

**REQUEST FOR SPOT LISTING OF:  
THE SCENIC RAILWAY ROLLER COASTER  
DREAMLAND AMUSEMENT PARK, MARGATE, KENT  
Submission to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport**

Report Produced by

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**Appendix 1:** List of wooden roller coasters built in the UK

**Appendix 2:** "The Brakeman Cometh", Article from TheGalloper.com, December 2000

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by Nick Laister BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI MIHT and David Page Bsc. This submission to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport requests that the Scenic Railway roller coaster at Dreamland Amusement Park, Margate, Kent is spot listed.
- 1.2 We set out below the background and experience of Nick Laister and David Page.
- 1.3 Nick Laister BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI MIHT is a leading amusement park historian and editor of the website JoylandBooks.com, which specialises in books on amusement park history. He is a Chartered Town Planner working for the RPS Group plc, and specialises in planning for tourism and leisure. He has been involved in a number of listed buildings cases, and has appeared as expert witness at several public inquiries and hearings. He has written articles for newspapers and journals and has been invited to speak at conferences on the subject of planning for tourism and leisure.
- 1.4 David Page is a fairground historian and editor of the website thegalloper.com, which specialises in reporting vintage fairs and general preservation matters relating to fairs and amusement parks. A former journalist he is now an editor at Freeserve, the UK's number one Internet Service Provider.
- 1.5 Nick Laister and David Page are currently working on a wider paper on the subject of Britain's amusement park heritage for presentation to the Department of National Heritage as a basis for a more thorough review of the potential for listing of a number of important buildings and other structures.
- 1.6 Section 2 of this report provides a brief background to the history of roller coasters as context for an understanding of the historical importance of the Scenic Railway. Section 3 provides details of the Scenic Railway at Margate. Section 4 sets out the case for the spot listing of the structure, and Section 5 provides the Conclusions.

## **2.0 BRIEF HISTORY OF ROLLER COASTERS AND AMUSEMENT PARKS**

### **Switchback Railways**

- 2.1 The first ever purpose-built commercial roller coaster was constructed in 1884 at West Tenth Avenue, Coney Island, Brooklyn, USA. It was called the Switchback Railway, and was designed by an Indiana inventor named La Marcus Thompson. By today's standards it would seem somewhat crude, and it only ran at about six miles an hour. Robert Cartmell's book *The Incredible Scream Machine* (1987, Amusement Park Books) describes it as "little more than a scenic tour of the beach".
- 2.2 The ride consisted of tracks undulating over a wooden structure six hundred feet long. A small train started at one end of the ride, about fifty feet high, and ran in a straight line along the undulating track until it got to the end. It was then 'switched' by the ride operators to a return track which started off at a higher level, and took the rider back.
- 2.3 Within a few months, however, switchbacks were springing up everywhere, including Britain. By 1885, only one year later, there was a switchback at Skegness in the UK, Britain's first ever roller coaster. That was followed by several others, including rides at Blackpool, Bridlington and Folkestone (see Appendix 1 for a full list).

### **Scenic Railways and Figure Eights**

- 2.4 Two other forms of roller coaster were quickly developed, which became the mainstay of amusement parks around the world for the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: scenic railways and figure eights. In the UK, scenic railways (from 1907) and figure eights (from 1908) often spelt the end for the ageing switchbacks.
- 2.5 The roller coaster at Dreamland, Margate, is an example of a Scenic Railway. The Scenic Railway roller coaster concept was also developed by La Marcus Thompson. The first example opened in 1887 in Atlantic City, USA. The idea behind the Scenic Railway was to create a ride where passengers could enjoy an imaginary scenic tour. They featured articulated carriages, powered cables to lift the trains up inclines, and often had their structures covered by elaborate landscapes to create the effect of mountain scenery. They were therefore the direct forerunner of the present modern-day roller coaster. One major difference, however, is that the trains did not have under friction wheels (used in modern day roller coasters to prevent them from leaving the track), therefore they required the use of a brakeman who sat between cars one and two keeping the speed in check. Scenic railways became the most famous amusement ride in the world, and spread across the globe to Britain, Europe and India.
- 2.6 The other type of roller coaster from that period is the Figure Eight. This is a 'side-friction' coaster named as such because the individual cars had wheels positioned perpendicular to the running wheels that ran along wooden rails on the edges of the track. These rides tended to be smaller than scenic railways, with single cars instead of trains, and they relied less on drops (therefore not requiring a brakeman).

