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# Insight

WINTER 2015

## Eat, shop, play

The women behind a new lifestyle concept



WIN!  
AN iPad MINI

### ON TOUR

A look at Leeds and what it has to offer



### DEVELOPMENT

Birmingham's New Street station gets a new look



WITH  
INSIGHT  
EDITOR  
CIARA  
O'CONNOR



Ciara, right, visited the KC contact centre in Hull

The KC contact centre in Hull forms the backbone of Network Rail's customer service.

This issue, we go behind the scenes to meet the team managing the national helpline and commercial property desk. Read more on pages 8-9 to discover why they're one of the top 50 UK companies for customer services.

We caught up with Rachel Munro-Peebles and Elena Mackey on pages 10-11, the pair behind FountLondon, Hackney's latest lifestyle concept. With a shop stocking rotating pop-up brands and an outside court area, a nursery, and a truly authentic Lombardy restaurant, it really is your one-stop shop.

This issue's tour took us to Leeds where we visited an exciting mix of businesses including a brewery, a fashion photographer, a hairdresser and a special coffee house – see pages 4-6.

Major redevelopment of Birmingham's New Street station was completed recently. Read more on page 7 about what it means for the UK's second city.

Hear from asset development surveyor Malcolm Carpenter on the back page. And finally, with Christmas just around the corner, why not try your luck with our festive competition to win an iPad mini – you never know, you might just bag yourself an extra gift this year.

Don't forget to follow us on Twitter – @InsightNR – for all the latest news and updates.

## CONTACT US

If you have a story to tell or a question about the magazine

Email: drop us a line at [insight@abcomm.co.uk](mailto:insight@abcomm.co.uk)

Twitter: Join the conversation using our new Twitter handle @Insight\_NR

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# FULL STEAM AHEAD

Business is most certainly on track for Vintage Trains at Tyseley Locomotive Works, Birmingham.

Operating from a Network Rail depot, Vintage Trains runs mainline steam excursions and dining experiences on its own classic renovated steam trains.

With routes to Carlisle, Llandudno and York, Vintage Trains also runs The Shakespeare Express between Birmingham and Stratford during the summer months.

"You could say we're living in the past!" said Ben Mason, marketing and PR manager at Vintage Trains.

"Built by the Great Western Railway in 1908, we are one of the few depots left in the country

that have seen continuous steam operations since the beginning. Visitors love coming for a special day out and to enjoy something a little different."

The archway has been occupied since 1968, originally operating as the Birmingham Railway Museum and changing to Vintage Trains five years ago when government funding was stopped.

Nearby Birmingham New Street station recently reopened following a huge redevelopment, and is set to bring millions of visitors to the city every year.

"The station has vastly improved and it's very pleasant to visit," added Ben. "It's a great addition to Birmingham and I'm sure a lot of positive things will come from it."



Read more about New Street station's redevelopment on page 7



## ALLERTON WELCOMES ELECTRIC TRAINS

Allerton train maintenance depot in Liverpool is ready to welcome a fleet of Northern Rail's electric trains after a £23m makeover.

The fleet of 20 electric trains are due to be deployed by the end of the year and will provide 6.7m additional seats a year to routes between Liverpool, Manchester, Wigan, Preston and Warrington.

"By electrifying routes between key towns and cities, passengers will benefit from bigger, better and more

environmentally friendly trains," said Network Rail's route managing director Martin Frobisher.

"The improvements at Allerton mean these trains can now be housed and maintained to help deliver these benefits."

The three phases of work on the depot started in 2014. The final stage is under way to improve the depot's capacity as well as making modifications to the Hunts Cross end of the site.



Network Rail launched its third Could IT Be You? competition in October, aimed at encouraging girls aged 16 to 18 to pursue a technology-related career.

Could IT Be You? was set up in 2013 by Network Rail's chief information officer, Susan Cooklin, following research commissioned by Network Rail indicated that almost two-thirds of young women had not considered a career in IT.

Commenting at the launch, she said: "Technology plays a crucial

role in all our lives and is vital to Network Rail as we carry out our Railway Upgrade Plan."

The winner and four runners-up will receive paid work experience and a year's mentoring with Network Rail's IT team. There is also the chance to win up to £9,000 towards university tuition fees.

## NEW TENANT REGULATIONS

Network Rail has distributed an updated set of tenant regulations outlining the latest legislation, best practice, and health and safety standards.

The document outlines the regulations Network Rail expects all tenants to follow, its 'Lifesaving' safety rules and a list of resources to help understand and manage risk.

