



Spotlight

THE MAGAZINE FOR RETAIL, PROPERTY AND THE ARCHES COMMUNITY

 @Spotlight_NR

 networkrail

WIN!

Competition

*Kick back with a
£100 Black Sheep
Coffee voucher*

Raring to go

*Birmingham New
Street on getting the
buzz back*

Feeling the love

*Retail Recovery
campaign in full swing*



Welcome

Welcome to our autumn edition of Spotlight. We're continuing to see footfall growth in our stations as more people return to the office, the kids have gone back to school and the vaccine roll-out programme gives people greater confidence to get back out there and enjoy what we have to offer.

This issue includes a wide array of exciting stories. We have new retail openings, the launch of a brilliant visitor information desk and the fabulous Electric Shuffle opening at London Bridge.

You'll no doubt have seen our 'It's good to be back' campaign across our stations, resulting in some fantastic sales increases and passenger feedback. Well done to all for getting involved!

Birmingham New Street is our destination station of the month and we've included some snippets from our retail partners on trading and interacting with their many customers.

In terms of safety and community, there are lessons to learn following the Elephant and Castle fire in June, we hear about the creation of a new digital RAMS system – saving time and trees – and why SSP has launched a charity cookbook.

Our commercial estate colleagues tell us about some wonderful innovation from Wreck-It Room and we have an update from the City of Aberdeen Distillery.

Enjoy reading.

Kieran Winder

Retail Business Partner – Cannon Street, Charing Cross, London Bridge & Victoria



TWEET OUT

We round up some of the top tweets from across the network...



Well done to last issue's winner Sarah Randerwala, who snapped up a **£100 FatFace** voucher. Check out the competition opposite to win a **£100 Black Sheep Coffee** gift card.

If you're planning to go paperless, you can opt out of receiving a printed copy of Spotlight by emailing: marketingenquiries@networkrail.co.uk

ABOUT OUR GUEST EDITOR

Kieran is the Retail Business Partner for the Kent and Sussex region and manages the retail operations in those stations, helping our retailers to trade safely and well. Kieran has

been at Network Rail for ten years now and prior to that was a successful travel retail operator working in international airports and downtown retail.



Find out more

www.networkrail.co.uk/property



Get in touch with Kieran:

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Latest arrivals

NEW STORES OPEN ACROSS THE NETWORK



We have welcomed some fantastic new and established brands to our stations recently.

A huge welcome to Black Sheep Coffee, which has opened units in

London King's Cross and Glasgow Central, and is now offering delicious beverages to customers both north and south.

The global coffee brand is the first to serve speciality grade Robusta beans, alongside a wide range of flavours.

Krispy Kreme fans can now delve into its delicious doughnut selection at Liverpool Lime Street.

Whether it's Strawberries and Kreme, Sticky Toffee, or Caramel Sensation you're after, there's a

sweet treat for all taste buds.

What's more, join the Krispy Kreme Rewards programme, and you can earn 'smiles' to put towards a free doughnut.

And at London Bridge, the spectacular Electric Shuffle has opened its doors to enthusiastic gamers and cocktail connoisseurs alike across five of our arches.

Find out more about how Electric Shuffle revamped an ancient game for the 21st century on [page 6](#).

COMPETITION!

To celebrate the opening of Black Sheep Coffee at London King's Cross and Glasgow Central stations, we're giving you the chance to win a £100 gift card to spend in store! Head over to our Twitter page [@Spotlight_NR](#) to see details of how to enter. (Check pinned tweet)

Here to help

NEW VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICE HELPS PROMOTE LOCAL BUSINESS

Team London Bridge has partnered with us to install a new visitor information service at London Bridge station.

The service, which opened in July, promotes local retailers, cultural attractions, restaurants and bars.

Head of marketing at Team London Bridge, Donald Campbell, explained that our recent Retail Recovery

campaign ([read more on pages 4-5](#)) shone a spotlight on the need for a face-to-face offering.

