



## Visitor attractions

Major museums and galleries are national leisure facilities. They are also visitor attractions. Other nationally important visitor attractions include theme parks and historic sites:

- Blackpool Tower and Pleasure Beach
- Bristol Zoo
- Chester Zoo
- Jorvik Viking Centre, York
- London Zoo
- Longleat Safari Park, Wiltshire
- Madame Tussaud's, London
- NEC (National Exhibition Centre), Birmingham
- Palace Pier, Brighton
- London Eye
- Woburn Safari Park, Bedfordshire

These visitor attractions are leisure facilities because customers go to them in their spare time for recreation. They are well known and attract visitors from outside the local area. Visitors who travel away from the place where they live and work are tourists. So the visitor attractions listed above are tourist attractions, too, as are the museums and galleries named in Chapter 1.2 and the theme parks and historic sites described later in this chapter. Attractions that are both leisure and tourism facilities demonstrate the links between leisure and tourism, which are discussed in Chapter 1.7.

### Zoos and safari parks

Figure 1.25 shows the locations of the UK's major zoos and safari parks. London Zoo is in Regent's Park in central London. Chester Zoo and Bristol Zoo Gardens (in Clifton) are on the outskirts of their respective cities. The word 'zoo' is a shortened version of 'zoological gardens'. Zoos keep animals in captivity in enclosures and buildings

set in landscaped grounds. As leisure facilities they attract visitors to see the animals for enjoyment and out of interest. Other purposes of zoos include animal research, protecting endangered species and education. They are similar to museums and galleries in selling the experience of viewing and learning from a collection and in having catering and book or gift shopping on site. It is the nature of their collections and the fact that they are typically outdoor attractions (with some indoor areas) that make zoos different.

Zoos were popular in Victorian times (the nineteenth century), when collectors brought exotic species back from expeditions around the world. In a time before film and television, zoos allowed their customers to view creatures that they could not otherwise see. In the twentieth century, there was concern about the animal-welfare issues linked with keeping animals in restricted cages and enclosures. Films, television wildlife programmes and increased car ownership have also helped to make safari parks popular attractions.

In safari parks animals wander freely within a large area of grass, water and open woodland. Customers drive through the park and view the animals from their vehicles (Figure 1.26). Woburn and Longleat safari parks are located in the grounds of stately homes — country mansions owned by aristocratic families and opened to the public as leisure attractions.



▲ **Figure 1.25**  
Some major zoos  
and safari parks in  
the UK



◀ **Figure 1.26**  
In a safari park

Adrian Sherratt/Alamy

## Seaside attractions

Seaside towns and cities are covered in Chapter 1.6. Visitor attractions in two of the most popular seaside resorts are:

- Blackpool Tower and Pleasure Beach
- Palace Pier, Brighton

Blackpool Tower and Pleasure Beach are twinned attractions on the seafront. Blackpool Tower (Figure 1.4, page 6) is about 160 m tall and was completed in 1894. It is an indoor entertainment centre and has a playground, aquarium and historic ballroom with a world-famous Wurlitzer organ. The nearby Pleasure Beach is a large fairground with five roller coasters including the Pepsi Max Big One, and a themed children's area, Beaver Creek.

Palace Pier is in Brighton on the south coast of England. It dates from 1891 and supports a fairground, amusements, a restaurant, take-away food outlets and bars. Weddings and conferences are also arranged there.

## Other major visitor attractions

Jorvik Viking Centre in York takes its name from the Viking name for the city. It features a reconstruction of the Viking streets that stood on the site 1,000 years ago with realistic sounds and smells. Employees play the roles of people of the time and answer questions posed by visitors. As well as being a straightforward leisure attraction, Jorvik is educational and is involved in archaeological preservation.

▼ **Figure 1.27**  
*Inside a capsule on  
the London Eye*

Madame Tussaud's near Baker Street underground station in London is next to another London visitor attraction: the London Planetarium.

Wax figures of famous people past and present are exhibited. Interactivity has been a development of recent years, designed to enliven visits. Parties can be arranged there as well.

The London Eye is a giant Ferris wheel operated by British Airways. Passengers ride each 'flight' in transparent capsules (Figure 1.27) that afford views over London landmarks including Big Ben, Westminster Abbey and Buckingham Palace. The London Eye stands in central London, on the South Bank of the Thames, opposite and slightly downstream of the Houses of Parliament.



TopFoto

The NEC (National Exhibition Centre) on the eastern outskirts of Birmingham includes the 12,500-seat NEC Arena, which hosts shows and concerts (pop and classical) and sporting events like gymnastic championships and the Horse of the Year show. It is served by the M42 motorway and, for rail services, by Birmingham International station.