2.7 Throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, British amusement parks were dominated by scenic railway and figure eight roller coasters. The following is a list of scenic railways in the UK, with the year of opening and demolition (a full list of all wooden roller coaster types is at Appendix 1):

- Aberdeen, Aberdeen Beach Amusement Park (1929-1943, rebuild of Scenic from Great Yarmouth)
- Barry Island, Barry Island Pleasure Park (1939-1973, rebuild of Scenic Railway from Empire Exhibition, Glasgow)
- Battersea, Battersea Fun Fair (1951-1972, rebuild of Scenic Railway from Sutton Park)
- Blackpool, Blackpool Pleasure Beach (1907-1933)
- Blackpool, Blackpool Pleasure Beach, *Velvet Coaster* (1909-1932)
- Cleethorpes, Wonderland, *Dipper* (1926-?)
- Edinburgh, Edinburgh Exhibition (1908/1910)
- Glasgow, Scottish National Exhibition (1911)
- Glasgow, Empire Exhibition (1938, rebuilt Barry Island)
- Great Yarmouth, Pleasure Beach [first scenic] (1909-1928, rebuilt at Aberdeen)
- Great Yarmouth, Pleasure Beach [second scenic] (1932-present)
- Liverpool, Liverpool Exhibition (1913, rebuild of 1911 Scenic from Glasgow Exhibition)
- London, Earl's Court Exhibition (1909)
- London, Festival of Empire Exhibition, Crystal Palace (1911)
- London, Japan-British Exhibition, White City (1910)
- London, Wembley Exhibition (1924, rebuilt at Belle Vue)
- London, Wembley Exhibition, *Giant Switchback* (1924)
- London, Wembley Exhibition, *Safety Racer* (1924)
- London, White City Exhibition, *Canadian Scenic* (1908)
- London, White City Exhibition, *Mountain Scenic* (1908)
- Manchester, Belle Vue (1926-1980, rebuild of Scenic from Wembley Exhibition)
- Manchester, White City [first scenic] (1907-1927)
- Manchester, White City [second scenic] (1928-?)
- Margate, Dreamland (1920-present)
- Margate, Dreamland, *Velvet Coaster* (later called *Roller Coaster*), (1922-1975)
- New Brighton, Tower Pleasure Grounds (1908-?)
- Newcastle, Newcastle Exhibition, *Himalayan Railway* (1929)
- Portobello, Edinburgh, Marine Gardens (1910-1914)
- Redcar, *Big Dipper* (1961-?)
- Redcar, *Giant Racer* (1925-1937, moved to Sheerness)
- Scarborough, Gala Land (1926-?)
- Scarborough, West Pier (1929-1939 approx)
- Seaburn, Seaburn Fun Park, *Big Dipper* (1952-1973)
- Sheerness (1938-1939, rebuild of Giant Racer from Redcar)
- Southend-on-Sea, The Kursaal (1910-1973)
- Southport, Pleasureland (1922-1940, rebuilt at Sutton Park and later at Battersea Fun Fair)
- Southport, Pleasureland, *Mountain Caterpillar Railway* (1925-1946, rebuilt at Sutton Park, Sutton Coldfield)

- Sutton Coldfield, Sutton Park (1946-1950, rebuild of *Scenic Railway* and *Mountain Caterpillar Railway* from Southport Pleasureland)
- 2.8 By the late 1920s, and with the invention of the under friction wheel, the scenic railways became overshadowed by bigger, faster roller coasters. Numerous wooden roller coasters were built throughout the UK in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: figure eights, scenic railways, and other types (see Appendix 1). Most have now been demolished. The biggest period of demolition was the 1970s, following an accident on the Scenic Railway at the Battersea Funfair, when many parks removed their ageing wooden roller coasters to replace them with more modern steel rides.

