

VISITOR ATTRACTION BEST PRACTICE

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Please note throughout this document are links to articles, video clips and websites, etc. If any of these have become broken over time we apologise.

SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNT

Introduction

Based on the consultants' desktop, internet and telephone research with attraction operators (see Case Studies) the following is a summary of the key lessons learned.

Food

- Food has become increasingly important as part of the visitor experience and attractions can benefit from attracting a local market particularly to boost lunch trade. (See Vasa and Astrid Lindgren Case Studies);
- Authenticity of the food offer is important. This could be discovering or resurrecting real local customs or lost delicacies / cuisine, farmers' markets, local products / crafts. Food and drink is a key part of the Scottish cultural identity. Scotland Food and Drink offer a number of how to [guides](#);
- The continued growth in appetite for artisan food, pop-up restaurants and street food offers the savvy visitor attraction an opportunity to embrace this;
- The focus on local produce is embraced by Corris Craft Centre – They source locally produced food and drink for their menu and this is echoed by the Welsh food and drink shop where local produce can be bought;
- The food offer needs to stand out. It may be the bizarre or the sensory, but quality and consistency of service is also key;
- Brands that promote home-cooking, use of local produce and have a prominence are increasing in popularity;
- Food offers linked to temporary exhibitions, which themselves are temporary or pop-up in nature offer opportunities;
- Well-managed social media and digital marketing can see an attraction, through its new and changing food offers increase pre and post-awareness of its catering facilities – see BCLM – Traditional dishes with a twist – heritage kit box anyone?;
- At Astrid Lindgren's World, they continually develop and refresh their food concept. Fresh, healthy, good quality local food is a key offer throughout the attraction. The local food is distinctive and is a prominent feature in the Author's books. The attraction reflects the authenticity of the food offer made by 'proper' chefs from scratch. The food cost may be higher than average but the quality sells;
- Key to Bompas & Parr's approach to creating the complete experience is attention to detail – designing food, plates, glassware, lighting, etc whatever is appropriate to an event;
- A lesson from the early Kynren shows is to ensure adequate food provision, that the number of outlets match the expected audience and the time allowed for purchase and consumption. The audience was invited to come early to avoid arrival queues and experience the 'food village' however the concession kiosk queues were extremely long.

Retail

- In some instances there has been a blurring at the edges of what constitutes an attraction versus a retail offering, retail on occasion being the main motivation to visit. A quality retail offering can be an attractant in its own right;
- It is important that the retail offer is authentic / appropriate to the attraction and adds to the overall visitor experience. The quality of retail offering in visitor attractions is key to boosting average spends;
- In recent years the most successful attraction retail facilities have embraced retail professionalism in merchandising, marketing, management and analysis. Attraction operators, where feasible, should invest in specialists to introduce and manage retail / food offers. Employing a dedicated retail manager can boost sales. Jodrell Bank's sales increased by 10% by employing an experienced and dedicated retail specialist;
- Visitors are looking for greater attention to detail in retailing, particularly in sourcing unique local crafts and other retail offers;
- There has been an increase in branded goods, particularly retail linked to events, but these must be relevant to the occasion;
- Making it easier for the visitor to spend will increase sales – Do you accept credit cards yet? Contactless?
- Online sales capability has boosted the appeal of attraction retail offers for some attractions;
- It is important that catering and retail is an intrinsic part of the business model, with products changing seasonally. The retail offer closely reflecting the themes of the museum and new events, to boost sales. Retail offers at a wide range of price points also helps to boost appeal.

Events

- There has to be great attention to detail in the planning and organising of events, nothing has been left to chance across the whole visitor experience / journey;
- Events can grow organically year on year with new elements added to continue to attract local resident and visitor markets;
- Events don't just benefit the organising attraction, other businesses in a locale will benefit from and help to create critical mass and ultimately attract more overnight and day visitors from a wider range of markets;
- Out of hours events can be successful when combined with astute targeted marketing. Out of hours events result in a varied audience for the attraction, but the marketing further afield has to be to a specific audience who will be specifically attracted to the event;

- Events that include interaction and engagement eg Meet the Expert events / Steam Engine firing, etc for children will have added appeal;
- Well-targeted public events can increase exposure and reach new markets – Blue Dot is a new science music festival, designed to attract a younger market to Jodrell Bank. It sees 8-10,000 visitors over a weekend which would take a month to achieve from the normal visit patterns;
- Bompas & Parr have diversified and grown since 2007 from a small company noted for its jelly-making capabilities into a company with international reach and reputation in catering and experiential events, design and strategic marketing.

Revenue

- Be on the lookout for new revenue generating opportunities – consider pop-up facilities eg accommodation for special events or longer term. This perhaps has a rural dimension / opportunity particularly;
- Diversify revenue streams eg food business / training / meeting space / after hours to help optimise revenue;
- Several attractions have diversified revenue sources by offering various forms of accommodation, including themed accommodation in Tiny Town, at Astrid Lindgren, but also Zoo Lodges at Whipsnade Zoo;
- BCLM has placed an emphasis on increasing revenue from filming location hire, whilst acknowledging it is hard to drive demand in this area, what sites can do is ensure that they are 'film friendly'. BCLM is also attracting more visitors via its special events programme, diversifying and improving its retail and catering offers and forging new public and private partnerships – see VisitScotland's Film [Toolkit](#);
- The introduction of easier payment methods through the use of wrist bands has boosted revenue;
- Are there opportunities for third party rent to boost income? – the Corris Craft Centre has 9 independent craft studios that pay rent and boost income year round;
- Seating boosts dwell time. The careful installation and placement of indoor and outdoor seating can boost onsite dwell time and increase spends in café and shop;
- Collaboration with others can be important for some. Bursledon Brickworks enhances use of its assets in association with a local history group, renting out the attraction for ghost hunts is an additional revenue source for them. ArtWorks Scotland have a [toolkit](#) for anyone delivering arts and creative learning through collaborative or participatory projects and programmes.

Brand

- Attractions can on occasion benefit from associations with existing brands, in terms of achieving valuable profile and kudos cost effectively. Jodrell Bank and the Clangers and Antiques Roadshow at New Lanark are examples;
- Astrid Lindgren has created a wider visitor destination through branding and promoting complementary locations that appear in the books and films. This increases the average length of stay and boosts visitor spend in the local area. Similarly Kynren / Eleven Arches will see accommodation and food and beverage facilities 'packaged' with Auckland Palace, the Art Gallery and Institute, to create a 'competent' destination;
- BCLM has a local business partnership scheme. It has sponsorship from Banks Brewery for events as official beer sponsor. It benefits the Brewery by increasing customer exposure to their brand, the attraction gets cheaper beer and the association with a well-respected local brand. The attraction reaches a wider and different audience than its core market;
- In the Tayto Park example the core brand has been used to draw people to an otherwise traditional theme park, while the secondary marketing at the Park boosts crisp sales;
- Tayto Crisps has used its brand irreverently and in edgy ways in the past – risky but it worked. Tayto Ltd published 'The Man Inside the Jacket', a spoof fictional autobiography of the Mr Tayto mascot. The company over the years has had some 'good-natured' and some not so good natured spats with an Irish band Toasted Heretic over unauthorised uses of the brand.

Marketing / Social Media

- Marketing is important and word of mouth through active use of social media can be grown. Use of internal resources for PR and press strategies ie self-promotion can be an effective marketing tool rather than using external agencies;
- Social Media needs to be actively managed, it is important in sharing with existing and potential visitors;
- A long term, well planned marketing campaign aligned to and working with tourist authorities, other local attractions and travel companies. Try to be very accommodating to journalists and film crews to create positive PR;
- Try to better understand the needs of the local visitor market, through discussions, temporary exhibitions, seminars, programmes, local marketing;
- A new creative marketing campaign maximising external marketing opportunities was devised by World of James Herriot – TV series, naming of a high speed train and naming of a puppy Herriot that can be followed on Twitter, to enhance the attraction's appeal to a national audience.

The Visitor Experience

- The authentic or immersive experience is becoming ever more sought after, so existing and new attraction facilities need to look for ways to build these attributes into their facilities without it feeling forced or false;
- The use of actors and live theatre is important in bringing the attraction alive and adding a unique, animated and immersive experience for visitors;
- Interaction with people is an important selling point – knowledgeable and helpful guides, storytellers, artists and staff can lift an experience to something special;
- Astrid Lindgren prides itself on a high level of customer service, good training and high staff morale. Is this because it offers its own staff accommodation and staff community?
- Recognising visitors as customers (and repeaters) to reinforce a two-way interactive participative relationship;
- Recognise the growing markets for the future and actively target them;
- The Astrid Lindgren website is in four languages with an embedded reading aloud app. The Vasa has its interpretation film available on site in 13 languages. How extensive is your language portfolio?
- Making everyday objects exciting, providing interactive experiences with working machinery is extremely important. There is a growing demand for ‘hands on facilities’ – Corris’s Pottery Studio expanded its studio for pottery painting activities.

Visitor Access

- How friendly is your attraction in terms of Access for All – wide doors, flat pathways that are all wheelchair and buggy accessible? Do you have changing areas, a comfortable seating area for less able visitors and their carers, dog relief area and coach driver facilities?
- Spaces need to be flexible – group visits, special talks, gathering space during bad weather, holiday hands on activities. Teaching space that can be transformed for evening events, corporate hire, talks, dinners, etc;
- Outreach can be an important part of increasing profile and recognition.

Technology

- There is a fine line to be trodden to find the right technology for a particular attraction. It will depend on the subject matter as to how the balance of traditional formats and new is reached, rather than just always moving ahead with the next technological innovation. Moreover the technology-based attraction is not always the one best placed to capitalise on advances in technology to showcase itself. (See Jodrell Bank Case Study);
- Embracing of technology and innovations, sympathetically, reflecting the scale and type of attraction – in many instances simplicity and ease may be the key, rather than expensive and technically complex options.

Collaboration

- Collaboration with others can boost revenue, increase the overall quality of the experience and increase destination credentials;
- There is a need to work in collaboration with other local attractions, which improves destination credentials for days out;
- Bompas & Parr are past masters of collaboration, creating the unexpected and wow factors by developing innovative collaborations linking design, architecture, meteorology and taxidermy to food. As a Company their key theme is innovation. They create experiences based on the avant-garde, the unusual, and the unpredictable. They work in the spectacular, creative collaboration is key to their success;
- BCLM particularly is keen to collaborate, forging new public and private partnerships.

Education / Outreach

- Education outreach and in-house resources should align with curriculum to maximise opportunities for attractions;
- An imaginative schools and education outreach programme, with a high degree of interaction and activity is an asset. It is felt outreach programmes can lead to additional attraction visits;
- Jodrell has a professional education team with a high level of qualification particularly in physics and education. Senior staff have all practiced as teachers. The use and links to key stages of the Curriculum, the iconic nature of the site and links to University of Manchester all boost demand;
- Encouraging the younger visitor, entrance admission is free to all education visits at some attractions – an investment in the future. At weekends and in school holidays tailored programmes can be offered, some aimed at grandparents with grandchildren or parents on maternity / paternity leave etc;
- Increase outreach programmes to widen appeal. The launch of the James Herriot Foundation to support veterinary nursing students, links with the British Small Animal Veterinary Association has proven valuable.

Volunteers

- Kynren matched jobs to each volunteer rather than creating a job then seeking a volunteer to do it;
- Invest in your volunteers with training eg Kynren, all the volunteers were given World Host Training, others more exotically, received sword, diving, and pyrotechnic skills, World Host is a stepping stone to more sophisticated customer service training;

- Consider how best to manage your volunteer team. Kynren volunteers were broken up into smaller teams and team leaders were appointed on merit rather than on perceived seniority;
- Grasp the importance of social media in communicating with the volunteers, audience and wider population.

Funding

- Traditional forms of funding are now extremely difficult to secure for visitor attractions, particularly for upgrade and refurbishment;
- There has been an increase in temporary events and exhibitions that can raise funding through sponsorship and local business support;
- Crowd funding has successfully raised money for new facilities and there are perhaps opportunities for large and small attractions to fund some growth and refurbishment projects through this method, if innovative rewards to funders can be devised. Payback through crowd lending may also be an option;
- Public appeals may be successful, particularly if the attraction is important locally or has direct community impact or benefit.

Growth / Development / Refreshing

- Refreshing of exhibits regularly is a must-do, to keep product fresh and attract repeat visitors;
- Increases in visitor footfall can be achieved through organic growth – in Tayto Park’s case introducing new rides, food offers and expanding the car parking;
- For World of James Herriot the importance of continuing to enhance, refresh and develop the visitor experience is critical. A recent modest investment included art, children’s activities and an interactive demonstration had the effect of boosting visitor numbers. However these new developments were not done in isolation – customer service and overall quality are still important components;
- The organic development approach means better tailoring to market needs, allowing an attraction to assess demand and design tailored visitor facilities for various market needs on a project by project basis. Identify a specific need and plan each new development accordingly;
- Steady organic growth at Corris Craft Centre, over 35 years, has created a complete visitor destination. The diverse range of attractions on one site gives something for all – Myths and Legends, a mine and craft studios, entertainment, art, activities, refreshment and shopping boosting day out opportunities for local residents and visitors;
- The development process itself can be part of the visitor experience.

Monitoring

- Utilising modern communication techniques to improve people to people contact with Facebook and business to business through Twitter, can offer promotional opportunities but also allow monitoring and analysis of captured data. Although this has become a visitor expectation, some would argue the benefit is difficult to measure;
- Some attractions carry out visitor surveys on a regular basis, monitor social media and undertake mystery shopping visitors to gauge visitor satisfaction levels and help improve the quality of the experience.

1 INTRODUCTION

Scottish Enterprise (SE), in partnership with the Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions (ASVA), commissioned Tourism Resources Company (TRC) to undertake research to identify and investigate best practice in a number of key areas of visitor attraction development and operation. The aim is to support growth and development of the visitor attraction sector in Scotland by sharing the findings with the visitor attraction community in Scotland.

1.1 Scope of Service

The objectives of the study were to provide:

- An overview of key markets, trends and recent developments in the visitor attractions sector – globally, in the UK and in Scotland;
- A number of case studies of visitor attractions which are successful in delivering different aspects of the visitor attraction experience – interpretation / activity, catering, retail and events and draw out some key lessons for Scottish attractions;
- Examples of innovation which are transferrable to a Scottish business environment;
- Critical success factors, including those that might apply to specifically urban or rural attractions; and
- Illustrations of how attractions are supported in other countries – ie through tax breaks, sponsorship, friends' groups, etc and draw out any key lessons for Scotland.

The outputs were largely delivered through a desk-based research exercise but we were able to undertake some site visits and one to one interviews.

1.2 Outputs

The information gathered required to be provided in printed and electronic formats with an executive summary and final report for SE and ASVA. The case studies and key lessons to be presented in a format to be shared electronically with the visitor attraction community. The material also to provide the basis for content at the ASVA conference in November 2016.

2 GENERAL TOURISM MARKET TRENDS

2.1 Introduction

“In today’s rapidly changing world, having an informed outlook is vital. The tourism and hospitality sectors are increasingly sensitive to consumer trends and economic conditions” – VisitScotland Insight Team, Trends for 2016.

In this report section the consultants have drawn trend information from a number of published sources and reviewed some of the economic, demographic and lifestyle influences helping to shape the tourism experience of tomorrow.

2.2 World Travel Trends Report – IPK International 2015/16

Worldwide economic factors, violent conflicts and terrorist attacks as well as the refugee crisis in Europe are impacting very differently on the global tourism industry. However, 2015 was a good year for world tourism with a 4.5% rise in outbound trips in the first eight months of 2015.

The outlook for 2016 remains healthy and further growth of 4.3% is expected. International tourist arrivals grew by 4% to a total of 810million worldwide in the first eight months of 2015 according to United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) figures released last October.

Europe, the world’s most visited regional destination, recorded a robust 5% increase in international tourist arrivals, the highest across all regions and a notable result for a mature tourism region.

The main trends in world outbound travel are the strong growth of city trips, cruise holidays and long-haul travel, according to the World Travel Monitor. One result of the strong growth in city travel is a trend towards more off-season travel. Europeans travelled abroad in good numbers in 2015 and will keep travelling throughout 2016 but potentially favouring safer destinations amid continuing conflicts and attacks around the World. However, when WTM published its report it was too early to assess the potential impact of the current refugee crisis and the high increase in terror attacks on outbound travel, let alone the impact of the UK’s Brexit vote.

At the end of 2015 IPK predicted a 2.8% rise in European outbound travel, based on its European Travel Confidence Index that measures travel intentions for the coming year. According to the index, 70% of Europeans were looking ahead positively and wanted to travel at least as much in 2016 as in 2015. Confidence was highest in the UK and Spain (both +6%), Poland (+4%) and Germany (+3%), indicating good growth ahead for those source markets next year. In contrast, French consumers are only slightly more optimistic about their travel intentions for 2016. However, increased terrorist threats, strikes by French air traffic controllers and transport unions in both France and the UK, as well as the Brexit vote in the UK are all likely to have impacts on travel.

2.3 UK Holiday Market – ABTA

According to ABTA, 2015 was an unprecedented, extraordinary year for the UK travel industry. The holiday market was up overall in 2015, as the travel industry continued a steady return to growth following the credit crunch and worldwide economic crisis. The 2015 summer season was robust, and overseas holidays in particular, performed well with strong Sterling benefiting British holidaymakers in the Eurozone and United States. The ONS (Office for National Statistics) reported that during the period July 2015 to September 2015, UK residents' visits abroad rose by 9% compared with the corresponding period a year earlier and they spent 9% more during this period. The growth in the market appears to be being driven by more affluent consumers taking more holidays, with the average number of holidays taken per person increasing slightly from 3.0 holidays last year, to 3.2 holidays this year. However, the number of people cutting back on holidays, or not taking a holiday at all also increased: the total number of people taking a holiday fell slightly from 80% last year to 77% in 2015.

2.4 Outlook for Domestic Holidays – ABTA

The past year has been positive for domestic tourism. According to VisitEngland, 58.1million trips were recorded in England between January and July 2015, a 13% increase in the same period in 2014. ABTA research also shows 4% of people taking at least one UK break and this looks set to continue into next year, with a range of anniversaries, festivals and events making domestic tourism an exciting option for holidaymakers. This is likely to be aided by the additional tourism investment that was announced in the Autumn Statement in November 2015, including a £40million Discover England Fund to boost visitor numbers from within and outside the UK.

According to ABTA research, families were key to the domestic market, taking an average of 2.2 UK holidays. For just over a quarter of families (26%) this was their only trip. Spending whilst away increased: 31% of people spent between £101 and £200 whilst on a short break (up from 19% last year 2014), while 25% of people on a longer UK break spent £201 – £300. Just over one in five (22%) people opted for a UK package holiday. Though this was down slightly from 24% the year before, it is still almost double the number in 2011 when only 12% of consumers said they had taken a domestic package holiday. Domestic packages were most popular with 16 – 24 year olds (36%) and families with children under 5 (33%). There was good news for high street travel agents, as the number of people booking their UK trips with them increased to 13%, up from 10% the year before.

2.5 Trends for 2016 – VisitScotland Insights

In the table below are highlighted the key attributes of the visitors to and within Scotland.

<p>Current Domestic Visitors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 44% between 35 and 44 years old; · 70% do not have children; · 68% are married; · 50% are holiday visits 31% VFR; · 41% visit towns and cities; · 35 to 54 year old highest expenditure; · 55 to 64 year olds highest spend per trip; · 52% Scottish Residents; · 46% English – 20% NW 13% NE. 	<p>Trending Domestic Visitors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Highest growth in 16 – 24 year olds 5% & 65+ 2.5%; · Growth in social class B; · Growth in English 16 – 24 NE, SE, Midlands; · More use of commercial accommodation; · 16 – 24 and all demographics visit towns cities and seaside; · Married couples of all age groups; · Increased spend from 16 to 24 and 65+age groups.
<p>Current International Visitors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Two thirds between 25 and 55 years old; · 45 to 54 are highest spenders; · Average length of stay 8 days; · 40% come between July and September; · Average spend £81 per night; · 52% are holiday visits, 28% VFR; · USA 14%, Germany 12%, France 7%. 	<p>Trending International Visitors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Would be over 35 years old; · Would arrive by air; · The highest spenders would be over 45 year old; · Highest spenders would come from USA, Germany, Australia; · More visitors from current sources; · More visitors from China, Scandinavia, Poland.

Source: VisitScotland Insights [Trends for 2016](#), December 2015

The Insights Team in VisitScotland suggest the following, as some of the key influences for the future in a Scottish context:

- Time: whether people will have time to travel in the future;
- Transport: whether it will be easy/convenient for people to travel;
- Depopulation of rural areas/increased urbanisation: this affects both markets and products;
- Infrastructure (in particular broadband / mobile): influencing where people live (and set up business);

- Uncertainty in the economy: nervousness by investors, businesses and consumers;
- Payment methods: the move from cash towards online payments (via phones) and/or other forms of currency which may be dependent on mobile signal / internet access;
- Investor attitudes to opportunity and risk: Scotland perceived as an expensive country offering poor return on investment;
- Responding to the needs of the 'millennial' market: need to understand what they want and how they buy;
- Housing policy, particularly in rural areas;
- Cost of compliance: reduces competitiveness of industry in comparison to other nations; and
- Low-cost airlines: major driver of change in tourism industry.

2.6 **Brief Profile of Scottish Attractions**

The Scottish Visitor attraction sector comprises in excess of 850 operations. These range from castles, wildlife attractions, breweries, and museums. These are under various ownership models, a proportion of which are free entry with others charged. ASVA has for the last three years undertaken a Trends Report among a proportion of the country's attractions. Returns from around 250 sites (excluding Country Parks) has shown growth in visitor numbers over the last three years:

· 2012/13	+0.5%
· 2013/14	+6.1%
· 2014/15	+3.4%

Key findings from the reports include:

- Edinburgh is growing at above the national average, with over 40% of all visits recorded across the years shown, Edinburgh Castle itself accounting for 1,568,500 visits in 2015 a 5.9% growth;
- Edinburgh has four attractions hosting more than 1 million visitors per year;
- Glasgow has over 30% of all visits made, with 2 attractions of over 1 million visitors;
- The Northern region (regions aligned with VS for research purposes) shows higher than average increase in 2015 (8.4%);
- At the other end of the scale some attractions only attract a few hundreds of visitors per annum but they all make up a vibrant and diverse sector with appeal to a wide range of audiences;
- Those hosting events and special exhibitions do see them contribute to growth.

2.7 Possible Impact of Brexit – STR

In the short term Brexit will cause uncertainty and a lack of consumer confidence as was witnessed in the currency and stock market downturns shortly after the result announcement of the referendum vote. However the stock market is volatile and bounced back in the days following.

STR Global and forecast partner, Tourism Economics, believe that the fluctuation of the British pound on the currency market exchange is an indication of the impact that Brexit could have on the overall economy – which would filter down to the tourism industry. Most of the impact is likely to be on travel confidence.

Domestic leisure tourism trips may actually increase, people choosing to stay at home rather than holidaying abroad as the Pound falls in value, overseas travel becoming more expensive. In addition a weaker Pound could stimulate more inbound holiday visitors to the UK and Scotland. Overseas demand from especially business travel in line with weaker GDP, consumer spending and higher unemployment may be expected with Britain voting to leave the EU. It is likely that the impact would be felt more on the business market than leisure-based demand.

Falls may be expected in capital investment, including tourism investment, particularly in the hotel sector, because of the ensuing uncertain business environment of Brexit. In addition even before Brexit, Scotland for foreign investors was perceived as an expensive country offering poor return on investment. Scotland will have to nurture its own home grown investors who have a positive attitude to perhaps longer-term investment opportunity and risk.

There is also an uncertainty in the labour market. Scotland has an ageing population and a European workforce fills many of the jobs in the tourism sector. The EU being where working in the tourism sector is viewed positively as a career. There is a possibility that the service sector may suffer from short to medium term labour shortages. This, in time, may lead to changes in service style, products, customer expectations, etc.

Within Europe the UK was often among the first nations to comply fully with regulations. Outside Europe there is a possibility that the cost of compliance could be lower, ultimately increasing business profitability, but this is currently an unknown.

While Oxford Economics predicts that the longer-term impact on overall domestic economic activity will be negative, there is a potential positive impact for the tourist industry, due to increased affordability of the UK, and Scotland, as a destination derived from a weaker exchange rate. However, some uncertainty is likely to remain, not least from the potential long-term impact of lower investment, which would continue to affect business travel decisions.

The Museums Association (MA) has published a briefing on the impact of Brexit. It predicts that the financial impact on the sector is likely to be substantial, with further tightening of public spending likely, valuable cultural and scientific links severed, and the loss of EU culture, education and research funding streams such as the €1.4bn Creative Europe Programme, the European Regional Development Fund and the Horizon 2020 programme.

The briefing states that attempts to reduce free movement could have a serious negative effect on the free exchange of ideas and talent, and the formation of constructive cultural networks in the UK. The briefing also highlights the MA's concern about the divisive tone of the referendum debate, and its role in making museum workers, volunteers and visitors from ethnic minorities and/or other European countries feel unwelcome in the UK.

2.8 Summary and Implications

The trends presented above indicate a movement towards smaller, more intimate, niche experiences that give travellers a more immersive, more active and often holistic experience. However consumers want a wide range of product(s) from which to make personal choices. They also want flexibility and adaptability in the visitor experience, nothing too prescriptive.

Attraction operators need to focus on a more active aging population, but they must not underestimate the off-season demand that could be created by the younger generation, the 16 to 24 year olds.

Many visitors are looking for authenticity and vacation experiences that enable escapism from the routines of daily life, without necessarily being in a remote rural location.

Trends such as the desire for healthier lifestyles, multigenerational experiences, enjoyment of the environment, authentic local culture etc, indicate a need to explore more boutique and niche, well-targeted developments.

Certain markets respond to gadgets and need visual stimuli, others need the digital detoxed, simpler approach.

These trends open up opportunities to seek ways to inspire local entrepreneurs and visitor attraction operators, however there is a need for the operators to really know their markets, targeting key niche segments will help to boost demand, particularly out of season.

3 LIFESTYLE INFLUENCES

3.1 Introduction – Market Influencers

In this section we outline some of the influences that affect the way people live their lives and some of the differences between the various cohorts of the population.

3.2 Multigenerational Living and Family Values

In developed countries especially, people are living longer and birth rates continue to decrease. We are an ageing population in Europe – we're all getting older. The market is shifting, and that means the attractions industry needs to start or become more active in responding to the needs of an ageing population.

According to figures from the International Longevity Centre, in the EU alone, the number of elderly will almost double from the base of 85million in 2008 to 151million in 2060. The numbers are vast. From now until 2037, the 15 to 64 age group in the UK will, on average, grow by just 29,000, compared to a growth of 278,000 in the over 65s group. The proportion of over-65s will rise from 16% to 26%. The over-80s will rise from 4.3% to 10%.

Everyone must be aware of the pressures in the housing market over the last few years, today and likely to see ongoing future impacts. A study by the insurance company Aviva recently forecast that 3.8million people aged between 21 and 34 will be living in their parents' home by 2025, a third more than currently and the number of households containing two or more families is also expected to rise, from 1.5million to 2.2million.

A survey of over 1,000 families with young children, undertaken on behalf of Netmums, the parenting website, found that 75% were planning a summer holiday with grandparents this year. The survey was backed up by booking figures from Eurocamp, the upmarket chalet and camping company, which said it had seen bookings from extended family groups increase by as much as 325% over the past two years. This is being noted and opportunities seized upon by companies offering intergenerational packages.

There is a growing demand for three generation holidays, these may be satisfied in multi-generational group resorts, cruises or self-catering establishments, which are linked to a range of activities, entertainment, restaurant experiences, etc. In the visitor attraction arena, this has resulted in extension to traditional family tickets.

The Corris Craft Centre (See Case Studies) is a multigenerational site with a wide range of attractions and facilities that appeals to young and old alike.

3.3 The Influence of Generation-Y

Generation-Y was born in the late 1970s through to the late 1990s. According to the Boston Consulting Group, by 2020 this generation will represent 50% of spending on business travel alone. Their values and aspirations are now influencing the workplace and the tourism and leisure sector. They are a generation of high performers, global citizens, socially and environmentally conscious and superb multi-taskers but are also high maintenance. They have a strong sense of adventure. This generation expects instant gratification and has shorter attention spans. They are very visually motivated and this needs to be reflected in an attraction's content to stimulate this market.

They assess their experiences with an exceptionally critical eye. Connectivity is crucial at work and at play – no matter how remote their destination. They expect a 'wow' factor in terms of design, a strong sense of place and evidence of a socially and environmentally responsible approach to operating in fragile environments. They expect instantaneity, a casual service, animated spaces and iconic design. They are looking for flexibility in their experiences and products.

The global luxury industry is growing accordingly and is forecast to rise by approximately 15% per annum. A large number of these affluent clients are based in some of Scotland's target markets of North America (United States and Canada), Europe (UK, Germany, and France), Asia (China, Japan) and Australia. It is suggest that the tourism industry should start 'cultivating and engaging with Millennials' who are predicted to replace the 50+ (Baby Boomers) demographic as the number one generation in spending power. However in the short term the Baby Boomers will continue to be the largest and more affluent generations. These issues need to be reflected in the next generation of attractions or when refurbishing an existing experience.

Millennials are also appearing to exhibit some characteristics at odds with previous recent generations:

- Those aged under 25 are a third more likely to be teetotal now than in 2005;
- A quarter of young people do not drink at all;
- Illegal drug use among the under-25s has also fallen by more than a quarter since 2004;
- The number of nightclubs has almost halved since 2005;
- Teenage pregnancy is at its lowest since records began in England and Wales in 1969;
- The number of crimes committed by under-18s in England and Wales has fallen by 70% since 2005, to a new record low, according to the Office of National Statistics.

3.4 Intrepid over 55s and the Return of the Original Trendsetters

According to ABTA members, older holidaymakers are travelling further and are seeking more active or adventurous holidays. In 2015, 6% of over 55s took a sporting holiday and the same number planned one for 2016. Additionally, 14% of 55-64 year olds headed to the lakes and mountains in 2015. The older market is becoming more adventurous and visitor attractions will have to respond by creating a range of experiences that appeal to a more active, more adventurous, older clientele.

The Baby Boomer generation wants to continue to benefit from the lifestyles they created and defined in popular culture. They may be inclined to make large one-off purchases to reconnect with their youth. With recent changes to private pension entitlements, this cohort will have access to greater cash liquidity to invest in their future. They do not consider themselves old, and seek excitement / stimulation and pursuits associated with younger demographics.

3.5 Travennial Generation

The youth 16 to 24 market should be recognised and targeted in the off-season, rather than just the over 65s. Younger, demographics are perceived to have little disposable income and are cost conscious but are seeking quality experiences, and have money to spend. They are environmentally driven and believe in the sharing economy. Attractions need to offer unique experiences that highlight local or 'glocal' products to entice the youth market.

3.7 Love Me, Love My Dog

In Europe pet ownership has been rising for decades. Seventy-two million households have a pet, with dogs representing 25%.