**Case Study** **Bristol Zoo**

**Location**

Bristol Zoo is in Clifton, 2 km from Bristol city centre in southwest England (see Figure 1.25). The M5 is the nearest motorway and car drivers are advised to exit at junction 17 and to take the A4018, following the brown and white elephant signs. Brown road signs are used in the UK to direct motorists to leisure and tourism facilities. The elephant symbol tells you that the attraction is a zoo and it does not need to be named on every sign. Figure 1.28 shows a brown tourist information road sign.



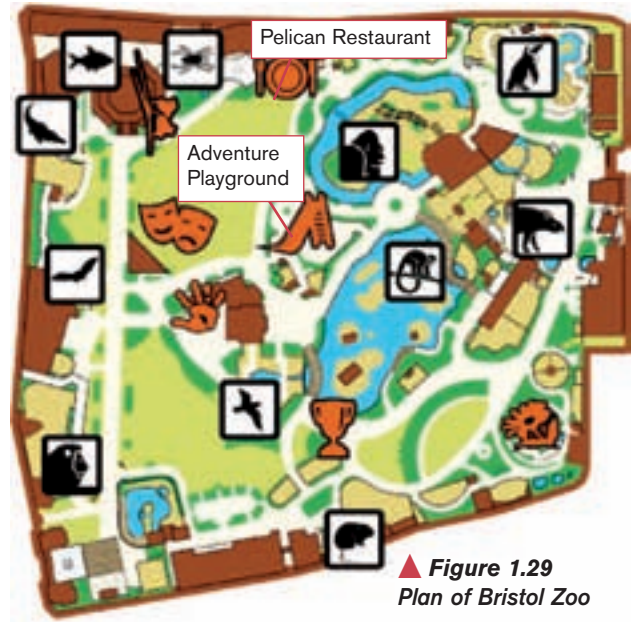
Publishing Pictures

▲ **Figure 1.28** A tourist information road sign

**Purpose**

Figure 1.29 is a plan of Bristol Zoo showing many of its leisure attractions. As well as exhibiting animals, Bristol Zoo provides catering services (the Pelican Restaurant is marked on the plan) and children's play activities (the Adventure Playground). It has educational and corporate hospitality purposes too. The Clifton Pavilion in the zoo grounds offers conference facilities, hosts weddings and is a venue for Christmas parties.

As a leisure facility, Bristol Zoo has diversified in other ways too. Events organised through the year include summer-evening theatrical performances and mother-and-toddler coffee mornings. These bring in more money directly and also market the zoo, because someone who comes to an event may be tempted to return as a paying customer of the zoo itself.



▲ **Figure 1.29** Plan of Bristol Zoo

## Theme parks

Theme parks are large, open areas with amusements, typically including ‘white-knuckle’ rides on exciting roller-coaster constructions. Customers may grip the handrails tightly (with white knuckles) as they spin round or soar up and down on the ride. Theme parks generally charge admission at the gate, selling day passes for example. Once inside the park, customers are free to choose which rides to go on and to return to their favourites as often as they like. However, at busy times the most popular rides can develop long queues. Some theme parks operate a ‘fast pass’ system in which customers can collect tickets to use the ride at a certain time. This reduces queuing time.

Major theme parks in the UK include:

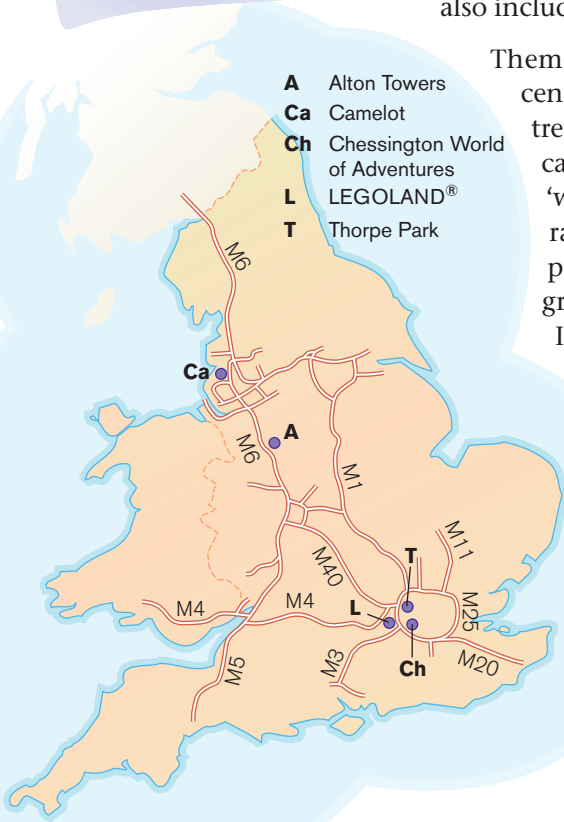
- Alton Towers
- Chessington World of Adventures
- Thorpe Park
- Camelot
- LEGOLAND®

▼ **Figure 1.30**  
Major UK theme parks

The locations of these theme parks are shown on Figure 1.30, which also includes major motorways.