"It's reassuring for customers, having lost that physical presence for so long during the pandemic," he said.

Customers can now seek help with anything from navigation around the station, to tailor-made itineraries for a day out in the capital.

Located on the lower concourse, feedback for the service has been really positive. "We've had lots of happy, reassured people," Donald said.

The help desk is open from Wednesday to Sunday every week, manned by Doris and Nikane (pictured).

If you'd like to advertise a store promotion, email donald@teamlondonbridge.co.uk



A smarter system

RAMS OVERHAUL TRIALLED AT LONDON LIVERPOOL STREET STATION

A new digital database for managing contractor applications has been rolled out at London Liverpool Street station, tahead of a wider roll out across stations in the capital.

The database, called eRAMS, speeds up the process of managing risk assessments and method statements (RAMS).

"eRAMS makes the process consistent and provides transparency for everyone

involved," explained Liverpool Street station operations manager Peter Hurst.

The database can be accessed on any device connected to the internet. Clients can see the status of applications affecting their area and are sent alerts and reminders automatically.

"The system is used by everyone in the station, from retailers to train operations companies to the British Transport Police,

whether it's to fix a broken coffee machine or replace the station roof," Peter said.

"eRAMS allows us to review and approve applications quickly. If there are any outstanding issues with an application, an email is sent to the parties involved explaining what's required to proceed.

"It's taken the average review time for any application from an average of 14 days to just 72 hours."

Feeling the love

Passengers and retailers get in the party mood as our Retail Recovery campaign takes off



DJ Candy played fun songs from station concourses

As new and returning passengers breathe life back into stations across the network, our Retail Recovery campaign is helping retail partners to get their businesses back on track.

Throughout the pandemic, we have proudly supported our retail partners with measures such as rent relief and remobilisation strategies.

Now, with footfall on the rise and shop doors open again, we are doing all we can to get customers shopping once more.

Since the end of July, our campaign has touched down at stations around the country, bringing live music, competitions and exciting experiences to customers in the station.

Each event has given retail partners a chance to engage new customers with tasting opportunities, prize giveaways, vouchers and hampers. Live music from buskers and DJs have even attracted non-travelling shoppers into the station, driving up footfall and sales.

With colourful signs throughout the

station to grab people’s attention, retail partners are already beginning to see the benefits.

Patisserie Valerie manager at Glasgow Central station, Gary Steel, said: “It was a fantastic and positive event. It has been very beneficial for my business and great to get cake samples out to the public. It was well communicated by Network Rail throughout.”

Supporting retail partners is at the heart of the event and Gary added: “There was great feedback afterwards from Network Rail, too. The personal touch means a lot.”

Feeling good

At London Paddington, where shoppers praised the “feel-good factor” that the event brought to the station, the number of shoppers rose by more than 3,000 during the week the campaign touched down. Average spend was also up from the previous week.

At London Waterloo, retail partners including Bagel Factory, Lush, WHSmith and Pret A Manger handed out samples





Buskers played original music to the crowds

“This happening gives me good summer vibes. It’s a great way to start my UK holiday”

“We brought over 1,000 cans and they were gone in under half an hour”



to shoppers, with many expressing their amazement at how quickly they handed out their stock.

A representative from WHSmith suppliers Dash Water said the day was “absolute madness”.

They added: “It was so great to be a part of it and the drinks seemed to go down a storm! We brought over 1,000 cans and they were gone in under half an hour.”

Waterloo was just one location where DJ Candy brought live music and competitions to shoppers from an activation and experiential stage.

As well as playing songs for shoppers, DJ Candy also hosted competitions, giving away prizes for the best dance moves or customer stories.

A platform for success

Event manager Lisa Rutherford said: “The best comment from the audience was from a girl who stayed for ages dancing with us.

“She had bought lots of things at the station – from Lush mostly – and she was in recovery from cancer; this was her first time out.

“She said she loved the music and it was really good to be back – in every sense of the word.”

At London Victoria, staff at Paperchase praised the campaign for providing “a platform” for them to distribute vouchers to shoppers.