Europe's passion for its pets is not a new phenomenon, but what is emerging are pet amenities and facilities being used as a selling tool in primary home purchases, and with pet passports, overseas tourism markets are slowly evolving, being dog friendly is now viewed as a prerequisite for success in some markets. Visitor attractions could respond by having amenities for pets. This could simply be covered / shaded car parking areas, dog bowls, pet meal menus, dog walking trails, poo bins, etc.

3.8 Peer-Powered Travel

Driven largely by the Generation-Y, digital native generation, Peer to Peer travel is growing at a rapid pace. P2P accommodation companies are challenging traditional tourist accommodation products by offering a wider variety of facilities – from a couch to a full home – at generally lower prices. It is also felt that this form of immersive accommodation offers visitors a more grounded and authentic experience – one of the key trends in recent years.

Some communities overseas are now tapping into this model to attract visitors, renting their homes and offering the ultimate ‘authentic’ experience. In Europe Airbnb is providing the visitor with this experience at all price and quality levels.

However lessons can be learned. If the authentic or immersive experience is becoming ever more sought after, notably by Generation-Y, existing and new attraction facilities need to look for ways to build these attributes into their facilities without it feeling forced or false.

3.9 Bespoke Tours

Holidaymakers are getting off the beaten track whilst again enjoying the reassurance and protection provided by a package holiday rather than simply using the internet which is often time-consuming and does not offer the security and peace of mind of the package holiday products – pay before you go approach. ABTA members have reported an increase in people seeking bespoke or tailor made holidays. Demand is likely to grow for package holidays both in and outwith the UK fuelled by the current perceived uncertainty. Further packaging of attractions into city breaks, with hotels and travel, may be beneficial.

3.10 The MICE Market

As the global recession recedes there has been a strong uplift in demand for meetings and conferences globally and most notably across Europe.

With an increasing number of Generation-Y delegates, there is demand for a new type of conference facility. Conference organisers are seeking fun environments, a casual and informal approach and healthy eating options. Another trend linked to family values, is the increasing propensity for conference attendees to bring spouses and families with them, assuming the venue is family focussed. These markets need additional entertainment experiences and there is a good opportunity for well-targeted packages offering visitor attractions to satisfy this growing demand particularly in Scotland’s cities. Recent surveys amongst younger conference attendees confirm the desire to hold meetings in outdoor spaces (weather permitting) and to mesh into the events outdoor pursuits, primarily focussed on team building and soft adventure activities such as cycling, kayaking, geocaching treasure hunts, etc. Although this market plays into the activities sector there may be some scope in the future for visitor attraction links.

3.11 Adventure Seekers

The active break market is growing at around 30% per year across Europe. Groups of families or friends seeking out activity-based holidays are one of the most lucrative sectors of the travel market. Cycling holidays, soft adventure breaks, luxury camping and glamping are all growing in popularity and we are seeing established products moving away from traditional sports like golf, towards amenity programming that maximises use of the surrounding environment. This market is not driven by visitor attractions, but the visitor experience can be enriched, with attraction themes that appeal and are linked to the core activity motivation.

3.12 Wellness, Longevity and the Evolution of Healthy Lifestyles

Increasing stress in the workplace is now widely seen as driving all manner of ailments from fatigue to depression. There is awareness that the body, mind and spirit require nourishment through exercise, healthy diet and holistic pursuits such as yoga, meditation, Pilates, wellness therapies and treatments.

Recent consumer research identified that the majority of the market want healthier food, enhanced fitness facilities, healthy sleep programmes and there is a growing market for meditation / mindfulness programmes. There is growing market interest in all manner of therapies and wellness genres.

3.13 Future Living

A new study into how we will live, work and relax a century from now has predicted a future where underwater bubble cities, drone-delivered mobile holiday homes and super skyscrapers are the norm. The SmartThings Future Living Report, suggests the way we lead our lives “will change beyond all recognition” over the course of the next century. According to the research, growing populations and diminishing natural resources, paired with technological advancements, will transform the ways we overcome space constraints over the next 100 years. The report predicts, we will develop super strong materials to build up into the sky, down underwater and below the surface of the earth, before heading for the stars and colonising the Moon and then Mars. The internet has revolutionised the way we communicate, learn and control our lives. Our future living spaces will become increasingly flexible and responsive. Living spaces with malleable walls will adapt to our needs and moods by changing room layouts and furniture and we will be able to 3D print our own houses any time we desire a change of scene.

4 NEW DEVELOPMENTS, INNOVATION AND EMERGING ATTRACTION TRENDS

4.1 Introduction

In this section the consultants set out some observations on the sector, having looked at emerging visitor attraction trends since the beginning of the year, through desk research of trade, Internet and press articles, etc. There are a range of trends going on in the visitor attraction sector which is not surprising given the need to keep up with wider trends in society and the need to refresh and maintain relevance to the visiting public. We have also highlighted the interesting and unusual in certain cases, to illustrate what others are doing to push the boundaries. One-offs that might prompt an idea or opportunity to crystallise in the mind of an operator.

4.2 Defining the Visitor Experience

There is acceptance that the visitor attraction experience does not begin at the entrance and end at the exit. It runs through from motivation to visit, booking interface, social media exposure, etc, etc.

Disney applies this visitor experience model to its theme parks.

- A true tourist experience must amaze and astonish;
- It must create a lasting memory by engaging and encouraging interaction;
- It must differentiate one's product from the competition;
- It must involve innovation; and
- It must be highly unique, but authentic.

Today's travellers want to learn, discover and undergo unique experiences. They are looking for something interactive. They want to know how other people live, go behind the scenes and visit places that tourists do not usually see. A true authentic experience should be created, it must innovate, amaze and surprise and provide good service. What aspects of a product could make people sit up and say 'Wow!'?

There are two major benefits of positive interaction: visitors tend to stay longer at an exhibition if they are able to interact in a positive manner with the content, drilling down to discover the information that interests them; and word-of-mouth advertising and recommendation can greatly influence visitor numbers. An additional benefit is that the more immersive the visitor experience, the more visitors tend to spend on retail and food and beverage.

You need to challenge; to do things differently. This is something which is core to the vision and strategic plan of the Black Country Living Museum (BCLM) – see Case Study.

4.3 Marketing / Promotion / Social Media

4.3.1 Over-personalisation

Consumers are more aware of personalised marketing and this is becoming overused. A continuation of this practice may lead to less brand loyalty and also lack of genuine discovery of products. Consumers still want to be in control of their purchase decisions and want to seek unique products and experiences. By offering a range of similar local products this maintains a visitor's sense of control.

4.3.2 Food For Thought – Vlogging and Influencer Marketing

Blogging and vlogging [video blogging] provide additional and valuable resources / conduits for connecting with people – it is information and trends that we might have otherwise missed. There are opinion influencers in many spheres of life: fashion, sport, travel, etc.

This social media phenomenon is also having an impact on the world of food and it is becoming increasingly important to have a cohort of followers on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, etc. The power of the medium is highlighted by a thirteen-year-old Californian food blogger [Chase Bailey](#), who despite suffering from autism, has just written his first cookbook after gaining more than 200,000 views for his YouTube page, Chase 'N Yur Face. This is an indication of how the digital economy is creating new types of jobs and challenging the way traditional industries operate. Brands are seeing the benefits of tapping into these ready-made audiences. Influencers single-handedly build a relationship with their audience based on expertise, authenticity, and trust. With social media and technology flooding the internet with over 200million pieces of content a minute, it is essential to find a way to break through the noise. Influencer marketing is one way to do this. The attractions sector of the future needs to keep on top of social media, if it is to compete effectively in an ever-increasingly, competitive marketplace.

4.3.3 Cross Marketing / Collaboration

Cross marketing and promotional opportunities might not be immediately apparent but the following struck the consultants as offering mileage to the Falkland Estate and its [Centre for Stewardship](#).

Falkland Estate is among fifteen organisations across Scotland that are partnering with Kew Gardens for the UK National Tree Seed Project, including Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Trees for Life, and the Woodland Trust. Together, this consortium of like-minded organisations will ensure that the collections already protected in Kew's Millennium Seed Bank will grow and become more comprehensive, eventually representing the full genetic diversity of Scotland's tree populations.

The Bursledon Brick Works (see Case Studies) works in collaboration with other local attractions and this has improved destination credentials for days out. They have also maximised third party use of the attraction, by a local history group and are renting out the attraction for evening ghost hunts.

4.3.4 Social Media

More and more tourism and leisure facilities are actively using social media as a communication medium for customers. This may be simply informing customers of new menus or dishes, sharing relevant insights, communicating new developments, special events, items of news, etc.

The marketing manager of Salisbury Cathedral in south-west England spent two years trying to persuade his colleagues that they should embrace new ways of attracting visitors. The Clerk of Works had to climb the cathedral spire with a colleague to replace a weather vane. He took a video head camera up. The resulting film, a unique view of the city from 123m above the ground, made the BBC and the online websites of national newspapers. They were then swamped by blog ideas from staff and volunteers. This was a defining moment to launch email marketing, revenue generation through advertising on the website – and an engaging blog, with content from staff and volunteers.

In India there is a new attraction proving popular that would not have been possible without the march of social media. It is a Click Art museum. The museum has 24 artworks on display, which have been created using 3D paintings and optical illusion. They offer the viewer an opportunity to interact and become part of the scenery. Moreover it is proving to be popular with both adults and children. Rather than a standalone attraction this could become an element of an existing attraction as a refresh / enhancement and would be cheap enough to update periodically.

Kynren / Eleven Arches, at Bishop Auckland in the North East of England has been very skilled at managing its social media streams in terms of promoting the attraction over an extended period of time, but also using it to encourage positive feedback from the show programme.

4.3.5 Branding

There has been a proliferation in the number of brands worldwide over the last decade and the tourism sector is no different, particularly amongst accommodation providers. This reflects the diversity of different products available to the traveller, but it has also created considerable consumer confusion. Accommodation products have benefited from a creative approach to both service and design and contributed to a growing understanding of the evolving needs and aspirations of a younger, more demanding, market. The visitor attraction market needs to learn from this.

Some of the most successful attractions in the world are built around a sophisticated understanding of brands and how to harness them to reach more people in more places, for example Disney, Lego and Guinness. Today branding is featuring in the attractions sector on two different fronts, one in terms of the need for strong branding of new attraction offerings but also, in cases of existing attractions, 'buying in' brands can enhance their offering or gain readymade appeal and profile for new facilities.

At one end of the scale there is Disney securing international IP rights relating to super heroes of other companies eg Marvel Entertainments (which it now owns), Avatar, Frozen and Star Wars. Two '[Star Wars Land](#)' attractions currently being built in Florida and California, for instance, will represent the largest expansion footprint in Disney's history at 14 acres each.

In the UK the big project in East London, [Paramount Park](#) is another case of the use of existing brands and franchises to create a visitor attraction. It will feature rides and entertainment based on Hollywood blockbusters alongside British film studio classics.

More modestly the heritage theme park in Margate, [Dreamland](#) had an Only Fools and Horses Exhibition as part of its 2016 offering before its financial troubles. In its opening Bank Holiday weekend the theme park attracted nearly 3,000 visitors, substantially more than a standard Bank Holiday.



Source: Kent News

The new Scottish Borders Railway gained added kudos and profile by scheduling the Flying Scotsman earlier this year.

[Emmerdale Studio](#) tours took place on selected weekends April to October this year at £30 per person. This after the success of a Coronation Street studio tour of the old Granada studios after the filming operation was transferred to MediaCityUK. Originally planned for a period of six months in 2014, planning permission was granted for the tours to continue until October 2015.

This enabled 850,000 visitors to take the tour over that period. This is one attraction maximising the benefit to it from the coach market with seamless bookings coming from coach operators as well as its own website. (See coach-friendly attractions).



Source: Continuum

Thorpe Park in Chertsey this year has added to its range of branded rides such as I'm a Celebrity, Angry Birds, etc with a [Derren Brown's Ghost Train](#) experience. Age-restricted Derren Brown's Ghost Train incorporates illusion, live action, next-generation technology and 4D special effects to create the experience. To make the experience "completely unique (sic), a combination of technologies have been utilised, including virtual reality via the HTC Vive headset. One of the attraction's key elements, is that each rider will have a unique experience".



Source: Thorpe Park Mania

On the 10-15 minute ride, there are 12 possible journeys to achieve two alternate endings. Dependant on choices made, each rider will follow a different path as they negotiate the experience. Its opening in July saw queue waits of more than three hours.

Alton Towers, reflecting this new market area have recently announced the development of a CBeebies-themed [Hotel](#).

Russia's The State Hermitage Museum, is to open a satellite [facility](#) on the Barcelona waterfront in 2019. For a period of fifty years art works from the Hermitage' collection of over three million items will be loaned to the new satellite attraction. It is estimated that the new museum will attract 500,000 visitors per annum. Like the V&A in [Dundee](#) or the Tate in [Liverpool](#), this is another example of the use of a brand to increase the profile of host and source.

In an increasingly competitive environment and continued government cuts, there is an even greater need for cultural organisations to have a distinctive offer and a compelling story to tell in order to engage and diversify their audiences and raise additional income. Developing a successful and distinctive brand requires long-term vision, strong leadership and commitment. If visitor attractions want to stay one step ahead and stay relevant to the needs of a society in flux, brand investment is imperative. They need to know what they stand for.

Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre, (See Case Studies), used the 'Clanger' brand in a promotional April Fools' Day [ruse](#). "A signal has been received by the giant Lovell Telescope at Jodrell Bank Observatory that proves beyond doubt we are not alone in the Universe....."

4.3.6 Lessons Learnt

- There are opportunities at all levels be you a Disney Corporation or a small independent attraction;
- Branding offers profile and recognition in its own right if it's your brand;
- There is an argument that adoption or association with existing strong brands can enhance an attraction, bring added profile to a new facility or benefit the attraction by association;
- In today's rapidly changing market the active use of social media is important. Visitors want immediate responses and personal recommendation. People like to feel involved, informed and follow positive and successful businesses.

4.4 Access for All

It take little brain power to understand that the attractions industry must do more to appeal to the older customer. This can be a less budget-conscious market segment and multi-generational days out and holidays are growing in popularity. Grandparents often fund these trips and make the important decisions. Another advantage of this mature market is that they're often available to visit during off-peak hours.

Multi-generational travel is one of the fastest growing sectors of the travel business and is driving demand for visitor experiences that can satisfy multi-age group families. This trend of three or more generations of family members travelling together also has implications for planning and attraction design and content. There is a need to design and develop facilities and activities with an appeal to all age cohorts and encourage family group activities. Linked to this trend is the rise in granny nannies – the active role grandparents are playing in raising grandchildren. This has implications for tourism, attractions and entertainment destinations – making lasting memories, adventures packed with exciting learning journeys to keep all ages engaged.

Accessible Tourism / Inclusive Tourism is the term used to describe tourism that serves the needs of a full range of consumers. The Inclusive Tourism market not only encompasses people with permanent physical disabilities, but also families with young children and senior travellers.

According to VisitEngland there are 12million disabled people in Britain, with an estimated spending power of £200bn. The overnight accessible tourism market is now worth £3bn, with day visits bringing that figure up to £12.1bn, according to VisitEngland research. Do businesses need to be encouraged to consider the needs of this market?

In 2015, VisitEngland launched a new Access for All project – a campaign aiming to improve disabled access to the hotel and tourist attractions in England taking part, from Lincoln Cathedral to the Galleries of Justice in Nottingham and Chatsworth House in Derbyshire. Other participants include East Lodge Country House Hotel in the Peak District, for example, which has built wheel-in showers in accessible rooms.

The Vindolanda Roman Fort, an archaeological site by Hadrian's Wall, among other measures, plans to install a toilet area for assistance dogs. (Sometimes it's the small things that make a difference).

Because an accessible hotel or tourist attraction means little if you cannot get there, Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach company is providing wheelchair access to 100% of its fleet – offering a wheelchair taxi guarantee if someone cannot get on to the bus – and it is trialling the use of hearing loop systems.

As an industry, however, more needs to be done:

- 40% of restaurants have no accessible toilet;
- Only 23% of restaurants produce menus in large print for those with visual impairments;
- Just 9% have hearing loops;
- Nearly half (45 per cent) of restaurant staff have not been given disability awareness training.

Have you got Large Print Access Statements, or an access statement full stop?

Access for All includes coaches and their drivers. In the UK, the Confederation of Passenger Transport recently launched an award for Coach Friendly Visitor Attractions (on the back of a successful Towns Award) but Gretna Green's Famous Blacksmith Shop is the 1st Scottish Attraction to be awarded the gong in May 2016.



Source Bus and Coach Buyer

Incidentally internet grazing can net one some interesting and useful information eg Continuum lists the coach operator companies involved in bringing visitors to the Emmerdale tours.

Further examples of activity to create inclusivity include:

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in April launched an international design competition promoting hotel design that is inclusive for disabled people.

The 'first of a kind' Bespoke Access Awards will celebrate designers who aim to improve access to hotels worldwide for disabled people, including those with learning difficulties, as well as all other guests.

A cookery school has created a specially built kitchen so all children can get involved in the preparation of food, no matter what abilities they have. The Kids' Cookery School in Acton, London, has kitchen appliances and hand basins that are height adjustable in a building which is fully wheelchair accessible. The organisation also caters for children with learning disabilities and visual impairment, working with children from the age of three.

Virtual Reality (VR) company [Tension](#), which introduced its historically-themed escape room and VR experience in June, has put experiences for special needs children at the heart of its operations, introducing 'quiet times' for children to use the technology in a productive way. VR is considered a fantastic way of creating sensory engagement with children with learning difficulties / special needs such as autism or ADHD. They can tune VR to the child's particular needs. There has been a lot of research done on VR and stimuli for special needs children.

Evidence suggests that immersive, interactive theatre / cinema is on the rise. With success stories such as Punchdrunk's [The Drowned Man](#), in which participants were invited to interact with the work's diverse sets, it is known that audiences like to explore different kinds of environments. (See also Edible Cinema and Secret Cinema).

Frozen Light creates theatre for audiences with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD). It can be challenging for people with PMLD to access mainstream productions, so Frozen Light focus on giving their audiences the opportunity to participate in the arts in a theatre setting. There are lessons to be learnt when creating theatrical attraction experiences for differing types of audience, but as ever, one needs to know one's audience.

Multi-sensory theatre:

- Audiences can smell the damp forest leaves and the burning of firewood. The audience experiences wind, rain and thunder. These sensory moments highlight what's happening in the play, making it more inclusive and accessible.
- Frozen Light speaks directly to the audience throughout the production, as well as singing a name song to each individual, personalising the experience. Through these one-to-one interactive moments, connections are made with their audience on a personal level, breaking down the barrier between actor and audience.
- Quality not quantity: They have an intimate audience of six people with PMLD and their companions. There are three actors on stage, this enables each performer to spend some quality time with individuals on a one-to-one basis. There are difficulties to be overcome in programming shows that attract such small audiences, as venues will always make a financial loss. This kind of work would not be possible without substantial subsidy.

There has been an increase in visitors looking for entertainment, wonder and wow as well as interaction and involvement. In the visitor attraction arena there is a growing trend for 'hands on' experiences and increased interaction. These may simply be audience participation events such as: 'Meet the Scientist' at Jodrell Bank; 'Painting a Pot' at Corris Craft Centre's pottery studio; or 'Making a Brick' at the Bursledon Brick Works. Interaction creates added theatre for the visitor and increases dwell time and spends. In order to increase appeal, attractions should optimise their opportunities for visitor interaction.

4.5 Technology

4.5.1 Introduction

This is the subject area with by far the most activity! It is ever evolving and without diligence could become: an unfulfilled quest to identify the best kit for your attraction; or a never-ending treadmill trying to keep up with developments perhaps followed by the realisation that what you have just installed is already out of date.

Such is the breadth of new developments there is probably scope for a study of this in its own right. We have picked up on several of the more striking developments to illustrate some of the directions of travel.

4.5.2 Trends?

Gadgets Galore – Technology is playing an ever-increasing role in many aspects of tourist / leisure markets particularly within the hotel and luxury self-catering field. In terms of the visitor attraction market the approach to technology needs to be sustainable and deliverable, often simplicity of delivery is key, using technology in a positive way, rather than just for the sake of the technology.

The Age of Impatience – The tourism industry will need to follow the lead of retailers where ‘click ‘n’ collect’ / ‘grab ‘n’ go’ concepts are increasingly demanded by impatient consumers. This impatience to date has been experienced mainly in the business tourism sector, but lifestyle changes are having an impact on our leisure demands too.

Emotiveography – The Emotion of the Image – Visitors are capturing images or feelings of a particular time and place. This is generated by geotagging photographs or ‘smoasting’ (internet boasting), and helps to generate ‘feelings’ of a location. Businesses should promote opportunities for photography creating hotspots for consumers to use to boost their online profile. See Galactica queue photography (page 23) at Alton Towers and the rise of Pokémon Go.

Pokémon Go

The potential of Pokémon Go and the games that are being spawned offer opportunities for the attractions industry. Already operators are reporting increased visitor numbers connected to the craze. Many operators are being proactive to draw in customers, hosting events where ‘lures’ are put down and hosting Pokémon-themed events.

English Heritage has embraced the spirit of the game linking some of its locations as Pokéstops and Gyms. It has created a guide covering more than 400 sites.

The popularity of the game is such that [Bristol Zoo](#) after promoting a Pokémon Go event saw more than 2,000 people arrive reaching event capacity within 30 minutes of opening. The zoo raised £6,000 from a £3 donation per entry and held a second [event](#) for those not making it into the first, with fans queuing reportedly for four hours. Closer to home both Edinburgh Zoo and the Falkirk Wheel have hosted Pokémon related events.

The Increasing Usefulness of the Internet of Things

The Internet of Things is still a thing. In fact, it's booming. Many of the world's largest tech companies are investing in the creation of huge ecosystems of connected devices, ensuring the increasing interoperability of all cloud-based products. The Internet of Things has repercussions beyond simply the smart home.

Payment Technology: the Spectrum from Convenience to Experience

Credit card or mobile payments are expected to be reliable, quick, secure and accurate. The majority of the time, consumers want a payment experience that is invisible, centring on the product or service. That appears to be changing with the payment experience becoming a spectrum from ultra-convenient and invisible such as contactless or mobile payment to more interesting / fun methods such as Snapcash's gamified payment. Sending money via the Snapchat app is integrated into the chat messages.

Queuing technologies / visitor management systems capitalise on and can be integrated into these payment advances.

A Texan waterpark has adopted a virtual queuing and ride reservation system, along with a wristband device, to be offered as a premium priced [Blast Pass](#) by the waterpark, allowing guests to use touchscreen kiosks in the park to save a space for the rides they want to experience. The Radio-frequency identification (RFID)-enabled Qband counts down the time and signals to the guest when it's their turn to ride, limiting queuing times.

Galactica space ride at Alton Towers uses queue-line as a photo opportunity with six DSLR cameras to capture up to six 'space tourists' at a time. The photo capture point is themed as part of the check-in process to fit in with the ride's space travel story. The visitors can pick up their digital version or print [selfies](#) after the ride.



Source: Bloolooop

The Anne Frank House has divided its [bookable](#) 'visitor day' up into two periods of 9.00am-3.30pm when bookings can only be bought online for timeslots, and from 3.30pm to 10.00pm when it is only possible to buy on a first come, first served basis at the museum entrance. The overall experience can be bought in two formats one with a 30 minute pre-show which has a separate entrance and the advice "to arrive 5 minutes before your programme start time". Here admission to the Pre-show is 14 Euros and a further 9 Euros for the house tour. Alternatively from 3.30pm you can queue, for up to two hours or more, to have just the 9 Euro house tour. With 1.2million visitors per annum they needed to tackle the queuing issue!!

Ease of payment may generate fresh revenue. Contactless card payment [technology](#) is being installed in Chester's medieval walls to encourage people to contribute to their upkeep, it is hoped the scheme, which encourages people to make a £2 donation, will pay for the upkeep of the Grade I-listed sandstone walls. This perhaps presents opportunities for the likes of Historic Environment Scotland, Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage.

4.5.3 Virtual Reality

2016 has been hailed as the year of Virtual Reality, with the technology predicted to enjoy its first billion-dollar year, providing new opportunities to businesses that want to create more immersive experiences for their consumers. In addition to the example in the Access for All section previously there are many other examples of VR in the attraction sector.

One of the biggest challenges facing galleries, museums and other entertainment venues today is how to make the visitor experience as rich as possible, particularly when competing with other forms of entertainment. Participation is the idea at science centres – the opportunity for visitors to get involved and contribute, rather than just learn about what is going on in science and in art. Today's younger generation, in particular, have very high expectations, thanks to their everyday use of video games and other media. There is the additional challenge of finite physical space, meaning that what venues can display is inherently limited.

This is why an increasing number of the world's attractions venues are turning to multi-user, multi-touch AV technology. 'Surprise – capturing people's imagination – is the most difficult to sustain'.

In other areas Mack Rides and [VR Coaster](#) are working on at least nine new virtual reality rollercoasters, incorporating the new technology.

The first virtual reality centre in the UK, [Tension](#) – opened in June 2016 in Lincoln – uses tailor-made VR experiences to help stimulate children with special needs. In addition to its work with special needs children, Tension is operating as a full attraction. The £200,000 venture – one of the first in the UK dedicated to VR – is housed inside a former church just outside Lincoln City centre.

Thematically the attraction focuses on the history of Lincoln in particular as home to one of only four surviving copies of the Magna Carta – The VR room experience tells people how the Magna Carta was stolen and revolves around establishing clues in the search for its return, a story deeply woven into the history of Lincoln.

Germany-based games developer Crytek has created [The Climb](#) for use on Oculus. It challenges players to complete solo climbs at exotic locations around the world. Crytek said there was potential for Scottish routes to be added in the future. Climbing routes on Ben Nevis and in Glen Coe and Skye could be recreated for a computer game played using the virtual reality headgear. This is a cross over from tourism to gaming and vice versa.



Source: Crytek / BBC

VR tech also has huge potential in the education and training sector, giving teachers the opportunity to provide much more vivid and absorbing experiences for their students.

3D Painting – A virtual reality experience allows the viewers to immerse themselves in The Garden of Earthly Delights by Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch. BDH Design and Direction created the [VR film](#) for the 500th anniversary celebrations of the painter's life. Seated on the back of a fish, the viewer appears to move through the Garden of Eden into Temptation before ending in Hell.



Source: Wikipedia

The team used computer technology to cut out elements – figures / features from the three paintings that make up the original work. These were animated and given a 3D feel so the viewer appears to be taken inside and interacts with the painting. The VR film took six months to create and is designed for use with a Google app with a smartphone and headphones but is also viewable on a tablet.

4.5.4 The First Digital-Only Museum

A new interactive digital-only experience dedicated to the impact of the Irish diaspora recently opened in Dublin. Called [Epic Ireland](#), the high-tech £12million exhibition, is located in the historic vaults of Dublin's CHQ Building. Epic Ireland says that it is the first digital-only museum in the world, with its collection stored in Microsoft's Cloud and accessed on screens.

Collaboration is seen as part of the visitor experience, the Irish Family History Centre – operated by genealogical and historical research firm Eneclann – introduces a way for visitors to search for their Irish ancestors, discover their own family story and explore Irish heritage and includes a 15-minute consultation with a genealogy expert.

4.5.5 Information Display Technology

Demand for information display media both inside and outside of retail and leisure environments continues to grow. Detailed exhibit information and voice guidance can now be provided using smartphones or tablets. This can include versions in various languages and this is being included in more attractions. It is now possible to have traditional display cases with actual hands-on experience. Physical objects can be combined with video and 3D animation to enhance the understanding of their functionality and history.

Telescopes have been produced that are freestanding, with tamper proof viewers that can house VR images securely, for visitors to experience VR presentations where domestic headsets might not be up to the rigours of multiple use.

The interactive [Collection Wall](#) in Gallery One at the Cleveland Museum of Art showcases the museum's extensive art collection. A 40-ft wide, 5-ft high interactive digital display wall made up of 150 seamless display modules. The Collection Wall helps visitors find the artwork they would like to view. It can be used by up to 16 people at once. Visitors can choose suggested tours or create their own by choosing from the thousands of artworks in the Museum's collection. Tours can then be saved onto mobile media eg phone iPad or one available from the Museum. Using the museum's ArtLens app, the phone or iPad acts as a guide for personalised tours of the different galleries.



Source: Christie Digital Systems

4.5.6 3D Printing

3D Printing – Museum Artefacts

A new concept is [Museum in a Box](#) which uses miniature versions of objects from museums around the World which are replicated using a 3D printer providing otherwise unavailable materials to schools globally.



Source: Museum in a Box

Each box contains a 'living brain', meaning that as you explore the content within the box, you can learn about each object using an embedded computer chip to relay information, and even link to the museum that holds the object. Interestingly the concept promoters are encountering a degree of inertia from the museums sector because of a lack of understanding of new technologies.

3D Printing – Food

A number of companies are working on 3D food printing. It is safe to say the technology is in its infancy and some results leave a lot to be desired but watch this space. It is likely that there will be a growing consumer market for 3D printers as people see 3D food printing coming into restaurants and they start becoming familiar with eating 3D printed food.

The [Foodini](#), a 3D food printer, has been developed by Natural Machines. This device has been designed from the start to be a specialised food printing machine. It can print with a very wide range of foods, from mashed potato to chocolate and is capable of printing structures several centimetres high, making elaborate 3D designs possible.

The Foodini is hailed as the first 3D food printing appliance but it is an expensive gadget and in the examples of its use below is not much more than a highly evolved piping bag!!



Source: Natural Machines / Foodini

Another company has gone a few steps further with 3D printed furniture, cutlery and food: Food Ink is a new restaurant concept created by a collective of architects, artists, chefs, designers, engineers and inventors. This pop-up launched in Venlo, Holland earlier this year, and one debuted in Shoreditch in July for three days.

A nine-course dinner was 3D-printed live to guests by an international team of cooks, artists and technologists including chefs Mateu Blanch and Michelin-starred eBulli veteran Joel Castanye.



Source: Food Ink

Some of the more promising products are shown below:



Source: [De Zeen](#), the news shack, [Graphiti](#), [Bocusini](#)

4.5.7 Robots – Artificial Intelligence vs Human Intelligence

Much is written about the rise of automation and the threat to human jobs. Despite the undeniable rise of robots in the workplace, much of the innovation has focused on human assisted AI. “A robot that grows with you is best placed to understand you, your strengths and weaknesses and therefore assist you throughout your life to help create good habits and keep you in good health”.

Robots may scare some, but recently conducted research revealed that 75% of the UK Population see the benefits of robotics, and are confident they are not a threat, nor will they replace human services. Londoners are the most positive with 31% believing robots would improve our lives for the better.

Whilst the majority of people seem happy to embrace this technology in the future, when it comes to the use of robots in hotel services, we in the UK have mixed feelings. When it comes to budget, 18% responded positively, as they believe having robots in hotels may reduce hotel rates, however, they also consider human service and interaction as key in hospitality. The majority of British people are fairly confident in embracing technology and robots in the future. Even so, they are still sceptical about how robots can improve their life and their holidays / leisure.

Introducing state-of-the-art technologies, [Henn na Hotel](#), near Nagasaki, Japan is the world-first hotel staffed by robots. The staff of ten robots is said to be capable of all the required functions in the general operation of the hotel.



Source: Henn na Hotel

At the front desk, multilingual robots help check in or check out. A robotic arm can store your luggage in the cloakroom and the porter robots will carry luggage to rooms. Visitors register with their face via a face recognition system negating the need for room keys. The hotel is said to pride itself in offering the unexpected, offering perhaps a unique glimpse into the future.

