

Attractions

MANAGEMENT

@attractionsmag

Volume 27 Issue 2

**Engaging
with visitors
with sensory
needs**
p50

**AWARD
SEASON**
*Celebrating
the museum
industry's
finest*
p64

**CHRIS
MATHER**
*Making the
most of the
post-lockdown
boom*
p28

**THE
METAVERSE**
*What you
need to know*
p44

NICOLAS DE VILLIERS

Puy du Fou takes on the US *p10*



40
years

OF TRANSFORMATIVE,
HUMAN EXPERIENCES.



BRC Imagination Arts is a full-service, strategic design and production company that translates brand and cultural stories into transformative, human experiences. For 40 years, we've stood on the front lines, helping our clients build more meaningful, enduring relationships with audiences around the globe.

Our unique body of work has earned us over 400 awards for some of the most respected and acclaimed brand and cultural destinations in the world.

Learn more: www.brcweb.com





The Leisure Industry's
Premier Event in Europe



TRADE SHOW: **13-15 Sept.** | 2022
CONFERENCE: **12-15 Sept.** | 2022

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

LEARN MORE

[IAAPA.org/IAAPAEurope](https://iaapa.org/IAAPAEurope)

[@IAAPAMEA](https://twitter.com/IAAPAMEA) | [#IAAPAEurope](https://twitter.com/IAAPAEurope)

Open for all

When it comes to being genuinely inclusive and welcoming to those with sensory needs, we must be open to feedback and not make assumptions. Listening is key



Over the past decade or so, the attractions industry has woken up to the fact that it must be more accessible, and it needs to reflect the diverse make up of the population it serves.

This issue, we interviewed a range of people working hard to make museums and attractions more inclusive and welcoming for people with sensory needs.

According to Kulturecity, a leading US non profit for those with invisible disabilities, one in six of us have a sensory need that could make a visit to an attraction overwhelming.

The people we spoke to for our feature on page 50 had some fantastic ideas about how to make museums and attractions more welcoming, but by far the most powerful comments were from Emily Elsworth, an autism advocate and trainer who was recently diagnosed as autistic at the age of 27.

As a child, Elsworth knew she found many attractions challenging, but she didn't know why. Now, armed with her diagnosis, she's working with museums and attractions to help improve accessibility.

Elsworth acknowledges how far we've come, with many venues working hard to welcome people with sensory needs. Detailed information on websites, sensory backpacks, properly trained staff and calmer, quieter sessions can help, but there's still a long way to go.

Elsworth cited a recent visit to a UK zoo, which claimed on its website to be fully accessible. When she stepped off the bus, she was greeted with blaring music and staff shouting information. The ticket gate and entrance was confusing and the maps had bright backgrounds



Houston Museum of Natural Science is a Certified Autism Center

PHOTO: HOUSTON MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE

“Don't make assumptions about what visitors with sensory needs want”

that made them hard for her to read.

Another issue highlighted by Elsworth is the gap in support for adults with sensory needs.

“There seems to be a perception that only children have sensory needs,” she says. “We need acknowledgement that those needs don't end when you turn 18.”

The main message is not to make assumptions about what visitors want – instead consult with the people you're welcoming.

“Don't be scared,” says Elsworth. “There are so many positives to bringing a whole new group of people into your venue that you'll miss out on if you don't make those changes.”

Magali Robathan, editor



Chris Mather shares his plans

28



Chester Zoo's conservation aims

14



Celebrating the industry's finest

64

05 Editor's Letter

We must listen to the communities we're trying to serve if we're going to make attractions inclusive for everyone, says Magali Robathan

10 People: Nicolas de Villiers

The head of Puy du Fou on taking on America

14 People: Dr Sue Walker

Chester Zoo's head of science on a project aiming to save animals from extinction

18 Danny Burzlaff

On AR, VR, world-building, avatar creation and the metaverse

20 News

The top news stories from the Attractions Management news feed

28 Chris Mather

As the Gretna Green Experience opens in Scotland, Mather & Co's CEO shares the highs and lows of almost three decades in exhibition design

36 Down to Earth

The world's first 'living waterslides', a hydroponic farm, rooftop beehives and more than 1,500 trees – all part of the Thermo Manchester next generation waterpark's aims to be as green as possible

38 Gardens of the future

Dubai's new Museum of the Future has opened with a bang. We look at how the innovative landscaping aims to support the museum's message

44 A whole new world

The metaverse is coming, and the attractions industry needs to pay attention. Lesley Morisetti explores the challenges and opportunities

50 Attractions and neurodiversity

How can museums and attractions ensure they are as welcoming as possible for visitors with sensory needs? The experts share their tips



Puy du Fou's Nicolas
de Villiers

PHOTO: STÉPHANE AUORAN/RUY DU FOU



The rise of immersive
art experiences

60

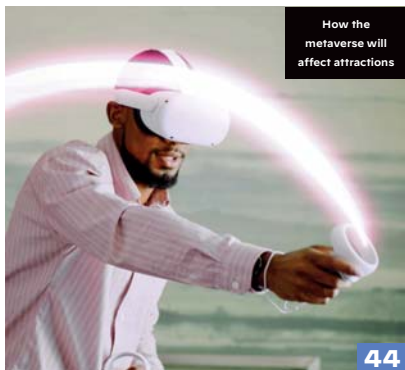
PHOTO: EXHIBITION HUB



Museum of
the Future's
landscaping

38

IMAGE: MUSEUM OF THE FUTURE



How the
metaverse will
affect attractions

44

PHOTO: COURTESY META

60 Van Gogh

Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience is part of a massive trend promising to offer new perspectives on art and artists

64 Award season

As the Oscars of the museum world celebrate the best, brightest and most creative, we take a look at this year's winners

74 The winds of change

Attractions providers not willing to take risks and get truly creative will get left behind, says Dr Terry Stevens. Here's how to stay ahead of the curve

80 A sustainable future

Research shows that consumers want attractions to get greener, faster, and they're actively pushing for change. BVA BDRC's Jon Young talks us through the numbers

86 Product innovation

From the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebration projections onto Buckingham Palace to Australia's South Coast's first rollercoaster, we take a look at some exciting product news from across the attractions industry

90 AM Directory

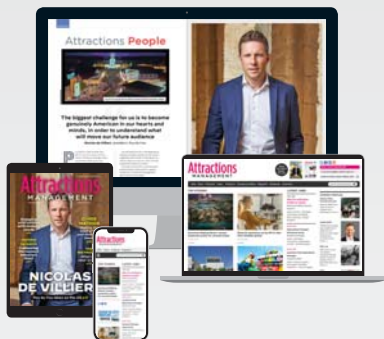
Companies supporting the industry

18



Unit9's Danny Burzlaff

PHOTO: UNIT9



Choose how you read Attractions Management

PRINT

Attractions Management is available in print on subscription at leisuresubs.com

DIGITAL/DESKTOP

Read free online and enjoy extra links and searchability

attractionsmanagement.com/digital

ONLINE/MOBILE

Each issue of AM can be read online at www.attractionsmanagement.com

PDF

A PDF edition is available to read offline attractionsmanagement.com/pdf

Other resources from Attractions Management

Attractions Management website
www.attractionsmanagement.com

Attractions Management Handbook
www.attractionshandbook.com

Attractions Management
Ezine & Instant News Alerts
www.leisuremedia.com/signup

Buyer search engine
www.attractions-kit.net

Leisure Media
www.leisuremedia.com

Attractions MANAGEMENT

MEET THE TEAM



EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
Liz Terry
+44 (0)1462 431385



EDITOR
Magali Robathan
+44 (0)1275 464192



SALES SUPPORT
Tyler Landry
+44 (0)1462 431385



HEAD OF NEWS
Tom Walker
+44 (0)1462 431385

DESIGN

Ed Gallagher
+44 (0)1462 431385

WEB

Tim Nash
+44 (0)1462 471917

CIRCULATION

Michael Emmerson
+44 (0)1462 471932

SUBSCRIPTIONS

+44 (0)1462 471910

FINANCE & CREDIT CONTROL

+44 (0)1462 431385

For email use: fullname@leisuremedia.com



COPYRIGHT NOTICE Attractions Management magazine is published by The Leisure Media Company Ltd, First Floor, 2 Railton Road, Woburn Road Industrial Estate, Kempston, MK42 7PN, UK. The views expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the publisher. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recorded or otherwise (please) without the prior permission of the copyright holder, Cybertrek Ltd. Printed by The Manson Group Ltd. Distributed by Royal Mail Group Ltd and Whistl Ltd in the UK and Total Mail Ltd globally. ©Cybertrek Ltd 2022 ISSN 1479-9154 (print) ISSN 2397-2416 (digital). To subscribe, log on to www.leisuresubs.com, email subs@leisuremedia.com or call +44 (0)1462 431385. Annual subs rates UK £48, Europe £65, rest of world £94, students (UK) £25



INTAMIN
AMUSEMENT RIDES

See us at
IAAPA EXPO EUROPE
BOOTH #1627

LSM LAUNCH COASTER



Talga Lineamäki, Finland



Scan QR-code for
more information.
intamin.com

Attractions **People**

PHOTO: EBC/THE LOT



The biggest challenge for us is to become genuinely American in our hearts and minds, in order to understand what will move our future audience

Nicolas de Villiers president, Puy du Fou

Puy du Fou is set to enter the US attractions market with its iconic, immersive themed visitor experience, after securing a partnership with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI).

The EBCI Tribal Council has approved plans to provide US\$75m worth of funding for phase 1 of The Gateway to Adventure project in Sevierville, Tennessee.

The Puy du Fou element will be a major part of the 200-acre development, located at the start of the Smoky Mountains. According to EBCI, the US' first Puy du Fou will be a fully immersive walk-through show inspired by an "authentic and heartbreaking Cherokee story" of their heroism in World War 1.

As well as Puy du Fou, The Gateway to Adventure project will feature the world's largest Buc-ee's Family Travel Center, as well as shops, restaurants, other themed experiences, parks and hotels.

Here Nicolas de Villiers, chairman and artistic director of Puy du Fou, speaks exclusively to *Attractions Management* about this exciting project.

How did your partnership with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians come about?

Thanks to Matthew Cross, founder of consultancy and development company OE Experiences, we crossed paths with the EBCI, who were looking for diversification by creating a



Nicolas de Villiers says Puy du Fou has "carefully screened the US for the next stage of our expansion"



family destination in Sevier County. Puy du Fou is a celebration of history and cultural roots; we mainly deal with stories inspired by history. EBCI wanted an original show with a new brand able to bring a new concept to this region. EBCI has been very open to the ideas Puy du Fou has presented; as such, this partnership makes perfect sense.

What will the show involve?

This immersive experience will be a deep dive into an authentic and breathtaking history – the story of the Cherokee volunteers who fought alongside American boys for their country and for freedom during the First World War. This story is little-known and will pay a deserved tribute to these heroes. From the Appalachian foothills to the French battlefields, our spectators of all ages will embark on an epic journey that will transform them.

What excites you and the team most about telling this story about the Cherokee Indians?

For us, each new meeting is an opportunity to discover another culture, another history, another perspective on our world. We've been touched by the glorious and suffering history of the Cherokees; there are some similarities

with our history, here in western France. We've witnessed them making their path in modern America with hope, success and determination. proud of their Cherokee roots and cultural legacy. Our feeling is admiration just as much as excitement: how could it be otherwise?

Why did you choose the Smoky Mountains for your first US attraction?

During the past year, we've carefully screened the USA for the next step of our international expansion. It became clear to us that South-East America, and especially the Great Smoky Mountains area could be a perfect fit for us. The natural beauty of the countryside, the legendary southern hospitality, the sense of community combined with a booming tourist destination and great support from local authorities set the stage for our first flag in America.

What do you see as the biggest challenges of developing the Puy du Fou experience for the US market?

The biggest challenge for us is to become genuinely American in our hearts and minds, in order to understand what will move our future audience, trigger their curiosity and incite them to come and visit us. This is an exciting



challenge which is also our signature: we don't replicate our creations everywhere in the world. We adapt them to the local culture, where we create what we call 'rooted entertainment'.

What are the biggest opportunities of expanding into the US?

The USA is THE country for entertainment. We've been coming here every year for 40 years and we're still fascinated by the depth of the market and its perpetual evolution. Moreover, the experts of the American entertainment industry were the first to recognise our uniqueness – in Los Angeles in 2012 (Thea Award for Best Park in the World) and in Orlando in 2014 (IAAPA Applause Award for Best Park in the World), thus paving the way for our international fame.

It's now time for us to bring Puy du Fou to our American friends: there are so many beautiful stories to tell in this country where experiences such as ours don't exist yet.

Are you looking for opportunities elsewhere in the US?

Right now, our main goal is to create this first show. It's likely to be just the start of our American adventure, though.

Richard Sneed, principal chief of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (centre wearing navy shirt), during a visit to Puy du Fou France in 2021

What else are you currently working on?

We're following our strategy of 'perpetual creation' in order to densify our offer in our parks in France and Spain: here, new creations will soon open their gates to the public.

Our teams are also developing a great immersive show in Shanghai, which will be unveiled before the end of the year.

In parallel, we've launched our own train experience: Le Grand Tour – a 4,000km tour of France's magnificent treasures, lasting six days and five nights.

We've also created Puy du Fou Films, a movie production company which will extend the Puy du Fou brand from stage to screen, telling beautiful and epic stories for international audiences. A first drama, *The Last Bandit*, will be released early next year. ●



PHOTO: CHESTER ZOO

Technologies such as cryopreservation offer us a new, critical piece of the conservation puzzle

Dr Sue Walker Head of science at Chester Zoo
and co-founder of Nature's SAFE

Scientists at Chester Zoo have started to freeze tissue samples of some of the world's rarest animals as part of a project to save them from extinction.

Together with leading animal reproduction experts, the conservationists at Chester Zoo have founded Nature's SAFE: "One of Europe's largest living biobanks dedicated to preserving and regenerating cells of the planet's most precious animals."

This project sees tissue samples taken from the ovaries, testicles and ears of animals that have died at Chester Zoo and are cryogenically frozen and stored at -196°C using liquid nitrogen.

The idea is that in the future, when reproductive technologies are more advanced, the frozen samples may be used to generate sperm and eggs, helping conservationists to restore genetic diversity in animal species threatened with extinction and even clone new animals.

To date, the frozen living biobank has cryopreserved multiple cell types from more than

100 highly threatened animal species – these include the jaguar, the Javan green magpie and the critically endangered Eastern black rhino.

"Without Nature's SAFE, for many species already so near the brink of extinction, there will be no return," said Tullis Matson, chair and founder of Nature's SAFE.

"With Nature's SAFE and other biobanking partners, there is optimism. We know the sixth mass extinction on Earth is underway, and there will be rough times ahead. The question is what do we want to do about it? And our answer is: we want to secure future options for biodiversity, by acting now."

Nature's SAFE is now home to biological tissue samples of some of the planet's most endangered species – providing an insurance policy for threatened wildlife.

Dr Sue Walker, head of science at Chester Zoo and co-founder of Nature's SAFE, speaks to *Attractions Management* about the project (overleaf).



Dr Sue Walker
has worked in zoo
science for 25 years

Why is this project so important?

Species all over the world face extinction: each day we are losing millions of years of evolution. Repaired environments will only succeed if we have genetically diverse networks of fauna to sustain them.

Nature's SAFE is providing hope to halt and reverse species decline by indefinitely storing and regenerating reproductive cells and cell lines from tissue that would otherwise be disposed of.

With gene pools and animal populations continually shrinking in the wild, the work of modern conservation zoos like ours has never been more important. Technologies such as cryopreservation offer us a new, critical piece of the conservation puzzle and help us provide a safeguard for many of the world's animals that, right now, we're sadly on track to lose.

What excites you most about this project?

The most exciting part of this project is the optimism that it provides. Species conservation is challenging, there is no one quick-fix – it

Amazon milk frogs
are threatened by
deforestation



PHOTO: CHESTER ZOO

requires collaboration and innovation. As we restore and repair landscapes we must also act in parallel to deliver cutting edge scientific solutions to ensure genetic variation is not lost. Nature's SAFE is an innovative tool in our conservation toolbox to ensure we store valuable genetic material after an individual animal dies.

What do you do with the tissue samples?

Samples supplied by zoos and cryopreserved by Nature's SAFE samples are processed in a unique way that ensures their functional ability is retained during preservation. From reproductive cells to ovarian and testicular tissue, to skin

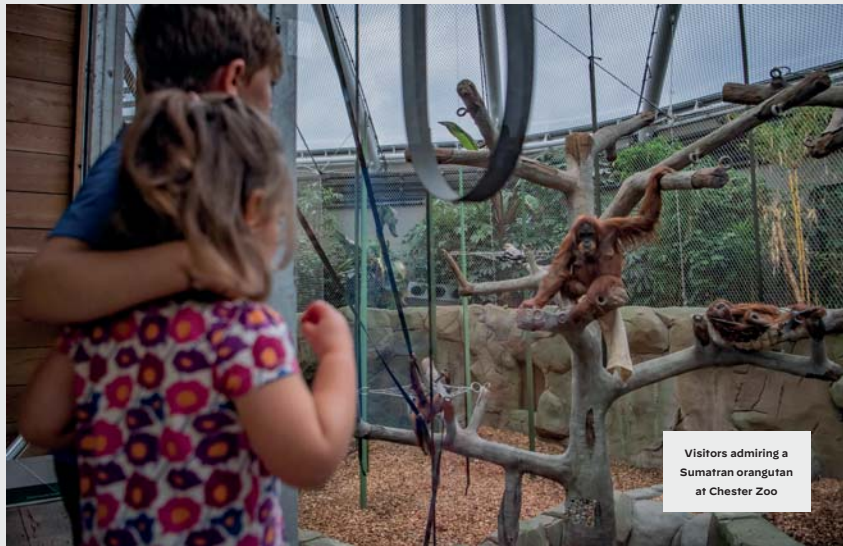


PHOTO: CHESTER ZOO

Visitors admiring a
Sumatran orangutan
at Chester Zoo



**Chester Zoo's
Monsoon Forest
reopened in 2020**

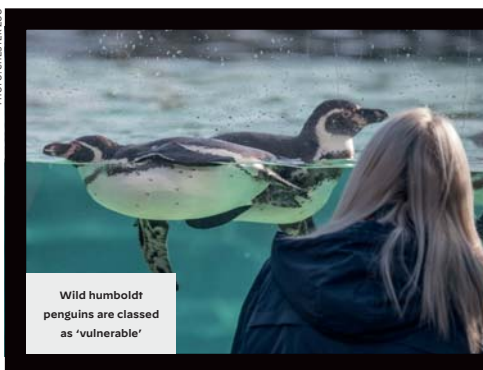
samples, specimens preserved by Nature's SAFE have true functional relevance to species conservation, providing a robust living biobank of multiple tissue types and cell specimens to assist in future species preservation.

