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## Hallmark restores former Midland Hotel



The city's oldest hotel has been returned to its former glory - thanks to a million pound refurbishment programme after being bought by Hallmark Hotels last year. A party and tour was held last week for over a hundred guests from the business community to mark the transformation.

Since then, the 102 bed hotel and restaurant has been the subject of an extensive restoration project, which has created a unique boutique style hotel with all the heritage and charm of the original building.

The Grade II-listed, four star Midland Hotel was built in 1841 and has been entertaining guests for more than 150 including many royal visitors such as Queen Victoria and the Duke of Edinburgh along with two Prime Ministers and several Cabinet Ministers, as well as many captains of industry and famous faces from the worlds of sports and entertainment.

## £6m investment in bus fleet

At a time when cutbacks and downturns are everyday news, trent barton is investing at record levels in a bus fleet that is already known as one of the UK's most modern. An investment of £6m in 2009 is committed in renewing almost a fifth of their fleet this year.

The city of Derby is a vibrant retail and employment centre and bus companies in Derby are making huge investments in the city in high quality environmentally friendly buses as an even-better alternative to the car as a means of reaching the

city.

Customers who travel on the Mickleover route will be among the first to benefit from new buses with new exterior and interior design, plus leather seats and air-conditioning as standard.

In addition, new GPS ticket machines are to be introduced across the trent barton network during the year and a unique "Mango" smartcard - which will be the first of its kind on buses in the UK. Similar to the Oyster card used in London, this "electronic purse" allowing travelers a convenient cashless transaction by touching the card on the machine when boarding and alighting the bus - with a minimum discount of 25% on single fares and an automatic calculation of the best discount for the customer.

## Costume drama at city's Kedleston Hall



Kedleston Hall property manager Victoria Flanagan with one of the dresses from *The Duchess*

Oscar and BAFTA winning costumes from the Hollywood Blockbuster, *The Duchess*, are proving a real hit at Derby's Kedleston Hall and have helped give a huge boost to the local economy.

A review published by screen agency EM Media showed that investment from filming across the East Midlands totaled £35m in 2007-8 - up from £27m in the previous year. The amount invested in Derbyshire was £5.9m.

The great houses and stunning scenery have been the setting for several major films and TV programmes that have been shot on location within Derbyshire in recent years, including *The Duchess*, *Summer*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Elizabeth* and *The Wolf Man*.

Kedleston Hall property manager Victoria Flanagan said "The film has really helped to put Kedleston on the map. Our visitor numbers were up 15% at the end of last season and we think that tren will continue this summer."

An in-house exhibition at Kedleston Hall, called *The Duchess - Behind the Scenes*, opened last summer and the total number of costumes now on display is seventeen, including those worn by the film's stars Keira Knightley and Dominic Cooper. The exhibition continues until 1 November.

For more more information and opening times, visit: <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-kedlestonhall>

## Derby's Motorpoint Superbike team a roaring success



Motorpoint Yamaha Riders & Motorpoint Directors

Over 500 people attended the launch of the Motorpoint Yamaha British Superbikes team as enthusiasts from across the East Midlands flocked to the company's headquarters in Derby for the sight of the riders with their bikes before the start of the season.

Pre-season favourite, Chris 'Stalker' Walker, headlined the night and was joined by fellow British Superbike rider and former Spanish Supersport Champion, Graeme Gowland. The pair will be riding an all-new Yamaha YZF R1 Superbike. Also wowing the crowds was 16 year-old Bruce Winfield from Ashbourne, the second youngest rider in the Junior Superstock 600 (part of British Superbikes).

## Ideas for Olympic inspired projects or events

Igniting Ambition is a series of annual summer Showcase events which will take place across the East Midlands between 2008-2011, culminating in the East Midlands Great Exhibition in 2012 - a region wide festival of cultural events and activities.

The series of festivals commenced over the Cultural Olympiad Launch Weekend last



year with the Beijing Handover events (Derby & Leicester) & Derby Festé. The second event is due to take place in Leicester this summer. A call has been made for proposals for the third event in 2010 called "Three Cities +" for grants of between £5,000 and £20,000 for Olympic inspired projects and events.

The Three Cities + programme across the three counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire, will focus on the international understanding of the cultures of India, China and the African Diaspora. If you have a great idea for a project or event, a proposal form and guidance notes are available on request from: [info@ignitingambition.co.uk](mailto:info@ignitingambition.co.uk)

The closing date for applications is 5pm Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May.

## Open day at the County Ground



Derbyshire County Cricket Club are throwing open their gates to the general public on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April (1pm start); giving members and supporters the opportunity of meeting the first team ahead of the new season.

The entire first team squad will be present for the open day and will be on hand to talk to supporters and sign autographs while the county's age group cricketers provide cricket demonstrations for entertainment.

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- What do you do/ what is your mission statement? Irongate is a supplier of office products, office furniture and print. Our catalogue contains over 25,000 products including stationery, computer consumables, business machines, catering and janitorial supplies and workwear all available on a next day delivery service. Our business principle is to deliver innovation and cost efficiencies to all our customers.
- When did you start? The business started out in 1977 as a retail shop in Irongate called The Irongate Copy Store selling photocopying services. But the shop was closed in 1995 when the business moved to Kingsway Industrial Park.
- Why have you become a Bondholder? Irongate Group being the largest office products and business products provider in the East Midlands is proud of its Derby heritage and 60% of our business comes out of the immediate area. We have a close relationship with a number of Derby businesses and believe Derby has a great deal to offer. We are therefore happy to support, encourage and invest in Derby.
- What do you think of the scheme? The scheme is what Derby has needed for a while now - a central hub which we can communicate what's good about the city and what's going on.
- How do you see business shaping Derby's future? In the last 10 years, Derby has changed dramatically with regard to being a commercial base and this has included the City Centre changes, which has increased interest from other businesses. Derby has become a lot more dynamic in recent years.
- What are your favourite things about Derby? Size, intimacy and its people and spirit - a close knit business community.

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