For more information, visit [www.networkrail.co.uk/property](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/property) and click on tenants' responsibilities.

## CHAMPIONING CHARITY

Since choosing CLIC Sargent as their Charity of Choice in 2014, Network Rail employees have raised more than £2.5m to help children and young people, and their families, cope with cancer.

As part of the partnership, Network Rail sponsored Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in September, and encouraged people to buy and wear gold ribbons to raise vital funds for young cancer patients.

To help spread awareness of the campaign, the Network Rail team installed a five-metre high gold ribbon at King's Cross station, which was seen by millions of visitors.



## TALKING ABOUT A REVOLUTION

A smart technology revolution is assisting frontline Network Rail workers do their jobs more safely by helping them to prevent and respond to incidents on the railway network.

Over the past four years, Network Rail has rolled out more than 25,000 devices with the Apple iOS operating system – both iPad and iPhone – to its workforce. More than 18,000 of these were across its frontline maintenance, operations, and safety and engineering teams. The move away from a paperless railway has helped modernise the workforce, and improved the performance of those working on the railway.

Scan the QR code to learn more about the programme





INSIGHT TOUR

# Halo Hairdressing

 Three decades of strong friendship have blossomed into a successful salon for Lesley-Anne Wilkinson and Karen Draper.

The duo trained at the famous Steiner academy and decided the time was right to build a business together five years ago.

Halo Hairdressing now houses a team of 12, including eight stylists and a nail technician who are all self-employed.

"We've become a bit of a hub for people starting out on their own," said Lesley-Anne, who was previously a colour

technician for L'Oreal. "Our team is a real mix of young and experienced stylists. "It's been a huge challenge and we had a £35,000 refit to make the space our own. It's a fabulous location and we love it."

Halo has proved a big hit and is often booked up around three months in advance, with Lesley-Anne gearing up for a busy festive period.

"Our customer base ranges from people in their early 20s right up to mid 70s. That helps maintain a relaxed environment and a positive energy across the salon."



# Insight TOUR



**COVERED: 2.4 MILES**

- England's third biggest city with a population of 715,000
- British retail giant Marks & Spencer was born in the city
- The first ever moving picture was filmed in Leeds

**2013**

The £350m Trinity Leeds retail and leisure development opened



**MY SUCCESS**

Contacts are absolutely key to success, so invest time and effort into building relationships.

# Maude Coffee Roasters

 Owner Matthew Van Elkan shares his story..

"Our mission is to source the world's best speciality coffee in a structure that's more sustainable for the entire business. "I've worked in the coffee industry for seven years now and got to a place where I felt my passion and experience were right to set up on my own at the age of 21.

"We're very much a one-stop shop for coffee. We source the best beans from places like Guatemala, El Salvador and Ethiopia and also supply coffee machines and grinders.

"Our customers come from all over but mainly

from cities like London, Sheffield and Manchester.

"We moved into our city centre spot last year and it's a fantastic space that gives us the platform to increase volume.

"The space is perfect for controlling the production process, which is very scientific and relies heavily on careful temperature control.

"Next up for us is the UK Cup Tasters Championship in Manchester, which puts my palate to the test against top coffee connoisseurs.

"Winning that would open up new opportunities for us."

[www.maudecoffee.co.uk](http://www.maudecoffee.co.uk)  
Twitter: @maudecoffee





## Brussels Street Studio



In conversation with owner Steve Cockram.

### Tell us about your business:

I specialise in shooting fashion and lifestyle photography to suit a wide range of clients. Previously I managed an international furniture business but I decided to really go for it and turn my passion for photography into a profession.

### Who are your customers?

My biggest client is a big jewellery company and I also do a lot of fashion and modelling shoots. I also work with both global brands and independent designers.

### What are you most proud of?

Getting to the stage where companies seek me out for consultation on large projects. My opinion is now valued and that means so much to a small business like mine.

### What do you like most about your Network Rail property?

We are relatively new to the space and it's a great location. We've done a lot of work to the site and it's perfect for a growing business like mine. The luxury of four parking spaces is a massive advantage too.

[www.stevieroy.co.uk](http://www.stevieroy.co.uk)  
@stevieroyphoto



Don't be afraid to aim for new markets if you believe in your product.

## Northern Monk Brew Co.



### Self-starter

Russell Bisset has turned his passion for creating quality craft

ales into a business that stretches far beyond the boundaries of a traditional brewery.

