

AIDtime

AMUSEMENT



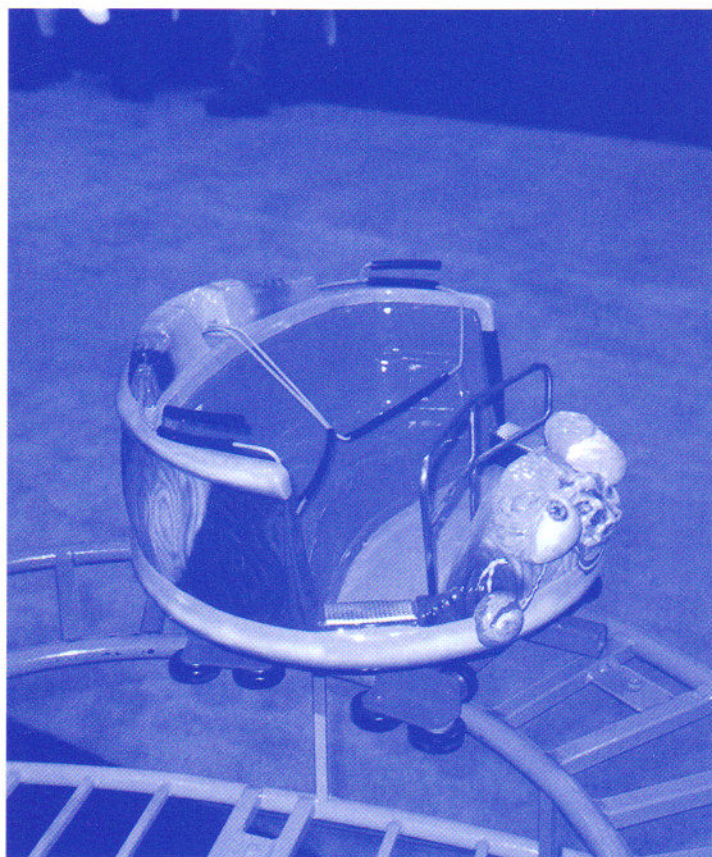
Issue 9

Jan/Feb 1998

CRAZY MOUSE

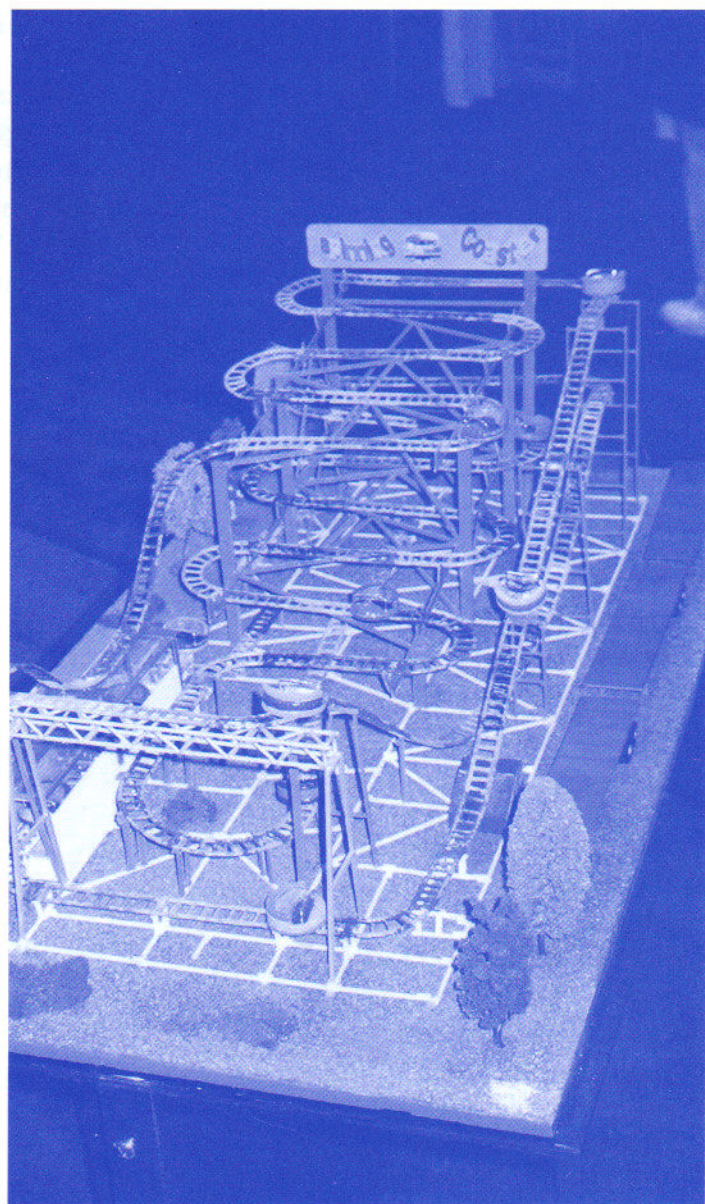
The UK is to get two of the new style spinning coasters this season. Made by French manufacturer Reverchon the Crazy Mouse coaster has Waltzer style cars which seat four riders. The track layout is similar to that of the traditional Wild Mouse, lots of hairpin bends and steep dips. One Crazy Mouse has been bought by Scottish Showman Raymond Codona and will be the UK's first travelling version. The second is heading for the South Pier at Blackpool.

