disks

**At the hot chocolate specialist Kokoa Collection, Paul Eagles says he has seen good ideas from his trade customers.**

"May café operators, pubs and the like have come up with new ways to support their communities and ways to keep themselves in the public eye. I have seen great initiatives from our customers in helping their local community with food boxes. We ourselves have been involved in handing out free beverages for nurses."

One of Paul's hot chocolate clients is North Star coffee roasters, and he points to North Star's website as a valuable source of a large amount of contact details for trade clients, including such helpful things as contacts for suppliers of plexiglass screens, and markers for social distancing.

"As the hospitality industry shut its doors in mid-March, we too had to make some drastic changes to ensure we could continue operating in the safest and most responsible way," says North Star's founder, Krag.

"Roastery life has been drastically different, working with a significantly reduced team and maintaining the social distancing rules. After a temporary closure to help us figure out a plan, we



managed to reopen to service our online shop customers.

"We have been keeping in touch with our producing partners too, the coffee farmers. They are understandably very concerned about what Covid will mean for them – right now there are harvests flooding in across the coffeelands with next to no-one available to buy their coffee.

"It is pretty disastrous but we are doing all we can to maintain the contracts we had in place. The knock-on effects of this virus are truly staggering but we go forward with optimism."

Meanwhile, Paul Eagles himself has introduced a novel new product.

One of the major features of Kokoa Collection chocolate discs is that they have to be melted before being added to frothed milk. There have in the past been several small machines which operate as simple milk-frothers for home use; the new one which Paul is offering is the Hostess, which has three distinct functions.

For hot chocolate, it accepts both the milk and the chocolate disks, and begins to work at a slow speed to melt the disks, then speeding up as it froths the entire liquid. Without chocolate, it will froth hot milk, and on a third setting it will froth milk cold.

## It's all very fragile, says Jersey roaster and cafe owner.

**At Coopers of Jersey, David Warr is both roaster and cafe owner, and has experienced a remarkable surge in online business.**

"A lot of the messaging to customers has been confused - when the public see some signs saying 'stay at home', but see other signs saying 'we are allowed to operate as per current guidelines', it makes things interesting!

"So we have seen a number of cafes turning themselves into take-away outlets, with mixed results – some kept trying to keep the tills turning whilst others just gave up as it became too expensive to open for the amount of business they were getting.

"The issue with our cafes was footfall. As the offices, swimming pool and fitness centre closed down around us, we simply couldn't make it worthwhile.

"Many of our foodservice customers ran out of cash almost immediately, and so we're sitting on tens of thousands in debtors' accounts. All very frustrating.

"And yet we saw a 1,500 per cent increase in on-line orders when lockdown happened. It hasn't made up the volume we had before, but it has been gratefully received.

"On Jersey there has been a lot of support for local businesses, so as a result we've seen more of our coffee being bought through supermarkets, farm shops and specialist outlets. Volumes here have doubled and trebled.

"The key has been not to price things too madly.

"I'm hopeful we'll see it all back in time, but at the moment it's all very fragile."

## Are you match-fit and ready for the next part of the game?



...or are you understandably worried that your team may be a little rusty after so many weeks away from the front line? The BSA can lead you to the best trainers to provide a vital freshen-up for re-start. Call us now!

[training@beveragestandardsassociation.co.uk](mailto:training@beveragestandardsassociation.co.uk)

# Looking forward ... eighteen months!

**"We look forward to 18 months hence," comes the rather long-term prediction from David Latchem. "When we anticipate that we will be back to a new norm, where trust, support and understanding will be the way forward. But we are also ensuring we will be ready and able to commence trading strongly when hospitality begins its recovery."**

That is not a negative outlook, says the head of Cafe du Monde. It is a practical reminder that although everyone's attention is currently fixed on one restart day, the overall cumulative effects of the crisis will last for a long time yet. Anyone in the trade who is hoping for their business to get back on an even keel would be well advised to think not just about re-opening in the short term, but also to consider what may happen in the medium term and long term.