The cruise market is in part following this trend as Royal Caribbean International has announced partnering with [Makr Shkr](#) to create the world's first 'bionic bar' on board [The Quantum of the Seas](#). The synchronised robotic bartenders are watched mixing customised cocktails for guests who have placed orders via tablets. Each robot can produce one drink per minute and up to 1,000 drinks per day.



Source: Makr Shkr

Upon boarding The Quantum of the Seas, guests are issued with RFID wristbands, allowing them to navigate the ship, make on-board purchases and unlock their rooms. All staff aboard carry tablets with customised apps to keep better track of guests' tastes. Whether a guest prefers gluten-free dining, early show seating, or shiatsu massage, these apps help crew-members anticipate their needs. Consumer-facing mobile apps also help to put travellers in charge of their cruise choices. Before their holiday begins, guests can research and book dinner reservations, shore excursions and spa appointments using the Cruise Planner app. The Royal iQ app allows guests to manage details during the cruise, providing at-a-glance views of their holiday calendar, and helping keep in touch with each other and home via phone and text capabilities.

Robots in Museums? Here's an example.

Kasparov and Chesster are two robots based at the National Museum of Australia where their job is to give visitors laser-guided virtual tours of the [Museum](#). Robot tours allow you to control your view of the galleries via the panoramic camera on each robot, and to talk with a tour guide.



Source: National Museum of Australia

As a virtual visitor you can:

- Control your view of the galleries – zoom / pan options to find what interests you;
- Search digital content about displays, including hidden images, etc created specifically for virtual visitors. and
- Interact with tour guides asking questions, etc.

This museum project is an innovative partnership between the National Museum, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), Australia's Academic and Research Network (AARNet), and the Commonwealth Department of Communications.

The robot project won the innovation category of the ANZIA (Australian and New Zealand Internet Awards) in 2013.

Robot Land

The World's first large theme park devoted to robotics and artificial intelligence is underway in South Korea, in Incheon 30km from Seoul. It is to be anchored by the Will Smith movie 'I, Robot' which it is claimed will be brought to life.

[Robot Land](#) is a collaborative investment by national and local governments and private developers, and is estimated to cost \$625million. It will include a family-friendly robot theme park with rides and attractions, waterpark and hotel, but will also be home to a graduate school for robotics, research and development labs, as well as a residential complex, retail centre and convention centre. (Another example of a mixed use site again).

The park will also be a mix of high-tech entertainment and educational attractions but offer more 'Asian and Korean content' in order to differentiate itself from other theme parks. (This is a strategy the new Disney China is also adopting). The theme park will feature a Robot Gaming Arena, a pavilion that will demonstrate how robots may be used by the year 2030, there are insights into helping senior citizens with housework, medical check-ups, and dementia prevention. Perhaps an acknowledgement of the changing population demographics?



Source: Spectrum IEEE

Biomimicry

Human innovation has often been inspired by nature drawing on how nature works efficiently and sustainably. (See Velcro, Gecko-tape, Bompas & Parr's thermochromic projects, etc). Over the past decade, biomimicry has featured in elements of architecture.

Visitors to the Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A) in London are able to explore a garden pavilion inspired by nature and fabricated by robots in front of their eyes.

The Elytra Filament Pavilion – created by experimental architects Achim Menges and Moritz Dörstelmann in collaboration with engineers Jan Knippers and Thomas Auer – launched a special Engineering Season at the museum. The installation has explored the impact of emerging robotic technologies – such as biomimicry and fabrication – on architectural design, engineering and manufacture.

The undulating canopy (see below) of tightly-woven carbon fibre cells has been inspired by the structures in the shells of Elytra beetles. Robots have been expanding the pavilion over six months in response to sensory data drawn from the garden environment.



Source: V&A Museum

4.5.8 Nostalgia

The recent global success of the Pokémon GO app game seems to be capturing two markets – the teens who are "catching 'em all" for the first time, and the people in their late 20s and early 30s who remember the craze from the first time around and are receptive to a little nostalgia.

The British public are attracted by nostalgia and memories of yesteryear. Growing interest in recent years has been spawned by TV programmes such as Back in Time for Dinner, Call the Midwife, Only Fools, Last of the Summer Wine, etc.

British Film Institute

Hundreds of forgotten films, many of them unseen since they were first shown, over 100 years ago, have been released online by the British Film Institute. Made in the years between 1900 and 1999 for cinema and television, they form part of the BFI's [Britain on Film](#) project. Among more than 750 films are many that were shot in Scotland. BFI has produced an interactive map to help people find films relevant to their local area.

Tenement House

The Tenement House provides a rare glimpse into life in Glasgow in the early 20th century, in the faithfully restored four-room house lived in by Miss Agnes Toward for over half a century. It showcases what it meant to be an 'independent woman' in the first half of the 20th century; highlighting how ordinary Glasgow residents lived, and making the visitor appreciate how many household amenities we now take for granted were considered luxuries less than a century ago.

Britannia Panopticon

The world's oldest surviving Music Hall is again open to the public in Glasgow for viewing and has recently gained an entertainment license so that it can charge for tickets rather than relying solely on donations, the bar will undoubtedly be a huge help in fundraising for the conservation project to ensure the future of the [Music Hall](#).

4.5.9 Technology-agnostics

The Joy / Fear of Missing Out – JOMO / FOMO

In some markets more people are opting out of social media and emails – 'Digital Detox' where you leave technology at check-in is growing. This points to potentially more tourist accommodation and attraction facilities with little or no reliance on technology and broadband and wireless 'black holes' – back to getting the basics right, is the name of the game for these markets. In contrast, as social media becomes more and more embedded in the leisure activities of many, good connectivity can be important in getting the most out of a holiday or day visit.

The need to entice visitors has led to continued development of user attractions. Visitors expect more than static artefacts on display, or large flat images. They want to choose levels of information, interact, and be impressed.

There is a demand for technology that links the physical location to the online world, with techniques such as peer-group influence through social media, on and offsite downloadable content, mobile and barcode scanning, wrist identification bands, RFID chipping, 3D projection mapping, venue Twitter schemes and phone apps. Technology dramatically improves the experience of visitors and in doing so, attracts and engages them. However technology will change; historical artefacts won't. Interpretation process and content should be presented with a technology-agnostic approach. The application should be flexible and adaptable, possible by any of a number of current and future delivery methods.

4.5.10 Lessons Learnt

There is a fine line to be trodden to find the right technology for a particular attraction. It will depend on the subject matter as to how the balance of traditional formats and new is reached, rather than just always moving ahead with the next technological innovation. The technology-based attraction is not always the one best placed to capitalise on advances in technology to showcase itself. (See Case Studies).

4.6 Green and Black

Eden Project

The Eden Project, 'the ultimate Green attraction', has embraced eco-friendliness in several ways including water saving, a geothermal heating project and an ethical online shop and all have contributed to The Eden Project evolving from a visitor attraction to become a conservation champion, educator, climate campaigner, health promoter, and food initiative partner. The Hive at Kew Gardens is also an example of an attraction adopting a 'political stance' or cause with its [Hive](#) project, in this case drawing attention to the 'plight' of British bees.



Source: Kew Gardens

Recycling

Establishing eco-credentials is a priority for new leisure facilities – but not only in terms of their approach to energy and waste water strategies. Recycling is now becoming a key design element. Some new brands are incorporating recycled materials into the interior design including backlit walls of recycled bottles and an eclectic mix of novelty features. The aim is to be eccentric and eclectic and at the same time to demonstrate this through creative recycling. The visitor attraction market can easily respond to this, not only in the build process, but also in the types and style of display and the messages that the attractions convey.

Green is the New Black

Vertical gardens as an interior design statement, the rooftop and the kitchen garden to provide home grown produce, are ways of stating that eco-integrity is being employed by some. Bringing the outdoors inside can be expensive, although the dramatic impact can be strong.

The provision of local artisan food, onsite market gardens growing fruit and vegetables and onsite production of fruit, vegetables, herbs and even wine is a growing trend creating a strong sense of organic sustainability. Food and local produce have always been an essential part of the visitor experience, but this has grown to a level where they actually may even be the core visitor attraction and the main motivation to visit.

Car Free Tourism

Visitors to Scotland are being urged to get to and from the country's main attractions by foot and public transport in a new 'car-free tourism' initiative.

The guide, which can also be used by 'stay-cationing' Scots or anyone organising a day out, provides directions on how to get to Scotland's top 24 visitor destinations without the need for a car.

There are also instructions for tourism operators to improve sustainable transport access to their sites across Scotland. The Car-Free Tourism [guide](#) has been compiled by sustainable transport charity, Transform Scotland.

Seeking Famili-ference

Visitors do not have to live in a remote location to get away from the familiar. Consumers don't need to travel to distant locations to experience 'off the grid'. Many urban areas are littered with opportunities for 'escapism', local knowledge should be utilised to advise consumers of hotspots, which furthers the theme of honest authenticity as consumers undertake an experience out with the normal tourist activity repertoire. (See Technology-agnostics 4.5.9 above).

Earth Sculpture

South Wales is home to the UK's largest earth sculpture in the form of a giant, leaping horse. The mound, named Sultan the Pit Pony, was designed and created by Welsh artist Mick Petts, which saw a total of 60,000 tons of coal and shale used in its construction.

Parc Penalta in South Wales is home to [Sultan](#) and many other natural attractions. Visitors can navigate the wetlands via a willow tree tunnel, trek across the Penalta Marsh in search of butterflies, or find hides and observation points on the lake to see the wildlife. Cyclists, runners, and hikers benefit from 8 mile and 27 mile trails nearby.

The Hills

A park consisting of towering hills designed by Dutch landscape firm West 8 will open this summer on Governors Island, offering sweeping views of the New York Harbour and the city skyline. [The Hills](#), as the project is called, consists of four mounds ranging in height from 25 to 70 feet (seven to 21 metres). The undulating park is made of construction debris and clean-fill material. The project adds 10 acres of green space (four hectares), 43,000 shrubs and more than 860 trees to the island, along with pedestrian pathways and playground slides.

The Devil's Elbow

Plans for a tourist attraction at a once-notorious stretch of winding Highland Perthshire road have been formally approved. The Cairnwell Pass was nicknamed The Devil's Elbow due to its double hairpin bend and was tackled by the Queen and Prince Philip in an iconic photograph.



Source: cascadenews.co.uk

The route forms the highest public road in Britain and is regularly used by classic car and motor bike enthusiasts.

Cairngorms National Park Authority (CPNA) plans to add seating, walkways and information boards. By promoting it through the Scenic Routes Initiative and creating attractive and interesting stop-off points they hope to encourage more visitors to the area.

21st Century Pleasure Garden

A Branded Concept: This major resort complex is proposed for key strategic sites in the UK, China, India and the Middle East. [Garden of Ideas](#) plans to become an internationally recognised venue; a new model for the popular leisure attraction market.

Garden of Ideas is reported as a thrilling green platform, “a space for arts and creativity”, for contemporary entertainment and arts, that are thought-provoking, fun, intelligent and compelling, for broad popular audiences.

“Garden of Ideas will bring together arts and popular culture in cavernous halls and installation spaces beneath a spectacular hill-shaped pleasure garden. Exploring the slopes of the gardens, visitors will discover entrances to the caverns within. Inside, visitors will explore theatrical installations created by the world’s best artists, filmmakers and theatre companies. This wondergarden (sic) will use cutting edge technologies and many world-first ideas to entertain, transport and amaze. The architecture is significant but the art and its content will drive the experience”.

Dark Tourism

In 2000, Professors Lennon and Foley coined the phrase dark tourism in their book of the same name. Over the last fifteen years there has been a growth in dark tourism and attractions of the macabre. Horror, terror, ghost, cemetery, grief, prison, holocaust, ruin battlefield and genocide tourism are other terms used.

An early example of the idea of scaring people was The Chamber of Horrors gallery first opened as a 'Separate Room' in Marie Tussaud's 1802 exhibition in London which quickly proved a success, however, the chamber closed on 11 April 2016 until further notice.

Anatomy Museum

The skeleton of murderer William Burke is to go on show online for the first time. His remains will be included in a virtual tour developed by the Anatomical Museum at Edinburgh University. The tour can be accessed through a new interactive application. Other highlights of the tour include 1,500 human skulls and the death masks of famous figures such as Oliver Cromwell, Sir Walter Scott and Napoleon Bonaparte. Now, with an [app](#), anyone interested in the collection is able to access it online and see it as if visiting in person.

Samadhi 4D [Death Experience](#)

An experience in China of how it feels to die in a fake crematorium, which stuffs you in a coffin and blasts you with hot air and light projections to create an authentic experience of burning. (Bizarrely this was in part crowd funded).

Torture

The Torture Museum in Amsterdam provides a vivid picture of this painful past. The International exhibition 'Punishments and Verdicts in the Middle Ages' includes over 40 instruments of punishment from different parts of Europe, from an inquisition chair to the guillotine. They are illustrated with engravings and described with historical background information in eight languages.

Dark Events

Australia boasts a festival of death and darkness – Dark Mofo. The festival, now in its fourth year, has received critical acclaim, winning performing arts awards and government funding. Its popularity is attested by the more than 270,000 visitors to various performances in and around Hobart, Tasmania, which only has a population of 210,000.

An offshoot of Hobart's Museum of Old and New Art (MONA), the Dark Mofo festival uses the winter solstice to explore ancient and contemporary mythologies around death. Its programme of art, theatre, music, film and food stretches across 12 days. Key events include the Funeral Party, a gothic ball held in a funeral parlour, and Hymns to the Dead, a concert featuring some of the World's heaviest black and death metal bands. The festival is rounded off on winter solstice morning, when more than 700 people plunge naked into the sea at dawn.

Rounding off the Green and Black Theme a couple of examples that straddle the divide from afar and closer to home.

Hell Garden, Thailand

These gardens host a variety of statuary, various depicting impaled, burning and disfigured figures that represent the tortured souls of hell; when Buddhists die they believe their good and bad deeds are reviewed before being sent to either heaven or hell. The morbid scenes and gruesome figures found in the Wang Saen Suk Garden have become a popular tourist attraction.



Source: FTSAU

One of Alnwick's USPs

The huge popularity of The [Alnwick Garden](#)'s Poison Garden demonstrates the public's fascination with poisonous plants. Initially in February 2005, the tours of the Poison Garden were conducted by volunteers but by April 2005, it was realised that the garden was going to be very successful and that paid staff were required.

The [Poison Garden](#) occupies a small portion of the 14-acre site. Wanting to hark back to old apothecary's gardens, the then duchess resisted planting healing medicinals in favour of hard-to-find deadly poisons, and included narcotic plants like opium poppies, cannabis, magic mushrooms, and tobacco. (Many required special government permission to grow). Because of the danger posed by poisonous plants some are caged, and the garden is under a 24-hour security watch.



Source: Alnwick Garden Trust

4.7 Refreshingly Authentic

4.7.1 Introduction

High end travellers increasingly want 'experiences' that are unique to the destination, particularly as the world becomes more homogeneous. Facilities that are designed and operated in a generic manner will have diminishing appeal. Facilities that have no sense of place or community engagement will lose out to those that reflect their local environs and character. This will extend from the landscape strategy through to the soft programming of events and activities.

It is also prevalent in food and beverage operations where visitors and tourists alike want to enjoy locally sourced produce, specialities, home baking, etc. An element of local design, crafts and a visitor's experience of the indigenous culture is also important. See VisitScotland trend 'Honesthicity'.

'Authentic' experiences are being developed within the minds of the consumer before they arrive in Scotland, and their expectations need to be met. Each consumer may have different ideas of what authenticity is when considering a tourism product, it should be noted that consumers are also searching for honest authenticity. This could be discovering real local customs or cuisine, farmers markets, local products / crafts. Food and drink is a key part of the Scottish cultural identity.

Consumers today are seeking flexibility and adaptability, within their experiences to cope with their fast-paced lives. The adoption of micro products has driven interest in micro-breweries, and pop-up short micro-adventures. These products are particularly attractive to a Millennials market.

There is a continued growth in the appetite for artisan food, pop-up restaurants and street food. There is a fatigue with decision-making and pretension and there is evidence of minimalist restaurants and menu-free dining. An international survey of high-end travellers indicated demand for food-focussed holidays with growing demand for local cuisine and cooking classes. A number of visitor attractions in Europe have adopted this approach with simple daily menus and local dishes. This has led to those attractions capturing local resident lunch trade.

4.7.2 Pushing the Papillote

Underwater Lunch

Five metres below sea surface at the Hilton Maldives Resort and Spa, the [Ithaa](#) Undersea Restaurant is a mostly acrylic building that only seats 14. Offering a 270-degree panoramic view to its customers, Ithaa was designed and constructed as the first 'all-glass underwater restaurant since joined elsewhere by a number of others around the globe including an underwater club at the Niyama Resort in the Indian Ocean.



Source: CN Traveler

Dinner in the Sky

The [Dinner in the Sky](#) concept is a high flying Sky Box that takes 22 guests to a viewing height of up to 180 feet. The 22 guests are comfortably strapped into a leather seat that is secured to a dining table. The dining table and seats are connected to a crane that then performs the lift. The centre of the dining table has a walking platform that can accommodate up to five service personnel for the purpose of serving food, beverages, picture taking, conducting a meeting or product launch presentation. The concept has been delivered in 45 countries so far. (Closer to home Clydebank's Titan Crane is known to have hosted [dinners](#) aloft in the past).

Dans le Noir?

Dans le Noir? is reported to be a cross between a show and a dinner. Couples and large groups come to [Dans le Noir?](#) in London to be entertained. Dining in total darkness, while guided and served by blind people, is a unique experience that is designed to change one's view of the world by reversing perspectives. Promotional text suggests: A sensory journey helps to challenge perceptions of taste and smell. A social conviviality, where darkness encourages an open-minded atmosphere. A human exchange, when the blind become one's eyes to guide us into a new way of sensing our environment.

Other similar multi-sensory dining experiences, generally in the light, include El Celler de Can Roca, in Spain; Sublimotion in Ibiza; Ultraviolet in Shanghai; and Heston Blumenthal's Fat Duck, Melbourne – many others exist around the World.

Petit Chef

The concept is projecting animated images on to a table before food service. This creates an animated film experience of food being prepared right in front of you. Great idea for a kid's party?

This concept could be aimed at children's parties. View the animations, courtesy of Skullmapping, by clicking: [Starter](#) / [Main Course](#) / [Sweet](#)



Source: Skullmapping

Edible Cinema

Pushing the boundaries of a cinema experience provides another offering, Edible Cinema. This occasional event based concept, hosted by Dulwich Picturehouse and others, sees participants supplied with a tray of numbered mystery boxes containing a bite-sized tasting menu tailored to specific moments in the film. Films that have been subject to this treatment include Trading Places, Some Like it Hot, Our Little Sister and Romeo and Juliet. It is suggested that edible Cinema is a unique way to experience a film: through aroma, texture and taste. A Menu:





Source: [Edible Cinema](#)

Return of the Speakeasy – The Cachet in Obscurity – FOMO

First opening in 2012, La Bodega Negra has been at the forefront of a growing global trend – the rebirth of the 'speakeasy', bars and restaurants that hide their location. This restaurant hides its location behind a Soho sex shop. "You've got to stand out", say the owners.

Berlin cocktail bar Beckett's [Kopf](#) is another modern day speakeasy. Located on a quiet side street in the neighbourhood of Prenzlauer Berg, rather than displaying a sign outside, the owners have simply hung a picture of Irish poet Samuel Beckett in the window. "We wanted to create an atmosphere of discovery, and bring back the curiosity you have as a child."

Modern day speakeasies are all about selling exclusivity, which is increasingly desirable to higher-end consumers. Word of mouth has been "turbo-powered by social media". There is a huge cachet in rarity, obscurity, mystique. Inaccessible means desirable.

The Cereal Killers

The UK's first speciality Cereal Café – they sell over 120 different types of cereal from around the world. To create the perfect bowl of cereal they have 30 different varieties of milk and 20 different toppings to choose from.

Akin to this idea is the similar development – Stoa's Porridge Bar, based in Edinburgh.



New Lanark operates a mobile Ice Cream Bicycle Vendor on hot summer days as an additional outlet for its own brand ice cream – one of the original pop-up ideas.



Source: New Lanark

As said elsewhere many are pushing the boundaries of food production and presentation, not least Bompas & Parr, (see Case Study) who have recently installed a pop-up [Jelly Parlour](#) located in Harrods Food Hall.

In addition there exists a [water sommelier](#) – based in a Los Angeles restaurant with a 43-page water list akin to a wine list.

4.7.3 In-House or Not?

Catering For Monkeys

Take the catering in-house or franchise it out? The East Midlands-based Zoological Society, which has until now managed all of the [catering services](#) at Twycross Zoo in-house, has brought Lindley Heritage on board to help the charitable trust develop and enhance its catering services for the 500,000 members of the public who visit the venue each year; build the conference and events business and establish a viable incremental revenue stream for the 90-acre site; and enable the management team to focus on its core business of running the zoo.

Turnover derived from catering and event management at Twycross Zoo is estimated to be worth circa £2million per annum, totalling £11million during the term of the partnership. The arrangement offers the East Midland Zoological Society a guaranteed annual income from catering services, plus a share of the profits.

A Chocolate Coating

The industry had been growing at around 11% due to the 'staycation' trend, but the economy had put extra focus on value of the consumer pound with 61% of visitors feeling that food and drink at attractions were expensive. From their analysis of the visitor attraction sector, not only did visitors feel food and beverages were expensive but a huge 50% looked for discount or offers before visiting.

Amadeus Food responded by branded and unique food concepts aimed at making food and beverage part of the visitor experience and enhancing perceptions of value. An example is the Cocoa-dusted ribs at Cadbury World. Creativity won them the contract at Cadbury World, it provided the opportunity to make the [catering](#) solution part of the Cadbury heritage. The environment created included the 'factory in the garden' concept restaurant.

At Dudley Zoo, Amadeus' main focus was to improve the quality of the food and service and they took over the running of three kiosks and a restaurant at Dudley from April 2014. The concept chosen was the Oak Kitchen a brand that highlights home cooking. The name symbolises a British icon; traditional, recognisable and dependable. The interior features wood finishes, sharing tables, group dining experiences as well as rustic merchandise. The food is hand-prepared, simply packaged and labelled by hand. All communications and POS designs use blackboard signage with clear provenance messaging, the concept highlights the food offer.

They also carried out comprehensive strategic marketing activity tailored to each venue with extensive footfall driving the tactical activity for free to enter attractions. At Cadbury World, Amadeus introduced local community tactical programme that encouraged Cadbury World locals to enjoy special offers and events to drive footfall. A programme of social media and digital marketing was instigated, in conjunction with the venue, to increase awareness of the catering solution before visitors arrive on site.

It is to be noted within our Case Studies we have a trend buckler. Jodrell Discovery Centre brought its catering services back in-house. The reason being that it allowed the management greater control of the whole catering operation, including allowing greater freedom in the private and corporate catering offer and use of seasonal produce. It also allowed flexibility in the workforce, in that 'Visitor Services Officers' can operate both across the front desk / shop and [café](#).

4.7.4 Lessons Learnt

- Food has become increasingly important as part of the visitor experience and attractions can benefit from attracting a local market particularly to boost lunch trade. (See Vasa and Astrid Lingren Case Studies);
- Authenticity of the food offer is important. This could be discovering real local customs or cuisine, farmers markets, local products / crafts. Food and drink is a key part of the Scottish cultural identity;
- There is a continued growth in the appetite for artisan food, pop-up restaurants and street food, and the visitor attraction sector should embrace this;

- Brands that promote home-cooking, use of local produce and have a prominence are increasing in popularity;
- Food offers linked to temporary exhibitions, which themselves are temporary or pop-up in nature offer opportunities;
- The food offer needs to stand out. It may be the bizarre or the sensory, but quality and consistency of service is also key;
- A well-managed programme of social media and digital marketing in conjunction with the attraction, its news and its changing food offer increases pre and post-awareness of the catering solution.

4.8 **Retail**

In 2013 Barclays predicted that expenditure on retail goods by overseas tourists to the UK is set to rise from 2013 by 36.3% to over £9.3bn by 2017, while domestic tourist spend is set to rise from £12.6bn to £15.6bn in the same period. Wealthy consumers from emerging economies such as Asia and the Middle East will largely drive this growth, as well as the increasing disposable incomes of the middle classes from developing markets and Eastern Europe. Whilst online and mobile retail continues to pose a threat to high street profits, consumers have shown increasing willingness to spend on small indulgences, such as dining out and visiting leisure attractions. With contactless and mobile methods of payment being introduced, and as more retail outlets accept these methods, spending has become easier.

When looking at the breakdown of spend on retail goods, overseas tourists are expected to increase their expenditure on both fashion and home goods by approximately 38%, whereas sales of electrical are anticipated to fall by 29%. This boost in fashion and home sales may be supported by the continuing popularity of 'Brand Britain', as well as the cheaper cost. As the pound falls, UK sales of British goods could increase – the reducing cost of British goods and services is seen a Brexit benefit.

It is easy to think about tourists as a one-shot opportunity, assuming they buy once and then do not return. But retailers and brand owners should treat them exactly the same as domestic consumers, by trying to establish a relationship with them digitally, and making special offers based on sales history and personal insights.

Secondary spend is often neglected by operators in the tourism and destination sector. There has been a steady decline in the traditional 'souvenir' buying pattern of many visitors but demand for the unusual and new is still an important area for all businesses to consider. What gifts you offer reflect the personality of your attraction and so getting this right is key to the overall success of your brand. (See New Lanark [partnerships](#) with fabric designers and gift manufacturers). [See initiative in BCLM Strategic [Plan](#) to diversify revenue streams].

Retail is a fail-safe way to boost secondary spend. With the right products and an experience to fit, spend can increase per head and improve engagement with your guests.

So how do you get retail right?

- **Work with local suppliers:** Source products that tell stories, through point of sale or staff interaction, giving guests a lasting memory of their visit. (The Corris Craft Centre is a good example of the use of local produce in its food outlet and tying that in to the shop to allow products / ingredients consumed to be bought to be taken home).
- **Does it fit?:** Each visitor attraction has a very clear brand identity. This should be to the fore when making product selections. See Jodrell Bank versus Corris Craft Centre versus Vasa Museum Case Studies.
- **Consider passing trade:** Your retail offer can appeal to a wider market than your attraction guests. Retail in front of any pay barrier – The report's authors would consider New Lanark for Christmas shopping.
- **Visual merchandising:** The look and feel of the shop is key to encouraging customer spending. Visual merchandising is one of the most important parts of the offering. (See New Lanark photos below).



Source: Iain Macfarlane

- **Invest in your team:** Train your team to deliver world class customer service. Employment of a retail manager at Jodrell Discovery Centre lifted retail spend by 10%.
- **Upsell:** Upselling is the single most important tactic to increase revenue, but to be effective it needs to be an experience enhancer.

4.8.4 Lesson Learnt

- In some instances there has been a blurring at the edges of what constitutes an attraction versus a retail offering, in many instances, retail has been the main motivation to visit;

- It is important that the retail offer is authentic and appropriate to the attraction and adds to the overall experience;
- In recent years the most successful attraction retail facilities have embraced retail professionalism in merchandising, marketing, management and analysis;
- The quality of retail offering in visitor attractions is key to boosting average spends;
- Visitors are looking for greater attention to detail in retailing, particularly in sourcing unique local crafts and other retail offers;
- There has been an increase in branded goods, particularly retail linked to events, but these must be relevant to the occasion;
- Making it easier for the visitor to spend will increase sales;
- Online sales capability has boosted the appeal of attraction retail offers.

4.9 Exploiting the Temporary and After Hours

4.9.1 Introduction

There appears to be much more thought and innovation going into the use of the space assets associated with buildings and grounds, not just associated with attractions but other venues too. There are many examples of the attraction assets being ‘sweated’ more, as the pressure to come up with new revenue sources increases. Temporary exhibitions and pop-ups of various sorts are proliferating. Below are a variety of examples.

4.9.2 The Power of Pop-Ups

The trend is for the use of free space, but combined with flexibility and adaptability. This sees the pop-up meet these criteria.

As part of VisitScotland’s Year of Architecture there was an exhibition of pavilions provided by cities from around the world, exploring the culture of pop-ups. Cities from across the globe were invited to design pavilions then created and located in Mound Square, Edinburgh in summer 2016. The exhibition built on the universal success of temporary pavilions and the popularity of present day pop-ups. Architects rose to the challenge of creating innovative and engaging pop-up [designs](#) that captured the public’s imagination. 2017 sees the celebration of the Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology with downloadable [toolkit](#) to help organisations make the most of the opportunity.

Temporary themed exhibits are becoming a regular feature and new exhibits aid in this process. Aecom reported the acquisition of the space shuttle Endeavour by the California Science Center boosted attendance by 31%, and the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid welcomed a 24% attendance increase to the Salvador Dalí exhibition. While these types of exhibition generate income from paying visitors, many museums are free to enter and this has caused funding issues.

Secret Cinema

[Secret Cinema](#) is a British events company specialising in live cinema experiences, combining film screenings with interactive performances in purpose-built sets in unusual venues.

Secret Cinema transforms a night at the cinema in to an immersive, participatory, live event. In seven years it has gone from niche audience – a screening of Gus Van Sant’s Paranoid Park to 400 people in a railway yard to becoming a major player with more than 40 events to date including screenings of Terry Gilliam’s Brazil and Ridley Scott’s Prometheus, bringing in audiences of 35,000 people.

In 2015 Secret Cinema created their largest event so far by selling 85,000 tickets to a Back to The Future experience that recreated a 1950s American town in East London. At £78 per ticket it is not a cheap night out but when customers buy a ticket they are given a character.

The hours before the screening of the film are likened to a music festival in the lead up to the main act, except you’re not just the audience, you are an active part of the event. Everyone, from bar staff to front of house is in costume. Secret Cinema is meticulous about staff doing several hours’ rehearsal, and because the ‘actors’ know what character every audience member is, interaction is effortless.



Source: FTSUC

A recent major event was based on experiencing a screening of Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back. The reported takings of £6.45m was derived from 100 nights.



Source: Hostels Club Blog



Source: Paul Cochrane / Secret Cinema

Secret Cinema, for six nights this summer, recreated an immersive world at the London location of Kellerman's famous holiday resort as part of a showing of the Dirty Dancing movie, the location was revealed only to attendees. It reported revenue of £1.9 million for that production of Dirty Dancing. The event launched July 15 and recreated the film's US summer camp Kellerman's at Leyton Jubilee Park in East London, hosting around 30,000 audience members. Honouring the 1963 setting of the film, the open air event included mass dances at the 'staff quarters' and across the site as well as live bands throughout the evening.

Over the past year, Secret Cinema has reported box office takings of £1.33m for its production of Danny Boyle's 28 Days Later and £1.24m for its production of Stanley Kubrick's Dr Strangelove.

Incidentally Vasa Museum has a film as part of the experience offered daily in 13 different languages.



Source: Vasa Museum

Dismaland

Graffiti artist, Banksy held an exhibition at the derelict seafront lido in Weston-super-Mare. The Dismaland show also featured work from Damien Hirst, Jenny Holzer and Jimmy Cauty and was temporarily located in its derelict Tropicana for six weeks. [Dismaland](#) attracted 150,000 visitors over a five-week period earlier this year.

