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ON THE COVER:
Titanic Belfast, p38

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EDITOR'S LETTER

CELEBRATING THE UK

Although *Attractions Management* has a completely global readership and we balance our coverage across all world regions in every edition, we hope you'll forgive us for hijacking part of this very special edition to celebrate a unique year for the UK, with our focus on the Best of British.

Britain is taking the opportunities afforded by the London 2012 Olympic Games to celebrate its history and drive its tourism and attractions industry forward, with the opening of a number of new, world-class visitor attractions such as Warner Bros. Studio Tour London – The Making of Harry Potter (page 30), The Cutty Sark (page 60) Titanic Belfast (page 38) and Chocolate – York's Sweet Story (page 37). All in all, a bumper summer is planned.

In addition, the UK will celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee with a bank holiday in early June, while the Cultural Olympiad, which has been running since 2008, will culminate in the London Festival from 29 June to 9 September. This vast event is offering 10 million tickets to 12,000 events – staged by artists from all over the world – in dance, music, theatre, fashion, food, art and film – and will include everything from a World Festival of Shakespeare to string quartets playing live from helicopters. Download the programme here from our digital and PDF editions: <http://lei.sr?a=L541>

While Britain's world cities can compete with the best when it comes to hotels, restaurants and entertainment, one of the UK's competitive edges – arguably unrivalled – is its strong heritage

While it's recognised that Britain's world cities can compete with the best when it comes to hotels, restaurants and entertainment, one of the UK's competitive edges – arguably unrivalled – is its strong heritage, and we've seen a shift in emphasis in tourism marketing in recent years, towards a celebration of this authenticity.

Britain has a rich tradition of storytelling and a great number of stories to tell. When this is coupled with an authentic location – Titanic Belfast, for example, is located on the Harland & Wolff yard where the ship was built – it creates compelling experiences.

And it's not just ancient history that's being appreciated and celebrated. Visitors to Warner Bros.' Harry Potter attraction speak highly of its authenticity and sense of place because the sets and locations are those used to actually make the much-loved films. It's this element which sets the attraction apart from the Wizarding World of Harry Potter attraction in Orlando – which is a new-build – and it shows that the approach works, whether it's applied to ancient or more modern history.

The London 2012 Olympic site is also destined to become part of the capital's attractions industry once the games are over. The Arcelor Mittal Orbit – Anish Kapoor's elaborate sculpture, which is taller than the Statue of Liberty – along with a new Olympic Museum, will open to the public in 2014 (see page 72).

Liz Terry, editor, twitter: @elizterry



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For suppliers of products and services in the worldwide attractions industry, turn to page 84

Ready for blast-off: Ecsite 2012

JEAN-BAPTISTE DESBOIS

It's with a great deal of enthusiasm and honour that the city of Toulouse, Cité de l'espace and the Museum of Toulouse join forces to host the Ecsite Annual Conference 2012: Space and time, unlimited, from 31 May to 1 June.

Cité de l'espace is the most important learning park in Europe dedicated to space and astronomy which it presents through permanent and temporary exhibitions (for example, you can actually explore Mars on our premises with the "Explorez Mars" exhibit), objects of space exploration (as displayed through the Mir Space Station and capsule Soyuz, among others), artefacts from space (we display one of only five moon stones available in Europe, granted to us by NASA), shows (IMAX films, our wonderful planetaria), and events.

We bolster our work through close partnerships with the most important regional actors in science, industry, academics, associations, tourism, as well as with national and international figures related to space (including CNES-agence spatiale française, the European Space Agency and NASA).

Based in Toulouse, a world epicentre of civil space engineering and production, Cité de l'espace has the primary objective to promote science to the widest possible public audience and inspire youth to pursue science-related careers. Cité is also a hub of the space sector's cutting edge activity; laboratories, research centres, schools and universities, enterprises and public organizations all gather at our park to advance inquiry into space. We're a proud contributor to the reputation of Toulouse and its status as a Midi Pyrénées "city of knowledge".

On the occasion of Cité's 15th anniversary, we are taking on a complete renovation of our permanent exhibition which the delegates of Ecsite 2012 will have a chance to sneak preview in June.

Without a doubt, this edition of the Ecsite Annual Conference will be a rich exchange of information surrounding the idea of Space and time, unlimited – a conference theme that not only echoes the heart of our institution, but also speaks to us as individuals in today's society.

Jean-Baptiste Desbois, director general,
Cité de l'espace



Mind Museum opens in Manila

Bonifacio Art Foundation (BAF) has unveiled the Mind Museum in Taguig, a city located in the Metro Manila region of the Philippines.

BAF has led the project to establish the country's "first world-class science museum", with design work undertaken by Ed Calma of Makati City-based Lor Calma and Partners.

The 7,600sq m (81,806sq ft) building, which contains five galleries across two levels, features a futuristic and organic design inspired by cell growth and molecular structures.

Interior exhibition areas span 3,560sq m (38,320sq ft), with the five galleries comprising The Story of the Earth; The Story of the Universe; The Story of Life; The Story of the Atom; and The Story of Technology.

More than 250 "hands-on" and "minds-on" experiences have been installed at the Mind



The interior area, designed by Jack Rouse Associates, has five galleries

Museum. Jack Rouse Associates acted as exhibition masterplanner and exhibit designer.

Other groups involved with the project include Singapore Science Centre (planning consultant) and Cobalt Engineering.

The US-based media group National Geographic Channel has signed a partnership allowing "complete access" to its digital media library used in exhibits.

Science museum for Stennis Space Center

A new US\$30m (€23m, £19m) science museum and visitor attraction has opened at the Stennis Space Center in Mississippi, US.

The 72,000sq ft (6,700sq m) Infinity Science Center houses a number of interactive exhibits and educational galleries on earth and space – including ones that examine the work of NASA and Mississippi's important contributions to space exploration.

The ground floor will be dominated by the Earth Gallery, which includes the Global Patterns exhibit, recreating the various cycles and patterns that characterise Earth as a system; and the Deep Ocean Lab, where visitors will be able to use technology to make a 3D map of the floor of a large water tank.



The new centre will house a number of educational exhibits on space

Other spaces include the Great Nations Dare to Explore gallery, a 4,000sq ft (372sq m) maze that will give visitors the chance to explore their way from early Egypt to a future that could see colonies established on Mars and the moon.

Mississippi science museum unveils expansion

The Mississippi Museum of Natural Science (MMNS) has officially opened a conservation and biodiversity facility in Jackson, US, following a US\$5m (£3.1m, €3.8m) expansion.

Financed by the state and federal governments, the new 19,000sq ft (1,765sq m)

Mississippi Center for Conservation and Biodiversity (MCCB) houses laboratory and collection spaces. MMNS' collections currently contain more than 1 million animal and plant specimens, with its "wet collection" of alcohol-preserved items exceeding storage capacity.



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Guggenheim Helsinki plans rejected

Plans to build a new Guggenheim museum in Helsinki, Finland have been rejected by the Helsinki City Council despite strong support for the scheme from Helsinki mayor Jussi Pajunen.

In a vote held on 2 May, the plans were defeated by a single vote by the city council's board. No reason was given for the rejection, though the cost of the project – estimated at €140m (US\$184m, £114m) – was seen as a concern.

The decision to reject the project was seen as a surprise after Helsinki mayor Pajunen's vocal supporter for the project.

In April 2012, Pajunen had outlined a financial package which would have seen the council provide 2.8m euros (US\$3.7m, £2.3m) of public funding in order to secure the museum's licence and to create a foundation to run the museum.



Mayor Jussi Pajunen (centre, holding folder) with the Guggenheim team

A concept and development study had also been completed, which had identified a site along the South Harbour waterfront for the museum development.

The plans for a Guggenheim in Helsinki were first announced in January 2011. At the time, Pajunen said: "It is widely recognised that cultural destinations can help drive economic growth for a country."

President: Argentina to build Falklands museum

Argentinian president Cristina Fernandez has announced that a museum is to be built at a former naval school in honour of soldiers who died during the 1982 Falklands War.

Fernandez said the museum, which will reportedly cost US\$20m (£12.7m, €15.2m), will open

next August and will remember marines killed in the sinking of the General Belgrano.

The announcement comes amid escalating tensions between Argentina and the UK ahead of the war's 30th anniversary next month, with both laying claim to the islands.

WWII museum project enters next phase

The US\$300m (£226m, £189m) expansion of the National WWII Museum in New Orleans, US, has entered the next phase following the topping off of the US Freedom Pavilion: The Boeing Center.

Scheduled to open later this year, the US\$335m (£26m, £22m) US Freedom Pavilion will be home to a broad variety of exhibits used by the US military during WWII.

These include a number of restored airplanes – such as the heavy bomber B-17G Flying Fortress – and an interactive submarine experience based on the final mission of the USS Tang.

Exhibits will also tell the human story, highlighting the contributions of all the branches of service in WWII.



Freedom Pavilion will be the home to a broad variety of military exhibits

The next phase of the expansion will be the establishment of a set of new permanent galleries called Campaigns of Courage. Scheduled for a 2013 opening, the 31,430sq ft (2,900sq m) galleries will explore the Allied campaigns in Asia, the Pacific and the European theatres of war.

Study launched into museums cuts in the UK

The UK's Museums Association (MA) has announced the launch of its second survey to examine the impact of government and local authority cuts on museum services across the country. According to the organisation, the latest study will allow for year-on-year comparisons to be made with last year's findings and provide an insight into the impact of budget cuts.

In 2011, more than half of museums studied in the research (53 per cent) saw a reduction in funding, with 20 per cent reporting a cut of at least 25 per cent.



The attraction will be based at the FIFA HQ

FIFA plans new museum for Zurich base

FIFA, the world's football governing body, is planning to establish a new museum dedicated to the sport as part of an expansion of its Zurich base in Switzerland.

Zurich City Council was informed of the proposals on 11 April in a meeting held at FIFA's base, although a design plan will need to receive validation from Zurich Municipal Council. FIFA's executive committee has already agreed to invest approximately CHF180m (£122m, €150m, US\$197m), which it believes shows the organisation's full support to the city.

Arts and opera district planned for Dubai

A new museum, arts and opera district will form part of Emaar Properties' flagship Downtown Dubai development under plans announced by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) state's ruler.

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum said that the Dubai Modern Art Museum and Opera House District would become the UAE's latest cultural 'nerve-centre'.

The project will include Dubai's first purpose-built opera house, a modern art museum. Several galleries will also be housed within the precinct.



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AZA zoos and aquariums are spending millions on conservation. In fact, a recent study shows that in 2010, AZA zoos and aquariums spent \$130 million to protect animals around the world. In total, AZA zoos and aquariums supported 1,906 projects in 112 countries.

Protecting animals in the wild can happen in a variety of ways. Some institutions, like the Wildlife Conservation Society and San Diego Global, have extensive programs all over the world. They hire their own scientists and field conservationists and do the work themselves. Other zoos, like the Bramble Park Zoo in Watertown, SD, make dona-



"Sometimes nature needs some help getting things started"

tions to other conservation organisations. For Bramble Park, their conservation partner of choice is the Jane Goodall Institute.

Some zoos and aquariums have extensive rescue and rehabilitation programs for sea turtles and manatees. These include the Gladys Porter Zoo in Brownsville, Texas, and South Carolina Aquarium in Charleston, SC, working with sea turtles and Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo focusing on manatees. Some zoos focus their conservation efforts around one of their signature animals. For the Memphis Zoo in Tennessee and Zoo Atlanta in Georgia, that means hundreds of thousands of dollars for giant panda conservation work in China.

Sometimes nature needs some help getting things started. The Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle breeds and releases endangered butterflies. Oglebay's Good Zoo in Wheeling, W Va, does the same with hell-bender salamanders. For the Phoenix Zoo in Arizona, its black-footed ferrets and the Los Angeles Zoo its California condors.

Tim Lewthwaite, publications manager, Association of Zoos and Aquariums

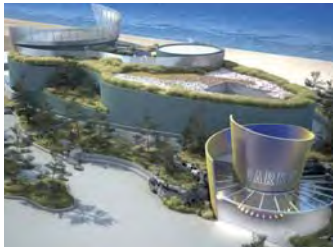
Work to begin on NY Aquarium

Work will begin later this year on the US\$30m (€22m, £19m) Ocean Wonders: Sharks! exhibition, the first phase of a US\$150m (€112m, £94m) expansion of the New York Aquarium in the US.

The 50,000sq ft (4,600sq m) Ocean Wonders exhibit will accommodate 115 species of marine animals, including more than 40 sharks.

Housed in an iconic new building and expected to be completed in 2015, the expansion will add more than 500,000 gallons of tank space to the aquarium's capacity.

The design of the building and the exhibitions has been a collaborative effort led by the in-house design team at the aquarium's operator, The Wildlife Conservation Society; Seattle, US-based architects The Portico Group; and a team of consultants including Doyle



The Ocean Wonders exhibit will accommodate more than 40 sharks

Partnership. The Architect of Record is New York City-based, Edelman Sultan Knox Wood. The expansion forms a key component of A Sea Change, a 10-year partnership launched in September 2009 by the aquarium operator (Wildlife Conservation Society), the City of New York, and the Borough of Brooklyn.

Chester Zoo unveils £30m Islands plans

Chester Zoo has unveiled plans to bring the islands of Sumatra, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines to Cheshire, UK, as part of a £30m scheme showcasing its conservation work.

The Islands project is to enable visitors to explore the themed and immersive landscapes by boat or on foot, with features including educational exhibits, play areas and eateries.

Species including the Indonesian Rhinoceros Hornbill and the Sumatran Orang-utan will be among those on show. A major new Indonesian tropical house is also included in the plans.

Architects from the Dan Pearlman group of Germany are behind the designs for the Islands project, which Chester Zoo believes will be the first scheme of its kind in the UK.



The designs for the exhibit were drawn up by architects Dan Pearlman

Zoo director general Dr Mark Pilgrim said: "Our wildlife expedition will be based on real life, real people and real stories and will be unlike anything seen in a UK zoo.

"Islands will not just showcase the areas that the zoo works in, but will also be a platform for some of the most endangered animals on the planet."

Ripley to open third aquarium in Toronto, Canada

Attractions operator Ripley Entertainment has confirmed that it will open a new aquarium in Toronto, Ontario, Canada in 2013.

Ripley's Aquarium of Canada will be a 12,500sq m (135,000sq ft) family attraction with more than 5.7m litres (1.5m gallons) of

water and featuring marine and freshwater habitats from around the world.

The CA\$130m (US\$131m, €100m, £84m) aquarium will be third in Ripley's portfolio, following previous openings in Myrtle Beach, S. Carolina, and Gatlinburg, Tennessee, US.

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How to plan a successful event

ALEATHA EZRA

In February, the World Waterpark Association convened its European Waterpark Symposium, hosted by The Time Capsule, in Coatbridge, Scotland. This two-day educational and networking event welcomed waterpark owners and operators from parks throughout Europe including the UK, Ireland, Germany and Italy.

Issues covered during the event included water quality, new developments in attractions, memorable marketing campaigns, safety in operations and more. One particular topic that led to lively discussion among the group centered around in-park event planning and how waterparks are an



"We must equip ourselves with the skills to read and pick up every sign of change within the market of desires"

event in and of themselves because of their unique combination of innovative rides and attractions and their mass appeal to all age groups and families.

During his presentation, "Taking Your Revenue to the Next Level," Enrico Muccioli discussed how Aquafan in Riccione, Italy created unique special events to appeal to key target markets that the park wants to draw on a daily basis. Highlighted events included Ciao Michael, a tribute to Michael Jackson, Cartoon Network Day, where popular Cartoon Network characters visited the park and interacted with young fans, and the World's Biggest Foam Party, which generated thousands of pictures shared across the globe via social media.

According to Muccioli, the key to event success lies in, "betting on creativity and on the people who know how to make it work as a system." He went on to say: "We must equip ourselves with the skills to read and pick up every sign of change within the 'market of desires' as it gets more and more sophisticated and complex."

Aleatha Ezra, WWA membership manager

Apollo to take over Great Wolf

Apollo Global Management appears to have won the race to purchase US-based waterpark group Great Wolf Resorts after increasing its bid to US\$7.85 (£4.80, €5.92) per share. The improved price agreed by Apollo represents a 171 per cent premium on the six-month average share price of Great Wolf prior to its original bid earlier this year.

KSL Capital Partners had entered the race to acquire the business, which operates a total of 11 waterparks across the US and Canada, which had been referred to as a "superior" offer.

However, Great Wolf Resorts said at the time that Apollo had been given an opportunity to submit a new bid in light of KSL Capital's US\$7 (£4.31, €5.28) a share proposal.

Great Wolf Resorts has now revealed that KSL does not intend to submit any further bids



Great Wolf currently operates 11 waterparks across North America

for the company, which leaves the path clear for Apollo to complete the purchase.

A Great Wolf Resorts spokesperson said: "The Apollo offer was unanimously approved by the Great Wolf board of directors.

"The board recommends that Great Wolf shareholders tender their shares into Apollo's revised tender offer."

Palace Entertainment acquires Noah's Ark

Palace Entertainment has completed the acquisition of Noah's Ark waterpark in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, US for an undisclosed price.

The 70-acre attraction is one of the largest waterparks in the US with 51 water rides, two wave pools and two lazy rivers. The park also has two hotels, totalling 300 bedrooms. Palace Entertainment will operate the park under its Festival Fun Parks arm. Palace currently operates 40 theme

and waterparks across the US. Noah's Ark will be the firm's first in the state of Wisconsin.

The park was sold by brothers Tim and Dan Gantz, who bought the attraction from its founders, Turk and Jack Waterman, in 1994.

Tim Gantz said: "When we considered the sale of the park, we were excited that a



Noah's Ark is one of the US' largest parks with two hotels and 51 slides

company such as Palace Entertainment, with so much experience in waterparks, theme parks, animal parks and family entertainment centers, would come to this area."

Palace Entertainment is owned by Spain-based, international visitor attractions operator Parques Reunidos.

Polin to supply rides for Cartoon Network's Thai park

Turkish supplier Polin has secured a deal to supply water rides for the new Cartoon Network Amazone waterpark being built in Bang Saray on the East Coast of Thailand.

Scheduled to open in 2013, Cartoon Network Amazone will incorporate rides themed

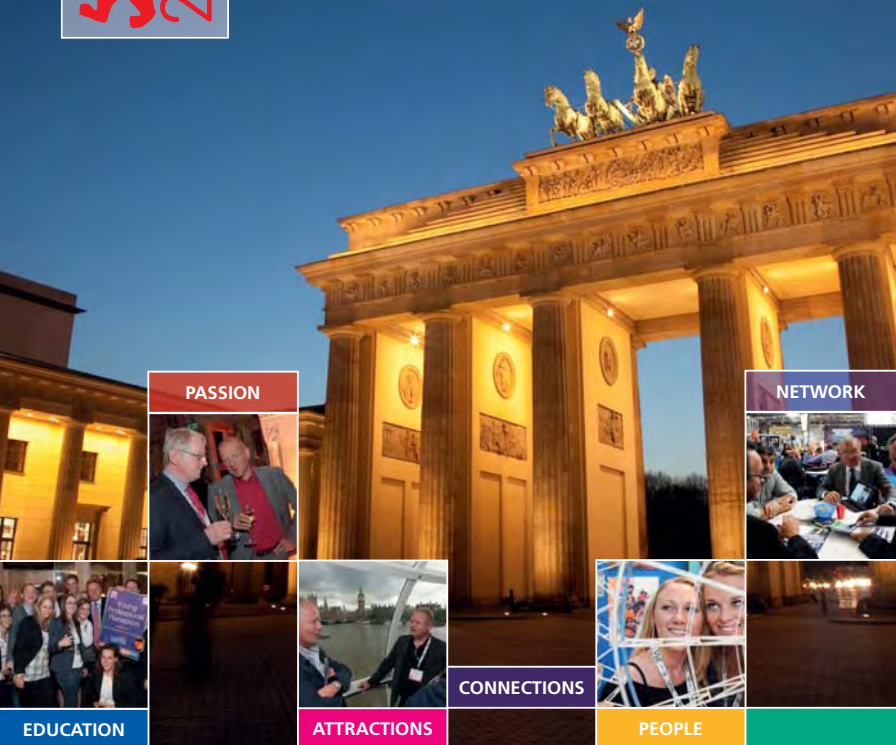
according to popular animated series and cartoon heroes such as Ben 10, The Powerpuff Girls and Johnny Bravo. The park's attractions will include a family wave pool, a winding adventure river, speed-racing slides, family raft slides and a large interactive water play fortress.



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Theme Park News

Finnish theme park opens first Angry Birds Land

Särkänniemi theme park in Tampere, Finland has opened the world's first Angry Birds-themed visitor attraction. The Angry Birds Land is based on the popular mobile game which was developed by Finnish gaming company Rovio Entertainment.

Miikka Seppälä, chief executive of Särkänniemi said: "We wanted to create a unique themed area and associate it with a strong and well-known brand. The Angry Birds characters were born in Finland but known worldwide by people of all ages. This is a perfect fit for our Adventure Park."



