



Alton Towers Resort announces Season of Celebration to mark 40 years of thrills

UK's biggest theme park celebrating 40 years of family fun with thrilling events and activities throughout the 2020 Season, including giving 10,000 magical experiences to those in need

Thrill-seekers first experienced the head-spinning, heart-pumping buzz of the Corkscrew at Alton Towers on 4th April 1980. The Resort has since helped over 200 million guests make memories together

Gangsta Granny: The Ride launching as the new headline attraction for the 40th birthday year

19 February 2020 – Alton Towers Resort today announced it is launching an exciting Season of Celebration for 2020 to mark 40 years of unforgettable shared adventures, exhilarating thrills and happy memories.

For the 2020 Season, beginning on 21st March, Alton Towers will roll out its biggest ever programme of events to celebrate the power of experiencing thrilling and unforgettable adventures, spending time with friends and family, and making memories together. The calendar includes:

- **21st March:** Park opening and launch of ***Gangsta Granny: The Ride***. The thrilling new 4D ride experience will see guests join the main characters as they attempt the greatest heist in the history of the world: to steal the Crown Jewels. A whole area of the theme park will be transformed, inspired by 'The World of David Walliams' and will feature a host of other rides and attractions
- **4th April:** The Resort will celebrate 40 years since the opening of the ***Corkscrew*** with unique opportunities and offers, details to be revealed on social media nearer the time
- **May Day Bank Holiday:** Families are invited to join the ***CBeebies Land Birthday Party*** (8th-10th May) celebration, including fun-packed activities, rides and attractions and a unique, special live performance with some of their favourite CBeebies Land friends!
- **May Half Term:** Join Ben and Granny for a ***Half Term Heist*** - a Gangsta Granny themed week of activities, challenges and competitions for all the family
- **Summer:** All summer celebrate Alton's world-beating thrill rides ... past and present
- **Autumn:** Brand new event ***Oktoberfest*** arrives at Alton Towers Resort offering families and thrill-seekers themed entertainment, delicious refreshments and selected late-night rides on selected weekends in September and October

- **Halloween:** the UK's favourite event **Scarefest** returns with award-winning mazes, family entertainment, rides in the dark and, new for 2020, experience the Resort's historic gardens in a whole new light (selected dates in October)
- **6th-8th November:** Marvel as the Resort's **Ultimate Fireworks** display celebrates 40 years of thrill-seeking with three nights of spectacular sights, wonderful whizz-bangs and serious sparkles
- **December:** Visit for a **Santa's Sleepover** - the most magical family Christmas escape. Jump onto specially selected rides, dive into the Waterpark, tuck into a festive evening meal, and meet Santa and his Elves!
- **New Year's Eve:** Alton's Season of Celebration draws to a close in style with a Fairytale-inspired **New Year's Eve Ball**

Since the Corkscrew opened in 1980, one in two Brits have visited Alton Towers Resort at some point in their lives. As the UK's biggest theme park, it has welcomed over 200 million guests through its gates in the last 40 years who have enjoyed 1.2 million drops of Oblivion, ridden over 300 million coaster loops, shared over a billion hours of family fun and an infinite number of smiles.

The Towers' famous gardens have been attracting visitors for nearly 200 years, but on 4th April 1980 the park's first ever thrill-seekers experienced the buzz of double-inverting coaster, the Corkscrew, marking Alton Towers' transformation into the theme park as we know it today.

"The Corkscrew kick-started a revolution in the industry." says legendary rollercoaster creator, John Wardley. *"No longer was Alton Towers a "funfair in the woods". Large, permanent installations started to be developed, requiring major capital investment. And these could have a veneer of theatricality applied to them...theming! Hence Alton Towers became a Theme Park. And the rest is history, all thanks to the Corkscrew."*

Looking back at the last four decades of giggles and shrieks, Alton Towers has released an exclusive animation showcasing the evolution of the theme park; from heart-pounding, ground-breaking coasters to themed lands and accommodation: <https://youtu.be/Z1veH80gdU0>

And for those who'd rather model their own theme park map including classic rides, current attractions or even a look to the future a new interactive 'Model Your Map' game on the Alton Towers website allows fans to plan, view and share their Alton Towers Map. More information about the resort's 40th Season of Celebration can be found at www.altontowers.com/40-years, along with shared memories from the past 40 years of visits to Alton Towers.