### **Our Amusement Park Heritage**

- 2.9 What is left of this roller coaster heritage? Very little. There were 127 wooden roller coasters built in the UK between 1885 and 1960 (see Appendix 1). Only 9 survive. Two of the survivors are scenic railways from the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, two are 'wild mice' from the 1950s and the remaining five are standard under friction wheel coasters. Below is a full list of surviving, pre-1960, wooden roller coasters in the UK. These are (in date order):

- Scenic Railway, Dreamland, Margate (1920)
- Big Dipper, Blackpool Pleasure Beach (1923)
- Scenic Railway (now Roller Coaster), Pleasure Beach, Great Yarmouth (1932)
- Roller Coaster, Blackpool Pleasure Beach (1933)
- Zipper Dipper (formerly Little Dipper), Blackpool Pleasure Beach (1934)
- Grand National, Blackpool Pleasure Beach (1935)
- Cyclone, Pleasureland, Southport (1937)
- Wild Mouse, Blackpool Pleasure Beach (1958)
- King Solomon's Mines, Pleasureland, Southport (1960, rebuild of Wild Mouse from Frontierland, Morecambe)

(Note: only three wooden roller coasters have been constructed in the UK since 1960. Most modern roller coasters are very different rides, constructed out of tubular steel.)

### **Amusement Park Closures and Ride Demolitions**

- 2.10 The pace of destruction of wooden roller coasters has slowed since the end of the 1970s, partly due to a resurgence of interest in amusement parks (caused to a degree by the growth in theme parks, which in turn raised the profile of thrill rides), and partly due to the fact that the few rides which remained were all located in popular amusement parks. However, that boom is now over. The theme park industry is now mature, and growth has reached something of a plateau. But of more concern to those who wish to see the best of our amusement park heritage preserved is the continual decline of the British seaside resort.
- 2.11 This decline is recognised by the English Tourism Council in its document "Sea Changes" (ETC, 2001). This report is based on a year-long examination of a number of representative resorts around the UK by ETC's Resort Regeneration Task Force. One of the outcomes of the Study was the

identification of a resurgence of interest in heritage. Unless the best examples of this heritage, such as the Margate Scenic Railway, are retained, this fundamental component of seaside regeneration would be undermined. This continual decline has undoubtedly been the main reason behind the increase in the number of amusement park closures over the last two or three years, which is placing Britain's amusement park heritage – its parks and its vintage rides – at risk.

- 2.12 In 2000, the 1937 Cyclone wooden roller coaster at Morecambe was demolished following the closure of the Frontierland Amusement Park, changing the skyline of this traditional resort forever. The Cyclone was one of only six pre-1960 under friction wooden coasters remaining in the UK, and the last ride to be designed by legendary roller coaster designer Harry G. Traver. The park is to be redeveloped as a new retail and leisure complex. Several other unique vintage rides were also destroyed. This is the greatest single loss to our country's amusement park heritage in over a quarter of a century.
- 2.13 In addition to Frontierland, several other parks have closed over the past few years, including: Fun City at Skegness, Marvel's Amusement Park at Scarborough, Seaburn Fun Park at Sunderland and Spanish City at Whitley Bay. When the Spanish City Amusement Park was demolished in May 2001, it was the end of almost 100 years of history. Even Dreamland at Margate has not escaped. Approximately one third of the park was closed at the end of the 2000 season and the owner is understood to be considering the development of a new retail and food centre on the site. Thankfully the Scenic Railway remains, and is believed to be unaffected by the current redevelopment plans, but it is now considered by most amusement park historians to be under threat.
- 2.14 Thanet District Council does acknowledge this risk to the site as a whole (if not to any ride in particular), and planning officers at the Council have confirmed to the authors that the forthcoming draft replacement local plan is likely to contain a policy protecting the Dreamland Amusement Park, recognising its importance to the town's tourism industry. The redevelopment of a limited part of the Park is likely to be considered acceptable by the emerging policy if it helps to secure the future viability of the remainder of the park, and the Council will require a legal agreement to ensure this.
- 2.15 In the next section, we describe the Dreamland Scenic Railway, highlighting its most important features.

