

## We Reflect on 2009 and Beyond

Over the past twelve months, we have been listening closely to our client's comments and suggestions regarding the types of **display sites** they prefer. In addition to this, we have been monitoring the effects the recession has had on the leaflet pick-up rate in different types of outlets.

The economic downturn has made an enormous difference to the public's leisure time and there has been a distinct swing towards **short-breaks** and **nostalgic holidays** in the UK. In many ways, this has been an extremely positive development for the local tourist industry and we have been delighted to see an increase in demand for **promotional leaflets** in caravan parks, smaller hotels, self-catering establishments, pubs, shopping parks, tourist attractions etc. Equally, some of our once busiest locations (particularly those frequented by business travellers) have become very quiet indeed. Obviously, it's very much a 'swings and roundabouts' situation, to coin a somewhat overused expression, but we are intending to make a few changes for **2010**.

The poorly performing outlets will be dropped at the end of the season in favour of more popular sites. We have already increased our collection of **Premier Networks** quite significantly over the past few months and, in addition to this, you can expect to see our holders appearing in several unexpected places during the autumn and winter.

There are a number of exciting and innovative plans in the pipeline, which we hope to implement over the coming months in order to take full advantage of the transformation within the **tourist industry** caused by the economic slowdown. We will also be adding the **Grosvenor Shopping Centre** (Chester) and the **New Mersey Shopping Park** (Speke) to our collection of exclusive sites this winter.

We are delighted to report that 2009 was immensely



Caernarfon Castle

rewarding for many of our clients. **Go Ape High Wire Forest Adventure** won the Responsible Tourism category in the TravelMole 2009 Web Awards; **Tatton Park** became Visit Chester and Cheshire's Large Attraction of the Year; **Blue Planet Aquarium** won VCC's Best Tourism Website of the Year award; **The Museum of Science & Industry** were voted Tourism Experience of the Year for 'Costumed Performers MoSI' in the Manchester Tourism Awards; **WWT Martin Mere Wetland Centre** won Visitor Attraction of the Year in the Lancashire & Blackpool Tourism Awards; the Mersey Partnership selected **National Museums Liverpool** as winner of both Tourism Experience of the Year and Tourism Marketing Project of the Year for their 'Art in the Age of Steam' exhibition and the co-founders of **GreenWood Forest Park**, Stephen and Andrea Bristow, were honoured by Gwynedd Business Network as its joint Business Person(s) of the Year 2009. A collective pat on the back goes out to every one of you from all at **LDS Tourism Services**.

### Twitter with LDS Tourism

All you tweeters can now sign up to follow **LDS Tourism Services** on Twitter at [twitter.com/LDSTS](http://twitter.com/LDSTS) and the **Brochure Marketing** group at [twitter.com/brochuregroup](http://twitter.com/brochuregroup). We will, of course, reciprocate!

## SQUATTERS IN OUR BROCHURE HOLDERS

At LDS we have a name for the unauthorised leaflets that appear in our display units from time to time. As a clue, the ornithologists among you will no doubt be aware of a certain feathered critter infamous for laying its eggs in the nests of other birds - frequently evicting the host's clutch and live young in the process. Yes, you've guessed, these freeloading flyers are known to us as 'cuckoos'!

Over the years we've evicted our fair share of 'cuckoos'. In fact, signs on our stands inform potential squatters: "**Unauthorised Material Will Be Removed**". Nevertheless, there are inevitably a handful of distributors who think we won't spot a leaflet or two promoting their clients among all the others. They couldn't be more wrong!

Whilst extremely annoying, this has never been of serious concern - until recently. We have suddenly noticed (what could only be described as) flocks of 'cuckoos' appearing in our holders; to such an extent that we have been impelled to contact various businesses to let them know their leaflets will never reach the public. It would be unfair to highlight individual names because we are quite sure this problem is down to one or two unscrupulous distribution companies rather than the attractions themselves. However, it's a great pity to see so much promotional print go to waste and it benefits nobody in the long-run.

So, the moral behind this story is beware unprincipled businesses passing themselves off as reputable distribution firms. If they offer to display your leaflets in hundreds of stands throughout the region (perhaps for half the price), then they are probably cuckoos in doves' clothing.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING IT LOCAL

Although small firms employ over fifty-eight per cent of the private sector workforce and contribute more than 50% of the UK turnover, the expansion of large national and international companies into every corner of British industry is heavily responsible for the demise of local trade.

"Expansion" has become a scary word to local traders. Yet, it is a fact that our economy is driven by small businesses and the case for keeping small retailers and businesses in our local communities is



overwhelming.

Leaflet distribution firms within the tourism and leisure sectors are no less prey to large 'out of town' companies moving in and attempting to put them out of business. There have been instances over the last few years where the 'big boys' have come into an area and proceeded to drastically undercut local firms. Inevitably, once the 'small fry' has been removed, prices increase dramatically, and by the time tourism operators realise that service isn't quite what it used to be, there is no longer a credible alternative.

So, why is it so important to use local companies to distribute and display promotional literature? Well, aside from obvious reasons such as their in-depth and long-standing knowledge of an area and its people, there is the fact that smaller firms usually have a personal interest in the survival of other businesses in their neighbourhoods - indeed, their proprietors and employees frequently have family members and friends whose livelihoods depend on the continued success of nearby attractions, leisure facilities, hotels, pubs and restaurants. Remove the local element and you are left with a bunch of fat-cat business people with little or no interest in a particular town or region - except, of course, when it comes to lining their own pockets.

If you are concerned about the demise of local firms, it may interest you to learn that the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) is actively campaigning to stem the tide of business closures and defend the choice and diversity customers deserve. It was inspired by FSB members and its message is now being delivered in local communities across the country. You can sign their **Keep Trade Local** petition online at [www.fsb.org.uk](http://www.fsb.org.uk).

## LDS MOVE INTO SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Befuddled by Facebook? Puzzled by Plaxo? Taken aback by Twitter? If so, we can help. Email [marketing@ldsts.co.uk](mailto:marketing@ldsts.co.uk) for info about our Packages.