Meanwhile, the Lush team said they would need to provide double next time.

Shoppers were equally delighted. One lady said: “My children are just thrilled to have £10 to spend on chocolate on their day out.”

Another added: “Receiving a voucher has made my day already.”

Meanwhile, at London King’s Cross, the live music brought shoppers in from outside to join the party.

“This happening gives me good summer vibes,” one shopper enthused. “It’s a great way to start my UK holiday.” ■



Customers could ask questions and take home freebies

Top of the table

Old meets new as high-tech version of ancient game comes to London Bridge

Five revamped railway arches beneath London Bridge station have become the spectacular venue for a high-tech version of Henry VIII's favourite tabletop game.

The 9,000 sqft space is home to Electric Shuffle, a new venture from the creators of popular social darts chain Flight Club. It pairs the ancient game of shuffleboard with high quality food and drink in an atmospheric club setting.

Steve Moore, CEO and founder of parent company Red Engine, has high hopes for a concept that has been four years in the making.

"Shuffleboard is massive in Scandinavia and the US," he said. "I first played it in Texas in 2017 and discovered it's a wildly cool sport. After the huge success of Flight Club, I realised there might be some synergies between darts and shuffleboard, so we came up with Electric Shuffle as a standalone brand."

Finding the right premises is key for entertainment destinations, so Steve was ecstatic to secure the spectacular 350-capacity space created by the redevelopment of London Bridge station.

"We were up against a lot of competition when we pitched for it, but we spent a lot of time working with the community on licensing and planning, and we got it," he said.

"The railway arches look wicked and we absolutely fell in love with the space, but it did feel quite cavernous. Our designers have put a lot of layers in there, so now it's got texture, it's got soul and it's quite rock 'n' roll."

It became Electric Shuffle's second venue when it opened in August, following a launch at Canary Wharf early this year, with a third planned in Dallas. At both London venues, 10 semi-private gaming areas for up to 16 players, two cocktail bars and a restaurant with an extensive menu have created a buzzing atmosphere.

But it's the thrilling, state-of-the-art game play that is really pleasing the punters. Eight small, weighted pucks are pushed along a wooden tabletop, with points automatically calculated for those closest to a scoring spot in a similar way to bowls, petanque or curling.

"It took three years for our software engineers, vision experts and game animators to develop the technology," explained Steve. "It's done with a camera system similar to Hawk-Eye, which tracks eight objects simultaneously."

"The basic game is relatively simple, but the tech has enabled us to layer four really cool games into it. We've raised the table up, like craps in Vegas, so you can get your mates round to see the action. It's pretty cool."

Steve added: "We're partnering with local distilleries and working with local DJs, because we want to make it a real neighbourhood spot. We're very passionate about that." ■