Theme parks were originally designed around a central theme. Disneyland in California began this trend with the theme of Walt Disney films and cartoon characters. Parks like Disneyland offer ‘white-knuckle’ rides but also provide a wider range of products and services, such as live performances, gentler and child-friendly fair-ground amusements and characters in costume. In the UK, Camelot in northwest England is based around the theme of King Arthur’s court. LEGOLAND® in Windsor (southeast England) uses the LEGO construction toy as its base idea.

Other UK theme parks like Alton Towers attract visitors mainly because of the ‘white-knuckle’ entertainment that they offer. These rides have become the theme of the parks. Chessington World of Adventures in Surrey has grown from Chessington Zoo. It markets itself now as a family-friendly theme park with rides and other attractions aimed at families with younger children.



## Case Study

## LEGOLAND® Windsor

Figure 1.31 is the front cover of a leaflet used to promote the LEGOLAND® Windsor theme park. Figure 1.32 shows the theme park's location.



▲ **Figure 1.31** LEGOLAND promotional leaflet (front cover)

### Location

LEGOLAND Windsor is 3 km west of Windsor town centre, close to junction 6 on the M4, which leads west from London's M25 orbital motorway. Although it is closer to the M4, LEGOLAND Windsor can also be reached from junction 3 on the M3.

### Purpose

Originally based around the theme of the LEGO® construction toy, the park provides an enjoyable day out for families. Guests pay for admission and also spend money at the restaurants and cafés. Its other purposes are to make money and help to sell LEGO toys, as well as showcasing new LEGO product ranges and maintaining the park's



▲ **Figure 1.32** Location of LEGOLAND

position as one of the UK's leading tourist attractions. A family (its target market) features prominently on the promotional leaflet (Figure 1.31). Many of the rides and other attractions shown are themed around the LEGO bricks idea. A large LEGO model of London's Big Ben is featured in Miniland — a reconstruction, using plastic LEGO bricks, of world-famous buildings and landmarks. There is also a model of the London Eye.

Attractions and activities that serve LEGOLAND Windsor's main purpose of providing family fun include:

- Miniland
- rides (e.g. the Dragon Ride and Jungle Coaster)
- panning for gold in the Wild Woods
- live action shows, puppet shows and a 4-D movie
- driving small electric cars at the two LEGOLAND Driving Schools

Supporting the main purpose are:

- shops selling souvenirs, LEGO toys and themed children's clothes
- restaurants and cafés providing snacks (e.g. the Pit Stop Café's mini-doughnuts) and family meals at the 'Big Restaurant'
- birthday parties arranged by LEGOLAND Windsor's Corporate Events team

## Chapter 1.3 Visitor attractions

- annual passes that offer value for money and unlimited access for guests to return throughout the year; each annual pass is cheaper than visiting twice, so guests save money each time they enjoy the park
- short breaks including accommodation in nearby hotels
- group visits and company fun days for business tourists

LEGO, the LEGO logo and LEGOLAND are trademarks of the LEGO Group and used here with special permission. ©2006 The LEGO Group. All Rights Reserved.



## Historic sites

Major historic sites in the UK (Figure 1.33) include:

- Beaulieu
- Buckingham Palace
- Chatsworth
- Hadrian's Wall
- Hampton Court Palace
- Stonehenge
- Tower of London

► **Figure 1.33**  
Major UK historic sites



### Stonehenge and Hadrian's Wall

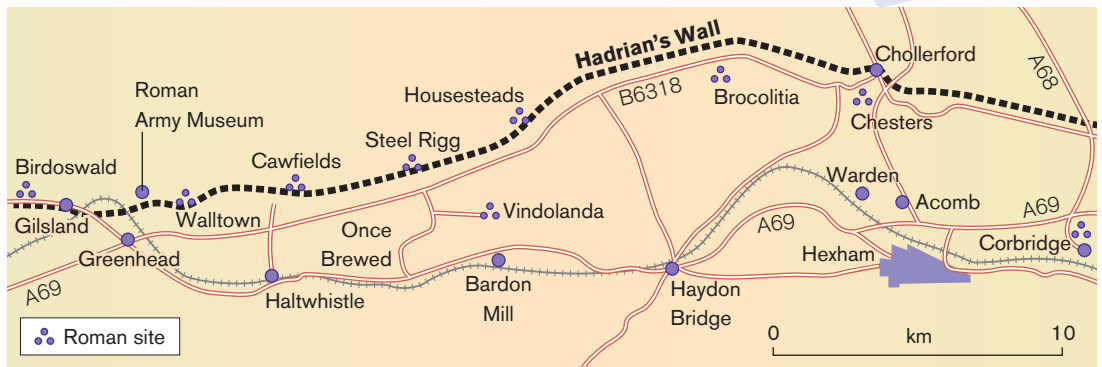
Stonehenge and Hadrian's Wall are ancient monuments. **Stonehenge** stands on Salisbury Plain and is a famous prehistoric site. It is a stone circle made up of sets of large stones assembled into arches by Stone Age people. The stones have survived for thousands of years and have long been a visitor attraction. The site, which is next to the A303 on Salisbury Plain, attracts particularly large numbers of visitors in June, on Midsummer's Day (the summer solstice), when the sun rises exactly over the Heel Stone just outside the main circle. The ancient builders of Stonehenge may have designed the circle with this phenomenon in mind.

