



# THORPE PARK, MERLIN ENTERTAINMENTS



## CHALLENGE

Merlin Entertainments installed a basic parking system in 2009 across several of their UK theme parks.

Ten years on, they issued a tender to update the method of operation with a **more integrated** and technologically advanced solution using ANPR.

The Name Plate (or License Plate, as in LPR) serves as a virtual ticket, and grants **free-flow access**, preventing stolen cars or ticket swapping. Since ticket and license plate have to match at entry and exit, it is almost impossible to pursue fraudulent behaviors.

Merlin's requirement was for an ANPR ticketless system that would integrate into the **existing park ticketing system** which was supplied by Accesso. The requirements of the system were to facilitate entry and exit for pre-booked ticket holders, on site Accesso parking kiosk ticket sales and daily transient parkers with payment at exit. Payment on site had to be with the **existing payment service provider** Adyen.

## BACKGROUND

In 2020 HUB Parking Technology announced a **global framework agreement** with Merlin Entertainments.

Merlin Entertainments is a global leader in location-based, family entertainment. As one of the world's largest attraction operators, they create and deliver memorable, immersive **brand experiences for millions of guests**.

Their parks operate around the world and include Alton Towers, Thorpe Park, Chessington World of Adventures, and Legoland New York Resort. The vehicle traffic to these parks varies depending on the day of the week and the month of the year, with **highest peaks** during the school holidays.

A combination of **different user types** need to be managed on a daily basis: transient users, passholders and pre booked ticket holders. Getting a comprehensive picture of the car park through **accurate analytics** and custom reporting becomes fundamental: clear-cut users' insights grants smooth and efficient operations.



## CLIENT REQUIREMENTS

- Efficient and good-looking equipment in two car parks, a specific drop off area and the main car park
- For the drop-off area, single **free-flow ANPR entry** and barriered exit, including ANPR and Chip & Pin
- In the main car park, 2 free-flow ANPR entries and 5 barriered exits with lane exit units with ANPR and Chip & Pin
- **3 virtual machines** running the HUB applications including the JMS software
- Customized reporting and **advanced analytics capabilities** through JMS
- Integrated ANPR system provided through Intelico
- Integrated intercom system provided by Zenitel
- **Chip & Pin integration** with Merlin's existing payment service provider Adyen, using the VeriFone UX hardware



## SOLUTION

Parking can leave a lasting impression for a guest visiting any resort, it's the beginning and very end of a guest's experience. Merlin Entertainments had a very clear vision on how they want to use technology to **enhance the overall guest experience** at all of their parks and locations.

The investment in new parking technology would result in a smooth, efficient and **effortless experience** when visiting. The **car parks' upgrade** project started in the second half of 2019, when integration discussions between HUB UK and Merlin began, supported by HUB HQ in Bologna, Italy.

Development was required on both sides to achieve the **required integration with Accesso/Merlin** which was all completed on time ready for the scheduled park opening in March 2020.

The degree of openness of HUB's platform architecture proved pivotal in moving forward with the integrations: the ANPR ticketless system swiftly communicates with the **existing park ticketing system** (Accesso) thus facilitating entry and exit for **pre-booked ticket holders**.

On site, the exit plaza was **redesigned and resurfaced** to incorporate an additional exit lane for the main car park and create a new exit lane for the drop off area.

HUB constructed these lanes and worked with the Merlin contractors to complete the installation, which was finalized and ready for the March opening - however due to COVID-19 this was postponed until July 4th, 2020.

Ahead of the 4th July opening HUB UK carried out two **weeks of intense testing** before the park opening, which was fully supported by the HUB engineering team.

The project won UK **Sceptre Award for the best car park** in the year 2021.