The Crazy Mouse spinning coaster comes in two different lengths, both 50ft high. The one for the South Pier will have nine cars and is due to open by Easter, just in time for the Blackpool Bash! These new style spinning coasters are the nearest you can get to the original Virginia Reel type rides.



Above is the spinning car, which as you can see is very similar to a Waltzer style car.

The picture on the right shows the entire track layout. This is the larger model and features 20 turns and two speed dips (and remember the cars spin all the way round!).



Track Talk

News from around the world



Europe - Walibi Special

- ☺ Walibi Wavre in Belgium is getting a 250ft high Intamin Giant Drop (new generation free fall machine). The ride will be called Dalton Terror and will be in the new Lucky Luke City themed area.
- ☺ Walibi Rhône-Alpes in France is getting a Space Shot from S&S Sports for the new season. It will be called Le Totem Infernal.
- ☺ Walibi Schtroumpf again in France is also getting a Space Shot for 1998 and they are calling theirs La Vengeance de Gargamel.
- ☺ Parc Asterix in Paris saw a 12% increase in visitors last season taking them up to 1.9 million. A park spokesman said that the introduction of the **wooden** coaster Tonnerre De Zeus was the reason. Of course!

USA

- ☺ Paramount's Great America in Santa Clara, California is getting Invertigo, a Vekoma inverted boomerang.
- ☺ Kentucky Kingdom in Louisville, have renamed their new two track woodie Twisted Sisters. Originally it was going to be named Double Trouble. The new \$5 million coaster will be the first ever dueling wood coaster designed by CCI. The coaster will have two separate unique layouts. The separate 72ft high lift hills rise

up and away from each other before the fun begins. The two interwoven tracks will race head-on at each other several times during the journey. The first being on the main drop where the two trains will dive past each other.

The entire 5,381ft of track is supported by steel structure (wooden track, steel structure = wooden coaster). The trains seven cars. The two layouts are already known as LOLA & STELLA.

- ☺ Geauga Lake in Akron, Ohio is adding a custom designed Vekoma inverter. Named "The Serial Thriller", this will be the second Vekoma coaster at the park, joining a standard Boomerang. Other coasters at the park include the classic Big Dipper and the Raging Wolf Bobs, a copy of the Chicago Bobs. The park also has an original Intamin Free Fall.

- ☺ Astroworld in Houston will rename the four looping Thriller, Taz's Texas Tornado.

- ☺ Six Flags Great America in Gurnee near Chicago is getting two new themed areas:- The Cartoon Network Village, and Looney Tune National Park. Rides will include a 37ft high kiddie coaster by Vekoma. Themed around the Jetsons, the name will be Spacely's Sprocket Rockets. Other attractions will include Bedrock from the Flintstones, a Scooby-Doo

Mysteryville and Mystery Machine ride, and a small train ride called the The Looney Tooner.