### **3.0 THE SCENIC RAILWAY, MARGATE**

#### **The Park**

- 3.1 Dreamland opened in 1920 on the site of a former zoo and gardens. It was owned by showman C.C. Bartram and businessman John Henry Iles. Bristol-born Iles was a great amusement pioneer, and owned the European rights to the scenic railway. He was responsible for a number of scenic railways, including the first scenic railway in Britain at Blackpool Pleasure Beach (1907). Dreamland was his first complete park, and it was centred on the Scenic Railway, which survives to this day. Other parks operated by Iles included Great Yarmouth Pleasure Beach, Belle Vue (Manchester) and Aberdeen Beach Amusement Park.
- 3.2 Following Iles' bankruptcy in 1938, the result of an unsuccessful flirtation with the film industry, Dreamland was taken over by his son, Eric, but soon closed following the outbreak of the Second World War (the park went into voluntary liquidation). It reopened on 6th June 1946, following an injection of cash from Billy Butlin, who by that time had opened several of his famous holiday camps (he was Chairman of Dreamland from 1946 to 1950). In the 1980s, the park was taken over by the Bembom Brothers, and briefly renamed Bembom Brothers Theme Park. Following a name change back to Dreamland, the park was purchased by showman Jimmy Godden in 1995, with the help of an EU grant of over £800,000 (Jimmy Godden also owns Rotunda Amusement Park at Folkestone). Godden refurbished the entire park, including the Scenic Railway, and removed many rides including the Big Wheel, Looping Star roller coaster and traditional Water Chute.

#### **The Scenic Railway**

- 3.3 Opening on 3rd July 1920, the Scenic Railway is the oldest operating roller coaster in the UK. It is one of only two scenic railway-type roller coasters still operating in the UK (the other being at the Pleasure Beach, Great Yarmouth). As it is a scenic railway the trains run in troughs, and do not have under-track wheels, which limits the speed and steepness of drops. The ride also has a brakeman, who sits on an elevated seat between cars 1 and 2. The train is pulled up the lift hills by a cable instead of a chain; the brakeman uses a lever to grab the cable. He then keeps a check on the speed throughout the rest of the ride.
- 3.4 The value and importance of this ride was summed up succinctly in an article by David Page on TheGalloper.com website in December 2000 (Appendix 2). Page concludes: *"If ever there was a ride in England that should become a National treasure this is it."* A series of photographs of the ride, taken by Nick Laister and David Page are included with this Report.
- 3.5 The Scenic Railway is undoubtedly a remarkable survival. Its importance to the history of amusement parks, and therefore the cultural heritage of the UK, is immeasurable. The ride is now considered to be under threat due to the alarming rate at which amusement parks are closing (see paragraph 2.13). As stated above, the owners of the site are now considering a partial redevelopment as a new retail and food centre. Although the Scenic Railway would be likely to be unaffected by this, we consider that its historical importance, and the continuing closure of amusement parks, make this an urgent candidate for listing.

- 3.6 It is also of note that the frontage building of Dreamland, the 1935 cinema building designed by Julian Leathart and William Granger, is currently Grade II listed. The Scenic Railway roller coaster is at least as important to the local scene as this building. On a national scale it is arguably of much greater importance.
- 3.7 The following Section will outline in more detail why this ride should be listed.

## 4.0 THE CASE FOR SPOT LISTING

### Policy Background

- 4.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides protection for buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest. Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15): Planning and the Historic Environment (September 1994) provides the Government's current policy for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas, and other elements of the historic environment.

### The Importance of the Scenic Railway Roller Coaster

- 4.2 The Scenic Railway is undoubtedly an unusual candidate for listing. However, PPG15 recognises that listing needs to look beyond architectural set-pieces and identify structures of historic and cultural importance. It states (paragraph 6.2):

*“There is a growing appreciation not just of the architectural set pieces, but of many more structures, especially industrial, agricultural and other vernacular buildings...”*

- 4.3 Paragraph 6.10 sets out the principles for selecting structures for listing:

- Architectural merit
- Historic interest
- Close historical associations
- Group value

- 4.4 We consider that the Scenic Railway should be listed because of its historic interest. Paragraph 6.10 of PPG15 provides more detail on these criteria. It states that ‘historic interest’ includes buildings which illustrate important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural or military history. In the history of British amusement parks, the Scenic Railway is perhaps the most important survivor, and is therefore a significant social and cultural icon that should be protected if at all possible.

- 4.5 It has been illustrated in previous sections that the Scenic Railway is the oldest surviving roller coaster in the country, and is now one of only two examples of Scenic Railway roller coasters surviving from the thirty-eight that were built in this country. As PPG15 emphasises, age and rarity need to be taken into account in identifying structures for listing:

*“Age and rarity are relevant considerations, particularly where buildings are proposed on the strength of their historic interest. The older a building is, and the fewer the surviving examples of its kind, the more likely it is to have historic importance.”*

Given the points raised above on age and rarity, and under the criteria set out in PPG15, the Scenic Railway can be considered to have substantial historic importance.

