



HiT entertainment



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PEEP! PEEP! It's Full Steam Ahead for Thomas Land™ at Drayton Manor Theme Park

26 March 2008, London – HIT Entertainment, one of the world's leading independent children's producers and rights owners and the award-winning Drayton Manor Theme Park in Staffordshire have opened Europe's first Thomas Land in the UK. Set within three acres of beautiful parkland, Thomas Land at Drayton Manor Theme Park features twelve themed rides including a 600 metre Thomas train ride, an indoor play centre, café and a Thomas retail shop.

Carefully created in partnership with Drayton Manor, the attraction is based on the popular Thomas & Friends™ classic story books with rides for children and parents including Cranky's Drop Tower, the Troublesome Trucks Runaway Coaster, Harold's Heli Tours and Jeremy's Flying Academy.

The first Thomas Land was launched in 1998 when the Fujikyu Corp opened Thomas Land in Japan within the Fujikyu Highland™ amusement park. Featuring eight Thomas-themed-rides and Thomas-themed rooms within the park's hotel, Thomas Land welcomes more than 1.7 million guests each year.

Peter Byrne, Executive Vice President Consumer Products Worldwide HIT Entertainment commented, "Thomas Land is a unique visitor attraction that offers young Thomas fans with a new way to interact with their favourite character. Drayton Manor Theme Park has created an outstanding attraction, testament to their reputation as one of the UK's leading theme park operators. With Thomas Land in Japan and now in the UK, this wonderful attraction is set to attract almost 3 million visitors each year."

Colin Bryan, Managing Director of Drayton Manor Theme Park, comments: "After years of planning and creating Thomas Land, this fantastic new attraction is now open. We feel honoured to have such a big star such as Thomas call Drayton Manor his home and we're in no doubt about how popular he'll be!"

Thomas Land at Drayton Manor Park was opened on 15 March 2008. For further information visit, www.thomaslanduk.co.uk.



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Notes to Editors

Drayton Manor Theme Park was first opened to the public by the Bryan family in 1950, after co-founders, husband and wife, George and Vera Bryan, converted 80 acres of land into a wonderful family pleasure resort. Almost 60 years later, Drayton Manor has been transformed into an award-winning attraction located in approximately 280 acres of beautiful parkland and packed with amazing rides for all ages. Drayton Manor remains a family owned and run theme park and is one of the Midlands' most popular attractions with over a million people visiting annually. The park also features a first class 15-acre zoo that is home to more than 100 different animal species from around the world.

Opening and closing times

The 2008 season begins on 15th March and runs until 2nd November. Rides operate from 10.30am to 5pm or 6pm depending on the time of year. The zoo is open throughout the year, except during certain dates each Christmas and New Year. In the run up to Christmas, Thomas Land will be open on selected dates. For more information, see www.draytonmanor.co.uk or call the 24-hour information line on 0844 472 1950. Tickets can also be bought by calling the Ticket Hotline on 0844 472 1960. The park's full address is Drayton Manor Theme Park, near Tamworth, Staffordshire, B78 3TW.

About Thomas Land

Drayton Manor Theme Park's brand new attraction, Thomas Land™, promises to become a hugely popular destination for the legion of Thomas & Friends™ fans across the UK and Europe. Based on the popular Thomas & Friends™ books and the highly successful Thomas Land™ in Japan, which attracts over a 1.7 million visitors per year, Thomas Land™ is set within the 280-acre award-winning Drayton Manor Theme Park, which also boasts thrilling rides and a first class zoo, providing total family entertainment. Carefully created in partnership with HIT Entertainment, the producers and rights owners of Thomas & Friends™, Thomas Land™ features 12 themed rides, including a special Thomas the Tank Engine train ride that takes visitors on an enchanting journey around the three-acre attraction. Alongside this, Thomas Land™ also boasts the ultimate retail store, brimming with exclusive Thomas & Friends™ merchandise, plus an indoor play arena for younger visitors, new restaurants and private function space.

About HIT Entertainment

HIT Entertainment, owned by private equity investment group Apax Partners, is one of the world's leading independent children's entertainment producers and rights-owners. HIT's portfolio includes properties, such as *Barney™*, *Bob the Builder™*, *Thomas & Friends™*, *Pingu™*, *Fireman Sam™*, *Angelina Ballerina™* and *Rainbow Magic™*. HIT represents Chapman Entertainment's *Fifi and the Flowertots™* and *Roary the Racing Car™* in North America and Japan, as well as *Wallace & Gromit™*, *Shaun the Sheep™* and Aardman Classics from Aardman Animations. HIT also acts as a worldwide representative for The Jim Henson Company's library of classic family brands and as representative for *The Wiggles®* in the UK. Launched in 1989, HIT's lines of business span television and video production, content distribution, publishing, consumer products licensing and live events and has operations in the UK, US, Canada, Hong Kong and Japan. HIT is a part-owner of US-based preschool channel, PBS KIDS SproutSM, and international preschool channel JimJam, (outside of the US, UK and China). For more information, visit www.hitentertainment.com.