4 GAMES

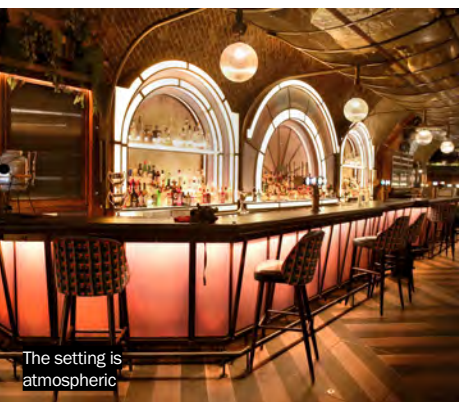
350 CAPACITY

10 PLAY SPACES

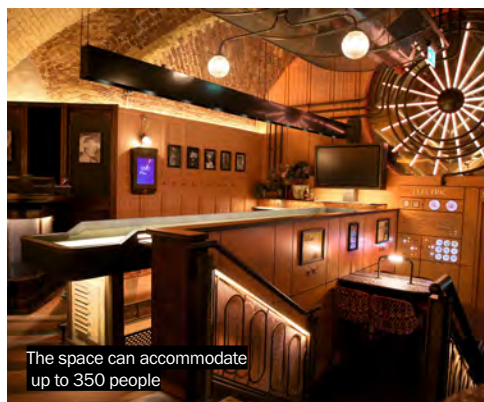
EVENTS FOR UP TO
250 PEOPLE

5 ARCHES

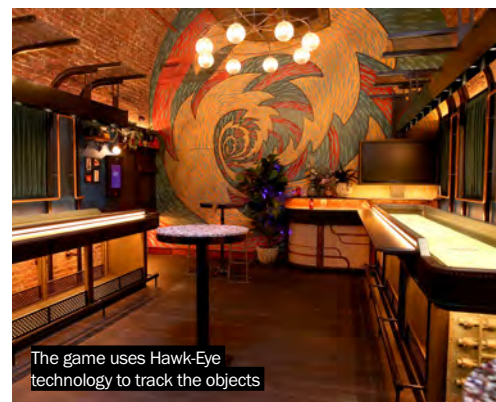
9,000 SQFT



The setting is atmospheric



The space can accommodate up to 350 people



The game uses Hawk-Eye technology to track the objects

The recent fire at Elephant and Castle



Fire safety

Taking the necessary steps to stamp out risks of fire

Following recent fires on railway premises, we're taking action to make sure all our tenants are complying with fire safety law, including Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 – what's known as the 'Fire Safety Order'.

A formal investigation is under way following a fire at Elephant and Castle railway arches on 29 June. The fire caused significant disruption – six people required medical treatment, three commercial units were destroyed and 600 people were evacuated from the area. Train delays resulted in hundreds of thousands of pounds paid out in penalties.

"If a fire is severe enough that it results in a train line being shut down, the penalty payments can be offset against whichever business caused the fire. We don't want any of our tenants to put themselves at risk, or to incur the fines imposed," said Dermot Skelly, head of commercial asset management for Network Rail Property (Eastern Region).

"To avoid any further incidents of this nature and keep everyone safe, we are

taking immediate steps to improve fire safety standards across our estate."

"Safety is always a priority over profit and should be a core part of any business operation," explained construction and maintenance manager, Gary Keane. "Network Rail is acting as a responsible landlord."

He continued: "Our inspections don't go beyond what tenants are contractually obligated to provide or carry out. It's not there to hinder, but to help businesses operate safely, reduce imported risk to the railway, our passengers and the public."

"We're very open to having conversations with tenants about how to improve their safety and are very much here to support wherever possible," added Dermot.

Any business with a question or concern about fire safety should speak to their portfolio surveyor in the first instance.

For more information on your obligations on fire safety in the workplace, go to www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities ■

Find out more on how to control fire risks at work at www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/index.htm

Some easy steps for your fire safety:

- Keep fire risk assessment up to date
- Yearly and five-yearly fixed wire electrical testing
- Good housekeeping – reduce waste build-up and maintain clear routes of access
- Follow manufacturers' guidelines for use, storage and disposal of materials and products
- Ensure any electrical equipment is regularly inspected and tested
- Have firefighting equipment that is adequate, in date and regularly inspected
- Regular inspection and maintenance of all equipment and machinery
- Ensure smoke/fire alarms are in place
- Good ventilation
- Fire safety training for all employees

New be-gin-nings

Keeping the history alive

Alan and Dan were always keen to complement their distillery with a gin school, which meant they needed the perfect premises.

“Aberdeen is an industrial city and there are lots of properties that could have worked, but who wants to go to an industrial estate for an event? We had to have something in the city centre,” Alan said.

“I’ve always thought railway arches are kind of beautiful and they have a history.”

It took three attempts for the pair to find their perfect arch – after the deal fell through on the first one and the second wasn’t suitable for a distillery – but when they did, they were keen to retain some of its character.

“This arch was built in the 1800s, and an awful lot has happened here. When we came to fit it out, the floor was a bit uneven and rough and we had the option of putting in concrete, but we wanted to retain the authenticity of the arch.