The 'bemusement' park was one of the most successful ever art exhibitions and turned the derelict Tropicana into the centre of worldwide attention. Banksy described the show as a 'family theme park unsuitable for children'.



Image: FTSAUC

Sensory Destination Pop-Up

Italian brewery Peroni launched a six-week 'residency' in London transforming a café and restaurant into The House of [Peroni](#) – a “multi-sensory destination of Italian sights, smells and tastes, aimed to surprise and intrigue” its audience and thereby increase profile of the brand.

Margherita Missoni, of the fashion house Missoni, was the above residency's 'Master of Style' and artist Petra Storrs collaborated to bring the project to life. A diverse programme of ticketed events were hosted including pasta making, mixology masterclasses and a private five-course dining experience created by Chef Mazzei, with cocktails and drinks by an award-winning mixologist.

4.9.3 After Hours

Traditionally visitor attractions have been fairly uniform in their opening hours and days, with many adopting short opening hours / fewer days a week during the shoulder and off seasons, with some closing completely during the winter. Attractions have traditionally been quite restrictive in their opening hours but a growing trend in opening at other times is arising for specific reasons.

By contrast a number are reviewing this policy and exploring ways of increasing visits by offering variations in opening to include special after-hours sessions or specific themed events out of normal hours.

There has also been an increase in attractions celebrating their own anniversaries or piggy backing on wider anniversaries to create additional demand from those who might not otherwise visit, or to attract repeat visits. Examples include the current widespread events relating to WW1.

The Museums at Night [initiative](#) which has been a UK initiative has seen some uptake in Scotland but there is perhaps room for more participants. Demand for overnight visits to zoos as 'safari'-type events is quite widespread in the USA see Oregon, Los Angeles Philadelphia, Houston etc. Similarly the aquarium sector has developed products of a like nature. These in general are premium product experiences and play into the idea of enhanced or authentic experience.

In the UK Whipsnade has developed lodge accommodation units adjacent to the white rhino enclosure and offers to families include free zoo entry, meals, guided walks out of hours, etc. New for 2016 is a [Gir Lion](#) experience, similar to the rhino offering but of 9 Indian themed Lodges. There is also a set of seasonal sunset safaris.

In Scotland Edinburgh Zoo successfully hosts four '[Summer Nights at the Zoo](#)'.

There are many examples of attractions curating or hosting short term exhibitions to encourage footfall. One such, close to home, is the Adventures in Space Science & Technology at The Lighthouse in Glasgow between July and October 2016. It is an exhibition offering insights into the architecture of science fiction curated by David Reat.

In 2014 there were four robots roaming around the Tate Britain Museum in London after hours, streaming video to the world as part of the [After Dark](#) project. As the robots moved through the museum, their lights illuminated hundreds of statues and paintings, works of historic and contemporary British art, spread over roughly 20 rooms. People around the world were able to have control of them navigating around the gallery. Conceived by a digital design studio, The Workers, it received the Tate Britain's IK Prize, awarded to a group using digital technology to take the museum's collections to a wider audience. No additional staff cost either.

Black Country Living Museum (BCLM) is going all out in its push to open for events, etc in the evening, to broaden its accessibility and appeal while at the same time securing additional revenue.

4.10 Piggybacking – Are Visitor Attractions and other Leisure Venues Converging?

Multi Use / Multi Attractions Increase Flexibility

In today's market where costs are high, funding is short and returns squeezed, there is a need for facility flexibility to attract a range of markets and a number of different uses.

The new owner of recently relegated English football club Aston Villa, has revealed plans to develop a theme park and museum for the club as the businessman aims to attract visitors from overseas. The long-term plan for Villa includes a museum, theme park and hotel to attract football tourists from China and India.

Real Madrid Football Club sees the ownership still hoping to take an extravagant theme park to the UAE with Abu Dhabi their preferred home.

Business Incubation as Visitor Attraction

[Cockington Court](#) was established as an innovation centre and visitor attraction following an extensive renovation and new-build programme which restored the Grade II* listed manor house and stable yard studios in Devon; creating 15 purpose built craft studios and 8 innovation centre offices.

Marketing a creative business incubator as a visitor attraction is a unique concept not available with the same level of business support anywhere else in the country. The project combines the incubation of early stage start-up companies from the creative sector and markets it as a visitor attraction to build on an existing base of around 100,000 visitors per year with the craft centre attracting an audience beyond the original traditional tourist.

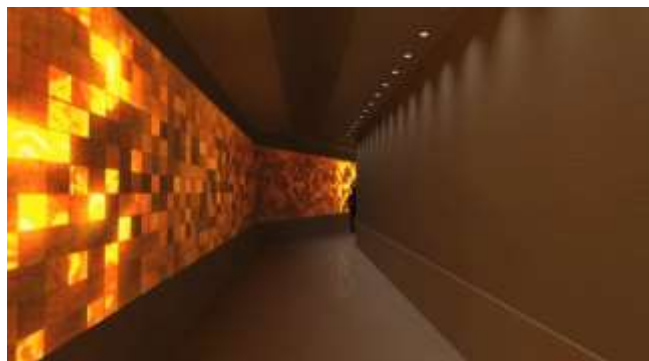
Paramount Entertainment

London [Paramount](#) theme park plans are predicted to attract 50,000 people to Swanscombe Peninsula every day. A new £2bn Paramount-themed entertainment resort, billed as an entertainment complex rather than a theme park is anticipated which will create 27,000 new jobs. The plans suggest more than 50 rides and attractions, all themed around famous films, television programmes, video games and other Paramount hits.

Unlike Disney World and Universal Studios, attractions based on movies by British production companies will sit alongside those based on Hollywood blockbusters. Attractions will include 12 rides, entertainment shows and cultural events including theatre productions. The masterplan was predicated on the need to integrate a leisure core, offering a range of supporting uses, including the proposed waterpark, events space, hotel and other infrastructure.

It is the first 'business or commercial project' to be considered as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and is expected to open in 2021.

Hotel brand Renaissance opened earlier this year and is New York's 'first [digitally enhanced hotel](#)' in Manhattan. Designed by a local studio the 348-room Renaissance New York Midtown Hotel features large-scale digital attractions created to celebrate the history of the location, which is a centre of clothes manufacturing and home to many fashion designers. A digital tapestry the length of a city block identifies the hotel entrance, projecting geometric patterns that showcases local artists and the neighbourhood.



Source: ehotelier

A booth located near the entrance is designed to act as a 'virtual concierge', using technology to allow users to explore local points of interests.



Source: Travel Weekly.com

Dubai Hotel / Attraction

A 75,000sq ft (7,000sq m) rainforest will be situated halfway up a tower in the Hilton Worldwide hotel in Dubai as part of a 'never before seen' entertainment experience created by ZAS Architects.

In an exclusive interview with CLAD, principal DJ Armin said the firm is using innovative digital technology, advanced architectural practices and biophilic design to create an indoor/outdoor leisure experience that "can work successfully through all four seasons and attract visitors to keep returning."

The urban rainforest sits at the heart of the Rosemont Hotel project, which will feature Hilton's Curio Collection branding. Lush vegetation native to Dubai will be installed on the outdoor podium of the futuristic 53-storey hotel tower, so that huge jungle canopies provide shade and shelter.

A sensory system will stimulate the feeling of being surrounded by rainfall, while keeping guests dry by controlling where the water falls. A high humidity level mimicking a tropical environment, will be created using water stored from condensation.



Source: [ZAS Architects](#)

“The whole idea is to create outdoor entertainment in Dubai in the summer,” Armin told CLAD. “Usually people can only spend time outdoors in winter because of the heat. But by planting a rainforest on the rooftop of the podium we’ll create a cooler environment and different opportunities to connect and contrast with the indoor entertainment on the floors directly below – such as the trampoline park, bowling alley and laser tag”.

“We’re not on a beachfront, and it’s not a resort where people can spend most of their day exploring the area. Our brief was to keep hotel guests at the Rosemont and attract exterior guests to use the public areas. So around this amazing rainforest there’ll be adventure trails, play zones, waterfalls, streams and an artificial beach with a splash pool”.



Source: ZSL

Comic Strips, Science Fiction and Space Exploration

There has been a growing trend for Comic Exhibitions and Conventions in towns and cities around the UK – Sheffield, Leicester, and London. This has been stimulated by a growing interest in Marvel Comics and their characters. The World of [Avatar](#) is opening in Florida in 2017 and Iron Man [Experience](#) is opening in Hong Kong in the near future (see Brand Adoption).

Space exploration as a theme has been rekindled with interest in films such as The Martian, Tim Peake's space exploits, the Juno Mission to Jupiter, but also in such natural events such as meteor showers, ellipses of the sun and moon. Jodrell Bank has benefitted from TV coverage and events directly related to night sky phenomena. In Scotland on a smaller scale the Dark Sky Park and the Observatory have benefitted from this growing interest.

Beatrix Potter's new tourist attraction opened to the public in July to celebrate the 150-year anniversary of the birth of Potter, the attraction on the [Lingholm Estate](#) near Keswick in Cumberland now features a café, shop and Victorian walled garden but also complements a new jetty offering scheduled boat services for the first time in half-a-century.

4.11 Volunteering

4.11.1 Introduction

For many visitor attractions an element of volunteer participation is essential to the sustainability of the attraction. But studies in the last two decades have shown it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract individuals willing to give of their time regularly. That said most recent research from Community Life Survey suggests after a sharp rise in volunteering in 2012/13 (possibly as a result of the Olympics) the levels dropped slightly in the most recent figures. What is striking, however, is the consistency of volunteering since 2001, with levels of volunteering fluctuating only within a five percentage-point range. In essence there does not appear to have been a seismic change in rates of volunteering at a national level since 2001, although these may fluctuate at a local level.

4.11.2 Examples

English Visitor Attractions

Visitor attractions in England in 2014 saw the number of unpaid volunteers up across the board, they most likely increased at the larger attractions, steam / heritage railways, visitor centres, gardens and country parks. Changes in volunteering staff are consistent across free and paid attractions. The trend of increasing voluntary workers continued into 2014 and looks set to remain, with 28% of attractions expecting to increase their use of unpaid volunteers in 2015.

Team London

The Team London Ambassadors programme has grown from strength to strength since its inception during the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. At the Olympics the 7,000 Team London Ambassadors were based at 43 visitor hotspots, travel hubs and tourist attractions. The Ambassadors were London's 'friendly face', on hand to answer questions from tourists and Londoners alike and helping to show the world the very best that London has to offer. In 2015, over 600 volunteers took part in the programme, with 150 new volunteers joining an existing pool, of which 60% volunteered during 2012. Ambassadors gave 15,000 hours of their time in total, and received fantastic feedback from visitors. In fact, 100% of visitors were more likely to recommend London as a place to visit after interacting with an Ambassador. This summer Team London Ambassadors have been based at nine locations welcoming visitors and maintaining London's reputation as one of the best cities in the World.

Viking Volunteers

Viking Handling Collection [Guides](#) perform a vital role in the regeneration plans of the JORVIK Viking Centre following its closure due to flooding on Boxing Day 2015. Volunteers have been recruited to support the work of rebuilding and 'reimagining' JORVIK for a reopening planned for spring 2017.

The JORVIK team have maintained interest and prominence of the Museum's plight by continued access to the JORVIK experience and the famous collection during the closure through a selection of pop-up exhibitions staged around York City Centre. Volunteer Viking Handling Collection Guides acting as a key part of this activity.

National Trust

One of the most well-known organisations with a role for volunteers in its structure is the National Trust. Volunteering in one of the National Trust houses allows the volunteer to indulge their passion for heritage and provide 'behind-the-scenes' access to some of the country's most beautiful places.

Kynren – Eleven Arches

Perhaps the most impressive volunteer project we are aware of is that of The Eleven Arches Charitable Trust's Kynren show (see Section 5). The brainchild of London financier and philanthropist Jonathan Ruffer, the show is based on the French Puy du Fou model. The Show spans the history of Roman times, the Viking invasions, the Industrial Revolution and both World Wars, with ships and a steam train, mass choreography, pyrotechnics and spectacular lighting and water effects.

Following three and a half years of planning, 13 months of preparation and volunteers giving over 200,000 hours of their time it was premiered to the public in Bishop Auckland on 2nd July running for 15 nights across the summer weekends.

Kynren is being fully presented by a volunteer cast and crew of over 1,000 individuals with the youngest volunteer three years old and the eldest 85. The volunteers have variously taken part in World Host and clown school, horsemanship skills, pyrotechnic training and diving courses depending on their role and no volunteer was turned away – a job being created for each depending on skills and comfort zones.



Source: TRC & Eleven Arches

4.11.3 Lessons Learnt

- Consider more pop-up facilities, accommodation for events or longer term – rural dimension;
- Collaboration with other attractions can boost interest, increase the overall quality of the experience and increase destination credentials;
- Refreshing of exhibits regularly is a must-do to keep product fresh and attract repeat visitors;
- Embracing of technology and innovations, sympathetically, reflecting the scale and type of attraction – in many instances simplicity and ease may be the key, rather than expensive and technically complex options;
- Diversify revenue streams eg food business / training / meeting space / after hours to help optimise revenue;
- Attraction operators should invest in specialists to introduce and manage retail / food offers;
- Education outreach and in-house resources should align with curriculum to maximise opportunities;
- Attractions should consider using existing brands. If appropriate, creating their own brand following; and
- Very often organic growth is an effect method of development, rather than embarking on the single large risk project. The development process itself can be part of the visitor experience.

4.12 Funding

4.12.1 Introduction

In this section we provide a brief overview of some of the funding routes being adopted by others in their attempts to secure monies for build, extensions, refurbishments, etc.

4.12.2 The Funding Landscape

Going Free

There are considerable challenges at museums that have transitioned from paid admission to free. Admission fees represent a huge part of earned revenue. Free admission brings more footfall but not necessarily higher revenues. There is no way to make it up through retail or food and beverage alone, the museum has to have other forms of support in place. Sponsorship is one aspect of this revenue generation, although this tends to be concentrated on new museum builds and temporary exhibitions.

“Most museums seem to struggle to source funding for refurbishment and upgrade”. Touring exhibitions are becoming more significant within the sector, in many cases combining historical exhibitions with themed entertainment. They may be instigated and developed by museums or sponsoring organisations. The touring exhibition sector has really taken off over the past 10 years, and is a good way of evolving a collection or popularising a museum, attracting both new and local visitor groups to the location. Touring exhibitions are often based around popular culture, like fashion and music, they are like mini trade shows.

New Zealand

The Minister of Tourism (MOT) also holds a discretionary fund (Tourism Facilities Grants Programme) that provides funding for non-commercial tourism facilities, in order to enhance overseas visitors' understanding and enjoyment of New Zealand. (NZ). The facilities must provide public good benefits, must not compete directly with an existing commercial venture, or be for commercial gain. MOT also makes freely available a large body of tourism research relevant to business planning, funding proposals and ongoing business decision-making.

The government will provide up to 50% of the required funding. Funding to be linked to key milestones. Investment focuses on projects that contribute to one or both of the following objectives: boosting innovation in the tourism value chain so as to ensure that NZ gains more from the international visitor spend and lifting the productivity of the tourism sector.

Projects need to be an addition to existing or planned activity, not to fund regular or day-to-day business activities. Investments should not duplicate existing central government investment in tourism.

Nova Scotia

Tourism Nova Scotia has launched The EXCELLerator partner program, which is open to businesses, tourism-related organizations, and licensed accommodations and campgrounds in Nova Scotia. This pilot program is designed to develop world-class experiences that differentiate Nova Scotia and appeal to the 'Free Spirit' segment, as well as to create marketing assets to promote new experiences to potential visitors in 2017-18. The support is for product alignment, marketing and skills development. This is not a direct funding programme but provides investment in collaboration, skills transfer, time and expertise.

Ready to Borrow

The £2.4m Arts Council England funds are being made available to museums in the second round of the Ready to Borrow: Small Scale Capital Development scheme, which aims to help museums across England develop their capacity and readiness for borrowing objects from national and Major Partner Museums.

Funding for the scheme will be distributed by each of the nine Museum Development providers as small grants to museums to enable them to upgrade exhibition spaces and host loans from National Museums or Major Partner Museums, allowing more people the opportunity to see, learn from and enjoy the objects.

The first round of the scheme in 2015 led to more than 60 museums in England benefitting from the fund.

Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding involves companies raising small amounts of money from a large number of people, typically via the internet. There are a number of global crowdfunding platforms that have sprung up such as Travelstarter (tourism and leisure sector) and Kickstarter (artists, filmmakers, designers). Crowdfunding in Scotland has emerged over the past three years as an increasingly important source of viable funding for business against a backdrop of subdued demand for bank finance and a general constraint on the availability of more traditional forms of finance. Firms were estimated to have received more than £27m in the 12 months to September 2015.

Crowdfunding activity in Scotland accounted for 4% of the overall UK total last year, compared with 1% in 2013. The chamber of commerce's latest report, compiled by crowdfunding consultancy twintangibles, recorded 1,263 successful campaigns in 2014-15. The report did not include figures for Aberdeenshire-based craft brewer BrewDog, which raised £19m via its Equity for Punks crowdfunding scheme in the year to April 2016. If BrewDog reach their Equity for Punks IV target, one of their plans is to develop a beer-led hotel in the North-East of Scotland.

A cluster of crowd funding activity in Dartmoor area saw:

- Dartmoor Zoo raised nearly £340,000 after a 35-day online crowdfunding [campaign](#) as part of an appeal to raise £1.6m in Devon. The appeal attracted 740 small investors. The zoo launched its crowdfunding appeal as part of moves to become a charity and also to avoid job cuts.
- Dartmouth visitor information centre is not operated by either the district or town council so a voluntary not for profit organisation has been providing this valuable resource for over 20 years. They have annual overheads round £120,000 and are looking to a crowd funding appeal to raise £30,000. Unfortunately the appeal did not prove successful raising only £240 from 6 backers in 28 days.
- Dartmoor Whisky Distillery is crowdfunding on Kickstarter to purchase a beer wash for their first distillations, with a goal of £25,000. They are currently installing an 'Alembic' still into the distilleries new home at The Old Town Hall. Refurbishment of the distillery has begun, and will continue over the coming months. Phase Two will include new facilities, kitchen, bar and visitors centre. Phase Three will see a new arrival reception, retail and souvenir shop. The distillery were successful in raising over £30,000 at the outset from 363 backers in 45 days.

On the Isle of Skye a crowdfunding campaign has been launched to raise 5% of the cost of the £1.5m small abattoir plant on the island – admittedly not a visitor attraction but an example of how wide the appeal of the crowdfunding model is. The island previously had an abattoir but it closed several years ago. Dubbed a micro-abattoir, the new facility planned for a site in Portree would provide a service to local crofters and meat to island businesses.

The largest part of the sector in Scotland last year was 'crowdlending' – also known as peer-to-peer lending – which raised more than £20.5m for companies, largely to finance expansion and growth.

- Edinburgh-based diet meal delivery company Diet Chef raised £1.5m in less than six weeks through lending-based crowdfunding;
- Websters, a theatre based in an A-listed church in Glasgow, successfully collected £33,310 by offering rewards to investors;
- Edinburgh-based seaweed flakes producer Mara Seaweed exchanged 13.5% equity for £527,750;
- The British Business Bank supports the Funding Circle, it is one of the UK's largest peer-to-peer platforms and it provides loans to small and medium-sized businesses. In 2014, the Government-backed British Business Bank Investment Programme invested £40 million alongside other investors, to support economic growth by providing more efficient finance to small businesses;
- The Eden Project raised £1.5m through a mini four-year bond yielding 6% per annum for investors. Mini bonds provide a set return over a set period.

Others

Brixton produces many community and cooperative initiatives, but Pop Brixton is one of its most impressive. Supported by local activists, a developer and an architect, and with backing from Lambeth Council, Pop has turned a disused space, leased from the council, into a vibrant, inexpensive eating destination. Pop Brixton hosts a number of events and start-up businesses for local residents and business people on a soft rental basis. It has close ties with the local community and schools and has become an attraction in its own right.

A new fundraising appeal is being launched to look after the remote islands of St Kilda. The National Trust for Scotland, which owns the remote St Kilda islands, is launching the Love Our Islands campaign to support historical conservation and environmental work on the archipelago.



Source: NTS

Museums Sheffield's Going Public Report states that philanthropy cannot be 'a silver bullet' to fund the arts sector, philanthropy is now an ever more significant source of support for the culture sector and more can undoubtedly be done to develop private giving. There is a growing desire on the part of private individuals to contribute to regional museums and galleries, but they are not prepared to plug gaps caused by government cuts.

Durham Cathedral has raised £300,000 over the last three years by engaging the public in the building of a Lego model to raise funds towards a new £10.9m permanent exhibition of cathedral artefacts called Open Treasure, expected to attract 120,000 people a year. The completed model is 12ft 6in (3.84m) long, 5ft (1.53m) wide and 5ft 6in (1.7m) high. Visitors donated £1 per brick and the growing model became an attraction in its own right.



Source: Durham Cathedral

4.12.3 – Lessons Learnt

- Traditional forms of funding are now extremely difficult to secure for visitor attractions, particularly for upgrade and refurbishment;
- There has been an increase in temporary events and exhibitions that can raise funding through sponsorship and local business support;
- Crowd funding has successfully raised money for new facilities and there are perhaps opportunities for large and small attractions to fund some growth and refurbishment projects through this method, if innovative rewards to funders can be devised. Payback through crowd lending may also be an option;
- Public appeals may be successful, particularly if the attraction is important locally or has direct community impact or benefit.

5 CASE STUDIES

5.1 Introduction

In this section we profile a number of attractions that were identified from a long list compiled by TRC, Studioarc and D & J International Consulting as prospective examples of best practice in areas of their operations. The selection was based on industry knowledge of the sector alongside evidence of recent award wins from a range of geographic and sector competitions. This long list was discussed with client group at an early meeting and a shortlist of attractions selected and agreed upon to approach with an invitation to participate in the study.


We were successful in 'recruiting' the following attractions and take this opportunity to thank them for their assistance in this project.

5.2 The Case Studies

The attractions featured are, alphabetically:

[Astrid Lindgren's World](#), Vimmerby, Sweden
[Black Country Living Museum](#), Dudley, UK
[Bompas & Parr](#), London UK
[Bursledon Brickworks](#), Southampton, UK
[Corris Craft Centre](#), Machynlleth, Wales
[Eleven Arches / Kynren](#), Bishop Auckland, UK
[Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre](#), Macclesfield, UK
[New Lanark](#), Lanark, Scotland
[Tayto Park](#), Ashbourne, Ireland
[Vasa Museum](#), Stockholm, Sweden
[World of James Herriot](#), Thirsk, UK



ASTRID LINDGREN'S WORLD		
Such A Short Season		
Location		Vimmerby, Sweden.
Post Code		SE 598 85
Telephone		+46 (0)492-798 00
Opening Times		10-5 Daily
Seasonality		May to August & weekends in September October week
Entrance Fee		Adult from 260-400 SEK (£24-36), Children 185-290 SEK (£17-26), [Day Rate]
Visitor Numbers		Around 500,000
First Opened		1981
Awards		IAAPA nomination
Main attractions		Theme Park, New 'Brothers Lionheart', Retail, Food, Tourist Accommodation
Volunteers?		None
Shop		7 Shops and online store
Restaurant		4 Restaurants plus stalls and coffee shops
Tax Breaks		
Funding		9.5million Swedish crowns (£850,000) from TBC the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth.
General Description		
<p>Astrid Lindgren World is a theme park based on the characters and settings of the children's author Astrid Lindgren. Billed as an outdoor theatre, it offers live performances, interactive experiences, play areas, food and retail opportunities.</p> <p>The park has a number of distinct areas individually themed corresponding to the characters in the children's book. These include Cottage, Katthult, Matt's Forest, Wild Rose Valley to see Pippi Longstocking, That Emil, Mardie, Karlsson on the Roof</p> <p>The Astrid Lindgren brand reaches further than the theme park itself and extends to various other attractions including Vimmerby town, Astrid Lindgren Nas, (the author's house and garden), Katthult Farm (depicted in her books) and Bullerbyn (a village appearing in films of her work).</p> <p>The town of Vimmerby has also hosted a number of films based on the books, the most recent in 2014. The park itself has been used as a location for some of the stories filmed.</p> <p>The attraction cooperates with a number of children's charities and they feature with a presence in Tiny Town where they have exhibits and displays of the work they undertake for example in Central African Republic.</p> <p>The author's legacy also includes a memorial award (ALMA) for writers of children's fiction. The sum awarded is in the region of £450,000.</p> <p>By way of diversification and revenue generation the theatre park offers a range of accommodation types – camping, chalets and cottages. The enrichment of the experience is ongoing with the new Brothers Lionheart attraction for 2016 and new accommodation in the form of Tiny Town.</p> <p>A particular feature of the park is the very short season.</p>		
What do you think accounts for the attraction's success?		
<p>We are a theme park experience working in the industry where the focus is the overall experience in the park. Our four cornerstones are: experience the environment, theatre, meeting and game. Focus is also on the food offering and the green / outdoor environment.</p>		

Of course Astrid's authorship and knowledge of Astrid is critical to the park's success. That we can bring to life the stories and create the illusion for our visitors of being in the middle of the story. There is also work to do in all areas of the visitor experience. Everything is really a crucial factor particularly our level of service and customer care.

How do the visiting public perceive the attraction – is it for entertainment, education?

Our view is that Astrid Lindgren's World is seen as a place of fun and entertainment. There are the other sites and attractions that will appeal to those looking for other aspects of her life eg history, education, etc.



What is the mix of business in terms of revenue – ticket sales, accommodation food, retail, etc?

Our biggest source of revenue is the entrance / admissions revenue which accounts for over 55 percent of turnover. Accommodation accounts for around 10 percent of revenue at present but this is where we see great potential to grow in future.

Food is obviously an important element at the attraction, with your chef collaboration, provision of locally produced, and prepared from scratch? Please describe the steps you have taken to differentiate your offering from others in the sector. How do you see the offer developing in future? Is your food cost above the industry norm because of your policy?

Our starting point is all about our local food culture, it is distinctive and widely eaten in Småland, Sweden with its own history. It is a prominent feature in Astrid's books where there are often descriptions of meals and dishes. Our raw material costs, we estimate to be higher than the average in our industry. But if we are going to do justice for Astrid Lindgren's World for real, it's important that we go all the way in the food and drink in the same way. We see that many of our attraction competitors / colleagues are going the same way which is why it is important for us to constantly develop and refresh the food concept. We are now working a lot to assist those with different food intolerances as more and more people today expect this of us.



The retail offer is diverse and wide ranging? How important is the retail offer to the business? What are the implications of such a wide offer in terms of stock, staffing, sell by dates, etc?

We sell only things that can be connected to Astrid's different stories and of course her books in our bookstore. Retail trade is important and we are also seeing more and more of our products selling at other times of the year through our online store.

How important is the portfolio of onsite accommodation? Do you have any idea of the proportion of visitors that stay overnight to visit you??

We currently have too little accommodation directly connected to the park and we also need accommodation for some staff to reside in the city of Vimmerby. Our plan is that within the next few years to increase our own accommodation from 1,000 beds to 2,000. Already this year, we are building an additional 200 beds, which will be operational for the forthcoming Autumn Break.

Development at the attraction has been undertaken over a long timescale and under various ownerships. What is the current ongoing plan for the future?

Housing development, the possibility of having more days open during the year. We hope to have a great news story or new facilities to present inside the park every 3rd or 4th year.

Apart from the new 'Brothers Lionheart' development opening this year, do you have any major plans for the future?

As I write, housing developments. This year we are building 200 new beds. The next stage of around 400 beds will be ready for May 2018.

To what extent is the ongoing refreshing and development activity instrumental in generating repeat visits?

Really important because over 60 percent of all our guests have previously visited us. New elements is a very big part in maintaining the appeal.

What are the main strategies to address the issue of seasonality and challenge of staffing?

Being able to retain skilled personnel in key functions. With our strong seasonality, we have difficulty to continue to employ as many as we would like to do on the basis of skills and experience.



How if at all, does the ethos of Astrid Lindgren permeate the work you do in the park? For example her ideas on peace and democracy.

Our mission is to bring to life the stories by Astrid actors and the environments that we build – our role is the entertainment fun side of the legacy. Obviously we reflect Astrid values in our attitude but it's shown more in how we receive our guests, the equal values and so on. There are other attractions where Astrid's wider ideas are more appropriately laid out and explored.

Does being part owned by the Municipality present any challenges or does it bring benefits?

We see the benefits of it then it will be a good anchor for the local business community.

Visitor Management – I see you offer a 'jump the queue' ticketing system. Is visitor management an issue for you, if so what strategies do you have in place to deal with the issue?

We do not see it as a problem. In the year up to date, we have sold 70 per cent of all our entrance tickets via the Web. However, we see a challenge for the future will be more to know exactly what day guests plan to visit us. Today valid ticket for the entire order or the main season. In the future we will try to find out when the guest supposed to come by asking them at the time of purchase on the web which week they were going to visit us. We would like to integrate our sales system more than they are today. A ticket may also be used to open the door to the accommodation or to use when paying in restaurants.


Lessons Learnt

- A wider visitor destination has been created through branding and promoting other locations that appear in the books and the film. This increases the average length of stay and boosts visitor spend in the local area;
- The attraction has diversified its revenue sources by offering various forms of accommodation, including themed accommodation in Tiny Town;
- The use of actors and live theatre is important to bringing the attraction alive and adding a unique, animated and immersive experience for visitors;
- The attraction prides itself on a high level of customer service, good training and high staff morale is needed. The attraction has its own staff accommodation and staff community;



- They continually develop and refresh the food concept. Fresh, healthy, good quality local food is a key offer throughout the attraction. The local food is distinctive and is a prominent feature in the Astrid Lindgren books. The attraction reflects the authenticity of the food offer made by 'proper' chefs from scratch. The foods cost may be higher than average but the quality is what sells;
- The website is in four languages with an embedded reading aloud app.