What's the biggest challenge of this project?

The greatest challenge for Nature's SAFE is dealing with samples from such a huge variety of species – from rhinos to mountain chicken frogs. The diverse biology between species makes it technically challenging and that is where our scientific expertise take centre stage – developing new species specific methods and techniques. Additionally, safeguarding tissue samples is step one, the second is developing culture techniques to generate sperm and eggs from the preserved samples.

Why is it important for zoos to play a role in endangered species conservation?

Zoos are a unique conservation model – not only do they have a very important role in species conservation, with thousands of visitors a day, they can also empower generations to care for our natural world and



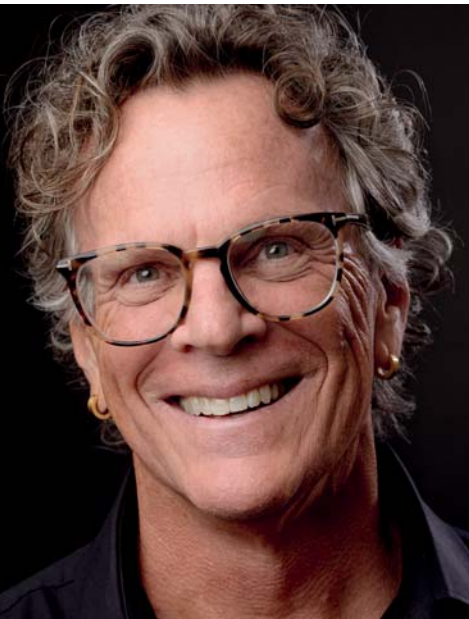
**Wild humboldt
penguins are classed
as 'vulnerable'**

act sustainably. Chester Zoo will continue to work with Nature's SAFE over the next few years in its mission to save animals from extinction by collecting, indefinitely storing and regenerating reproductive cells and cell lines from endangered animal species. ●

“

The Metaverse offers the attractions world the incredible ability to transport and engage guests from anywhere in the world, redefining the meaning of footfall

Danny Burzlaff, head of attractions, UNIT9



The UNIT9 Group has launched a new division, Attractions by UNIT9, to partner with museums, cultural institutions and theme parks to explore the opportunities that come with advancements in AR, VR, XR, Web3, metaverse experiences, immersive theatre, gamification, world-building, avatar creation and high-craft 3D.

The venture is launched by Daniel Burzlaff, who previously worked at Universal Studios Florida and SeaWorld Orlando, and has helped design immersive content for The Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal Studios Beijing and the Roald Dahl Story Company UK.

Recent attractions projects by UNIT9 include immersive virtual art and gaming experience Unframed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; augmented reality app Moonshot at the John F Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston; and the multisensory Bentley Centenary installation at the Bentley Visitor Centre.

The company is currently working on a new project with former client the Centre for World Culture based in Saudi Arabia, as well as an immersive cultural experience in Egypt.

Why is the visitor attraction market so exciting for UNIT9?

The visitor attractions market holds so many opportunities for exploration, education and adventure.

Audiences are ready for an elevated tech-led connection and we're incredibly excited to be able to match that growing demand with interactive, engaging visitor experiences.

What trends are you seeing in the attractions market?

We're seeing families becoming a lot more reliant on their children to direct entertainment and call the shots on experience decisions.

This influential younger cohort – Gen Alpha – are the first generation to grow up truly digitally native with tech savvy parents. Not only will they be expecting digital touches in every experience they engage with – they will be actively demanding it.

We expect to see tech becoming a more fluid, intuitive and seamlessly integrated aspect of the visitor experience. Especially AI systems and the personalised interactivity they facilitate, which will increasingly become the norm as the technical sophistication of audiences rises.



Clockwise from top left;
Bentley Visitor Centre;
Goodwood; JFK Moonshot;
The Met Unframed – projects
worked on by UNIT9



Are there any particularly innovative technologies shaping this market right now?

There are a few areas I'm pretty excited about right now. Hyper immersive activations – where guests are thrust into the adventure through interactive, customisable and shareable experiences imbued with cutting-edge technology, social interactions and a strong theme to tie it all together – are location-based entertainment gold dust. Disney's Galactic Starcruiser Hotel is a prime example of this.

Along with those types of experiences, AI and AR are doing a huge amount to shape the market. AI continues to enhance the user journey with personalised storytelling, allowing the guest to essentially become the hero of their own adventure. And AR is fast becoming a critical component of the most engaging guest experiences – from a personal concierge to an innovative game mechanic or engaging educational device.

Why should attractions providers take notice of the Metaverse?

The Metaverse is the next iteration of the internet. It's a platform that will pave the future

of interactivity and engagement and will totally change the way we interact with the world.

The Metaverse offers the attractions world the incredible ability to transport and engage guests from anywhere in the world, redefining the meaning of footfall.

Not only that, it can also support a physical visit to an attraction, enhancing an environment with digital augmentations or by offering access to a virtual concierge system and allowing the guest to customise their visit, order food, purchase merchandise and enjoy a personalised tour. These new revenue streams not only offer lucrative profit opportunities, they also bring the potential to connect with new guests in new ways pre, during and post visit, extending the user journey and building loyalty among visitors.

What are you working on right now?

I can't go into too much detail, but we have a very interesting project incorporating intuitive and fluid AI systems that respond to user input, curating specific entertainment and educational responses in real time so that guests can enjoy a personalised experience.

We're also working on a multisensory immersive destination within a cultural park. ●

UAE

Abu Dhabi SeaWorld to be world's largest aquarium

Construction work is set to be completed later this year (2022) on the world's largest aquarium.

Slated for a 2023 opening, SeaWorld Abu Dhabi will feature six different realms offering immersive experiences – as well as dynamic habitats, housing different species together, as they are in their natural habitat.

Located on Yas Island, the aquarium is set to house more than 68,000 marine animals, including sharks, schools of fish, manta rays and sea turtles.

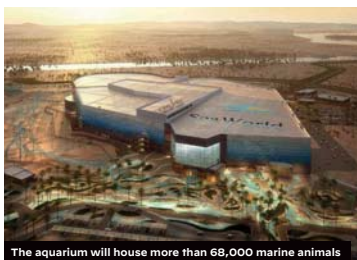
It will also be home to Yas SeaWorld Research and Rescue Center, the UAE's first dedicated

marine research, rescue, rehabilitation and return centre providing facilities to support regional and global conservation efforts.

The aquarium is being developed in partnership with SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment and Miral, an Abu Dhabi-based curator of attractions and visitor experiences.

Mohamed Abdalla Al Zaabi, chief executive of Miral, said: "SeaWorld Abu Dhabi will be a next-generation marine life park – the world's largest marine aquarium and the UAE's first dedicated research centre to study and care for animals."

More: http://lei.sr/S9y5P_T



“

This will be a next-generation marine park
Mohamed Abdalla Al Zaabi

TURKEY

Turkish resort opens first Rift waterslide, designed by Polin

“

As the signature waterslide designer of the industry, we are proud of the completion of the world's first Rift waterslide at Titanic Deluxe Golf Belek, which was launched at IAAPA Expo 2021
Polin Waterparks

The Titanic Deluxe Golf Belek resort in Antalya, Turkey, has launched the world's first Rift waterslide.

Designed by water ride specialist Polin, the themed Rift has a height of 10.8m and features a gravity duelling drop and an "intricately engineered" outrun. The design offers dynamic movements in two directions and almost 90 degree spikes for riders.

The new attraction is part of the resort's new 15,000sq m waterpark which features nine adult slides from three towers, a 210sq m swimming pool and a children's pool with a water



play structure with seven slides and interactive features.

The Titanic Deluxe Golf Belek resort has 594 rooms spread over 170,000sq m, a golf course with 36 holes and a number of restaurants.

Polin said: "As the signature waterslide designer of the industry, we are proud of the completion of the

world's first Rift waterslide at Titanic Deluxe Golf Belek in Antalya, which was launched at IAAPA Expo 2021 in Orlando, Florida.

"Rift exemplifies Polin Waterparks' expertise in design, engineering, and R&D in its signature rides."

More: http://lei.sr/A7F6r_T

UK

Architects chosen for International Slavery Museum

Adjaye Associates and Ralph Appelbaum Associates (RAA) have been named as the preferred bidders to lead the design of a £57m redevelopment of the International Slavery Museum and Maritime Museum in Liverpool, UK.

National Museums Liverpool (NML) picked the two design firms for the project which will see the Dr Martin Luther King Jr Building become a prominent new entrance to the International Slavery Museum.

According to NML, the work will create not only improved visitor orientation and a "more inspiring welcome", but also a stronger sense of purpose and identity for the museum.

Adjaye Associates has been appointed to lead the architectural design, while Ralph Appelbaum Associates will be responsible for the exhibition design.

David Adjaye OBE said: "I am deeply humbled to lead the renovation of the National Museums Liverpool's International Slavery Museum and Maritime Museum.

"This project presents us with an opportunity to reimagine the historic fabric of this Grade 1 Listed Building and to reposition it within the powerful context of Liverpool's Waterfront and its relationship to the transatlantic slave trade."

More: http://lei.sr/5a8E2_T



PHOTO: NATIONAL MUSEUMS LIVERPOOL



“

I am deeply humbled to lead the renovation of these museums

David Adjaye

FRANCE

Avengers Campus opens at Disneyland Paris

Disneyland Paris has hosted a soft opening of its new Avengers Campus Paris, ahead of its opening to the public.

Forming part of a €2bn (\$2bn, £1.69bn), multi-year expansion of the resort, the Avengers Campus is the first-ever Marvel-themed universe in Europe.

It features two new themed rides – Spider-man W.E.B. Adventure and Avengers Assemble: Flight Force.

The latter is a reimagined version of the original Rock and Roller steel coaster built by Vekoma that opened at Disneyland Paris in 2002.

It will see guests board a Stark Industries hypersonic vehicle, strap themselves in and blast off for an "epic adventure full of twists, turns and loops".

The Spider-man W.E.B. Adventure is an interactive screen ride – similar to the Web Slingers: A Spider-Man Adventure ride at Disney California Adventure.

Avengers Campus also includes a Hero Training Centre, where visitors can hone their super powers; and Stark Factory, where guests can explore the innovations of Tony Stark. Other themed experiences



PHOTO: MARVEL DISNEYLAND PARIS

include restaurants and bar concepts and "photo opportunity zones", where guests can snap themselves with their favourite character.

Guests will also be able to try their hand at creating their own comic art at the Marvel Design Studio.

There is also a themed hotel, called Hotel New York

– The Art of Marvel. The hotel has been designed as a New York art gallery and is the first hotel in the world dedicated to Marvel art.

It houses one of the largest publicly-viewable collections of Marvel artwork, with 350 pieces of art.

More: http://lei.sr/8n7N5_T

GLOBAL

FlowRider rebrands to reflect 'past and future'

FlowRider, the stationary wave machine pioneer, has undergone a rebrand for the first time since its launch in 1991.

The first FlowRider opened in 1991 at Schlitterbahn in New Braunfels, Texas, US.

Since its launch, the company has expanded at a steady pace and there are now more than 250 FlowRider sites across the globe.

The new brand identity, revealed in July 2022, has been designed to reflect "passion and forward-looking innovation".

FlowRider is based on technology which pumps a thin sheet of water over a tensioned ride surface, creating a nonstop wave

and an entirely new sport called "flowboarding".

In 2009, the company became part of waterpark ride giant WhiteWater, a move which helped FlowRider increase its global presence and secure its spot as the leader in the stationary wave industry.

Marshall Myrman, president of FlowRider, said: "We're really excited to have a brand identity that is representative of our product. This new branding really nails the curvature of our original FlowRider product, while also being reminiscent of a river wave, which is what our new FlowSurf is based on."

More: http://lei.sr/p2a2Q_T



PHOTO: FLOWRIDER.COM



“
The brand identity
is representative
of our product
Marshall Myrman

SWEDEN

Liseberg's Grand Curiosa Hotel to open in 2023

“

Grand Curiosa will
have 457 family rooms
and a restaurant with a
fully functional merry-go-round from 1923

Liseberg theme park in Sweden has confirmed that its new Grand Curiosa Hotel will open in 2023.

A highly themed family hotel, the Grand Curiosa will have 457 family rooms, a restaurant with a fully functional merry-go-round from 1923, and a rooftop bistro with a view of the park and several bars.

The theming has been inspired by the history of its home city, Gothenburg, and the West Swedish East India Trading Company – combined with Liseberg's own unique DNA. The hotel will form the first part of Liseberg's

wider expansion plans, which include a €110m indoor waterpark called Oceana.

The year-round attraction, designed by Swedish architects Wingårdh, covers an indoor area of 13,600sq m and a further 4,000sq m outdoors. Set to open in April 2024, the park will

have a capacity of 1750 guests at any one time.

The park will feature 14 attractions designed by WhiteWater, ranging from toddler pools to thrill rides. The Grand Curiosa will have its own entrance to the park.

More: http://lei.sr/t6H7P_T



PHOTO: LISEBERG

US

Juneteenth Museum to “inspire spiritual uplift”

Detailed plans have been revealed for the National Juneteenth Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, US.

Designed by architects Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG), the 50,000sq ft visitor attraction will anchor a larger mixed-use development on the Historic Southside of Fort Worth.

It will explore the events of June 19, 1865, when Union General Gordon Granger issued Order No. 3, in essence declaring that “all slaves are free” in the state of Texas.

The museum is the brainchild of activist Opal Lee, who successfully campaigned for Juneteenth to become a federal holiday.

A spokesperson for the National Juneteenth Museum

said: “We’re erecting a museum to celebrate the legacy of freedom that was announced on June 19, 1865, the date known globally as ‘Juneteenth’.

“We believe that the extraordinary story of that fateful day and the events surrounding it deserve to be told, and we intend to tell it.

“But we’re not just erecting a museum, we’re curating an experience centre.

“The National Juneteenth Museum development project will infuse economic activity into one of the south’s most underserved communities and shift the trajectory of a neighbourhood that was once home to a number of prominent figures, including



BIG’s design for the museum will use heavy timber

PHOTO: BIG

Texas’ first Black millionaire, William Madison McDonald.”

Douglass Alligood, the BIG partner in charge of the project, added that he hoped the building would convey “spiritual uplift” in keeping with Opal Lee’s vision in

spearheading the Juneteenth National Holiday movement.

BIG’s design for the museum will use materials such as heavy timber and also draw on the local architecture.

More: http://lei.sr/u8p6y_T

US

Industry mourns death of Meow Wolf founder, Matt King

Meow Wolf, the immersive arts and entertainment company, has announced the death of its co-founder, Matt King.

No further details of King’s death have been made public, though Meow Wolf’s Facebook page described it as “sudden”.

King was an instrumental figure behind the company, which was launched in 2008 as an informal “DIY collective” of Santa Fe artists in New Mexico. Since then, it has developed a distinctive style of immersive, maximalist environments that encourage audience participation.

In a statement on Facebook, Meow Wolf said: “The Meow Wolf community is devastated and in absolute shock by the sudden passing of Meow Wolf co-founder, artist and dearest friend Matt King. Our thoughts and condolences go out to his family, friends and everyone who knows and loves him.

“Matt’s work as both a collaborator and artist was like no other: monumental, groundbreaking, otherworldly, and wild. This is a tremendous loss to the world. And we are tremendously grateful to have shared time and space with him.



King was an instrumental figure behind the company

PHOTO: MEOW WOLF/PRINCE ADOLBERG/INKEIN

“Matt is a wizard who is riding rainbows in the astral plane now. His spirit is no longer constrained by the physical limitations of this world, and we all are responsible for continuing to build what he began with us here.

“Matt was present at the very first Meow Wolf

meeting in 2008 and, along with Quinn Tincher, created Meow Wolf’s first immersive art show before anyone at Meow Wolf even knew what immersive art was.

“Matt’s spirit will live on in our collective heart. We will continue to honour him.”

More: http://lei.sr/9t8T5_T

UK

Museum of London's epic move begins

Museum of London in the UK will move to its new home in Smithfield in the heart of the capital at the beginning of 2023.

The popular attraction is moving to the historic General Market buildings that have remained derelict for more than three decades.

Described as one of Europe's biggest cultural projects, the new £337m museum space has been designed by Stanton Williams, Asif Khan and Julian Harrap Architects.

The new museum will celebrate the existing architecture of the site and offer more exhibition space, with exhibits making use of the historic buildings both

above and below ground. It will also explore key moments in London's history. For example, visitors will see evidence of the birth of the digital age in London in 1837 via a section of the world's first commercial electric telegraph cable that ran between Euston Square and Camden Town.

Sharon Ament, director of Museum of London, said: "London has been slap-bang in the middle of it all – culture, trade and innovative ideas – for hundreds of years now and so it feels right that we're relocating the Museum of London to Smithfield Market."

More: http://lei.sr/k3k3G_T



The museum will celebrate the architecture of Westfield

PHOTO: MUSEUM OF LONDON



PHOTO: MUSEUM OF LONDON

“

It feels right that we're relocating to Smithfield market

Sharon Ament

UK

Harry Potter Studio opens Professor Sprout's Greenhouse

“

Visitors will learn how Thestrals and Mandrakes were brought to life using a mixture of scale models and CGI
Warner Bros. Studio Tour London

Warner Bros. Studio Tour London has launched a new area, further expanding the popular Harry Potter-themed visitor attraction in Leavesden.

Professor Sprout's greenhouse will allow visitors to step into the original set, seen in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, which is home to many exotic and magical plants.

Once inside, they will be able to step to pull out a potted 'Mandrake' as part of an interactive display.