"I have to say this all brings back memories of when we started out over 30 years ago in a recession and money was tight," recalls David Latchem. "We learnt many valuable lessons about ensuring money was in place to meet our bills, and where this was difficult, we learned to speak to our suppliers to agree payment terms – and we stuck to them! This built very strong relationships early on and helped maintain good credit ratings, to help our business grow.

"This time, to support our nationwide network of independent self-employed engineers, we paid all invoices immediately. By the end of June we will have cleared our whole suppliers/purchase ledger from March 31st, although it leaves us with a much reduced bank balance! However, we now have enough stock to carry us through the early stages of recovery."

David Latchem believed in creative ideas to see Cafe du Monde through the crisis, even though he had to put 70 per cent of his staff on furlough.

"We have been able to concentrate fully on our new website, which was already under construction but which is now operational, with some small glitches. This is having a direct impact on online sales, which have more than doubled, and continue to grow. A member of our team came up with the idea of sending a message on heart-shaped slate, with every new online order. This has produced some very positive responses.

"We also launched recyclable packaging for our coffee sachets in a new brand design, and switched our plastic coffee capsules to recyclable aluminium, with a competition online to win a domestic coffee capsule machine that will also provide boiling water for tea."

David has been impressed with the work of his trade customers.

"In Hornchurch, Le Moulin Patisserie boosted their sales by making small celebration cakes and selling bread through click-and-collect. They teamed up with a local florist to send out patisserie with flowers, thus helping each other in their community, and a bonus for them was that as all of the large coffee chains in their town shut down, they have been discovered by a whole new customer base who love their coffee!

"Banana Wharf in Southampton set up a fresh-produce market stall outside their restaurant, and the William and Victoria wine bar in Harrogate have created a 'W & V at home' takeaway menu (including wine by the bottle!)



*All new online customers received a heart-shaped slate with a message*

"And Coombe Abbey, near Coventry, have set up an online tutorial menu service under the name 'Coombe dine with me!'"

In this, customers are invited to let the chef know what ingredients they have sitting at home in a store cupboard; he comes back with a recipe created from them. And in addition to the now-familiar idea of delivered afternoon tea, this venue came up with the idea of a 'chef on demand' service – a trained chef goes to the customer's home to prepare and cook, with all social distancing and appropriate safety measures in place.

Working together in a crisis strengthens good trade relationships, says David Latchem.

"I am pleased to say only one supplier has behaved to us in a usury manner – and they will reap their just reward!"

The Kent press has been sympathetic towards a café owner in Canterbury who has been trying to keep her café afloat with deliveries since having to shut in March, during which time she has had to keep paying rent, but does not qualify for any support schemes. While juggling incoming and outgoing deliveries in front of her cafe, she was approached by a traffic warden who she says was training a new recruit, and was told that she could stop only for unloading; when she protested that unloading was what she had just done, the senior warden said "too late" and issued a ticket.

The press was sympathetic towards a hard-working business owner; however, the local council were not.

The owner of the Strange Brew and Mesa cafes in Glasgow has been an enthusiastic member of the Glasgow Pantry, an online community launched in early April to support the city's food and drink businesses during self-isolation.

The venture produces a range of programmes from 'live cook-a-longs' to virtual beer tastings, with a view to getting people in lockdown to follow chefs as they make dishes. The popularity of the venture was shown when she received a panic call from a local cheese shop, asking if she had just shown a recipe for pizza - because they had been inundated with customers looking for mozzarella!