Image: MARIO ROY/GETTY IMAGES

The UK's first KidZania is set to open by 2014

KidZania signs deal for first UK location

KidZania, the Mexico-based educational theme park concept, has signed a license agreement with Longshot Kids to open its first location in the UK within the next two years. Longshot Kids is an affiliate of Longshot, a company led by entrepreneurs Ollie Vigors and Joel Cadbury and former owner of private members establishment, The Groucho Club.

London's KidZania joins a development plan of sites in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (see p56); Santiago, Chile; and Sao Paulo, Brazil – all of which open this year.

Spring launch for new PortAventura coaster

PortAventura, the theme park located in Salou, Spain, has revealed that Europe's tallest rollercoaster is to open this spring, although it will not be ready for the start of the season on 30 March.

The park has invested more than €25m (£21m, US\$33m) in developing Shambhala, which features more than 1,650m (5,413ft) of track and comprises more than 1,600 tonnes of steel. According to PortAventura, the ride will be a "hypercoaster" and will be 76m (249ft) at the highest point, while its drop of 78m (256ft) will also be a new European record.

Parques Reunidos acquires Slagharen

Spain-based visitor attractions operator Parques Reunidos has acquired the Slagharen family theme park in Slagharen, The Netherlands.

The 80-hectare (198-acre) Slagharen park, which receives more than one million visits a year, is themed according to American history – with a heavy emphasis on the 1850s – and includes four zones: Wild West, Mexico, New Orleans and Yellowstone.

The theme park includes more than 40 attractions and rides – including two roller coasters – and a holiday park with 800 beds, as well as a large retail and food and beverage offering.

Richard Golding, executive chair of Parques Reunidos, said: "The acquisition of Slagharen signifies the extension of our family leisure facilities in a new market, the Netherlands, increasing our presence in Europe."



Slagharen and its accommodation is themed with American history

"Slagharen is a wonderful park and has a long tradition which is very well recognized."

When completed, the deal will increase the number of attractions in Parques Reunidos' portfolio to 72. The company recently acquired Noah's Ark waterpark in Wisconsin Dells, US, through its US subsidiary Palace Entertainment.

Disney shuts exhibit over 'bullying' claims

Walt Disney Parks and Resorts has decided to close its Healthy Habits exhibit and gaming zone that promoted healthy lifestyles at it's Epcot resort in Orlando, Florida, following accusations that it was 'offensive to overweight children'. A lobby group called the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance (NAAFA) claimed that Disney had "taken the side of the bullies" with the portrayal of its characters in its Habit Heroes zone.

The characters included "Snacker", portrayed as eating too much fatty foods; "Lead Bottom", who doesn't get enough exercise; and "The Glutton", a character who eats too much. NAAFA launched a campaign against the exhibit, encouraging "everyone to call and write to Disney and to express their outrage".



Image: WALT DISNEY WORLD

The Healthy Habit exhibit included the Habit Heroes attraction

In a statement, a NAAFA spokesperson said: "We are appalled to learn that Disney, a traditional hallmark of childhood happiness and joy, has fallen under the shadow of negativity and discrimination."

"It appears that Disney now believes that using the tool of shame, favored so much by today's health care corporations, is the best way to communicate with children."

New CEO outlines Cedar Fair growth strategy

Matt Ouimet, the new chief executive officer of Cedar Fair Entertainment Company, has set out a new long-term growth strategy for the Ohio, US-based visitor attractions operator.

Ouimet was named president of the group last summer and has now succeeded former

chief executive officer Dick Kinzel. The new growth strategy has been called FUNforward.

Adding new rides and attractions to enhance guest experience is one of the strategy's components, as is improving consumer messaging and relationship management.

Theme Park News

Real Madrid theme park

Spanish football club Real Madrid and the Government of Ras al-Khaimah have announced plans to establish a major new US\$1bn (£632m, €756m) visitor attraction in the United Arab Emirates.

Built under the Spanish football club's brand, the Real Madrid Resort Island complex and theme park is to boast the first sports stadium open to the sea and a Real Madrid museum. Luxury hotels, sporting facilities, a "sport port" and a residential scheme also form part of the project, which will become the first to be built under the Real Madrid trademark.

The 50-hectare (124-acre) development will combine tourism and sports and is to launch in 2015. It will also enhance the club's presence in the Middle Eastern and Asian regions.

Real Madrid president Florentino Perez said: "When the Real Madrid Resort Island



The resort will include a theme park and a range of other attractions

opens its gates, visitors will become part of the legend of this club, which strives to be eternal and universal.

"The world of sports and Real Madrid again prove to have no boundaries and that football is a fantastic tool with which to make cultures come together.

"Real Madrid Resort Island will be a sports tourism complex of the highest level."

'Napoleonland' planned for France

Yves Jégo, mayor of Montreuil-Fault-Yonne in central France, has announced plans to build a historical theme park celebrating the life of former French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte.

The park would be located just outside Montreuil, south east of Paris - the site of the

former French leader's most famous victory against the Austrian army in 1814.

Jégo said that the park would cost €200m (£166m, US\$259m) and will include a re-enactment battlefield, a museum, a hotel, restaurants, a retail park and a congress centre.

Politician lobbies for 'Disneyland Philippines'

A Philippines congressman, Carmelo Lazatin, has contacted The Walt Disney Company with the view of securing a Disneyland theme park at a disused former US airbase in Clark Freeport Zone. In an open letter to Thomas Staggs, chair of Walt Disney Parks and Resorts, Lazatin emphasised the site's suitability for a park due to its size and accessibility.

He said: "The Clark Freeport Zone may interest you and Walt Disney as the next location for your famous Disneyland theme park, as it boasts of a 4,400 hectare main zone and 27,600-hectare subzone."

He added that the country's increasing popularity among foreign visitors - and the fact that the Disney franchise and characters are



Disney currently has two parks in Asia and is building a third in Shanghai

very popular among Filipinos - made it an ideal location for a large theme park.

Clark Freeport Zone is located close to the cities of Angeles City and Magaland - around 60 miles north west of capital city Manila. The land is owned and operated by Clark Development Corporation, a state-owned entity.

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MCA reopens following expansion

The Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (MCA) in Sydney has reopened following the completion of a "significant" AU\$53m (£34.3m, €41.2m, US\$55m) redevelopment.

Sydney-based Sam Marshall has worked with the New South Wales Government Architect on the design of the new-look attraction, which has added 4,500sq m (43,438sq ft) of space.

The expansion has increased MCA's size by nearly 50 per cent and has included three new galleries, a refurbishment of existing facilities and a 120-seat lecture theatre.

Work has also included the creation of the National Centre for Creative Learning offering two studios, as well as the addition of rooftop spaces overlooking Sydney Harbour.

A spokesperson for the museum said that the redevelopment responds to the growing



The expansion has increased MCA's gallery space by nearly 50 per cent

audience for contemporary art in Australia. In advance of the opening, the MCA also announced a digital makeover that included the launch of a new website and smartphone apps in order to enhance core activities.

MCA has worked with local wi-fi provider Aruba Networks on a location awareness system that allows visitors to access information on artworks around them throughout the building.

October launch for US museum's new home

The Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland (MOCA) in Ohio, US, has announced that its new building in the Uptown district of University Circle will open on 8 October.

London, UK-based Farshid Moussavi Architecture are behind the design of the new

facility, which aims to provide a catalyst for "creativity and growth" in the area.

The 34,000sq ft (3,159sq m) building is 44 per cent larger than MOCA's current site and was designed with both financial and environmental sustainability in mind.

Reopening date announced for Stedelijk

Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam will reopen to the public on 23 September following the completion of the most ambitious renovation and expansion project in its history.

Famous for its collection of modern and contemporary art, the museum is located within Amsterdam's Museumplein (Museum Plaza). It is housed in a historic building dating back to 1895, which has undergone a complete renovation. Nearly all of the building's spaces have been converted into galleries, which will enable the first comprehensive display of Stedelijk's permanent collection.

Work also included the creation of a brand new 10,000sq m (107,000sq ft) building, designed by Benthem Crouwel Architects. The



Work on the museum included the creation of a brand new building

new space will house the museum's café and other amenities freeing up exhibition space in the main building.

The extension's design means that the museum's entrance will face onto Amsterdam's Museumplein, creating common ground with its neighbours – the Rijksmuseum, the Van Gogh Museum, and the Concertgebouw.

Major revamp for Chrysler Museum of Art

Plans to undertake an "extensive" expansion and renovation of Chrysler Museum of Art in Norfolk, Virginia, US, have received the approval of the attraction's board of trustees. The H&A Architects-designed project is to form part of a US\$45m (£28.2m, €33.7m) capital programme currently in its "quiet phase" and which has also included the new Chrysler Museum Glass Studio.

Work will commence in July this year and will see 8,000sq ft (743sq m) of new gallery space being created to complement the museum's existing 210,000sq ft (19,510sq m) space.



A total of 8.9 million people visit Louvre each year

Louvre is world's 'most visited' art museum

New research has found that the Louvre, one of the most iconic attractions in Paris, France, was the world's most visited art museum last year after welcoming nearly 8.9 million people.

According to an annual study undertaken by The Art Newspaper, the Louvre easily claimed the top spot with nearly 3 million more visitors than the second most visited art attraction.

New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, US, welcomed six million people, with the British Museum, National Gallery and Tate Modern – all in London, UK – completing the top five.

Google unveils 'major' Art Project expansion

Internet giant Google has announced a "major" international expansion of the Art Project, after it entered into more than 150 new partnerships with institutions across 40 countries.

More than 30,000 objects are now available to view in high resolution, up from the 1,000 in the first version. Meanwhile, there are now 46 museums and galleries covered by Google Street View images.



The imperial residence will house a visitor centre

€5m visitor centre for Schönbrunn Palace

Schönbrunn Palace, a former imperial summer residence in Vienna, Austria, has announced that a new "fully comprehensive" visitor centre is to open at its main entrance later this year.

The new facility is scheduled to be completed by autumn and will accommodate ticket sales zones; a café; a waiting area; and a shop. It will be able to cater for 400 visitors at any time.

Plans have been drawn up in conjunction with the Austrian Federal Office for the Protection of Historic Monuments in response to increasing visitor numbers to the attraction. Work will include the removal of partition walls in the interior of the Guards' Wing and the renewal of the roof structure. The project will cost around €5m (£4.2m, US\$6.7m).

A spokesperson said: "The façades are being renovated and will remain largely unchanged, thus preserving the overall appearance of the ensemble."

Meanwhile, work remains on track to complete the revamp of the palace's Great Gallery this year. Work on the €2.3m (£1.9m, US\$3.1m) scheme began in February 2010 and has been undertaken in two phases.

Work begins on 'Ring of Harmony'

Construction work has begun on the Ring of Harmony wheel attraction at Shenfu New Town near Fushun, China. The 505ft (153m)-tall attraction will form the centrepiece of Shenfu, an entirely new town being built in the Liaoning province close to the city of Shenyang.

The wheel has been designed by California, US-based Goddard Group which has also produced part of the master plan for the 10sq km (3.86sq mile) Shenfu New Town. While the Ring of Harmony will be completed first, the Goddard Group's master plan covers over 2sq km of urban design, including housing, retail, entertainment, civic buildings, parks, lakes and other community-based design elements.

The entire city is expected to be built out over the next four to five years.

Gary Goddard, founder and CEO of Goddard Group, said: "When we were first



The Gary Goddard-designed wheel attraction will dominate the vista

approached about providing a master plan and vision for Shenfu New Town's downtown urban core, I felt that this massive new town needed a visual 'centre' to symbolize its place in China and in the world."

National Blues Museum for St. Louis

A new National Blues Museum is being proposed for St. Louis, Missouri, US, as part of plans to reinvigorate the city's riverfront area.

To be located on Washington Avenue in downtown St. Louis, the museum is set to feature interactive exhibits, 25,000sq ft of special programming space and a 100-seat theatre.

The museum's central hub will be The Blues Lab, housing a number of interactive stations, including ones which will allow visitors to try out and record their 'jamming' skills.

The Icons/Legends and Timeline exhibits will chart the history of blues music by presenting imagery, artefacts and interactive tables. The National Blues Museum will also offer a variety



Exhibits include galleries on the history of blues

of public programmes and members-only activities designed to encourage repeat visits to the facility both during and after museum hours. The museum is set to be one of the centrepieces of the US\$500m (£377m, £315m) Gateway Arch park rehabilitation scheme.



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BART DE BOER

"When Walt Disney came to Europe in 1954 to research attraction parks, he came here and was inspired by our park," says Efteling's CEO Bart de Boer. "Actually, that's just a story," he admits with a smile. "He may well have come, but there's no proof of it. We like to say it though."

The Netherlands' oldest theme park is so revered in its home country that when it marketed Raveleijn – a medieval city-themed entertainment venue – as a "new town", 70 per cent of the country's mayors, resident in their chains of office, attended the opening ceremony in 2011.

Raveleijn also forms the backdrop to a tv show, book and online game. While investing in rides and entertainment to ensure guests have a great time is the main aim of Efteling, which is run by Efteling Nature Park Foundation, media has become a large part of the park's offer. After producing several tv series, it premiered its first film, *Sprookjesboom* (*The Fairytale Tree*) in February and it went gold in March. "One park started with a mouse and became quite successful, so we're working to that," smiles de Boer.

HISTORY

2012 marks the park's 60th anniversary, which is being celebrated all year long.

Inspiring Disney, defying the recession and expanding into film and tv are among Efteling's achievements, as it celebrates its 60th birthday. CEO Bart de Boer tells us why the Netherlands' oldest theme park is so successful

KATHLEEN WHYMAN • MANAGING EDITOR • ATTRACTIONS MANAGEMENT

"It's an important step," acknowledges de Boer. "We're part of history and we're very careful with that history."

The history started back in 1952 when Efteling opened as a family amusement park using attractions to tell 10 stories within a Fairytale Forest. The park was founded to bring employment into the region and to conserve nature. While that's still the park's aim, 60 years on, Efteling has evolved into a theme park with more than four million visitors each year, a variety of coasters, dark rides and experiences, theatre shows, a hotel, a holiday park, a golf course and its own tv series.

De Boer credits Efteling's success to staying close to its Fairytale Forest roots. While the designers employed over the years have all left their imprint on the park, the original style, created by Anton Pieck, has continued to the extent that fairytale-related stories appearing in Dutch, and some German and Belgium, media are referred to as "Efteling-like".

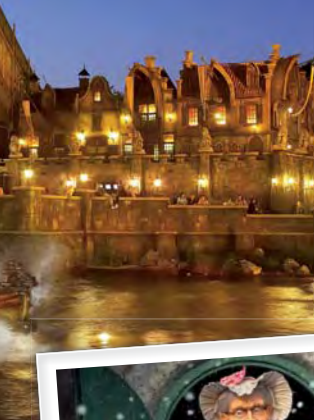
The park offer now includes coasters, but the core business hasn't changed.

"We never wanted the fastest, highest or most dangerous rides; we always have the extended family in mind," explains de Boer. "The park is very large and is beautifully landscaped. Visitor feedback shows that they like the way they can wander around and enjoy being a part of nature."

REALMS

Efteling is divided into four realms – Ruigrijk (Adventure), Reizenrijk (Travel), Marenrijk (Fairy) and Anderrijk (Alternative). Each are tailored to different members of a family. The Fairytale Forest and shows are for everyone. Older children and adults will enjoy the coasters and dark rides while their younger siblings spend time in the playground. Carnival Festival, which takes visitors on an eight-minute journey past 15 different countries and 270 different animatronics, is popular with all ages. The ride is currently being refurbished to mark

Roller coaster De
Vliegende Hollander –
The Flying Dutchman



(Above) George and the
Dragon wooden coaster;
(below) the show Raveleijn;
(left) Mother Holle



Efteling's anniversary. It's rumoured that Carnival Festival was the inspiration for Walt Disney Parks and Resorts' It's a Small World musical boat ride. "There are photos of Disney executives looking at Carnival Festival and It's a Small World is similar – visitors travel through countries while a song plays throughout," says de Boer.

The update may mean the park can expect another visit from Disney executives in the future. "We sent about 1,000 of our 2,200 employees to Disneyland Paris in batches of 200 in March to celebrate our Diamond Jubilee," he says. "Hopefully they will send all theirs to Efteling!"

CELEBRATIONS

All well as the employees, all visitors to Efteling are invited to be a part of the year-long anniversary celebrations. They started on the 31st December 2011 and 10,000

visitors attended. Events will be held throughout the year but the big attraction is Aquanura, a spectacular show using water, fire and light. "The park's birthday is the 31st May and we'll have a big show on that day culminating with Aquanura, which is just amazing," says de Boer.

Also new is a themed pancake restaurant, Polle's Kitchen, which is the first phase of a new Fantasy Realm. Costing €42.5m (£35.3m, \$55.4m), and with an estimated opening date of 2015, the realm will be Efteling's biggest and most expensive expansion to date and will include a dramatic dark ride.

De Boer has spent the last five years focusing on content. These include a double wooden speeding coaster which spins visitors around a fire-breathing dragon and Raveleijn, the medieval city that provides the setting for a spectacular

park show for up to 1,200 people. The 20-minute show details the adventures of five children who become knights and is performed up to five times a day. It features horses, ravens, an owl, a falcon, actors and a five-headed dragon.

VISITORS

Almost every Dutch child visits Efteling, as it's the most popular destination for Dutch school trips. "They come here as a child, then a parent and a grandparent," says de Boer. "Most Dutch people will come to Efteling several times during their lifetime."

Efteling received 4.1 million visitors in 2011 and de Boer anticipates another 200,000 visitors this year. "The anniversary helps, but we'd expect an increase anyway, as the visitor numbers are growing every year," he says. "We predict that by 2020 we'll be up to five million visitors each year." ▶



ABOUT Bart de Boer

What are your hobbies?

I had a private pilot's licence but I had to quit flying when I started working here so I fly in a coaster instead now. I also like cooking and photography

What's your favourite food?

I'm a bit of a foodie. I've visited Heston Blumenthal's The Fat Duck in the UK. I'm desperate to eat at Noma in Copenhagen, but it's hard to get in – if anyone's reading this, who can get me in, please let me know

Favourite film?

It'd be a bit cheap to say *The Fairytale Tree!* I don't have a favourite film, but I love the Swedish thriller tv series *The Bridge*. It's excellent and I'd love to be able to produce a programme like that

How do you spend your spare time?

With this job there isn't too much spare time – there's always something to do. I live a 45-minute drive from the park, which is good or I'd always be here.

I like reading, walking the dogs and cooking nice meals to try and entice the kids back home

What drives you?

I'm not a caretaker. When I'm somewhere I want change and growth and results. But at Efteling I'm building on a lot of history. This combination makes it a very interesting job

How would you describe yourself?

I like to make a presence

How would others describe you?

As a motivator

What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

I once read: "You have to realise when you're happy." In other words, we should appreciate what we have while we actually have it.

Another piece of advice is: "Relax." That's from my wife!

"I APPLIED FOR THIS JOB IN 2008. BACK THEN THEY SAID I WASN'T QUALIFIED SO TO LATER BE APPROACHED FOR THE ROLE IS SWEET REVENGE!"

► The majority of Efteling's visitors are from the Netherlands with about 10 per cent from Germany and another 10 per cent from Belgium. "We do have visitors from Spain, Israel and the UK, but it's not as accessible," says de Boer.

Ten per cent of visitors stay at Efteling's 122-room hotel or in one of the 203 accommodations in the holiday park Efteling Village Bosrijk. Both the hotel and resort are constantly fully booked. "Many resorts in the Netherlands are having a difficult time, but we're not and are thinking of expanding," says de Boer. "I think we're the equivalent of the movie theatres in the 1930s – we give a day away from all the troubles. People need to have money to pay for it of course, so if things get worse it'll start to impact, but up til now we haven't been affected at all."

Efteling's employees are as loyal as its visitors. "Many stay here for years and we have whole families who have worked for us across generations. Everyone is very involved, which is wonderful," says de Boer. "But this can result in the organisation being a bit slow to react to suggestions because so many people are involved. I have to try and hurry things along without disturbing that very special Efteling feeling. That's my biggest challenge here."

Efteling won a Brass Ring Award in HR Excellence in 2010 with its internal program *Beterover* (Enchantment). "Key to this program is that our employees are told they can make the difference between a normal day in an attraction park or an exceptional experience," adds de Boer.

MEDIA

To add to this exceptional experience, the media side of Efteling is expanding rapidly. "Efteling Radio, featuring children's news and a fairytale of the day, started four years ago," says de Boer. "Broadcast to most of the Netherlands, it's one of the most listened to children's stations. We also produce and broadcast two hours of children's television every day through commercial station RTL84. It's shown in the Netherlands and in Belgium and we're expanding that. Our series *Raveleijn* has five million viewers, *Pardoes de Tovenaar* has already been seen by a million people



and our daily show *De Schatkamer* has about 100,000 viewers a day.