Based on the scene in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, visitors can



Actor Tom Felton, who played Draco Malfoy, at the attraction

PHOTO: WARNER BROS. STUDIO TOUR LONDON

also spot the Venomous Tentacula hanging from the ceiling as they walk through the greenhouse.

A spokesperson for Warner Bros. Studio Tour London said: "In addition to the new area, visitors will learn how Thestrals and Mandrakes were brought to life using a mixture of

scale models and CGI in the Creatures Workshop."

Professor Sprout's Greenhouse is a permanent attraction and follows the recent additions of a 1:3 scale version of the Weasleys' Burrow and the fountain from the Hogwarts courtyard.

More: http://lei.sr/K9b8m_T

GLOBAL

Hettema Group and Themespace merge to form THG

Experiential design firms The Hettema Group and Themespace have merged to create a new company called THG.

The new creative agency is dedicated to creating “awe-inspiring attractions around the world” and will focus on theme parks, museums and leading consumer brands.

Based in Pasadena, California, US, the new THG will build upon The Hettema Group's and Themespace's experience in designing attractions for a wide range of clients – from theme parks and destination attractions to brand experiences.

The partnership was announced by Phil Hettema of The Hettema Group

and Erik Neergaard of Themespace at the 2022 Themed Entertainment Association (TEA) Summit being held at Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, California.

Hettema will now serve as THG's CEO while Neergaard will serve as THG's chief creative officer and COO.

Phil Hettema said: “I have long been inspired by Erik's creativity and innovative spirit, and I believe he will be the perfect partner as we embark on this new chapter.

“As an independent agency, we specialise in close partnerships with our clients, to help them realise their goals and dreams into destinations.”

More: http://lei.sr/U9h2C_T



Themespace concept art for London Paramount resort

PHOTO: THEMESPACE



PHOTO: THEMESPACE

“

I have long been inspired by Erik's creativity and innovative spirit

Phil Hettema

GLOBAL

Jorvik's digital strategy described as 'leading light'



PHOTO: JORVIK GROUP

“

We reached a global audience of 3.2 million

Sarah Maltby

The Jorvik Group has been named a 'leading light' for its digital strategy, which helped it gain an international audience of more than 3 million people during the pandemic.

As part of its strategy to keep Vikings in the front of the public's mind during the COVID-19 lockdowns, the York, UK-based visitor attraction created a number of digital alternatives to physical visits. These ranged from the expansion of its Virtual Vikings education offer to the creation of a fully digital festival, called That Jorvik Viking Thing.



Jorvik created digital alternatives to physical visits

PHOTO: JORVIK GROUP

As a result, Jorvik has been named as one of the leading lights in a new report from Digital Enterprise, an organisation helping businesses to improve performance through digital technology.

“We had been exploring digital technologies before 2020, but when the pandemic

hit, we recognised that we had an opportunity to innovate and develop our skills and resources,” said Jorvik's director of attractions, Sarah Maltby.

“The results were phenomenal – we reached a global audience of 3.2 million.”

More: http://lei.sr/u4z6w_T

UK

Groundbreaking virtual ABBA concert for London

ABBA, the 70s icons behind hits such as *Dancing Queen* and *Mamma Mia*, has returned to live concerts after a 40-year break – in digital form.

Featuring ground-breaking augmented reality and other digital technologies, the new ABBA Voyage concerts recreate the sights and sounds of Abba in their 1970s heyday.

To create the footage, the four ABBA members worked together with Industrial Light & Magic – the visual effects firm founded by George Lucas and famous for its work on lightbusters such as *Star Wars* and *Lord of the Rings*.

Agnetha Fältskog, Björn Ulvæus, Benny Andersson,

and Anni-Frid Lyngstad performed in motion capture suits for five weeks, with around 160 cameras scanning their body movements and facial expressions.

Industrial Light & Magic animators and visual effects artists then created digital avatars – or “ABBAvars” – of each member, who then appear on a 65 million pixel screen in front of their fans.

Using lights and other effects, the boundaries between the screen and the “real world” are then blurred using lighting effect, creating an illusion that the four are, in fact, performing on stage.

The experience is housed at a custom-built venue, called ABBA Arena, at



The concert is housed in a purpose-built venue

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, east London.

“ABBA Voyage is the long-awaited concert from one of the biggest pop acts of all time featuring a setlist of ABBA’s biggest, most popular hits – each

handpicked with great care by the band,” ABBA Voyage said. “Agnetha, Björn, Benny and Anni-Frid have created the concert they always wanted.”

More: http://lei.sr/q7A5g_T

UK

Wake The Tiger becomes first-ever ‘amazement park’



PHOTO: BOOMTOWN

“

It will invite you to explore connections with the environment around you
Lak Mitchell

Wake The Tiger – described as the world’s first ‘amazement park’ – has opened in Bristol, UK.

Blurring the lines between an experiential art gallery, interactive theme park and detailed film set – and offering visitors a “surreal and beautiful twist” – Wake The Tiger has been designed to offer an immersive adventure for all ages.

The multi-layered labyrinth of “creative environments and fantastical wonders” is the brain-child of the artistic team behind the annual music festival, Boomtown Fair. With 27 distinct spaces



The attraction will feature 27 distinct spaces

within the experience, the art installations explore themes of connection and innovation, inspiration and discovery.

Lak Mitchell, creative director of Wake The Tiger said: “You have to see it to believe it. Wake The Tiger is an abandoned time capsule of fantastical experiences just waiting to be discovered.

“It will invite you to explore connections with the environment around you as well as challenge you to transform the world we all live in. This is a vision that plays into and expands on everything we have spent our lives building.” ●

More: http://lei.sr/C7E2E_T

INGENUITY THAT MOVES YOU



LONDON
13-15 SEPTEMBER
BOOTH #3128

SUSPENDED THRILL COASTER



FAMILY BOOMERANG SPIRIT

DISCOVER MORE

Our team of specialists in concept design, engineering and manufacturing can deliver the most thrilling experience for your guests!

Whether you want to create a new family coaster that appeals to children, teens, parents and grandparents, are looking for a new heart-pounding experience to delight thrill seekers or want to develop any other attraction that will make your venue a success, Vekoma will assist you to discover more.

We look forward to meeting you at **IAAPA EXPO EUROPE 2022!**

WWW.VEKOMA.COM

MAXIMUM THRILL ULTIMATE COMFORT



WILDCAT LOOPING COASTER





Chris Mather launched Mather & Co in 1995 after working as design director for Granada TV

“

The operator's eye when designing is invaluable; it's all very well coming up with lovely ideas, but they have to be maintained and stand the test of time

CHRIS MATHER

With experiences opening this year celebrating tennis, love, science and the Olympics, Mather & Co is making the most of the post-lockdown boom, finds Magali Robathan

Like most people, we were bombed by COVID-19, but I'm stunned by how things have come back now," Mather & Co CEO Chris Mather tells me over a coffee in a hotel in central London.

"We're involved in some amazing projects."

Mather is the CEO and founder of visitor attraction and experience design consultancy Mather & Co, which he launched in 1995. Mather took a roundabout route to a career in exhibition design via international rugby, a stint in the Royal Navy, a law degree, and a job for Granada TV, and this is perhaps reflected in the wide range of projects the firm has worked on.

Completed projects include the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland; The Royal Mint Experience

in South Wales; Downton Abbey: The Exhibition; the Silverstone Interactive Museum in Silverstone, UK; and visitor experiences for football clubs including Arsenal, Manchester United, Chelsea and Manchester City.

Last October saw the opening of the Mather & Co designed W5 science and discovery centre in Belfast, Northern Ireland; while new projects for 2022 include the recently opened Gretna Green Experience in Scotland – celebrating 'romance, rebellion and unstoppable love' – the launch of a new gallery at the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum and a spectacular live project mapped light show celebrating the 150th Open at the R&A St Andrews in Scotland.

The firm has also released initial concept designs for a new visitor attraction at Inverness Castle,

“

People really want a lot for not much money. The expectations for say, £25k, can be enormous

offered a preview of their plans for the redevelopment of the Glencoe Folk Museum in Ballachulish, Scotland, and has just been appointed to design a new experience at Manchester Town Hall.

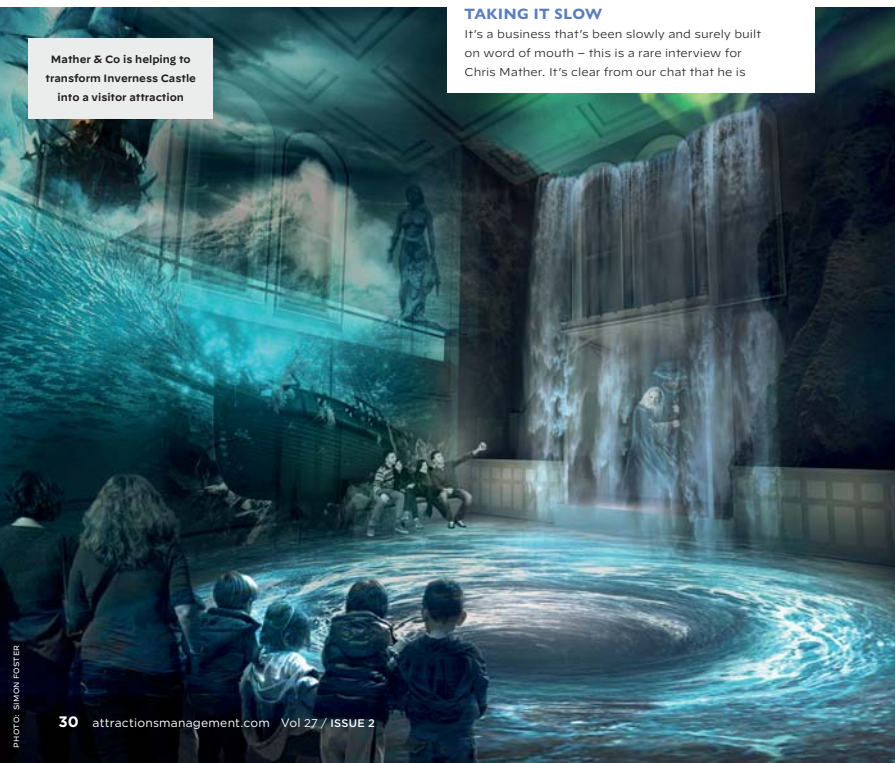
"I do think my background means we're a little broader in the scope of our work than many design agencies," Mather tells me. "Another thing that differentiates us is that I part-owned and operated the original Coronation Street experience [part of the Granada Tour] in the past. That taught me about how to make the commercial aspects of an attraction work – we understand that the F&B, the operations, the marketing all have to work.

"The operator's eye when designing is invaluable; it's all very well coming up with lovely ideas, but they have to be maintained and stand the test of time."

Mather & Co is helping to transform Inverness Castle into a visitor attraction

TAKING IT SLOW

It's a business that's been slowly and surely built on word of mouth – this is a rare interview for Chris Mather. It's clear from our chat that he is





Belfast's W5 science centre has been transformed during the COVID-19 pandemic



not one for blowing his own trumpet – quietly getting on with the job is more his style.

Mather is honest about the highs and lows of the past 27 years, and is refreshingly open about the financial challenges of running an exhibition design agency.

"The money's rubbish – comparatively speaking," he says. "When you take into account everything we do. You have to be careful bidding for work with your margins – people really want a lot for not much money. The expectations for say, £25k, can be enormous.

"We get caught out sometimes, where we spend too much, have a happy client, but don't make anything for ourselves. There are a lot of projects out there using public money which are great to be involved with, but where we only just cover our costs, and sometimes we make a small loss. I think that's why some of our competitors are going to the Middle East."

COVID-19 hit at a particularly frustrating time for the company, Mather explains. "It was difficult because we were having a stunning year. We'd spent hundreds and thousands of pounds on pitches around the world, and we'd won some really big jobs – in Las Vegas, bringing Downton Abbey to London and some other major projects. All in all, it was about £20m of work – it all stopped, overnight.

"I'm impressed with how things have come back though. We have a really nice mix of projects now, and I'm very happy with that."

NEW PROJECTS

After the frustration of lockdowns and stalled projects, 2022 has been a busy year for Mather & Co. In April, the Gretna Green Experience launched in Scotland, telling the story of the Scottish village's history as a destination for runaway marriages.

Mather and Co were responsible for the design, build, management and production of the £1.5m attraction, including the exhibition and the restoration of the Famous Blacksmiths Shop.

"Gretna Green was an emotional rollercoaster," says Mather. "It was the vision of the head of the family, Alasdair Houston, who sadly died last year. He was such a fantastic chap and we all very close to him, so it was supercharged with emotion. The family decided to continue with the project and we set out to deliver his original vision."

The exhibition invites visitors to follow a timeline detailing the history of Gretna Green, and features original artefacts and a range of audio visual experiences including a 360-degree film at the centre of the experience that 'brings the history of the site to life around the original anvil'.

"I'm stunned at how successful that attraction has been," says Mather. "It's a great project – the building has been restored very well, we have a really good, exciting experiential retail offer. We've made some great films, great interactives and you can actually see people getting married there."

“

We've made some great films, great interactives and you can actually see people getting married there

Other recently unveiled projects include new exhibitions for the Silverstone Interactive Museum and Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum (both prior clients); an exhibition to celebrate the 10 year anniversary of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games; and a very cool audio-visual show projected onto the side of the iconic Royal and Ancient Clubhouse in St Andrews, Scotland. Around 5,000 people turned out to watch the projection show, narrated by Gerrard Butler and produced by Mather & Co, which used projection mapping and 4D motion graphics and was part of the R&A's countdown to the 150th Open Golf championship.

You can watch the R&A celebration video here: www.attractionsmanagement.com/r&a

Looking ahead, Mather & Co have a typically broad range of projects on the books including some sporting projects – “we have a major sports project which I can't talk about yet because it's NDA but it's going to be huge and very exciting,” says Mather – a revamp of the quirky Glencoe Folk Museum, and the transformation of Inverness Castle into a new visitor attraction.

“That's a great project,” says Mather. “The castle is being very carefully restored – think Somerset House meets Saatchi Gallery meets Harry Potter Studio Tour. There will be something for everyone.

““Highlife HighLand [a regional council which promotes opportunities in culture, leisure, sport and wellbeing across the Highlands] has been

PHOTO: CHRIS HUMPHREYS



The famous Gretna Green Blacksmiths Shop is part of the revamped attraction



A curated timeline explores the history of Gretna Green dating back to 1200



PHOTO: CHRIS HUMPHREYS

collecting stories from local stitchers, farmers, fishermen, musicians and more, through their project Spirit:Stories. There are so many great stories – and we have been supporting a story selection board of 10+ Highlands and Island representatives to select the very best ones to feature within the visitor experience. We'll tell these stories using big immersive environments, art installations, projection mapping, mechanical interactives, and a big theatrical show with immersive projections and special effects. It will be seriously impressive – when you walk into the building, you won't expect to what you see."

The latest project to be announced by Mather & Co is a new attraction inside Manchester Town Hall, which will tell the story of the iconic neo-Gothic building.

"That building telling its stories is going to be something special," says Mather. "Manchester Town Hall has such a fantastic history. If you think what Manchester has brought to the science and engineering worlds and the internet – it's phenomenal." The building is set to reopen as a visitor attraction in 2024 following a complete refurbishment.

LOOKING BACK

While on paper, Mather's career background looks slightly disjointed, all of his experiences have proved invaluable when designing memorable and meaningful experiences, he tells me.

He was an international rugby league player in his youth, and that passion for sport has translated into a large portfolio of interesting and varied sports projects.

"Our first big break was the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum 20 odd years ago," Mather says. "We bid against all the big US and London firms. When I asked the client why she'd chosen us, she said: 'You understood and translated our vision, without glamorous presentations or pretty pictures or CGIs. You just got it.' Plus she thought we'd be fun to work with."

Since then, the firm has worked on a wide range of sports-themed attractions projects spanning golf, motor racing, football, rugby and the Olympics and Paralympics.

Mather started his career with the Royal Navy, and says the experience of running a warship taught him



a huge amount about managing people and being organised. A short-lived marriage to presenter Carol Vorderman introduced him to the world of tv, and he spent eight years working as design director for Granada Television, which led to the development and management of the original Coronation Street Experience as part of the Granada Studios Tour.

"That got me into the attractions world," he says. "I still think it's amazing what we did with that attraction – we spent £20m and we managed to get one million people through the door in a very tight site."

Highlights, according to Mather, include winning the Olympic Museum in Lausanne – "that was an amazing project," spending several days filming with John McEnroe for the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum and working with Tiger Woods on the Tiger in the Park promotional event in Hyde Park, London. "Oh and

Winning the Olympic Museum in Lausanne was a major highlight for Mather & Co

going out on the town with a Clingon in full costume when we were working with Paramount on a Star Trek attraction. That was an interesting experience."

I ask who Mather admires in the industry, and what attractions and museums are on his wishlist for this year. "I admire Ralph Appelbaum, Casson Mann and Tom Bradburn," he says. "They're all doing great things. And I'm very keen to get to Los Angeles to see the new Academy Museum of Motion Pictures."

The attractions industry has a tough ride over the past few years, but Mather is confident that the future is bright – as long as the industry is prepared for a shake up.

"We need to be ambitious and creative – to continue to engage people in surprising ways. We've seen how the high street has reinvented itself. I think the museum industry needs to do the same.

"We have the skills and the creativity. We just need to make it happen."



PHOTO: PETER CORCORAN

Mather & Co created the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum in 2006

PHOTO: PETER CORCORAN



Mather & Co worked with
NBCUniversal on Downton
Abbey: The Exhibition

Mather & Co Selected projects

2022

Gretna Green Experience
Scotland, UK

Client: Gretna Green

Mather & Co was responsible for the design, management and production of a new exhibition celebrating the history of Gretna Green as a wedding destination for runaway couples since 1710.

2021

**W5 Science and
Discovery Centre**
Belfast, Northern Ireland

Client: The Odyssey Trust

Mather & Co helped to transform the W5 family science centre into "an engaging and hands-on attraction for a modern audience".

2019

Silverstone Interactive Museum
Silverstone, UK

Client: British Racing Drivers' Club and Silverstone Heritage Limited
Mather & Co worked with Silverstone Heritage Limited and the British Racing Drivers' Club to design a family attraction at the home of British motor racing in Silverstone.