Russell converted a grade II flax mill into the hub of his operation last year and expansion has been swift. He said: "In just over a year we've tripled capacity and now export our core range of nine craft ales to six countries, including America.

"We wanted more control over the entire process and can now ensure our product is produced to a high standard in an ethical way."

A ground floor brewing base is only part of the story, with a refectory

and kitchen upstairs serving imaginative combinations such as malt-roasted harlequin squash.

To celebrate its first birthday recently, Northern Monk added a warehouse to the business, including an office and logistics centre.

Honing and refining the production process is top of Russell's agenda, while working with like-minded local business to show off the north's best brews.

[www.northernmonkbrewco.com](http://www.northernmonkbrewco.com)  
Twitter: @NMBCo



## NEW BEGINNINGS FOR NEW STREET

**Around 1.5 million passengers passed through the ticket barriers of Birmingham New Street in its opening week, as the station reopened in September following the completion of major redevelopment work.**

Now a major transport and shopping hub, it's estimated that 500,000 people used the station in the opening weekend alone, boosting economic growth and regeneration in the UK's second city.

"Birmingham New Street sits right at the heart of our rail network and the transformation is nothing short of stunning," said Network Rail's chief executive Mark Carne.

"The station is now bigger, brighter and better able to meet the needs of the growing number of people who use it each day."

The five-year, £750m redevelopment features 43 shops at concourse level, with the Grand Central shopping complex above

including one of the UK's largest John Lewis stores. The new atrium above the passenger concourse is five times bigger than London Euston's.

Network Rail's route managing director, Martin Frobisher, said: "The impressive new concourse and the improved access to platforms were invaluable to help handle the demand placed on the station.

"Combined with the careful planning that went into safely handling the huge number of people, the station really proved its worth as a fitting new gateway to Birmingham."

The redeveloped New Street has created over 1,000 jobs and is expected to attract more than 50 million visitors a year.

Construction began in 2010 and the station remained operational throughout the makeover.



The new look station above, and below, the original

### NEW STREET IN NUMBERS

# 1854

When the original station opened

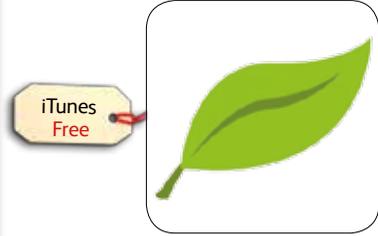
# 37

Number of seconds, each day, a train leaves a platform

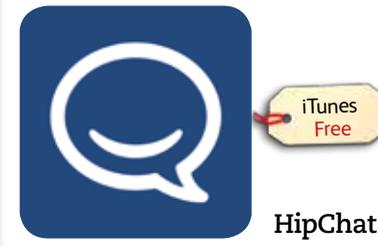
# 300,000

The number of passengers New Street can now accommodate

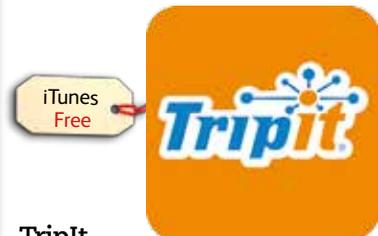
In this issue, we're looking at three of the best business apps to keep you up to date while on the move.



**FreshBooks**  
This user-friendly accounting app allows you to create online invoices, record expenses, track your time and keep you up to date on your cashflow. The best bit is you can use all the features together or choose the individual functions suited to your business.



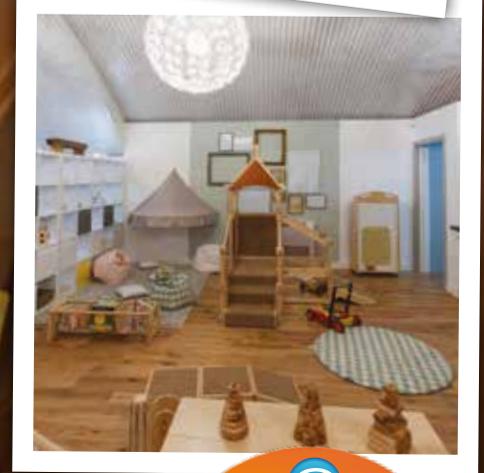
**HipChat**  
This instant messaging app with a team chat tool lets you share files and discuss tasks in real-time with colleagues, project collaborators and clients through unlimited chatrooms. Controls are in place so you can choose who has access and who can see what.