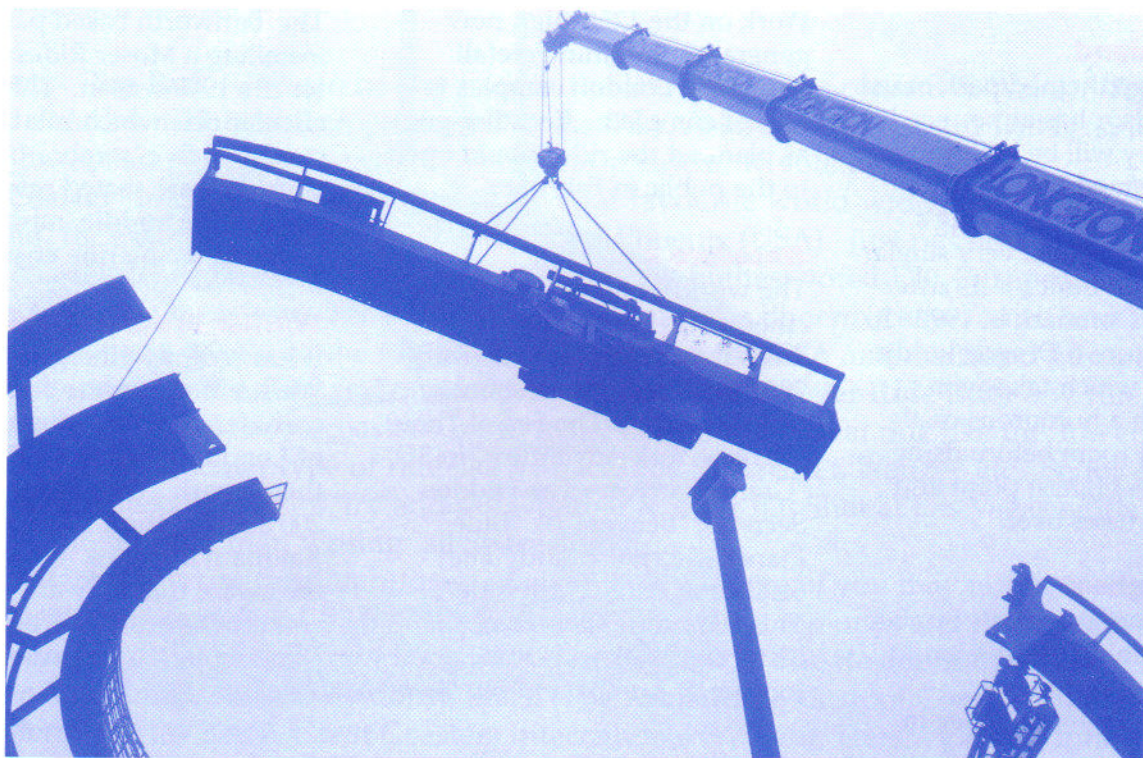
- ☺ The name for the new CCI woodie for VisionLand in Birmingham, Alabama mentioned in the last issue is Rampage. The coaster will have a similar feel to Oakwood's Megafobia as it has the same layout, just a little larger, having a 120ft first drop. Check out the updates on the new VisionLand website:-
<http://www.visionlandpark.com>
- ☺ Thirteen of the rides from the recently closed park Opryland have been purchased by Premier Parks. They will move them to the currently closed park, Old Indiana in Indianapolis, which was also recently purchased by Premier Parks. It will reopen in 1999 under a new name. The \$10 million deal includes, Grizzly River Rampage (Rapids), The Hangman (a Vekoma Inverted coaster.) The Old Mill Scream (Shoot the Chutes), Screamin' Delta Demon (Intamin Bobsled), Chaos (Vekoma Indoor Powered Coaster), Wabash Cannonball (Arrow Corkscrew), The Barnstormer, Tennessee Waltz (Swing Ride), Country Bumpkin (dodgems), Dulcimer Splash (Log Ride), Little Deuce Coupe and Rock N' Roller Coaster (Arrow Mine Train).