Images Source: Astrid Lindgren's World

BLACK COUNTRY LIVING MUSEUM		
'Well, go to the foot of our stairs!'		
Location		Dudley, West Midlands
Post Code		DY1 4SQ
Telephone		0121 557 9643
Opening Times		10am – 5pm
Seasonality		Daily all year (Oct-Dec Wed / Sun only)
Entrance Fee		Adult £16.95, Concessions £13.50, Children £8.45, Family Tickets available. Reductions online.
Visitor Numbers		298,965 (2011), 249,574 (2012), 240,388 (2013), 271,467 (2014), 292,530 (2015)
First Opened		Charity formed 1975, Doors opened in 1978
Awards		Museums & Attractions Gold Award: Forging a Culture of Enterprise and Self-Reliance National Museums & Heritage Awards for Excellence. (Best Project on a Limited Budget in the UK 2015). Sandford Award (Education). Group Travel Awards runner-up – Best Museum for Group Visit. Finalist in Group Leisure Awards – Best Guided Tour. More pre-2010. TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence
Main attractions		Immersive visitor experience across 26 acres. (Nostalgia). Vintage transport. Mining experience. Satellite Museum of Locks 6 miles away.
Volunteers?		60 (Approx)
Shop		Gift Shop and online
Restaurant		2 Cafés, Pub and Fish & Chip Shop
Tax Breaks		N/A
Funding		Most recent success securing £2.658m from Arts Council England as part of the West Midlands Museum Partnership, a new initiative between BCLM and Culture Coventry, which accords the title ACE-funded Major Partner Museum.
General Description		
<p>The Black Country Living Museum (BCLM) located near Dudley in the West Midlands is one of the largest open-air museums in the UK attracting some 8.5 million visitors to date since it opened in 1978. It has grown in stature over the years and now the Museum's entire collections are Designated by Arts Council England.</p> <p>It covers 26 acres of former industrial land, and lays claim to being the birthplace of the industrial revolution, manufacturing amongst other things, structural ironwork, chains, locks and keys, metal tubing and traps. It seeks to recreate the sights, sounds and smells of an early industrial village which comprises over 50 buildings including a pub, Methodist chapel, school, shops and houses from around the wider Black Country many dismantled brick by brick at their original sites and rebuilt to create the feel of the late 19th-century.</p> <p>As a visitor attraction it offers period costumed characters, shops, houses, live demonstrations, an underground mine (recreating working conditions in a coal mine), a school, a fairground, a transport collection (rideable trams and busses), working animals and a pub.</p> <p>In addition to the above, it is used as a location for various period television programmes, including 'Peaky Blinders', 'Arthur & George' and 'Land Girls'.</p> <p>BCLM has many connections to the education sector with school visits from all age groups – early learning to higher educational stages. There is curriculum approved material available for teachers, and opportunities for adult learning with talks, conferences and skills development programmes.</p>		

BCLM won a major award this year from Museums and Attractions for Trading and Enterprise. What was the nature of the project submitted?

The Project Title was Forging a Culture of Enterprise and Self-Reliance at BCLM.

As part of its Strategic Plan 2015-20 BCLM has adopted a new business model in order to achieve greater resilience. Through a significant increase in visitor numbers and by maximising and diversifying sources of revenue, the Museum will become and remain self-reliant. 2015 saw the first year of this new approach, placing emphasis on increasing revenue from filming location hire, attracting more visitors via its special events programme, diversifying and improving its retail and catering offer and forging new public and private partnerships. This new approach is underpinned by a fundamental shift in attitude; seeing visitors as customers and thus reinforcing a two way relationship.

What was the high level outcome of adopting the new business model?

2015 saw the Museum achieve a trading surplus of circa £450k, more than doubling the surplus made in 2014 and moving from trading losses of £15k and £285k in 2013 and 2012 respectively. The adoption of the new business model outlined has been central to this success and has enabled the Museum to secure its independence moving into 2016 and beyond. Through re-investment of the surplus, the Museum will work towards realising its full potential for visitors, the local community and staff, in pursuit of its vision and mission. *“Our staff live in the Museum to welcome you into the inspiring stories of real people, their streets and homes, work and daily lives, so you too can see, taste, feel, smell, hear and join in 300 years of Black Country history”.*

You have grown your Location Hire revenue year on year recently, is this the result of a conscious effort?

BCLM earned £51,000 from filming projects in 2015 (in 2013 that figure was £15,100).

In 2015 the Museum took on various filming projects including prime time reality shows, documentaries and dramas. Increasing income from filming has formed an integral part of the Museum’s strategic aim to grow and diversify its income streams. BCLM has been both ambitious and resourceful in attracting film crews, offering a unique and competitive package as well as taking advantage of the authentic ‘ready-made set’ that it has to offer.

One of the ways BCLM innovates in this area is by utilising the strengths of its current staff for filming projects. The Museum has trained select staff to be specialist filming assistants and supervisors. This offers a number of benefits, and means that staff across the site both understand and champion the impacts and benefits of filming. BCLM is committed to ensuring that filming projects are never to the detriment of the visitor experience. By having trained staff on hand who are empowered to make decisions, offer help and communicate with visitors, the impacts are greatly mitigated. The Museum also consistently ensures that it derives maximum value from any secondary benefits that filming offers. For example, the Museum received an estimated £165,000 worth of press coverage from just five days of Peaky Blinders filming in 2015.



Source: Express & Star

You have been successful in your Events programme, how has this been achieved?

Income from ticket sales for evening events in 2015 has increased by 5% from 2014 (£260,832 in 2014 to £274,075 in 2015) and by 26% from the £216,997 achieved in 2013. Our 1940s Weekend saw revenue return increase from £9,469 in 2014 to £20,829 in 2015, with pre-purchase ticket sales increasing from £14,033 in 2014 to £25,036 in 2015. Note: This calculation is admissions, retail and catering income less event, staffing and marketing cost.

Holding out of hours events is nothing new or special for many museums. Making them a viable way of generating income, however, is. In 2015, BCLM truly excelled in this area which is often considered labour intensive and unprofitable. While BCLM has always had a strong, year round events programme, 2015 saw record-breaking levels of attendance and profits for the programme. The Museum has fully utilised all of its resources to make its events programme what it is today – unique experiences that cater to a wide variety of audiences from young families (Family Night) to history and steam enthusiasts (Red by Night). All evening events sold out in 2015 but perhaps the shining example of how evening events can really generate income, was the 1940s Evening. Revenue generated from this event increased by 74% year on year, with pre-purchase ticket sales increasing 84% year on year. This is due to a combination of more astute marketing aimed further afield and to a much more varied audience (although note that marketing budgets increased by only 5% – budgets were just used much more judiciously) as well as utilising the Museum's food & drink offer to cater for such an increase in visitor numbers.

How has the Retail element of the attraction fared in recent years?

In 2015, average net on site spend per visitor increased by 28% (from £1.18 in 2014 to £1.52 in 2015). Overall, the onsite retail and catering units achieved a 39% increase in net profit year on year.

In 2015 the Museum's two retail units (main gift shop and H. Morrall's Gentleman's Outfitters) saw sales increase by 11% (from £319,035 in 2014 to £355,414 in 2015), net profit by 38% (£50,013 in 2014 to £68,902 in 2015) and average transaction value by 23% (£4.24 in 2014 to £5.21 in 2015).

BCLM has seen vast improvements in its earnings from onsite trading activities. These figures are not wholly accounted for by an increase in visitors numbers (of 7.8% year on year), to which the rise in spend per visitor will attest.

These impressive numbers are a result of the attitudinal shift within BCLM's business model. In 2015, retail and catering became valued as an intrinsic part of the BCLM experience. This can be seen in the overhaul of products offered to visitors with product ranges beginning to change seasonally, and reflecting the themes of the Museum's popular events as well as the films and TV shows it features in. For example, 1940s Weekend was matched with its own prominent section in the gift shop where visitors could pick up wartime memorabilia, ration cookbooks, vintage reproductions etc. For the launch of BBC drama *Peaky Blinders*, BCLM stocked locally brewed Sadler's *Peaky Blinders Ale* as well as herringbone flat caps at the Museum's 1930s H Morrall's Gentlemen's Outfitters. The latter proved exceptionally popular and saw sales in the outlet jump by 57% year on year. In general, these changes are demand-led with products now being offered at more diverse price points to reflect the more varied audiences at the Museum. This forms part of the more general shift from 'visitor to customer' that is taking place across the Museum.

What progress has been made with the catering offer on-site?

In 2015 the Museum's catering units (comprising 7 onsite units of varying sizes and one entrance café) saw sales increase by 18% (£1,014,746 in 2014 to £1,203,580 in 2015), net profit by 34% (£271,046 in 2014 and £366,673 in 2015).

When purchases are made at the Museum, it is exceptionally important that they are integrated seamlessly into the visitor experience because some of the retail and catering outlets also double as part of the attraction. A good example is the Museum's 20th century on site inn. Compared to recent years, it now stocks a greater variety of drinks and traditional snacks at a wider range of price points including a ploughman's lunch and 15 types of gin, the history of which costumed staff are able to talk about extensively. The *Bottle & Glass Inn* has seen spend per visitor jump 44% year on year (net profit 47% year on year).

We try and give ourselves an edge in our catering offering by adopting the idea of "authentic dishes from the past with modern twist" – see menu from the Workers' Institute.



Please tell us a little about your Public and Private Partnerships

In 2015, BCLM forged several creative partnerships including sponsorship from Banks's (a Midland's-based sub-brand of Marston's PLC), ERA and Thomas Dudley. Banks's took sole sponsorship of the Museum's 1940s Weekend and Halloween Nights. The partnership proved highly successful, with Banks's selling 1,500 pints across the two events, exposing their brand to over 11,400 customers. Banks's are renewing their sponsorship in 2016, taking the role of 'official beer sponsor' across all of the Museum's special events. Not only has the Museum benefitted from aligning with a well-respected local brand with a rich history in the Black Country, it has also enhanced profitability through receiving Banks's and Marston's casks at a reduced, and importantly, flat rate. The Museum has also utilised Banks's knowledge – they provided extensive cellar management training over the summer.

What are your future plans?

Within the Lifespan of our 10 year Vision we aim to grow visitor numbers to 500,000 visitors. Soft Developments to events programme and partnerships especially to develop our Business Partnership Scheme further, gaining new commercial partners. Physical developments include plans being considered for the development of onsite visitor accommodation of some kind. The large scale redevelopment of the site including a new visitor centre and car park, industrial quarter and 1940-50s town. Incremental site developments including Anchor forge and colliery. To continue with the Museums and Resilient Leadership Programme, a unique course designed to develop a new kind of leading museum professional'. This is part of our ACE MPM programme supporting skills development.

Lessons Learnt

- The Museum's approach has raised its profile and enhanced its reputation leading to increased philanthropic support and improved staff recruitment and retention;
- The museum has placed an emphasis on increasing revenue from filming location hire, attracting more visitors via its special events programme, diversifying and improving its retail and catering offers and forging new public and private partnerships;
- The new approach was underpinned by a fundamental shift in attitude; seeing visitors as customers and thus reinforcing a two-way interactive participative relationship;
- The attraction has a local business partnership scheme. It has sponsorship from Banks Brewery for events – official beer sponsor. It benefits the brewery in increasing customer exposure to their brand and the attraction gets cheaper beer and an association with a well-respected local brand. The attraction reaches a wider and different audience than its core market;
- It is important that catering and retail is an intrinsic part of the business model, with products changing seasonally. The retail offer closely reflects the themes of the museum and its new events, boosting sales. Retail offers at a wide range of price points also helping to boost appeal;
- The museum refined and refreshed its out of hours events programme in 2015. Success is due to a pull of museum resources and a combination of more astute marketing aimed further afield and to a much more varied audience – marketing budgets were used much more judiciously.



Food for Thought?

Location		London
Post Code		SE1 3AE
Telephone		020 7403 9403
Opening Times		N/A
Seasonality		N/A
Entrance Fee		N/A
Visitor Numbers		N/A
First Opened		2007
Awards		30 under 30, Zagat, 2012
Main attractions		Food-related installations and exhibitions, produce and books. 'Thinking out of the box'
Volunteers?		None
Shop		Online shop
Restaurant		None
Tax Breaks		No
Funding		No

General Description

Trying to define what Bompas & Parr do is not immediately apparent. Their website offers some clues but we were still a little bemused. Best leave the description to their own words. This from their website and below in answer to our direct question.

Bompas & Parr leads in flavour-based experience design, culinary research, architectural installations and contemporary food design.

The studio first came to prominence through its expertise in jelly-making, but has since gone on to create immersive flavour-based experiences ranging from an inhabitable cloud of gin and tonic, the world's first multi-sensory fireworks display and a Taste Experience for the Guinness Storehouse in Dublin, officially the best place to taste Guinness in the world.

The studio now consists of a team of creatives, cooks, designers, specialised technicians and architects. With Sam Bompas and Harry Parr the team works to experiment, develop, produce and install projects, artworks, jellies and exhibitions, as well as archiving, communicating, and contextualising the work. Bompas & Parr also collaborates with specialist technicians, engineers, artists, scientists, musicians and many other disciplines to create wondrous events.

Bompas & Parr has an in-house design studio, kitchen and workshop, where we develop new ideas, recipes, cocktails, prototypes and innovative ways of consuming and experiencing food and drink.

Since 2007, when Bompas & Parr was founded, the studio has grown from just Sam Bompas and Harry Parr into a team of 20 skilled and ambitious people eager to generate a wide range of projects. They work with Sam and Harry to experiment, develop, produce, and install projects, artworks, jellies and exhibitions, as well as archiving, communicating, and contextualising the work.

Bompas & Parr also contracts externally with structural engineers, scientists, artists, taxidermists and psychologists – in fact, any other discipline that facilitates a particular response to a creative brief.

How would you describe your organisation?

Bompas & Parr has changed somewhat over the years, evolving from a jelly company into a catering company, then growing into an experiential events company, a design practice and a strategic marketing consultant for all sorts of companies – and we're artists in our own right too. To wrap all those things up, as we still undertake all these different disciplines, we now describe ourselves as experience designers: whether we're designing glassware, planning a feast, or advising on the new advertising strategy for a company, the concept of experience design seems to cover it.

Above all, we're known for avant garde, unusual and unpredictable outputs – whether it's building a lake on the roof of Selfridges, delivering fireworks you can taste as well as see and hear, planning a launch event for a new fragrance or dreaming up innovative new products for an ice cream company, people know to expect the unexpected and that they'll have a great time!



What are your products?

We work predominantly with food and drink partners, cosmetics brands, fashion houses, automotive industries and more, and our 'products' come in the way of imaginative and immersive experiences for consumers that manifest the heritage, provenance, production or values of a product or brand. These experiences could be an intimate journey for a handful of guests, a grand dinner for 600 people, or a huge spectacle for thousands. If we're working with a spirit company, for instance, we might do everything from design new glassware that evokes certain emotional reactions from the drinker, by virtue of the way it looks and feels in their hands or we might plan an event that contains multiple manifestations or interpretations of the product, such as how it was invented or how it tastes; or we might advise on how consumers might experience the product as they walk through an airport.

Who are your primary target market?

We can tailor any experience to the target markets of our commercial clients, but in general we are appealing to an art-loving, urbane crowd who are heavily into food and drink and into enjoying new experiences that they want to share with their friends – to that extent we provide real world experiences that are a refreshing wake-up to a life spent staring at screens, but helpfully create those experiences so that they can share them digitally too. In general our output is appealing to millennials, foodies, and art lovers in fact we often specifically create off-line opportunities that force people to fully engage with their surroundings and to look away from a screen (though of course we also want them to get their phones out and take a picture of our activations!). In that respect we invite our guests / participants to be the protagonist on their own adventure, and that interaction actually gives them new and exciting content to share on their social media platforms, so it neatly intersects the real / off-line world with the digital / on-line.

What do you think are the contributory factors that have made you unique in what you do?

We are known for being visionary and creating world-firsts. That's by virtue of our ability to interpret products and brands in unpredictable ways, and in turn that comes from not only the talents of our own collective internally at Bompas & Parr (we're now 20 people) but by collaborating with other disciplines from unexpected places or industries – hence why we've worked with everyone from taxidermists to toxicologists, meteorological scientists to vulcanologists, florists to fetishists in the pursuit of an amazing experience and 'consumer journey'. Such unexpected collaborations yield equally unexpected outputs – it often means there's a degree of jeopardy in what we do but the results are often spectacular.

When clients approach you, do they always have a good idea what they want from you, or are they largely guided by your ideas and concepts?

We certainly get approached by clients who have definite ideas for us to execute, but we largely get given a blank sheet of paper, so are able to make a number of different suggestions to surprise and delight our clients and tend to make those initial concepts quite 'disruptive' so that we can gauge their reactions and work out the level we should pitch a final experience. Obviously that means there's a creative tussle as we learn more about their brands and they appreciate how what we're proposing is going to generate headlines or talkability or enhance brand awareness and sales.



How long do you think you can keep up this level of creativity?

The whole team here is constantly on the prowl for new ideas and exposing themselves to new stimuli, whether going to the latest showings at galleries or absorbing esoteric books on any subject. We have a grand pool of resource within the studio, which contains artists, writers, designers, film-makers, architects, chefs and more who each have their own interests and experiences, so there's nary a dull moment when these forces align. We don't worry we are going to run out of ideas – though of course it is a challenge to stay ahead of the curve, but one we embrace as we are all collectively adding to our life experience and seeing new and unusual ways to interpret things.



To what extent are your ideas affected by H&S issues and have there ever been occasions when you could not proceed with an idea?

We of course have to operate within health and safety laws, and of course never want to harm or injure anyone who comes to our events, but we do like to push boundaries as we know that injects a note of danger, or at least perception of danger – into proceedings. Often we are creating new experiences that aren't conceivably covered by existing laws or regulations, such as when we gave botanical stimulants to visitors to Kew Gardens as part of a theatrical lecture on toxic plants – for that we had to consult with three toxicologists to understand the safe doses we could give. Even when we knew what we were giving was safe, we had to modify the language in the script so that it didn't unreasonably amplify the psychosomatic effects. And we had to have a defibrillator ready in case there really was an adverse reaction. Of course none of that was covered by conventional health and safety. In general we would say we deliberately include a frisson of danger, even if there's not an actual danger.

How receptive have you found the visitor attraction sector to your ideas and projects?

In the past we've worked with theme parks, museums and art galleries, creating bespoke collateral for temporary collections, given guest lectures, catered special events and cocktail parties and of course we are in the midst of creating our own visitor attraction in the shape of The British Museum of Food, which launched as a pop-up and for which we're about to sign a lease on a 20,000 square foot permanent site. We are also planning a retrospective with Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM) in Sao Paolo in 2017. In general, visitor attractions, the retail sector and other industries are seeing value in our unorthodox approach to experience design.

As a case in point, the British Museum of Food, which initially popped up in Borough Market from November to January 2017, was a fantastic endorsement for our approach to experiential events that take people on immersive journeys and that re-enchant their relationship with something they thought they knew: food. It also made us realise there should be a good balance between the real and digital experiences that we create. In general, it also amplified that people are generally fascinated by flavour and their palates, and that they crave experiences that stimulate all of their senses. If you give them something to eat at the same time, all the better!

Your client base appears to be the large international organisations with 'deep pockets'? Are there opportunities at other market levels or is this solely a high end enterprise?

Actually we have a spread of clients, big and small, and while we work on projects in the hundreds of thousands or even million dollar budgets, we can also accommodate smaller projects that are worth far smaller amounts. What's key is to get a clear brief and then for us to have candid conversations with the client around what bang they get for their buck, but we can deliver an unusual experience at all levels.

You appear as a company to have had a tremendous amount of press coverage and media attention. Similarly you have worked with high profile companies and institutions. Is this something you have courted and managed or has it been the result of word of mouth?

We work hard on press awareness. To some extent you're only as good as your last project that people read about. So for given projects we might have dedicated PR resource but most of the time we plan our press strategy internally but in tandem with the overall experience design. From an early stage we'll factor in whether we're going to simply create an experience or front it too. Word of mouth these days comes from creating scenarios that people want to share on social media. Behind the scenes we obviously work hard to court potential clients but happily as a result of press coverage, social media and conventional word of mouth the phone rings a lot too, sometimes from highly unusual places.

Are there any Scottish organisations you would like to work with?

We've already worked extensively with a variety of Scotch whiskies, single malts and blends, but curiously many of these activations are conducted outside of Scotland and often overseas – we launched a new sherry-finished variant of The Singleton late last year in Taiwan and have previously built a magnificent pipe organ for Johnnie Walker which changes your sense of taste by virtue of its sound, which has travelled the globe. Closer to home it would be an amazing project to create a visitor experience at a whisky distillery – perhaps akin to the taste experience we have at the Guinness Store House in Dublin.

Are there any ideas / comments you could share as food for thought to the Scottish Attractions sector?



The Edinburgh festival and Highland Games are obvious places to start where we could activate something amazing for large crowds. These are occasions when there's so much media attention already focused on Scotland that it would really leverage a brand if they were to take advantage of the sheer number of people with an unforgettable experience.



Lessons Learnt

- The company has diversified and grown from a food brand (jelly company) to a catering company, experiential events company, design practice and strategic marketing consultancy;
- Creating the unexpected and the wow, by developing innovative collaborations linking design, architecture, meteorology, taxidermy to food;
- They have a wide audience but try to appeal in the main to discerning, art-loving millennials. They recognise that this is a growing market for the future and they actively target;


- As a Company the key theme is innovation. They create experiences based on the avant-garde, the unusual, and the unpredictable. They work in the spectacular, creative collaboration is key to their success;
- Key to their approach is attention to detail in creating the complete experience – designing, food, plates, glassware, lighting, etc whatever appropriate to an event;
- They create experiences that are highly emotional and excite visitors' senses – they are experience designers.
- Marketing is important and word of mouth through active use of social media has grown. They tend to use their own internal resources for PR and press strategies – self-promotion is the most effect marketing tool rather than using external agencies.

BOMPAS & PARR PROJECTS

Company / Location	Project	Description
Barbican Art Gallery	Surreal House Dinner – London, 2010	A dinner created for the launch of the Barbican's Surreal House Exhibition
Garage Center for Contemporary Culture Moscow	Art Experiment 2011, Fruit Weather 2013	Using powerful humidifiers to super-saturate the air with fruity vapour
Salon Del Mobile	Innerspace: How Interiors Influence The Taste Of Food – Tar Magazine, April 2012	Experiment to see the effect of different environments on flavour
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art	Funeral Jelly 2009	A glow-in-the-dark funeral installation
Serpentine Gallery	Power Trifle 2010	An overnight event of talks, films, experiments and a midnight feast
Wellcome Collection	Dirt Banquet 2011	A meal exploring the culinary implications of dirt at a London Victorian sewage station
Diageo	The Flavour Conductor 2014	The world's first working musical instrument that you can 'taste' by listening to it
Selfridge & Co / Producers Cargill	Truvia Voyage Of Discovery, Crazy Golf 2012	A installation on the roof of Selfridges in central London
Louis Vuitton	Jelly Landmarks, Istanbul 2014	Jelly landmarks for the launch of the Louis Vuitton Istanbul
Vodafone	Multisensory Fireworks 2014	Clouds of fruit scents, accompanying fireworks
Kraft Foods	Jell-O – New York 2009 	Jell-O map of America
Heinz	Heinz Beanz Curry Flavour Experience 2013	Flavoured baked bean bowls that amplified the flavour of different variants
Borough Market, London,	British Museum Of Food	Temporary museum entirely devoted to the history, evolution, science, sociology and art of food
Guinness	Guinness Tasting Rooms	Tasting rooms designed to celebrate the taste of Guinness
Alcoholic Architecture	Romancing The Armpit / Coffee In Space	The world's first armpit sniffing dating night / Coffee beans sent to space
James Squire's Brewery	Edible Biography Banquet 2016	The tale of Australia's first brewer – Sydney Australia
Perrier-Jouët Champagne	Fleurs Des Rêves 2016	Flowers painted with thermochromatic ink to change colour 

Thornton's	The Sensory Accumulator 2016	'Taste Pod' designed to heighten the appreciation of chocolate
British Museum Of Food	Night Of The Theatroscope 2016, Yoga With The Butterflies 2015	Based on the tale of the Theatroscope, a journey exploring the sights, sounds, smells and sensations of different countries / Yoga in a lepidopterarium
The Shard	Height Of Winter 2015	Designing the world's most romantic place, using smells sounds visual and aural experiences
The Singleton Malt Whisky Co	The Single-Opticon 2015	Based around a 6-metre-long 3D map of Scotland, helping tasters in Taiwan understand and appreciate the spirit better
Soho Farmhouse	Dreaming Together 2015	A Halloween epic combining the supernatural with local lore
Merge Festival	Chamber Of Wishes 2015	The world's first bioluminescent algae-based grotto
Sony	Sonic Wonderland 2015	An audio-gustatory dinner using music to enhance and modify food's flavour
Facebook	London Pie Chart 2015	An illuminated pie chart reflecting the general election conversation on Facebook displayed on the London Eye
Dubai Design District	Artisanal Chewing Gum Factory 2015	A pop-up factory installation to elevate the profile of chewing gum
Andaz Liverpool Street Hotel	Spirited Dinner 2015	Advertised as 'a night of wonder and mystery: séance followed by dinner
Nike	Feasting On Stars 2015	Cooking with plasma, the fourth state of matter
Gold Edition For David Beckham	Instinct 2015	A labyrinth that reflected the design of the bottle for 'Instinct' fragrance for men
Prime Minister's Office Of The UAE	Pharmacafé 2015	Exploring the future of healthcare with Ayurvedic-inspired drinks, blending herbs, spices and flowers
Ace Hotel And The Gourmand & B&P	Anatomical Whisky Tasting 2015 	Aged whiskies consumed from the contours of bodies the same age as the drink
Sir John Soane's Museum.	Monumental Masonry 2015	Reigniting interest in funerary architecture
Belsazar Vermouth	Upside-Down Banquet 2014	Environmental and abstract cues in turning the world upside down, with a mirrored table and reverse menus
Johnnie Walker Diageo	Gingerdrome – Mexico City 2014, States Of Flavour – Melbourne 2013	'A multi-sensory installation to promote 'Johnnie Ginger' drink
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew	Recreational Vegetation 2014	A series of workshops exploring psychoactive plants and stimulating botanicals
Annie Lomax And Kylie Minogue	The Water Temple 2014	A multi-sensory water tasting Installation
Museum Of Sex New York	Funland 2015	An Erotic Fairground – Museum of Sex
Shoreditch House 	Gourmet Bathing: Wetness at Breakfast 2014	Gourmet bathing and morning cocktails
Olympic Park London	Chromatopsia 2013	River Lea turned emerald green at Olympic Park
Wall's Ice Cream	Glow-In-The-Dark Cornetto 2013	The world's first glow-in-the-dark ice cream
The Royal Shakespeare Co	The Waft That Woos 2012	The first mirror maze navigable by nose
Jason Bruges Studio	Mercedes Drive Thru 2012	A installation which illuminates as diners drive through it
Museums At Night	Gesamtkunstwerk – SS Great Britain 2012	Brunel's steamship, successfully set in 55,000 litres of lime green jelly
Alton Towers	Mt. Rocky 2012	The world's first chocolate climbing wall

Images Source: Bompas & Parr

BURSLEDON BRICK WORKS		
How Do You Make Brick Sexy??		
Location		Swanwick
Post Code		SO31 7GW
Telephone		01489 576248
Opening Times		11.00-16.00
Seasonality		3 Days a Week March / October
Entrance Fee		Adult £4, Concession £3, Child £2
Visitor Numbers		7,000
First Opened		2007 (opened three days a week from 2014)
Awards		Institute of Mechanical Engineering Heritage Award in 2011 Tourism South East: Bronze – Small Visitor Attraction award 2014 Best Community Tourism Award 2014 European Route of Industrial Heritage Anchor Point 2016
Main attractions		Large industrial machinery. Hands on craft making. Brick Museum
Volunteers?		Largely run by Volunteers
Shop		Shop selling local crafts (Brick related)
Restaurant		Café – Light food
Tax Breaks		Registered Charity
Funding		£666,300 from HLF in 2011. AIM (Association of Independent Museums) and Biffa Award £82,000 in 2015 as part of the National Heritage Landmarks Scheme
General Description		
<p>Bursledon Brickworks, situated near Southampton, was a fully functioning factory until its closure in 1974. The company were set to demolish the buildings but they were saved in 1980 and given a Grade 2* listing. In the early 1990s the site was sold to Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust for a token sum of £1. A dowry of £700,000 was included in the transaction because the buildings had deteriorated into such a poor state. For several years the site was run as a centre for conservation by HBPT and opened to the public occasionally by a team of volunteers. In 2012 the site was awarded a Heritage Lottery Grant to turn it into a museum.</p> <p>The factory site has been recognised nationally as one of significance as it is the only steam-driven brickworks left intact in the Country. The Victorian machinery and working processes were never updated and all still in use when it closed – this makes it a rare survivor. In fact it has become an anchor point for the European Route of Industrial Heritage in the South of England – only normally accorded to those attractions open all year.</p> <p>Its principle attractions include the steam-driven working machinery, practical brick making, other clay crafts, narrow gauge train rides provided by the Hampshire Narrow Gauge Railway Trust and various visiting attractions.</p> <p>The museum is mainly run by volunteers acting as guides / facilitators and who carry out most of the ongoing restoration work of the buildings and machinery.</p> <p>Additionally, the brickworks has an active educational dimension, welcoming visits from schools, universities the Women's Institute and others.</p>		
Our particular interest: Education and Community		
How do you make bricks sexy!? What do you think are the unique selling points of your attraction?		
<p>We are the only steam driven brickworks left in the country – so that is our USP.</p> <p>However, getting people to actually commit to visiting a museum based on bricks and brickmaking is probably the hardest sell of all. Once they come they love it and the reviews are good. The main attractions are the working machinery, the history, making a brick and understanding more about where bricks come from.</p>		

Making a brick is an activity that is mostly carried out by children but the parents take lots of photos etc and take part in that way.

For schools the best part is being able to undertake activities they would find challenging in the classroom. At the museum children can be very hands-on, mixing clay, creating wattle and daub walls, etc and no one worry about making a mess.



Source: The Oasis Club

How important was it to create your (very witty) website, and the Blog?

The website has been important and we have just updated it so that it is mobile and tablet friendly – most of our visitors look at it using these two methods and hardly any use PCs (which took us by surprise).

We try to keep it factual but interesting and upbeat in style.

We have also started using our Facebook (for people to people contact) and Twitter (business to business) accounts far more as they are a way of being more approachable.

You are only open two days a week generally, is this something you would like to change, and if so in what way?

We are actually open three days a week and if a school or group want to come on other days we fit them in. In the fullness of time we would like to be open for longer. We don't make good use of the weekends or bank holidays. But as a volunteer-run museum it is too difficult at the moment.



Source: Eventseeker.com

I note the Redland endowment and HLF funding in the past – does your attraction run without loss currently?

We are running at a loss now the HLF project has ended but we are about to embark on a new project to try and create a more resilient future.

In terms of percentages what is the mix of revenue in a typical season / year tickets, venue hire, café sales, retail, donations, etc?

Roughly it is as follows: Admissions 50%, Commercial (includes room hire etc.) 31%, café 9%, retail 6% and donations 2%.

How important are the outreach and education programmes to your offer?

The outreach and education programmes are very important to the museum as they take the message of what we are all about further than we could manage otherwise. We like to share what we know and try to inspire people so that they come and visit.

Talks usually end up with the groups coming on a visit either later in the year or the following year. Schools visits we hope end up with the children telling their parents all about us. We don't know if that leads to visits at a later date though as we haven't checked this.

Our school visits follow an imaginative and varied programme that is slowly getting through to our local school community. We were doing Victorian history but this year changed as the curriculum changed. We are now concentrating on what we do best which is getting messy! Activities range from making clay houses for mini-beasts to wattle and daub houses.

What other ways do you interact with the local community?

We are the focus for a local history group. Our visitors are primarily within a 30 minute drive. Our volunteer base is all local. We also work with local businesses where possible. We have a series of one day events throughout the year when we steam up all the working machinery. On these days we have a theme to help us attract visitors. Themes range from a country fair to WW2.

City College Southampton tutor Joe Taylor created a unique sculpture for Bursledon Brickworks Industrial Museum a year or so ago. 'A Twisted Shard' was unveiled in the museum's courtyard in July 2015 in front of over 100 local people who had contributed to the artwork. The twisted sculpture is made of bricks, stands at 30 courses or 2.5 metres high and features a time capsule with information about the history of the museum, the artist and the community groups involved in the build.