Access to the stones themselves has been restricted because of the large numbers of people who want to visit them. Limited access lessens any negative impacts of tourism on Stonehenge and helps to conserve the monument for the future. This is called sustainable management. Impacts of tourism and sustainable tourism development are examined in detail in Chapter 1.6.

**Hadrian's Wall** was built around 2,000 years ago on the orders of the Roman Emperor Hadrian. It was to act as the border of the Roman Empire in Britain, and at that time ran from Wallsend near Newcastle upon Tyne to the Solway Firth on the west coast. Parts of what is sometimes simply called the Roman Wall have been partially reconstructed or excavated by archaeologists to become a series of leisure attractions. These include some stretches of the wall itself, such as the section near Housesteads in Northumberland which forms part of the Northumberland National Park (see Figure 1.34). Walking beside the wall is a cost-free physical and countryside recreation activity.

In addition, the remains of Roman forts such as Housesteads and Segundum at Wallsend have been developed into visitor attractions. At Vindolanda, just south of Housesteads, a museum and visitor

▼ **Figure 1.34**  
Map of part of  
Hadrian's Wall



centre features reconstructions of Roman life. Like many leisure attractions, these have educational purposes as well as appealing to purely leisure visitors.

▼ **Figure 1.35**  
*Yeomen of the Guard at the Tower of London*



Clay Perry/CORBIS

### **Hampton Court and the Tower of London**

Hampton Court, which is beside the Thames to the southwest of London, and the Tower of London, close to Tower Bridge in central London, are both former royal palaces. **Hampton Court** was built for Cardinal Wolsey during the reign of Henry VIII and was later taken over by the king himself. Apart from the palace itself, one of its best-known attractions is the maze in its grounds.

The **Tower of London** has a long history as a castle, palace, prison and place of execution dating back to Norman times. Among those imprisoned and executed there was Henry VIII's second wife, Anne Boleyn. The Tower of London is home to the Crown Jewels, which many visitors see as part of their tour. Guided tours led by Yeomen of the Guard, also called Beefeaters, (see Figure 1.35) are popular too. Both palaces have educational purposes and provide catering services.

## **Case Study** Chatsworth

Chatsworth (Figure 1.36) is the stately home of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, although it is actually in Derbyshire.

### **Location**

The Chatsworth Estate is in the Peak District National Park in Derbyshire. (National Parks are featured in Chapter 1.6.) Chatsworth is 10 km north of Matlock and just over 25 km from junction 29 on the M1.

### **Purpose**

A historic house and estate, Chatsworth provides a range of leisure products and services. Visitors



▲ **Figure 1.36** *Chatsworth House*

enjoy the grand architecture of the house — inside and out. Figure 1.37 shows the 'Painted Hall' inside Chatsworth. Guided tours and a guidebook support visitors' enjoyment. There is also a collection of art, sculpture, furniture and design. Fountains can be found in the gardens and there are gift shops and food and drink outlets. Visitors can walk in the surrounding park without payment. 'Park' is the word used to describe the extensive grounds of grass and trees that typically surround stately homes. There is also a farmyard. Chatsworth was used as a location for the 2005 feature film *Pride and Prejudice*.

Like the other nationally important visitor attractions mentioned in this chapter, Chatsworth is also a major tourist attraction. People from all over the UK and some incoming tourists from other countries visit Chatsworth.



The Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth. Reproduced by permission of the Chatsworth Settlement Trustees.

▲ **Figure 1.37** The 'Painted Hall' at Chatsworth House

## Have a Go

### Know and understand

- 1 a** Design a poster to promote either LEGOLAND® Windsor or Chatsworth.
- b** Explain why it is important for leisure facilities to have catering services.

### Apply what you know

- 2** You are the education officer for a historic site other than Chatsworth. Make a short PowerPoint presentation to show to other GCSE students, explaining the purposes of the site.

### Investigate

- 3** Research and write the script for a television report about the location, products and services of a UK theme park other than LEGOLAND® Windsor.