SW4 - UPDATE

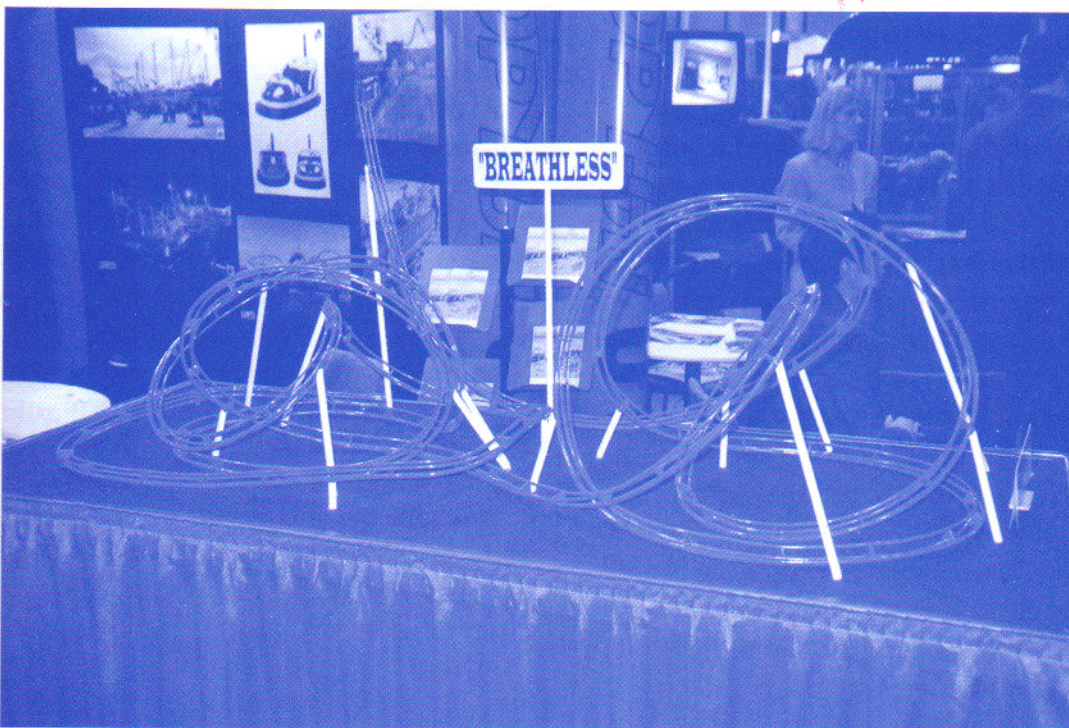
Just before the Christmas break the final piece of the new style Bolliger and Mabillard track was put into place. The unique cars have now arrived on site and depending on weather testing should commence shortly. Once B&M testing is complete, the operation of the ride will be handed over to Alton Towers for final theming and staff training.

The whole area (SW4, The Black Hole, and two spinning rides) is now known as the X-Sector, but the name of SW4 itself is still a closely guarded secret and will not be announced until the 11th hour.

If testing goes to plan the ride will be open on the first day of the season, March 14th. The ride has already been quoted as "The most physically demanding and psychologically challenging experience in a lifetime!" Apparently it will even make Nemesis seem tame! (Be one of the first to ride, see Members Offer on page 6).



BREATHLESS



This new Pinfari coaster is unique in that it has no lift hill as such. Basically the train is taken to the highest point by a lift (elevator). The train is then tipped onto the track where upon it drops and proceeds around six inversions (none of which are standard loops or corkscrews), before stopping at the end of the track. The coaster is 131ft high, 2132ft long and can handle 1300 riders per hour.



Legoland

The Lego themed park based in Windsor has announced that they will be building a new themed area for the 1998 season called King's Castle. It will be very similar to the one built for its sister park in Denmark in 1997. It will feature a Dragon kiddy coaster which takes you through a humorous castle themed room before rising up to its highest point and gravity takes over!

Birmingham!

Hampton Trust have applied for planning permission to build a £300 million entertainment complex in

Home News

Birmingham. If granted it would be the second tallest building in the country and would include restaurants, theatres, a hotel and a lot of themed rides.

Trocadero 1

Work on the 125ft high new generation Intamin Freefall inside the London complex is almost complete. If testing goes as planned the ride should open to the public in February.

Trocadero 2

The world's biggest IMAX cinema has opened in the Trocadero. The screen is over 70ft high! Movies on show include "Across The Sea of Time - A New York Adventure" in 3D, "Grand Canyon - The Hidden Secrets", "Beavers" (!), "Blue Planet", "Everest" and "The Science of Fun - Thrill Ride". This 50 minute film traces the history of rides with some good footage of Kumba and Big Shot,

but spends a lot of time talking about motion simulators like Back to The Future and Star Tours. Prices start at £5.95 and the theatre opens from 10.30am to 11.30pm. Full details on 0845 600 0505.