# A BSA ready-reference directory

Please refer to the BSA website for more details of these companies

- 3M** 01344 858437 [www.3m.co.uk/filtration](http://www.3m.co.uk/filtration)  
**Allpure Filters** 01252 519955 [www.allpurefilters.com](http://www.allpurefilters.com)  
**Alpha Kaffe** 30210602537 [www.alphakaffe.gr](http://www.alphakaffe.gr)  
**Arden Coffee** 01246 252832 [www.iwantacoffeemachine.com](http://www.iwantacoffeemachine.com)  
**Barry Callebaut** 01244 370500  
[www.barrycallebautvending.co.uk](http://www.barrycallebautvending.co.uk)  
**Brita** 01869365840 [www.brita.co.uk](http://www.brita.co.uk)  
**British Coffee School** 07907 997979  
[www.britishcoffeeschool.com](http://www.britishcoffeeschool.com)  
**Bryan Stockley Consultancy** 07832 258879  
[www.bscls-ltd.co.uk](http://www.bscls-ltd.co.uk)  
**BWT** 07831382929 [www.bwt-uk.co.uk](http://www.bwt-uk.co.uk)  
**Café 2U** 0845 644 4708 [www.cafe2u.co.uk](http://www.cafe2u.co.uk)  
**Cafebiz** 01707 286 966 [www.vend-ex.com](http://www.vend-ex.com)  
**Caffeica** 01993 776753 [www.caffeica.co.uk](http://www.caffeica.co.uk)  
**Cimbali** 020 82387100 [www.cimbaliuk.com](http://www.cimbaliuk.com)  
**Clockwork Coffee** 01753 548 009 [www.clockwork-coffee.co.uk](http://www.clockwork-coffee.co.uk)  
**Coffea Arabica** 07766533157 [www.coffeaarabica.co.uk](http://www.coffeaarabica.co.uk)  
**Coffee Care** 01756 794 811 [www.coffeecare.co.uk](http://www.coffeecare.co.uk)  
**Coffee Classics** 0844 800 5387 [www.coffeeclassics.co.uk](http://www.coffeeclassics.co.uk)  
**Coffee Kids** 16466882774 [www.coffeekids.org](http://www.coffeekids.org)  
**Coffee Perfection** +353 01 8253981 [www.coffeeprecision.ie](http://www.coffeeprecision.ie)  
**Coffeeman Devon** 01803 873759 [www.coffeemandevon.co.uk](http://www.coffeemandevon.co.uk)  
**Coffix** 01530 242800 [www.coffix.com](http://www.coffix.com)  
**Coffox** 07736 950673 [www.cafesuccesshub.com](http://www.cafesuccesshub.com)  
**Complete Beverage Solutions** 01635 877173 [www.cbs-beverages.co.uk](http://www.cbs-beverages.co.uk)  
**Cornish Coffee** 01209 215555 [www.cornishcoffee.co.uk](http://www.cornishcoffee.co.uk)  
**COTECO** 306944258158 [www.bsaeducation.gr](http://www.bsaeducation.gr)  
**Edgcumbes** 01243 555775 [www.edgcumbes.co.uk](http://www.edgcumbes.co.uk)  
**Espresso Services** 0141 425 1083  
[www.espressoservices.co.uk](http://www.espressoservices.co.uk)  
**Espresso Solutions** 01293 769825 [www.espresso-solutions.co.uk](http://www.espresso-solutions.co.uk)  
**European Water Care** 01279 780268  
[www.watercare.co.uk](http://www.watercare.co.uk)  
**European Water Care Ireland** 00353719638155  
[www.watercare.co.uk](http://www.watercare.co.uk)  
**Evoca** 07384 836532 [www.evocagroup.com](http://www.evocagroup.com)  
**Farrer's** 01539 720020 [www.farrerscoffee.co.uk](http://www.farrerscoffee.co.uk)  
**Fracino** 0121 328 5757 [www.fracino.com](http://www.fracino.com)  
**GMS Espresso** 01494 484319 [www.gmsespresso.com](http://www.gmsespresso.com)  
**H2O Direct** 01892 669628 [www.h2odirect.co.uk](http://www.h2odirect.co.uk)  
**Habitat Café** 01887 822944 [www.habitatcafe.co.uk](http://www.habitatcafe.co.uk)  
**Inglehurst Foods** 01420 563 413 [www.inglehurst.co.uk](http://www.inglehurst.co.uk)  
**Kimbo** 0208 743 8959 [www.kimbo.co.uk](http://www.kimbo.co.uk)  
**Kokoa Collection** 0208 8832660 [www.kokoacollection.co.uk](http://www.kokoacollection.co.uk)  
**LF Spare Parts** 01285 861625 [www.lf Spareparts724.com](http://www.lf Spareparts724.com)  
**M\*A\*D Training Solutions** 07768 884693  
[www.coffeetraining.co.uk](http://www.coffeetraining.co.uk)  