"Efteling worked with famous Dutch children's writer Paul van Loon to create a book called *Raveleijn*," he continues. "We produced the television series, set up *Hyees* (a Dutch Facebook-type site for children) for the different characters, launched an Internet game and created the show here in the park, so we do the whole range. The aim is to bring Efteling closer to people and doing it through tv works."

Efteling's Facebook page was set up a few months ago. It received 50,000 followers within two weeks of launching and is now up to 100,000. "I tweet to make Efteling reachable and we try to react actively to questions people raise on Facebook and Twitter," adds de Boer.

(Clockwise from top left) Piraña water ride; the Fairytale Tree; Polle's Kitchen; one of the park's golf courses; Donkey lift your tail; The wolf and the seven little kids



Polle's Kitchen opened this year and is the first part of Fantasy realm – Efteling's most expensive expansion

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

Despite embracing technology, Efteling is still very aware of its environmental policies, although de Boer points out that they have quite a mixed approach. "Of course we use as many environmental systems as we can," he explains. "We purify sewer water from the community of Kaatsheuvel with our own helophyte filter.

This water is used for watering Efteling's parks and greenery, the Efteling Golf Park and for Efteling's lakes and water-based attractions as well as the lake in Efteling Village Bosrijk. We've been doing that for 10 years so were very advanced in that area. However, we offer people a day away from everything and don't want them to be worrying about how they can save the environment – we want them to relax.

CAREER HISTORY

De Boer was approached for the role of CEO in 2008, but had officially applied for the appointment a decade before. "Back then they said I wasn't qualified, so to later be approached for the role is sweet revenge," he laughs.

Prior to Efteling, de Boer worked at a company which is now part of Center Parcs, for film distributor Filmnet and then for Eindhoven Airport. Efteling's product and its broadness appealed to de Boer. "How many jobs involve making a tv series, expanding a resort and choosing a new dragon?" he asks. "Yes, the job involves managing 2,200 staff and we have to make a profit and big investments, but it's a job with a very intriguing product and I have the ability to expand it, which makes it

wonderful. And everyone loves Efteling," he adds. "The name always brings a smile to people's faces."

De Boer is actively involved with IAAPA and is president of the European Advisory Board. "The contacts at IAAPA are very good," he remarks. "In just three years I got to know many people in the attractions industry and that's remarkable."

De Boer is keeping quiet about future developments for Efteling. "We have growth plans and know exactly what we want to do, but I'm not going to tell you what they are," he laughs. One thing's for sure, he'll be involved in ensuring those plans come to fruition. "I'm 61, but I'm not even thinking about quitting – I like it here much too much," he says. "As long as they want me here, I'll stay." ●

CHANGING TIMES

ATTRACTIONS MANAGEMENT
15TH ANNIVERSARY

Technology and consolidation are among the big changes in the past 15 years, with both good and bad results, as we discover in the second part of our series.

Keith James

Owner and CEO, JRA

“I’ve been in the industry for more than 40 years. In that time, technology has become so sophisticated that we now have many different ways of expressing the stories, from traditional walk-throughs to 5D attractions, and everything in between.

Technology has handed us so many options. However, an experience is always going to be based on the story. The story, not the machine, is what makes people come back.

Keeping current with technology and new opportunities is a challenge in the industry. As is getting used to jet-leg, because it really is a worldwide market. I work with a fantastic staff, and luckily for me, I sleep well on planes.



James has been in the industry for 40 years

As creators and designers, our challenge is always to stay ahead of what our guests can experience at home. Our facilities are designed so that the guests can get away from reality for a little while. Therefore, we always need

An experience is always going to be based on the story. The story, not the machine, is what makes people come back

to be a few steps ahead of their living room. The industry was more relaxed at the beginning of my career. Now, it's far more intense, but that's not a bad thing. Times are just different – and I've enjoyed all of it.”



JRA's projects include Ferrari World Abu Dhabi

Ylva French

Founder, Ylva French
Consultancy

The cultural attractions sector is now in serious competition with commercial attractions and provides visitor experiences that equal and surpass many commercial attractions.

This dramatic transformation has been driven by the expectations of visitors, who are better educated and more quality conscious. They're also keen not just to experience, but also to learn, and to encourage their children to learn.

Visitor services have been the biggest and most important change in most museums and galleries. We've moved on from a situation where the objects were king, to a customer-focused welcome instead. Facilities have been vastly improved, including toilets and cafés, as well as interpretation and interaction.



French has been running her consultancy since 1988

In the future, the semantic web (an extension of the World Wide Web that enables people to share content beyond the boundaries of applications and websites) will finally arrive to the museum sector and we'll have wonderful opportunities to explore world heritage online. Visiting in person will be just as popular and growing popu-

In the future, the semantic web will finally arrive to the museum sector and we'll have wonderful opportunities to explore world heritage online

lations and increased tourism will put enormous pressure on museums, galleries and heritage attractions. This will result in more timed ticket entry, not just for blockbuster exhibitions but for all sorts of attractions, to maintain the quality of the visitor experience. Social media and technology will continue to change – who knows what will be next."

Bob Rogers

Founder and CEO, BRC Imagination Arts

When BRC was established in 1981, there wasn't an attractions industry as such. There was an amusement park industry with coasters, flat rides and arcade equipment, but the market for ideas, storytelling and Disney-level technology that we associate with the industry today simply wasn't there – we made it up as we went along. The industry took off in the 1990s with breakthroughs in technology and in the expanding exchange of ideas due to the efforts of organisations such as *Attractions Management* and IAAPA.

By contrast, it's a big industry now. There are hundreds of firms and thousands of individuals ready to deliver the technology and skills necessary to create world-class attractions.

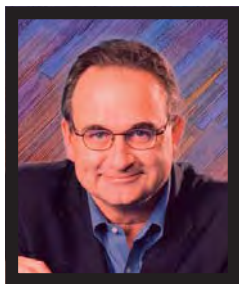
CHANGES

We used to dream about the kinds of experiences we'd like to create for our

guests, but couldn't because the technology didn't exist. Today, the limit isn't the technology, but your imagination. The technical breakthroughs we're seeing today are going to create astounding experiences in the next few years. There are things in our shop that we can't wait to show the world.

Another big development is that the people who work in this industry are smarter, better educated, more knowledgeable, more creative and every bit as driven as the industry pioneers of 40 and 50 years ago. Thirty years ago, we had the excitement of just beginning. Today, we have dedicated professionals who are passionate about new ideas and new possibilities.

Looking ahead, there is a danger that we'll become too set in our ways. At the recent IAAPA, Disney Legend's Marty Sklar and Jack Lindquist talked about the value of ignorance and how people who don't know what they can't do are more inclined to try the improbable and achieve the impossible.



Rogers founded BRC Imagination Arts 31 years ago

Periodically, you should try to forget what you know and start over.

We should focus on the quote by Henry David Thoreau [American author, poet and philosopher]: "Do not tell me what is new; tell me what is never old."

Using timeless wisdom and fresh imagination, we need to seize the new and drive it towards the great new guest experiences that are just now becoming possible."

David Camp

Director, economics, AECOM

"A major change has been the consolidation and commercialisation of the top end of the industry. Players have come and gone as private equity groups spotted the potential to increase the financial performance of the commercial attraction operators. There have been many positives to come out of this process: attraction operators have become more professional, as the ownership moved from families to companies to groups; greater levels of consumer research have led to far more customer-focused attractions; and regular investment in new rides and attractions have kept visitors coming back.

However, the private equity groups are not attraction lovers. They view the sector as a business in the same way they would a manufacturer of widgets. Their chief motivation is to get in cheaply, build value and exit with a profit. This is fine if they understand the sector – the need to put customers first and the fact that attractions need to regularly invest just to stand still. Many have, and the growth of the Tussauds Group and now Merlin Entertainments shows what supportive backers and a solid management team

can do together. Unfortunately this hasn't always been the case and there are some attraction businesses struggling to meet overambitious targets set by their financiers. While the market isn't conducive to sales currently, as soon as things improve there will be another round of transactions.

CHALLENGES

A huge challenge in the UK is the low value that government places on the sector. The foot and mouth epidemic of 2001 showed how disparate the attractions and hospitality industries are. While farmers spoke received government compensation for their losses, thousands of small attractions, hotels and other tourism businesses struggled or closed, as people stayed away from the countryside. An estimated 20-30,000 tourism jobs and more than £5bn in tourism revenue (more than 10 times the cost of culled farm stock) was lost as a result of the epidemic but this received little coverage.

The attractions industry is a vital driver of tourism revenues and employs hundreds of thousands of people, yet is not seen as a real business sector. There's an outcry if one factory closes with the loss of 100 jobs, yet many times more jobs have been lost in small businesses around the country. We need to work together more in the future.



Camp is head of AECOM's European & Middle East team

FUTURE CHANGES

Internet and mobile communications are only just impacting the industry. Most attractions have web pages, but few use them for much more than a poster advert. This is largely a resources issue, but costs will come down and more companies will offer services to small attractions. Then they can use mobile communications to make daily offers, promote deals and communicate with customers more effectively than they can currently. However, the clamour for customer attention is growing ever louder and the challenge will be in being heard among the multitude of other businesses that will be doing the same."

Lesley Morisetti

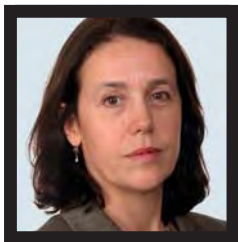
Director, LM Associates

"The development of branded midway attractions, especially for younger children (for example, Legoland Discovery Centre, Kidzania, Thomas Land), and the licensing of brands has grown, as it becomes increasingly challenging for operating profits alone to fund larger standalone attractions, in particular new theme parks.

Other major changes include consolidation of ownership and the creation of powerful operating groups in Europe, plus the removal of entry fees for the UK's National Collections in 2001.

The economic downturn makes sourcing development funding more

challenging, but experience shows that success or failure of a new attraction is more aligned to whether or not it's the right concept in the correct location, rather than as a result of the short-term impact of the economy.



Morisetti provides independent advice to attractions

Customers have increasingly high expectations and a growing desire to customise and share their experiences. Successful attractions operators ensure they have a depth of understanding of their customers and put them at the forefront of all decisions.

From a product perspective, the most fascinating debate for the industry will be the balance between created experiences and the real thing. The ability to 'trick' us into thinking that we're experiencing reality – whether it's a thrill ride or a cultural experience – and to enhance that reality to provide a physically impossible experience is forever increasing.

However, I still believe there's a role for the real experience – you just can't beat the exhilaration of a roller coaster or the beauty of seeing original paintings and artefacts."

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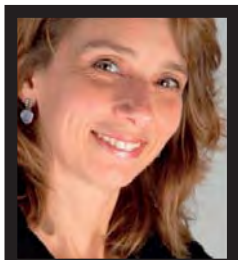
Catherine Franche

Executive director, Ecsite

"Society has changed, so the role of science centres and museums have also changed. Issues such as climate change, nanotechnology, biodiversity, energy and genetically modified products and organisms are now much more present in the public sphere through newspapers, the Internet and political discourse.

Science centres and museums are responding actively and consciously to demographic changes by reaching out to minorities, integrating art and science for new audiences, developing

Members of the public are beginning to recognise their ability to competently discuss science on an equal footing with scientists



Franche has been executive director since 2006

programmes for our ageing population, and actively contributing to the cohesion of their own communities.

Also, partnerships with local authorities and universities are abundant and these are becoming even more powerful and efficient.

Social media and the reach of the internet continue to change the science communication landscape. There are now more varied and accessible sources of information, but, perhaps more importantly, the power balance of knowledge has changed. Members of the public are beginning to recognise their ability to competently discuss science on equal footing with scientists or science communication professionals.

This has led science centres and museums to change the way they work by, for example, co-developing exhibitions and activities with citizens and organisations or integrating social media into exhibitions. By doing so, science centres and museums enhance their role as information hubs that can connect diverse groups to scientific and technological issues.

ECSITE'S CHANGES

In 2005, Ecsite participated in five European projects; by 2010 this number had doubled. Ecsite has successfully gained recognition among policy makers, notably from the European Commission. For example, our position on public inclusion in science-related matters was written into the recent European Biodiversity Research Strategy 2010-2020, which was adopted by the European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy at its meeting in Palma de Mallorca in 2010.

With its diverse membership, creative energy and motivated spirit, Ecsite's future is as exciting as the field of science itself. Ecsite's strengths are the power of the network's diverse expertise, combined with the focus and professional leadership of its executive office and board. Ecsite is now regarded as a definitive European voice in science engagement." (See p48 for details of the Ecsite 2012 conference)

Terry Stevens

Founder and managing director, Stevens & Associates

"The greatest changes in the past 15 years have been: the impressive emergence of Merlin Entertainment as a UK company that is a genuine global player; the post-Millennium grant bonanza realisation that successful projects must have a market, a genius, a rationale and a compelling story – egos don't produce sustainable attractions; and the flawed, misguided political dogma that has created free access to public museums and art galleries in the UK. This is distorting the marketplace and creating a false, uneven playing field. As a result, the private sector is highly focused on market-led development and innova-

tion while public sector attractions have a false sense of security resulting in complacency and mediocre service.

Worldwide, the introduction of social media is a great tool to give attractions new ways of interacting with their target groups while consumer-uploaded content prevents any hiding place.

In the future there will be a greater emphasis on the consumer being part of creating their experience – from consumer to prosumer – allowing customised, unique and individual experiences to prevail. This will mean attractions becoming a means to an end rather than being the experience.

Looking to the future, I'm concerned about the lack of real innovation in



Stevens has been a tourism consultant for 25 years

our industry. We're in danger of 'serial reproduction' of ideas. What we need is for fresh creative talent to join the attractions industry."

Kevin Murphy

“While many of the techniques we use today were in existence years ago, technological advances have

made things easier and now the use of technology is the norm. This has good points and bad points. When we had to struggle with simpler tools, more care went into design and content, and with high costs, more due diligence was applied when using any technologies at all. Nowadays, as there's so much available to use, anyone can have a go and I feel that the advance in displays and interactive technologies have introduced more mediocre content and also technology for technology's sake.

Another change is that the entertainment, themed and education sectors

are much more closely linked. Now organisations and conferences cross the sectors and professions, bringing in operators, architects, designers, integrators, project managers and all the various suppliers and disciplines needed to make a project happen. It feels more of a cohesive industry than it did years ago, yet there's still room for improvement. Ask anyone in our industry to describe what our industry is, and you will get many different answers, but the changes in perception and practice are actually quite tangible.

UNWELCOME ADDITIONS

I'm not keen on the commercialisation of glasses-based 3D. I really liked some of the 3D shows that were around 15 or more years ago – they were special. I have yet to see a commercial 3D release in the cinema that moves me as much as a really good story told in



Murphy joined the attractions industry in 1977

plain old 2D. I even wonder if we're still going through another 3D phase, as there have been some before over the years which then resulted in a loss of interest by the public, although we can see a high penetration into the home now which could keep it alive.

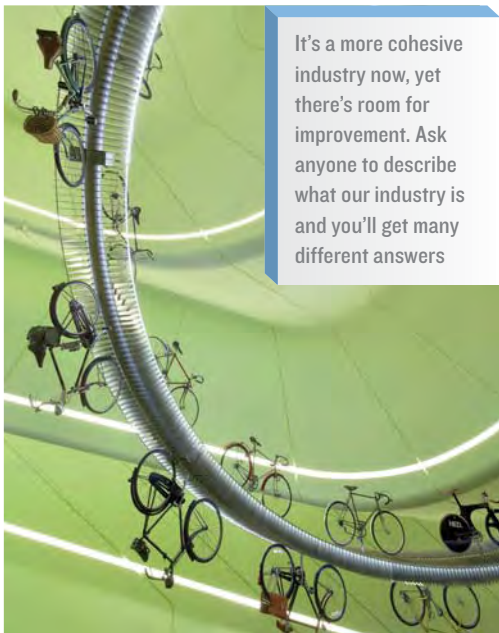
Augmented reality was also introduced way too soon. While there are now a few applications that are worth a look, many applications were lame and uninspiring. Possibly with the advances in technology and displays, in 10 years' time AR can really take off and inspire uses that benefit and entertain to a much higher degree.

EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS

The most exciting development has been the immersive experience. I like taking large numbers of visitors on a journey in a group. There's still room for the singular experience, but I feel strongly that people enjoy being with others and having an experience fed to them, with a strong storyline and series of sensory stimulations, particularly visual and aural.

With dramatic changes in projection technology, lens design, and now LED technology, the last 10 years has seen astonishing developments in what we can do both to and for the visitor.

For the next 15 years, the most radical change will still be linked to technology in some way, with the basic concepts and commercial realities offering the same sets of issues, opportunities and upsets over the years. Not all the changes will be good, but advances in projection and LEDs will ensure that digital immersive spaces on a large scale will be explored even more across the sectors, taking visitors to places they can only imagine.” ●



It's a more cohesive industry now, yet there's room for improvement. Ask anyone to describe what our industry is and you'll get many different answers

Event's designs for travel museum Riverside, Glasgow include a velodrome displaying 30 bicycles



MOVIE MAGIC

The UK's newest attraction opened in March, bringing together two huge, global brands. The top team talk about the magic of creating a new attraction

KATHLEEN WHYMAN • MANAGING EDITOR • ATTRACTIONS MANAGEMENT

SARAH ROOTS
Vice president



What is Warner Bros. Studio Tour London – The Making of Harry Potter?

It's the UK's newest attraction and is the coming together of two huge, global brands – Warner Bros. and Harry Potter. It's been put together by filmmakers, so the quality, design and presentation are of an extremely high standard. I don't think the UK has ever seen anything like it.

What's the visitor experience?

It's access to the authentic sets, costumes and props from the making of the Harry Potter films. Our drive is to bring that to life and make the experience engaging and interactive so visitors can enjoy and understand the context around the sets and props and costumes.

The experience starts with a 12-minute film, then visitors are led into the Great Hall. This is the only part of the tour that's guided and visitors are introduced to the concept of what the experience is about.

During the Studio Tour there are visuals and special effects, touchscreens, green screen and photo opportunities. We've also got media featuring freshly filmed interviews with the cast and crew and a digital guide from Antenna with unseen footage from behind the scenes, including

Daniel Radcliffe's first audition. People will be surprised at how much there is to do and also by the sheer scale of it.

Where was the inspiration for the Tour?

Normally a set is temporary and is destroyed at the end of the film. Here the sets were very permanently built and remained in place for the duration of the 10 years that Harry Potter was filmed. The sets and props were created with painstaking care and craftsmanship. They're a showcase of British talent. That was the driver – it would be such a shame to destroy them when they could be shared.

How did you work with the films' crew?

All of the original heads of departments were here throughout. Oscar-winner Stephenie McMillan was the set dresser and John Richardson, who won a BAFTA for the film's special effects, was employed to work on the Studio Tour. So was Stuart Craig, the creative designer for all of the films, and the one who interpreted JK Rowling's descriptions and came up with the final design. In the attraction we have some lovely visuals that show how Craig's sketches became full design drawings that then became shots in the film.

How can the attraction be developed?

We've got lots of research planned so we can find out from our visitors what works well. We have the ability to move things out of storage, swap sets in and out, add

**"A START UP PROJECT
WITH TWO POWERFUL,
GLOBAL BRANDS
IS VERY UNUSUAL
AND IRRESISTIBLE"**

things, or just make small changes. We can adapt to trends if something comes up outside of this world that we can link into a certain element of the attraction.

We have expansion space, which we will use in the future. And there's the option to showcase other Warner Bros. films that have been made at Leavesden.

What's your day-to-day role?

When I joined in October 2010 my role was project management – creating our brand and position and identifying our audience, then developing operational plans and building the team. Now that we're open my role is more of a general manager. I also look at how we respond to feedback and how we invest our development capital.

In the past I've worked with Tussauds Group, the National Trust and, most recently, the National Maritime Museum and Royal Observatory at Greenwich, UK. I had no plans to leave, but then Warner Bros. presented me with the opportunity to work on a start up project with two powerful, global brands. These two factors are very unusual and irresistible.



(Main picture) the visitor experience starts with The Great Hall; (above) the Weasley's kitchen includes interactives; (right) the hand sculpted construction of Hogwarts Castle

DOMINIC WONG
Marketing and
communications director



What's your role?

I set and implement the marketing, branding, communication and advertising strategy. When I started in early 2010 I was the first permanent employee of the Studio Tour, so my job was to build a brand from scratch and get people to understand what that was. I did research and focus groups to develop the content. Now my role includes reacting to feedback and issuing new PR stories to keep the buzz going.

What's the marketing strategy?

Our strategy is about raising awareness of what we are. We're different from anything else in the marketplace, so we push those behind the scenes messages and the fact that we use targeted media to reach and reinforce that the attraction isn't just for Harry Potter fans – it shows how films are made; and day-trippers and tourists to London.

We have three target markets: Harry Potter fans, who we work with via websites and our global Warner Bros. teams who have that fan base in place; film fans, who we use targeted media to reach and reinforce that the attraction isn't just for Harry Potter fans – it shows how films are made; and day-trippers and tourists to London.

