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LATEST RESEARCH CONFIRMS BLUEWATER AS THE UK'S MOST ATTRACTIVE SHOPPING CENTRE

Bluewater shopping centre in Kent has retained its title as the UK's leading shopping centre, according to the new Definitive Guide to Shopping Centres from independent retail analyst TW Research Associates and Churston Heard, a leading retail property consultant.

The 1.7 million sq ft (157,930 sq m) centre, which was developed by Lend Lease, the Australian property developer, has topped the retail rankings since it was first opened in 1999.

Trevor Wood, editor of the research, which covers all 747 shopping centres in the UK, says: "There has been considerable jockeying for position across the top 100 centres as they compete to attract shoppers, retailers and investors, with Bluewater emerging victorious with a total of 7,743 points."

The MetroCentre in Gateshead, owned by Donald Gordon's Liberty International, was runner-up with a total of 7,354 points. However Lakeside, rival to Bluewater, slipped from third place into fourth, after being hop scotched by British Land's Meadowhall shopping centre in Sheffield.

The biggest new entrant to the top ten was Festival Place in Basingstoke which shot up the rankings from 91st place in 2000 to number 10 following an extensive redevelopment by Grosvenor, the Duke of Westminster's property company.

Other big risers include the shopping centre at Canary Wharf, in London's Docklands, which soared from 215th place in 2000 to 47th in the rankings with 3,241 points. The centre is now classed as a sub-regional shopping mall and plays hosts to shops ranging from Karen Millen to Waitrose.

Meanwhile, despite receiving much public acclaim for regenerating the centre of Birmingham, the new Bull Ring shopping centre developed by Hammerson, Land Securities and Henderson Global Investors entered the rankings in just 14th spot with a total of 4,630 points.

The report is available from TW Research Associates for £295 incl. postage & packaging: Tel: 01494 715 846, or email retail@twresearch.co.uk.