- 4.6 Paragraph 6.12 explains the approach for the listing of 20<sup>th</sup> Century structures. The approach is to identify “key exemplars” for each of a range of

building types. In terms of seaside and amusement park structures, the Scenic Railway is the most important of its kind in the country. Moreover, we consider the ride to have much more than local importance. Our assessment has been on a national basis; therefore we consider that the building should be listed partly due to its national importance.

- 4.7 We have therefore undertaken exactly the type of assessment required by paragraph 6.13 of PPG15:

*“...the listing of buildings primarily for historical reasons is to a greater extent a comparative exercise and needs to be selective where a substantial number of buildings of a similar type and quality survive.”*

In the case of the Scenic Railway, there are few survivors, and none of the quality of the Margate Scenic. Therefore, in terms of its historic interest, its value has to be regarded as high.

- 4.8 Finally, whilst we consider that the Scenic Railway is a delightful example of a seaside structure, we do not suggest that it should be listed for its aesthetic qualities. We ask that it be listed for its historical importance, its age, its rarity and because its future is not secure. PPG15 makes it clear that structures of historic interest do not have to display aesthetic merits:

*“Buildings which are important for reasons of technological innovation, or as illustrating particular examples of social or economic history may well have little external visual quality.”*

This is undoubtedly the case for the Margate Scenic. Its importance is in what it represents, rather than its aesthetic merit.

### **The Ride’s Future**

- 4.9 The likelihood is, in our opinion, that if the Scenic Railway is not listed, it will be removed in the short to medium term for one of two reasons:

- (i) As more lucrative redevelopment options become available. It is significant that several of the amusement parks that have recently closed were profitable concerns; it was purely land values, and the assembly of an uncomplicated site for developers, that were the drivers of their removal. Large roller coasters such as the Scenic Railway are undoubtedly major constraints to a site, but not an insurmountable constraint. Retention in situ would never be a developer’s first option, unless required by listing status. The ride’s removal will result in there being no unaltered representatives of a structure which has partly come to symbolise British seaside holidays in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.
- (ii) Even if the park were to remain in either its current or reduced form, without listed status there may still be a pressure on the park owners to replace it with a more modern ride. As noted above, the forthcoming development plan review may well ensure that the site remains in an amusement park use, but this will not prevent the Scenic Railway from being removed to be replaced by a more modern attraction. The park is large enough for modern rides to be accommodated elsewhere on the site, whilst leaving the Scenic Railway intact. Listing would simply

make the owners try a little harder to find a more imaginative solution. It is our opinion that Dreamland would be less of an attraction without this classic ride in any event. It is our contention that the listing of this ride can act as a catalyst for the continuation of the town's regeneration.

- 4.10 On the basis of the case set out above, we request that the ride is given Grade II status, but would also ask (due to its uniqueness as a national treasure) that Grade II\* is considered.

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 As this paper has shown, amusement parks have been as much a part of the culture of Britain as they have been in America. The seaside amusement park, centred on its huge wooden roller coaster, is part of our culture, and is now threatened and fast-disappearing. It is disappointing that, to date, no part of this heritage has been considered suitable for listing. It is essential that at least one example of a wooden roller coaster is listed; this paper has demonstrated that the Margate Scenic is the finest example of a wooden coaster in the country, and an exceptionally rare survivor.

5.2 In summary, therefore, the case for listing the Scenic Railway, Dreamland, Margate is overwhelming:

- Amusement parks are an important part of Britain's social and economic culture.
- Over 120 wooden roller coasters, the centrepiece of most amusement parks in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, were built between 1885 and 1960. Only nine survive.
- Only two 'Scenic Railway' roller coasters now survive, the Scenic Railway at Dreamland, Margate, is the only one surviving unaltered.
- The Scenic Railway at Dreamland is the oldest surviving roller coaster in the United Kingdom. Its age and rarity are major factors in support of its listing.
- Seaside amusement parks are closing down at an alarming rate, and vintage rides are being demolished even when parks don't close. Part of Dreamland is already being prepared for a potential retail development, although the Scenic Railway is likely to be unaffected.
- Without listed building status, we consider that the future of the ride is in doubt. The removal of this ride would almost completely wipe out this important part of British amusement park history.
- On the basis of the case set out in this document, we request that the ride is given Grade II status, but would also ask (due to its uniqueness as a national treasure) that Grade II\* is considered.