An additional target market is overseas. Our website is in French, German and Spanish and we're doing some digital activity in Germany, France and America.

What are the challenges?

The Studio Tour is only accessible through pre-booking, which is a challenge because it's not the norm. One of the main communication messages right from the beginning has been that you have to have a ticket before you can get on site.

My personal challenge was that when I started we had no name, logo or team. However, when you've got two brands like Warner Bros. and Harry Potter, and a new attraction in a new studio, there's a lot of excitement. I saw it as a great challenge to create a brand that pulled all those messages and ideals together.

How do you use social media?

We're doing really, really well – if I do say so myself! We had 75,000 Facebook fans before we'd even opened and now have more than 100,000. We encourage visitors to share their experiences via Facebook, TripAdvisor and our post-visit micro site.

We have access to the British talent who are responsible for the production and design of the films. At the BAFTAS we were tweeting live from the red carpet and had

a photo of Daniel Radcliffe for our twitter feed, then news of the award the films won. Our social media fans really respond to that. It gives us so much credibility and that extra differentiation between what we are and anything else out there.

How can you ensure people don't confuse you with Universal Studio's The Wizarding World of Harry Potter?

We've been careful right from the start to make our positioning completely different.

Our attraction is about the making of films and there's a very clear difference. We've focused on pushing the behind the scenes element and use the director's chair, set lighting and rigging in all our brand values and creatives to convey that.

We give access to the tips, tricks and secrets that go into the sets, such as the fact that the books in Dumbledore's office are covered phone directories. Or that the actors had to sit in their beds at an angle during the last films, as they'd outgrown them. We pull the visitor back a few feet from what they've watched on screen, so they get to view what the cast and crew see. ▶





(Above) Dumbledore's office; (right) Some of the models in the Creatures Effects Workshop



LAURA WATSON

Visitor experience director



How do you train staff?

We've taken the team to a new level of standard using vocal training and confidence building. Staff are also trained intensively in Harry Potter. All of the heads of department from the films have been in and given talks to everyone.

We have about 100 full time staff and in excess of 200 when we're fully staffed at high season. We've worked hard to create a cool culture and a great place to work. We want our staff to look forward to coming in as much as the visitors do.

How do you manage visitors?

It's time ticketed, so visitors are pulsed through the tour every 30 minutes. We estimate a dwell time of three hours, but there's no time limit.

We've planned the attraction so visitors have a lovely experience of space and don't feel as though they're crowded in.

The most visitors we anticipate having in a day is 5,000 when tours run from 10am til 6pm during school holidays. The rest of the year tours run til 4pm.

"EACH STONE IS LAID DOWN IN EXACTLY THE SAME WAY AS IT WAS IN THE FILMS. VISITORS WALK OVER THE SAME FLOOR AS THE CAST - THAT'S THE MAGIC OF THE EXPERIENCE"

How is the content protected?

The Great Hall is already weathered and we want that to continue, as it adds to the character, so visitors can touch the walls and the stone floor. Each stone is numbered underneath so that when it was moved to this site it could be laid down in exactly the same way as it was in the films. Visitors walk over the same floor as Daniel Radcliffe and the rest of the cast did - that's the magic of the experience.

Other areas though are very fragile. We have alarms, barriers, cameras and RFID so visitors can't touch anything. The host asks visitors for their help in protecting the assets and keeping them there for future generations. We use that approach rather than "don't touch".

CRAIG HANNA

Chief creative officer,
Thinkwell



What's the design?

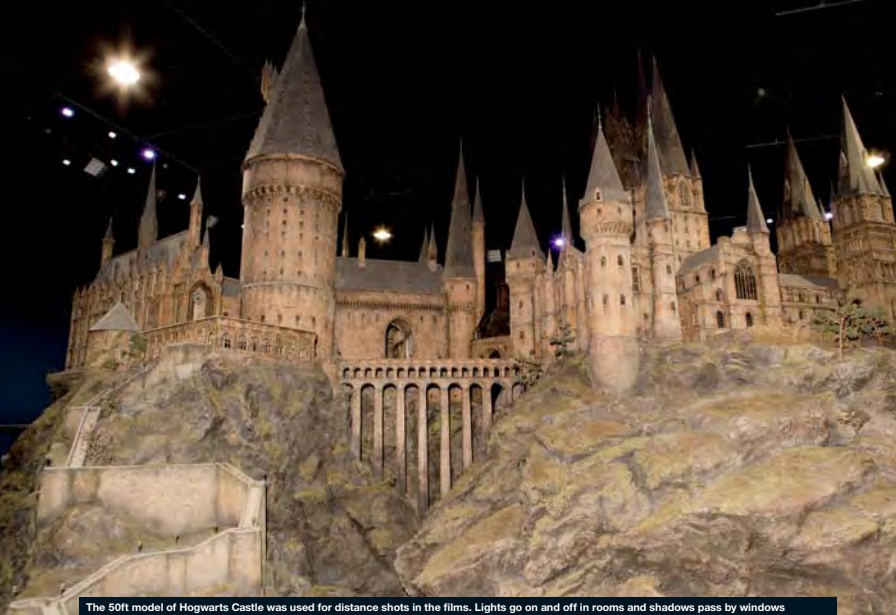
We've created a permanent attraction around the sets, props and costumes, as they were used in the making of the films.

In most cases, the sets are dressed and lit just as though you were lucky enough to go to Leavesden when the films were being made and step right onto the set. People will be astonished by the attention to detail.

Key elements, such as the principle wands, are in display cases where visitors can get their noses right up to them and appreciate the incredible attention to detail of the work of the props team. Some of the props are stacked in the middle of the floor with a cage around them, as they would be on an actual sound stage.

What were the challenges?

The film sets and sizes couldn't be altered. There were drawings for every set, but what



The 50ft model of Hogwarts Castle was used for distance shots in the films. Lights go on and off in rooms and shadows pass by windows

was drawn and what ended up being built was very different. So we'd have a drawing for a set at a certain height, but when we put the set in the space, it was much bigger. It called for a lot of organic planning on our part to accommodate these things.

Another challenge was deciding what to display. We wanted it all – there really is an embarrassment of riches – but 150,000sq ft (14,000sq m) isn't big enough for everything, so we had to cull it down.

We put ourselves into the shoes of the fans to decide which were the poignant, iconic or important sets and pieces from the film that people wanted to see. We'd have huge arguments over what we were going to select!

What was it like working with such a well-known brand?

Thinkwell trod very lightly into this world of Harry Potter. We're the custodians of this, not the creators of any of the beautiful stuff – we're merely putting the wrapping and packaging around it so visitors can explore it and enjoy it.

It's been a pleasure and honour to work with the directors, crew and cast. To be involved with these amazing people, who are so wonderful, delightful and pleased to be a part of this process, is a rare opportunity and a treat I'll never forget.

DAVID KENDAL Retail and Commercial director



What's the retail offer?

We have a really wide selection, all of which was inspired by the films. It ranges from key rings – 25 per cent of our items are under £10 (€12, US\$16) – and t-shirts, right up to authentic prop replicas and limited edition artwork from the archives. The most expensive item is Dumbledore's replica robe at £495 (€596, US\$795).

We also have the Honeydukes confectionary range. These include Bertie Bott's Every Flavour Beans with the authentic disgusting flavours, such as sausage and soap, as well as the nice ones.

Seventy-five per cent of our range can only be bought here or at Universal Studios in Orlando.

What size is the shop?

It's a 6,000sq ft (557sq m) retail unit. The shop is a mix of props and retail and was designed to be a continuation of the tour, as opposed to an add-on.

The staff really engage with visitors. They help them choose a wand, interact using toys and give that extra level of service.

What is the F&B offer?

We have a Starbucks, plus a café serving fast, hot food with 200 covers. There's also an outdoor seating area.

Our most exciting F&B offer is freshly made Butterbeer, which is sold in a kiosk in the back lot area. The Studio Tour and Universal Studios Orlando are the only two places you can buy it from. The recipe is a closely guarded secret.

How will the retail offer be developed?

We'll be adding to it this autumn and next spring. We have development capital so we can refresh it regularly.

We'd love to do a beautiful range with the Hogwarts castle, so we're in development on a few things like that.

TICKET PRICES

Adult	-	£28.00
Child	-	£21.00
Family	-	£83.00

The Complete Studio Tour
Package Adult - £37.95

The Complete Studio Tour
Package Child - £30.95



(Main picture) Much of the furniture used in Dolores Umbridge's study was found in second hand shops; (below) the potions classroom contains thousands of jars, all with hand-written labels

FIRST PERSON EXPERIENCE

Kathleen Whyman



I am a Harry Potter fan. Not to the extent that I'm con-

templating getting a lightening tattoo on my forehead, but I love the films and became the most unsocial person on the planet each time a book was released, unable to interact with other human beings on any level until I'd finished reading each instalment. So I was very excited to visit the Warner Bros. Studio Tour London - The Making of Harry Potter.

Too excited perhaps? Was I setting myself up for disappointment? The answer is no - I thoroughly enjoyed it.

The sets are everything they're hailed to be. The attention to detail is truly fascinating and I could stand and stare for hours (and did, in fact) and still not feel as though I'd seen everything. Staff gave me additional behind-the-scenes facts, as did the written media and accompanying interviews with cast and crew, all of which enhanced the experience.

After being on my feet for two hours I was ready for a break so was pleased to head onto a rest area in the back lot between the sets and the second part of the tour - the Creature Effects Workshop and the art department. Refreshments are sold here, including the famous Butterbeer and I doubt many visitors can resist a



glass. The external sets of Privet Drive, the Dursleys' and the Potter's house, Hagrid's motorbike, the Ford Anglia that Harry and Ron "borrow" and the Knight Bus are placed as perfect photo opportunities.

The Butterbeer, a few poses in front of the set pieces and a foot rub (self administered - the guides are helpful, but even they have limits) pepped me up and I loved looking around the Creature Effects Workshop and learning how the animatronics were created. The art department's transitions from sketch to detailed drawing, to model to film still were amazing to look at. It never occurred to me that tiny models would be made of almost everything used, right down to a printing press, which you only see fleeting in one of the films, and miniscule owls perched in the owlery.

Walking along Diagon Alley and peering into the shop windows was great fun, but my real wow moment was when I turned the corner and saw the amazing model of

Hogwarts Castle. It's called a model, but it's nothing like the Airfix type my brother and I used to create; this is an intricate miniature creation of how Hogwarts looks, complete with lights at the windows. Fifty feet in diameter (15m), it's a masterpiece of craftsmanship and is breathtaking.

My last stop was the exit through the gift shop, which is impressively stocked. Although tempted by wands, a puppet owl which turns its head and coos, and even a replica of the dress Hermione wore to the Yule Ball, the prices stopped me going overboard, so I limited myself to some authentically-themed confectionery.

The attraction has been done extremely well and afterwards I wanted to race home and rewatch the films, so I could take in everything I hadn't noticed before. I will definitely come back, as there was too much to absorb in one visit. Too bad the shop didn't sell floor powder to make it quicker for me to return. ●

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Objects are brought to life through theatrical stories

SHIP SHAPE

Dutch Maritime history is told using 21st century design techniques at the Sheepvaart museum. By Kathleen Whyman



Alex McCuaig

The Sheepvaart museum, or Amsterdam Maritime Museum, showcases the last 400 years of Dutch Maritime History. After a refurbishment initiative to position

it at the cutting edge of global museum interpretation, it reopened in October 2011.

MET Studio designed the £1m (€1.2m, US\$1.6m) Dutch Maritime Experience, which covers 600sq m (6,500sq ft) of the total 4,000sq m (43,000sq ft) museum space. The brief was to create a fully immersive visitor walk-through experience based simply around three objects: letters from a teenage sailor who was lost at sea; a blanket a little girl was wrapped in when rescued from a passenger ship struck by

a German torpedo; and the Naval depot building that's now the Scheepvaart museum. "We brought the objects to life through the stories and the people behind them in a theatrical setting," says MET Studio's founder and chair Alex McCuaig.

FOUR ENVIRONMENTS

The design is broken into four immersive environments. The first deals with the building – visitors enter a modern day room, which transforms before their eyes and takes them 400 years into the past to the golden age of Dutch maritime history. Virtual characters are introduced, who set the scene for a perilous sea journey.

The second area places visitors on the deck of a ship, surrounded by 360 degree HD moving images projected onto a 7m (23ft) high AV screen. The audience goes on a voyage spanning 300 years, where

they encounter stormy seas, ferocious sea battles, legends of ghost ships and the First World War. "As the stories and action unfold, we gently rock and undulate the virtual horizon to create the illusion that the visitor's at sea," says McCuaig.

The third area places visitors below the deck of a passenger ship as it's struck by a German U-Boat torpedo. Moving scenery and virtual characters are used to set the scene and show the dramatic rescue of the small girl wrapped in the blanket. The fourth environment displays an uplifting and positive scene of returning home from the sea journey. A combination of AV and infinity mirrors creates an animated view of returning to the Amsterdam Docks and being greeted by all of the characters introduced throughout the experience. Finally, the virtual characters fade and the real objects from the stories remain.

THE PRODUCTION

The project's AV, lighting and network design work was done by local integration firm Rapenburg Plaza. Global design and fabrication firm Hypsos also worked on the project.

The exhibit Voyage at Sea is a five-room, 20-minute, immersive walk-through cinematic experience in which visitors are taken on a journey through five centuries of Dutch maritime history. Its centrepiece is a 360-degree, oval-shaped projection which uses 10 edge-blended projectors with wide-angle lenses, along with snap-on cartridges custom-designed by Rapenburg Plaza for additional image filtering.

Content was provided by Amsterdam-based Tungsten AV Designers to a design concept by Tinker Imagineers of Utrecht. The film's played back through QuickTime ProRes software and is run through five dual-motherboard PCs, each running two licenses of Dataton's Watchout multi-display production and playback system. The Watchout machines, which are located in the museum's central server room alongside the content servers, lighting controllers and network switches, provide eight tracks of audio. These are routed through a Richmond SoundMan server to create the sound track.



Visitors go on a sea voyage on board the deck of a ship

SWEET SUCCESS

Chocolate – York's Sweet Story's celebrates 200 years of confectionary manufacture and consumption

Most people enjoy chocolate, but their appreciation can be taken to a whole new level at Chocolate – York's Sweet Story. The new £2m (€2.4m, US\$3.2m) UK attraction is based on the city of York's role in the manufacture of chocolate and confectionery over the last two hundred years.

Confectioners lead visitors through a delicious journey from the Aztecs and Mayans to the present day confectionery industry. Guests can perfect their chocolate tasting skills (chocolate should be savoured, rather than gulped down) and learn about the intricate processes that cocoa beans go through in order to become chocolate.

The attraction features archive materials including World War One Christmas tins and the tin of Rowntree's chocolate found alongside the body of Scott of the Antarctic in 1912.

TASTY OFFER

"The vision wasn't to create a museum or a mini theme park, but to build a vibrant visitor attraction which created a stage on which the stories could be told," explains Continuum's CEO Juliana Delaney. "The key to Chocolate's future appeal is that the content isn't fixed. The stories are so plentiful and the objects so various that the visitor experience will be refreshed regularly."

The stories currently being told include the huge impact a Quaker named Mary Tuke made in York when she opened a grocery store in 1725 to sell cocoa; the influence of sugared almonds on 1960s fashion; how the sale of cough lozenges and lemon and orange peel in 1767 led to the creation of Terry's Chocolate Oranges



Two centuries of confectionery are celebrated at Chocolate

and All Gold, which are still popular today; and a look at the billion dollar brand KitKat that now sells 17.8 billion fingers every year worldwide in many different forms – in Japan alone there are 43 varieties of the bar, including wasabi.

Situated in the heart of the city, the 6,000sq ft (550sq m) three-storey attraction opened on 31st March and includes a shop and café selling choctails.

Suppliers to the project included Centrescreen and Paragon, Skelton Consultancy and MET Studio, which did the interior fit-out and exhibition, including all the graphics and script.

DELICIOUS DESIGN

MET Studio's design director Lloyd Hicks decided against a diorama-based historical approach on the origins of chocolate in Central America or a Willy Wonka fun factory experience. "We wanted to tell this

fascinating story in a more immersive and interactive way," says Hicks. "Our central premise was the idea of chocolate alchemy and the ingredients and processes that go into the art of chocolate-making."

"Visually, a massive sculpted ribbon, based on the look of melted chocolate, threads throughout one whole floor, creating structure in the space. The ribbon is inset with interactives, objects and graphics which cover provenance, recipes and individual confectionery successes – with the world-leading KitKat featuring here – as well as packaging, advertising and a celebration of the industry's founding fathers."

"Large bubbles, inspired by melting chocolate, are used to tell the story of chocolate as visitors go through this floor," continues Hicks. "Trained cast members act as confectioners, advising on the art of chocolate-making and teaching visitors how to properly enjoy chocolate." ●

TITANIC BELFAST

Marking the centenary of its maiden voyage and tragic end, new attraction Titanic Belfast highlights the ships' splendour and grandeur, but also reminds visitors that this is a story about individual lives and losses

KATHLEEN WHYMAN • MANAGING EDITOR • ATTRACTIONS MANAGEMENT



A bronze sculpture called Titanica sits in front of the building

ABOUT TITANIC BELFAST

Opened on 31st March for the centenary of the famous maiden voyage, Titanic Belfast is the world's largest Titanic exhibition. Six thousand people visited the attraction on its opening weekend and 40,000 within the first 10 days. The project is part of Titanic Quarter, Europe's largest waterfront regeneration project, encompassing 75 acres of former industrial land to the south side of the River Lagan in Belfast city centre.

The 14,000sq m (150,700sq ft), six-floor, £76m (€92m, US\$121m) visitor experience is built on the plating works of Harland & Wolff's Shipyard, where the actual ship was created.

The venue accommodates nine galleries of exhibition space, drawing together special effects, a dark ride, underwater exploration

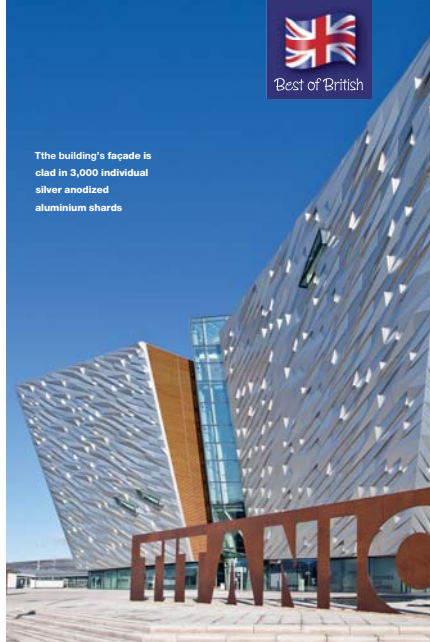
theatre and recreations of the ship's decks and cabins and innovative interactive features to explore the sights, sounds, smells and stories of Titanic, as well as the city and people which made her.

To enhance the experience, Acoustiguide's Opus Click multimedia guide is available in six languages – English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Mandarin.

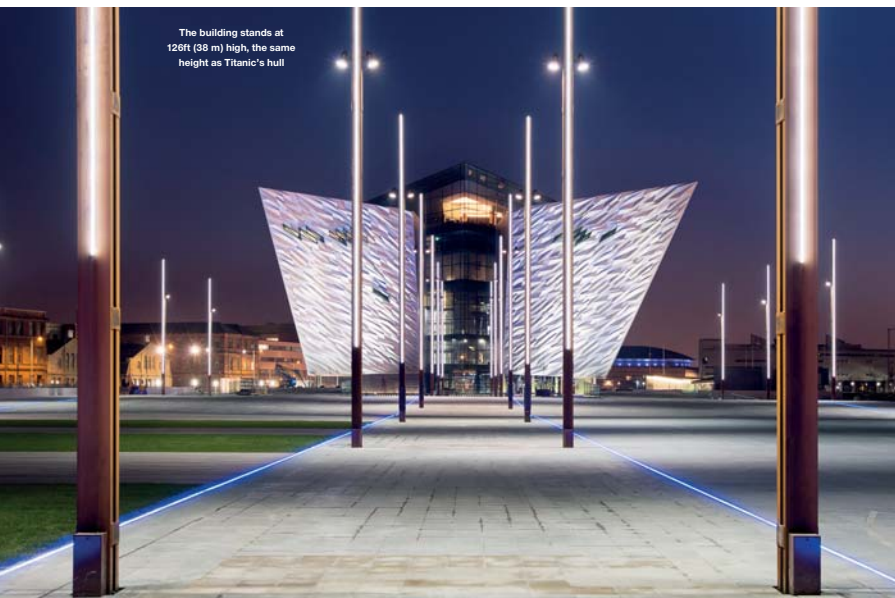
The building also houses temporary exhibits, a banqueting suite, education and community facilities, catering and retail space and a basement car park.

Supported by the Northern Ireland Executive, Titanic Belfast is a unique public/private partnership funded by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Belfast City Council, Belfast Harbour and Titanic Quarter Ltd. It's operated by Titanic Belfast Ltd and owned by the Titanic Foundation Ltd.