Source: Southampton City College

A brick carver attended the opening ceremony to let the gathered crowd try their hand at the decorative carving techniques that had gone into creating the shard. Throughout the project Joe held workshops for local school children and young adults to mould their own personalised bricks that were eventually added to the build. Each brick took one month to dry and was fired for 36 hours before being added to the commission.

We work with special needs groups and can run Arts Award from the museum. At present we help potential young offenders achieve the first level of Arts Award to boost confidence prior to starting secondary school. We also work with adults who have mental health issues and run workshops and memory sessions based on clay.

We also help volunteers gain experience and confidence to get back out into the work place. In the last three years we have helped four people achieve this level of independence.

How important is being near other attractions such as the windmill and Nature Reserve?

It does help all of us as Swanwick is not really a destination. By working together we can help create a sense that it is worth visiting for the day. We started an initiative called Hamble Heritage which worked for two years but changes in staffing at two of the venues has led to a pause. Once we have established a connection again we will resurrect it if possible.

We try to work closely with other attractions further afield as well. Fort Nelson, Basing House, New Forest Show are just some of the partners we work with. They like us bringing hands-on activities to them which we can do quite easily.

What is the nature of the relationship with Hampshire Building Preservation Trust? Does sharing the site with other groups eg SHHSES, HNGRT present challenges? What are the 'partnering arrangements? How useful have you found the associations?

HBPT own the site and have to be consulted on anything that relates to the main building complex and machinery. The aim is for our new trust – Bursledon Brickworks Museum Trust (BBMT) – to take over later this year. The BBMT will run the museum on a day to day basis.

The two partner organisations on site have a fairly simple agreement with HBPT but this is shortly to become a tripartite agreement with our trust as well. It isn't always easy and the relationships wobble occasionally. We do have representatives of both groups on the management team to help ensure communications are good.

What is the staffing set up, I take it most of the team are volunteers? – What proportion?

60 volunteers and 3 part time self-employed contractors...no staff.

How do you train and monitor your volunteers? What kind of training do you give to them?

We monitor via feedback from visitors and keeping an eye on activities ourselves as the notional ones in charge. Training is based on what is statutory at the moment and includes the usual manual handling, working at heights and food hygiene.

We have done some specific work on Dementia and working with troubled youngsters. We ensure there is a first aider on site wherever possible.

Can you tell me something about the connections you have made with 'Dark Encounters' / Southern Ghost Society? Do you see any potential downside to these associations, or was it a 'one off'?

Dark encounters now runs all our ghost hunts etc and we have roughly a booking a month. It is a useful income stream and we don't have to do anything except invoice.

At the moment we don't see a downside and it brings people to the museum who would never have visited otherwise.

If we had to run them it would not be cost effective as no one wants to spend their nights sitting in the cold dark museum so would have to be paid!

How important was the AIM Biffa Award useful in continuing your development of the site?

It was useful in that it has installed our second steam engine which has been in storage for years. People love seeing our working machinery so having more on site will be excellent. It was difficult to manage as the grant had to be applied for quickly and we weren't really ready so it has been a lot of extra work for the volunteer team.

(The HLF grant was the most significant as it helped us to create the museum.)

Do you have any further plans for the site and if so what are the obstacles you envisage?

We have very big plans for the site which, if it all works and we can raise £1.6million will really help to make the museum resilient and restore two derelict areas.

Obstacles – raising such a big sum of money. We have never been so ambitious before.

Hampshire Building Preservation Trust and The European Route of Industrial Heritage. What progress has been made?

We are an anchor point for ERIH which is a big accolade as they won't usually let organisations do this unless they are open full time. It makes us the only one in our area – in fact quite a large area in the south of England. We have had more visitors from Europe this year.

What are you most proud of?

Surviving!

Creating a really interesting museum out of something that most people would think was a bit of a non-starter.

Winning the Tourism South East 'Best Community Business Award' in 2014.

Winning our HLF grant.

Being awarded the Institute of Mechanical Engineering Industrial Heritage award.


Keeping the volunteer team together and inspired.

Our TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence.

Attracting TV programme recording to the site eg Flog It and the Antiques Road Trip. We've also been used as a film set for a BBC South programme on WW2 and several programmes needing a gritty / industrial backdrop!

Lessons Learnt

- Making an everyday object exciting, providing an interactive experience with working machinery is extremely important – everyone loves to make a brick;
- An imaginative schools and education outreach programme, with a high degree of interaction and activity. It is felt that the outreach programme leads to additional attraction visits;
- Need to work in collaboration with other local attractions this has improved destination credentials for days out;
- Utilisation of modern communication techniques to improve people to people contact with Facebook and business to business through Twitter;
- Collaboration with others is important to maximise use local history group, renting out the attraction for ghost hunts is an additional revenue source.

CORRIS CRAFT CENTRE		
Something for Everyone		
Location		Mid Wales
Post Code		SY20 9RF
Telephone		01654 761584
Opening Times		10-5 daily (and Labyrinth)
Seasonality		Varies, mainly seasonal. March – October Some annual.
Entrance Fee		Labyrinth: Adult £9.95, Child £6.65, Senior £8.75
7Visitor Numbers		80,000
First Opened		1982
Awards		National Tourism Awards for Wales Finalist 2015
Main attractions		Retail Crafts / Foods, Mine Explore, King Arthur’s Labyrinth, Lost Legends of The Stone Circle
Volunteers?		
Shop		9 Craft studios all selling craft products, plus a welsh food and drink shop.
Restaurant		Café selling local welsh foods
Tax Breaks		
Funding		
General Description		
<p>Corris Craft Centre in Southern Snowdonia is built on a landscaped part of the old Braichgoch Slate Mine. It opened in 1982, it now comprises nine Craft Studios, a range of tourist attractions, Welsh food and drink shop and a Welsh food café.</p> <p>The centre offers craft products including Chocolate, Glass objects, Candles, Pottery, Furniture, Herbal Lotions and Remedies, Celtic Jewellery, traditional wooden toys and Gin made with Wild Welsh Botanicals. The pottery studio has recently expanded its studio space to allow for more visitor participation.</p> <p>The former underground slate mine plays a major part in the centre’s offer. ‘King Arthur’s Labyrinth’ and ‘Lost Legends of The Stone Circle’ are described as underground storytelling adventures involving boat tours and depicting Welsh folklore.</p> <p>Additionally, ‘Corris Mine Explorers’ is a guided tour, open all year and offers an opportunity to explore the abandoned workings of the old Slate Mine.</p>		
Please provide a little history of the Craft Centre and its associated attraction elements, did you develop the attractions organically or all together?		
<p>The Corris Craft Centre was developed by the Welsh Government and opened in 1982 and comprised 6 craft studios, café and toilets. The Corris Craft Centre is built on the reclaimed land of an old slate mine. In 1994 Corris Caverns Ltd opened the King Arthur’s Labyrinth visitor attraction which uses the disused underground slate mine caverns as a dramatic backdrop for its underground storytelling adventure. In 1996 Corris Caverns Ltd acquired the Corris Craft Centre which consisted of 6 craft studios and a café. In 2006 a further four craft studios were opened. In 2009 a further attraction, Corris Mine Explorers opened.</p>		
Are the Craft Centre, King Arthur’s Labyrinth and The Corris Mine Explorers stand-alone businesses or all under the Craft Centre umbrella?		
<p>All of the businesses are owned and operated by Corris Caverns Ltd but they are standalone brands / attractions.</p>		
If under a single commercial entity, what proportion or revenue do the Craft Centre / King Arthur Labyrinth / Stone Circle and the Corris Mine Explorers experience contribute to the whole?		
<p>The 9 individual craft studios are run by independent designer-makers who pay rent for their space.</p>		

The proportion of revenue is split approximately as follows:
King Arthur's Labyrinth and Lost Legends of The Stone Circle: 56%
Corris Craft Centre, including Café, Welsh food and drink shop and Tourist Information Point: 40%
Corris Mine Explorers: 4%



Source: Corris Craft Centre

How do you manage the mix of different Crafts in the Centre? Do you experience much turnover of 'tenants'?

The leases provide an exclusive area of activity for each craft studio. We have 6 very well established tenants and 3 which have changed recently. We have 2 tenants who have been at the Craft Centre since it first opened. We have a low turnover of tenants.

Can you provide a rough breakdown of visitor numbers by type, schools groups, independent tourists, day visitors etc? Adult / Children mix, etc? What proportion of visitors book tickets on line?

I'm sorry but the visitor breakdown is difficult and we don't have these numbers. We have an approximate mix of 2 adults to every 1 child. For King Arthur's Labyrinth and Lost Legends of The Stone Circle approximately 10% of visitors book on line.

How many staff do the different parts of the business employ? Are there any volunteers involved? How do you deal with the seasonal opening in terms of staffing?

During the main season we employ 1 person in our Tourist Information Point, 6 in the King Arthur's Labyrinth reception area, 8 Guides in King Arthur's Labyrinth, 4 Office Staff (3 part time and 1 full time) and 10 Café staff. During the winter season we employ 1 person in King Arthur's Labyrinth reception area on a part time basis, 4 staff in the office as above, 4 Guides in King Arthur's Labyrinth and 2 in the Café. We don't have any volunteers. During the summer months we employ a large number of students to cope with the peak season.

In your café and shop, do you think that the local produce you offer is key to the success of this aspect of the visitor attraction? Do you have a local resident market for the shop? Do you have any plans to provide online shopping facilities?

We would not describe the local produce as key to the success of the Y Crochan cafe but it is very valuable. In our Welsh food and drink shop Bwtri Y Crochan it is absolutely key as the whole ethos of Bwtri is Welsh produce. Much of the produce sourced comes from just a few miles away. In our gift shop local produce is certainly useful but not viewed as important.



Source: Corris Craft Centre

Yes, we do have a number of local residents who come to the Corris Craft Centre to shop and to have lunch. Some of our independent craft studios offer on line shopping but we do not have any plans to offer that facility from the Craft Centre.

What is the take up on the 'hands-on' activities you provide?

We are told by the independent designer-makers that this is a growing side of their business. The Pottery has recently expanded its studio space to allow more room for their pottery painting activities.



Source: Corris Craft Centre

Have you found H&S / risk assessment considerations an increasing challenge in developing and sustaining your business?

Health and safety and risk assessment considerations are increasingly challenging especially in running our 2 underground attractions (King Arthur's Labyrinth and Corris Mine Explorers). We take these considerations very seriously.

How much are the other visitor attractions in your area influential in bringing business your way?

We do limited joint marketing activities with the Centre for Alternative Technology and Talylyn Railway who are our 2 nearest attractions. We are members of the Attractions of Snowdonia (a consortia of approximately 30 visitor attractions across Snowdonia). We are also members of the Dyfi Biosphere Tourism Association. We work closely with a number of accommodation providers across the local area.

What special attributes do think makes your Visitor Attraction particularly unique and successful? What are you most proud of in the business? What do you think makes you such a popular day out?

The Corris Craft Centre is such a diverse mix of attractions, activities and shops offering something for all members of the family to enjoy. We often have family members who go in separate directions to enjoy different elements of the attraction and then meet for lunch in the café. We have unique visitor attractions – King Arthur's Labyrinth sails people through a magical waterfall and back to the Dark Ages to enjoy mythical Welsh legends whilst Corris Mine Explorers takes people into the virtually untouched, abandoned workings of an old Welsh slate mine. It is the guide that makes this trip so very unique almost bringing it back to life.

The Corris Craft Centre studios are now all full which we are very proud of. A couple of years ago, 2 tenants left at virtually the same time which left us with 2 empty studios for a number of months and this was during the recession. Thankfully we climbed out of it and now the Craft Centre has a very diverse mix of studios and many visitors are now commenting on the great selection of handmade crafts which is very reassuring to hear.

There are many things that we are very proud of and it is difficult to pinpoint just one thing. They would include the quality of our staff – we receive consistently high reviews about our staff that are described as being friendly and helpful and this is so incredibly important to us. We are very proud of the diverse nature of our product offering and being able to provide something for all ages and abilities to enjoy.

More than half of our nine Craft Studios offer opportunities for visitors to participate in hands-on and fun activities. This is becoming increasingly important and fulfilling the increased demand for visitor participation.

We are proud to be able to welcome and entertain less able visitors. Our pathways are wide, flat and wheelchair friendly as are our Craft Centre studios and Y Crochan café. We have a Changing Places unit providing a comfortable area for less able visitors and their carers. Lost Legends of The Stone Circle has gravel pathways and is also wheelchair accessible.

We are very proud to have been shortlisted as one of the Best Days Out in Wales 2015 in the Wales Tourism Awards.

We are also very proud of the quality of our food. The Y Crochan café sources delicious locally produced food and drink which is used across the menu to create mouth-watering dishes. We are receiving excellent comments about our food and drinks. The addition of the Bwtri Y Crochan Welsh food and drink shop about 4 years ago is another bonus with visitors able to buy many of the ingredients which were used to create the dishes they enjoyed in the café. All of the above make us a popular day out.

Is the provision of tours in Welsh an important offering?

Politically yes, commercially not really.

Do you have any plans to develop your business in the near future and if yes, in what way?

Next year it is the Year of Legends in Wales and we are working up a range of ideas to enhance and develop King Arthur's Labyrinth for this exciting year and beyond.

Lesson Learnt

- Organic growth over 35 years has now created a complete visitor destination – attraction, entertainment, art, activities, refreshment and shopping boosting day out opportunities for local resident and visitors;
- The diverse range of attractions on one site gives something for all – Myths and Legends, a mine and craft studios;
- Interaction with people is an important selling point – knowledgeable and helpful guides, storytellers, artists and staff;
- A growing demand for 'hands on facilities' – Pottery Studio expanded studio for pottery painting activities;
- Trend to focus on local produce – The café sources locally produced food and drink for their menu. This is echoed by the Welsh food and drink shop where local produce can be bought;
- Third party rent to boost income – the centre has 9 independent craft studios that pay rent and boost income year round;
- Access for All – The centre has wide doors and flat pathways all are wheelchair and buggy accessible. They have a Changing Places unit, a comfortable area for less able visitors and their carers.



2016's Hot Ticket with a Cast of a 1,000

Location		Bishop Auckland
Post Code		DL14 7SF
Telephone		01388 311 813
Opening Times		9.30pm start (early season) 8.30pm start (late)
Seasonality		14 Performances over 3 Months July-September 2016
Entrance Fee		Adults £25-£55, Children £19-£41
Visitor Numbers		TBD
First Performances		July 2016
Awards		
Main attractions		Large immersive outdoor theatrical experience
Volunteers?		Over 1,000 volunteers across the project
Shop		Onsite Shop
Restaurant		Food Stalls and Licensed Bar available
Tax Breaks		None
Funding		£31m core funding

General Description

Kynren is the vision of the philanthropist Jonathan Ruffer formerly an investment banker who is originally from the North East. He has largely funded this, and other local projects, which is broadly based on the Puy du Fou model, an idea developed in La Vendée in France which opened in 1978.

Kynren is described as 'An Epic Tale of England', and is a night time open air show performed on a 7.5 acre site near Bishop Auckland, in the North East of England. This, the first year saw the show being staged 15 times over the summer on most Saturday evenings. The concept takes a potential audience of 8,000 (each night) through two millennia of British history. It contains special effects, pyrotechnics, a 'movie-like' surround sound system, actors and animals.



Unusually, its cast and crew of approximately 1,000 are comprised almost entirely of volunteers, trained by specialists in their respective fields. The local volunteers have learned skills including costume-making, combat, horsemanship, maintenance and working with the public. Others have learnt lighting skills, animal handling, diving, acting etc. Some of the veterans of Puy du Fou along with several of those involved in the staging of the 2012 London Olympics opening ceremony have been instrumental in delivering the project.

Through Kynren, the intention is to create jobs and attract more tourists to the area through continuing the shows but adding new elements annually, developing a cultural centre in the Town and redeveloping local inns / hotels. To promote the destination 13 projects have been identified. The vision includes turning the castle into a public attraction with 150,000 visitors anticipated annually, nearby Binchester Roman Fort has been purchased and a two-storey 'welcome building' completed. The economic impact study, which envisages a 'Durham cultural corridor' is available to read [here](#).

There will be an art gallery, borrowing 'world class' works from the Prado Museum in Spain along with a Spanish study centre in a disused school, supported by Durham University. The Charitable Trust has bought the Queens Head and Post Chaise hotels in the market place and there are plans for an 80-seat restaurant at the Castle's renovated walled garden.

The consultants took the opportunity to attend two of the shows, the opening night of 2nd July and a later 3rd September event which up until that time was the only one to be staged in the rain. The content below contains comment relating to the two trips.

The ambition is huge, what has so far been the most important aspect of delivering that ambition?

The whole project has been an immense undertaking. From the Kynren props team sourcing and creating hundreds of items to ensure every detail of Kynren is as authentic as possible. Items include flails and hammers for the Georgian Renaissance scenes along with Roman shields, drums and helmets, the latter using a mould from a real Roman helmet used in the film Gladiator. The team have also created larger pieces like the throne of William the Conqueror to the Kynren seamstresses who have been hard at work for months making costumes for the cast, including Queen Elizabeth I robes, which took around a month to create and used over a mile of thread and 10,000 hand-sewn beads.

The music sound track which accompanies the performance is the work of the award-winning composer Nathan Stornetta. He graduated from the Royal College of Music in London and almost immediately started winning awards. He has collaborated with Hans Zimmer (The Dark Knight Rises, Sherlock Holmes, and Pirates of the Caribbean) and Jeff Atmajian (King Kong, The Village, and Batman Begins).

The Show director, Steve Boyd said "Our greatest goal is getting the broadest spectrum of participants, every socio-economic age range, everything. If we get the first year right, then it becomes a word of mouth thing for recruitment year-after-year. That's our overarching goal."

How has the partnership with Puy du Fou helped?

This is Puy du Fou's first artistic collaboration outside of France and we are incredibly proud to have been able to steal a march on Moscow – their next project. Puy du Fou have been rigorous in their approach. Raphaël Daguët, stage designer for Puy du Fou and assistant producer for 'Kynren' has said that they undertook significant research to ensure historic authenticity in bringing this epic journey through British history to life. The designs have been adapted for the show based on the artistic directions of Puy du Fou and practical criteria like weight and size, before the props team consider the best and most cost-effective way to make them.

Undoubtedly success will have been down to planning and logistics – what has been involved.

There was a call for action where people were invited to express their interest to become a volunteer, we were looking for 1,000 volunteers. Puy du Fou had the artistic side taken care of and Steve Boyd was the catalyst to getting all the volunteers ready for them. He said "We're finding the right people, we're getting the ethos of volunteering and community together so everyone's on the same level. Getting them working as a team. [Puy du Fou] are the guts of it, I'm getting them the right candidates. It's like a cross between a really good wedding reception and a gym class, it's all about community."

In September 2015 Eleven Arches hosted a mix-and-match session at Auckland Castle, where volunteers who had registered their interest were assessed and assigned a role for the season. The training academy then ran through the off-peak season between September and March with kids able to participate in after-school and weekend activities to bring them up to show standard.

How did you initially engage with the local community at all levels? What lessons have been learnt? How did you take the community with you and avoid alienation?

The whole project has been about the community so all actions and activities have been focused in that manner. We held open days, recruitment events, then moved on to training sessions across the piece. (See overleaf).

In addition to the creation of props, we put out calls for the community to donate or loan historic props for use in the show. The response was great with a wide range of items from musical instruments and bicycles to scythes and milk jars but a number of objects were more difficult to source including 1920s bicycle and cars.

In addition to the dress rehearsals and press preview night we staged a special Near Neighbour performance in the run up to the Show's premiere.

What have been the messages to volunteers?

Best summed up in the ad: HELP WANTED: Enthusiastic volunteers needed to sword fight, joust, set off fireworks, turn themselves into shapes and possibly change the face of North East tourism.

No experience necessary. Training provided. An interest in history or being Errol Flynn desirable but not essential. Must be able work as part of a team – of 1,000 people. Interested? Then the Eleven Arches project needs you!

Volunteers trained by the academy, will not only perform on-stage, but also act as technical crew and handle elements such as first-aid, costume design, pyrotechnics and prop making, among other duties.

The team created four masterclasses – one on pyro, combat, horse riding and human animation.

All-comers have been provided with a job and it has been important that the volunteer has been matched to a job rather than a person filling a role. Hence there is a youngster whose role is 'Sheep Calmer' and given the responsibility of stroking the sheep once they have come 'off stage'! (Each volunteer committed to make themselves available for 10 of the 14, later 15 performances).

What was the process in recruiting volunteers?

Call to arms a series of early workshops for a small number of 'evangelists / ambassadors' then a wider appeal for participation.

A 'phase zero' stage of the project saw 334 participants involved in a series of weeklong programmes designed to teach them pyrotechnic, equestrian, combat and choreography skills. Led by Steve Boyd, up to 10 hours of training were proof the project was deliverable and it was possible to train people in the tight timeframe. Off the back of the workshops a series of video trailers were produced, with participants talking about their experiences, and showing what they learned in an effort to encourage others to sign up. The Open Day saw 700 signed up. Further call for 240 made in July 2015.

The complexity of the tasks involved are illustrated by the Head of Volunteer Casting role who had to:

Be responsible for a c500 Cast Performers and oversee as well as support facilities c500 Workforce Volunteers.
Be responsible for building a Volunteer database and Volunteer Casting Management Plan.
Manage Volunteer information on the database and take care of all legal requirements, Government issued ID, medical, special requirements and additional information.
Maintain registration lists with attendance from Rehearsals.
Prepare internal and external documents for the Volunteer Casting Department.
Liaise with Stage Management to understand the props requirements for delivery of Rehearsals. Load in and collect props from Rehearsals.
Compile a master Rehearsal and Training Schedule for all Volunteers and for the organisation to follow.
Schedule and distribute rehearsal / performance timings.
Supervise and coordinate Volunteers to ensure that cast are kept informed and attend all scheduled Rehearsals.
Support Volunteer movement and way finding / displaying signage of Rehearsal venues.

Manage Team Leaders by providing duties and on the job training.
Assist the Mass Choreography Team during Rehearsals and delivery of performances.
Obtain data capture for Volunteer ID cards and distribute cards on completion of their onsite induction.
Liaise with and induct Volunteer Chaperones in their role & support to Eleven Arches.
Compile and distribute Chaperone communication packs.
Compile progress and attendance reports, overview of active and inactive.
Volunteers, overview of Children across all Volunteer departments.
Provide breakdowns across all Volunteer departments.
Liaise, as required with other Team Captains and Eleven Arches functional areas.
Support communication between workforce planning and volunteer recruitment.
Training Management - liaising with Team Captains regarding their Volunteer departments' training requirements.

What have been the key issues and lessons in dealing and training such a large number of volunteers?

One of the hopes, alongside an increased sense of community and the economic benefits, is that in an area of higher than average unemployment, and at a time when groups like the North East Local Enterprise Partnership are calling for more to be done to give young people the skills needed for work, the project can provide an alternative to conventional learning for the town's teens.

It is hoped all will have left having had a positive experience and will go and talk to their families and friends as our goal is to get as broad a spectrum of participants from the community as possible. "If we get a freshman class that is diverse and strong then for years and years to come recruitment will take care of itself".

Strengths of your training professionals and their methods?

Steve Boyd, the creative mastermind responsible for choreographing the Industrial Revolution sequence of London 2012 Opening Ceremony, spent several months working with Eleven Arches to orchestrate the Mix and Match auditions and establish the Showcase Masterclasses for Kynren, which are the cornerstone of the choreography in the show. Members of the cast attended rehearsals right up to the premiere to ensure Steve's vision was perfectly executed at each performance. Several members of the choreography team – who have major international event experience including Olympic winter and summer ceremonies, Paralympics, Commonwealth Games and FIFA World Cups – were invited to work on the Rio Olympics ceremonies – but turned it down in favour of working on the incredible dance routines for Kynren.

The ethos was all encompassing with the consultant on the 3rd September particularly impressed by one of the Food Concessionaires, circulating to ask his patrons whether they were enjoying their purchased fayre!

How have you planned for a large volumes of people movement on event nights?

A cohort of visitor services volunteers, the Experience Team, all received WorldHost training in the manner of the Games makers of the 2012 Olympics – the Archers chosen for their outgoing personalities, and friendly natures. Welcome Archers are posted along the length of the routes from car parks to the Show site, each with a smile and a friendly word as patrons pass by, some show tricks taught at 'circus school' to engage with the kids in the family parties. The two and a half to three and a half hour arrival period and instructions allowed for a relaxed arrival of the 8,000 audience supported by bus transfer from car parks to site.

Departure presented some issues with the need to pulse / briefly hold back audience, controlled by the Archer marshals, to avoid accident or injury through mass rushing offsite.



Source: Newton News

What were the conditions placed on the development in granting the planning permission to proceed?

Initially recommended for refusal, the project was passed by the Durham County Council planners in June 2015 once fears / concerns over issues with noise, light pollution, bats and otters were allayed. The real positive feel across the whole community is thought to have communicated itself to County Durham councillors and they committed to the vision, feeling able to pass the application despite certain concerns.

Has the project been entirely funded by Jonathan Ruffer in the run to the event. Figures of £25 million up to £100 million are quoted in the press. Is this a reflection on catalytic investment or the combined Auckland Palace and Kynren projects?

Various figures have been quoted some refer to different elements of the overall vision. It would not be appropriate at this stage to discuss a total. Jonathan's investment has attracted some support from other quarters eg Heritage Lottery.

Once up and running the show can be performed a maximum of 30 times a year and will see about £3m invested annually, but it is hoped that it will generate £9m in tourism revenues for the surrounding area. It is estimated the show will support 220 jobs directly, 392 roles locally local and 490 regional jobs. In addition to the show a number of other properties and businesses have been bought or are being created to provide a cluster of hospitality related businesses, local hotels, art institute, Auckland Palace all within the same trusts.

What innovations have you introduced into the development of this project?

The fact that the whole project stands or falls on the volunteers is perhaps the most daunting yet rewarding aspect of the whole project.



How have you balanced the need for recruitment, training, rehearsal over the extended timeframe?

Everything structured and delivered on the back of detailed planning. Team leaders identified of small groups, selected on merit rather than perceived seniority or 'status'.

Is the historical park plan for 2020 still a live ambition?

The plan is to keep developing the community based project in forthcoming years and to make it a top UK tourist destination. Revenues from the 2016 season will fund the next. The organisers have already started on the planning of Kynren 2017 (indeed the consultants were invited to volunteer for 2017 at the 3rd September show)! Once the 2016 season has concluded, the process of recruiting additional volunteers will start and developing the skills of the current team continue.

Lesson Learnt

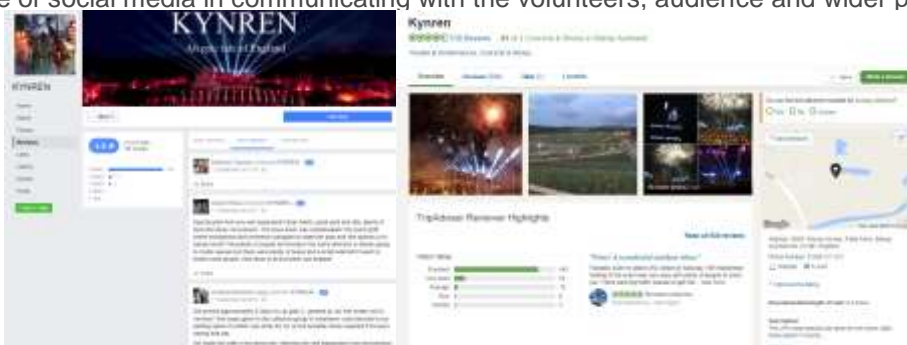
- There is a need to have adequate food stall provision. This was not evident during the first show. The audience was invited to come early to avoid queues and experience the food village however the queues were extremely long. A second visit on the wet night of the 3rd September saw several improvements. The number of food concessions had nearly doubled from 6 to 11 with the original area enlarged and the food stalls split into two separate areas. These food areas were populated with pub-height bar tables.



- There is a need to have adequate seat provision in the visitor waiting area, again this was inadequate and had only been partly addressed with the introduction of some large tree-trunk logs acting as benches. The intrusive movement of physically challenged guests through the waiting audience in advance of the premiere had been alleviated by the second visit when the buggy-borne visitors were transported along a peripheral route to the seating area;
- The key lesson learnt is the detailed planning of the event, training and organising of a large volunteer force to put on a large-scale event. The detailed training by specialists over the last year of volunteers;
- They matched the jobs to each volunteer rather than the volunteers to the jobs;
- As in the London Olympics, all the volunteers were given World Host Training;
- There has been a great attention to detail in the planning and organising of the event, nothing has been left to chance;
- Volunteers were broken up into smaller teams and team leaders were appointed on merit rather than on perceived seniority;
- The event will grow organically each year with new elements added to continue to attract local resident and visitor markets. The plan is to keep developing the community-based project in forthcoming years and to make it a top UK tourist destination. Revenues from the 2016 season will fund the next;



- The event is linked to 13 other attractions in the local area, which will help to create a destination and hopefully attract more overnight and day visitors from a wider range of markets;
- Importance of social media in communicating with the volunteers, audience and wider population.



Images Source: Kynren or Iain Macfarlane unless otherwise identified.



Not Another Big Bang Theory!

Location	Macclesfield
Post Code	SK11 9DL
Telephone	01477 571 766.
Opening Times	10-5 daily
Seasonality	Open All Year
Entrance Fee	Adults £7.00, Child / Concession £4.95 (Peak Rates apply)
Visitor Numbers	140,000
First Opened	1945
Awards	Shortlisted for Museum and Heritage of the Year 2014 Marketing Cheshire Annual Awards, Visitor Attraction of the Year 2012 UK Festival Awards 2012
Main attractions	Dish Tours, Science Exhibition, Interesting Retail, Education Programme
Volunteers?	Blue Dot Festival only. Full volunteer programme being developed.
Shop	Gift shop and online gifts available.
Restaurant	Café, and Potting Shed for school visits.
Tax Breaks	
Funding	£3m from ERDF, £26,890 (Royal Academy of Engineering), £12,147,200 (HLF)

General Description

Jodrell Bank Observatory near Macclesfield, in Cheshire was founded in 1945 and is now on the shortlist to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The site hosts the first large, steerable radio telescope in the World and still operates as the 3rd largest on the planet. Since the opening of the original visitor centre in 1971, Jodrell Bank has continued to develop its offer by opening new pavilions and attractions on the site. In recent years after a review of a wholesale redevelopment of the attraction elements, they concluded that a more modest phased approach was more appropriate. The Discovery Centre endeavours, it says, to marry the needs of pure science – as part of the Centre for Astrophysics at the University of Manchester – whilst still providing various public outreach events, including public lectures, star parties, and "Ask the Expert" sessions.

Jodrell Bank has endeavoured to broaden its appeal to visitors, by hosting a number of 'Jodrell Bank Live' concerts between 2011 and 2013, culminating this year in the creation of the 'Bluedot Festival' a July weekend with Headline Acts, DJ sets, comedy, talks, workshops and live experiments, aiming 'to entertain and inspire'.