Drayton Manor Park

The Tamworth based park is installing a Moser Rides Sombrero for the 1998 season. This is a circular ride which rotates at the centre, as five 'sombros' in which the riders are seated revolve around the middle, raising and lowering as the ride ensues.

Warner Brothers Back Again?

It has recently emerged that Warner Brothers are seriously considering a new site on the East of London for their £225 million theme park. They want to use just 200 acres of the 1,100 acre Rainham Marshes. However they are aware that they are bound to run into opposition from newt campaigners! (See issue 8).

WHY WOOD?

Now, never let it be said that I am biased to wooden coasters, but surely there is some reason why so many parks all over America build wooden coasters rather than steel. Is it that they know that the public like them? Is it that they know that once you have been upside down once, you've done it a 100 times? Is it that they appreciate that only real coasters are made of wood? Other materials just create thrill rides. Is it the traditional lattice wooden structure, so pleasing to the eye? Is it the extra 'shake, rattle and roll' that you don't get from a steel coaster? Is it the fact that riders can get off a wooden coaster without rubbing their ears? Or is it all of these reasons and more? Come on English parks, take note. Oakwood did and look at the result. Maybe the UK parks that read AIRtime would like to write and tell us why they have yet to realise that wooden coasters are and will always remain 'King of the Park'. Don't believe me? Ask Parc Asterix what their most popular attraction is, or Oakwood or Kings Island, or Knoebels, or Six Flags Over Texas, or Astroworld, or Kennywood, or..... I think you get the message!

Terror On

Blackpool Pleasure Beach!

No don't panic, there's not been an accident! Following on from last issue's feature on the Haunted Mansion in Florida, Blackpool Pleasure Beach have recently announced plans for its own blood curdling, walk through attraction. Developed by Spanish company Monsters & Monsters, the haunted house experience will have trained actors, special effects and theatrical lighting and sound. In small groups visitors will navigate their way through horror settings and rooms in near darkness. MD Geoffrey Thompson said "It's going to be the most terrifying experience known to man". The new attraction is due to open in Easter just in time for the Blackpool Bash!

The RCCGB Amusement Awards 1998

Enclosed with this issue is your 1998 Renewal Form. To continue with uninterrupted membership and keep the same membership number all you will need to do is return the form with your name and membership number and any family members names along with a cheque payable to 'RCCGB'. Please check the address label to ensure that your address is correct. If any of the lines of your address are wrong or you have recently changed your address please write your corrections or new address clearly on the back of the form.

Also on the form you will notice that there is an area called "The RCCGB Amusement Awards 1998". Please take the time to complete this section as your votes are important and awards will be presented to the winners of each category

Notes for voting:- **Top Park (UK)** can be any park in the UK (England, Scotland & Wales). **Top Park (World-wide)**, includes mainland Europe as well as the USA, Asia, etc. This award will be split into the highest voted European park and rest of the world, but please only vote for one park.

Top Wooden Coaster* and **Top Steel Coaster*** is for your favourite world-wide (UK included). So please don't put, for example, Grand National (UK) and Phoenix (USA). Just put one wooden coaster and one steel coaster. These two awards will be split into the highest voted UK, European and rest of the world. (i.e. If the top three woodies were from the UK and the Phoenix came fourth and Tonnerre De Zeus came fifth, these would be the top wooden coasters in the USA and mainland Europe.) But please, only one vote for steel and one for wood. **Best Non-Coaster Ride** is for any ride anywhere in the world that is not a coaster. Try to make this an individual ride like the Tower of Terror at MGM rather than a particular type of ride like a Spaceshot, Skycoaster, Waltzer, etc. So for example, if you wish to nominate a Spaceshot, try and say whether it is the Big Shot at Las Vegas or Playstation-Ride at Blackpool rather than writing "all Spaceshots".

Best Ride Manufacturer is pretty straightforward. However as some of you may not be too familiar with the manufacturers names and their rides, here are a few of the top ones and their rides:- Bolliger & Mabillard (Nemesis & Kumba), Arrow Dynamics (The Big One & The Revolution), Vekoma (X:\No Way Out & The Missile), Pinfari (all Zyklons), Mack (The Avalanche), Custom Coasters International (Megafobia & Tonnerre De Zeus), Great Coasters International (Wildcat, Hershey Park), Intamin (Shockwave & Freefalls), Togo (Ultra Twister & Manhattan Express), S&S Sports Power (Spaceshots) and Sky Fun 1 (Skycoasters).