2017

Downton Abbey: The Exhibition
Various locations

Client: NBCUniversal

Mather & Co worked with NBCUniversal and Emmy-winning writer Julian Fellowes to create an immersive experience for the TV programme Downton Abbey. The exhibition toured the world, including Singapore, New York, Boston, and Chicago.

2016

The Royal Mint Experience
Pontyclun, Wales

Client: The Royal Mint

The Royal Mint opened its gates to the public for the first time in over 1,000 years in May 2016. Mather & Co worked alongside the Royal Mint Museum to develop a new permanent visitor centre on site, with retail, learning and café spaces, and an exclusive behind-the-scenes factory tour.

2013

Olympic Museum
Lausanne, Switzerland

Client: International Olympic Committee

The museum in Lausanne was completely remodelled and doubled in size to create three permanent galleries called Olympic World, Olympic Games and Olympic Spirit. Two new spaces are devoted to rotating temporary exhibitions, and the museum fully integrates with the onsite Olympic Studies Centre.

2006

**Wimbledon Lawn
Tennis Museum**

Wimbledon, UK

Client: The All England Lawn Tennis Club

Mather & Co has worked closely with the All England Lawn Tennis Club for over 15 years to bring visitor experiences to the Wimbledon stadium site ranging from an immersive museum and tour experience, to designing bespoke photo opportunities. ●

PHOTO: BESPoke FOUNDRY

Down to Earth

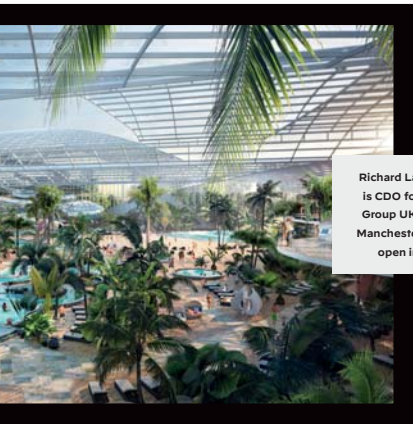
IMAGE: THERME GROUP



Updated plans for Therme Manchester show plans for the world's first living waterslides as part of a focus on biophilic design

The 'living waterslides' have been designed to resemble tree trunks

IMAGE: THERME GROUP



Richard Land (right)
is CDO for Thermo
Group UK. Thermo
Manchester is due to
open in 2025

PHOTO: THERMO GROUP



Thermo Manchester – the £250m indoor ‘next generation’ waterpark, thermal bathing and wellbeing spa set to open in 2025 – will include the world’s first ‘living waterslides’.

The waterslides are part of the resort’s focus on biophilic design and will feature 3D-printed structures housing thousands of biodiverse plants.

Thanks to their design, the slides will be made to look like tree trunks, with plants growing out of them.

Updated plans for Thermo Manchester revealed by the group in April 2022 involve a ‘greater integration of biophilic design elements, including double-curved roofs, which reduce the amount of steel required, increasing the sustainability of the development.’

The new design also features a green ‘vertical forest’ multi-storey car park, and a number of new guest attractions including an all-season urban beach and the living waterslides. Innovative ‘welltech’ experiences will be offered, including a snow room, multi-sensory showers and oxygen rooms, and an education centre will host events on sustainability, food and nature.

Due to its sustainable approach, the resort will have a major net gain in biodiversity with a 10,000sq m wellbeing garden, a next-generation hydroponic vertical farm, more than 1,500 trees and roof-top beehives, producing honey for use in restaurants and wellbeing treatments.

Speaking to *Attractions Management*, Richard Land, Thermo Group’s UK chief development officer, said: “We’re creating urban oases, where we bring together fun and relaxation to nurture mental and physical health. We’re looking to embed ourselves in communities; to be a catalyst for greener, healthier, more liveable cities and provide wellbeing for all.

“At a basic level, we all connect with water and find it incredibly calming to be in and around.”

Stelian Iacob, senior vice president of Thermo Group and CEO of Thermo Group UK, said: “The COVID-19 period gave us the opportunity to update the design of Thermo Manchester to create an even more sustainable, engaging and accessible experience with profound health and wellbeing benefits for all.

“We will continue to work with the Manchester community as we progress with the design and development”.

Located at TraffordCity in Manchester, Thermo Manchester is the UK’s first city-based wellbeing resort.

Thermo Group is working in partnership with Peel L&P to deliver the project, at a cost of over £250m (US\$328.5m, €299.3m).

Construction of the development is scheduled to begin in 2023, with a build time of around two years.

Thermo Group is working on the development of a second UK wellbeing resort for Glasgow, Scotland. ●



GARDENS OF THE FUTURE



The landscaping of Dubai's new Museum of the Future supports the message of the museum, with a focus on sustainability and innovative technologies aiming to address challenges of climate change. Cracknell's Robert Shakespeare talks us through them

Several years in the making, the Museum of the Future was inaugurated by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum in February 2022, with a spectacular light show featuring projections onto the museum as well as the Burj Khalifa, Burj Al Arab and other prominent Dubai buildings.

The torus-shaped building, designed by Killa Design and Buro Happold, features a stainless steel facade covered with quotes written in Arabic calligraphy. The museum explores the science and technology of the future, via interactive exhibits spread across seven stories.

The museum transports visitors to the year 2071 via five exhibits: OSS Hope (Orbiting Space Station), which includes a 'Journey to space via a shuttle simulation; Heal Institute, which shows what Dubai could be like in 2071; Al Waha (Oasis), a series of experiences aiming to heal the mind and body; Tomorrow Today, which celebrate future technologies; and the children's play space Future Heroes.

The distinctive building sits within new gardens featuring 100 species of trees and plants from across the UAE.

Masterplanned by landscape architecture firm Cracknell, the gardens are a key part of the design of the museum, and use a number of sustainable features, including LED lights, a smart irrigation system; and new green wall and steep slope technology.

Here Cracknell's Robert Shakespeare talks us through the highs and lows of this unique project (overleaf).

The distinctive museum building sits in landscaped gardens

Robert Shakespeare is
group design director
at Cracknell

“

Creating spaces that link directly to indoor exhibition spaces, roof terraces and courtyards or outdoor pocket gardens can add visual and functional value to a museum, giving an additional level of visitor engagement

What advice would you give to attractions and museums operators looking to create or improve green space around their buildings?

Creating outdoor components to museums is very important to their success, encouraging outdoor exhibits to complement the indoor experience. To achieve this the primary requirement, particularly for the climate in Dubai, is to create shade, ideally with tree planting, but also using shade canopies and structures.

Creating spaces that potentially link directly to indoor exhibition spaces, roof terraces and courtyards or outdoor pocket gardens can add visual and functional value to a museum, giving an additional level of visitor engagement, making the lessons people take from their visit that much more powerful and lasting. Integrating the exterior and indoor spaces to create a strong indoor/outdoor relationship for exhibition spaces is key.

What did the Museum of the Future project mean to Cracknell?

We knew this was a high profile iconic project for Dubai and would become a significant landmark in the region, presenting an opportunity to partner with Killa to create something quite dramatic. We were also interested to explore the technology and innovation challenges that the project presented.

What makes it unique?

The majority of the building is effectively covered by the landscape. Although what the public sees is the beautiful oval shape of the museum, a huge proportion of the building,



The museum's gardens feature 100 species of native trees and plants

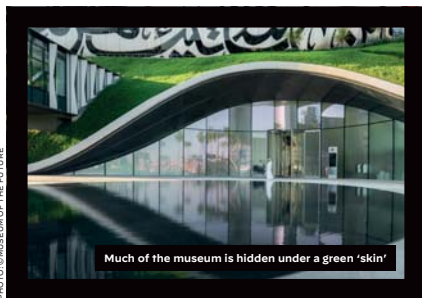
including all the parking and infrastructure, is concealed beneath a green skin.

It was also an interesting concept to create the impression that access to the building was through the landscape. The technology and design innovation involved in creating the landscape was challenging and unique – the success of the planting given the urban constraints is a particular success.

How does the landscaping fit with the content of the museum?

In line with the museum's ethos of being a place where people can see, touch and shape our shared future, the landscape presents the latest innovation in green wall and steep slope technology and growing plants in restricted substrate.

The native planting brings many birds and insects to the site where people can immerse themselves in nature – the landscape has an important message for a sustainable future as we look to make our cities more resilient.



Much of the museum is hidden under a green 'skin'

The site for the museum was very restricted by the adjacent buildings and infrastructure, and as a result the mound had to take on a soft shape, as if moulded into the remaining spaces. The landscape has become a fascinating and very unexpected intervention into the urban context, and is much larger than you expect when you approach it on foot. It has a strong presence in the space as if muscling in between adjacent buildings and metro lines.

The mound was also designed to encourage visitors to walk up it to experience the landscape, providing unusual and surprising views of the city.

The climate in Dubai is quite inhospitable for plants and greenery – what are the biggest challenges of creating a green urban oasis in this environment?

The landscape presented tremendous technical challenges, but the extent of the planting also presented challenges in terms of sustainability and water consumption. However, by specifying drought tolerant plants we managed to reduce the overall water demand. The irrigation delivery system was modified to provide very short bursts of water through

buried drip lines. Any excess water that wasn't required by the planting is then collected and can be reused. As a result, the overall water usage is extremely low and highly efficient, exceeding the water saving requirements specified by the LEED rating system.

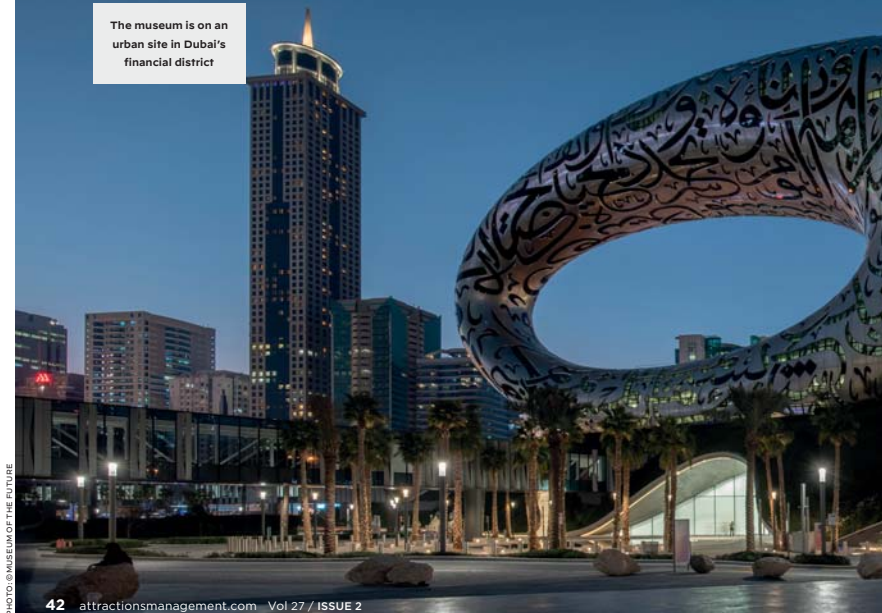
What other challenges were there?

Fitting the building and the landscape into a very restricted space required significant coordination. The site is criss-crossed by underground services and existing roads that had to be respected. We also had to tie the building into overhead pedestrian walkways that would punch into the mound. The design process was complex and although the result looks simple, there is a lot happening below ground.

Did you use any interesting technologies in this project?

The most important technology we used was to develop systems that would allow us to drape a carpet of planting over the building and to retain the soil on extremely steep slopes. This couldn't be achieved without an integrated engineered system.

The museum is on an urban site in Dubai's financial district



We used two different systems depending on the steepness of the slope, the soil carpet system, and a green wall system. The strategy also had to allow us to sculpt the mound to create the natural shapes you see in the completed project.

The first step was to use high density polystyrene blocks to form the final shape of the mound. These blocks are lightweight allowing us to create the mound profile without adding loading to the structure of the building below. Once complete we added the landscaped layering system. The soil 'carpet' consists of two layers of a flexible geoweb that retains the soil within pockets. The irrigation network of dripper lines is embedded within the soil 'carpet', delivering precise amounts of water to the plant root zones. The carpet is laid over a drainage mat system that is designed to collect any water that bypasses the roots and takes it down to a collection channel at the base of the mound. During heavy rain, any water run off from the mound is also collected, filtered and reused for irrigation. The water used for the planting is Treated Sewerage Effluent, or grey water, ensuring that no potable water is used for the project.



PHOTO: © MUSEUM OF THE FUTURE

Museum of the Future
explores changing
science and technology

The second system we used for almost vertical slopes was the green walls system. This is effectively rigid panels with integrated soil and irrigation that is used like a cladding system. Once complete it creates a seamless planted wall of green.

Are you seeing any trends in the landscaping of attractions, museums, zoos and theme parks?

There's a trend in the Middle East in particular to create more 'responsible' and resilient landscapes that use less water and use more native plant species. The vision for designers and clients today is to create landscapes that are appropriate to the regional context and have a strong local identity, representing the hardscape materials, plants and design language of the region.

How do the challenges of climate change affect your work?

With rising temperatures and water scarcity, landscape designers have a responsibility to address climate change through resilient design. This starts at the outset of the project with the planning process, establishing the vision and understanding the impact the project will have on the landscape. ●



A WHOLE NEW WORLD

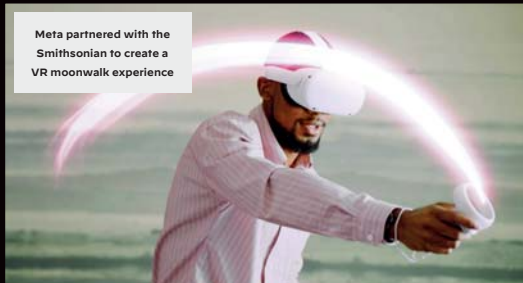
While it's too early to predict how the Metaverse will develop, one way or another, it's coming. Lesley Morisetti takes a look at the challenges and opportunities for visitor attractions



PHOTO: CREDIT ANDREA NORTI, PSD



Meta partnered with the Smithsonian to create a VR moonwalk experience



In the three weeks between late October and early November 2021, Google searches for the term 'Metaverse' grew by nearly 1,500 per cent. Facebook had re-branded as Meta and a term which had previously connected mainly with online gamers hit the mainstream.

Jump forward four months and Citi Global Perspectives and Solution's (Citi GPS) report, *Metaverse and Money*, estimated that the Metaverse could be worth as much as US\$13 trillion by 2030.

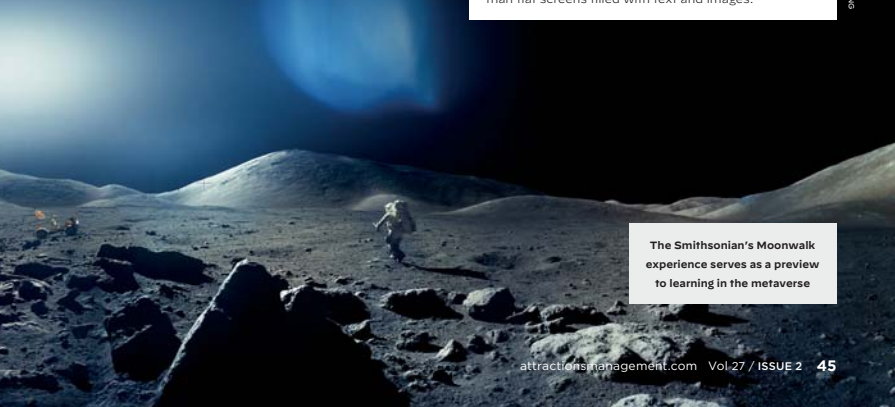
So how is this relevant to location-based experiences (LBE) and should the industry view the Metaverse as a threat, an opportunity or just not relevant to us today? David Andrade, of Theory Studios, Martin Howe of Dapper Labs, Louis Alfieri of Raven Sun Creative, and I were given the opportunity to progress the discussion by running a session at TEA's recent SATE Europe conference at Liseberg, in Sweden.

SO, WHAT IS THE METAVERSE?

Our first aim was to provide a better understanding of what the Metaverse is. Google search the term Metaverse and multiple definitions are listed. Matthew Ball, who describes himself as an entrepreneur, investor, strategist, theorist, writer and Metaverse expert, uses the following definition: "A persistent and interconnected network of 3D virtual worlds that will eventually serve as the gateway to most online experiences, and also underpin much of the physical world."

I like this definition because it talks about 3D virtual worlds being interconnected (allowing users to move easily between them) and it also talks about the blending of digital and physical experiences, with the Metaverse becoming not an alternative to real life, but part of our future way of engaging with each other.

But how does that differ from the internet of today? Nick Clegg, VP Global Affairs and Communications for Meta Platforms, Inc, says: "The Metaverse is coming, one way or another. The future of the internet will be more human than the way we experience it today – more physical, interactive and speech based than flat screens filled with text and images."



The Smithsonian's Moonwalk experience serves as a preview to learning in the metaverse

Most people agree that it's much too early to predict exactly how the Metaverse will manifest and how it will be used. At the end of the 20th century, in the early days of the internet, a lot of money was invested in online businesses which quickly went bust. Most were trying to simply replicate existing business models from the physical world. It took time to truly understand the new opportunities that the internet could support and enable, and time for consumer behaviour to adapt. The same is likely to be the case for the Metaverse. As David Andrade told us during the SATE session, the Metaverse is currently at the same stage as the internet was in the late 1990s. Similarly, Nick Clegg estimates 10 to 15 years or longer for major change.

I introduced our SATE session from the perspective of a non-technical person. My work, looking at the market demand and economic viability of attraction development, considers opportunities from the perspective of brands/developers (supply) and consumers (demand). Within this context, I have set out my attempt at a 'Metaverse 101', based on my research so far and attempting to identify which are the most crucial factors that will drive the growth expectations of Citi GPS versus the factors which are enablers rather than drivers. I have also tried to identify some of the challenges which are likely to be faced in achieving growth.

METaverse 101 (EARLY DAYS!)

