



Keith Prowse ~ A History of Innovation

The Keith Prowse Tickets & Tours Companies are proof that the heart of a successful long term business is innovation and change. Indeed such characteristics are even more vital in these days of exponential change and the world of Web 2.0. After 225 years, Keith Prowse is still at the top of its game, creating new products and winning industry awards, like the 2009 "Best Holiday Add On Company" Award from Travel Trade Gazette for Keith Prowse Attraction Tickets. It is part of a global ticketing business, selling millions of tickets every year to theatre, sports, rock, pop, classical music festivals and other events, with 25 offices around the world.

The roots of the Company go back to a Mr Robert Keith, who was an instrument maker back in the late seventeen hundreds, based in Bishopsgate, London. Music and theatre were the most popular forms of entertainment in this era for all levels of society, but Mr Keith's high society clients didn't like having to queue with the hoi polloi for their theatre seats. Spotting a gap in the market, he offered to purchase seats on his clients' behalf and the theatre seat broking part of the company was born by 1786.

In 1830 his son-in-law William Prowse joined the business, creating Keith Prowse, and the world-renowned music publishing empire was created. The innovation continued and, in 1911, Keith Prowse was the first agency to sell airline tickets, setting up at Brooklands, their first venture in the travel industry.

Many world class events and venues are still linked with the Businesses, even after more than 100 years, facilitating ticket sales for Ascot since 1886 and still offers a huge variety of sporting events, including horse racing, Premiership football, Grand Prix racing and world class events such as the Melbourne Cup and the Australian Open Tennis Championships. Other world famous events such as Chelsea Flower Show and Edinburgh Tattoo are also sold.

In the 1980s Keith Prowse Tours became involved in packaging theatre and other tickets with hotel accommodation and travel arrangements within the UK, most notably in London, for both the local and inbound tourist markets. Its first overseas office was established in New York in 1981. Theatre packages remain a core element of the portfolio.

In 1991, as the theme parks of California and Florida began to dominate tourist itineraries for the US inbound market, Deirdre Finnegan was recruited from the commercial banking sector to set up and launch Keith Prowse Attraction Tickets.

Taking the Company's innovative spirit to heart, she virtually created the market for advance purchase attraction tickets, collaborating with Disney on the creation of the 10 Day World Ticket for Walt Disney World, Florida and becoming the first company ever to sell it. Further collaboration led to the creation of what is now the staple Florida attraction ticket – the 14-day Disney pass.

Where the greatest lead, others will always follow, but Keith Prowse remains at the forefront of the attraction tickets market, offering the added benefit that holidaymakers receive the actual tickets they have bought for the major theme parks and attractions – not the vouchers (often called e-tickets) which is all that some of their competitors offer.

The recession-hit summer of 2009 proved to be a spur for yet more innovation: the creation of what has become Keith Prowse's most popular ticket package ever – The WOW! Ticket.

The first of these was WOW! Orlando, created specifically for the British market to bring extra value to cash-strapped holidaymakers. Available for a limited period over Summer 2009 for 2009 and 2010 departures, the Orlando WOW! included 14 days admission to Walt Disney World Resort, Florida, SeaWorld Orlando, Aquatica, Universal Studios, Universal's Islands of Adventure and Universal City Walk. On top of that a one day Shopping Extravaganza with breakfast and lunch is included. 2010 prices offered amazing value at £459 per adult and £419 per child.

The even newer city WOW! tickets are perfect for city breaks, combining theatre, dinner and sightseeing experiences into one ticket. London and New York have been so popular that Las Vegas is now being launched at the Travel Convention in Barcelona this October.

Keith Prowse Attractions Tickets and Tours now offer the widest range of destinations, with attractions and tours in every continent. 2009 saw the introduction of Tenerife, Majorca, Vietnam, Barbados, the Bahamas and the Dominican Republic. In addition to the theme parks, tickets can also be purchased for sports events such as the NFL and NBA in the USA, sightseeing tours around the world and exclusive shows like Bette Midler and Cher in Las Vegas.

Keith Prowse's connection with the best in UK sports and events continues, with packages to Premiership matches for Manchester United, West Ham United and Chelsea Football Club, as well as the Formula 1 Grand Prix and the Edinburgh Military Tattoo. This part of the business is now managed and developed by Richard Strange, who has used his extensive background in tour operations and sports to create new and exciting products

Keith Prowse Attraction Tickets and Keith Prowse Tours became part of the Seatem Group in 1994. Other brands within the Group include the International Festival Bureau, Choir Contact International, Global Tickets, First Call, Applause and Enta, the Group's in-house software company, which now leads the industry in box office management systems. The Group has management offices in Belfast, London and Jersey.

Keith Prowse Attraction Tickets and Tours sells tickets and packages both through the travel trade and direct to consumers via its website at www.keithprowse.com and call centres. Keith Prowse Tours is a member of ABTA (number V2452) and is licensed by ATOL (number 3198).

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For further information and enquiries, please contact:

Tanya Hillman / Kate Burgess-Craddy at KBC PR & Marketing on 01825 76 36 36
Tanya.hillman@kbc-pr.com / kate.burgess@kbc-pr.com

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