The building's façade is clad in 3,000 individual silver anodized aluminium shards



The building stands at 126ft (38 m) high, the same height as Titanic's hull



TECHNICAL CONCEPT DESIGN AND SPECIFICATION BY EVENT COMMUNICATIONS



James Alexander, chief executive

“Our aim was to create a fully immersive exhibition that explores Edwardian Belfast, where the Titanic was built. As well as the story of the ship, we look at the people who crafted her, the passengers who sailed on her and the scientists who found her. The experience includes a ride, a 3D ‘cave’ that allows visitors to walk through the ship and HD footage of the wreck of the Titanic.

THE EXPERIENCE IS TOLD THROUGH A SERIES OF NINE GALLERIES:

1 Boomtown Belfast: Visitors walk through the ‘streets’ of 1900s Belfast. Set pieces, artefacts, photographs, soundscapes, oral testimony, archive material and film set the context for the birth of the Titanic. We wanted visitors to feel part of the street scenes and for their shadows to become part of the display if close to the screens. To facilitate this, new short throw zoom lenses were used on the video projectors, enabling the projectors to be positioned as close to the screen as possible and high in the ceiling with an extreme offset.

2 The Shipyard: Visitors take a 20m journey in a metal elevator up the Arrol Gantry, the enormous steel structure built to facilitate the construction of Titanic and her sister ships, Olympic and Britannic. They then join Harland & Wolff’s workers on a ‘shipyard ride’. Believed to be the first of its kind, the ride is a five-minute journey in a six-seater car that rotates and moves up and down along a circuit accompanied by CGI, audio and special effects. Full-size replicas, including riveting machines and Titanic’s rudder, give a scale perspective into working life in the shipyard.

3 The Launch: Visitors have a view down the slips where this momentous occasion took place. Innovative glazing transposes original imagery of Titanic’s onto the glass, demonstrating the sheer scale of the vessel.

4 The Fit-out: A look at the skill and craftsmanship that went into Titanic, from the fitting of its enormous boilers and engines to the fine joinery and upholstery work of its linens, carpets and cabins. Visitors will experience the reality of the ship’s interiors in a three-sided ‘cave’ that recreates the engine rooms, third class saloons, first class corridors, grand staircase, à la carte restaurant and navigation bridge, allowing visitors to ‘walk’ the ship’s length. There are also detailed, full-scale reconstructions of first, second and third class cabins. The three-sided cave (a virtual environment) takes visitors on a journey through the ship using a custom designed CGI show. The three sides of the virtual space were represented by special rear projection screens on a huge scale, using projection rigs with mirrors to reduce the space taken up by the projectors.

5 Maiden Voyage: A showcase of the extraordinary photographs of Father Frank Browne, the young Irish Jesuit who was given a gift of a ticket to travel on Titanic from Southampton to Queenstown and photographed the journey. His images provide a unique chronicle of Titanic’s first and only voyage.



6 The sinking: The atmosphere of the exhibition changes into a dramatic sensory experience, as visitors enter a darkened tunnel where the temperature, soundtrack and images all evoke the tragedy of Titanic’s collision with an iceberg and subsequent sinking, with the loss of 1,500 lives. They then move into an area where the narrative follows the stories of survivors and victims, and the worldwide press coverage of the tragedy.

7 The Aftermath: A poignant wall of 400 life vests leads into interactive visual and audio displays centred round a 25ft (7.6m) replica of a Titanic lifeboat interpret the aftermath of the sinking, the British and American inquiries into the disaster and the ongoing question of who – if anyone – was to blame, as well as the important changes to safety at sea legislation.

8 Myths and Legends: After the disaster, Titanic’s story fragments as legends and cultural representations of the ship become different from the reality. An interactive table enables visitors to explore some of the films, books, plays and poetry which Titanic has inspired. The interactive table features a combination of five 4in (10cm) LCD monitors, built into a display with capacitive touch foils.

9 The Wreck: Gallery nine is an immersive theatre, which utilises a large, three-chip high definition (HD) video projector on a 12m (39ft)-wide screen with a 5.1 multi-channel sound system. Narrated by ocean explorer Dr Robert Ballard, the film creates the illusion of flying over the wreck before descending to appreciate a close up of the wreck, made from a mosaic of thousands of Ballard’s photographs. This was achieved with multiple video projectors, projecting down into the pit and soft edge blended using the in-built projector processing. Visitors also see some of the thousands of items which lie around the wreck. The narrative ends, not with the disaster, but with an examination of how the spirit of Titanic has lived on, in the Ocean Exploration Centre.”

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* ABC audit for LiW 2011 (20-22 September 2011). Total attendance: 9,064. Visitor attendance: 7,177. Exhibitor attendance: 1,877.

SYSTEMS INTEGRATION, DETAILED DESIGN, PROGRAMMING AND INSTALLATION by DJ Willrich

John Doe, project lead

"Museum and attractions design specialist Event Communications had created a stunning vision for Titanic Belfast. It was DJ Willrich's brief to bring this to reality, working with software providers ISO Design and Graham English and Company. The exhibit had to be world-class, inject life back into the shipyard and create a unique and truly memorable visitor experience that would allow visitors to understand the Titanic story in a fully interactive way.

Instant impact was vital and interactive exhibits were incorporated to involve guests from the start.

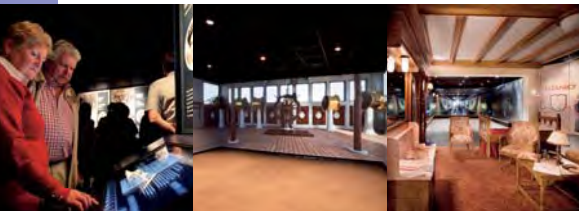
Among the highlights of our work is in Gallery One, Boomtown Belfast. It features a videoscape of six, 4m x 3.5m (13ft x 11.5ft) screens showing images of Belfast during the 1900s. On another wall, seven monitors show portrait and landscape images of the various industries in the city during that time. In the same area we installed an interactive made up of four projections



onto the floor, where designs of the ship are beamed. A logo lights up and tells visitors to 'stand here' for more information on specific parts of the ship. Cameras above the visitor use infrared technology to sense their presence and audio and images are played to give them more information.

In Gallery Two, the Arrol Gantry, guests are taken on a dark ride through the shipyard to witness the vessel being built. Gallery Four explores the fit-out and includes a video cave of three 6m (20ft) screens in a box, showing a 3D video journey of what each deck of the vessel looked like. Working alongside Paradigm AV and using Watch Out software, we were able to ensure all projections were synchronised together. CGI footage was provided by ISO design. Also in the fit-out area, the power of projection is used to bring the story of Titanic's passengers to life, as DJW's projectors transfer 'memory-like' images of people into the set of carefully recreated second and first class cabins.

The action continues to the final gallery where visitors see a film detailing the discovery of the Titanic wreck on a 12m (39ft) screen. As they look down to the glass floor, they're greeted by a soft edge projected image of the vessel itself under their feet."



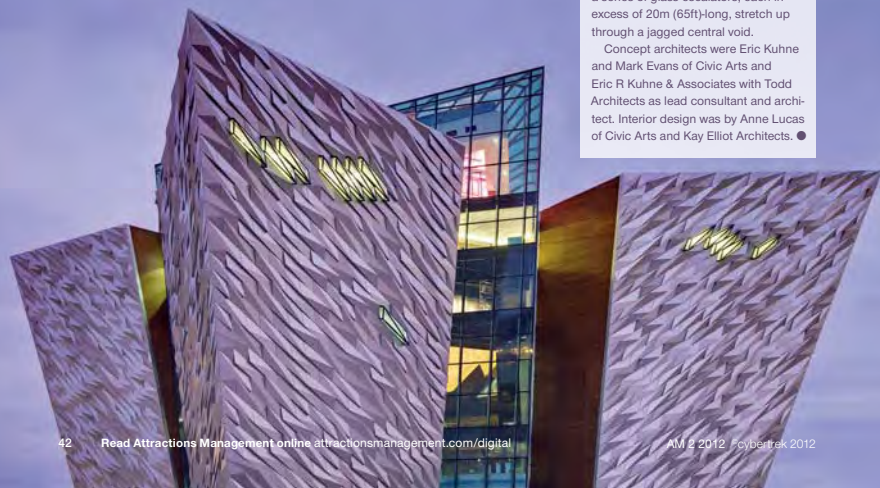
(Left) Visitors learn more through interactives; (centre) the navigation deck; (right) first, second and third class cabins are recreated; (below) the building is already being called "the iceberg"

ABOUT THE DESIGN

Titanic Belfast's architectural design was influenced by several maritime themes, including ice crystals, ships' hulls and the insignia of the White Star Line, the company that owned the Titanic. The external façade is clad in 3,000 individual silver anodized aluminium shards, which are enhanced by reflective pools of water surrounding the base of the structure.

The four façades lean out at angles to give a crystalline or shard like appearance. From the central atrium, a series of glass escalators, each in excess of 20m (65ft)-long, stretch up through a jagged central void.

Concept architects were Eric Kuhne and Mark Evans of Civic Arts and Eric R Kuhne & Associates with Todd Architects as lead consultant and architect. Interior design was by Anne Lucas of Civic Arts and Kay Elliot Architects. ●



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BRIGHT SPARK

CANADA'S TELUS SPARK AIMS TO GET YOUNG PEOPLE EXCITED ABOUT SCIENCE. JULIE BOWEN, VICE PRESIDENT OF CONTENT, EXPLAINS HOW THIS IS BEING ACHIEVED THROUGH INNOVATION AND EXPRESSION



KATHLEEN WHYMAN • MANAGING EDITOR • ATTRACTIONS MANAGEMENT

What is Telus Spark?

Telus Spark is a new science centre in the city of Calgary. It opened at the end of October 2011 and is the first purpose-built science centre to have been built in Canada in decades.

Our goal is to engage people of all ages in the exploration of science and the practice of the skills that lead to science innovation and engineering. We want to get kids excited about science and parents to start to unravel the complexities of the issues of the day. For teens it's a place to come and develop the skills that will be important for the work force of the future.

What was the inspiration?

Through the course of conversations with Calgarians, we discovered that businesses are concerned about the big baby boomer retirement looming – they're worried they won't have the skilled workforce to fill those roles. There aren't enough young people going into science and engineering, who understand and are interested in how to innovate and there aren't enough of the traditional skilled workers to take

roles in the booming oil and gas sector. We needed a place that people can come back to repeatedly and get engaged with their families. Teachers wanted a place that would help them teach science-based curricula in a cool and interactive way.

We've created a science centre that we believe fulfils those roles.

What is the content?

There are five exhibit halls. The Creative Kids Museum is for children under eight-years-old. It encourages them to explore, play, experiment and problem solve in a very open environment. We blend art, science, engineering and music in a cool way for that age group.

The other four halls look at different topics. Earth and Sky covers the forces that shape our immediate landscape and our world. The Energy and Innovation gallery focuses on the transformation of energy from one form to another and what results from that. Our Being Human gallery is about our relationships, reactions and connections to others. The final exhibit hall is called Open Studio and aims to engage

"There aren't enough young people going into science and engineering who are interested in learning how to innovate"

the teen audience and encourage them to think differently from the way they normally do. They explore different aspects of creating, designing, inventing and taking apart. Activities include creating fashion outfits using unusual materials and making animations with weird objects.

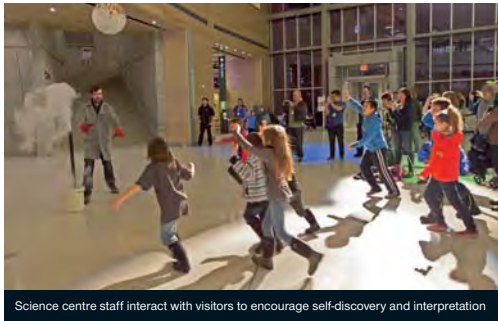
Our spaces are platforms rather than kiosks. We've accommodated for multiple people to be engaging with the objects, so visitors can work with other people.

Visitors can do different activities every time they come. We put out different materials, change the starting points and alternate the things in the spaces. Much of the content is digital, so we change that regularly to highlight what's going on in the world of science and engineering, discoveries that are made or controversies that exist. We've created a space that will be relevant to our community all of the time.

What interactives are there?

In the Creative Kids Museum we have a climbing structure. There are nets, bridges, rope ladders, a spider's web where they can climb up through tight elastic, spaces for them to hang out or spy on other people, plus places to build things.

We recognised that kids like to run around when they get excited. This gives them the opportunity to burn off energy, play around and create their own games in



Science centre staff interact with visitors to encourage self-discovery and interpretation



The Creative Kids Museum enables children under-eight to learn and problem solve in an open, fun environment

the space. As they get older they can do different things – the spider webbing piece is not an easy thing to do; it's a little scary. We wanted to let kids take a risk and do something out of their comfort zone.

In our Earth and Sky exhibition space we give people the opportunity to explore the forces of water and how that shapes our landscapes. We have a very long stream table, which starts off as a waterfall, runs through a canyon, opens up into some flat areas, then eventually curves around and disappears. People create dams to see what happens when they build on flood planes, or build houses on flat areas, then release the water flow and watch the consequences. We can control the water levels, so we have lots of rivers around, but we also have droughts. By reducing the water flow we can talk about what happens to our local environment, how that impacts the amount of water flow and how much water is available for irrigation. There are also a couple of erosion tables so visitors can play around with what happens when the snow melts and erosion happens. Most water tables are for children, so we wanted to design one for adults.

In our Energy and Innovation space, people build their own wind turbines and see how they perform. In the Open Studio gallery, visitors can tell a story, create an object, take something apart and put it

back together in a different way. In our Being Human space we have an Eye Tracker exhibit. Your gaze is tracked as you look at particular images and then you compare yourself to an expert. For example, you look at an art piece as an amateur and then see what a professional artist looks for and compare your gazes.

There's also the opportunity to try flirting with someone – how does that work, what things do you do, are you starting to sweat? It's a fun space and there's a lot of laughter and conversation.

How did you choose the content?

For the 150 exhibits that are on the floor, we tested 4,000 ideas. By doing that we were able to get a really powerful handle on what people wanted. The Human Gallery was originally going to be called The Human Body. We tried a bunch of classic biology exhibits and people would play with them for about 20 seconds, then move on. Our developer started to explore ideas about the relationships we have, how we interact, how we communicate. Those exhibits had much more resonance with the audience, so instead of a gallery about the human body, we have one about the things that make us human.

That was a really profound shift for us – a scary one too because we put the power of decision making with the audience.



Visitors learn through interactives

What is the building's design?

The building sits on reclaimed land, which the city donated. We're built on top of an old creek, which had been filled in with industrial garbage.

We didn't want it to be an over-stated architectural building. The culture of Calgary is low key, so we didn't want this thing with giant crystals or crazy roofs. It needed to feel as though it belonged in both the city and in this location.

Because one of our goals is to encourage people to be more innovative, the building needed to be a showcase for innovation. We've worked hard to create a



Adult only evenings allow people to explore the science centre without feeling as though they should be giving the children priority

“ To become a more innovative culture, we need to practice and develop the skills that lead to innovation ”

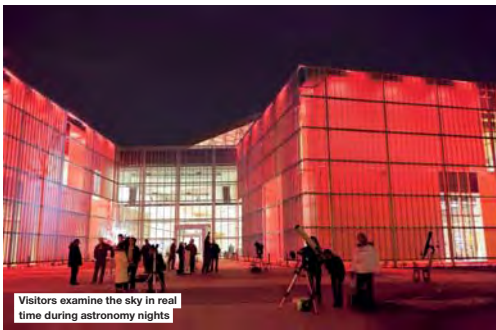
place that people are comfortable being in and relaxed enough to try new things.

There are two floors and two wings forming an A-shape. The exhibit halls are all on one side apart from the Creative Kids Museum, which is by the entrance, so kids in strollers and families can get in quickly.

From above, the building looks like geological plates moving. There's a lot of light coming in, which is unusual for a museum or science centre. We have a huge atrium with a high ceiling and it's incredibly quiet. The architect did an amazing job of making sure the building is acoustically sound. We can have hundreds of kids in the atrium and it isn't as noisy as you'd think, as there's no echo.

The building is understated in some ways, but it's also incredibly beautiful with amazing technologies and design features. At night it lights up with LEDs.

It's a LEED gold building. The floors are heated and the cooling panels are in the ceiling. Heat rises and cool falls, so we can manage the temperature that way.



How is Telus fulfilling its aim?

All the exhibits, activities and school programmes are based on the idea that in order for us to become a more innovative culture, we need to practice and develop the skills that lead to innovation.

We've identified those skills as problem solving, critical thinking, effective communication, creativity and the comfort with taking a risk. We want visitors to experiment and try something new.

Everything we offer reinforces that. The premise is that as people get more confident doing these things in a science centre, they'll take that confidence home with them.

We now have 15,500 members and some families have been back 14 times

already. The more people come back, the more they build on the skills they're learning. Hopefully they'll keep coming back to develop them even more.

What are the future plans?

We have a Dome Theatre opening in May and will develop our own planetarium shows. There's a digital media studio underneath the dome where we'll do workshop-based activities. Visitors can create something then show it on the dome. Outside we have a large park space of between three and four acres. That'll be developed in the next couple of years so we'll be able to offer outdoor exhibits, experiences and activities. ●

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ECSITE

2012

Space and time, unlimited is the theme of Ecsite 2012, the annual conference for the European network of science centres and museums



This year's Ecsite conference is held in Toulouse, France

EMMA WADLAND • COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER AND WEBMASTER • ECSITE

Why was the theme chosen?

The rationale behind this theme is that space and time pervade contemporary science and technology; from cosmic exploration to minute nanotechnologies, or the plodding tempo of evolution to the speed of light. Some of the most intriguing scientific inquiry and discovery has been, and continues to be, built on principles of space and time. These two concepts – literally and symbolically – challenge science centres and museums with endless options and opportunities.

We tackle the practical aspects of space and time while overseeing outreach programmes, taking part in projects with consortiums of geographically dispersed institutions or while planning our institution's management strategy. Space and time also influence how we keep pace with scientific, technological and social development: For example, when we develop social media campaigns, engage with the ever-expanding world of virtual visitors and exhibitions or strategise on the best ways to effect social change.

How will the talks reflect the theme?

Sessions were chosen based partly on how they answer these key questions: How can we use time and space to communi-

cate science in new and innovative ways so that we remain relevant to our audiences? And can our institutional spaces keep up with the times in an unlimited way?

From exhibitions and collections, institutional strategising, communications and marketing, education to learning and social presence – time and space have unlimited influence over all facets of our work.

So, all the sessions chosen connect to the idea of remaining vital and flexible across space and time – with space and time interpreted literally or figuratively depending on the session.

Who is the keynote speaker?

The keynote speech is on future cities by Professor Carlo Ratti – Queensland's 2009 innovator in residence and director of SENSEable City Laboratory, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, US.

The topic relates to the increasing deployment of sensors and hand-held electronics in recent years, which is allowing a new approach to the study of the built environment. The way we describe and understand cities is being radically transformed – alongside the tools we use to design them and impact on their physical structure. The presentation will discuss these changes from a critical point of view



**ECSITE ANNUAL CONFERENCE
2012 TOULOUSE**

based on the work of the SENSEable City Laboratory, a new research initiative at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

What will the key sessions be?

Ecsite is breaking new ground with the project PLACES by involving more than 60 science communication institutions from across Europe in the quest to define and develop European Cities of Scientific



Professor Carlo Ratti

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(Above left) A chance for delegates to meet the suppliers at the Business Bistro at Ecsite 2011; (right) delegates network over dinner

- **Culture.** The Building Cities of Scientific Culture: The impact of science centres and museums session, on Thursday 31 May, will highlight some of the main findings of this project so far.

The amount of women in research is low in many European and associated countries. The TWIST (Towards Women in Science & Technology) project addresses this challenge with an ambitious programme of coordinated activities to raise awareness on the role and representation of women in science and technology focusing on gender stereotypes and prejudices related to career paths and social roles. Breaking gender barriers, on Friday 1 June, will look at these issues in depth.

We're also offering some key sessions related to new technologies and social networking – always hot topics for our audience because of the need to grow with the times, attract young adult audiences and engage visitors in a more personal way.

What are the current trends and issues in the industry?

Some pervasive interests include: Meeting the technological expectations of visitors; enticing young people to choose science and technology careers; remaining vital in times of economic crisis; and increasing social relevance through initiatives, such as the PLACES project, which pairs science centres with local policy makers.

As we emerge from yet another difficult economic year, we have the opportunity to rethink our models of development and to search for new, improved ways of facing the future. Research, innovation, entrepreneurship, creative thinking and sustainability – values at the heart of Ecsite – are echoing all over Europe. Science centres and museums, science communicators and educators, need to step up and bring new energy to interpreting the signs coming from society and position themselves to become even more useful in this changing world.

We're offering a pre-conference workshop on fundraising to help our members thrive during times of economic turmoil. We're also emphasising content related to new technology, embracing technology and social media to help centres and museums grow with the times and keep their visitors interested.

What's new for this year's conference?