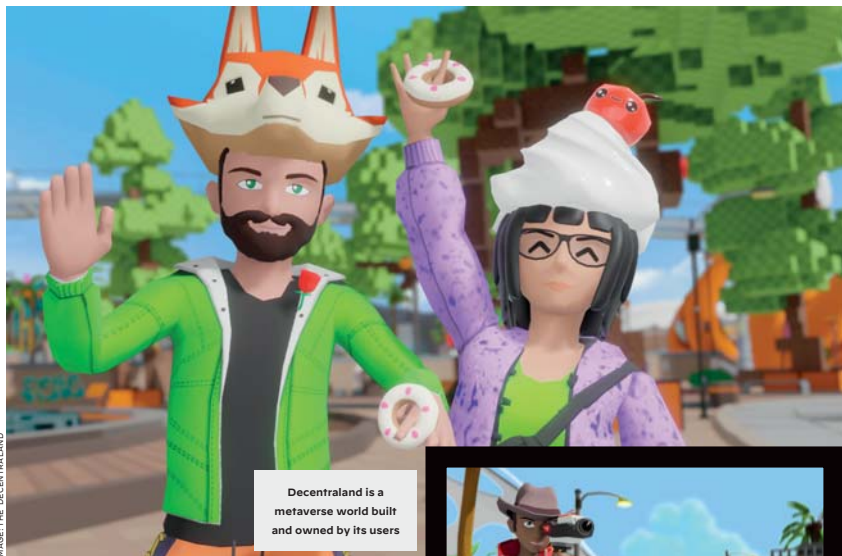
Drivers of Growth:

- **Creative content** – fundamental to success is creating environments and experiences that consumers will want to spend time within and, crucially, enabling them to co-create and drive their own interactions within the environments.
- **Solving the access barriers** – VR glasses are simply one form of 'hardware' which can be used to access the Metaverse. Citi GPS and many others consider that access needs to be via more commonplace hardware for the highest growth expectations to be achieved, with the ubiquitous mobile phone key to achieving this.
- **Decentralised finance (DeFi)** – financial transactions in the modern world are mainly made via 'middlemen' such as banks or credit card companies. Transactions in the Metaverse cut out this middleman, enabling trading to be a direct transfer between the buyer and the seller. This shift is seen as key to allowing the Metaverse to have an effective economy.
- **Human behaviour change** – as with the early days of the internet, changes in human behaviour will need to evolve alongside the Metaverse.



Lotte World launched a virtual replica on Naver's Zepeto metaverse





Decentraland is a metaverse world built and owned by its users

Enablers of Growth:

- **Lower latency, open versus closed technologies and other technical and infrastructure improvements** – Not my area but 'ping time' is apparently key and not fast enough at the moment!

- **Blockchain currencies and NFT collectibles** – these are the tools which allow DeFi to take place

- **Collaboration to enable interconnectivity** – the ability to move seamlessly from one 3D world to another requires the Metaverse community to work together and to design on a compatible basis.

Challenges:

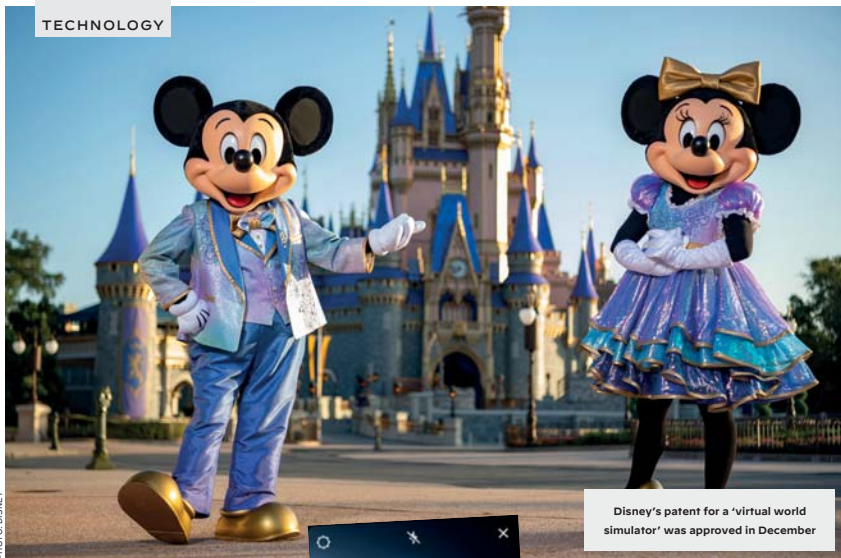
- **Big tech's desire to dominate** – when we buy a new phone we have to decide between Apple or Android and switching between the two systems can be challenging. An interconnected future is going to require the large tech companies to work much more collaboratively, otherwise the future will be fragmented and siloed.
- **Achieving realistic graphics** – many of the gaming successes so far are cartoon based. Think of the success of Pokémon for example. Creating graphics which are more representative of the physical



world is currently more challenging. Compare this to our industry's immersive environments such as Pandora, the World of Avatar at Disney's Animal Kingdom, and the Metaverse is not yet there.

- **Who regulates?** – There is already much discussion about how the internet is regulated and this will be equally important with the Metaverse. Who is responsible for content moderation, free speech, privacy?

- **Safe-guarding** – This was in the news earlier this year with disturbing stories of children's avatars being abused by rogue participants. But it's not just users that need protecting. How do brands/IPs protect their values and prevent fake versions appearing in the Metaverse? And the pitfalls of decentralised finance have also been much in the news, including the recent hacking of BPYC's official Instagram account which led to NFT collectibles worth US\$ millions being stolen. Who protects you when there is no middleman involved?



Disney's patent for a 'virtual world simulator' was approved in December

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

So as an industry, where are we currently? While the majority of LBE operators are currently preoccupied with more immediate challenges (recovery from the pandemic, war in Ukraine and impacts of both on the global economy), some operators are starting to dip their toes into the Metaverse. Not surprisingly, this is being led by major content owners, for whom LBEs are just part of their business model and who have deep enough pockets to fund R&D.

In April Disney launched Galactic Star Cruiser, an immersive two-night stay costing US\$6,000 for a family of four, which is described as taking immersion to a new level. The decisions each guest makes impacts their pathway through the experience and their outcome, and the experience is created using a mixture of physical and digital techniques. Is this the Metaverse? I am not sure, but maybe a step towards it?

Smaller visitor attractions, or those with more modest budgets, are testing the water through partnerships with organisations which can support them on technology and implementation. The British Museum, alongside other art galleries and museums,



PHOTO: COURTESY META/IMMERSIVE LEARNING

is working the LaCollection platform, selling 200 Hokusai NFT artworks, to coincide with their exhibition Hokusai, The Great Picture Book of Everything.

And, the Smithsonian recently ran a temporary Moonwalk Experience using VR glasses at their Arts + Industries Building FUTURES exhibition. Developed with support from Meta, the experience is described as letting visitors walk in the Apollo astronaut's shoes.

Conversely, brands created in the Metaverse are starting to test their popularity in the physical world, for example, BAYC recently launched a branded pop-up burger restaurant in Los Angeles, which has been so well received

that they are thinking of making it permanent.

Our session at SATE certainly sparked debate, including, for some, the desire for physical experiences to offer device-free family time as an antidote to the online world that many children increasingly live within. Whatever your stance, the Metaverse is evolving and I for one plan to continue to monitor it to identify opportunities for the LBE industry, and experiences in general. ●



VAC2022



THE ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

Thursday, 13 October 2022

The ICC Birmingham

The essential event for owners, managers and marketers of a visitor attraction, for opinion formers and tourism or heritage professionals. VAC is a national conference organised by the industry, for the industry where you can:

- Get involved in a unique forum for industry professionals.
- Network and share experiences.

Don't miss this opportunity to:

- Understand your business in the context of the wider visitor attractions market.
- Keep up to date and find new directions for your business.

Speakers or Sessions include:

Andy Street CBE, Mayor of the West Midlands and former MD of John Lewis Partnership

Bernard Donoghue OBE, Chief Executive, ALVA, the Assn of Leading Visitor Attractions

Andrew Lovett OBE, Director of the Black Country Living Museum and Chair of AIM, the Association of Independent Museums

Paul Kelly, Chief Executive, BALPPA, the British Assn of Leisure Parks, Piers & Attractions

Jon Young, Research Director, BVA-BDRC

Liz Terry MBE, Managing Editor, Attractions Management

Louise Stewart, CEO, the Chester Race Company and former Chief Executive of Alexandra Palace

and many more!



**Thank you
to our sponsors:**



convious



ADIDO

Register Now!

To register or to see the updated conference programme and speakers, log on to:

www.vacevents.com

Sensory backpacks offer tools to support visitors with sensory needs



“

What helps is reaching out to the people you're trying to welcome, being open and sharing experiences

Neurodiversity and attractions

The attractions industry is waking up to the needs of neurodivergent visitors, but is enough being done? How can operators ensure their attractions are as welcoming and inclusive as possible? Magali Robathan speaks to those working to create a better experience for all



ver the past few years, the issue of ensuring that attractions and museums are more inclusive and welcoming for people

with sensory needs has risen up the agenda. Major museums offer sensory sessions, when they dim the lights and noise and admission numbers are controlled.

While it's a great start, and there are many attractions out there going above and beyond, offering sensory backpacks, quiet spaces and a range of other accommodations, there's still a long way to go. There are gaps in provision for adults with sensory needs, and there's a growing movement that argues that it's time to provide the accommodations that make visits



easier at all times, instead of only offering them during special sensory sessions.

Assumptions are still made about what neurodivergent visitors want and need – sometimes without proper consultation with the visitors themselves. Many people with sensory needs find too much noise overwhelming, for example, but others find quiet spaces difficult and need stronger stimuli to orient. What helps one person might be difficult for someone else.

There's no simple answer, but what definitely helps is reaching out to the people you're trying to welcome, being open, and sharing experiences. Here we talk to some of those people working hard to create an inclusive and positive experience for everyone.



I recently went to visit a zoo which claimed on its website to be inclusive. I had a really horrible experience and I don't think I'll go back

Emily Elsworth
Autism trainer and advocate

As an autistic person, what elements of a museum or attraction can be hard for you?

I was only diagnosed with autism 19 months ago, at the age of 27. As a child, I didn't know I was autistic or had sensory processing issues, but I found many attractions overly busy and very challenging. I remember trying to avoid interactions with people as much as possible.

I struggle with sudden noises – I don't like it when museums have microphones hanging from the ceiling that suddenly start playing when you walk past. The lighting on particular exhibition panels can make it difficult to take in the information. And too many conflicting visuals at one time can be a real barrier – I know exhibitions sometimes like to cram a lot of things into a small space, but that can be incredibly overloading for someone who has sensory processing needs.

If there are too many people in the room, I find it hard to focus on what I'm looking at. I don't like entrance halls that are too bright and there's lots going on. Lack of clear signage is an issue.

Can you think of a particular time you visited an attraction and it was a difficult experience?

I recently went to visit a zoo which claimed on its website to be inclusive. I had a really horrible experience



and I don't think I'll go back.

I got off the bus and was greeted by blaring music – it was like an outdoor nightclub – and staff shouting information. The ticket gate and entrance were not well explained, there was no clear signage and once we got into the zoo, there were no staff around to ask questions. I was trying to understand the maps – which all had bright backgrounds, making them hard to read – with the loud music and noise going on around me.

If I get overwhelmed, I normally mask when out in public, but that day was probably the closest I've come to having a meltdown in a public place. I got very agitated and I could see visitors walking past and tutting. I was with my mum, and there were no staff around for my mum to approach and say that I needed a quiet space.

What advice would you give to staff about how to react if a visitor is becoming visibly overwhelmed?

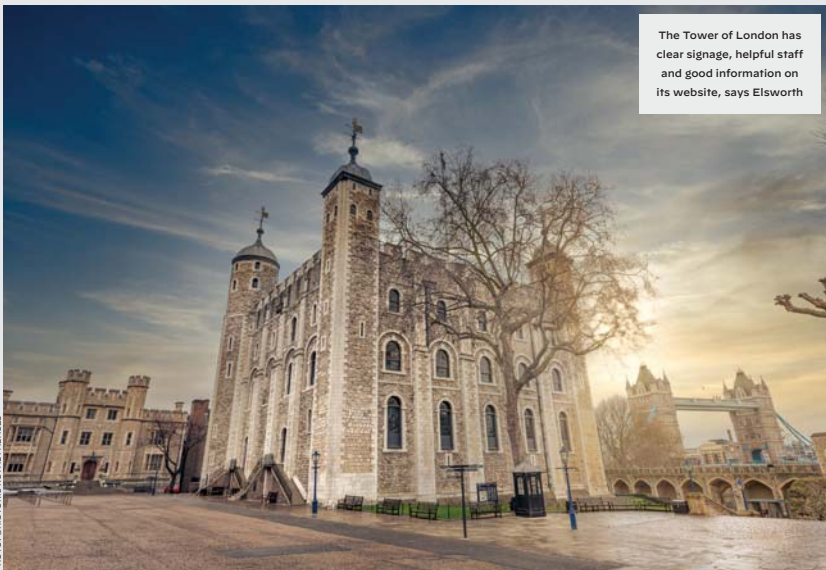
Don't stare, and don't ask loads of questions because that's just going to cause more overwhelm. If they're with someone else, talk to that person, direct them to a quiet space or sensory space, depending on what's causing the overwhelm. If they're on their own, give them space. Move other visitors along if they're staring or tutting.

It's also important to offer somewhere to go and sit and recharge once the meltdown is over rather than immediately trying to continue with the visit.

Can you think of a positive experience of visiting a museum or attraction?

To be honest, I don't think I've ever had a wholly positive experience from start to finish. The closest I've come was a recent visit to the Tower of London. They had very good information on their website about where to go and very good signage around the attraction. There was a one way system in place in the towers, and clocks telling you when the next tour was taking place so it was very clear. The warders were really friendly if you needed help and it was obviously easy to spot them.

But there were crowds, which was difficult. And I struggled to find anything I could eat in the



The Tower of London has clear signage, helpful staff and good information on its website, says Elsworth

cafe because there are so many texturals things I can't manage.

One thing that people often don't think about with sensory needs is food. It's really helpful to have your menus on your website – if there's no menu I can read in advance, that immediately makes me anxious. Many attractions have their menus on screens that can be hard to read, and I feel I'm holding people in the queue up while I go through every single ingredient on the menu. It would also help to have a wider choice of food, and perhaps some ingredients left over so people can request food made up that's sensory friendly.

Is there a gap in provision for adult visitors with sensory needs?

There's a huge gap in provision for adults with autism – there seems to be an idea that sensory needs are just about children. We need acknowledgement that those needs don't end when you turn 18, although

support often does. I was diagnosed as an adult, and many other people are too, so you're missing out on a whole generation of people who desperately need additional access and support.

The differences in adaptations for adult and child visitors aren't huge – you still need to think about sound, visuals, smells and textures. It's more of an issue about communication – so much of the information is addressed to 'parents and carers of children on the autistic spectrum'. I can still obviously read that information, but it annoys me that it's aimed at the parents instead of giving that ownership to the autistic person.

What other advice do you have for museums and attractions trying to be more inclusive?

If you want to be inclusive, the welcome is so important, and that starts when a visitor books their ticket. Think about your pre-visit, have a visual story on your website with a

map, showing the entrance, the toilets and other relevant information.

Also, make sure the things you say are there, are actually there. Do you have lots of staff around? Is it clear who the staff are? If I need to ask a question, can I? Make sure your staff understand what a sunflower lanyard means.

If you're planning to make adaptations, bring in the people that need the adaptations – otherwise you'll make assumptions that might not be right. Don't just aim your information at parents. Adults have sensory needs too, and we like going to museums and attractions on our own.

If you make a mistake, don't be defensive – be grateful for feedback and be open about the fact you didn't get it right on that occasion.

And don't be scared. There are so many positives to bringing in a whole new group of people into your attraction that you'd be missing out on if you didn't make those changes.



Sensory-friendly is good, but it's not enough. Let's move towards sensory-inclusion, so that people with sensory needs don't have to wait for special hours

Uma Srivastava
Executive director, KultureCity



KultureCity is the US's leading nonprofit on sensory accessibility and acceptance for those with invisible disabilities.

Where are we now in terms of attractions and inclusion?

Our aim is to help museums and attractions create safe spaces and encourage safe conversations to ensure visitors can understand and engage with the content without having to worry about becoming overloaded.

What we saw a few years ago is museums and science centres creating sensory-friendly hours, when they dim down the lights and noise and sessions are crowd controlled. That was a good thought, but what if a visitor wants to go and they're having a bad day, or there's bad traffic or a storm that stops them getting there? They've missed their chance.

We want to push the boundaries and say: sensory friendly is good, but it's not enough. Let's move towards sensory-inclusion, so that people with sensory needs don't have to wait for special hours – they can go to a museum or attraction as long as their doors are open.

How do you advise your clients to become more sensory-friendly?

Becoming inclusive is a three pillar approach. The first pillar is staff training, so that the next time a volunteer or staff member is engaging with someone with a sensory need, they know how to approach an individual, what

language to use and not to use, and what tools might be helpful.

Pillar number two is providing sensory bags – we ensure that all of our venues have sensory bags that families can check out for free. They contain noise cancelling headphones, three different types of fidgets and a visual thermometer so that if someone's unable to communicate verbally in that moment, they can point to different emotions or something they need such as a break, a restroom, or water.

The third is social stories. They're a visual narrative that help individuals prepare for their visit. We ask venues to identify a couple of pockets that are quieter so that if people get overwhelmed they can step away to decompress, as well as headphone zones – areas that are louder than others so people can pop on headphones if they need to or grab a fidget.

What are the arguments for and against sensory-friendly sessions?

It's not just children who have sensory needs, it's adults too – and adults are sometimes less likely to want to draw attention to their sensory need. Say you have an adult with PTSD – they might keep their diagnosis private, and might not want to raise their hand and go to a special sensory-friendly session where they could find themselves in a room full of people who are not their age.

Also, sometimes sensory-friendly hours end up not being sensory-friendly, because all of a sudden you've got 200 families coming at the same time wanting a quiet environment, and it's no longer quiet. We want to move from sensory-friendly to sensory inclusion.

What simple changes can attractions make to ensure they're as welcoming as possible to all visitors?

It's about shifting your mindset. Making sure that as long as your doors are open, people of all abilities are able to walk in and feel comfortable. Pivoting away from the idea that you should only let those with sensory needs come in at particular hours.

