

# SHOULDN'T YOU BE AT WORK?

Will Mr Jerk be able to provide enough Trinidadian food for everybody at Reid Architecture? Will the Scott Brownrigg beer keg be big enough? Will Lord Foster 'do the Crouch'? With the answers to these questions and many more besides, **George Hay** presents a definitive guide to World Cup office parties

THE WORLD CUP IS UPON US AND, AS ALWAYS, it's a great opportunity for Englishmen and women to crowd into pubs, shout at foreigners and strap themselves in for an emotional rollercoaster ride that invariably ends in tear stained extra-time heartache and furious calls for penalty-taking to be made compulsory at GCSE. Nothing wrong there, you might think. But try telling the kiljoys at BAA, who last week banned Heathrow Terminal 5 workers from flying England flags out of their car windows. The official reason was that there is a risk of them being sucked into a jet engine. The unofficial reason is that BAA doesn't want the England-supporting section of its workforce starting rucks with foreign workers over disputed penalties.

But one hairline fracture shouldn't be allowed to spoil the whole metatarsal. Building was fairly confident that a quick search of the construction industry would reveal firms imbued with a livelier appreciation of football's finest four weeks. So here is Building's authoritative guide to the industry parties to be at for the 2006 World Cup...



# BE AT WORK?

## Foster and Partners

Nobody can accuse Lord Foster of not being a party animal, but it always seemed unlikely that the great man would invite the CAD monkeys from the bowels of his riverside studios to come up to his apartment and 'do the Crouch'. Instead, Foster has aimed typically high and organised his own World Cup. "We're organising a 'one night only' mini-World Cup in Battersea Park," says an excited spokesperson. "There'll be 80 people, 22 different nationalities and eight teams."

Blimsey. This beast of an event, which seems to have almost as much invested in it as the real thing, will have two groups (from which the top two teams will qualify), two semis and a final. Even better, every player has been given a loosely appropriate nickname according to the country they are playing for; for example, Graeme "Souness" Laughlan, Matteo "Franco Baresi" Fantoni, and so on. Any chance of Norman "bites yer leg" Foster, David "Glinola" Nelson, or even Spencer "Andy" de Grey?

## Reid Architecture

You'll have to go some to beat the enthusiasm that will be emanating from Reid's offices off Oxford Street. For the England-Trinidad match on 15 June, and the England-Sweden game on the 20th, Reid is to slay the fatted calf. "We'll have big screens up in the conference room and we've invited clients and consultants," says an insider. "We'll deck everything out in England colours and we're having a giant inflatable mascot of an England fan knocking around." For the Trinidad match, Reid is planning to raid the local West Indian eatery, Mr Jerk, for authentic cuisine. As David Coleman would say, pick that one out.

## Atkins

The consultant's Leeds office has taken a leaf out of Reid's book and is holding a Calypso-themed event for the Trinidad match. "The team has just moved into a new office so we're hosting an afternoon of seminars followed

by a screening of the England-Trinidad match", reveals my source. The format is a Caribbean-style barbecue and drinks for 100 people. But – and this really is the icing on the cake – there will also be a raffle to generate money for the children's ward at St James Hospital. Not bad, not bad at all.

## Richard Rogers Partnership

"I'll have to get back to you on that," replies a helpful PR at the mighty architect. Research reveals that Lord Rogers, in typical avuncular fashion, has decided to turn the firm's expansive kitchen area into a football shrine, complete with large screens, on which staff will be able to watch the England games that start earlier in the day.

## Scott Brownrigg

The fun-loving architect already has a bar area at its Covent Garden offices, but is going to ramp things up for the World Cup. "We're getting a special beer pump in, a proper keg for all the matches," says a senior source. "We actively encourage everyone to get involved; there's quite a lot of fans of footy here." And, by the sound of it, lager.

## Multiplex

No official confirmation of this, but my spies indicate that the troubled Wembley contractor may attempt to make light of its legal and financial woes and hold a secret bash at the stadium. A large screen may feature, but England fans may opt to sly away given the likely allegiance of the main players at the Aussie firm. All together now: "Come on you Soccerros!" (Swiftly followed by: "Is that Harry Kewell limping off?")

## Fitzpatrick Contractors

Not to be outdone, Fitzpatrick has gone one step further and is hiring venues for the games. The Fitzrovia Hotel in Bolsover Street will play host to the Trinidad match, while the Langham Hotel in Portland Place will be used for the Sweden game. The firm has already secured the attendance of 60 guests per match, as well as a generously proportioned bar and buffet. But will there be a man-sized England mascot? "No," says a spokesperson.

## Make

Ken Shuttleworth's crew are really getting into the spirit. "We're going to celebrate it by eating and drinking," reveals one insider. Members of staff are to be assigned World Cup teams, and if said team wins they have to cook a meal for the next match using recipes from their "native" country. "It'll be all right if you get Italy, but a bit harder if you get the Ivory Coast," quips one director. "We didn't want to make it too Anglocentric because we've got lots of staff from Spain and Germany." Building wonders if this touching display of European unity will withstand another semi-final defeat on penalties to the host country...