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## PHOTOGRAPHS



An aerial photograph of the ride taken in 1993 before its recent refurbishment



A train climbs the cable-hauled lift hill (2000)



A selection of views of the ride taken in 2000.

## Appendix 1: List of wooden roller coasters built in the UK

(Note: where question marks are shown, the date of the ride's demolition is unknown.)

### Switchback Railways

Listed by town, name of park where known (dates in brackets)

Aberdeen (1886-1911)  
Barry Island Pleasure Park (1897-1914, rebuild of Switchback from 1896 Cardiff Exhibition)  
Birnbeck Pier, Weston-Super-Mare (date unknown)  
Blackpool, Blackpool Pleasure Beach (1891-1922)  
Blackpool, Raikes Hall (date unknown)  
Blackpool, Rigby Road (date unknown)  
Blackpool, St Chad's Drive (date unknown)  
Blackpool, Uncle Tom's Cabin (date unknown)  
Bradford Exhibition (1904)  
Bradford, Shipley Glen (1887-1920)  
Bridlington (1898-1912)  
Brighton, Devil's Dyke (date unknown)  
Burgess Hill (date unknown)  
Cardiff Exhibition (1896)  
Cleethorpes (1897-?)  
Crystal Palace Exhibition (1889)  
Douglas, Isle of Man (1887 approx-?)  
Folkestone (?-1906)  
Glasgow Exhibition (1888)  
Glasgow Exhibition (1901)  
Great Yarmouth (1887-1909, rebuilt at Honley, Huddersfield)  
Honley, Huddersfield (1910-?, rebuild of switchback from Great Yarmouth)  
Hull, White City Pleasure Grounds (date unknown)  
Morecambe, Winter Gardens (date unknown)  
Nottingham Exhibition (1903)  
Ramsgate Pier (date unknown)  
Saltaire Exhibition (1887)  
Scarborough (1888-1905)  
Skegness (1885-1911)  
Southend-on-Sea, Marine Gardens (1894-?)  
Southport (? , it was present in 1895)  
South Shields, Ocean Pleasure Beach (?-1910)  
Sutton Coldfield, Sutton Park (1906-1936)

### Figure Eight Railways

Listed by town, name of park where known, *name of ride if different to Figure Eight* (date)

Aberavon (date unknown)  
Barry Island, Barry Island Pleasure Park (1912-1939)  
Blackpool, Star Fairground (date unknown)  
Bristol Exhibition (1914)  
Clacton (date unknown)  
Cleethorpes, Wonderland (1911-1974)  
Cleveleys (date unknown)  
Edinburgh Exhibition (1908)

Felixstowe, Butlin's Amusement Park (now Mannings Amusement Park), *Giant Dipper* (1932-1977)  
 Folkestone, Rotunda Amusement Park, *Runaway Coaster* (1997-present, rebuild of 1922 travelling ride from Holland)  
 Great Yarmouth, Pleasure Beach (1929-?)  
 Halifax Zoo (date unknown)  
 Hunstanton, Rainbow Amusement Park (date unknown)  
 Littlehampton, Butlin's Amusement Park (now Harbour Park), *Big Dipper* (1933-1962)  
 London, Earl's Court Exhibition (1909)  
 London, Festival of Empire Exhibition, Crystal Palace (1911)  
 Mablethorpe, Butlin's Amusement Park (now Dunes Leisure) (1931-1938)  
 Manchester, Belle Vue (1908-1934)  
 Manchester, White City (date unknown)  
 Morecambe, West End Amusement Park (later Morecambe Pleasure Park) (1909-1938)  
 Mumbles (1908-1919, rebuilt at Coney Beach Amusement Park, Porthcawl)  
 Onchan Head, Isle of Man (1909-1974)  
 Porthcawl, Coney Beach Amusement Park (1920-1981, rebuild of 1908 ride from Mumbles)  
 Portobello, Edinburgh, Fun City (1910 approx-1957)  
 Portobello, Edinburgh, Marine Gardens (date unknown)  
 Rhyl, Marine Lake (1920-1969)  
 Rhyl, Ocean Beach Amusement Park (1960-1975, former German travelling ride)  
 Scarborough, West Pier (date unknown)  
 Seaton Carew (1926-1965)  
 Skegness, Jungle Park (now Botton's Pleasure Beach) (1929-1931, moved to Mablethorpe)  
 Skegness, Butlin's Amusement Park (now Botton's Pleasure Beach), *Big Dipper* (1931-1961)  
 Skegness, North Parade Amusement Park (1908-1970)  
 Southend-on-Sea, Luna Park (later The Kursaal) (1910-1947)  
 Southport, King's Gardens (later Pleasureland) (1908-1937)  
 Southsea, Butlin's Amusement Park (now Clarence Pier) (1938-1961)  
 South Shields, Ocean Pleasure Beach (1910-1932)  
 New Brighton, Tower Pleasure Grounds (1905-1971)  
 Whitley Bay, Spanish City (1910-1975)