The other thing we're seeing is people having a narrow focus and thinking that sensory needs is just autism. Autism is a big part of that community, but there are also many other conditions that mean people get overwhelmed. Make sure when you say you're sensory-inclusive, you're including all communities.



Success can be measured in many ways that don't always align with a non-disabled person's perspective

Roger Ideishi

Director of Occupational Therapy at George Washington University, US



PHOTO: ROGER IDEISHI

George Washington University Professor Roger Ideishi works with museums and arts organisations to create supportive environments for people with autism and sensory needs

What elements of an exhibition or visitor attraction might typically be challenging for people with ASD and sensory processing issues?

There can be many things – diversity is in the term neurodiversity.

There's a tendency to think loud noises and bright lights are the main thing people with ASD have difficulty with – that's true for many autistic individuals but not all. Spaces that are too quiet or don't have enough lighting can be difficult as well.

Every venue, every community, every person has unique needs.

What's your starting point when working with a museum or cultural institution?

I often start by examining their mission and vision statements to see if they align with their actions – not partial actions but a fully

integrated strategic plan that's building inclusive capacity across all layers of operation, not just visitor services.

I also ask about the organisation's relationship with the local disability community. Is it a mutually trusting relationship? Does the organisation have an accessibility advisory board with disabled stakeholders? Does the board of directors include persons with disability and other diverse identities?

I often see my role as facilitating dialogue and connecting stakeholders who haven't been previously connected. Then I let an organic process emerge since the needs will be different for every venue, community, and person.

How do you measure the success of a project?

Success can be measured in many ways that don't always align with a non-disabled person's perspective. A person taking part in a cultural experience for 20 minutes then leaving before the end may be seen as unsuccessful. But for that individual, 20 minutes may have been more

than they'd previously managed, so this could be a huge success. Maybe the next time, they'll stay longer.

There have been some common responses from the variety of sensory experiences I've been involved in. The most impactful is the disabled person saying: "I get to be who I am." Imagine not being who you are when you go into the community? The idea of masking who you are is to make non-disabled people comfortable, so who's really making the accommodation here?

Are there any common 'mistakes' when it comes to creating a sensory-friendly experience?

Common mistakes are thinking there's a 'right' way to create sensory friendly/relaxed experiences. Every experience, venue and community is different.

Presuming that every autistic person needs softer sounds is another common misperception. Many do but not all. Some may need greater sound intensity to organise and orient to the experience. Also most venues address the typical five sensations but there are other ways we perceive the environment that need attention, such as gravity, our perception and response to the intensity of gravity. Also, not all autistic individuals have sensory processing difficulties.

Can you think of any examples of quite simple changes museum operators can make?

Just be nice to every disabled and non-disabled person. It seems simple and it is, but it's often not universally done because of pre-conceived and misperceived ideas of disability.



Ideishi has worked with the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia



We're broadening the scope of stories we tell, including celebrating the contribution of neurodivergent people to STEM subjects. It's so important that visitors see themselves reflected in our galleries

Fiona Slater

Head of Access & Equity at the Science Museum Group, UK

How does the Science Museum support visitors with ASD and sensory needs?

We support autistic visitors and people with sensory access requirements through a range of initiatives. We know how crucial planning a trip in advance is to visitors with sensory needs and their families so we've recently created a visual story and will soon be publishing our Sensory Map. This gives visitors information about the museum, including key sensory information, so they can prepare for their visit.

Within our public programme we run a series of events designed for people that want to visit us in a quieter environment. On 6 August we'll be running the next in our popular Sensory Astronights series – our much-loved overnight adventure has been tweaked so that it's suitable for people that want to experience the museum away from the regular hustle and bustle. We also continue to deliver relaxed and out of hours events such as Early Birds and Night Owls.

We're aware that the museum can be an overwhelming space so we have specific pages on our website that raise any potential triggers for visitors before they arrive. Our accessibility pages highlight the busiest times to visit and we flag which demonstrations have loud noises. Our visitor experience team are also trained on how to support visitors, and to direct them to a quiet space if they need to take time out.



What's your starting point when thinking about how to ensure your museum is as inclusive as possible for visitors with autism and/or sensory needs?

Consultation! Over the years we've partnered and consulted with a number of organisations, individuals, families and autistic adults to understand the barriers posed by the museum and any gaps in our public programme – and how best to tackle these.

Have your ideas evolved about how to create a welcoming environment within the Science Museum? And would you say attitudes have evolved generally within the world of museums?

One of our five core values at the Science Museum is to be 'Open for All' – this is our commitment

to ensuring that the millions of people who visit or engage with us online feel welcome and see our museum as a place for them.

A key part of this is also broadening the scope of stories we tell in the museum, including recognising and celebrating the contribution of neurodivergent people to STEM subjects, as it's so important that visitors see themselves reflected in our galleries.

Attitudes are evolving across the sector and awareness of the potential barriers for autistic visitors and people with sensory needs are improving. There's more to be done but there's definitely been a shift in the desire to make museums as inclusive as possible.

What advice would you give to other operators looking to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment?

My number one tip would always be to involve the groups you want to reach out to in the discussions from the beginning. There will never be a 'one size fits all' solution so we need to be flexible and offer a variety of ways visitors can engage with the collection and activities we offer.

Making sure that colleagues have the training, awareness and confidence to support visitors who face a range of access barriers is also incredibly important. A positive interaction with a member of staff is often what elevates a visit and makes visitors keen to return.



If a meltdown takes place in the museum, we understand. If a person needs to be directed to a quiet space, we know what to do

Matti Wallin

Accessibility Programs Manager, Houston Museum of Natural Science, US



PHOTO: HOUSTON MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE

Houston Museum of Natural Science, in Houston, US, is a Certified Autism Center that offers a range of tools and support for visitors with autism and sensory needs

How does the Houston Museum of Natural Science support visitors with ASD and sensory needs?

We offer a range of resources at the museum, including visual vocabulary cards, exploration planners, sensory guides, sensory backpacks, and our Access HMNS app.

Our app has a map of the museum to help visitors plan ahead and our sensory backpacks include fidgets, headphones, and sunglasses if our exhibits feel a little loud, bright, or overstimulating.

HMNS also has sensory friendly events where families can visit the museum while the exhibit halls are adjusted to be as sensory-neutral as possible.

Our staff are another great resource – HMNS team members are very accommodating and always willing to assist.

What's your starting point when thinking about how to ensure the museum is as inclusive as possible?

Your institution can have all the resources in the world available, but they're not meaningful if your staff don't know about them or the guests that they serve. Staff training is the most important starting point when thinking about creating an inclusive experience.

Basic disability etiquette, autism awareness, and training about what your institution offers and how it is helpful is key. HMNS is a Certified Autism Center, which means that our staff went through a training module through the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education. This has been a really helpful platform to foster a larger culture of compassion among the staff.

If a meltdown takes place in the museum and that's what the guest needs to move through in order to carry on with their day, we understand. If a person needs to be directed to a quiet space or provided ear defenders, we know what to do.

There's an argument that if you can offer accommodations during sensory-friendly events, you should offer them at all times. What are your thoughts? Creating resources to be used during everyday visits and building exhibits and spaces so they're inherently inclusive is obviously the ultimate goal, but I also see the benefit in continuing to offer sensory-friendly events. Some people with autism and learning disabilities can feel judged by other visitors, so it's nice to offer a time where they can be free of that feeling and be themselves.

By offering both options, you put the choice in your guests' hands.

How have your ideas on inclusion evolved over the years?

It's important to remember that autism is a spectrum, and if you've met one person with autism then you've met one person with autism. I've learned to not overgeneralise and let our visitors decide what works best for them and then give them the tools to make that happen.

Do you have anything to add?

Making your space inclusive and sensory-friendly is helpful for a lot of people, not just people with autism and sensory sensitivities. We've received positive comments from guests who get migraines, are prone to seizures, and younger guests who might be afraid of sensory components in our exhibits.

I've never had a visitor without a disability complain about an accommodation that HMNS has made. Creating an inclusive environment supports all audiences. ●



PHOTO: HOUSTON MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE

OUT OF THIS WORLD

Valeria Rizzo, business development director of Red Raion shares insights into the growth and direction of the business

You exclusively work with digital content. Why is that?

Attraction-goers search for extraordinary experiences that can't be replicated in real life: they want to dive into the story and be the protagonists.

CGI gives the power to create new worlds by exceeding what's possible in real life, creating out-of-this-world adventures.

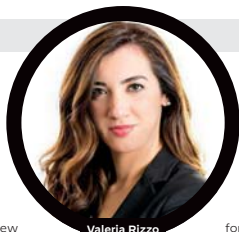
It was the potential of the technology that inspired us to dive into it. That's how Red Raion was born and found its identity – as a CGI studio specialising in media-based attractions.

What makes you different?

When we stepped into the industry eight years ago, we analysed companies producing digital content for media-based attractions – from generic outfits to Hollywood studios.

They had one thing in common – none were making content exclusively for media-based attractions.

When we started talking to potential clients, we realised this lack of specialisation had led to situations where they sometimes had to



Valeria Rizzo

carry extra costs and accept content that wasn't of the quality they expected.

We knew if we wanted to build a brand from scratch, we'd need a skilled team, an exclusive focus on media-based attractions and to always be there for clients to answer questions and anticipate and resolve their doubts.

What's your delivery process?

We've developed a standardised process we call the CGI Magic Chain.

Clients don't have to deal with distributors, we take care of all aspects of content creation in-house, from pre- and post-production to on-site installation.

We help clients find CGI content that fits their venue and have also created a series of reports that identify common mistakes operators make: it's free to download at www.bit.ly/am-redraion.

It's a useful tool for potential clients to understand what they need, even before we meet, so we start our relationship aligned and it goes smoothly from the beginning.

It's our biggest achievement to have never missed a deadline or gone over budget – even during the worst moments of the pandemic.

Some of your competitors are Hollywood studios. How do you compete?


Hollywood studios are the best at creating top feature films, but the feature film industry is completely different from the attractions sector.

Hollywood studios work on dozens of productions every year, following multiple pipelines, working on films, commercials,



CGI is created by the in-house team





“Operators can invest in the creation of their own unique IPs

TV shows and animated movies. As a consequence, their production times for CGI content for media-based attractions can be long, causing delays and price increases.

It isn't a question of whether they're able to do it, but more whether it makes sense to ask Hollywood to do this work, instead of a specialised company focused on this kind of project, that delivers the same results at a reasonable price.

What are your goals?

Besides continuing to improve our processes and technologies, our main goal is to expand more globally.

We already work worldwide, collaborating with hardware manufacturers, such as Triotech, Kraftwerk, Simworx, Brogent and SimEx-werks.

We've produced custom CGI content for theme parks all over the world and are currently working on projects including a flying theatre movie commissioned by SimEx-Iwerks, a dark ride in Vietnam, a VR attraction for Loveland Living Planet – the American aquarium that will combine CGI with real footage – and a CGI dining experience on a cruise ship in partnership with Leisure Expert Group.

Another step forward in our expansion has been the addition of content experts to our roster of professionals. Every regional market has distinctive features, so we train

these professionals to support clients in choosing the perfect CGI content, with each focusing on the area they know best.

What trends do you see?

Firstly, acquiring Intellectual Property for use in themed venues. This doesn't mean owners of theme parks or museums have to buy the rights to famous IPs, they can invest a smaller budget in creating their own.

It's a great way to achieve an identity without relying on already-famous IPs and gives the opportunity for operators to create stories unique to them and create sequels using existing assets, which means they can save money.

We worked on such a project when we created Miko and the Spell of the Stone, a custom CGI movie for Unlimited Snow, based on its Alpine Marmots IP.

Speaking of attractions, one of the most popular emerging formats is flying theatres. This is why we're building our own 'fly format' movie catalogue and have formed a partnership with SimEx-Iwerks – a company that's been in the industry over 30 years.

The number of licensed fly titles available isn't as high as with other formats, so SimEx-Iwerks has enriched its offering by pairing its flying theatre experience with Red Raion's growing catalogue of fly movies.

More: www.redraion.com



IN THE PICTURE

Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience is part of a hugely popular trend for immersive art that fuses technology and creativity. We take a look

It has toured world cities including New York, Las Vegas, Boston, Tel Aviv, Beijing, Naples and London, and now Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience digital art experience has launched in Bristol, UK.

Capitalising on the current popularity of immersive art shows, the exhibition's highlight is a 20,000sq ft light and sound show featuring floor-to-ceiling digital projections of many of Van Gogh's best known works.

The experience also features galleries exploring the life, works and techniques of Van Gogh, as well as a drawing studio and a VR experience that guides the viewer through a 10-minute journey on "a day in the life of the artist, providing a chance to discover the inspiration behind some of his most beloved works including Vincent's Bedroom at Arles, and Starry Night Over The Rhone River."

The work of entertainment producer Exhibition Hub together with entertainment discovery platform Fever, Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience premiered in a cathedral in Naples, Italy, in November 2017. It has since toured the US and Europe, as well as Tel Aviv and Shanghai.

Animated visuals for Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience were created in collaboration with digital media artists Dirty Monitor.

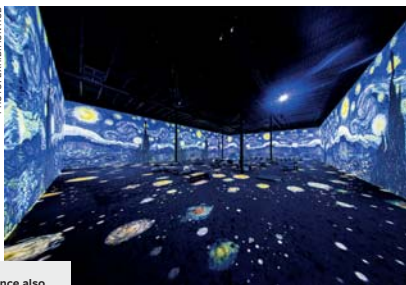
Immersive art experiences represent a hugely popular trend in attractions, with innovations in VR and AR technology driving the market, which promises to offer new perspectives on art and artists.

Other successes include Meow Wolf's Omega Mart, Las Vegas, US; teamLab's permanent museum in Tokyo, Japan; Steve Kopelman's Seisique in Houston, US; and Superblue Miami, US.

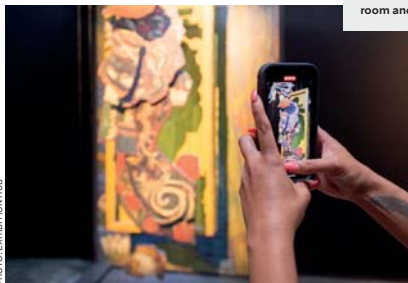
The 360-degree
digital art experience
has toured the world



IMMERSIVE ART



The experience also features a drawing room and an exhibition



Belgium-based creative studio Dirty Monitor helped create the visuals





The 20,000sq ft show features projections of Van Gogh's works

PHOTO: EXHIBITION HUB



The experience starts with an exhibition about Van Gogh's life

PHOTO: EXHIBITION HUB



You can view a video trailer of Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience here:
www.attractionsmanagement.com/vangogh

AWARD SEASON



The Museums + Heritage Awards – the Oscars of the museum world – celebrate the best in the world of museums, galleries, and cultural and heritage centres. We check out the 2022 winners

The Museum + Heritage Awards were presented in London in May, with winners including the National Trust; Casa Batlló immersive Gaudi experience in Barcelona, Spain; the Manchester Jewish Museum in the UK; and the Fashion Museum, Bath, UK.

The judging panel was chaired by ALVA CEO Bernard Donoghue, and consisted of Dame

Diane Lees DBE, Sara Wajid, Maggie Appleton MBE, Dr Matthew Tanner MBE, Sam Mullins OBE, Caro Howell and Stephen Duncan.

Hosted by comedian, podcaster and history presenter Iszi Lawrence, the awards followed the first day of the Museums + Heritage Show, which returned to London for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

THE WINNERS

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF THE YEAR

Casa Batlló Immersive Experience

Casa Batlló, Barcelona, Spain

Launched in 2021, this immersive experience uses technology to provide visitors with a glimpse into Gaudi's mind. Features include the Gaudi Dome – an immersive room with more than 1,000 screens that explores what inspired Gaudi – and the Gaudi Cube, a six sided LED cube that enables visitors to 'enter Gaudi's mind and see reality with his eyes'.

Why the judges chose this winner:

"The judges were impressed by the intelligent interpretation demonstrated and its creative response which felt very genuine. Combining a clever use of technology with layers of storytelling, there is no doubt that Gaudi would have appreciated it."



PHOTO: CASA BATLLÓ, PERE VIVES

The experience fuses technology, heritage and art



PHOTO: CASA BATLLÓ, PERE VIVES

The exhibit offers
a new way to
enjoy Casa Batlló



FUNDRAISERS OF THE YEAR

Fashion Museum Bath Buy a Bag Campaign Bath, UK

Bath Fashion Museum launched a 'Buy-a-Bag' fundraising campaign to provide 1,400 archival garment bags to help protect its collection when it is moved from the Assembly Rooms to its new home in spring 2023.

Donors were able to donate bags in exchange for a range of rewards, including access to a late-night event, private tours of

the museum galleries and a Fashion Museum guidebook and tote bag. The goal of £17,500 was successfully raised by the campaign.

Why the judges chose this winner:

"The judges cited this courageous digital-first crowd-funder campaign as being simple, effective and brilliant. It is everything you would hope to see in a winning campaign!"

BEST USE OF DIGITAL - INTERNATIONAL

DMW Creative, on behalf of The Irish National Stud Company, Ireland Irish Racehorse Experience, National Stud, Tully, Co Kildare, Ireland

The Irish Racecourse Experience, which opened in June 2021 in Co Kildare, combines gaming technology with live video, audio and graphics to take visitors on a journey through the history and heritage of the Irish thoroughbred sector. Visitors can watch a foal being born, learn tips from top trainers, and are given the chance to 'own, train and ride their own thoroughbred racehorse, culminating in a thrilling real-time race.'

Why the judges chose this winner:

"The judges were impressed by the clever and engaging way this winning project wove the exhibition's narrative into a fun, interactive experience."

PHOTO: DMW CREATIVE



The Irish Racecourse
Experience won
Best Use of Digital



PHOTO: MEGAN WILSON

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME OF THE YEAR

York Archaeological

**Trust Archaeology on Prescription
York, UK**

Archaeology on Prescription is an innovative project run by York Archaeology which sees participants work with archaeologists to improve their health and well-being, as well as learn new skills in archaeology. Local residents are also encouraged to get involved to help create the most detailed picture possible of life in this part of the city from the medieval period to the modern day.