Ecsite's Nature Group is more active than ever. The Group will use the pre-conference workshop to discuss its Rio + 20 campaign and show the Catalogue of Actions and Science centres and museums: *Inspiring people to action for the planet* short film.

The Creative LAB Pre-Conference Workshop is new for 2012. The Creative

LAB is a practical workshop to help participants create concepts in management and design. The underlying premise here is that management and development of creativity is not about thinking, but about doing. We explore the value of prototyping and being innovative by allowing ourselves to fail and try again.

Another first is the Newcomer's Breakfast, created for people attending the conference for the first time. Established members will also take part in the breakfast to discuss how to optimise the newcomers' experience at Ecsite.

Ecsite has a new Thematic Group for 2012 – Communicating European achievements in space. This inaugural workshop for Ecsite's brand new Space Thematic Working Group will highlight collaborations between The European Space Agency (ESA) and museums and science centres across Europe.

Together we will collect feedback and chart ways to optimise future space-themed collaborations. Representatives from space industries and national space agencies will also share their expertise and ideas in this workshop.

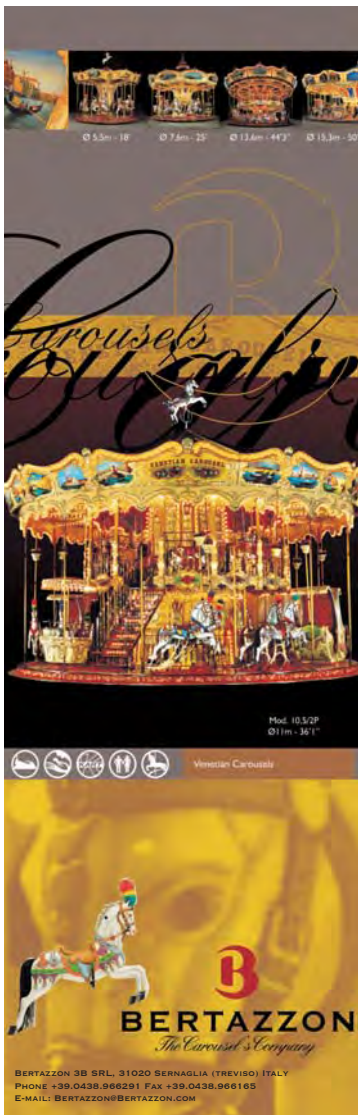
Where will Ecsite 2013 be held?

The 2013 Ecsite Conference will be held at Universeum Science Center and Aquarium in Gothenburg, Sweden. The theme will be related to innovation. ●



ABOUT ECSITE 2012

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REGISTRATION: WWW.ECSITE.EU



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Old Beijing: WATCHOUT creates a 228 m mural, 56 projectors. Image courtesy Audio Visual Technique.



Ron Arad's Curtain Call Installation, Roundhouse: 360° projection on silicone cord. Photo Ron Arad Studio.

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MULTITASKING

Rocking through the ages, exploring the Malaysian environment, boarding a Tudor warship and experiencing the beautiful game are among the latest multimedia and audiovisual projects

KATHLEEN WHYMAN • MANAGING EDITOR • ATTRACTIONS MANAGEMENT

The Ajax Experience, Netherlands

Football fans can learn more about one of the best known football clubs in the world at The Ajax Experience, which opened in Amsterdam in September last year. Electrosonic was the AV systems integrator for the visitor centre, which replaces the original museum within the Ajax stadium. The centre's theme is From Children to Champions.

Visitors enter the exhibition into the Hall of History, a graphic display augmented by a videowall based on four 46 inch LCD panels. A film *Well of Talent* that shows how young players become Ajax Juniors. This is shown on a horizontal trapezoidal screen raised just above floor level.

Visitors then enter The Giant Academy, which combines memorabilia, trophies

and significant club artefacts with linear films and interactive exhibits where visitors can try their football skills. These are done inside glass "boxes", which ensure the ball doesn't escape and allows spectators to see what's going on. Infra-red lighting and infra-red cameras are used to detect the position of the ball for the speed interactive. A combination of data from the kick detector and interrupted invisible laser beams allows a computer to calculate the trajectory of the ball and whether the kicker has imparted any swerve to it for the technique interactive. Interactive multi-touch table top displays, based on 46in (117cm) LCD panels, show visitors how to understand the options when players are in different positions on the pitch.

In the Locker Room, visitors take the place of team members when the mirrored wall becomes a rear projection screen and the team manager appears to give the players a half time pep-talk.

The final part of the experience, the Stadium, is a large space dominated by four projection screens, the largest of which uses two projectors to produce a panoramic edge-blended image. A multi-

channel sound track accompanies the show about historic Ajax matches.

The Ajax Experience exhibition was designed and produced by gsmprict*, who also produced the linear media content and the media for the table based interactive exhibits. Kiss-the-frog produced the Speed and Technique football-based interactive exhibits. Fiction Factory was the exhibition fit-out contractor.

Projectors were provided by Panasonic and Optoma with LCD panels from NEC. Standard single image video playback is by Roku Brightsign HD210 players. Wotbox Warping video servers are used for the *Well of Talent* and Giant Academy. Synchronised multiscreen playback is by Medialon MIP players. Image Anyplace units provide image warping in the stadium exhibit. Show control is by a Medialon Showmaster pro system. Audio processing is by Symetrix Jupiter DSP and the amplifiers are from T&M.

(Left) Graphic displays were provided by Electrosonic; (right) Hall of History introduces visitors to the experience



Mary Rose Museum, UK



(Above) The museum is placed above the Mary Rose; (right) visitors can look into one side of the 16th century ship

Visitors will get an insight into life on board a 16th century warship at a £35m (€43m, US\$56m) museum, which opens later this year. The museum is placed directly above King Henry VIII's famous Mary Rose ship, which sunk in 1545 and was raised in the 1980s in the UK.

Sysco AV is building the AV and interactive hardware elements of the project, which bring alive the stories of the people who served and died on the ship. A large-scale immersive projection engaging a visitor's whole peripheral vision and using directional audio conveys the experience of seeing the ship raised from the waters.

Touch screens reveal information about exhibits that were recovered when the ship was raised. Sysco's managing director, Hugo Roche, explains the challenges these presented. "The primary interactive elements are projectors and screens. This was complicated by the fact that everything has to be kept at carefully controlled conditions," he says. "Equipment's mounted inside showcases, so we have to get the temperature and humidity within those showcases right. We're installing equipment far earlier than normal to allow the showcases to get to the right conservation and humidity levels."

Sysco worked with Land Design Studios to ensure the technology is integrated into the space rather than being bolted on as an after thought. "We wanted it to be simple and intuitive to use," says Roche. "There are too many occasions when interactive and multimedia elements aren't thought through and become quite cumbersome for the visitor to use."

"THE PRIMARY INTERACTIVES, PROJECTORS AND SCREENS, HAVE TO BE KEPT AT CAREFULLY CONTROLLED TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY"

Walkways at different levels throughout the museum enable visitors to look into one side of the Mary Rose. Showcases on the outside bring to life artefacts that would have been used by the crew.

"Projection is still a powerful tool for telling a story," Roche says. "That's the element that will grab attention. There are some beautifully integrated interactives. People will enjoy the experience of using something that works smoothly."

Sysco worked with Panasonic, NEC, DVS, Panphonics and Tannoys on the project. The museum was designed by a team comprising Wilkinson Eyre (architect), Pringle Brandon (interior architect) and Land Design Studio (exhibition design and interpretation), with Gifford (structural and M&E engineer).



Putrajaya Wetlands Park, Malaysia

The largest artificially-made area of freshwater wetland in south-east Asia, Putrajaya Wetlands Park has been conceived as a protected natural habitat. Rare breeds of flora and fauna can establish themselves and flourish, without the threat of upheaval from other human activity. The Wetlands cover 200 hectares and human access is carefully controlled.

Within the park's visitor centre is a new Cineplex showing educational films about the park and protecting the environment.

Azian Jizam at VR Solutions, the systems integrator responsible for designing and installing the AV technology at the Putrajaya Cineplex, alongside contractor MintPlaza Sdn Bhd, says: "The project uses a very large 240-degrees cylindrical screen so that the audience feels truly immersed in the video content. The screen is driven by five HD projectors blended together to create a single canvas more than five megapixels in resolution." The system uses uncompressed, raw video.

A new Cineplex shows educational films about Wetlands park and the environment

UK-based creative designers 7thSense's Delta solution was used to deliver, blend, warp and process multiple images without compression or any related loss of data integrity. "We wanted the system to be future-proof in the advent of a 3D capability being added down the line, and Delta allows for this," says Jizam.

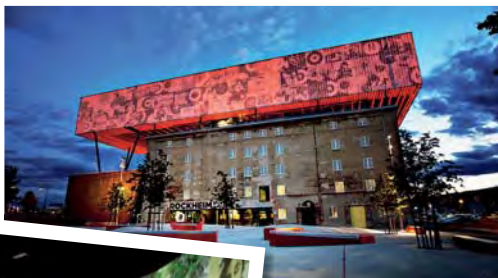
Rockheim, Norway

Visitors are given a fresh insight into the history of Norwegian popular music and culture through a series of interactive spaces and exhibits at new museum Rockheim.

Located inside a converted grain warehouse in the port city of Trondheim, each of the six storeys is dedicated to a different era from the 1950s through to the present day and includes a stage for live music.

Norwegian AV company projectiondesign worked on the exhibition areas for the 1960s, 1980s and 2000s, plus a Tribute Wall that showcases artists spanning the entire period.

The Tribute Wall, powered by six projectiondesign projectors, enables visitors to 'virtually wipe' the image from the projection screen in front of them if it isn't to their taste, by moving their arms. Their movements are tracked by cameras



(Above) Rockheim is in a converted grain warehouse; (left) visitors change the images by moving their arms

and sensors.

The data is then fed to the projectors. As the image clears, the next act from that era appears to play.

Projectiondesign's technology is also used to provide a backdrop to a series of immersive experiences created to place

the visitor at the heart of a particular era, such as in a famous recording studio or at a band rehearsal.

"Rockheim uses our F12, F22 and F32 projectors as an interactive alternative to traditional ways of representing history and culture," says Anders Løkke, projectiondesign's international marketing manager. "Its success shows the power of interactivity in museum engineering, as well as the power of projection in implementing it." ●



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Inside the KidZania Kuala Lumpur city



Children learn how to make burgers

ROLE MODEL

CHILDREN GET TO GROW UP QUICKLY AT KIDZANIA
WHERE THEY ASSUME THE ROLES OF ADULT PROFESSIONS.
WE VISIT KIDZANIA KUALA LUMPUR TO SEE IF THE
ATTRACTION IS A WORTHY ROLE MODEL

JENNIFER HARBOTTLE • JOURNALIST • ATTRACTIONS MANAGEMENT

KidZania is a miniature city where children get the chance to play at being grown ups. They are given jobs, earn money (kidZos) and deposit savings in a bank account, which can then be used to buy goods and services. Children can choose from 90 career-based role-playing activities which are supervised by Supervisors, such as becoming a pilot, putting out fires, washing cars, making sushi and being a dentist.

The KidZania franchise is owned by Mexican entrepreneur and KidZania CEO, Xavier Lopez Ancona. Currently, there are nine KidZania family entertainment centres worldwide, in Mexico City, Monterrey, Tokyo, Jakarta, Koshien, Lisbon, Dubai, Seoul and Kuala Lumpur. There are plans for another 11 to open worldwide over the next two years. A deal has been signed to open a site in the UK plus an imminent move into the US will see the concept open up across a number of states there too.

KidZania Kuala Lumpur is the newest KidZania franchise. Opened in February 2012, it's the first of many new branded attractions due to be developed and operated by Malaysia-based Themed Attractions and Resorts Sdn Bhd. Themed Attractions is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Malaysian Government's investment arm, Khazanah Nasional Berhad (Khazanah) and has been set up to develop and run leisure and tourism attractions in Asia. (See interview with CEO Steve Peet in *AM Q1 12*).

Themed Attractions has invested RM80m (£16.2m, €20.2m, US\$25.4m) in KidZania Kuala Lumpur. It hopes to see a return on this investment by the end of 2012, on the back of the 500,000 visitors it expects to receive this year.

LOCATION

KidZania is located in an affluent suburb of Kuala Lumpur in a high-end retail mall called The Curve. Other big anchor tenants



Children earn kidZos, which they can spend in the shop

include Ikea, Tesco and a major cinema operator, so KidZania Kuala Lumpur has the benefit of a high incidental footfall.

The attraction spans 80,000sq ft over two levels, although access to the actual entrance once you've bought your ticket on the ground floor is reached via five separate escalators or a lift to the fifth floor.

TICKETING

Crucial to the success of the KidZania model is securing sponsorship tie-ups with well-known local corporations. As a result, the establishments found in every KidZania city, such as the restaurants, the hospital, the petrol station and the bank, are branded with company logos. In



(Above left) Withdrawing their kidZos; (right) the firefighters tackle a blaze at the KidZania hotel. This is so realistically done that many children believe the building really is on fire

KidZania Kuala Lumpur for instance, where the marketing team has secured more than RM50M (£10.3m, €12.4m, US\$16.4m) in sponsor-partnerships, you will find CIMB bank, Sony photo lab, Sushi King Sushi Bar and a Honda car dealership.

In keeping with this, AirAsia is the sponsor of the check-in counter at the entrance to the attraction, where visitors receive their boarding passes to enter. The area is themed realistically to look like an airport check in, with no theming for KidZania, so I was slightly confused as to whether I was in the right place or not. Once I'd established that I was, buying a ticket was simple and good fun and the staff were enthusiastic, eager to help and engaged with my daughter from the offset.

SECURITY

Security – especially where children are involved – is a major concern to parents in Malaysia. In KidZania, children have to leave their parents' side to try out the different jobs on their own, so this could present a headache for the operators.

The problem is solved by making all adults and children (children have to be accompanied by an adult and vice versa) wear an electronic wristband that contains information about each visitor. Reassuringly, no one can leave the attraction without the person they came with.

ROLE PLAY

In its marketing literature, KidZania is variously described as “a nation where children can lead independent lives”, an attraction with “role-play activities specifically designed to aid physical and

intellectual growth” and a place that “teaches children the value of equality and respect for others”.

At KidZania, children don't get to create their own stories. Instead they experience playing at adult jobs in an adult world at the instruction of Supervisors, who tell them what to do and when. To fulfil the aims of KidZania's mission statements, I'd like to see more role playing that is instigated by the children and encourages them to use their imaginations, rather than being hand-held through the experiences.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

I'm getting increasingly despondent with food and beverage offerings in theme

“I'd like to see more role playing that's instigated by the children and encourages them to use their imaginations”

parks. Is it too much to expect a cheese sandwich on brown bread or a salad?

Despite KidZania raising the bar in terms of the standard of visitor attractions in Malaysia, it seems the F&B outlets have chosen the well-worn path of deep fried and fast. I asked the F&B manager about alternative options and he assured me that



The site sits within retail mall The Curve



(Above left) children take the law into their own hands in the Courthouse; (right) learning how to make dishes such as sushi in the Cooking School is among the popular activities

“Themed Attractions must be congratulated for the work it's done with its staff, or Supervisors”

► sandwiches and a healthy sushi dish will become part of the menu, but he couldn't confirm specific details.

There weren't many people queuing for food when we visited the main cafeteria, but service was painfully slow. This is something the operations team need to address to avoid people getting frustrated during busy periods.

RETAIL

There are two types of shopping experience at KidZania – those that accept real money and those that take kidZos. The National Store of KidZania, which accepts real money, sells t-shirts, toys and KidZania mascots, which are reasonably priced and quite nice.

But the best shop is The Department Store, which is full of games and discovery toys. Unfortunately, kids need to earn a lot of kidZos to be able to afford to buy anything. The Joy basket is a small conces-

sion that sells cheaper items for 50 kidZos – an amount that most children will have accrued by the end of their visit. Despite not having any KidZania-themed items for sale, it's a treasure trove for little ones and my daughter spent at least 30 minutes trying to choose between a wand, face paints and a candle that blew out when you clapped. (The candle won.)

THE STAFF

Given that the attractions industry is in its infancy in Malaysia, and finding experienced local staff is almost impossible, Themed Attractions must be congratulated for the work it's done with its staff (or Supervisors). Every staff member we spoke to was engaging and genuinely got into their role rather than just going through the motions.

Staff members were smiley and helpful. And every time the KidZania anthem came on, they were happy and uninhabited

about dancing and singing along.

Talking to the staff members in the different workplaces, I discovered that a number of them were actual nurses, firemen and caterers, employed at KidZania until a “proper” job comes up. This authenticity shines through, especially in areas such as the hospital where it was obvious the nurses knew their stuff.

MY EXPERIENCE

The main problem with KidZania is that it's not clear what you're supposed to do when





A flight simulator allows children to assume the roles of pilots for the day

you arrive. Ideally, guests would receive a briefing on how to get the most out of their visit because it's quite disorientating when they first enter. After my visit I found out that there's a job centre where you can find out which roles suit you best. It would have been helpful to have been directed to this when we'd first arrived.

Waiting times for each role play activity and show times on the doors of each establishment are confusing. My daughter had set her heart on being in a magic show or theatre performance only to be told it wasn't on again for another four hours.



Scaling a wall is child's play

Too many of the experiences were out of bounds to my four-year-old. The fashion boutique had no one in it, the cooking school had already started, she was too young to be a tv presenter or a journalist and too short to have a go on the climbing wall. As a result, I spent a large amount of time explaining to her why she couldn't try the experiences she'd initially picked out from the map, despite the fact it indicated that all experiences are open to children age four and above.

Eventually we found some roles she was eligible for. In the beauty salon, she was paired up with another little girl and shown how to apply make up and nail varnish, which she loved. In the nursery at the hospital, the Supervisors worked one-to-one with her to help her wash a baby, put its nappy on and pat it to sleep.

The design of the hospital and the overall design and theming of KidZania is nothing short of gorgeous. The burning hotel that the firefighters put out is so realistic that my daughter was convinced it was actually on fire.

A special mention goes to the staff who trained my daughter to be a flight supervisor for AirAsia. Housed in an actual aeroplane fuselage, the Supervisors – dressed as flight attendants – were delightful as they showed her how to serve airline food to the passengers and run through the safety routine.

Despite the fact it was quiet on the day we visited, there was still an energy to the place and all the children I saw looked excited and happy to be there.

I overheard one child tell his friend that he wants to join the police force when he grows up because "at KidZania the police

"It'd be good if they have some charity-based organisations which teach children that life isn't just about doing things for money"

OPENING HOURS

Operating hours are from 10am – 5pm and you can stay as long as you like.

At weekends however, you have to choose between the 10am to 3pm session or 4pm – 9pm.

WHAT'S THE SCORE?

Experience	7
Value for money	9
(if you and your child are prepared to spend the whole day there so you get to experience a decent number of occupations)	
Staff	9
Cleanliness	10
Toilets	10
.....	
Overall experience	8

get to wave a big red light stick!".

The brochure for KidZania asks children to "get ready for a better world". In my opinion, KidZania needs to be a bit more altruistic to achieve that. I would like to see an effort to encourage kids to eat healthy food and recycle rubbish. It would also be good if they perhaps have some charity-based organisations which teach children that life in an adult world isn't just about doing things for money.

However, these criticisms are aimed at the concept rather than the operators. Themed Attractions has, in the main, done a very good job with its first attraction and has demonstrated that it will be a great asset to the Asian attractions industry. ●

SHIP AHEAD

The world's oldest tea clipper, the Cutty Sark, reopened in April following a £50m conservation project. Chief executive Richard Doughty explains how the clipper survived a recent fire and what makes the 142-year-old ship so special

KATHLEEN WHYMAN • MANAGING EDITOR • ATTRACTIONS MANAGEMENT

Cutty Sark is now suspended 3.5m (11.5ft) from the bottom of the dry berth



Built in 1869, the Cutty Sark served as a merchant vessel and then as a training ship until being put on public display in 1954. Following an extensive conservation project, the vessel reopened in April at Greenwich, UK.

But why is the ship so important? "That's the million dollar question," says Richard Doughty, chief executive of the Cutty Sark Trust. "Why do people want to save her? What's her significance? The Cutty Sark isn't remembered because she brought tea back from China or because she was the most successful war clipper in the world or because she's one of three remaining composite ships anywhere in the world. Few people know this; few people care," Doughty explains. "Cutty Sark is significant because she captures people's imaginations. She's a tangible reminder of another world – a way of life just beyond the grasp of human memory."

Doughty is passionate about what the ship represents and has overseen a five-year redevelopment project to restore her to her former glory. The original plan was thwarted by a fire in May 2007, thought to be caused by an air-venting machine.

Doughty admits that the fire turned him "prematurely grey" but also feels they were very fortunate. The fire destroyed temporary works (the mast, rigging and deck housing had been removed for restoration) and the three decks. One needed replacing anyway, one had been installed in the 1950s and the other was a composite deck that had been changed and altered during its working life. "Cutty Sark came through the fire just as she has come through the storms around Cape Horn and the ravages of salt corroding its iron frame," says Doughty proudly.

