



## High-powered office jokers in our Stand Up Challenge



FIGURE: CHRIS GORDON

**STAND-UPS LIE DOWN:** Contestants must perform a five-minute comedy routine

BY LAUREN MILLS  
Deputy Business Editor

The contestants for this year's Stand Up Challenge welcomed a chance to network with other would-be comedians, try out their jokes and enjoy some free refreshments.

The comic hopefuls came face to face with each other for the first time at a reception at Hotel Malaya, Leicester, where they met professional comedian Anthony King.

The 2016 Stand Up Challenge is being supported by De Montfort University's Leicester Castle Business School and will see brave individuals from the business community take to the stage to perform their first ever five-minute stand-up comedy routine.

So far, nine comic hopefuls have signed up for the challenge.

They include Hotel Malaya owner Aatin Anadkat and business consultant Jeanne Rao. Aatin said he felt he had missed out by not taking part last year.

He said: "I've always wanted to do stand-up as I have so much comic genius to show the world - and I fancied making a fool of myself!"

"I'm not overcome with fear, I'm just excited to do it."

Jeanne, so far the only woman in this year's contest, said she was looking forward to the event, despite her nerves.

She said: "I am absolutely petrified, largely because I'm assured by my friends that I'm deeply unfunny."

"But I wanted to challenge myself and I'm really looking forward to the training."

Anthony who has performed at many top comedy clubs across the UK, including the Jongleurs chain, will provide training and support to the comic hopefuls and help them write and rehearse their scripts.

The other contestants are

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Bernard Secezh, director of IBM Leicester; Richard Osborn, a partner at law firm Wightmans; Professor Kevin Schurer, the historian, genealogist and statistician who played a key role in the discovery of Richard III; David Nicholls, of Better-IT; Carl Millin, a partner at Howes Percival; Duncan Clarke, of CS Ellis Group; Danny Nelson, from

Winvic, and Leicester Racecourse general manager Rob Brackon. Last year's Leicester Stand Up Challenge was won by Nick Pulley, regional director of Santander, who saw off competition from Debra Heighton, of Turner Insurance, Pete Miller, of The Miller Partnership, Jack Ferguson, from Bistro Live, Chris Greenwell, from Gateley,

and Chris Rees, of Howes Percival.

The 2016 Stand Up Challenge final will be held on November 2 at The Kube, at Leicester Racecourse, as part of Leicester Business Festival. Big Difference Company, the people behind Leicester Comedy Festival, are organising the contest and all the money raised on the night will support

their work, which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of communities across the UK.

For further details and to book tickets, visit: [www.leicesterbusinessfestival.com/events/stand-challenge-leicester-2016comedy-festival.co.uk/](http://www.leicesterbusinessfestival.com/events/stand-challenge-leicester-2016comedy-festival.co.uk/) [www.businesspartnersclub/event/stand-challenge-leicester-2016](http://www.businesspartnersclub/event/stand-challenge-leicester-2016) [www.standupchallenge.co.uk](http://www.standupchallenge.co.uk)

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**COSTS:** Brian Berry

## Brexit may add to woes of builders

**CONCERNS** over the rising costs of construction materials could be made worse by the weakening pound following the EU referendum result, the Federation of Master Builders (FMB) has warned.

The FMB's State of Trade Survey results for the second quarter of 2016, shows two-thirds of small and medium sized construction bosses predict material price inflation.

FMB chief executive Brian Berry said: "Following the EU referendum, the plummeting value of Sterling has further complicated an already difficult situation for small construction firms.

"Even prior to the referendum result, nearly two in three bosses were anticipating rising material costs, on which there has been intense pressure over the past couple of years, as demand for projects has picked up again.

"With the dramatic fall in currency value however, we're concerned that the trend towards price inflation will gather pace.

"We've already heard accounts of timber and brick costs rising, and a number of sources have said that even steel prices have risen by 8 per cent since the decision was made to leave the EU."

## Green light for Breedon

**BREEDON** Aggregates' £336 million deal to buy Hope Construction Materials has finally been completed.

The plans, announced last November, were held up by a conflict over ready-mix concrete plants owned by the two companies which the Competition and Markets Authority feared could have created a monopoly in a handful of areas.

Hope's chairman, Amit Bhatia, 36, has been appointed to the Breedon board of directors as a non-executive director.

Breedon Aggregates, based at Breedon Quarry near East Midlands Airport, received clearance for the takeover last week.

Shares in Breedon have returned to pre-referendum levels over the past few weeks - reaching 70p a share yesterday morning.