### Scenic Railways

Listed by town, name of park where known, *name of ride if different to Scenic Railway* (date)

Aberdeen, Aberdeen Beach Amusement Park (1929-1943, rebuild of Scenic from Great Yarmouth)  
 Barry Island, Barry Island Pleasure Park (1939-1973, rebuild of Scenic Railway from Empire Exhibition, Glasgow)  
 Battersea, Battersea Fun Fair (1951-1972, rebuild of Scenic Railway from Sutton Park)  
 Blackpool, Blackpool Pleasure Beach (1907-1933)  
 Blackpool, Blackpool Pleasure Beach, *Velvet Coaster* (1909-1932)  
 Cleethorpes, Wonderland, *Dipper* (1926-?)  
 Edinburgh, Edinburgh Exhibition (1908/1910)  
 Glasgow, Scottish National Exhibition (1911)  
 Glasgow, Empire Exhibition (1938, rebuilt Barry Island)  
 Great Yarmouth, Pleasure Beach [first scenic] (1909-1928, rebuilt at Aberdeen)  
 Great Yarmouth, Pleasure Beach [second scenic] (1932-present)

Liverpool, Liverpool Exhibition (1913, rebuild of 1911 Scenic from Glasgow Exhibition)  
 London, Earl's Court Exhibition (1909)  
 London, Festival of Empire Exhibition, Crystal Palace (1911)  
 London, Japan-British Exhibition, White City (1910)  
 London, Wembley Exhibition (1924, rebuilt at Belle Vue)  
 London, Wembley Exhibition, *Giant Switchback* (1924)  
 London, Wembley Exhibition, *Safety Racer* (1924)  
 London, White City Exhibition, *Canadian Scenic* (1908)  
 London, White City Exhibition, *Mountain Scenic* (1908)  
 Manchester, Belle Vue (1926-1980, rebuild of Scenic from Wembley Exhibition)  
 Manchester, White City [first scenic] (1907-1927)  
 Manchester, White City [second scenic] (1928-?)  
 Margate, Dreamland (1920-present)  
 Margate, Dreamland, *Velvet Coaster* (later called *Roller Coaster*), (1922-1975)  
 New Brighton, Tower Pleasure Grounds (1908-?)  
 Newcastle, Newcastle Exhibition, *Himalayan Railway* (1929)  
 Portobello, Edinburgh, Marine Gardens (1910-1914)  
 Redcar, *Big Dipper* (1961-?)  
 Redcar, *Giant Racer* (1925-1937, moved to Sheerness)  
 Scarborough, Gala Land (1926-?)  
 Scarborough, West Pier (1929-1939 approx)  
 Seaburn, Seaburn Fun Park, *Big Dipper* (1952-1973)  
 Sheerness (1938-1939, rebuild of Giant Racer from Redcar)  
 Southend-on-Sea, The Kursaal (1910-1973)  
 Southport, Pleasureland (1922-1940, rebuilt at Sutton Park and later at Battersea Fun Fair)  
 Southport, Pleasureland, *Mountain Caterpillar Railway* (1925-1946, rebuilt at Sutton Park, Sutton Coldfield)  
 Sutton Coldfield, Sutton Park (1946-1950, rebuild of *Scenic Railway* and *Mountain Caterpillar Railway* from Southport Pleasureland)

### Undertrack Friction Wheel Coasters

Listed by town, name of park, *name of ride* (date)