**Miko** 0800 496 39 39 [www.miko.co.uk](http://www.miko.co.uk)  
**Miko(Distribution Centre)** 01942 601911 [www.miko.co.uk](http://www.miko.co.uk)  
**Miko (Scotland)** 01355 244466 [www.miko.co.uk](http://www.miko.co.uk)  
**Miko Southwest** 01392 447272 [www.miko.co.uk](http://www.miko.co.uk)  
**Mind Your Business** 0118 983 5827  
**Pentair Water Belgium** +32 (0)14 283 504  
[www.pentairfoodservice.com](http://www.pentairfoodservice.com)  
**Plantation Coffee** 01733 830875 [www.plantationcoffee.co.uk](http://www.plantationcoffee.co.uk)  
**Pumphreys** 0191 4144 510 [www.pumphreys.co.uk](http://www.pumphreys.co.uk)  
**Qualitasse** 01256 300050 [www.qualitasse.co.uk](http://www.qualitasse.co.uk)  
**R.W Stokes** 01522 512548 [www.stokes-coffee.co.uk](http://www.stokes-coffee.co.uk)  
**Rainforest Alliance** 00 31 20 422 8856 [www.rainforest-alliance.org](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org)  
**Ranald Paterson** 01494 674 095  
**RBC East Midlands** 0300 303 0666 [www.rbcem.co.uk](http://www.rbcem.co.uk)  
**Rcoffee** 0161 448 9171 [www.rcoffee.co.uk](http://www.rcoffee.co.uk)  
**Robert Mallerman** 01279 248100 [www.spray-dryer.com](http://www.spray-dryer.com)  
**SCA** 01245 426060 [www.sca.coffee](http://www.sca.coffee)  
**The Apple Tree** 01283 712332 [www.bartonmarina.co.uk](http://www.bartonmarina.co.uk)  
**The Black & White Coffee Co** 01205 460700  
[www.southlincsfoodservice.co.uk](http://www.southlincsfoodservice.co.uk)  
**The Brew Group** 0845 450 0500 [www.caffesociety.co.uk](http://www.caffesociety.co.uk)  
**The Brew It Group** 07970 389101 [www.brew-it-group.co.uk](http://www.brew-it-group.co.uk)  
**The Coffee Cart Co** 01432 278626  
[www.coffeecartcompany.co.uk](http://www.coffeecartcompany.co.uk)  
**The London School of Coffee** 0208 439 7981  
[www.londonschoolofcoffee.com](http://www.londonschoolofcoffee.com)  
**The Office Coffee Co** 0203 7634035 [www.office-coffee.co.uk](http://www.office-coffee.co.uk)  
**The Proton Group** 01924 892834 [www.proton-group.co.uk](http://www.proton-group.co.uk)  
**Total Refreshment Solutions** 0131 448 0666 [www.arumba-coffee.co.uk](http://www.arumba-coffee.co.uk)  
**UK Tea Academy** 07976517128 [www.ukteaacademy.co.uk](http://www.ukteaacademy.co.uk)  
**Voyager Coffee** 01364 644440 [www.voyagercoffee.co.uk](http://www.voyagercoffee.co.uk)  
**Vin Sans Fin Education** 0808 9012029 [www.vsf.wine](http://www.vsf.wine)





BEVERAGE  
STANDARDS  
ASSOCIATION

The Bulletin is published by the  
Beverage Standards Association

[www.beveragestandardsassociation.co.uk](http://www.beveragestandardsassociation.co.uk)  
07944 161785

[admin@beveragestandardsassociation.co.uk](mailto:admin@beveragestandardsassociation.co.uk)