In this vein, their statement – “Our mission is to inspire the scientists of the future” saw a Facebook article on April 1st, describing the discovery of the Planet of the Clangers.

How have the recent developments benefitted the attraction? In addition to increases in visitor numbers from 55,000 to 130,000 pa, what other performance improvements have been experienced eg increases in spend, dwell time, satisfaction?

Previous market research shows that:

- 27% visitors have visited Jodrell Bank before
- 80% are on a daytrip, 20% are on a staying trip in the region
- 60% are female and 40% are male
- The majority of visitors surveyed are in the 35 – 44 age bracket

Our own surveys tell us that;

- 81% of visitors rate their overall enjoyment of their visit as good or very good
- 82% of visitors rate the quality of the venue and the content of the exhibition as good or very good
- 71% rate the customer service as good or very good
- 72% rate value for money as good or very good

Average spend per visitor in the gift shop has increased 10% since employing a dedicated Retail Manager.

We have experienced increases in dwell time through the installation of outside seating spaces and deployment of indoor spaces during inclement weather.

We are currently in the process of commissioning further market research to update the information we have. This means we do not have many up-to-date figures at the present time.

Do you have any specific impacts attributable to:

Planet & Space Pavilions

The Planet Pavilion is the main entrance for visitors. Specific space has been dedicated both to a popular café and a successful shop.

The Space Pavilion hosts the main exhibition for self-guided visits. Designing a separate, flexible space within this building has allowed us to offer group visits and special talks, as well as an indoor space during bad weather (see above). This space is used during the school holidays for hands-on activities and is used by the BBC during filming.



Big Telescopes Exhibition

This exhibition has allowed us to extend our capacity for outreach and education on site, including increasing dwell time on site.

Star Pavilion

The Star Pavilion has added capacity to our schools programme (up to six groups per day from four). We now also offer a range of science- and heritage-themed event talks (the Lovell and Heritage lecture series) through a 200-seat auditorium. This space is also available for corporate hire, and has allowed us to extend the number and type of events we can host, including corporate dinners run by our café team.

Destination Space

The Destination Space programme has formed part of our live shows run during schools holidays. We have advertised these as holiday events in local media. Although we do not charge for the shows, they form part of the attraction for visitors and increase dwell time.

First Light at Jodrell Bank

The First Light project has not yet begun construction. As part of the planning process, we have begun trialling new activities and events that will take place in the new building. This space will allow us to engage current and new visitors with the heritage of the site, which we have not previously been able to do. This will include paid-for add-ons to the ticket price which will increase revenue and dwell time on site.

The increase in staffing you mention from 8 to 32 is greater than the increase in visitor number might suggest. Is this conscious and are the new staff adopting new and different roles eg dedicated social media person, marketing team, educationalists, etc.

Since opening in 2011, we have brought the café in-house (approx. 15 people), rather than being externally run, and employed a number of new administrators and educators to cope with rising demand for the general public and our schools programme. We have also received funding for special positions, including the UK SKA Outreach Officer now based here. The University of Manchester, of which we are part, has requirements for us to engage with their Widening Participation programme, for which we now have a dedicated officer.

What lessons have been learnt from adopting an organic development approach, rather than an all-out one large project?

The Discovery Centre has been built on a building-by-building basis (noting that Planet and Space were built at the same time). This has allowed us to assess demand on an incremental basis and learn from each building project before beginning the next. The lessons include use of building management systems and the design of the visitor experience.



With each new building, we have clearly demonstrated a need and planned purposes. For example, the Star Pavilion included a flexible space predominately for teaching, but that could be transformed into an auditorium for evening events.

How does the Jodrell Bank site balance formal Science and research with the needs of the visitor?

The Jodrell Bank site is owned by the University of Manchester. It is home to the Jodrell Bank Observatory, which is part of the University's School of Physics and Astronomy and also hosts the e-MERLIN/VLBI National Facility, The SKA Organisation headquarters and the Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre also share the Jodrell Bank site.

The Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre is the entry point for all general visitors and acts as a public facing window on to the site, communicating with the wider public about the site's unique heritage and scientific research.

The site is clearly defined physically with little geographical crossover between the buildings that house each of the different organisations.

The open spaces of the Discovery Centre grounds allow visitors to move right around the Lovell Telescope without impacting on its use and visitors respect our requests to turn their mobile phones to airplane mode when on site.

Public programmes include interaction and engagement with the world-leading research science of the Observatory and the wider University. These include popular Meet the Expert events for children and young families and, for older audiences, popular talks and a lecture series that benefit from the site's academics, scientists and researchers.

Similarly, social media is utilised to share insights and expertise about the Jodrell Bank site and wider related news and scientific research to our wider audiences.

What sort of new approaches has JBDC adopted to presenting Science to visitors? – discuss and give examples please.

Jodrell Bank's key event for 2016 is our new science-music-culture festival, "Bluedot" (www.discoverthebluedot.com). This is run in partnership with external bodies and hosted on site. It is designed to attract a new, younger audience to our normal demographic. The festival combines the best of music, culture, and science outreach to inspire the next generation of scientists (in line with our mission statement) and make the University of Manchester's research accessible to more people.

In addition to this, we host the BBC's annual 'Stargazing Live' broadcast series (usually 3 programmes in January each year), which attract between 1million and 4million viewers, depending on programme content.

JBDC as a regional science education resource and as a Science Heritage site of international importance excels with its links to education? 18,000 education visits pa.

What are the successes / lessons?

In the past 12 months we have had in excess of 22,000 education visits. The popularity of these is in the most part due to our Education Team's high level of qualifications in Physics and Education and in their understanding of the national curriculum. All senior members of the education team are qualified and have previously practised as teachers.

Feedback from teachers is that our use and link to the national curriculum, including tailoring the content of sessions offered to key stages, is the reason why schools choose us over other, similar education centres and also a reason for the high level of repeat visits. We believe that the iconic nature of the site also contributes to the appeal to schools.

Although we have been open only 5 years, we are already recognised as a national authority in our sector. This is indicated by the fact that we have been a lead development partner in a number of national outreach and Education projects eg Explore Your Universe for the Science and Technology Facilities Council and Destination Space for the UK Space Agency). Both these projects have been dispersed to a wide range of fellow science centres, museums and University departments, etc generating national reach for our work.

How important are public events in promoting JBDC?

We host a number of public events throughout the year that help us reach more audiences and achieve with our core mission to inspire future scientists.

We programme a lot of public events and activities around school holidays where we welcome hundreds of families every day who come along to watch science shows and take part in family friendly activities.

Other public events include our Lovell Lecture series and the popular Girls Night Out evenings, which enable us to open the Discovery Centre outside of normal operating times.

All these events provide our customers with another or a new reason to visit and help us to attract new audiences and to develop deeper relationships with existing customers.

We also work in partnership with other organisations to develop public events such as the Amazed by Science festival. Now in its third year, this annual festival was initiated by us in partnership with Marketing Cheshire and now includes events and venues across the county, all working to promote and celebrate science, engineering and technology. Collaborative public events such as this mean we can make use of wider networks, make use of reciprocal marketing opportunities and reach an even bigger audience.

We benefit greatly from other events that take place here at Jodrell Bank, in particular the BBC's Stargazing Live series, after which we always see an increase in visitor numbers.

As we have a high level of awareness of our sector, we are able to plan events in line with future Astronomical and Space events (eg the recent Solar Eclipse and, most recently, Tim Peake's mission to the ISS) and ensure that we are aligned with national partners, both generating and benefiting from marketing toolkits and educational tools etc.

What are the benefits of staging the Blue Dot festival while closing the Visitor Centre to visitors?

The Bluedot Festival is estimated to attract 8,000-10,000 visitors in three days, a figure that the discovery centre would take just under one month to hit at normal visitor rates and working capacity.

It also has the potential to reach new and different audiences and to broaden and develop our audience of discovery centre customers.

The style and positioning of the festival is well defined and focused, and it celebrates a clear idea that its audiences have bought into. It is described as a festival of discovery and invites festival goers to 'camp out under the stars, and to explore a stellar programme of music, science, arts, technology, culture, food and film'.

This compliments our own mission to inspire the scientists of the future and it supports our core belief that science is an integral part of culture. Therefore, it helps us further achieve our aims.

Our partner festival producers ('From the Fields' and 'Ground Control') are multi award-winning programmers with an enviable reputation for delivering high quality, innovative events and we have worked very closely with them to programme what we expect to be a truly unique festival.

How important is the provision of the various grades of camping facilities to the success of the large scale event, past and future?

Previous festivals at Jodrell Bank have not had camping facilities. This is the first year we have offered camping during the festival and the festival organisers are confident that this has increased weekend ticket sales.

Jodrell Bank excels in its media coverage, through worldwide events and universe happenings – please explain the links and the lesson learnt – what works well?

Jodrell Bank has strong links to the BBC through Stargazing Live and other broadcasts. Scientists at Jodrell Bank are seen as a reliable source for comments on space-related news stories and we are highly regarded in the media for our informal education content. We therefore feature prominently and actively engage in partnerships that are in line with our mission statement, including an April Fools' this year with the Clangers, which ended with the publishing of educational material around lunchtime. No royalties were paid to Coolabi as this was a joint venture that was mutually beneficial to both the Clangers brand and the outreach / education aims of the Discovery Centre. Apart from staff costs (in terms of time taken to produce the design/education materials), there are no tangible costs.

The proposed First Light heritage project – what it is expected to deliver in the future? – How will the project enhance and promote the centre?

The First Light at Jodrell Bank project will allow us to tell the story of Jodrell Bank and engage both new and current visitors with the heritage of the site. The new building will provide spaces in which to do this and will increase dwell time for visitors.

Jodrell Bank has been at the forefront of scientific understanding in radioastronomy for the past 70 years. We believe that science is integral to culture; this project will allow us to combine science with history and interpret how the process of scientific discovery is key to the successes that are made.

Technology: Is the reliability of the technology you employ as part of the visitor experience up to the job?

The site is limited in the use of wireless technology by the presence of radiotelescopes, which can suffer interference. Therefore wifi is not present and the use of mobile telephones is not allowed. The lack of wifi limits the use of card payment machines (and how we use them) and inhibits our ability to deliver virtual reality content, but generally is not problematic for the visitor experience. Two years ago, we moved to a fully integrated till system provided by an external company which has enabled us to deliver online ticket sales and an online shop, increasing revenue.

Café Information: Strategies to encourage use? Importance of supporting dietary restrictions? Proportion of visitors converting to café users? How is the Potting Shed differentiated from the café or is it just extra capacity during the high season?

The café primarily serves Discovery Centre visitors and although we don't currently know the visitor-café conversion rates, it is a popular and busy part of the Centre. The café also supports public events outside of normal centre opening times, providing bespoke catering with special menus and offers.

The cafe has a small secondary market for café-only visits, particularly popular for local cyclists who often incorporate a café visit along their cycle routes. It also serves the wider Jodrell Bank community, providing catering for meetings and events and for staff.



The Potting Shed serves two uses, its primary one being as extra capacity during high season. Secondly, it also provides a more informal 'grab and go' catering offer that can 'top up' pre brought picnics and so on.

The café offer is about high quality, locally sourced, artisan food and provides breakfasts, hot lunches and a wide and varying selection of cakes and treats. It can cater for all dietary requirements from diabetic to gluten free.

The café is promoted alongside the Discovery Centre: it is included in leaflets; has extensive details including photos and menus on the Centre website and utilises poster sites at the centre to promote current menus and offers. The cafe has also successfully promoted itself as a destination in its own right through Marketing Cheshire's Taste Cheshire campaign.

Can you outline your strategies to encourage purchasing from the shop? Importance of branded items, breadth of ranges? Specific targeting at age groups? Online shopping – successful? Any particular successes / lessons?

The shop stocks a range of products to suit different audiences and price points, from school children to amateur astronomers, from £1 to £25.

School parties and young families are catered for with small price souvenirs, books, games and 'build your own' style toys. Books and souvenirs serve keen amateur astronomers. Meanwhile branded merchandise covers a more diverse mix of products including t-shirts, mugs, stationary, calendars and jigsaws.

The offer generally relates to the scientific nature of the centre but there are also products that relate to the gardens (with the sale of local honey from garden bees) and science in more general terms.

An increasing selection of popular items for our shop are also sold online.

What are the other two organisation on the Jodrell site you referred to in your previous email – University, JBCA, eMERLIN?

The University of Manchester encompasses the Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre (JBDC) and the Jodrell Bank Observatory (JBO). JBO hosts the Jodrell Bank Centre for Astrophysics (JBCA), which is an astrophysics research group, and the national eMerlin network of radiotelescopes. Academics from JBCA assist us in the delivery of specialist content during school holiday events, including “Meet the Expert”.

Lessons Learnt

- Employing a dedicated retail manager boosts sales. The attraction boosted sales by 10% by employing an experienced and dedicated retail specialist;
- Seating boosts dwell time. The careful installation and placement of indoor and outdoor seating can boost onsite dwell time and increase spend in café and shop;
- Space needs to be flexible – group visits, special talks, gathering space during bad weather, holiday hands on activities. The Star Pavilion is a chameleon – a teaching space that can be transformed for evening events, corporate hire, talks, dinners, etc;
- Organic development approach means better tailored to market needs. This allowed the centre to assess demand and tailor and design visitor facilities for various market needs on a project by project basis. They learnt about building management systems. They identified a specific need and planned each new development around that need;
- Education, education, education. The centre attracts 22,000 education visits per annum up to 6 groups per day can be accommodated. This is due to the professional education team and their high level of qualification in physics and education. Senior staff have all practiced as teachers. The use and links to key stages of the Curriculum, the iconic nature of the site and links to University of Manchester all boost demand;
- Public Programmes must include interaction and engagement. Meet the Expert events for children, popular talks, lecture series given by scientists all include a level of interaction;
- Social Media. This needs to be actively managed, it is important in sharing insights and expertise about the Jodrell Bank Site with existing and potential visitors;
- Outreach is paramount to increase national recognition. They are a national authority in the sector they are a lead development partner in a number of national outreach projects, which appear in other science centres, museums and University departments;
- Well-targeted public events can increase exposure and reach new markets – Blue Dot is a new science music festival, designed to attract a younger market. Festival goers will camp out under the stars and explore music, technology, science, art food and film.



An Industrial and Social Heritage Gem

Location	Lanarkshire
Post Code	ML11 9DB
Telephone	01555 661345
Opening Times	10-5 Summer, 10-4 Winter, (Visitor Centre)
Seasonality	All Year
Entrance Fee	Visitor Centre: Adult £9.50, Concession £8.00, Children £7.00 / Family £30.00
Visitor Numbers	400,000 annually
First Opened	1974
Awards	UNESCO Green Tourism Award Soil Association
Main attractions	World Heritage Site, Museum, Dark Ride, Education, Retail (Wool)
Volunteers?	Varies – 25-30 for larger projects
Shop	Mill Shop
Restaurant	Mill Café
Tax Breaks	
Funding	£4m (HLF and HES) for Double Row – latest conservation project

General Description

One of only six World Heritage Sites in Scotland, New Lanark was the vision of the 18th century social reformer Robert Owen. His ideas to provide decent and modern working conditions, free education and sanitation was at the forefront of enlightened thinking.

His 'Institute for the Formation of Character building at New Lanark', today houses the reception of the New Lanark Visitor Centre, which opened in 1990. This and other buildings house archival documents, maps, paintings, artefacts, family and oral histories all pertaining to the industrial history of the village. Attractions include, The Annie McLeod Experience Ride, The Roof-top Garden, Robert Owen's House and School, retail and food areas.

The mills, the hotel and most of the non-residential buildings in the village are mainly owned and operated by the New Lanark Trust and seek to retain the authenticity of the original by preventing modern intrusions such as television aerials or satellite dishes. Services such as telephone, television and electricity are delivered though buried cables.

NLVS, in line with its founding principles, is deeply involved in education. Educational packages designed to support the Curriculum for Excellence are in place and travel to courses provided by New Lanark are subsidised under the Scottish Government's Travel Subsidy Scheme for Scottish Schools.

Part of the restoration of New Lanark included reintroducing the mills on which the original prosperity of the village depended. (In its time it had been among the largest factories in the world, employing nearly 2,500 people at its peak).

Nowadays, the mill operates on a much on a smaller scale, producing woollen rather than cotton yarn. Products manufactured in the mill are available in the retail outlets and online.

General

Did World Heritage status change your business?

Since achieving World Heritage Site status, we have experienced an increase in interest and visitors from overseas. We have also developed a World Heritage Management plan, which helps to guide future developments in the site and helps us to gauge progress.

Do you have any input / constraints from UNESCO or other conservation bodies regarding the running of New Lanark?

We have to be careful that any developments we aim to complete on site will not have an adverse effect on our World Heritage Status, eg disrupting key views to and from the village. We work in close collaboration with Historic Environment Scotland, Scottish Wildlife Trust (who manage the Falls of Clyde Wildlife Reserve) and other conservation bodies to ensure all developments are appropriate and accepted. Occasionally a local planning issue will cause difficulty if it threatens the site. Where this happens we continue to liaise with UNESCO, HES and SWT.

Has the European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH) benefitted you? Is it more likely to benefit other industrial heritage sites in Scotland?

We have experienced some benefit from ERIH, mainly a small increase in visits from people who are already aware of the scheme. The scheme doesn't seem to be well known enough to have a huge impact. Perhaps greater benefit could be gained by collaborative working with other ERIH Anchor Points.

What is the mix of visitors to New Lanark?

The majority of visitors who go through the New Lanark Visitor Centre are from Scotland. From 1st August 2015 – 31st July 2016 the breakdown is as follows:

- Scottish – 66.7%;
- Rest of UK & Ireland – 13.2%; and
- Overseas – 20.1%.

What benefits are gained from holding VisitScotland's Green Tourism 'Gold' award?

Feedback suggests that although visitors and guests like the idea of Green tourism, it is not a key driver for visiting the village / booking the Hotel.



Source: Iain Macfarlane

How do you recruit and maintain your volunteer body?

We recruit through the following channels:

- Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire (VASLan);
- Project Scotland;
- Social Media (this works particularly well on a project specific basis and has recently attracted 15 new volunteers for our 'House History' project);
- New Lanark Website; and
- Partners (Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership, Lanark Community Development Trust, Lanarkshire Heritage Forum).

We maintain our volunteer body through regular volunteer catch ups, social events and good communication. The volunteers are fully integrated to the organisation and we received a 'Volunteer Friendly' award from VASLan in 2014.

How much training is given to your volunteers in the different roles they play?

Our volunteers work across the following areas, all receive full day inductions to the site and Health & Safety training as well as training relevant to each role:

- The New Lanark Archive – collections management training, cataloguing training, handling and collections care plus on-the-job training in research, family history and dealing with public enquiries;
- Events and exhibitions – pre-event meetings and overview of what the day involves, on the job training in working with the public;
- House History project – as per the New Lanark Archive but with additional training in genealogy and researching in other archives;
- Learning and crafts – on-the-job training;
- Grounds and gardens – on-the-job training; and
- Marketing – this role usually only applies to marketing students and graduates.

What criteria do you apply in accepting or securing touring exhibitions?

We examine how well the exhibition content fits with the values and strategic focus of the site, the space needed to properly host the exhibition, the dates the exhibition is available and the aesthetics of the exhibition.

How has the pricing policy changed over the years to arrive at – one visit equals a one year ticket if Gift Aid secured?

The Gift Aid policy is based on a UK-wide policy set by the Government in that in order to claim Gift Aid on admission tickets, the ticket must become a 'pass' which is valid for 12 months.

The New Lanark Visitor Centre admission prices are reviewed every year and benchmarked against local and national competitors. The last price increase was in September 2015 when we also removed the family 2 and 4 ticket options as this was being under used. The 'free age' was also lowered from Under 4s to Under 3s as it was felt that children aged 3 and 4 do have a strong enough grasp, and gain enough enjoyment from New Lanark experience to justify paying for a ticket.

What proportion of visitor sign up for Gift Aid?

In order to qualify to Gift Aid your tickets you must be a taxpaying UK resident. Therefore, a number of people are excluded from Gift Aiding their tickets due to the government policy: those who do not pay tax, international visitors, and from New Lanark's policy those under a group booking.

From the visitors that purchase Individual Tickets (Adult, Child, Concession) an estimated 60% of those chose to Gift Aid their admission price.

In the period of 1st August 2015 – 31st July 2016 1,786 people who returned with their New Lanark Unlimited Card to visit for free, a benefit of Gift Aiding their ticket. (1,278 adults, 508 children).

There appears a lot of cross-selling with other local attractions – do you see that as part of your role as the foremost attraction in the area or do you benefit?

We feel there are many benefits to cross promoting the range of attractions in the local area. International visitors are most likely to plan full day itineraries during their visit to Scotland, and as such it makes sense for us to link up with other local attractions to jointly promote the benefits of a full day out in the local area by linking visits to different attractions. In terms of our online activity, we have found that creating high value, relevant content on our blog is more likely to be shared by users, and therefore more likely to be seen by potential visitors to New Lanark.

Some examples of online content we have been creating for this purpose are blog posts on the themes of 'Top days out for groups in Scotland' and 'The best free days out in Scotland' – all of which mention New Lanark World Heritage Site in some way whilst also promoting attractions in our local area, or Scotland. In terms of direct benefit to New Lanark, we have found that many residents within a very close proximity to New Lanark (ie Lanark and immediate surrounding area) have already been through the Visitor Centre in the past, so don't feel any immediate need to do it again – thus any opportunity we have to promote the other opportunities / facilities at New Lanark to a local audience cannot be ignored – for example, promoting our special events, walks in the area and the shopping / eating facilities of the Mill Shop and Mill Café.



Source: Iain Macfarlane

What are the key threads of consumer feedback?

At New Lanark we use a range of feedback mechanisms to gain constructive feedback from our visitors, both online and offline.

- We use traditional paper questionnaires on-site which are easy for visitors to fill out and post in one of the 'post boxes' we have located around the site. There is also the option for visitors to request this questionnaire to be emailed to them. There is an incentive of winning a £20 Mill Shop voucher for completing this, but we are investigating the option of higher value incentives to encourage more results;
- On the New Lanark website we have a link to an online SurveyMonkey questionnaire which is based on the same questions as the on-site paper questionnaire; and
- For our programme of special events we offer a specific online event survey via SurveyMonkey which is emailed to the event attendees. We are also starting to utilise simple paper feedback forms at events which can be filled in at the time.

We also receive a range of feedback through our social media channels (Facebook reviews, Google+ reviews, Twitter and Instagram) as well as actively monitoring and responding to TripAdvisor reviews.

What are you most proud of achieving with New Lanark?

The almost complete restoration of the village with sustainable long-term uses for all of the buildings. Only two buildings remain to be restored – Double Row, a tenement block of former millworkers' homes and the Village Church. Work is now underway on the restoration of Double Row and this is due to be completed in 2017.

The regeneration of the village into a living and working site. Approximately:

- a. 120 people living in the village;
- b. 150 people employed by New Lanark Trust and its trading subsidiaries;
- c. 70 people employed by local businesses who are commercial tenants of New Lanark Trust;
- d. 300,000 visitors to the World Heritage Site annually; and
- e. 80,000 visitors to the paid attraction annually.

The development of one of the most complete attractions in Scotland with:

- a. An award winning visitor centre, exhibition space, shop and café;
- b. A 3 Star hotel, 4 Star self-catering accommodation, a 4 Star hostel and a leisure club; and
- c. In-house production of hydro-electricity, New Lanark Wool and New Lanark Ice Cream.

What do you think are the current drawbacks of the operation at present?

Current drawbacks include:

- Difficulty in accessing the site through the winding roads of Lanark;
- Lack of orientation space (rather than simply reception space) in the main visitor car park;
- Difficulty getting visitors from car park (up a steep hill) to attraction and back again;
- Difficulties streamlining directional signage throughout the site;
- Requirement to upgrade parts of the attraction including reception, interpretive spaces and booking system; and

- Website is not mobile friendly.

Strategies – how important are they to the success of the operations?

Extremely important as they help to set out future priorities for development and feed into funding applications. Within any strategies we always aim to have achievable aims and deliverable objectives.

Future plans for the site?

- Potential new access road;
- Redevelopment of the interpretive and exhibition areas of the attraction;
- Transport to and from the visitor car park;
- Development of a mobile app and make the website mobile friendly;
- Host large scale exhibitions; and
- Continue to develop strong partnerships with e.g. Lanark Community Development Trust, other Scottish World Heritage Sites, International partners.

Education



Source: Iain Macfarlane

How important is the educational side of New Lanark in the business mix, as an aim of the trust / as a revenue source?

Primary, secondary and tertiary groups form an important part of the business mix. Groups come to study many different aspects of the site with specialist tours available.

Has the Travel Subsidy for Scottish Schools made a difference to school visitor numbers?

School visits have not recovered to reach levels prior to the increase in coach travel costs. The travel subsidy will have alleviated this to an extent but figures remain down.

Has the inclusion in the 'Curriculum for Excellence' part of your education offer created any problems for your educational staff or incurred a significant cost?

The education element of the visitor offer requires a substantial input and upkeep but its inclusion in the Curriculum for Excellence delivers a substantial number of school groups. This inclusion has been seen as very beneficial.

Food

What is your conversion rate visitors to café users?

Visitors to café include paid admission visitors, walkers, general visitors, hotel guests, commercial business guests. So actual conversion rate is not known (see comment re school children overleaf.)

What is average spend?

Average spend per transaction is £8.20.

Do you permit encourage use of the café by local residents?

Yes.

The conversion rate we obtain is used for comparison purposes, only. We have a large number of visitors (mainly school children) who pass through the Mill Café to visit our Mill Shop. They bring packed lunches. Our development plans include improvements to capture more of the local market.

What sets your food offering apart from the ‘run of the mill’?

We try where possible to support local producers and prepare freshly made food. However, we are planning a review and would like to improve our offering. Our own artisan, Scottish Champions, award-winning ice cream is very popular and an improved offering forms part of our plans.

What was the motivation / how did the idea to create the ice cream business come about?

Local ice cream producer was looking to sell his business. He originally supplied ice cream to the site. The business was quite small and therefore relatively cheap to buy. We knew we could sell ice cream on site. We were already involved with food production so possessed the basic skills. In terms of investment, it was relatively low and created an additional revenue stream.

Retail

How important is the retail side of your business?

Investment in a new style of retail offering is delivering excellent returns. We have moved away from a retail offering which was essentially geared towards tourists looking for souvenirs and schoolchildren’s pocket money to a high end shopping experience offering a wide range of quality gifts and clothing. Our retail shop has always delivered a financial return but we feel this shopping experience adds value to the visitor experience.

What particular aspects of the retail offering are you most happy with? Collaborations, Quality products, Retail display, etc?

All of these. Our own textile products feature strongly and are supported by other quality manufacturers. The combination of quality products which are displayed beautifully has created a lot of local interest.

Can you identify the full range of revenue sources that the Trust benefits from and perhaps allocate a percentage of revenue each represents?

To answer this question I have taken the following headings recorded their annual revenue to 31st Jan 2016, added in any obvious omissions and shown each as a % of the whole. The figures are skewed as hotel business as a whole is compared with departments of visitor attraction.

<i>Donations</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>Food & Beverage (Hotel)</i>	<i>22%</i>
<i>Grants / Gift Aid</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>Attraction Admissions / Tours</i>	<i>8%</i>
<i>Ice Cream</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>Mill Café Sales</i>	<i>8%</i>
<i>Textiles</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>Mill Shop Sales</i>	<i>6%</i>
<i>Domestic Tenancies</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>Commercial Rents</i>	<i>2%</i>
<i>Leisure (Club)</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>Power Generation</i>	<i>5%</i>
<i>Accommodation</i>	<i>18%</i>	<i>Events hosting eg Antiques Roadshow</i>	<i>0%</i>

What are the benefits gained from the ‘Soil Association’ organic approval and the accreditation of the British Wool Marketing Board with respect to the wool products you sell?

The main ethos of our textile manufacture is to offer goods for sale which are Scottish or British. This is a very strong marketing tool. Visitors to New Lanark want to take home something Scottish or British. The British Wool Marketing Board stamp is very important.

There is a much smaller market for organic textile goods and sales of these are more limited. However we exist as one of the very few organic spinners for specialist flocks of sheep and accreditation is essential.

Technology

Technology – Exhibits and Displays Interactives? How important are the technology features of a visit?

We feel they bring the story of New Lanark alive, particularly for the younger audience, though we also believe that guided tours are also very effective. Technology becomes dated and is not easy to change / update. Guides are more flexible that way. Both much better than interpretive panels.

Has the Annie McLeod Experience been upgraded / refreshed over the years, if so when and how?

In the year 2000, the ride became the New Millennium Ride and introduced new technology and Owen's ideas on how society should be in the year 2000 (something which Owen wrote extensively about). Around 2004 the ride reverted back to the Annie Macleod experience incorporating the new technology but returning to the original story of New Lanark told through the eyes of Annie.



Source: Iain Macfarlane

Can you provide some statistics relating to your website?

The New Lanark website is a popular resource for visitors wishing to find out more information about the many different aspects of New Lanark. From the beginning of 2016 the website has had 168,329 visits by 108,166 unique users. This has resulted in over half a million page views (501,875) with a user spending an average of 1 minute 31 seconds on the site. The most viewed content of the website is the homepage, Visitor Centre page, World Heritage Site page, Online Shop, Admission, Visiting, Attractions and full list of events. We have seen that the website is a very useful resource in providing information about our programme of events, with the two 'busiest' days for the website this year being the day before our Easter event and the day before the Antiques Roadshow.

What is the rationale behind the Website – separate sites for Education, Wee Hostel, Hotel, Shop, Clearburn play area?

The current New Lanark website is designed to allow visitors to navigate to the specific areas of the site based on the specific information they are seeking. For example, there may be people visiting the website wishing to find out about an event but have no interest in the history of New Lanark, and conversely there may be people visiting the website for historical research purposes who have no interest in our current events or activities. Having separate pages for content, for example Clearburn Play & Picnic Area, allows us to specifically link to that page via social media, hyperlinks and when necessary to answer visitor enquiries.



Source: Iain Macfarlane

Lessons Learnt

- New Lanark has been particularly successful in identifying and capitalising on a wide range of revenue streams from organic wool weaving to ice cream manufacture, energy generation, etc;
- The attraction is run professionally and the attention to detail struck the consultant on two visits;
- Retail quality and presentation has proven to be a key factor in the success of the retail offering at New Lanark;
- It's not necessarily what you think are your assets that are your assets. One youngster visiting from Dubai was absolutely fascinated by the wildlife stream, and flowering weeds in the Clearburn area;
- New Lanark is successful at marketing its diverse attraction to a range of audiences utilising a number of promotional channels. They are also successful in cross-promotion of the site by staff working in their respective areas;
- New Lanark sees it has a role in signposting to other attractions that perhaps don't have the profile of New Lanark with its World Heritage credentials and undertakes cross marketing activity with for example Chatelherault.
- New Lanark has become adept at securing funding for large scale capital projects;
- The attraction has successfully developed a volunteer programme moving from zero to 20+ regular volunteers in three years;
- Their events and exhibitions programme extending across the year to promote New Lanark as a cultural venue has successfully attracted repeat visits and a loyal local audience; and
- The site runs as a social enterprise where profits from the commercial arms [New Lanark Hotels and New Lanark Trading (visitor attraction, café, retail, hydro, wool and ice cream)] are returned to New Lanark Trust for re-investment into the running of the site.