“So, rather than change it, we thought, ‘How can we really work with the arch and bring out its best?’ That’s what guided us.”

University friends bring distilling back to Scotland’s city of granite

Alan Milne had a taste for brewing from a young age. As a teenager he’d help his uncle make wine – skills he developed through university, making tipples blended with foraged wild fruits, which were quickly polished off by pals.

His love for creating alcoholic concoctions led him to the Wine Society at Aberdeen University, where he met Dan Barnett, a keen home brewer. Around 20 years on, the pair has successfully reignited Aberdeen’s historic distilling industry.

Operating from a large railway arch, the City of Aberdeen Distillery has quickly made a name for itself, with its speciality spirits picking up a slew of awards, and its tours and gin-distilling workshops becoming a must-do activity for visitors.

This is particularly impressive as the distillery’s first year in business coincided with the outbreak of coronavirus.

Alan said: “We opened the week before Christmas 2019 and had launch events that went very well, with 20 people at a time coming in to distil their own gin.

“When the first lockdown happened, we had to suspend the events and the first thing we did was make hand sanitiser for GP surgeries – they got in touch because they couldn’t buy it anywhere. We supplied all of that for free.”

They adapted their events, holding virtual tastings with taster packs sent to guests’ homes in advance, and were able to keep the distillery open throughout the lockdowns as an off licence.

With restrictions now eased, they’re back hosting their in-demand tours. They offer three: a 45-minute discovery tour, a 1.5-hour gin-tasting masterclass, and the three-hour gin school experience, where guests create, name and bottle their own tittle to take home.

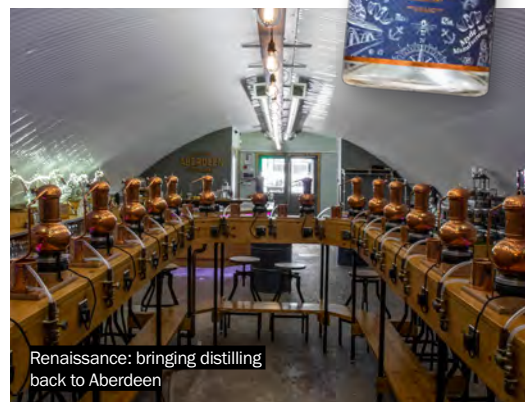
All experiences include a tour, tastings and talk about the history of distilling and brewing in Aberdeen, which dates back to the 17th century.

“Back in the late 1800s the biggest pot still in Scotland was in Aberdeen and made whisky. Unfortunately, it caught alight and burnt down. The city also made beer and rum 50-60 years ago,” Alan said.

“It’s been an oil town since the 1970s, which has completely taken over. We give a nod to that in our decoration, but we also believe that we’re now in Aberdeen’s renaissance. We’re proud to have brought distilling back to the city.”

Find out more by heading to:

www.cityofaberdeendistillery.co.uk ■



Renaissance: bringing distilling back to Aberdeen

Choose your weapon

Unique business invites you to truly let loose

What links a television and a tire iron, a crockery pot and a crowbar? At Aberdeen's Wreck-It Room, they are part of the 'art of smashing s*** up'.

"It started as a really simple concept," explained ambassador of disaster, Chris Monaghan. "I was working with two colleagues, Craig Finnie and Sean Gordon. After a stressful day, we joked, 'wouldn't it

be great to have a place where you can smash things with no repercussions?'"

What started as a joke soon turned serious. Chris, Craig and Sean set to work on a business plan – alongside running their other ventures and heading into a global lockdown – to turn their vision into a reality.

The arches on Palmerston Road provided the perfect location. Chris said it was 'like striking gold'. "We don't take ourselves too seriously. All the other arches have a similar approach. It's great to tie in with local businesses."

At Wreck-It Room customers take part in one of four sessions, which cater to group sizes and offer a wide number of wreckable items.

"There are a range of weapons available in each package, from a baseball bat to a sledgehammer," Chris explained. There's also the War Chest, groaning with some top secret weapons, for a small additional cost.