SHIPSHAPE

Despite adding 14 months onto the projected completion date and an extra £10m (€12m, US\$15.6m) on to the total cost, the fire didn't deter anyone and Doughty's eager to unveil the transformed visitor experience the ship now offers.

Perhaps the biggest transformation is the positioning of the ship. Instead of being displayed in a concrete bunker, gradually crumbling under her own weight (the mast had already been removed as it was too heavy for her to support out of water), the ship is now suspended 3.5m (11.5ft) from the bottom of the dry berth. Visitors can walk underneath her and she's as near as possible to how she would have been when supported in water. The entire structure from the waterline down is enclosed



Visitors can walk beneath the ship and there is space for corporate dining



Chief executive Richard Doughty

"Cutty Sark is significant because she captures people's imaginations. She's a tangible reminder of another world – a way of life just beyond the grasp of human memory"

by a glass canopy formed from a geodesic dome. The side panels are double glazed sheets of glass, which are angled at nine degrees to minimise reflections. A huge basement houses kitchens, plant rooms and toilets. Air conditioning from the waterline down ensures the ship is protected from the elements and the temperature and humidity controlled.

Inside, the main visitor route takes visitors into the lower hold of the ship. "Here we're looking at Cutty Sark the trader, getting people to understand that this was a Victorian cargo ship and was built for the China tea trade," says Doughty. "That space is dark and atmospheric. Lights slosh around the inside walls and visitors walk on and beneath tea chests. They go through a forest of screens projecting facts and films as they progress down the ship."

A children's trail delivers the same messages but in different ways, so younger visitors can also enjoy the experience. For example, a scampering monkey leads them to different parts of the ship where things happen. Other trails enable visitors to look through the ship to the sea beyond or through the sheaving to the conserved structure. Performers in costume bring the ship to life and a smartphone app allows guests to create a souvenir of their visit. ▶



The Duke of Edinburgh inspects the site



The Queen opened the renovated ship on 25 April

▶ The Queen deck showcases the voyager element of the ship, which travelled to virtually every major port around the world. Interactive games and touch tables help explain the mechanics of navigating the ship while crew lists allow visitors to find out if any of their relatives worked on the ship. The weather deck examines how the ship was sailed. Visitors can raise and lower the yards and use binoculars to see things that would have been seen by the crew, such as icebergs at Cape Horn.

"Digital media really brings the stories to life," says Doughty. "For example, a magic mirror in the master salon shows the reflections of people that aren't here now, but were once. These include a war merchant and a lady from the 1950s touching up her hair and make up when the ship first opened in Greenwich. These are fun ways of engaging with the public."

GANGWAY

Visitors exit the ship by a gangway into an access tower, which takes them down into the basement alongside the ship. "You break out underneath the ship and experience what I hope will be a truly awe inspiring experience of being able to walk underneath the ship and see the lines," says Doughty, unable to conceal his pride.

Visitors can relax in the new café area and sample bespoke Chinese black and green teas created by Twinnings while listening to a soundscape of the ship being built and launched out to sea. An underwater-themed soft play area is set up in the day. "We're catering for a very wide audience with the family in mind," says Doughty.

As well as greatly enhancing the visitor experience, the aim is to generate further income stream opportunities by using Cutty Sark at night. Corporate entertainment includes silver service dining for 320 guests underneath the ship and 100 on board, a reception for

500 under the ship or a production in the theatre for 100 people. "It's now a very versatile resource," says Doughty. "That allows us to lay down reserves so that in 50 years time, when undoubtedly more work will need to be done to the ship, we'll have money saved up and secured so won't have to get out our begging bowl."

TREASURE CHEST

Money raised to date has come from the Heritage Lottery Fund, central and local government and the public, who were very responsive to the cause, particularly after

"I joined in 2001, wondering I was going to raise £5m. And here we are £50m later"

the fire. As is often the case, the cost of the project increased in the consequence of discovery. "When we removed the concrete in the bilges, the wrought iron frames were so badly corroded we had to have strengthening steel added to the ship to be able to put it back together again.

"That was an unexpected blow," recalls Doughty. "We also had huge problems in the ground, as the dry berth structure that was built just after World War II, turned out not to have been built according to the official records of its construction. We had to grout the entire structure, rebuild the foundations and recast the entire top of the dry berth. All those things added hugely to our costs and created significant delay, which also became very expensive. "I get a wry smile when I think about when I was

appointed in 2001," he continues. "The aspiration of the trustees was that this would be a £5m (€6m, \$7.8m) project at most. I joined wondering how I was going to raise £5m. And here we are £50m (€60.5m, US\$79.3m) later."

Although Cutty Sark is a big part of British maritime history, it's also a brand that belongs to the world, so Doughty has been able to secure funding from Russia, Australia, Europe and the US. "The ship's reputation and the esteem with which its held has helped enormously," he says.


ROYAL ENGAGEMENT

The Duke of Edinburgh is the founder president of the trust and has been associated with the Cutty Sark since 1951.

"People say that I've done well staying in the job for 10 years with all that's happened," says Doughty. "But the Duke's been doing it for 60 years, which is phenomenal. He's been very generous with his time and support so that's made a huge difference in our ability to get people to understand the significance of the ship and want to invest in it."

Doughty reinforces the fact that Cutty Sark is a conservation project, rather than a business plan; driven by people who want to find the best solution for the ship and conserve it, rather than restore it.

"Cutty Sark is one of those rare things which are truly emblematic and intrinsically inspiring. It's a piece of history that cannot be remade," he says. "The ship that people come and see isn't a replica; it's the real ship. These are the frames and the wooden strakes that sailed to the south China seas and back. I can't wait to get the public on board to see what we're been doing for the last six years." ●



***“We like cool, crazy,
creative, out-there stuff,
but we love cool, crazy,
creative, out-of-there stuff
that works.”***

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JENNIFER HARBOTTLE • JOURNALIST • ATTRACTIONS MANAGEMENT

The recent battle over Great Wolf Resorts (with private equity firm Apollo Global Management finally winning over KSL Capital Partners) and reports at the last WWA symposium that many water leisure operators have announced expansion plans for the 12 months ahead, shows that there's money to be made from large-scale water-based attractions. This is reinforced by the many dry park operators looking at water attractions to add an extra dimension to their existing facilities.

However, a shaky economy has seen the emergence of a more bullish domestic waterpark operator, keen to capitalise on the staycation market. As a result, suppliers have seen a greater proportion of their business coming from municipal and family run businesses such as campsites, sporting facilities and resorts.



Forrec brings Chinese myths to life

Forrec has developed the masterplan for a waterpark in Tangshan town, in the Jiangning district of Nanjing. Opening on the 26th May, the 23-hectare site includes a hotel and luxury spa.

In the design of facilities, landscaping elements and attractions, the overall design concept is themed around four keywords – mythical, mystical, magical and China. Based on these keywords, the park explores a range of Chinese myths and legends, paying special attention to the fantastic, magical and adventurous qualities of these much-loved stories.

Landscaping elements include distinctive wave-patterned paving and a selection of tropical vegetation which is hardly enough to survive the parks' subtropical climate. As a departure from

other Chinese water parks, Longmenzhen includes a large number of cabana units – a feature that has proved especially popular in waterparks in other parts of Asia.

A hillside at the rear of the site offers a striking green backdrop to the waterpark as well as the opportunity to build water slides into the terrain. On top of the slope is a luxury spa with views over the countryside.



The waterpark's theme is mythical, mystical, magical China

Second Aquatica waterpark for SeaWorld

SeaWorld is extending its Aquatica waterpark brand with the opening of a second park in San Antonio on 19 May 2012.

The new park in Texas is an extension of SeaWorld's Aquatica waterpark in Orlando. Like its sister park, it will operate a separate gate, with the option of a two-park pass for guests who want to visit both SeaWorld and Aquatica. Construction of the 20-acre waterpark began in May 2011 and is the largest single investment SeaWorld San Antonio has made since 1988.

Aquatica San Antonio will feature three terraced pools, a wave pool, meandering river and thrill rides, all themed around a South Seas tropical setting with more than 42,000sq ft (4,000sq m) of sandy beaches and private cabanas. In keeping with SeaWorld's philosophy of combining attractions with animal habitats, the park's signature attraction is Stingray



The waterpark's signature attraction is Stingray Falls

Falls. A four-seat raft twists and turns into an underwater grotto featuring stingrays and tropical fish. The ride is the first of its kind in the world.

Other attractions at Aquatica San Antonio include a family raft ride called Walhalla Wave where riders experience weightlessness as they get shot up a zero-gravity wall. The HooRoo Run, an exhilarating 48ft (15m)-tall ride, will feature a series of turns, twists and drops. At Ke-Re tropical reef, guests feed different species of stingrays.

Cartoon Network goes to Thailand

The first Cartoon Network-themed waterpark opens in Thailand in 2013. The Cartoon Network has joined with attraction and resorts developer Amazon Falls Co Ltd to develop the park in Bang Saray, near Pattaya, Thailand.

Cartoon Network Amazone will feature Cartoon Network characters including Ben 10, The Power Puff Girls, Johnny Bravo and The Amazing World of Gumball. The waterpark will have a number of signature attractions including a gigantic family wave pool, a winding adventure river, speed-racing slides, family raft slides and one of the world's largest interactive water play fortresses for kids, all supplied by Polin.

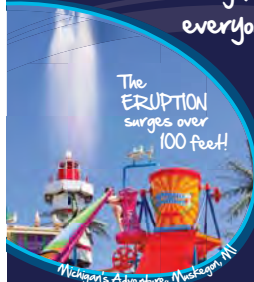
Phase one of the waterpark is already underway and when completed will cover 14 acres of coastal plains in Bang Saray, 15 minutes from Pattaya Beach City. The developers are hoping to attract 800,000 visitors a year.

Cartoon Network
Amazone will
open in 2012



Wings and Waves Waterpark, McMinnville, OR

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Michigan's Adventure, Muskegon, MI



Bali Waterpark, Foshan, China



WHITEWATER

The Waterpark Company

Building Sandcastles



Montazooma at Blackpool

The UK's largest indoor waterpark has added two new slides to its existing attractions. Sandcastle Waterpark in Blackpool has invested £2.5m (£3m, US\$4m) in its Aztec-themed Aztec Falls and Montazooma slides, which launch from the roof of the waterpark and plummet down the side of the building.

Going with the flow

The Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre (MSAC) in Albert Park has just opened its Double Flowrider attraction which forms part of its indoor swimming pool, wave machine and water slide offering. MSAC was originally built for the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games.



Flowrider at MSAC

Happy Birthday Sunway Lagoon!

Malaysia's Sunway Lagoon is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. As well as a new 5D theatre attraction planned for its Kuala Lumpur theme park, the Sunway Lagoon waterpark has spent RM6m (£1.2m, €1.5m, US\$2m) on a WhiteWater Abyss waterslide that will be the world's largest when it opens in August 2012.

The 100ft (30m)-high mega waterslide complete with LED light effects will accommodate six riders at a time as it twists and turns before plummeting into the abyss.



The Abyss at Sunway Lagoon

Lotte Group dips its toe in the water



The waterpark is scheduled to open in April 2014

The Lotte Group, which owns Lotte World indoor theme park in Seoul, South Korea, is developing a brand new waterpark in Kimhae, near Busan, South Korea.

The waterpark is the second major attraction for Lotte Group. It will include indoor and outdoor rides and water play.

WhiteWater West has been given a US\$22m (£13.7m, €16.8m) contract to engineer, manufacture and install all of the park's attractions. This will include two Megatube rides – the new Family Rattler and Family Python – a Family Boomerango, AquaLoop, Abyss, an eight-lane Whizzard, Family Raft Ride, Dueling Master Blasters plus Speed Slides and Body Slides. The Polynesian-themed waterpark (which hasn't yet been named) will also feature a 115ft (35m) pneumatic Surf Wave pool, a smaller, indoor 60ft (18m) Family Wave pool, a FlowRider Double and two AquaPlay multi-level interactive play structures.

It's all flow at Legoland Florida

As its opening date of May 26 approaches, Legoland Florida Waterpark has been filled with water. As well as the first Legoland waterpark to get a Lego Wave Pool, the park's other key attractions will include a Joker Soaker and a Build-A-Raft River where families will be able to design and build a unique boat made from Lego and sail it around a 1,000ft (305m)-long lazy river.

Meanwhile, at Legoland's waterpark in California, a new attraction called Pirate Reef will open this summer. Families will be able to ride a boat between two 40ft (12m)-long pirate ships while other families aim water cannons at each other.



Legoland Florida is filled with water



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in 82 Countries**



A kids' paradise



Paradise Resort

Zagames Paradise Resort on Australia's Gold Coast has undergone a multi-million dollar renovation. The family-owned hotel resort has expanded its waterpark facilities and is now the largest resort-based AquaPlay waterpark in the southern hemisphere.

Its central resort area now has a giant pool, heated spa and two WhiteWater AquaPlay attractions. At three-stories high, it has 80 interactive water features and a smaller AquaPlay for toddlers.

Wild West at Frontier City

Frontier City Theme Park, which is owned by Premier Attractions Management, is adding a water area to its existing park called Wild West Water Works.

When it opens in May 2012, the water area will include a five-storey water feature with eight slides, 200 interactive play elements, a tipping bucket and lounge deck, all themed like the wild, wild West, courtesy of WhiteWater. Entrance to Wild West Water Works will be included as part of the general park admission.



The Wild West Water Works

Build it and the children will come

Wet 'n Wild Orlando will open a new sandcastle-themed water playground for kids in time for its Summer 2012 season.

The 15,000sq ft (1,400sq m) attraction will be built on two levels on the site of Wet 'n Wild's current kids' park and will feature 17 slides as well as 100 soakers, jets, waterfalls and water cannons.



The new sandcastle playground

King Cobra for Six Flags, Jackson

Six Flags Hurricane Harbour water park in Jackson, NJ is adding a Polin King Cobra racing tube slide to its attraction, in time for the US summer season.

The ride will enable two riders to race through a circular path with twists and turns before plunging eight metres down at a speed of 51 km/h.



Polin's King Cobra

Alabama Splash Adventure on course



The waterpark's offer includes zip lines

The recently re-named and re-branded Alabama Splash Adventure Waterpark in the US re-opens in May with the latest WhiteWater innovation called AquaCourse.

AquaCourse is a multi-level play experience where guests transverse through towers, bridges and zip lines while being bombarded with buckets of water and bubbling geysers.

Yes to Yas Waterworld

Yas Waterworld Abu Dhabi, which opens in the last quarter of 2012, is in its final development phase. The 15-hectare water park, located opposite Ferrari World in Abu Dhabi on Yas Island, will be operated by Farah Leisure Parks Management.

Themed to reflect the traditional Emirati culture, Yas Waterworld will feature 43 rides, slides and attractions that chart the adventures of the waterpark's main character, Dana – a young Emirati girl in search of a legendary pearl which brought prosperity to the people of her village. The centrepiece is Jebel Dana, which towers 45m (148ft) above the ground and is the home of the Great Mother Pearl. The park also has restaurants, shops and interactive games.



Jebel Dana the waterpark's centrepiece

Neptune Benson Down Under

US-based Neptune Benson, Inc is enjoying a wave of success in Australia with its Defender regenerative media filter. The company is in the process of commissioning five new Defender installations for the Australian market. This includes an installation of the product at Adventure World in Western Australia. ●



Neptune Benson's Defender installation

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DIAMOND OPPORTUNITY



As the Queen celebrates 60 years on the throne with a line-up of official events this summer, we ask what UK attractions can do to appeal to the Jubilee crowds

JULIE CRAMER • JOURNALIST • ATTRACTIONS MANAGEMENT

For sport-lovers and royalists the world over, summer 2012 in the UK promises to be an exciting time. The extended weekend of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee events – celebrating the British monarch's 60-year reign – runs from Saturday 2nd June to Tuesday 5th June, and will be swiftly followed in July by six weeks of sporting heroics as the Olympics and Paralympics get into full swing.

While billions of people around the world are expected to watch both events on tv, there's a sense that the Jubilee celebrations will be much more of a home-spun affair, creating a chance for communities to engage with each other. One event that aims to build on this community spirit is The Big Lunch – an idea started by the Eden Project in Cornwall four years ago – which aims to get as many people in the UK together to have lunch with their community on the first Sunday of June each year. This year coincides with the extended Jubilee



The Queen – 60 years on the throne

weekend, and Buckingham Palace has embraced The Big Jubilee Lunch as part of its main events.

STREET-WISE

While most of these events will be in the form of self-organised street parties, the advantages of having so many people 'out on the streets', could present nearby visitor attractions with the opportunity to market their offers to a willing audience. Last year's Big Lunch attracted two million

people and a spokesperson says this year's event is hoping to double that.

As with Prince William and Kate Middleton's wedding in 2011, businesses should also benefit from the extra Bank Holiday in 2012, falling on Tuesday 5th June, enabling families to enjoy an extra day out or, with a four-day weekend, take an extended UK break. According to the UK's Department of Culture, Media and Sport, there will be "tangible and intangible" benefits associated with the additional public holiday, including "lifting national spirit, pride, tourism and trade".

UK attractions wanting to create new product lines can capitalise on the Diamond Jubilee. The use of Royal Insignia and photographs on souvenirs is usually subject to strict controls under the Trade Marks Act 1994, but these rules have been temporarily relaxed for the Diamond Jubilee, allowing greater scope for them to be used on certain products. In addition, a special emblem has been designed, which is free to download (details are available on the British Monarchy website), for all activities linked to the Diamond Jubilee, such as local and national events, publications, retail and merchandising.

HOME PRIDE

There's a sense that some UK visitor sites are using the Diamond Jubilee year to re-assess their core values, Britishness and unique heritage.

The National Trust's head of publishing, John Stachiewicz (also chair of the Association for Cultural Enterprises), says: "The Jubilee will attract proportionally more visitors to the UK from the Commonwealth, North America and Continental Europe, but at the National Trust (NT) our dependence on overseas visitors is very low – about 8-10 per cent – and we're not expecting a significant change in that in 2012." The organisation, which looks after

Visitor attractions can take advantage of the long weekend and community spirit





Four million people are expected to take part in The Big Jubilee Lunch

historic houses, stretches of coastline and parklands around the country, is planning a variety of Jubilee celebrations aimed more at UK visitors, including Big Lunch events on 3rd June at more than 180 historic properties and the lighting of Jubilee beacons at 40 sites on 4th June.

Stachiewicz believes the current economic climate is driving visitors to seek simpler pleasures. "When times are hard there's a phenomenon that people seek solace in more spiritual things or in nature – they want fresh air, gardens, parklands and a sense of provenance and heritage," he says. Such a focus is clearly paying off for the organisation, as its visitor attendances for December 2011 exceeded half a million – more than a 70 per cent increase on the same period in 2010.

PARTY POLITICS

Tourism advisor and chair of the Visitor Attractions Group, Ken Robinson, however, remains sceptical about the direct benefits to tourism of either the Jubilee or the Olympics (see p72): "The Jubilee will be a wonderful party, but we have to remember that it's only four days. Also, the Cultural Olympiad has caused a lot of funds to be put into events and exhibitions for public sector visitor attractions such as museums, but these are just more competition for private visitor attractions."

What Robinson is optimistic about is the legacy potential of the global media attention, showcasing the UK's heritage

and culture, which he believes is the real reason overseas tourists visit the UK.

"We're turning our backs on Cool Britannia," he says. "The government has realised that foreign tourists don't want to visit the UK for the nightclubs or music scene. The real pull is our heritage, tradition and culture. It's the backbone of our tourism appeal."

The Royal events of last summer and the Jubilee celebrations planned for June will no doubt play a key part in highlighting that unique heritage.

Figures from VisitBritain show that in the three months to May 2011 (the period preceding, including and following the Royal Wedding) there were 7.8 million overseas visitors who spent just under £4bn (€4.8bn, US\$6.3bn), representing a 10 per cent and seven per cent rise respectively on the same period in 2010.

VisitBritain spokesperson, David Leslie, says: "The big opportunity is not about people coming here for the Jubilee, but about the hordes of people who will watch it on tv and who might be encouraged to visit the UK as a result."

An estimated two billion people watched the wedding of Prince William and Kate and we would expect audiences of hundreds of millions for the Jubilee. Alongside that there will be countless tweeting, Facebook comments and YouTube videos to be posted globally.

"We're also working with international media in all our key markets to extend their

Jubilee Weekend official events

Saturday 2 June, 2012: The Queen attends the Epsom Derby horse race

Sunday 3 June, 2012: The Big Jubilee Lunch: Details: www.thebiglunch.com

The Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant will feature 1,000 boats from across the UK, Commonwealth and around the world, with the Queen's Royal Barge leading the flotilla. Details: <http://www.thamesdiamondjubileepageant.org>

Monday 4 June, 2012: BBC Concert at Buckingham Palace: Tickets are available to UK residents by public ballot only

Queen's Diamond Jubilee Beacons: More than 2,000 beacons will be lit by communities and individuals throughout the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and the Commonwealth

Tuesday 5 June, 2012: Service of Thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral followed by a carriage procession for the Queen

coverage of the Jubilee to the destination, and providing story ideas around heritage and footage of destinations associated with the Royal family."

