

# live!

## NEWS

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## Goldsmith backs Superdome project



Allied Entertainments' chief executive Harvey Goldsmith and chairman Ed Simons have put their backing into the proposed 65,000-seater Superdome complex in West Yorkshire, and have acquired a nominal stake in the project.

The project designer, John Garside, a local Bradford man and now chief executive of Superdome UK, originally proposed the stadium for a competition, which it went on to win. The scheme was made more robust and submitted for consideration for the National Stadium. Although it failed in its bid to become the National Stadium, the project is still going ahead, with a planned build time of two and a half years.

Garside comments that "Goldsmith and Simons are experienced and respected members of the entertainment world" and that they are "very happy" to have them involved on the Superdome board.

Ed Simons told *Live!*: "John Garside has proceeded with the project and put it all together as a commercially viable venture."

He added: "It is a major attraction for the UK. It is very exciting and deserves all the help we can give." Harvey Goldsmith told *Live!*: "We've gone on board as non-executive directors to promote the idea of building the stadium. Obviously, when it's built we will promote there."

"When the plans for being National Stadium failed, they were determined to carry on and we looked at his plans – and will support it."

With two hotels, a theme retail mall, casino, clubs and theatres planned, Superdome claims it will be the world's biggest leisure, sport and entertainment facility under one roof – itself the first-ever retractable roof in the UK.

■ Fiona Harley

## Wembley Stadium bid looks a winner

Wembley Stadium's bid to be adopted – and rebuilt – as the UK's new national stadium received a massive boost last month with the confirmation of backing by three national sports bodies.

Soccer, athletics and rugby league organisations all gave their backing for Wembley stadium as the new national stadium site. Under present proposals, the Sports Council is due to make a final decision before Christmas.

But with the Football Association in particular citing Wembley's history and status, and its overseas image as an Olympic venue, the hopes of its rival, Manchester, look to be receding fast.

The plans would involve demolition of most of the current Wembley stadium, with little but the famous twin towers being retained in an otherwise all-new £200m structure designed by Sir Norman Foster.

■ Mike Lethby

## Ogden pulls back

Ogden Entertainment Services has made further redundancies, following the closure earlier this year of its head office in Windsor with the loss of two senior employees and support staff.

Carl Martin and Steve Pike, who were both working on the Oberhausen Arena project, have been made redundant as of November 9. On the back of that, Noel Penrose, currently managing director of OES (Europe) told *Live!* he has resigned and will leave the company at the end of the year.

The news confirms that the American management company has practically ceased new business developments in Europe. New theme park or other business opportunities in Europe will be handled through OES' head office in New York.

Penrose told *Live!* that after the closure of the head office in March, the company had decided to move strategically beyond venues. "Our focus was to stop concentrating on new venues but rather move into entertainment in a wider sense – theme parks, IMAX cinemas, theatres etc." This has happened in the USA, with a number of recent joint ventures. Penrose says the moves are a result of the company's realisation that "there isn't enough money in venue management." He continues: "They (Martin and Pike) were told in March that they would work on the current Oberhausen project, but that there was uncertainty after that time. There isn't another project for them to move on to."

Carl Martin was asked by *Live!* for a comment and responded: "Carl Albert Henry Martin has become a victim of 'riffing', (the latest American buzzword for 'reduction in workforce') by his present employer OES. Having been involved in the design, build, operational set-up and handover of Ogden's Nynex arena in Manchester, the Newcastle Arena and most recently Arena Oberhausen in Germany, 'Carl Albert Henry', formerly at Sheffield Arena and the SECC, Glasgow, is available from November 9, and can be contacted on 01428 727546."

■ Fiona Harley

## Sound City 97 sets dates for Oxford

Oxford, which has produced the likes of Supergrass, Ride and Radiohead, will go under the spotlight as one of the UK's most vibrant music centres when it hosts next year's Sound City event, running from October 19 – 26. Organised by the BPI, Musicians' Union and Radio One, it will feature concerts, talent showcases, seminars and other events at venues across the city.

With its new autumn slot, Sound City promises to pick up daytime as well as evening exposure via the Evening Session on Radio One. The station's deputy controller Andy Parfitt says he is committed to providing more coverage of new bands as well as giving airtime to key seminars and debates.

■ Karen Faux