The final award is for the "**Person Who Has Made An Outstanding Contribution To The Industry**". They can be alive or dead, just so long as they have done something that you consider outstanding. Some examples are:- W.G. Bean for creating Blackpool Pleasure Beach or Doris or Geoffrey Thompson for keeping the park going and not selling out to a big corporation. Maybe John Wardley for introducing world class rides to the UK like Nemesis. David Pickstone, an enthusiast who gave up everything to save a Wild Mouse. Sadly after 12 years of extremely hard work he has been forced to give it all up. You may like to vote for Denise Dinn-Larrick for creating Custom Coasters International (CCI) and giving us the excellent Megafobia. Or even Paddy and William McNamara from Oakwood for having the guts to have Megafobia built after such a long absence of new wooden coasters in the UK. The success speaks for itself. Or Walter Bolliger and Claude Mabillard for being able to bend steel and still produce a smooth coaster! Or maybe you have another choice. So it doesn't matter who you vote for, just so long as you personally feel that they have done something to improve your desire and passion for this, the most fun industry in the world!

The winners will be announced in a future AIRtime and awards will be presented, where possible at club events.

Remember The Ultimate at Lightwater Valley is a steel coaster not wood. What defines a coaster is the track that it runs on. Steel coasters usually run on tubular steel track (like The Ultimate), whereas wooden coasters run on laminated wooden strips (like Megafobia). Anyone who votes for The Ultimate as a wooden coaster will have their name printed in AIRtime!!



QUEUE LINE

Gossip

UK

Southend Pier

No sooner is it off, its back on again! New rumours suggest that more funding has been found and so the 'The Swine' project is back on again. Remember that this is the rumours section so the last issue's report that it was off could not be 100% confirmed before printing.

(American) Adventure World

If this Derbyshire park does get a woodie it is rumoured that it will be like Megafobia but the size of the Texas Giant!

EUROPE

Wood, wood, wood, wood

There are rumours of at least four woodies for Europe over the next two years. No firm details as to which parks, but I suggest you keep an eye on all of the Walibi Parks which were recently bought by Premier Parks.

USA

Six Flags Great America

This park near Chicago has a proposed new 25 acre waterpark called Hurricane Harbor. A 400 room hotel, a small shopping center and a man made lake. All planned for a 136 acre site bought by the park on the opposite side of the I-94 to the park.

Six Flags Over Texas

Big rumour about SFOT is that they are going to spend in excess of £18 million on just two new coasters. One for 1999 and one for year 2000. One ride will travel at over 90mph and the other will have two underwater tunnels. Both will be steel and one is rumoured to be called Batman and Robin the Race for Gotham.

New 200ft Coaster

Busch Gardens Williamsburg in Virginia have received planning permission for a 200ft high coaster. However they now have to decide if

they want to utilise the natural valley so as not to have a 200ft high structure in the skyline or just use the 200ft and the valley together to create one enormous drop!

Kennywood

Not yet confirmed is a Crazy Mouse coaster for Pittsburg based Park Kennywood. Plus a new rumour that they may also be getting an SW4 type ride for 1999.

New Woodie - WOF

Not content with the 200ft high Mamba for 1998, Worlds Of Fun is rumoured to be adding a Raven clone for 1999 on the site of the 24 year old Zambezie Zinger.

DISCLAIMER

All of the rumours featured in this page are 'rumours'. The Club cannot accept responsibility for any inaccurate or untrue information. Due to the nature of the articles (and very secretive parks) it is obviously impossible to confirm the stories until parks release full details. If you hear a rumour send it to the Club address or E-mail:- rccgb@aol.com

