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**“MY CITY**

**The games kids used to play**

GIVEN that so many of our childhood memories are bound up with the games we played, it's unsurprising that Liverpool English has a whole vocabulary for them. Kids spent a lot of time on the street, or on wasteland - the "debby" (from the French "débris"), "olla" (from "hollow"), or the "bombdie" (from "bombed"). But games are generational, and the language records the changes.

Older readers will remember "pitch and toss" (recorded as "pitch and hustle", from the 17th century), a popular form of street gambling that needed only a mark (to pitch at) and a couple of coins (to toss). If you didn't have the coins, you could play instead with "Flemings", brass buttons from Fleming's, the Scotland Road tailor. There were variations: "Bang off", "Buttons" and "Jigs", all of which combined elements of pitch and toss and marbles. They had their own specialised terms too: a "delly" (a prize button flattened on a tramline) and "to fang out" (to span your fingers to measure the distance between buttons).

Marbles was called "cherrywobs" (also known as "cherrybobs" and "cherrywags") and "ollies". "Cherrywobs" (origin unknown) was played with cherrystones; "ollies" was a serious game, often played by adults, and again it had its own precise terminology: "bloody alley", "glannies", "jacks", "lassies/lazzies", "nonks", "parrots", "segs", "stonies", "steelies" and "ups".

"Ollie" didn't come from "alley", (correct Liverpool terms for this were "jowler" and "jigger"). It's the Liverpool pronunciation of "alley", an 18th-century shortening of "alabaster". Such is the creativity of Liverpool language, that "yer ollie's down the grid" became a common expression meaning "You're in a hopeless position".



**TONY CROWLEY**  
AUTHOR OF THE LIVERPOOL-ENGLISH DICTIONARY

**Banners on the Victoria Street building which is to become Signature Living's Dixie Dean Hotel**  
Picture: COLIN LANE



**PAST YEAR HAS BEEN OUR BEST YET, SAYS SIGNATURE, AS FIRM GOES ON GROWING**

By **JOSH PARRY**

Property Reporter  
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LIVERPOOL hotel developer Signature Living has said it will report profits of more than £13m for the 2017 financial year.

The business, fronted by Lawrence Kenwright, says its pre-tax profits will be recorded at £13.17m for the 2017/18 financial year - an all-time high.

The business, which includes hotels such as 30 James St and The Shankly in its portfolio, previously reported pre-tax profits of £5.6m in 2016 and £1.59m in 2015 - meaning they have more than doubled in a year.

The privately-owned group, founded by chairman Lawrence Kenwright and his wife, Katie Kenwright, employ more than 830 people across its businesses in Liverpool and in August of this year will celebrate its 10th anniversary.

They said they were projecting profits in the region of £20m for the 2018/19 financial year.

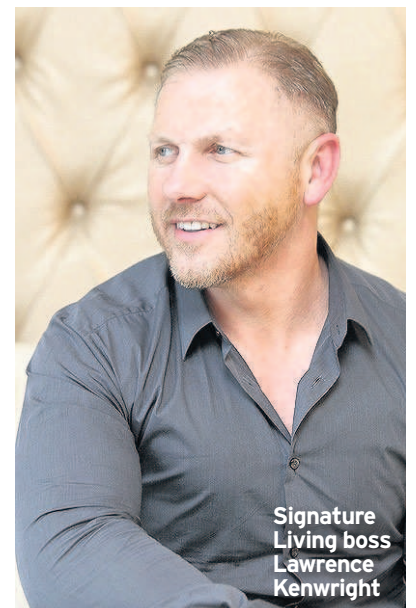
The expanding group has also reached a landmark this month with news that the Signature Living Group has developed and now owns over 1m square feet of property in Liverpool alone and a further 500,000 square feet in other parts of the UK.

As well as developments in Liverpool, the company is now planning sites in Manchester, Preston, Cardiff and Belfast.

Speaking to the ECHO in 2016, Walton-born Mr Kenwright explained how he'd hit rock bottom and declared himself bankrupt before re-building his reputation and hotel empire.

**“**I don't think I had that knowledge, so I made quite a few mistakes when I first started  
**Lawrence Kenwright**

**Hotel developer reports profits of £13m**



Signature Living boss Lawrence Kenwright

He said: "I feel now, that I was too young really. My dad was a docker, I couldn't go home and ask him for business advice. I didn't have the knowledge base there. I don't think I had the foundations in business that I needed."

"I didn't see the pitfalls that I'd now see a mile off. I didn't have that experience of understanding what the dilemmas are. I don't think I had that knowledge, so I made quite a few mistakes when I first started out."

Mr Kenwright lost everything during the property market crash, and said it left him so depressed he couldn't even bring himself to get out of bed.

He told the ECHO: "I got myself into financial dif-

ficulty with properties. I over-leveraged like everyone did. I didn't have a penny. I was potless and that's when I didn't have anything and I had to start again.

"When it all went, it hit me so hard I went to bed for three months, I couldn't bring myself to get out of bed. I only got up because my daughter called me from school crying her eyes out saying they were going to throw her out because I hadn't paid her fees.

"I didn't pay it because I didn't have the money. I heard her say 'they're going to throw me out of school' and I bolted up there and then."

Currently, the group operates a hotel and apartment portfolio valued at over £250m and has plans to develop a further £300m of hotel projects and residential development schemes over the next three years.

**ECHO**

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