After a quick safety briefing, it's time to plug in your playlist and get wrecking.

"We initially figured it would be good for people who were stressed and wanted to have some fun, but we've been surprised at how much the experience helps customers' mental health," said master of mayhem Sean.

Having only been open since mid-June, Wreck-It Room is already recommended by local support workers for those suffering from conditions like ADHD and anxiety.

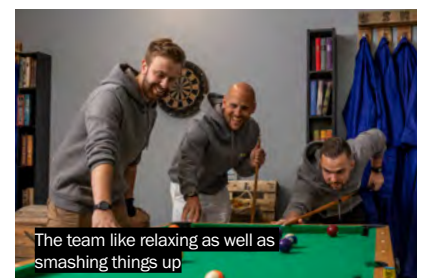
"We're so happy that our business is helping people," Sean continued. "One guy's comment, that we're 'cheaper than therapy', has even become our slogan!"

Wreck-It Room also looks to recycle as much as it can. "We used recycled items for the office furniture and equipment. We try to save anything that still has life in it – hence the pool table and foosball table in our reception area," he added.

Open seven days a week, the business is currently run by Chris, Craig and Sean, plus director of getting s*** done Hailey Baird. And while they plan to expand, they're particular about who they hire.

"We approached the Department of Work and Pensions to hire young unemployed people on the Kickstart Scheme and will be welcoming two new colleagues soon," said captain of carnage Craig.

"We want to mentor young people in this fun environment that also gives them great work experience. That way it won't just be our customers who leave with a grin stretching from ear-to-ear, but our colleagues, too." ■



Getting the buzz back

Passengers and events are returning to Birmingham New Street and the station's retailers are raring to go

The bright atrium of Birmingham New Street station seemed very quiet last year. Located right in the heart of Birmingham, the station is the country's busiest interchange outside of London and traditionally served an average of 170,000 passengers every day before the pandemic. At the height of the crisis that fell sharply to between 10,000 and 15,000, but as the pandemic and restrictions ease, business is beginning to pick up once more.

"It is nice to have the energy back in the station," said shift station manager Jessica Mcloughlin-Carroll. "It was horrible when it was quiet. Now it's almost like it never happened because there are events happening in the city and we have had a lot of people coming through the station."

With Birmingham's famous Bull Ring shopping centre right next door and strong local links, as well as popular routes such as London, Plymouth and

Edinburgh, New Street is almost a tourist destination in its own right.

"This is the prettiest station," Jessica continued. "What makes us different is we're slap bang in the middle of the city and we're also a public walking route. You don't have to just travel via train to come into the station, it has great connections to rest of the city."

"The Bull Ring is pretty much in front of us – you can walk through without purchasing a ticket to go to another area of the city. It's great when we have events in the atrium because people can come in and get involved."

Those events have always been at the heart of Birmingham New Street's offer, and they are something that the station's retailers are delighted to see starting up once more.

First orders

For the team at All Bar One, just opening their doors again as Covid-19 restrictions were eased felt like a huge sigh of relief.

"There is always something going on and something happening at the station," said

Exciting events are returning to the station



The All Bar One team are happy to be back

general manager Helen O'Neill.

"I think people are still cautious, but we have a nice seating area outside and a family area, so it's bustling and vibrant again; there's just a really great atmosphere and everyone seems to be coming back now."

Some of the recovery Helen and her team are hoping for will be driven by the returning football and cricket fans, who've begun to pour through the station at the weekends as live sport begins once more.

On top of that, the city has Birmingham Pride coming up this month, alongside the daily traffic of locals looking for everything from a cocktail to a quick pint before they jump on the train.

"That is what I love about New Street," Helen added. "There is always something going on."

Here to help

Staff at Marks & Spencer throw themselves enthusiastically into any events taking place at the station.

While shopper numbers have not fully recovered yet, and traditional weekly highlights such as traffic for the Thursday student night are still a bit slow, store manager Ginatre Mikenaitė and her team are delighted to see people being drawn back into Birmingham.