Members Offer

EXCLUSIVE ALTON TOWERS OFFER

To help you experience SW4 on March 14th, the first day of public operation I have arranged a 'Meet at the Park' day. There will be no exclusive ride session or trip badges, we will just 'Meet at the Park'! However I have arranged a special members price entry of just £12.00 instead of the normal £19.50. You must book this at least two weeks in advance and the easiest way is to call **01538 702200** with your credit card and membership number. (If you don't have a credit card, please send me an SAE for a postal booking form). You can then just 'Meet at the Park' which opens at 9.30am, and SW4 at 10.00am. If you are unable to make the 14th you can still obtain the members discount entry at any time up until April 30th. Just remember to book two weeks in advance. Note: No tickets for this offer are for sale on the day and they cannot be used with any other offer. Offer is open to members families also. And don't forget the 10th Anniversary Fun Day at Alton Towers on Monday June 1st. This will include a one hour exclusive ride session on SW4, the It's A Knockout Tournament (I'll be after team members soon!), a BBQ and a disco. Full details of this special day will be sent as soon as all details are confirmed.

*** The Club cannot accept responsibility if SW4 is not operating on any offer day.**

VIDEO ALERT

PLEASURE BEACH on the BBC

Starting on February 2nd at 9.30pm on the BBC is a six week series on Blackpool Pleasure Beach. It is 'fly on the wall' style similar to the recent Hotel, Cruise and Holiday Reps programmes.

QUOTE!

"I bet it's a looping Skycoaster?"

Members guess as to what SW4 is!

Members Page

10 YEARS UPDATE

...a few weeks to go before we start the big 10th Anniversary celebrations. The first of which is the Blackpool Bash on April 17th, 18th & 19th. Remember to book your hotel soon. (List of B&B's, Guest Houses and Hotels with your invitation) As you know from the last issue, I have now added a Gong Show on the Friday night starting after the Ken Webster Hypnotist Show. So I now need volunteers to take part in the Gong Show. You don't have to be able to sing or in fact be able to perform anything. You just have to have a go! If the audience like you, then you carry on. If they don't you will be 'gonged' off! Its all a bit of fun and already I have a Spice Girl tribute and the legendary Village People!! So, get thinking and give it a go! You can mime to a song, really sing one, do some magic, juggling, a dance, tell jokes, in fact absolutely anything that you feel will entertain your fellow members. Even if you think/know you are no good, just have a laugh and give it a go. After all I need some bad acts to 'gong' off!! If you are interested please write to me, tell me and I contact you to discuss it. The Coaster Crazy Gameshow is now even zanier! Lots of shouting, cheering and the chance to win bigger and better prizes, including cash!!

Time To Ride Again!

Or where can I get my first ride of the season?

Blackpool Towers
Open daily 14th March - 8th November.
Entrance £19.50 (see Club members offer)

Blackpool Manor Park
Open daily from 29th March.
Entrance and wristband £13.00

Blackpool Wood
Open daily 4th April - 26th September.
Entrance £9.95

Blackpool Pleasure Beach
Open Weekends* - All weekends in March starting on the 7th, plus April 4th - 9th inclusive. Open daily from 10th April - 8th November.
Includes The Big One and Playstation-The Ride.

Blackpool Pleasureland - Southport
Open 14th-21st February (Half Term) daily at Easter and then weekends until Spring Bank Holiday. Then daily through summer until September.
Wristband £10.00, individual ride tickets £1.00

Pleasure Beach - Great Yarmouth
Open 28/29th March, 4th - 19th April, weekends beginning in May and daily from 23rd May.
Entrance - TBA (may introduce wristband)

Dreamland - Margate
Daily 4th April - end of October.
Entrance TBA

Lightwater Valley
Open 1st-19th April, then weekends from April 25th - May 17th. Daily from 23 May - 6th Sep. Weekends until 1st Nov
Entrance £11.95

(American) Adventure World
Daily Sat 4th April
Entrance TBA

Chessington World of Adventures
Daily 23rd March - 1st November
Entrance £19.00 (Note: New wild mouse coaster **not** open until mid-April)

Call the parks for full opening hours.

Whats In A Name?

Batman, The Incredible Hulk, Superman, etc. Its all so easy to name a ride after a movie or use a good old traditional coaster name like Cyclone, so its very refreshing to see some good new coaster names coming. Shivering Timbers, Rampage and Double Trouble (although changed to Twisted Sisters) to name but a few. What would you name a new woodie or steelie? Write in with your suggestion and I'll print the best.

COMMUNICATION!

