

**SAVE DREAMLAND CAMPAIGN  
PRESS RELEASE**

18 June 2007

**SAVE DREAMLAND CAMPAIGN RESCUES VINTAGE RIDES**

The new Heritage Amusement Park proposed for Margate's Dreamland site moved a step closer this week as dismantling work commenced on the remaining rides at the defunct Pleasureland Amusement Park in Southport, Merseyside. The rides, which are some of the last remaining examples of their type in the world, will be placed in storage to enable them to be rebuilt as part of the proposed Heritage Amusement Park at Dreamland, Margate.

Campaign Leader Nick Laister says: "Southport's Pleasureland is one of only a handful of seaside amusement parks in this country that still have original vintage amusement park rides. Rides such as the River Caves and Caterpillar date back to the 1920s. Sadly the park closed last year and the rides were due to be bulldozed this month to make way for a new temporary fairground operator. The Campaign has been in discussions with Blackpool Pleasure Beach and Pleasureland's new owners, Sefton Council, since February with a view to removing all the original rides to allow them to be placed in storage for use in the proposed Heritage Amusement Park. Thankfully these discussions have resulted in the rides being 'donated' to the Dreamland project".

The rides currently being dismantled include the vintage 1960-built Wild Mouse wooden roller coaster that formerly operated at Morecambe's Frontierland and the 1922 Caterpillar, identical to the one that operated at Dreamland between 1922 and 1980, becoming one of its most famous rides. The Campaign's contractors (Hopkinson Construction Engineering Ltd, who have just completed construction of the Nightmare ride at Camelot) started work on ride dismantling on Wednesday 6 June and work should finish by 30 June.

Nick Laister says: "I visited Pleasureland a few weeks ago with ride engineers Dave Collard and David Wragg to survey the condition of the rides, most of which were in reasonably good condition. The rides would have all been bulldozed over the next few weeks as Sefton Council are in the process of clearing the site for Norman Wallis ('Dreamstorm'), who has an 18-month lease on the site. We were given a very tight deadline to secure the necessary funding and remove the rides. A large proportion of the funding has been provided by the Margate Town Centre Regeneration Company Ltd (MTCRC), the owners of Dreamland. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank Toby Hunter and the rest of the team at MTCRC; without their help these rides would undoubtedly have been lost and the Dreamland Heritage Amusement Park project could not have been delivered. I would also like to thank Tony Corfield at Sefton Council for his help, and for keeping the rides safe whilst the bulldozers cleared the rest of the site, and Susan Marsh and Dave Collard for their valuable assistance."

The Save Dreamland Campaign launched its proposals for a Heritage Amusement Park, based around the listed Scenic Railway, in May 2007. The Heritage Amusement Park, which would be a world's first, will include some of the remaining examples of Britain's amusement park heritage in a high quality park-like environment around the Scenic Railway. The listed Cinema building would also be brought back into use with rides, shows, bars, restaurants and an amusement park/seaside heritage museum.

The Save Dreamland Campaign has set up The Dreamland Trust, which will play a key role in delivering the Heritage Amusement Park project. Nick, who is Chairman of The Dreamland Trust, adds: "We believe that this is the best option to secure the future of the Grade 2 listed Scenic Railway and for the distinguished history of the park to be recognised. It is also no exaggeration to say that within the next 12 months most of the country's amusement park heritage outside of Blackpool and Great Yarmouth will be lost. It is therefore an ideal way of safeguarding and preserving the UK's amusement park heritage at this critical time. We are currently in active

discussions with a number of other parks with a view to saving their threatened historic rides and moving them to Dreamland. The Dreamland project could not have been better timed and will undoubtedly play a pivotal role in the regeneration of Margate."

Initial feasibility work undertaken by the Save Dreamland Campaign and by independent consultants suggests that the project will be viable. Further feasibility work on the project is to be undertaken over the coming weeks by a leading tourism consultancy.

Nick Laister concludes: "The project still has a long way to go, but we are hopeful that we can open the new Heritage Amusement Park for the 2009 season. I look forward to continuing to work with MTCRC and Thanet District Council to deliver this first-class visitor attraction to Margate."

## **ENDS**

### **Information for Editors**

The Save Dreamland Campaign's Concept Plan, by theme park designer Jean-Marc Toussaint, is available to download: <http://www.joylandbooks.com/scenicrailway/heritageamusementpark.htm>

For further information on the Save Dreamland Campaign please contact:

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The Save Dreamland Campaign was launched in 2003 to save the Dreamland Pleasure Park, Margate, home of the UK's oldest roller coaster, the 87-year-old listed Scenic Railway. The Campaign is led by planning expert Nick Laister, a planning consultant working within the British amusement park industry. The Campaign is now speaking on behalf of over 13,000 people, including local residents, businesses and organisations such as the Margate Historical Society, Margate Civic Society, the Isle of Thanet Hotel and Guest House Association, European Coaster Club, Roller Coaster Club of Great Britain and SAVE Britain's Heritage.

The official campaign website is [www.savedreamland.co.uk](http://www.savedreamland.co.uk). The campaign can be emailed at [campaign@savedreamland.co.uk](mailto:campaign@savedreamland.co.uk). The address for all correspondence is Save Dreamland Campaign, The Shell Grotto, Grotto Hill, Margate, Kent CT9 2BU.

The Margate Town Centre Regeneration Company acquired Dreamland in March 2005 and plans to redevelop the site. The current proposals are for a mixed use redevelopment, to include a heritage amusement park similar to that proposed by the Save Dreamland Campaign.

Pleasureland Amusement Park, Southport, opened in the 1920s and became one of the north west's most popular visitor attractions. The park closed in September 2006. A short-term lease for the 25-acre park has been agreed with leisure operator Dreamstorm until the end of the 2008 season. This will see a number of British and European travelling funfair rides moving to the site on a temporary basis.

The following rides are being removed from Pleasureland: Wild Mouse/King Solomon's Mines wooden roller coaster; River Caves; Ghost Train; Haunted Swing; Mirror Maze; Mistral Flying Machine; Sandstorm; Caterpillar; Sky Ride (Chairlift); and remaining Fun House machines. The Crooked House will not be removed due to asbestos contamination. Ride removal should be complete by the end of June. Pleasureland should reopen to the public as the new 'Euro Attractions Park' in July.

Dreamland Pleasure Park is located at Belgrave Road, Margate. The park is owned by Margate Town Centre Regeneration Company Ltd, the majority shareholder of which is Reading-based Waterbridge Group.