**TripIt**  
Take the stress out of organising business trips with this clever app. TripIt lets you forward your flight, hotel and car rental reservations, and creates a digital itinerary for your trip that you can print out for yourself or share.



Giovanni and the team at Il Cudega



Elena, left, and Rachel are keen to support community



# FOUNT OF BRILLIANCE

Recognising a gap in East London's offering for a one-stop shop for parents, local mums Rachel Munro-Peebles and Elena Mackey decided to take things into their own hands – cue the birth of FountLondon, Hackney's latest success story.



A passion for nurturing small businesses and small children, and bringing the community together inspired Rachel Munro-Peebles and

Elena Mackey to set up FountLondon last September.

"FountLondon is about bringing people together in one space," says partner Rachel. "We initially came to look at one arch and ended up taking three."

A family-friendly concept based in Hackney, FountLondon is many things. It's home to a retail space for innovative new pop-ups with an outdoor area for rotating stalls. It is also FountNursery, an urban

'home from home' nursery complete with Jamie Oliver-trained chef Kerry-Ann Dunlop, and then there's Il Cudega, a Lombardy restaurant run by fellow locals, Giovanni Brighi and Luca Gaggioli.

"FountLondon is the one-stop shop for families," says Elena. "Our tagline is 'eat, shop, play'. We're about taking from the community while putting back into the community. It's a perfect partnership."

Rachel and Elena met through the school their daughters attend. Playground conversations turned into reality and the pair haven't ruled out a national expansion of FountLondon.

"The brand could work anywhere," says Rachel. "If the template works, we

may well do a rollout. We want to bring this experience to all communities."

With a background in banking, then childcare and holistic living, Elena's the driving force behind the nursery, while Shoreditch property owner and developer Rachel looks after nurturing the businesses and designing the interiors.

"Rachel's the creative and I'm the paperwork," says Elena. "We're very different but it just works."

With several pop-ups in Shoreditch, Rachel has drawn on her experience to develop FountLondon.

"I love watching businesses evolve," she says. "FountLondon is my platform for that."



If you're thinking about starting a business, just do it, don't be afraid.



Know your area and know your customers.

**CONTACT US**  
We want your business stories. Email [insight@abcomm.co.uk](mailto:insight@abcomm.co.uk) and tell us why you should be featured.

# THE RENOVATION GAME

When he's not busy with arch investment appraisals and refurbishment projects, asset development surveyor Malcolm Carpenter turns his hand to gardening, listens to Pink Floyd and enjoys a good curry.

## What does your job entail?

I project manage our clients' remit, working with a team to develop it into a detailed specification of works. I oversee planning permission for any alterations or change of use, building contractors on site, and handover of the premises.

## What skills do you need?

Good all-round property and building construction knowledge is essential but more importantly, excellent team skills. We manage individual projects and liaise with a range of departments and teams, as well as external parties such as architects, solicitors and letting agents. There are a lot of people involved so being a good team player is key.

## How do you help tenants?

We provide refurbished space to a standard that both existing and new tenants want to rent.

## What's been your biggest challenge?

Getting planning approval for

property can often be quite challenging. Some applications can just sail through while others take a lot longer, but working with the local authority planning departments, we get there in the end. We also have a very patient and calm internal planning team.

## Describe a recent success...

Refurbishing a series of 20 half vacant, derelict industrial arches in Almond Road, Southwark. The planning was meticulous, the building contract went as smoothly as could be expected and the spaces were snapped up. It's now an impressive, sought-after estate. It was a great team effort by all involved.

### QUICK-FIRE MALCOLM

**Hobby:** I love DIY and gardening. Cutting grass is such good thinking time.  
**Music:** Pink Floyd, George Harrison and Genesis. You really must see Roger Walters perform *The Wall* live.

### Sport:

No thanks.  
**Food:** Curry. Chicken Zafrani, garlic cheese and onion naan, and salad – washed down with two pints of Cobra.  
**Place:** The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo festival. The atmosphere is amazing.



**WIN!**  
**AN iPad MINI**

## WE'RE SPREADING SOME CHRISTMAS CHEER. NAME THE ACTORS FROM THE FESTIVE FILMS FOR A CHANCE TO WIN

Send your answers, with your name, place of work and contact number via email to [insight@abcomm.co.uk](mailto:insight@abcomm.co.uk) or tweet us @Insight\_NR. You can also post your answer to Insight, AB Publishing, Unit B, Gemini House, 180-182 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3TQ. Craig Stanbridge from The Mailbox in Birmingham won last issue's iPad mini.