Brand New Game in Town

Location		Co. Meath
Post Code		
Telephone		+353 01 835 1999
Opening Times		10-6 daily
Seasonality		March/Oct Open, Nov/Dec Open Weekends, Jan/Feb Closed
Entrance Fee		15 Euro Adult and child over 3 years (£13), Concession 12 Euro (£13)
Visitor Numbers		500,000 annually
First Opened		2010
Awards		Meath Business & Tourism Awards Best Overall Tourism Award 2012 Ulster Bank 2012 Award – ‘Best Business Start-up’.
Main attractions		Themed areas, Zoo, Europe’s largest wooden rollercoaster, Factory Tours
Volunteers?		
Shop		Lodge Gift Shop
Restaurant		Café and stalls
Tax Breaks		No
Funding		No

General Description

Tayto Crisps is a major Irish potato crisp manufacturer, founded by Joe Murphy in 1954. Tayto invented the first flavoured crisp production process and as a result Tayto crisps and the Brand are a cultural icon in Ireland akin to Iron Bru and Tunnock’s Teacakes in Scotland – Tayto is used by most people in Ireland for crisps in the same way Hoover and vacuum get interchanged.

Tayto Park is a traditional theme park open seasonally which this year has hosted for the summer a Big Top Show with the Fossetts – the National circus in Ireland. The attraction has a variety of traditional family rides free once an entry ticket has been purchased. The attraction was opened in November 2010.

It has a zoo, children’s play areas and amusement rides. It underwent a major expansion for the 2015 season which saw the opening of Europe’s largest wooden roller coaster, a 5D cinema and an Air Race among other flat rides. It is also home to the Tayto Factory Tour, as the Tayto factory is nearby.

Tayto Park is wheelchair accessible except for the tea house in the Tree House and the buffalo viewing platform. There is a gift shop and various food options eg Lodge Building holds a restaurant, private function room and Pizza Place.



There is free parking for cars and buses as well as disabled parking close to the entrance.

Why did you move into theme parks, and what lessons have you learnt and what might you do differently?

We opened 2010, which was a bad time to open. That winter was bad. We had blizzards. It would have been useful to have visited more parks in advance, and become a member of BALPA. More research would have been really useful. We only joined in last 12 months. Overall, my advice would be – ‘ask for advice’!!! After the initial blizzards. We had a great number of visitors. There are no parks like this in Ireland. Timing was a really important factor.

We moved into theme parks as a result of a trip to Belgium made by our MD 16 years ago where as a bit of a folly, he bought some 30 buffalo. In the first year, people visited the animals. That became the genesis for a visitor centre. Then 10 years ago this led to opening a visitor centre / interpretation centre for the brand.

When the MD acquired the Tayto brand, the park was developed like the model for Cadbury / Storehouse. Partly to boost the crisp brand.

After opening in 2011 (zoo area and some rides), how many visitors did you achieve in succeeding years?

From 2011-15 Maybe 330,000 –390,000, then 420,000, then 450,000 and 750,000.

What drove this big growth expansion?

We had more than a big roller coaster, there were additional rides. Also additional car parking nearer the main road. Easier entrance point with shopping. Altogether we redesigned, streamlined the park. Also restaurant expansion with more food points.

Was there a big growth in per capita expenditure? What explains the big leap in 2015?

Yes, the biggest single jump was 2015. We increased attendance fee, the park was a new offer in Ireland – We developed purchase tokens and a wrist band allowing all day rides – we offered good value to justify the big increase per cap. Additionally retail benefitted. Overall, the biggest single jump was revenue from introduction of wrist bands.

Per caps from 1st to last?

Can't recall 2011 but 21-22 Euro in 2015 including entrance fee. I think in 2011 14-15 Euro. 15% increase per capita.

You have a small market in Ireland / Dublin. What is the repeat customer's pattern?

Lots of repeats. We rely on that. 6.5m within people live within an hour's drive. We do have family memberships but certainly we rely on repeats and need to ensure we continue this trend. The industry standard seems to be that every 3rd year you need to invest 10% of turnover in creating a new big ride/ big attraction. Perhaps for our model we need to do that every 18 – 24 months. We need to maintain a good reason to return.

The combination of our offer (rides, zoo, and factory tours) is very helpful. We have had good press coverage with respect to our animals. Lots of new born animals attracted press attention. Also we are very lucky with social media. The interest is incredible. 205,000 likes for Tayto Park on Facebook. (Having taken the decision to separate from the 'Mr Potato' brand on Facebook). With recently-run competitions and family visits with stays in a local hotel, we reached of 1.8 m / 1.9m.

Using Facebook as primary marketing, do you have a dedicated Facebook Manager?

Yes and no. We have a part-time Facebook manager, plus our own marketing manager and his assistant keep an eye on it. Always someone watching the site. – Less is more. Don't want to reply to every comment.

Do you use TripAdvisor and monitor it?

Yes, but we can't really look after it as much as they / we would like.

Use TV ads?

No TV ads at the moment. We made some 2/3 years ago but we gambled that investment in the new ride and its press coverage would bridge the gap. This paid off. We are looking at TV again this year for next season. It is hugely expensive though. The main marketing drive is through radio / social media and PR. We do media days.

You have an organic approach to development rather than throwing large amounts of money at the park. What are the benefits? How do you avoid the park looking like a building site?

We have learned that you need to know your limitations. Beware of building too much too quickly. In redesigning new roads and gardens in the initial stages, we did look like a building site during the week, then found ourselves trying to tidy up for weekend openings. We decided to close for a few months in the winter until most of the projects were completed. Best thing with the organic growth idea was not being burdened with debt. Had we opened in 2006, bank loans would have been no problem and we might have built too much too quickly. We might not then have been able to cope with that debt in 2011-15.

In terms of customers, what is the breakdown at your attraction ie rides / zoo / factory tour / etc?

The order above is the right priority for our park. We are doing another survey now and more surveys are in the pipeline (completion end August). This will give us up to date information for next season. Most important in our offer are the rides, then the petting farm / exotic animals, then factory tour in that order. The animals are a really big part. Our new falconry show is proving popular. Rides overall are by far the biggest attraction. However, in fact 40% of visitors do visit the factory for the tour.

Is there anything you have put in recently that has proved to be a big draw?

Kid's rides / real junior rides have been very successful. Merry-go-round etc. The scale of interest in kids' stuff has been a surprise. In addition there is the train ride onsite which has proved popular.

Are you considering a water ride?

We are building a super-flume opening Easter 2017.

How do you attempt to exceed customer expectations?

In our growing park, there are new people visiting and not knowing what to expect. Repeats are finding new stuff all the time. Keeping it fresh we think is key.

How do you monitor customer feedback?

Mystery guests are used. We do a lot of surveys.

Price resistance. What lessons from your pricing?

We are looking to move to an all-in-one price and have to try to justify the price increase this might bring. This year we are adding new attractions but not increasing the price. When promotions were done midweek or in shoulder periods, there were complaints on social media that these offers were not extended into the summer and during school holidays and weekends.

What lessons were learnt from building an attraction based on a food brand? Do you consider yourselves a park in your own right?

When we started we were heavily linked. In the last 16 months we have found an identity for ourselves. We will continue to develop that separate identity.

Were there significant retail sale increases on the Tayto brand?

We did some research on this, (2 to 3,000 surveyed) it seems that sales of Tayto crisps have increased as a result of the secondary marketing at the park. 90% of visitors surveyed said they would be more likely to buy Tayto products.

What is the retail growth?

It's fairly static. However, the whole crisp market has been static since 2009/10 but we have started to see ourselves 'nibbling' into competitor's market share. Difficult to quantify.



Has the park had an influence on the product? Packaging / messaging / advertising?

Yes, the park is advertised on the package from time to time. Front of pack advertising occasionally with cross brand promotion. Free tickets with quantity of packets sold.

Do you pay for this directly?

There is a shared cost between organisations.

Staffing – Do you have difficulty recruiting staff? Is there a high level of loyalty / training?

We usually have a group of the same people for three –four seasons then they leave. This corresponds to the usual college course length. Therefore – 45% leave annually and 55% stay till following year. This costs massively in training annually and comes at the time when the park can least afford it, coming in the few months before the new season opening.

Do you have referrals for staffing by 'college mates', or do you interview potential staff or approach colleges directly?

Some references are given by former employees, but we have floods of requests from locals and students / we also sustain significant costs from filtering these applications. However, we have no need to advertise. We have 480-500 staff all told. Fulltime 180-190. This number drops at the end of the season. Most employees will last the whole season.


Lessons Learnt

- The Brand has been used to draw people to an otherwise traditional theme park;
- Secondary marketing at the park has boost crisp sales;
- The brand and its mascot have been used in cases irreverently and in edgy ways in the past Tayto ran an advertising campaign with Mr Tayto as a fake election candidate in 2007 Irish elections during which company was fined for littering with their fake electoral posters in public places;



- In 2009, Tayto Ltd published 'The Man Inside the Jacket', a spoof fictional autobiography of Mr Tayto. The company over the years has had some 'good-natured' and some not so good natured spats with an Irish band Toasted Heretic over unauthorised uses of the brand;
- Keep the attraction fresh , but beware of building too quickly;
- The increase in visitor footfall has been down to organic growth and introducing new rides, food offers and expanding the car parking;
- The introduction of easier payment methods through the use of wrist bands has boosted revenue;
- The attraction carries out visitor surveys on a regular basis, monitors social media and undertakes mystery shopping visitors to monitor visitor satisfaction and improve the quality of the experience.

Images Source: Tayto Park

VASA MUSEUM		
Look, Don't Touch		
Location		Stockholm, Sweden
Post Code		115 21
Telephone		+46 8 519 548 00
Opening Times		10-5 Daily
Seasonality		Open All Year
Entrance Fee		Adults 130 SEK (£12) Children (0-18) Free Student 100 SEK (£9).
Visitor Numbers		1.1m annually
First Opened		1990
Awards		TripAdvisor's "Traveller's Choice"
Main attractions		Museum Garden Permanent and Temporary Exhibitions Education Research
Volunteers?		
Shop		Shop selling replicas of retrieved sunken items, etc.
Restaurant		Yes
Tax Breaks		
Funding		
General Description		
<p>The Vasa Museum in Stockholm opened in 1990, and is essentially a maritime museum. It is the most visited museum in Scandinavia and displays the restored hull of the Royal gunship Vasa, which as a result of poor design capsized and sank on its maiden voyage in 1628. The vessel was salvaged in 1961 and housed in a temporary building whilst being stabilised in a similar manner to the Mary Rose.</p> <p>The museum building was constructed following a national architectural competition and completed in 1998. During the summer of 1989, when visitors were allowed onto the wider construction site, 228 000 people visited the half-finished museum. The building reflects how the ship would have appeared on the skyline of Stockholm, complete with masts the same height as the original vessel.</p> <p>The principle emphasis in 'Vasa', is conservation. Almost as soon as the ship was put on display, signs of damage were detected and there is an ongoing research programme to combat the deterioration of the hull and its artefacts. This research is emphasised by the museum as part of the visitor experience. Hence, you may look at the hull from viewing areas but not touch, since the very delicate conservation and climate control process might be compromised.</p> <p>The main hall contains the ship itself and various exhibits related to the archaeological findings of the ships and early 17th century Sweden. In addition to the hull display, there are secondary exhibitions including – life aboard, causes of the sinking, the ships historical context etc.</p> <p>Vasa, alongside its conservation programme, has from its beginnings, sought to involve young people in education programmes, providing free entrance for school groups and all young visitors up to the age of 19.</p>		
Restaurant		
<p>We prepare all our food from scratch on location and use mainly regional ingredients from Swedish farmers. On the lunch menu we always have one traditional Swedish dish, soup of the day, vegetarian dish and salad. A children's menu is also available. If you want something lighter to eat, we have a range of sandwiches. For a traditional Swedish fika we have cakes, buns and cookies. Gluten- or lactose-free food for visitors with food allergies can be ordered in the Vasa Museum Restaurant.</p>		

How do you see yourselves? – A museum with preservation and conservation as the key role or a visitor attraction for amusement and enjoyment – where does the main emphasis lie?

We are proud of being a museum with high-class collections management and research at the same time as it is a top-ranked visitor attraction. Ideally the two cross-fertilize. We can see how our public preservation and maintenance work add to the visitor experience and obviously a high number of visitors gives us the economic means for advanced plans for long-term preservation of the ship.

We have seen that it is important to work with this internally, to avoid walls between those who work as museum professionals with conservation and preservation, and those who work with different kinds of visitor service.

How do you balance your role in conservation, preservation and education with the modern visitor 'amusement park' type expectation?

We haven't really tried to balance that, but been confident with what we offer our visitors. The ship is such strong experience in itself and by telling that story in different ways we reach different target groups. Our visitors do not expect us to be an amusement park.

How important are your links to the other Maritime Museums in Sweden and The University of Stockholm?

The Vasa Museum and two other maritime museums are together organized under the umbrella of National Maritime Museums of Sweden (SMM), which is a government agency. The organization is a matrix which means that a big part of the staff works in all three museums. We have the same administration and work closely together with for example collections management, but in the eyes of the public we are (and want to be) three separate institutions with different trade-marks on three different locations.

We have a common research program going on together with Stockholm University, called CEMAS. It is a centre for maritime studies in history, archaeology and ethnology. The scientific seminars usually take place in the museum, and the staff is always welcome to participate. Scholars within the program have been used as experts in the development of new exhibitions.

We also have close links to a number of universities in the preservation field. The museum has been a leading part in projects aiming to understand issues of preservation and find methods to slow down degradation in wood. Focus has for a long time been on chemistry but has recently shifted to a stronger focus on applied mechanics, material strength also. Many Swedish and foreign universities have been involved and at the moment we work closely with Uppsala University.

It is impossible for a museum to have skilled and experienced expertise in different scientific fields, which makes it necessary to cooperate with the institutions that house such expertise. We have worked with this "cooperation-model" for over 15 years and the overall experience is very good.

How do you measure success – is it down to visitor number alone?

We have for a long period of time been working with different kinds of surveys to measure the visitors experience and satisfaction. The focus, range and methods have changed over the years, but we still see it as an important way of measuring and a way to improve ourselves.

Over the years we have also measured our presence in media, and, more lately, in social media. All these kinds of methods for measuring are more or less blunt, but they can give interesting indications.

Visitor numbers have grown to around 1.2million each year, why is the Museum so successful?

The most important factor is that the number of tourists to Stockholm has increased over the last decades. The museum is a "must-see" in Stockholm for these tourists.

The Vasa Museum has a long tradition of national and international marketing. Already in the 1960's campaigns were carried out in Europe and the US, and this has been going on ever since. Without this conscious, long-term and planned marketing The Vasa Museum would not have been such a popular tourist attraction today.

Our marketing staff work close together with organizations like Visit Sweden and Stockholm Visitors Board as well as other tourist attractions in the city. They have close contact with tourist- and incoming sector and cruising companies.

We always make sure that we are present in old and digital media, as well as guide books etc. We try to be very accommodating to journalists, film crews and others that can help us to spread the message, and we have free access to almost all pictures we produce.

Films and images produced by visitors and posted on the internet are usually accessible on our web site.

The Museum has growing overseas visitor demand and profile, how do you balance the need for different, cultures, languages, etc?

The Vasa Museum has always been an international affair. Today 80 % of our visitors are foreigners. Exhibition texts, books, catalogues, films, guided tours, etc is offered in different languages. Traditionally we offered the big European languages like English, French, German and Spanish, but today for example Russian and Chinese is as important. We follow the changes in the mixture of tourists. The film about Vasa and the booklet are available in 16 – 17 languages, the web page in about 40 languages.

Culturally we have not dealt with this very much. Our exhibitions are of course made to be interesting to people without knowledge of Swedish history, but the shipwreck itself tells a story easy to understand over cultural borders.

How does the Museum make history so accessible?

Once again a sunken ship tells a story accessible for people of all ages, from different cultures, with different level of education, etc. The story it tells is an intellectual one as well as an emotional. In that sense we can meet every visitor on his or her own level.



'Live' guides in a variety of languages rather than audio guides makes it possible for visitors from different backgrounds to interpret the history and ask questions when they don't understand (but we do have audio guides as well).

How do you engage with a younger visitor market?

There is a strong emphasis on the younger visitors. Entrance is free up to age of 19, and school programmes with our education department is also free of charge. On weekends and school holidays we offer special programmes for different age groups, and on regular days we sometimes have extra drives for 'Grannies with children', 'Parents with small children on maternal / paternal leave', etc. For schools located far away we have offered education live via Skype.

What measures have been taken if any, to cater for a more active aging market?

Not very much so far, but our seminars are popular with the seniors and so is the museum itself as well.

How will you maintain or grow visitor numbers in the future – discuss development refurbishment, etc?

We have an ongoing plan for increasing the number of visitors from the Stockholm region. The number of visitors during the summer (June – August) is close to maximum, but there is potential for the rest of the year. We are trying to understand the needs of the local visitors better and by meeting them we hope to increase the number of return visits. We also discuss the opening hours and may extend them in the future.

We extended the museum 2013 with a new entrance, new gift shop and new hall for temporary exhibitions, and we are continuing this work this year with better logistics and easier orientation for the visitors.

How have you managed to capture the essence of the ship, as visitors are not allowed to go aboard?

The way the museum is built you are able to come close and see parts of the inside through the canon ports and also get a good look at the top deck.

The full scale replica of a part of the upper gun deck that is located in the exhibition is important. It gives a good impression of the inside of the ship. For school groups we have another full scale replica where they can have lessons without distraction. In the future we may be able to enable a virtual on-board experience.

How does the design of the building and its spatial aspect influence the visitor experience?

The idea with the building is that everything emanates from the ship itself. The big brown hull rests in the middle of the museum and wherever you are you can see it and relate to it. This works very well together with the idea of telling many stories starting from the ship (about the people, the time, warfare, decoration, shipbuilding, rescue, etc). There is no pointed-out route in the museum – visitors can stroll around as they like and go to the spots they find most interesting. This free on unstructured way of going around has its roots in that this is a museum without chronology and with one big object dominating the exhibition.

Some visitors find the unstructured approach in the museum room very difficult, and want to know the best way to go around, probably afraid of missing something important. This is one of the reasons we now look into problems with orientation in the museum.

How have you brought the past to life? What display techniques have worked well and not so well?

We use both traditional and digital display techniques. Some of our exhibits have been more or less the same since the museum opened 1990 and one can notice different “generations” of exhibits. We see a variation of display techniques as a strength and believe that it helps the visitor to digest the experience and move from one chapter to the next among the exhibits. The displays that we are not too happy with is when the look has not worked the rest. We have one exhibit with a very plastic look and that does not work well with the others.



How important have you found temporary exhibitions in attracting a repeat local market?

As mentioned above we try to attract the local public to a greater extent. Temporary exhibitions together with programmes, seminars, happenings, local marketing, etc play an important role. The hall for temporary exhibitions is new and we have only had one exhibition in it so far. It is still too early to evaluate.

How much use does the Museum make use of technology in displays and what issues have been faced?

When the current museum opened in 1990 we had digital presentations and computer programmes in one of the displays. Since then focus has shifted several times. More recently the idea has been to avoid too much technology around the ship since it can disturb the experience of the ship. In the new hall for temporary exhibitions, on the other hand, we are free to use as much technology as we like. The exhibition ‘Meanwhile’ is completely digital.

What operationally have you done to improve the visitor experience – visitor service desk, guides, tours, queuing systems, ticketing?

See above. We are focussing on these issues at the moment. The goal is to give the visitor a smooth and nice experience all the way from the decision to visit the museum till he / she has left the building (or sitting at home looking at photos, reading a book bought in the gift shop).

Good service in the entrance and at the information desk has always been important. The visitors shall they need in a language they understand.

We installed ticket machines a couple of years ago to cut queuing time and are now planning for on-line purchase of tickets.

How big a part do the restaurant and shop play in the Vasa Museum visitor experience?

We have no recent data on this from visitor surveys, but the general impression is that the restaurant and shop is important. A big museum without shop or restaurant is unthinkable today. My personal view is that restaurant, shop and good toilet cleaning is as important as the exhibitions, for the overall impression.

Do you have a regular lunch trade of local residents and business people – approximately how many each day are attracted?

The restaurant is a company on its own and not owned by the museum. They have some kind of card for frequent guests, but the number has decreased in the last years.

How effective is your social media communication?

It is very difficult to measure the impact of separate communication tools or strategies. We can see that number of followers on eg Facebook is going up, which mean we reach an increasing number of people. For a modern museum it is impossible not to be on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc. It has to do with the expectations the surrounding world has on us, but effectiveness is difficult to measure.

The website is impressive and includes a lot of information – text, video and audio, history, etc. Do you know how visitors make use of your website?

800,000 visitors to the site in 2015.

What sorts of website monitoring do you undertake?


Google Analytics are the basis of monitoring activity.

How often do you update your website?

The website is updated about twice a week.

Lessons Learnt

- Long term and well planned marketing campaign. Campaigns have been run since the 1960s. The museum works closely with Visit Stockholm, other local attractions and cruising companies. They have also been very accommodating to journalists and film crews, creating positive PR;
- Measuring Success. The museum continually carries out surveys to measure the visitors experience and satisfaction. They also measure their presence in the media and social media;
- Emphasis on younger visitors. In order to encourage the younger visitor, entrance admission is free as are all education visits. At weekends and in school holidays tailored programmes are offered, some aimed at grannies with children or parents on paternity leave etc;
- Attracting a repeat local market. They are trying to better understand the needs of the local visitor, through discussions, temporary exhibitions, seminars, programmes, local marketing. They have added a new entrance, gift shop, better logistic and orientation;
- Need to actively use Facebook and other Social Media tools. The number of followers has increased. They actively use Facebook Instagram and YouTube as communication mediums. This has become a visitor expectation, but its effectiveness is difficult to measure.

WORLD OF JAMES HERRIOT		
Happy Birthday, Alf		
Location		Thirsk
Post Code		YO7 1PL
Telephone		01845 524234
Opening Times		10am-4/5pm Seven days a week
Seasonality		Open all Year
Entrance Fee		Adults £8.50, Child £5.00
Visitor Numbers		50,000
First Opened		1995
Awards		VisitEngland Gold – Small Visitor Attractions White rose awards 'Yorkshire's Best Visitor Attraction (under 50,000) 2014'.
Main attractions		Book and TV Theme based town and museum
Volunteers?		Small Number
Shop		Gift shop and online gifts available.
Restaurant		No
Tax Breaks		
Funding		Invested £70,000 in 2015
General Description		
<p>The World of James Herriot is the writer Alf Wright's home repurposed as a museum attraction in Thirsk, North Yorkshire. The museum covers the life and books of the veterinarian who lived and worked in the Yorkshire Dales until his death in 1995.</p> <p>The museum is located in the 1940s period house with period veterinary science exhibits. It was the original real life practice of Alf Wright (pen name James Herriot) and known as 'Skeldale House' in his books.</p> <p>The popularity of the books reinforced by a number of television series entitled 'All Creatures Great and Small' and later 'It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet' sees visitors from all over the World visit to experience a recreation of the living areas and sets from the television show along with the Austin 7 also used in the TV series. The attraction has spawned a number of other attractions featuring artefacts eg Yorkshire Museum of Farming and local Pub adopting its 'stage name'. Such is the strength of association and appeal for many people across the World the area is sometimes marketed as Herriot Country and there is a Herriot Country Tourism Group.</p> <p>WJH has an educational aspect and includes an interactive learning centre, engaging in 1940s history, and seeks to inspire future generations to become vets through the WOJH Statue and Legacy Fund.</p>		
Please give a brief history of your attraction?		
<p>The multi award-winning World of James Herriot is a celebration of the life and times of Alf Wight OBE – the world's most famous vet!</p> <p>Our attraction is set in Alf's former home and surgery in Thirsk. Through a collection of interactive exhibits and displays, WOJH tells the story of Alf's veterinary work and his writing as 'James Herriot' – as popular today as when he first put pen to paper in 1960.</p> <p>WOJH was owned by the local council but in 2012 it was taken on by a new team, who have invested in and developed what is now a hugely popular attraction.</p> <p>Innovation and bags of enthusiasm have combined to make WOJH one of Yorkshire's top tourist experiences, attracting visitors from across the world.</p> <p>And while WOJH pays homage to Alf, its lasting legacy is the inspiration it provides for future generations to follow in his footsteps and become vets.</p>		

What do you think is the particular appeal of your attraction and why is it successful?

WOJH is known around the World because of Alf Wight's writing as 'James Herriot' and the ever-popular television series All Creatures Great and Small. Our visitors come from all continents and return home happy that they have got to know him better!

We have worked hard to sustain the Alf Wight story and, as a result, we have become a successful business, contributing to Yorkshire's strong tourism economy.

We're delighted to be celebrating the 100th anniversary of Alf's birth this year – he would have been very proud of the work we are now doing for charity and especially our bursary support to encourage young vets.

Over the last four years, The World of James Herriot has grown to become a multi-award winning visitor attraction with an enviable reputation.

We have developed the museum, investing £70,000 in the last year, adding exhibits and making improvements to ensure our attraction appeals to new and repeat visitors.

What is the market profile of your attraction?

Visitors to WOJH have increased every year since 2012.

Total visitors in 2015 = 29,426 – a 12% increase on 2014.

From within Yorkshire = 35%.

From outside Yorkshire = 45%.

Overseas visitors = 20%- from Canada, US, Australia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Russia, Caribbean, Korea, Brazil, Malaysia, Finland, India, Mexico, Philippines, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Czech Republic and Germany.

The WOJH website is available in most languages; we are also on Twitter and Facebook.

Coach and school bookings have increased – up 8%, from Yorkshire, Finland, Malta, Germany and Republic of Ireland.

These figures demonstrate the enduring popularity of WOJH and its ability to appeal to young and old Herriot fans

What recent improvements that have been made to your attraction to enhance the visitor experience and what effect they have had on your business.

We invested £70,000 in 2015 to enhance the experience of visitors. This has seen visitor numbers rise to 29,426. We continue to attract more people from overseas and outside of Yorkshire.

New exhibits:

- Installation of life size bronze statue of Alf Wight and his favourite dog Hector in the WOJH garden. This marked the start of our new legacy fund which provides bursary support to young people who want to become vets or animal care specialists
- New children's activities, including games, puzzles and quizzes
- Farrier's workshop demonstrating a working scene reminiscent of the type the famous vet and author would have experienced.

We have increased our outreach work to widen our appeal as an attraction while, at the same time, contributing to the veterinary sector:

- Launch of 'James Herriot Foundation Trust' in 2015 to support veterinary nursing students through college. An 'Outstanding Student Nurse of the Year' has already been made to nine colleges and a study room at Sheffield College has been named 'James Herriot'
- Link up with the British Small Animal Veterinary Association to support Computers for Africa charity. WOJH will be an official collection point for the disposal of unwanted computers which will be reconditioned before shipping to Africa
- Link with Moscow school teaching English – we supplied James Herriot books for reading. We provided photographs and materials to the State Darwin Museum, Moscow, which is staging an exhibition dedicated to the 100th anniversary of James Herriot in December 2016.

Our attraction is fully accessible (except for the cellar featuring the air raid shelter) to disabled visitors and includes two lifts between the exhibition areas. We have been highly recommended by carers of disabled/special needs visitors for our access and support of disabled people at WOJH.

For customers with impaired sight, we have a guide book in Braille.

What investment has been made in staff training and development in recent years? How has the training improved the experience of visitors to your attraction?

Our reputation for great customer service means we attract repeat and new visitors. We are very proud of our attraction and want others to enjoy their experience with us.

We continue to invest in training for staff and volunteers – all are up to speed with first aid and fire drill training. Formal training has included Improving Sales (Welcome to Yorkshire) and Customer Service (Yorkshire Pride).

Our 30 volunteers are vital to the smooth and efficient running of WOJH and six have been recognised in 2015 for 10 years' service with us.

We positively encourage feedback through our visitors' book and a customer questionnaire form which guests complete at the end of their tour.

From our visitors book:

'Very well kept, warm and welcoming, loved it all. Lovely tribute to a wonderful author!'

'Well designed and interesting museum. Lots for children (and adults) to do'.

TripAdvisor comments reflect the high standard of customer service we deliver:

'Friendly and enthusiastic staff, an interesting and well-presented recreation museum especially if you are a fan of the books and the TV series, learnt lots about the "real" James Herriot and would visit again'.



Source: Glenswatman

'Met in the hall way by a charming lady who had a font of knowledge ...I was interested in going to the museum having read my first Herriot book in the early 70s...It didn't disappoint one bit and I won't spoil it for anyone planning to visit except to say try not to miss any of it'.

Our commitment to the training and development of staff and their dedication to delivering great customer service has resulted in a raft of award wins. These include a VisitEngland Gold Award 2015 for best small attraction and a Hambleton Champion Business Award 2015 of which we are very proud.

Explain briefly how you attract new and encourage repeat visits, including any of your creative marketing campaigns. What impact did this have on business?

Our creative marketing campaign has increased visitor numbers by 12% in the last year and increased hits to our website to 1.9m in 2015 – up 17% on 2014.

The Yorkshire Vet

This documentary series follows life in a North Yorkshire vet practice. WOJH was instrumental in bringing the series to Channel 5. It has without doubt helped to increase visitor numbers.



Source: Glenswatman & WJH

Grand Central Railway

A high speed train now bears the name James Herriot – this service builds on our partnership with Grand Central and promotes our attraction to a national audience. We are re-dedicating the train's name on 22 June – 100 days before the 100th anniversary of Alf's birth. This will take place at King's Cross and is a partnership to promote WOJH, Thirsk and Grand Central – a win-win for all and Yorkshire!

100th Anniversary Celebrations

This black-tie gala dinner on 1st October 2016 will mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of Alf Wight. This landmark occasion – featuring soprano Lesley Garrett – will serve to promote WOJH and we plan to maximise publicity around '100' to further cement our attraction in people's minds.

Herriot the Puppy

This black, flat-coated retriever is the mascot of WOJH and has got more than 500 followers on Twitter. This is a fun way for us to engage with our audiences and keep them updated on developments and new exhibits.

Coach Parties

We have actively approached coach operators to widen our reach across the UK. We have attended two national coach exhibitions at NEC, Birmingham to promote WOJH. We also launched 'Heritage, Herriot & Heirlooms' – a three-centre coach stop featuring Wensleydale Railway, WOJH and Tenants, Leyburn.

Herriot Country Tourism Group

WOJH is the flagship for the group and we champion the Flavours of Herriot Country Awards, which honour the achievements of the food and drink sector. These partnerships are instrumental in attracting more visitors to Herriot Country and WOJH.

Lessons Learnt

- The importance to continually enhance, refresh and develop the visitor experience. An investment of £70,000 included art, children's activities and interactive demonstration, had the effect of boosting visitor numbers. These new developments however were not done in isolation;
- A new creative marketing campaign maximising external marketing opportunities was devised – TV series, naming of a high speed train and naming of a puppy Herriot that can be followed on Twitter, to enhance the attraction's appeal to a national audience;
- Increased outreach programme to widen its appeal, the launch of the James Herriot foundation – to support veterinary nursing students, links with the British Small Animal Veterinary Association;
- The appeal of nostalgia has grown.