

TRIUMPH AND TROPHIES

The best of the industry gathered at the Grosvenor House in London last Tuesday to celebrate the 12th annual Building Awards, in a football-themed evening that was graced by such legends as Bob Wilson, Pat Jennings, John Motson and 1966 England World Cup players

EXACTLY 66 DAYS BEFORE THE KICK-OFF OF THE 2006 WORLD CUP in Germany, it was only right that last Tuesday's Building Awards should be a celebration not only of the construction industry but also of some of our greatest football stars. And in the 40th anniversary year of England's 1966 World Cup victory, what better than a football-themed night to blow the final whistle on the year in style?

The evening attracted more than 1600 of construction's great and good to the plush surroundings of London's Grosvenor House Hotel on Park Lane. It also brought together stars such as Martin Peters and George Cohen, both England World Cup winners in 1966, as well as former Northern Ireland goalkeeper Pat Jennings and ex-Arsenal stalwarts Bob Wilson and Frank McClintock.

While Adrian Chiles, presenter of *Match of the Day 2*, played host to the prizegiving, football commentator John Motson proved himself to be on the ball with building issues, too. Announcing the nominees for the construction personality of the year award, Motty quipped: "Seb Coe is hoping that the Olympic Stadium will be complete by 2012 – about the same time as Wembley."

But it wasn't all about football. Bob Wilson and his wife Megs proved the generosity of the industry by raising more than £26,000 for their charity, The Willow Foundation, which provides "special days" for young adults between 16 and 40 with serious illnesses.

The evening's prizewinners had their share of the limelight, too. Sir Stuart Lipton, who was presented with the third Building Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Construction Industry, used his acceptance speech to call on the government to champion top-quality design. He said: "Government, as the principal client in the UK, must ensure that every single building in Britain is designed to the highest quality. A good design need not be costly ... Architecture is every hour of every day. Government should think of buildings as the ultimate realisation of community needs."

A riotous performance from British-Iranian comedian Omid Djalili and a stirring rendition of football's favourite aria, *Nessun Dorma*, rounded off dinner, before the crowds moved on to the various bars and ballroom of the hotel. While OSs took on contractors at table football, architects, developers and engineers could be seen frittering away the chips at a charity casino laid on for the Willow Foundation.

And by half past two, as the final happy revellers left the Grosvenor House hotel, only one phrase could sum up their feelings: "They think it's all over ... it is now."

ANDY HENDRY

1 A hail of ticker tape rained down on the guests at the climax of a rousing performance of *Nessun Dorma*
2 Commentator John Motson in his legendary sheepskin coat
3 and 4 The guests enjoy table football, all clad in their free Building 2006 scarves



Building Awards 2006 online

For a full list of all the award winners and shortlisted entrants, and all the incriminating photographs from the evening, log on to www.building.co.uk

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5 George Cohen and category sponsor Wavin's David Jones (right) award the Housebuilder of the Year prize to Philip Davies of Linden Homes (centre)
6 British-Iranian comedian Omid Djalili brought the house down
7 Chief Executive of the Year John White of Persimmon (centre) with sponsor KPMG's Richard Whittington (right) and Frank McClintock
8 Sir Stuart Lipton collects his Outstanding Contribution to the Construction Industry accolade from *Building* editor Denise Chevin
9 More than 1600 guests enjoy a great dinner at the Grosvenor House



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10 Jennie Price of WRAP hands Tony Fox of Spaceover the Manufacturer of the Year trophy
11 Robert Smith of Hays Construction & Property (left) gives the Consultant of the Year award to his namesake Rob Smith of Davis Langdon
12 Proceeds from the charity casino went to the Willow Foundation
13 Steve Pycroft of Mace picks up his award from ex-Spurs player Martin Chivers
14 Irish footballing hero Pat Jennings
15 The Major Housebuilder award is collected by Paul Pedley of Redrow (left) from George Cohen and sponsor Finnforest's Rod Allan
16 Taylor Woodrow boss Tim Peach (left) collects the Constructing Excellence award from Peter Rogers and Martin Peters. The firm also won Major Contractor of the Year



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