As part of its 40th anniversary celebrations, Alton Towers Resort has pledged to donate 10,000 tickets to charities and organisations supporting children facing challenges of serious illness, disability or adversity across the UK, helping to put a smile on the faces of those who need it most. The Resort has teamed up with Merlin's Magic Wand, the dedicated children's charity for Merlin Entertainments, to make its biggest pledge to date and enable young people, children and their families to create precious memories during the most difficult of times.

The 10,000 tickets will be donated in addition to the Resort's existing charitable efforts which include local and regional donations to support charities and community engagement projects across Staffordshire, overnight experiences for children's hospice beneficiaries in end of life care, education programmes including the Prince's Trust, conservation, restoration and heritage projects, and more.

Charities and organisations supporting children and young people facing challenges of serious illness, disability or adversity in the UK can find out more and apply at <http://www.merlinsmagicwand.org> ahead of the park opening in March.

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Notes to Editors

Please download release and assets here:

<https://app.box.com/s/p7e1b6rl0k7wxksd1ywibvn4352d5oht>

Season Pass

Guests to Alton Towers Resort can visit as many times as they like throughout the Theme Park season (21st March to 1st November) for £58, the same price as buying a theme park ticket on the day (for a Standard Season Pass). For just £75, a Premium Season Pass offers access to the park without any date restrictions including during Scarefest. For more information about the benefits of an Alton Towers Season Pass visit www.altontowers.com/SeasonPass.

40th Birthday Year Calendar of Events

A full calendar of events for Alton Towers Resort's Season of Celebration can be found at www.altontowers.com/40-years. Additional information on competitions and short term special 40th Birthday offers will also appear there, and on social media. Alton Towers is inviting guests from over the years who have experienced the magical power of the theme park to share memories using #40ThrillingYears.



Paul Burton, Chairman of the European Coaster Club, said:

“How can you talk about Alton Towers and not mention the Corkscrew, the one ride that created the Theme Park industry for the UK? It went on to give millions of people the feeling of turning their lives literally upside down and put Alton firmly on the map as THE best place to go for ride technology and innovation. That can still be seen today in amazing rides such as Nemesis and Wicker Man.

“For me, the Corkscrew introduced me to an amazing hobby that still lives with me today. Even now the European Coaster Club members still miss this iconic ride, so it's great for us to be part of a celebration of 40 years since its grand opening in 1980. Here's to the next "40" loopy years.”

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About Alton Towers Resort

In 2020, the UK's biggest theme park Alton Towers Resort will celebrate 40 years of exhilarating excellence providing world-class fun, thrills and entertainment for the nation to enjoy.

Spanning over 900 acres in the heart of Staffordshire, Alton Towers Resort is the iconic home of a world-class theme park set across 10 fully themed lands with seven world-renowned coasters, as well as unique accommodation, waterpark, luxury spa and Extraordinary Golf course, making it the perfect escape for friends, families and thrillseekers alike!

The 2020 theme park season will see the much-anticipated opening of 'The World of David Walliams' in collaboration with comedian, actor and best-selling author David Walliams OBE. The area will bring to life much-loved characters from his cherished children's novels and feature a host of exciting rides and attractions including 'Gangsta Granny: The Ride'.

Alton Towers Resort is a proud member of the Merlin Entertainments family. For more information visit www.altontowers.com.

About Merlin's Magic Wand

Merlin's Magic Wand is a global charity that supports children facing challenges of serious illness, disability or adversity. They do this by supplying tickets and travel grants to enable them to visit Merlin attractions, creating Merlin Magic Spaces and providing Magic on Tour Experiences for those unable due to reach an attraction due to their circumstance.

Merlin's Magic Wand eligibility criteria:

Children must be aged 2 to 18 years and fall into one of the following eligibility criteria:

- Serious/Long-term Illness
- Disabled

- In care home
- In foster care
- Recently adopted
- Child impacted by domestic violence or abuse
- Child impacted by bullying
- Child of terminally ill parent/legal guardian/sibling
- Child of recently deceased parent/legal guardian/sibling
- Young Carer

More information and information on how to apply can be found at <https://www.merlinsmagicwand.org/>.