If the UK's attractions and tourism sites can further build on the Royal wave this summer, then the outlook for 2012 is that the UK is in for a right royal time. ●

LASTING LEGACIES

WITH THE EVENTS OF LONDON 2012 BEING BEAMED TO BILLIONS AROUND THE WORLD,
HOW CAN THE UK'S ATTRACTIONS CAPITALISE ON THE INCREASED ATTENTION?

JULIE CRAMER • JOURNALIST • ATTRACTIONS MANAGEMENT

The media excitement and buzz created by hosting the Olympic Games is inescapable, and even if most of the UK's attractions won't directly gain financially from the six weeks of Olympic and Paralympic events, Britain's tourism professionals are optimistic about the potential for creating a significant and lasting boost to inward bound tourism for many years to come.

The UK's tourism body, VisitBritain, is forecasting a bumper year for tourists, with more than 30 million visitors due during 2012, spending a predicted £17.6bn (£21.3bn, US\$30bn). VisitBritain also says it's targeting an extra 4.6 million overseas visitors – and an extra £2.3bn (£2.8bn, \$3.65bn) in visitor spend – by 2014-15 as a result of hosting the Games and staging the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations this summer.

Chris Foy, head of the 2012 Games Unit at VisitBritain, describes both events as “a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to enhance

the image of the UK as a destination, showing the best that Britain's heritage and attractions have to offer and creating a tourism legacy for years to come”.

Those in the industry are equally bullish about the possibilities. John Stachiewicz, chair of the Association for Cultural Enterprises, which has more than 200 member organisations in the heritage and culture sector across the country, says: “There's definitely a whiff of excitement and optimism in the air. What we want to instil in our members is that it's a great opportunity to showcase their business, create stronger displays that are more relevant to their core offer, redesign their websites and work with talented young designers to highlight new product ranges. It's also an opportunity to work on raising the level of their customer service.”

VISITOR SURGE

While Stachiewicz acknowledges that it's uncertain whether Games visitors will extend their stay and venture further afield,

he encourages organisations to focus on what the legacy could mean for them.

“It has been observed by past Olympic hosts that there's often an overall decrease in visitors during the event, but then a surge later on. The question for the UK is, when will that surge come – and it could well start in the autumn and over the Christmas period.”

Some visitor attractions may well benefit from a slight upturn in summer visits from domestic tourists wishing to ‘escape’ the intense Games coverage, and there's another potential market that Stachiewicz believes savvy sites could tap into. “We have to think creatively. For example, there will be around 20,000 international journalists covering the Games, many of whom might be twiddling their thumbs between certain events. With targeted press, can we get them to venture out and write articles about other parts of the UK and interesting attractions?” he asks.

VisitBritain's unprecedented £100m (£121.2m, \$158.5m)-plus marketing

The National Portrait Gallery's Olympics: Road to 2012 collection



British gymnasts Beth Tweedle, Hannah Whelan, Jenni Pinches and Rebecca Tunney



Diver Tom Daley by Bettina von Zwehl

campaign, ahead of and during, the UK's Olympic year will have no doubt laid some important groundwork – from which all UK visitor attractions and locations can hope to benefit. But fears have also been expressed over whether customer service can match the expectations of first-time visitors, especially those who have already experienced the type of service standards found in North America and the Far East.

Addressing the issue of Britain's perceived 'unfriendliness', chief executive of VisitBritain, Sandie Dawe, told *Leisure Management* (Q1 12): "While we've got up to four billion people watching on tv, we have the opportunity to change that image. We need to ensure the welcome, service and friendliness shine through."

TOURISM RESPONSE

VisitBritain has been encouraging the industry to improve its service offer in the run up to London 2012, by taking advantage of official training programmes, such as World Host and Welcome to Excellence. Foy adds: "Working with London 2012, we've produced www.tourism2012Games.org as the official source of information for the UK's tourism industry. Attractions are encouraged to check out the site in the lead up to the Games for advice on matters such as brand protection, reaching international media, and case studies on how destinations around the UK are making the most of the opportunity."

The Paralympics will also put a spotlight on the facilities for disabled visitors to the UK. It presents a key opportunity to

The Cultural Olympiad and London 2012 Festival

The Cultural Olympiad (CO) was created in 2008 for people across the host country to participate in arts, cultural, sporting and educational events.

Around 16 million people are said to have participated in, or attended, CO events and projects since its inception, with the highlight due to be the 12-week nationwide London 2012 Festival, which starts on Midsummer's Day on 21 June and runs until the 9 September 2012.

Highlights include: A major new art installation along the 84-miles of Hadrian's Wall; Stonehenge being transformed into a glowing fairy tale scene with an elemental Fire Garden; the final part of the National Portrait Gallery's three-year photographic project documenting athletes and those working behind the scenes to make 2012 happen (see box out below); and The Stories of the World project, which involves 60 museums.

"THEY'LL BE AROUND 20,000 INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISTS COVERING THE GAMES. CAN WE GET THEM TO WRITE ARTICLES ABOUT UK ATTRACTIONS?"

reassess disabled access and how staff are trained to deal with disabled visitors.

SEPTICISM

However, while London 2012 and its related events have undoubtedly stimulated improvements, as well as the potential to raise the longer term profile of the UK in the eyes of a global audience, there are professionals who remain sceptical about that translating into any real benefits to attractions and leisure businesses around the country.

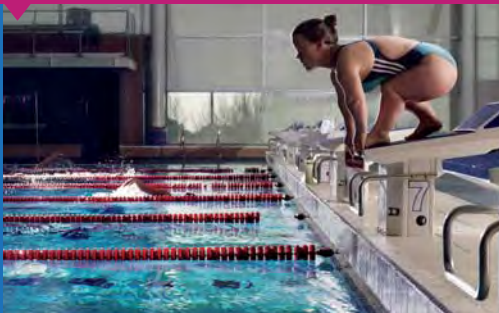
"There's too much hype surrounding the Olympic benefits, and the reality for most UK visitor attractions is that the Games will simply have no relevance at all," says chair of the Visitor Attractions Group and advisor on tourism policy, Ken Robinson.

"In the initial aftermath there will be feelings of pride, followed by a few months of deflation – like when all the guests have left the party and there's only the clearing up to do. After that, it's the role of government to build on the legacy – attractions can only play a passive role. What I would say to sites during this Olympic year, is to just concentrate on running your business well – be here, be good, and be excellent at all times."

Global media attention started ahead of the Royal Wedding last April. London 2012 and the Queen's Jubilee (see p70) look set to build that attention to a crescendo, and the future holds even more opportunities – namely the Commonwealth Games in 2014 and the Rugby World Cup in 2015.



Sebastian Coe by Emma Hardy



Paralympic champion Eleanor Simmonds by Finlay MacKay

► Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

After the closing ceremonies signal the end to London's hosting of the 2012 Games, the Olympic site is due to undergo an ambitious transformation into the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park – a 250-acre area offering new world-standard attractions, sport and leisure facilities, housing and green spaces.



An artist's impression of how the park will look

While a grand plan is taking shape, there's huge potential for attractions and leisure operators to get involved in future developments. The corporation's director of venues, Peter Tudor, says: "We're currently inviting expressions of interest from all types of operator and companies can go to the website for more information and to register their ideas."

Tudor says that some vacant indoor or outdoor spaces in the park may be available for six months to operators with good ideas, while others could be available for up to 15 years, as the development company works on its vision up until 2030 using a mixture of public and private funding. Anything from urban sports venues to open air amusement parks will be considered. "We'll be promoting the experience as 'A Day in the Park' with some multi-ticket entries," he says. "So there will be a huge variety of things on offer."

THE OLYMPIC MUSEUM

The British Olympic Association (BOA) is building an Olympic Museum next to the Orbit, which is set to become a major attraction when it opens at the park in 2014.

The design and content for the museum is still under discussion, although a key aim of the new facility will be to highlight London's unique contribution to Olympic history as it becomes the first city in the world to have hosted the Games three times – in 1908, 1948 and 2012.

The British Olympic Association's chief executive, Andy Hunt, says: "The museum will provide members of the public with a venue to re-live the excitement, passion and drama of the London 2012 Games. It will create an interactive experience using technology and entertainment to communicate the Olympic values to inspire future generations."



ArcelorMittal Orbit is 22m taller than the Statue of Liberty and offers a 20-mile view across London

ArcelorMittal Orbit

At more than 114m (374ft), the new ArcelorMittal Orbit tower is the tallest sculpture in the UK. It is expected to draw great attention for tourists and visitors alike and become a major revenue earner for the park.

Costing £22.7m (£27.5m, \$36m) – £19.6m (£23.7m, \$31m) of which is from sponsors ArcelorMittal and the remainder from the Greater London Authority – the Orbit has been created and constructed by renowned designer Anish Kapoor and engineer Cecil Balmond of Arup AGU. The striking red structure is 22m (72ft) taller than the Statue of Liberty, offering visitors views of London covering a 20-mile (32km) radius from the top. Built as a continuous lattice loop of steel, visitors can ascend the tower via a lift at the centre and descend down an open winding staircase.

"The Orbit is a major new attraction for London," says Tudor. "After the Games, the site will need to close as the rest of the surrounding infrastructure in the south of the park is being developed." The Orbit is due to re-open in 2014, and will be operated by the development corporation. ●

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CLARITY COMMERCE SOLUTIONS

Increasing income was one of the aims of Parques Reunidos-owned theme park, Bobbejaanland, in Belgium, when it chose Clarity Commerce Solutions to install new ticketing software. Its previous system meant that targeted promotions, campaigns and sales initiatives were difficult to track, but the ClarityLive Ticket software solves this issue, by providing an integrated selling environment for creating one view of the customer. For example, a campaign can be run for a family ticket, offering discount on F&B and retail, which incentivises guests to spend more money. The information gathered also helps build up a guest profile.

The system allows tickets for all venues to be downloaded at home, on the move, from the kiosk or the ticket office and offers point of sale for the other profit centres. It also increases the per capita income – ticket buying is easier, so more sales will be closed and it allows the upselling of other products and services via the ticketing selling channels.

ClarityLive improves the customer experience by processing and tracking transactions efficiently, solving



Bobbejaanland recently installed Clarity Commerce Solutions

problems, such as long queues, slow customer service, lack of reliable information and poor co-ordination of sales channels.

CEO of Bobbejaanland, Roland Kleve, says: "We now have a truly multi-channel theme park with sophisticated tools for building brand loyalty. This will provide an enhanced customer experience and ways to increase revenue streams."

GATEWAY



The National September 11 Memorial has had a million visitors

Gateway implemented an online ticketing webstore for the National September 11 Memorial, New York, which opened in 2011. It needed to be able to support exceptionally high volume, a reservations department and call line, as well as a controlled scanning process for time-managed admissions to the memorial.

"The Gateway ticketing system has played a large part in the success of the 9/11 Memorial by providing free passes to the more than one million visitors – and counting – we have received in the first few months of operations," says Jim Connors, executive vice president of operations. "We required a ticketing system to safely manage capacity because of the ongoing construction on other World Trade Center projects surrounding the Memorial."

One challenge of this installation was network connectivity, as the attraction has a number of locations around Lower Manhattan. This was overcome by installing a robust wireless network and extended WAN to the dispersed locations.

Gateway recently launched its eGalaxy Mobile Web Store to help customers improve operations and efficiency while increasing sales. Guests can use their phones to make purchases en route or on arrival to avoid queues or order additional tickets.

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OmniTicket Network - the market leader in the field of computerised admissions ticketing, access control and ticket distribution systems for visitor attractions - is seeking a **Client Support/Training Specialist** to operate from it's UK base in Staffordshire.

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OMNI TICKET

Customer operations manager at Edinburgh Zoo, Moira Adam, says: "Omniticket's system enabled us to speed up the admission process and has allowed us to introduce a timed ticketing process."



Edinburgh Zoo prepares for pandas

Children's entry and exit to and from Curve Motion is recorded and monitored

Curve Motion selected modules from Vennersys solution's Venpos application suite, which provided the best fit for their requirements. This could cover all operational areas of their business from one single system, along with a wristband system for security. The system allows rapid entry at busy times, an online booking module, security enhancements and a comprehensive CRM solution, providing a detailed view of customers so they can market more pro-actively.

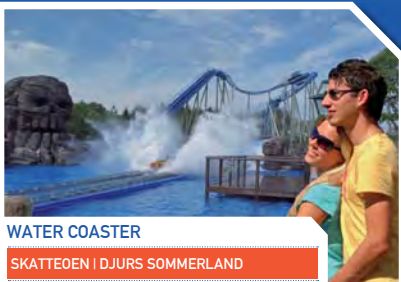
Part of creating this safe environment has been the implementation of a security procedure designed to ensure children's entry and exit from the centre is recorded and monitored, to ensure the right child leaves with the right parent. Wristbands, with an identifying barcode unique to each family group, are issued. When the group leaves, all the wristbands are scanned. Vennerys worked closely with Curve Motion to understand the exact requirements for the wristband system, which wasn't part of Venpos at the time, and carried out a short custom development to deliver it.

Founder of Curve Motion, Fiona Bayliss, says: "We didn't want the complications and administrative cost of running different systems in different parts of the business. Venpos allows us to manage the business from a single back office application."

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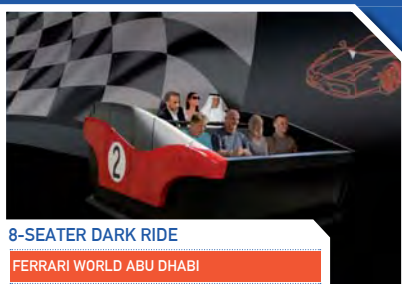
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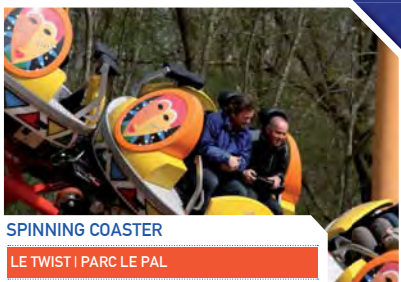
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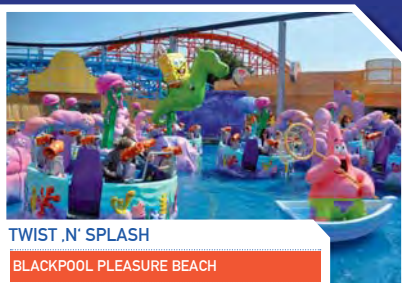
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TOR SYSTEMS



The National Media Museum uses a bespoke ticketing system

TOR Systems has installed a bespoke ticketing system at the National Media Museum in Bradford, UK, which saw the development of many new features to fit the wide ranging brief that was specified by the client.

The system needed to be capable of setting up different selling areas, categorising events, segmentation of data, coping with advertising codes for marketing purposes, e-ticketing, real time availability, locks to avoid double bookings, choice of seats and touch screen collection terminals. A CRM aspect of the system is used for regular updates to people and it was essential the system could cope with cross selling, as well as run the different membership types.

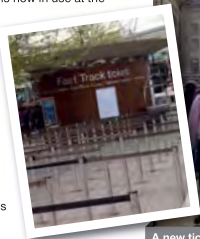
TOR installed its Maxim and MaximWeb Solutions, along with new and bespoke features, to meet the customer requirements. According to TOR sales manager, John Parker: "The challenges were overcome through extensive interaction with the client, listening to their specific needs and concerns and addressing these in the product build."

TENSATOR

Tensator has installed a range of innovative queue management systems at two famous attractions within the Merlin Entertainments Group, in order to cut down on queue times.

The SLQ2000 Electronic Call Forward system (ECF) is now in use at the EDF Energy London Eye to cope with the high volume of visitors. Positions are usually split between fast track and standard tickets, but Tensator has provided a solution enabling all the positions to be merged at busier periods, meaning faster queue flow. The ticketing area needed to be upgraded, so Tensator removed old equipment and retro-fitted the eSLQ2000 system into the ceiling. Ticket cashiers are identified by digital signs with customers being guided forward by two central display units (CDU).

New for Thorpe Park is an eight position ECF and single CDU. The system displays customised messages to the visitors, and cashiers are clearly identified to ensure accurate synchronisation.



A new ticketing system for the EDF Energy London Eye

SKIDATA

Skidata used its KeyWristBand to great effect at the luxury Atlantis resort in Dubai. The multi-function wristband does away with the need for cash, locker keys or tickets.

On arrival, guests validate their tickets at 60 Point of Sale terminals and then access through 20 contactless readers. As 1,000 people per hour pass through the turnstiles, the system needed to be smooth and fast.

Since the waterpark is open to both resort guests, who use it for free, and paying day visitors,

flexible rate models were necessary to differentiate the guests.

The wristband also handles payment in the park, negating the need for cash. It handles the lockers in the same way. ●



The luxury Atlantis resort in Dubai has introduced Skidata's KeyWristBands to resort and day guests

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Product round-up



An Innovative new Mobile Zip Line

Distributors Innovative Leisure have announced the UK and European launch of the new Mobile Zip Line from Spectrum Sports. Voted Best New Product at IAAPA, access to a 28ft-high platform is via a 30in-wide staircase. Riders enter a protective launch barrel before being attached to the line and are slowed at the end of the ride by a new Auto-Retract® braking system.

fun-kit.net KEYWORDS
innovative leisure



Polin supplying slides for new Thai waterpark

Polin are to supply waterslides for the new 14-acre Cartoon Network Amazone waterpark, currently under construction in Bang Saray, near Pattaya on Thailand's east coast. Scheduled to open in 2013, Cartoon Network Amazone is a nod to the Amazon Rainforest which incorporates attractions featuring popular animated series and cartoon heroes including 'Ben 10', 'The Power Puff Girls', 'Johnny Bravo' and 'The Amazing World of Gumball'.

fun-kit.net KEYWORD
polin

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HUSS tower for Dorset Olympic venue

HUSS Park Attractions is building an observation tower on the Weymouth, Dorset, seafront. To be operated by Merlin Entertainments, the 53m (174ft) tower, which will provide 360 degree views over the English Channel and surrounding countryside, is due to be completed in time for this year's Olympic sailing events which are set to take place in Weymouth and neighbouring Portland. The structure is being built on the town's Festival Pier and will feature a rotating gondola of 12m in diameter.



fun-kit.net KEYWORD
huss



fun-kit.net KEYWORD
samsung

Samsung adding to the Eye experience

The capsules on EDF Energy's London Eye have been fitted with state of the art Samsung Galaxy Tab 10.1 devices in a move designed to improve the flight experience of visitors. The interactive guides enable guests to access key information about what they can see by touching the landmark on the screen or by searching its name to find it. In addition to information about 44 famous London landmarks, guests can enjoy 24 hour time-lapse photography, 360° day and night views from the Eye itself and bird's eye views of some of the landmarks as well as a 'look inside' a number of the structures.



New Interlink ride for Finnish amusement park

Interlink is to build a new 'Bridge over the River Kwai'-themed log flume ride at PowerPark in Härmä, Finland. Scheduled to open in 2013, the project involves the design, manufacture and supply of a two lift Super Flume which will feature two lifts and two drops, one of 7m and another of 14 m, and will have an overall circuit length of approximately 400m. It will incorporate a 12m long station section and utilise a total of nine, six-seater boats. The ride, to be integrated into an existing bridge, will be situated in a new area of the park.

fun-kit.net KEYWORD interlink



fun-kit.net KEYWORDS
ie park/soli

IE Park/Soli's bumper additions

Italian ride manufacturer IE Park/Soli Bumper Cars has delivered new bumper cars and tracks to two of Asia's largest theme parks. The Thrill Mountain zone at Hong Kong's Ocean Park has taken delivery of new bumper car tracks and new cars from the company, the 27 Bumper Blaster vehicles supplied being the redesigned '1936' floor pick-up model with a specially designed head restraint. Lotte World at Seoul, South Korea has seen the installation of a new 30m x 10m track on which an existing fleet of 15 of the company's adult 'Charlie' cars is now operating.



Whitewater heading for the wild west

Frontier City, a western-themed amusement park in Oklahoma City, US has partnered with WhiteWater West to build the state's newest attraction. An AquaPlay RainFortress called 'Wild West Water Works', the wild west-themed, 52ft-high structure will feature a 1,000 gallon tipping bucket that resembles a barrel, 200 interactive play elements and eight waterslides.

fun-kit.net KEYWORDS
whitewater west



Watch out for new Chinese exhibition

Dataton's Watchout multimedia content playback solution has been supplied for use with a multi-faceted 228m screen in a new Chinese exhibition called 'Old Beijing Gets Moving'. Located in Beijing's National Conference Centre, the exhibition takes as its inspiration 'A Glance Round Old Beijing', an extended scrolled panorama of the city as it was in the 1930s. Watchout blends and synchronises the images of 56 digital video projectors.

fun-kit.net KEYWORD
dataton

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