During the last year 9000 issues of AIRtime were mailed, 1500 Yearbooks, 12,100 trip invites, 1350 trip confirmation letters and 1681 individual letters. That totals 25,631 stamps! Most of them manually licked! The Club received over 2000 letters ranging from information requests, help with college courses, historic questions, etc. Over 130 faxes were sent and 82 received (mostly for USA '97). I made more than 1000 telephone calls and received about twice as many! I also received just over 1200 E-mails and sent over 800 of my own! Just a quiet year then really!

GQ Active

Look out for a big 'Top Ten Thrill Rides' feature in the March/April edition of GQ Active magazine which should be on the shelves in February.

Non-Renewal

If you found that the Club was not for you and decide not to renew your membership, please accept my thanks for your support in 1997. But please write and tell me why. I am always open to suggestions on how to improve the Club and will gladly consider all ideas.

COMING SOON

The new 1998
10th Anniversary
T-Shirt

Editor's Comment

So to the end of your membership year. If it was your first year I hope you have found the Club to your liking. Many times new members or those wishing to join, ask me all sorts of questions like, "Am I too old", "Am I too young", "Is it full of anoraks". Well of course the answer to all those is a big "no". There is no age limit on having fun, so as long as you like coasters, enjoy reading AIRtime and like the social side of being on a Club trip (parties, Gameshows, etc.) then the Club is for you. And do we wear anoraks? Of course not! We are just a group of people who like to have fun. We travel the world visiting amusement parks. We meet lots of people and share some great experiences together. And as I said in the last Editor's Comment, a lot of friendships have been formed in the Club. So no, we are not anoraks. When was the last time you saw a member counting the bolts on The Big One or asking what time the next Nemesis train will leave platform one? The Club is all about having fun. It's a social Club for amusement park enthusiasts to meet at parks and enjoy a day together. AIRtime keeps you updated in between the trips and the Yearbook reminds you of the fun you have had during the year!

So if you agree with all that, then by now you will be hastily filling in your renewal form. Remember the 10th Anniversary Blackpool Bash invites are printed and will be sent to you with your 1998 membership card. Only when you get this can you apply to come on this, the biggest ever Bash! And with a limit of 450 people on the Friday night the sooner you renew, the sooner you can confirm a space for this hilarious evening! And don't forget I need volunteers for the Gong Show. Go on have a go its only a bit of fun!

Happy New Year and I look forward to seeing you on one of the forthcoming trips. By the way does anyone know how many bolts are on the Big One or where I can buy the new Club anorak!!

It's a Date!

Make a note in your diary of forthcoming Club events in the 1998 season. Full details will be sent to you in good time.



March 14th 1998

ALTON TOWERS - SW4

Start the season off in style with a casual 'meet at the park' day to ride SW4 on its first day of operation! No ERS, no trip badges, just meet at the park! To book at the special Club members rate of £12.00 call 01538 702200 with your credit card details. Then just meet at SW4 (which won't be called that by then!) as soon as the park opens. (This trip is in addition to the 10th Anniversary Fun Day on June 1st).

April 17th - 19th 1998

BLACKPOOL BASH '98

The biggest and best ever Bash! The first of our 10 year celebration events includes a Hypnotist Show, Gong Show (Talent), ERS's on The Big One, Playstation, Grand National, Cyclone, Fun House and Chaos! Plus two luncheons, the new zanier Coaster Crazy Gameshow and the Club party!! The most action packed weekend you'll have all year! Full details and booking form when you renew.

OTHER TRIPS

May 16th - **MegaMania Part 1**, including a TWO hour ERS on Megafobia (all for just £11.00). **Part 2** will be later in the season, when its darker! and will be part of the 10th Anniversary events.

June 1st - **10th Anniversary Fun Day** at Alton Towers featuring an ERS on SW4 and an It's a Knockout Tournament.

July 18th - **Summer Bash '98**, Dreamland, Margate (& Rotunda) Plus **Euro Ventura** now in September and more.

AIRtime

Editor: Andy Hine Proof Reader: Yvonne Hine

Contributors:- Michael Bolton, Bart De Paepe, Wayne Davis, Kevin Sudds, all the Internet coasterites and the many parks and manufacturers featured throughout.

Special thanks to- NAPHA, IAAPA, Inside Track & Amusement Today.

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