"We get people coming from every destination," she said.

"For example, for the German Christmas Market every year we get people from all over the world coming to visit."

Before the yuletide festivities can begin, Gintare and her team are planning a special fundraising sale for the Macmillan Coffee Morning, and they are ready to serve partygoers when Pride lands this month.

"That is a big one," she said. "We usually have a table outside with our mixer cans, which are very popular. We have to plan for Pride because it does get very busy."

Community spirit

As business picks up again, Jessica is working closely with the retailers to make sure the station's new dawn benefits everyone.

This includes regular competitions on the station's social media channels, encouraging shops to provide vouchers to drive footfall and creating a WhatsApp group to keep everyone connected as travellers and shoppers return.

"We saw the station at its lowest during the pandemic," Jessica concluded. "It is so nice to welcome everyone back; I think we appreciate our retailers even more now and we are working with them to help re-engage customers." ■



Delicious treats at Caffè Nero

"It's great when we have events in the atrium because people can come in and get involved"



Marks & Spencer have noticed customers being drawn back to the station

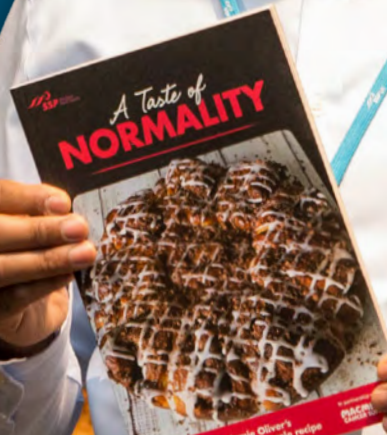


Recipe for success

Retailers take part
in cookbook fundraiser



Follow us @Spotlight_NR
for all things station retail!



From stuffed courgettes to cinnamon buns, you can find recipes to suit any taste in SSP Group's charity cookbook, *A Taste of Normality*. And with every bite, you'll be contributing to a fantastic cause.

Travel food and beverage company SSP operates a number of our station outlets, such as Ritazza, Upper Crust and Pasty Shop. During lockdown, furloughed colleagues rallied to raise much-needed funds for SSP's charity partner, Macmillan Cancer Support.

"So many people have contributed. From our frontline colleagues to SSP's chief operating officer. There's even a celebrity contribution from Jamie Oliver," said SSP's Les Slye, food and beverage operations lead for UK and Ireland.

Copies of the book first went on sale online in May. We have partnered with SSP to sell copies in some London stations.

From early August, customers and colleagues can pick up a copy from SSP units at Euston, Paddington, Victoria and Liverpool Street.

"Station stores are a great location to sell the cookbook, because of visibility and footfall," said Victoria Robertson, SSP business development director for major rail and new channels. "Network Rail have agreed we don't have to pay any turnover on sales, which is a massive bonus."

A Taste of Normality retails at £9.99. SSP have covered all costs except printing, so £8.33 from each sale goes straight to Macmillan. So far, they've raised more than £4,000.

"We printed 1,500 copies and our aim is to sell every one, which would take our total to just shy of £12,500," said Les.

SSP colleagues have been front-and-centre of putting the book together, from contributing recipes that have been in

their family for generations, to voting on the winning title for the collection.

Les said *A Taste of Normality* was the obvious winner. "It captures how we're all feeling, wanting to get back to making a difference," he explained.

Fahd Akhter, general manager at Ritazza Euston (pictured), said he was proud to be part of the project. "The first reason for pursuing any kind of charity is to make a difference," he said.

"My team and I will do our share to make that difference. As a retailer, it's important to be part of such charity drives. It sends a great message in the wider community, boosts our brand reputation, helps to build loyalty and motivates our team."

Fahd's favourite recipe from the book is the butter chicken by Dheeraj Chopra – with his own added twist. "It's simple enough to make and full of flavour. As I love spicy food I like to garnish it with green chillies as well." ■