Why the judges chose this winner:

"The judges were impressed by this simple, strong, confident concept, one which is not limited in ambition or scope. Intelligent thinking lies behind the long-term, strategic approach to the design of this impressive programme. It is both impactful and scalable and is actively changing lives."

TEMPORARY OR TOURING EXHIBITION OF THE YEAR Budget greater than £80,000

Sponsored by The Shipping Monster

Colchester + Ipswich

Museums Power of Stories

Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich, UK

In 2021, the Power of Stories exhibition at Christchurch Mansion brought together film costumes, historic museum objects and local stories to create a display exploring storytelling and identity.

This exhibition featured three iconic costumes from Marvel Studios' Black Panther as well as Marvel comics, historic museum objects and local stories.

Why the judges chose this winner:

"The judges were impressed by how brilliantly the Power of Stories connected with its community. They felt it was genuinely powerful and demonstrated a clear and lasting benefit. Delivered on a budget which only just took them into this category, this block buster was extremely good value as well as being both surprising and smart."

CAFÉ OR RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR**Manchester Jewish Museum, Manchester Jewish Museum Café****Manchester, UK**

Opened in 2021, Manchester Jewish Museum's cafe serves a contemporary vegetarian kosher-style menu using local produce and authentic Jewish and vegetarian ingredients, and helps visitors to learn about the history and traditions of Jewish food.

Why the judges chose this winner:

"Successfully connecting the food offer with the museum's ethical framework and purpose, the judges were impressed by this intrinsic link, which ensures the café offer is so much more than just an extension of the visitor experience."



The vegetarian
Manchester Jewish
Museum Café

LEARNING PROGRAMME OF THE YEAR**Foundling Museum Tracing Our Tales****Foundling Museum, London, UK**

Run by the Foundling Museum, Tracing our Tales is a 'ground-breaking three-year project to develop a bespoke, paid training and mentorship programme for care-experienced young adults,' with funding from Oak Foundation and ICAP.

Why the judges chose this winner:

"Innovative and highly relevant to the core purpose of the Foundling Museum and its collection, this winning programme provides meaningful learning opportunities, and has demonstrated how it has positively impacted its participants."

PARTNERSHIP OF THE YEAR**Oxford University Museum of Natural History Meat the Future: A partnership to feed minds and bodies****Oxford, UK**

Meat the Future was a 'challenging' exhibition that ran at Oxford University Museum of Natural History from May 2021 to January 2022 with the aim of giving visitors food for thought about how the production and consumption of animal products affect people and the planet.

Why the judges chose this winner:

"A brilliant example of a completely mutual and cross-dependent partnership. Meat the Future successfully combined research, engagement and commerce in an immersive and involving experience."

The Second World
War Galleries
opened in 2021



PERMANENT EXHIBITION OF THE YEAR

Sponsored by Displayways

**Imperial War Museums, Second World
War and The Holocaust Galleries**

London, UK

IWM London opened the new Second World War and The Holocaust galleries in October 2021. Spanning two floors, these huge new galleries bring together the stories of real people from diverse communities to examine the complex relationship between the Holocaust and the course and consequences of the Second World War.

Why the judges chose this winner:

"An outstanding game-changing, global exhibition, with decolonisation at its forefront. Embracing many difficult stories, juxtaposing them and blowing apart the traditional narrative. The Second World War and the Holocaust Galleries literally and figuratively, bring global and personal stories of humanity and inhumanity, into the light."



These new galleries
"bring personal
stories into the light"



A man wearing a black helmet and a black puffer jacket stands on a city street at dusk. He is holding a purple bicycle. In the background, there are brick buildings and a street sign. A woman is partially visible behind him.

TEMPORARY OR TOURING EXHIBITION OF THE YEAR

Budget under £80,000

Sponsored by The Shipping Monster

**Museum of Homelessness Secret Museum
London, UK**

In November 2021, the Museum of Homelessness ran an 11 day Secret Museum, which they described as part treasure hunt, part immersive experience, part theatre, part museum experience. The experience featured objects and stories from homeless people, activists and community organisers.

Why the judges chose this winner:

"Secret Museum is a project which courageously redefines what exhibitions can be. It is truly ground-breaking and is creative, thoughtful and raw. The judges felt that it paves the way and shows what can be done by being proactive and disruptive."

**The Secret Museum
shared stories of
homelessness**



RESTORATION OR CONSERVATION PROJECT OF THE YEAR

The Churches Conservation Trust
in partnership with Mosedale
Gillatt Architects and Historic
Properties Restoration Ltd

Turning a dream into a reality –
restoring 1719, Sunderland

Why the judges chose this winner:

"The judges were impressed by this
hugely complex and challenging
project. It had a team of more
than 200 people, who worked to
deliver conservation-led restoration,
which was sensitively executed
with a big heart and deep and
broad community engagement."

SUSTAINABLE PROJECT OF THE YEAR

Sponsored by National Lottery Heritage Fund

Winner: Discovering 42,
Reimagining Reality

MARKETING + COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN OF THE YEAR

Joint Winner: Kiplin Hall and
Gardens, Kiplin goes local

Joint Winner: Imperial War
Museums, IWM London's Second
World War and The Holocaust Galleries

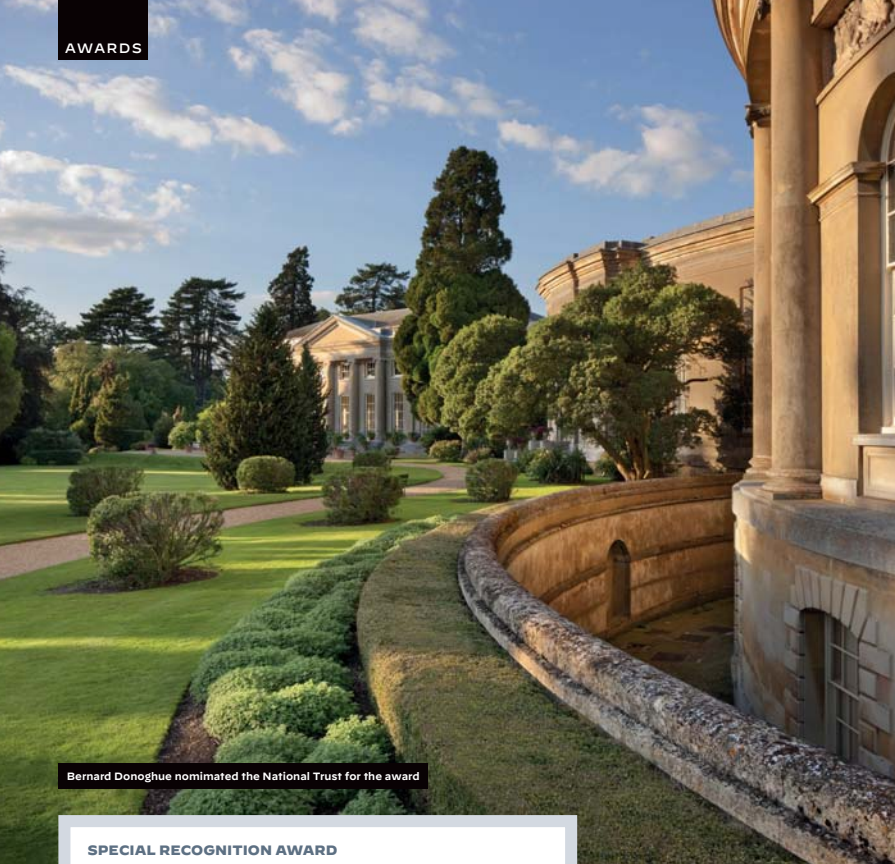
VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

*In partnership with Association
of Independent Museums*

Winner: Cleveland Pools Volunteer
Team, Cleveland Pools Trust

SHOP OF THE YEAR

Winner: Beamish, The Living
Museum of the North, 1900s Town
Market Stalls at Beamish, The
Living Museum of the North



Bernard Donoghue nominated the National Trust for the award

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD

National Trust

The Special Recognition Award was nominated by the judges, and is made to an individual or organisation which they feel have done extraordinary work or made a significant positive impact on the sector.

Why the judges chose this winner:

"The National Trust has demonstrated its conviction to tell the authentic, sometimes uncomfortable, stories of its collections, places and people in an unwaveringly impressive and inspirational way."

VISITOR WELCOME AWARD

Winner: History of Science
Museum Front of House Team
University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

BEST USE OF DIGITAL – UK

Winner: Commonwealth War
Graves, Commission War
Graves Week ●

PHOTO: ARNHELD DE SIERRA





The Trust saw a 383% rise in online donations during the pandemic



The judges called
the National Trust
"Inspirational"



THE WINDS OF CHANGE

PHOTO: BRIDA INSTITUTE

“

Thirty years ago I challenged theme parks and other attractions to become benchmarks of sustainable development. Very few rose to the challenge – precious time is slipping away

The coming decade will bring unprecedented experimentation within the attractions sector and those who aren't willing to get truly creative risk getting left behind, argues Dr Terry Stevens

Bob Dylan's refrain, *The Winds of Change Are Blowing Wild and Free*, on his 1997 album *Time Out of Mind* echoes his earlier anthem, *The Times They Are A'Changin'*. The sentiment is prescient and wholly relevant today. The pandemic, together with other global crises, has shifted many aspects of leisure consumer behaviour, demanding a response from the supply side of our industry.

Nowhere is this challenge more pronounced than in the attractions sector. It is time to reconsider the concept of a visitor attraction. Time to scrutinise their role and purpose. Time to re-imagine their business and operational models. It was 30 years ago when, in 1993,



my essay *Playgrounds or Agents of Social and Cultural Development* won the American Express Annual Award for Travel. The text challenged theme parks and other attractions to become benchmarks of sustainable development and to recognise the needs of thoughtful consumers with their new priorities for selecting their leisure experiences. Very few rose to the challenge. Three decades on there is a new imperative to act. Precious time is definitely slipping away.

The heartbeat thumping the sector into action is compliance with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals and the paradigm shifts within the industry that will have profound impacts on how we re-imagine the future of the development and planning of attractions.

These paradigm shifts are:

HYBRIDITY & TRANSFORMATION:

The appearance of novel, unique solutions, in product development, experience creation and tourist engagement that are blurring definitions and making it increasingly difficult to categorise and accredit an 'attraction' – and does it matter anymore if a product receives a 5 star or a 2 star assessment by a tourist board? Initiatives that boldly go where few have been before to make a positive transformational impact will prevail.

OUTLIERS:

As part of the era of the hybrid, we're seeing the rapid emergence of attractions that would have been regarded as being 'left-of-field', or quirky, but now these niche outliers are fast becoming mainstream – 'who would have thought it' ideas are now becoming the expected, delivered by hybrid-thinkers and often developed by the new pirates (as they have been described).

CO-CREATION:

Multi-faceted, multi-layered, co-created, and collaborative unique experiences capable of commanding high value and capturing guest attention and involving the guest in their design will become a demand driver for destinations.

CO-DEPENDENCY:

A cornerstone of co-created experiences is the need for destination stakeholders to work together and recognise a co-dependency tourism eco-system rather than a business-centric, ego-system.

ELASTICITY:

The need for everyone involved in attraction development to be more agile, flexible, and fluid in their design, planning, and operations, welcoming new ideas, different ways of working, and nurturing innovation.

TALENT:

Exploring the idea that an individual's talent may well be more important to a tourism business than a traditional skill or qualification – the fact that your security guard is the best fiddle player in the village might be more important than his security qualifications.

VALUE:

The culmination of these shifts is resulting in our need to re-calibrate all aspects of perceived and real value of tourism in our destinations and, ultimately, to deliver new metrics of success.

Ljubljana Castle in Slovenia has been transformed

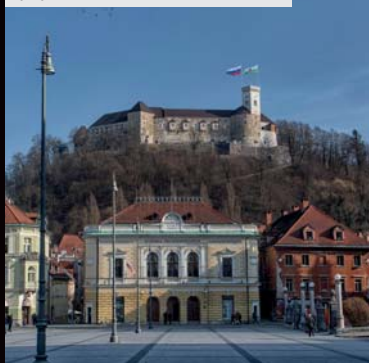


PHOTO: MIHA MALY

ARoS art museum in Aarhus, Denmark



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK



Art Circle in Brda, Slovenia hosts art and gastronomic events

PHOTO: BRIDA INSTITUTE



Meneghetti Winery &
Hotel in Istria, Italy:
"Ahead of the curve"

In this context, much has been written about the experience economy and how attractions can deliver memorable experiences to add value and competitiveness. However, as Design Hotels founder Claus Sendlinger has challenged us on many occasions, "The tourism industry needs innovative and creative ideas to survive but the industry is not sufficiently innovative or creative to deliver what will be needed. We need hybrid thinkers delivering hybrid solutions."

The next five to 10 years in the sector will be a period of unprecedented experimentation, where old formulas no longer hold true; where traditional forms of partnership and collaboration will have to change and where hybrid solutions created by hybrid thinkers will prove to be winners. This will be about creating the 'new-extraordinary'. In the words of Martin Raymond of The Future Laboratory: "We've spent our time fretting about the New Normal, when we should be talking about the New Extra-ordinary! The pandemic has precipitated scientific advancement, championed innovation, and ushered in a new age of collaboration, challenge, and accelerated change".

“

We've spent our time fretting about the 'new normal', when we should be talking about the 'new extraordinary'! The pandemic has precipitated scientific advancement, championed innovation, and ushered in a new age of collaboration, challenge, and accelerated change

Martin Raymond, The Future Laboratory

**Monastero di Astino
in Bergamo, Italy is a
hybrid success story**

Key to successful experience creation in attractions are the twin notions of co-creation and co-dependency. How can tourism (and other) stakeholders work and play better together to ensure optimal sustainable outcomes and exceptional experiences? For K Michael Haywood, Professor Emeritus, School of Hospitality, Food and Tourism at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, the answer in his 2021 ebook *Astonish, Smarter Tourism by Design* is that, "There is a need for well-developed eco-systems (networks and clusters) for innovation within the tourism industry, its various interdependent yet operationally independent sectors, and all host communities and neighbourhoods."

This brave new world will not be kind to, or tolerant of, a traditional visitor attraction offering well-rehearsed, tired, experiences – be it a castle, stately home, theme park, or zoo. There are examples of enlightened investors and operators embracing these changes who are ahead of the curve; they are few and far between, but they prove the winds of change bring wonderful opportunities to refresh, re-

ignite, and regenerate the attractions sector.

Hybridity characterises the success stories in this new world. Take for example, Jupiter Artland near Edinburgh – an extraordinary collection of large-scale artworks in an heritage setting on the western fringe of Edinburgh. Or Monastero di Astino, Bergamo, Italy – a former monastery that's a working farmscape, a religious centre, an exposition of local food and drink, and a conference and cultural venue. Or global trendsetting attraction Ars Electronica in Linz, Austria – an iconic building housing a collection of immersive exhibits exploring the interrelationship between art, technology, and society together with the inspirational 8-D Deep Space Evolution. Other successful hybrids showing how it can be done include Hauser & Wirth, Somerset, UK; Meneghetti Winery and Hotel, Istria; ARoS, Aarhus, Denmark; and Babylonstoren, Franschhoek, Western Cape.

These attractions all combine several different offers to create something new, fresh and intriguing – none of them are playing it safe.

Undoubtedly, the trendsetter of these new ways of thinking about attractions and experiences is the Slovenian Tourist Board (STB) with its national initiative, known as Slovenian Unique Experiences (SUE). The STB have created a scheme for the curation of unique, 5 star Slovenian experiences that conforms to the requirements of the national tourism strategy and are evaluated by an independent commission prior to going to market.

Each proposal has to meet 40 criteria within 10 thematic groups: Local identity, Authentic, Unique, Experiential, Green, Boutique, Premium, Added value, Off-season, Digitally enabled.

The result is a wonderful palette of experiences delivering the new extraordinary. A template for the way to realign our attractions, maybe?



Ars Electronica explores art, technology and society

PHOTO: ARS ELECTRONICA

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK



Joana Vasconcelos: Gateway at Jupiter Artland, Edinburgh

Successful hybrid attractions

Terry Stevens' pick



Jupiter Artland showcases art in a heritage setting

Jupiter Artland

Near Edinburgh, UK

An extraordinary collection of large-scale artworks in an heritage setting on the western fringe of Edinburgh

Ars Electronica

Linz, Austria

Austrian cultural, education and scientific institute exploring new technology and its impact on our futures via the 'Museum of the Future', the annual Ars Electronica Festival, an innovation campus and the Prix Ars prize

Monastero di Astino

Bergamo, Italy

This former monastery has been renovated as a centre of sustainable agriculture and local culture. It is a working farmscape, a religious centre, an exposition of local food and drink, and a conference and cultural venue

Meneghetti Winery and Hotel

Istria

Part winery with tasting rooms and visitor centre, part hotel with villas and gardens, a conference and cultural centre, and a gastronomic celebration.

Roxanich

Istria

This old farm storehouse has been converted into a contemporary design hotel with a five storey underground winery and visitor attractions together with conference centre and art galleries.

ARoS

Aarhus, Denmark

Contemporary art gallery with a rooftop immersive 360 degree walk through attraction, restaurants, and speakeasy of debates and discussions.

Babylonstoren

Franschhoek, Western Cape

This western Cape historic farm has been converted into a contemporary mix of gardens, accommodation, spa and wellness facilities and gastronomic experiences by the same owners as The Newt in Somerset.

Ljubljana Castle

Slovenia

This visitor experience has been transformed from a predictable, heritage offer to a centre featuring numerous attractions, restaurants, extraordinary living history experiences, and retail.

Art Circle, Brda, Slovenia

In spring this southwest corner of Slovenia comes alive with a unique range of art galleries, gastronomic experiences, and locally curated pop-up attractions. ●

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Decades have passed since sustainability was first raised as an issue, but progress is slow. Research by BVA BDRC shows consumers are forcing change and attractions can become greener while attracting more visitors, says Jon Young

Sustainability is very much on the public's agenda, with 95 per cent of the UK public very or fairly concerned with at least one sustainability issue, with deforestation ranking most highly, after decades of publicity around the Amazon rainforest. The extinction of species follows, then climate change.

The issues are clear, but action has not been. The problem is that climate change has been too slow for most of us to notice – today's grandparents probably won't live to see the damage, though their grandchildren certainly will. Investments conventionally need to pay back in a couple of decades at most. Shareholders have no interest in watching their investments tank so as to benefit future generations.

