



PRESS RELEASE

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New manager appointed at Magna

Magna Science Adventure Centre has appointed a new general manager, who says his philosophy in life is thanks to the late Liverpool manager Bill Shankly.

John Silker moves across to the South Yorkshire tourist attraction from Manchester United where he was the manager of the VIP suite at Old Trafford. He is originally from Merseyside and it was there at the age of 15 where he met Mr Shankly.

“He said to me ‘be the best in whatever you do in life’ and to me that is about passion. You have got to have a passion for what you do.”

John, who has 36 years’ experience in the hospitality and leisure industry, says he is passionate about building on the success of Magna.

“What we have at Magna is unique in terms of the building. We can do so much that other venues can’t, particularly because of the space inside. It’s almost like having a blank canvas. It is an exciting time to be taking over.”

Housed in a former steelworks in Sheffield Road, Templeborough, near the M1, Magna is a family attraction with more than 100 hands-on exhibits designed to explore the four elements of air, water, earth and fire. It also hosts regular school trips and has event space that can cater for anything from 30 people up to 3,000.

The nine different function spaces can host awards ceremonies, business conferences, large exhibitions, dinners, team building, wedding receptions, car launches and dance events. In the last year alone it has hosted the Olympic torch relay, the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra and Richard Hawley in a concert broadcast live on BBC 6 Music, Warp Films tenth anniversary celebrations, RIBA Awards ceremony, BBC’s Children in Need and a real ale festival.

Magna is a registered charity committed to promoting science and preserving South Yorkshire’s steel industry heritage.

Janet Lister, chair of the Magna Trust, said the future of the building was in safe hands.

She said: "John is committed to helping us build on the legacy of Magna, which has so much going for it, both for the leisure market and on the corporate side. I really think John can take us forward."

John, who is 60, has managed hotels and spa and golf resorts from Gretna Green in Scotland down to Suffolk.

He may originally be a Scouser, but John said the eight years he spent in charge of Hellaby Hall Hotel near Rotherham, which he left in 2008, had a big influence on him.

"I was very committed to the area when I was here and involved in lots of charity work and was vice-president of Rotherham Chamber. Coming back to South Yorkshire feels like coming home. I love the area and I love the people."

As well as being a Liverpool fan, away from work John likes golf and the theatre.

NOTE TO EDITORS

Attached photograph shows John Silker.

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Magna also boasts outdoor and water play area and is open daily, from 10am to 5pm with last entry at 4pm.

Full day tickets to Magna include entry to the indoor attraction as well as the Sci-Tek outdoor play area, or families can pay to just visit the outdoor play area. All full tickets include a further 12 months' free entry.

The Templeborough steelworks were built during World War One and shut in 1993. They remained derelict until being transformed into an award-winning visitor attraction in 2001.