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# INDUSTRY WEEKLY DIGEST

#HOSPITALITYatSurrey



## A PAEAN TO THE HEART OF LONDON

### HOSPITALITY AND RESILIENCE

The impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on the hospitality sector across the world have been well-documented. In this digest, our Visiting Professor, **Professor Chris Cowsls**, shares his view on how hospitality, the beating heart of London that has helped keep it together for centuries, will bounce back after the crisis.\*  
Have a great weekend!

\*This article was first published in **HOSPA** Overview

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*What's in this issue:*

**A PAEAN TO  
THE HEART  
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# A Paean to the Heart of London

**PROF CHRIS COWLS**

42 was the number of cars yesterday in the station car park of the town where I live, Dorking, Surrey. With a capacity of 328 that car park (which used to be always full) is my personal barometer about the state of London, because if the good burghers of Dorking are here, they aren't there.

I have been enthralled by central London for the 35 years I have worked in and around there - with the place itself in all its finery and frippery, but above all with the people and their sheer diversity. And the beating heart of London that has helped keep it together for centuries? Hospitality, again in all its diversity. From the coffee houses of the 17th and 18th centuries where the insurance and banking systems first emerged to the grand hotels of the 19th century, the swinging clubs and pubs of the 20th century and the world-leading dining scene of this century, hospitality is a key reason why people have always come to London. Or did until March 2020.



Will Dorking station (and the rest of the mass transport system) ever be full again after Covid-19 is a nightmare behind us? Will London and its hospitality heart ever get back to its former self?

My sense is that, whilst the vast numbers of commuters will go down, the other myriad reasons for locals and tourists 'heading up to Town' will be undiminished - the national spectacles, shows, exhibitions, sports, culture, shopping, meeting each other - being at the centre of things. And hospitality will bounce back as an integral part of the experience for those returning. The businesses that largely existed to service the office working population will shrink as others grow. Ours is a hugely innovative sector, and I know several entrepreneurs who are already working through what London will look like next and how they will make the most of it. The hospitality heart of London will beat differently - but still with the vigour of centuries.

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