We need different models of motivation and governance for real change to happen and the momentum is most likely to come from the consumer, who can learn to change their habits and start to impose real and lasting change on the market.

At consumer and business insight consultancy BVA BDRC we use research to make sense of consumer attitudes. Unlike many other issues – and contrary to the media narrative – environmentalism is not limited to the young, with over 55s typically more concerned



with sustainability issues than any other age group. This chimes with a good deal of the research we have conducted elsewhere.

Most surveys we run with national tourist boards show older generations prioritising landscapes and scenery as a motivation for visiting – this is the case for the UK, German, US and French markets. Older age cohorts also index above average in visits to cultural and garden attractions. They are the most engaged with the natural world so it's no surprise they're the most likely to want to protect it.

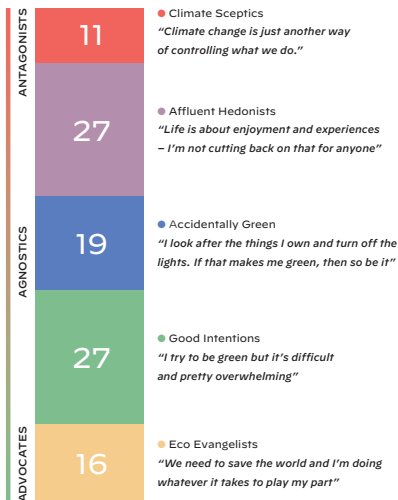
Environmentalism is also not biased towards the political left. It is broadly non-partisan. Conservative and Labour voters score almost identically on environmental issues – with the exception of 'climate change' which is perhaps a more politically loaded term.

While it's no secret that people care, there is not yet a link between sustainability and decision-making and this link is needed to persuade attractions that it's worth making the investments needed to become more sustainable.

One of the most important outcomes of our research was to demonstrate that sustainability is not 'one size fits all'. To make this point we developed an attitudinal sustainability segmentation based on attitudes and sustainable behaviour. The inclusion of behaviour was particularly important in separating the advocates from the virtue signallers or those who want to be sustainable but don't know how. The five segments are:

Attitudinal segmentation based on attitudes and sustainable behaviour

% of UK population



Eco Evangelists – 16 per cent of the population:

These are individuals who care deeply about the environment and regularly make sustainable choices, from recycling to reducing meat consumption, to switching energy suppliers to direct action on the streets.

How to attract to attractions: Attract through promoting depth of sustainability activity. Accreditation may be seen as greenwashing so focus on tangible achievements.

Good Intentions – 27 per cent: These people are very concerned about the environment and do what they can, but generally find it all too overwhelming. They need help from corporations or government to make sustainable choices.

How to attract to attractions: Make being sustainable easy and visible. This may include on-site recycling bins, provision of water



Polar bears made from plastic waste at the National Trust's Sheffield Park Garden

fountains, vegan and local food in the café and plenty of sustainable produce in the shop. Accreditation may also help but this segment will best respond to actions that get visitors involved.

Accidentally Green – 19 per cent: This (mostly older male) segment is not involved with the sustainability conversation – they will actively criticise those who take direct action. However they will naturally make sustainable choices – be it through recycling and reusing, nurturing a bee friendly garden or purchasing locally grown food (sometimes growing it). Saving money is a priority for them but they also dislike waste.

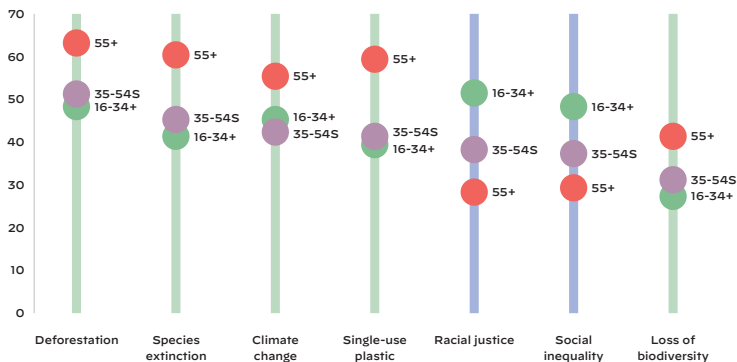
How to attract to attractions: Highlight ways in which sustainable choices can save them money (e.g. discounted hot drinks with reusable cups) and draw attention to how the attraction is saving waste.

“

Our latest Mystery Visitor research indicated that 47 per cent of visitor attractions don't have recycling bins on site and only a third have some sort of sustainability accreditation on view

How concerned are you about the following?

(% very concerned by age)



Affluent Hedonists – 27 per cent: The closest fit to a segment of 'virtue signallers' this audience will say they are concerned about sustainable issues, but their behaviour suggests otherwise. Nevertheless, being sustainable is good for their image, so they will make sustainable choices if it makes them look good, and will pay more for the pleasure.

How to attract to attractions: This segment will light up when being sustainable makes them look good. Attractions can achieve this in many ways, but examples include using influencers to communicate messages, utilising new/clever technology, selling fashionable/designer sustainable goods or serving locally sourced good quality vegan food in the café. The wealthiest segment, this is a good one to get.

Climate sceptics – 11 per cent: A segment opposed to the sustainability movement and not sustainable in their behaviours. How to attract: There's very little that can be done to attract this

segment, but attractions may simply want to listen to their views so they are not alienated.

Visitor attractions index especially highly in attracting the 'eco evangelists' and 'good intentions' segments, indicating the importance of them being outwardly sustainable. Our Mystery Visitor programme – which assesses attractions on a range of sustainability measures – suggests this is often not the case. The latest quarter of our Mystery Visitor research indicated that 47 per cent of visitor attractions don't have recycling bins on site and only a third have some sort of 'sustainability accreditation' on view. While the accreditation can be seen as an example of greenwashing, and recycling bins won't solve the climate crisis, the lack of both will be a source of frustration for environmentally-minded visitors.

More positively, 72 per cent of attractions sold sustainable items in their shop, and 55 per cent served vegan food in their café. But broadly speaking, the evidence suggests attractions still have some way to go. ●



The National Trust's
Living Green Visitor
Centre educates visitors



Attractions need to make
sustainable options easy
and visible for visitors

Product Innovation

Suppliers tell *Attractions Management* about their latest product, design and technology news

For the latest supplier news and company information, visit attractions-kit.net

Buckingham Palace was transformed into a huge screen



PHOTO: CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY

Creative Technology provides technical delivery for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

As part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in London, UK, Creative Technology provided technical delivery of the Buckingham Palace projection and main stage LED screens for BBC Studio's Platinum Party at the Palace celebration.

Working with Stufish – who were responsible for stage design – and NorthHouse Creative, who designed and created the projections, Creative Technology assembled a team of engineers to produce a backdrop for the concert, which included music performances, a display by the Royal Ballet and words from Her Majesty The Queen, HRH Prince William, and Sir David Attenborough.

The projection onto Buckingham Palace combined archive imagery with a range of real-time and

rendered motion design, pre-filmed footage, and visual effects that included disco balls 'swung around the palace' when Diana Ross appeared and the outer walls of the palace appearing to peel back to display 70 layers of wallpaper showing the Queen's changing style during Duran Duran's performance. It aimed to tell the story of the Queen's reign and bring the building to life for the in-person audience and 12 million viewers watching at home.

The show saw the entire front of Buckingham Palace turned into a projection-mapped display, with 32 high brightness projectors used during the concert. Working to Stufish's stage design, CT also supplied 209sqm LED screens to all three of the main stages

displaying content by NorthHouse Creative with live camera feeds from NEP broadcast.

"It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to project onto Buckingham Palace and produce a stunning backdrop for the likes of Duran Duran, Alicia Keys and Diana Ross to name just a few. It was an event that should make the live events industry immensely proud to be a part of," said Will Harkin, project manager at Creative Technology.

The LED screens were also used in the lead up to the event for the Trooping the Colour, the service of Thanksgiving at St Paul's, and the Platinum Jubilee Pageant.

[attractions-kit](http://attractions-kit.net) keyword
Creative Technology

Aussie World launches Dingo Racer coaster

The Aussie World theme park on Australia's Sunshine Coast has launched its first rollercoaster.

The Dingo Racer spinning coaster, which was built by Reverchon Rides, promises to take parkgoers on a journey through a Mad Max themed attraction close to home.

The ride has a capacity of 960 people per hour, seats four people per car, and is open to anyone over the height of 120cm. It travels along the coaster track up to 14m in the air before twisting and turning along the track up to speeds of 72km/h.

PHOTO: REVERCHON RIDES/SAMANTHA HOOPER



The new ride launched in June 2022



The coaster travels up to speeds of 72km/h

PHOTO: REVERCHON RIDES/SAMANTHA HOOPER

The experience begins when visitors enter the queue ride, with a life size model of a dingo,

"taking you along for the ride as he tries to escape a forbidden area, leading to his Mad Max style car."

"As the second new major attraction to open at Aussie World in the last year, the Dingo Racer is helping to expand our experiences and in turn, we expect it to attract a more diverse range of holidaymakers and locals," said Aussie World Manager Shannon Fay.

"As the second new major attraction to open at Aussie World in the last year, the Dingo Racer is helping to

expand our experiences and in turn, we expect it to attract a more diverse range of holidaymakers and locals.

"The ride has certainly got a unique spin of its own, with the seven cars moving around the track while simultaneously spinning 360 degrees as it travels."

The ride was officially opened in June by Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Sport and Engagement, the Honourable Stirling Hinchcliffe.

attractions-kit keyword

Reverchon Rides

Scruffy Dog and Simtec launch Fisher-Price themed trackless ride



The ride can take six or nine people

PHOTO: MATTTEL/SIMTEC

Scruffy Dog Creative Group and Simtec Systems have partnered to launch a new immersive trackless dark ride featuring the popular Mattel IP, Fisher-Price.

The ride's narrative and concept were developed by Scruffy Dog, while Simtec designed the trackless system. The modular and adaptable design of the system means it can be scaled up or down depending on the client's budget.

The ride also offers interactive elements and flexibility in terms of vehicle designs.

Joe Bright, Scruffy Dogs CEO,

said: "Teaming up with Mattel and Simtec is a fantastic collaboration.

"The ride system can be designed to work with all the various iconic Fisher-Price themes which give our clients options and variations."

Founded in 1930, US-based Fisher-Price creates educational toys for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

It is owned by toy and entertainment giant Mattel. Germany-based Simtec specialises in high-end entertainment simulator systems, while Scruffy Dog is a UK-based entertainment and experience designer.

attractions-kit keyword

Simtec

Clevedon Pier's
ticketing system
has been upgraded

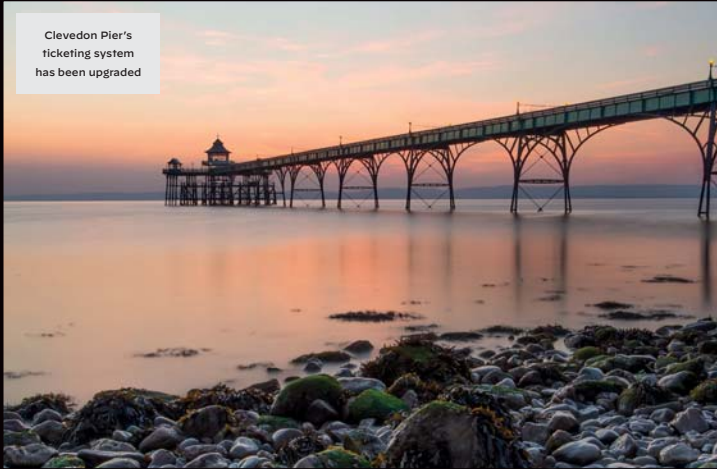


PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/DAVIDANNE

Vennersys upgrades Clevedon Pier's ticketing system

Integrated ticketing and visitor management firm Vennersys was asked by the Clevedon Pier & Heritage Trust board to update their ticketing management system.

Located in the town of Clevedon, Somerset, Clevedon Pier is a seaside pier on the eastern shore of the Severn Estuary and a popular local attraction.

Clevedon Pier & Heritage Trust was looking to upgrade their ticketing management system to one that would allow them to implement an integrated approach to embrace their marketing, operational and commercial needs.

The VenposCloud visitor management system has been used to process the collection of gift aid donations with integrated postcode look-up features and optional donations available at several points of sale. With the integration of the ticketing and admission module,



Stuart Ward

donations are stimulated by offering two ticket options – one with and one without an additional donation.

Clevedon Pier & Heritage Trust also offers a wide selection of official pier annual passes, and now uses Vennersys membership management module. This makes it easier to manage the passes, reduce admin time and redeem sold tickets quickly.

"It's an honour to be working closely with such a wonderful and historic attraction as Clevedon Pier," said Vennersys business development manager Stuart Ward of the partnership.

"We took this challenge with excitement and best interest towards the Pier to not only meet but exceed the Trust's expectations and help them modernise their operations to current industry standards. We look forward to what

this partnership will bring in the future and, in the meantime, we'll always look for ways to improve the system to meet their needs."

Clevedon Pier & Heritage Trust chairman Phil Curme said: "Vennersys have offered excellent support from the very beginning, always open for discussions and ever ready with suggestions on how to improve our business practices and take full advantage of their innovative system.

"VenposCloud is an extremely flexible piece of software which allows us to do things we couldn't do previously, and it lets us modernise our processes – helping us to upgrade our offering to visitors and improve their overall experience. The reporting feature has been key in helping to find new growth opportunities and increase our revenue." ●

attractions-kit keyword

Vennersys



WATER. JUST ANOTHER WAY TO SAY FUN

ADVANCED WATER PLAY SOLUTIONS WITH CUSTOMIZED DESIGN: WHEREVER THERE IS WATER MYRTHA CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE.

www.myrthapools.com

 **Myrtha
Pools**
WATER. VISION. CREATION.

Attractions MANAGEMENT

DIRECTORY

To book your space call: +44 (0)1462 431385

MULTIMEDIA & AV



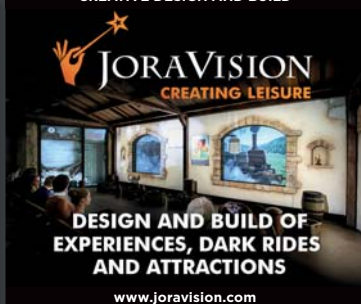
KRAFTWERK
LIVING TECHNOLOGIES

**WE ARE YOUR AV SPECIALIST
FOR HIGH-QUALITY
MEDIA-BASED ATTRACTIONS!**

www.kraftwerk.at | +43 7242 69269-0 | info@kraftwerk.at

www.kraftwerk.at

CREATIVE DESIGN AND BUILD



JORA VISION
CREATING LEISURE

**DESIGN AND BUILD OF
EXPERIENCES, DARK RIDES
AND ATTRACTIONS**

www.joravision.com

CGI CONTENT PRODUCTION



REDRAION®

**The CGI studio specialized in
media based attractions**

www.redraion.com

IMMERSIVE RIDES & ATTRACTIONS



INTRODUCING:
Extended Experiences™

WHERE EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE

www.holovis.com

Attractions MANAGEMENT

To book your annual advert call the
sales team on **+44 (0)1462 431385**

YOU ARE NOT JUST *DESIGNING MEDIA CONTENT FOR YOUR ATTRACTION.*
YOU'RE *PLANNING A DREAM EXPERIENCE.*

Make sure it comes true.



How can you be sure that the CGI content you need will meet your expectations in terms of **quality, costs, and lead time?**

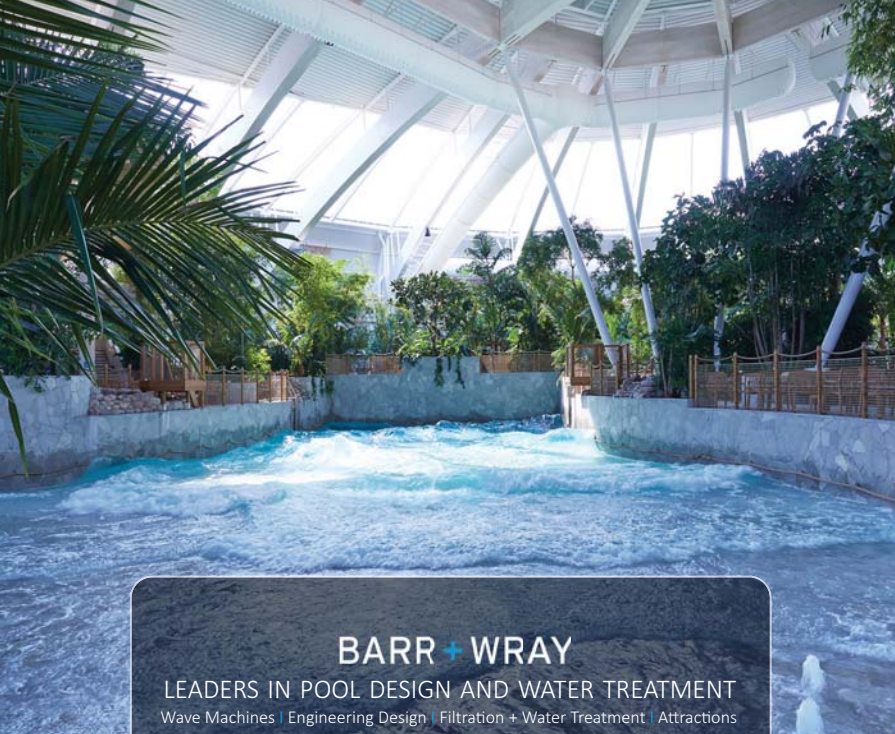
You can with the CGI Magic Chain, our standardized production process: it will show you exactly how we will work and what you can expect, **before you commit to the agreement.**

Send the request for proposal of your media content project at rfp@redraion.com



RED RAION®

The CGI studio specialized in media based attractions



BARR + WRAY

LEADERS IN POOL DESIGN AND WATER TREATMENT

Wave Machines | Engineering Design | Filtration + Water Treatment | Attractions



Middle East + Asia

Barr + Wray Dubai

T: + 971 4 320 6440

E: sales@barrandwray.com

UK + Europe

Barr + Wray

T: + 44 141 882 9991

E: sales@barrandwray.com

www.barrandwray.com