Blackpool, Blackpool Pleasure Beach, *Big Dipper* (1923-present)  
 Blackpool, Blackpool Pleasure Beach, *Roller Coaster* (1933-present)  
 Blackpool, Blackpool Pleasure Beach, *Grand National* (1934-present)  
 Blackpool, Blackpool Pleasure Beach, *Zipper Dipper* (formerly *Little Dipper*) (1934-present)  
 Blackpool, Blackpool Pleasure Beach, *Wild Mouse* (1958-present)  
 Manchester, Belle Vue, *Bobs* (1929-1971)  
 Morecambe, Frontierland, *Cyclone* (later the *Texas Tornado*) (1937-2000)  
 Morecambe, Frontierland, *Wild Mouse* (later *Runaway Mine Train*) (1960-2000, rebuilt at Pleasureland, Southport)  
 Narberth, Oakwood, *Megafobia* (1996-present)  
 Southend-on-Sea, The Kursaal, *Cyclone* (1935-1974, originally at Brussels Exhibition, built at Southend in 1936)  
 Southport, Pleasureland, *Cyclone* (1937-present)  
 Southport, Pleasureland, *King Solomon's Mines* (2000-present, rebuild of Wild Mouse from Frontierland, Morecambe)  
 Warrington, Gulliver's World, *Antelope* (1995-present)

## Miscellaneous

Listed by town, name of park, *name of ride* (date)

Blackpool, Blackpool Pleasure Beach, *Virginia Reel* (1921-1982)  
Clacton-on-Sea, Clacton Pier, *Steel Stella* (1937-1973)  
London, Japan-British Exhibition, White City, *Wiggle Woggle* (1910)  
London, North Tower Gardens, Crystal Palace, *Topsy Turvy* (1902-1909)  
New Brighton, *Himalaya Railway* (1898-?)  
South Shields, Ocean Pleasure Beach, *Cyclone Ride* (1938-1940)  
Sutton Coldfield, Sutton Park, *Coronation Thriller* (1937-1946)  
Whitley Bay, Spanish City, *Virginia Reel* (1925-1950s)

## Appendix 2

# The Brakeman cometh!

## Taking the plunge on Margate's Scenic Railway!

**When you look around at some of the 'thrill' sports, like parachuting, bungee jumping and climbing tall buildings without ropes then you may think that working in a fairground is tame by comparison. But imagine what it's like riding a roller coaster all day long and it's you who controls it! DAVE PAGE sat behind the brakeman on Dreamland's Scenic.**



We all know what it's like when asked what we do for a living. There are those of us who get really enthusiastic in telling all about their occupations and there are those who would rather drop the subject straight away.

But imagine what it must be like to tell someone that you drive a roller coaster for a living, that would certainly get everyone's attention at a dinner party!

Margate's Dreamland actually employs people to do just that on their Scenic Railway, or rather it pays people to ride with the old coaster to stop it flying off into the North Sea - talk about a career with lots of ups and downs!

But joking apart, it's also a job that carries great responsibility and requires skill. The train is pulled up the lift hills by a cable instead of a chain and the brakeman sits on an elevated seat between cars one and two. He uses a giant lever to grab the cable and slow the cars down when needed. There is absolutely nothing automatic on the Scenic!

And that's the strangest part about this ride if you have never been on a Scenic before. This guy seriously has your life in his hands - and sitting at the front of car two (my son's idea, not mine) puts you right in touch with what this ride is all about. In essence, it's a cross between riding the Ffestiniog railway and being trapped in a Bobsleigh at the Winter Olympics. You just have to trust the guy with the brake lever and hope he pulls it when he's supposed to.

The best policy is to just sit there, enjoy the ride and remind yourself that there's more to the old-time fair than revolving horses, organ music and the smell of steam engines. The seaside amusement parks of Britain are as steeped in tradition as any Goose Fair or Mop - and although the aeroplane has changed holiday habits for good the Scenic provides a strong reminder of past glory.

This is a truly classic ride. Opening on 3rd July 1920 it is the oldest operating roller coaster in the country. It is one of only two Scenic Railway-type roller coasters still operating, the other being at the Pleasure Beach, Great Yarmouth. The cars run in troughs (and do not have under-track wheels), which limits the speed and steepness of the drops.



Compared to the modern coaster the Scenic is quite tame in places and it offers some great views across the rest of the park and Margate itself (for what it's worth). But every now and again you are reminded why you paid your fare. There are two lift hills and the drop off the second certainly has the potential to reunite you with your lunch.

If ever there was a ride in England that should become a National treasure this is it. The cars are

originals and come complete with lion's head carvings.

The whole thing has history written all over it and if you ever get the urge to set the clock back 80 years or so then don't resist it.

This feature appeared in December 2000. With thanks again to Nick Laister.