

= The Swarm ( roller coaster ) =

The Swarm ( officially stylized as " THE SWARM " ) is a steel Wing Coaster at Thorpe Park , a theme park in the United Kingdom . The Swarm was the world 's second Wing Coaster designed by Swiss roller coaster manufacturer Bolliger & Mabillard and the United Kingdom 's first Wing Coaster . Construction commenced in May 2011 , and the coaster opened on 15 March 2012 . Starting in 2013 , the last two rows of each train face backwards , while the first five rows face forward . This was removed in 2016 , with all riders facing forward once again .

The 775 @-@ metre @-@ long ( 2 @,@ 543 ft ) ride stands 39 metres ( 128 ft ) tall and features five inversions . On the one @-@ minute twenty @-@ five second ride , riders experience speeds of up to 59 miles per hour ( 95 km / h ) and 4 @.@ 5 times the force of gravity . A marketing campaign for the ride began 11 months before The Swarm was opened to the public . The ride has generally been well received , ranking highly amongst other roller coasters of its type .

= = History = =

= = = Planning and announcement = = =

In 2010 , planning for The Swarm began behind closed doors . The ride was codenamed LC12 in the early process of its planning and construction . On 31 January 2011 , Thorpe Park submitted a planning application for their 2012 ride to the Runnymede Borough Council . The website gave further information about the new ride 's theme , that of an apocalyptic battle .

= = = Construction and opening = = =

At the time of the ride 's announcement construction was already underway . The track for The Swarm was complete by 18 November 2011 . Clearance testing started almost immediately ; the first operational test run was completed on 17 January 2012 .

On 15 March 2012 , The Swarm officially opened to the public . In January 2013 , Thorpe Park announced that the last two rows on The Swarm would be rotated to face backwards for 2013 , a first for a Wing Coaster . The park 's tag line for this experience is ' THE SWARM- Brave It Backwards ' . The park additionally announced that they were adding a damaged , mangled billboard , which the train travels through . In 2016 the seats were returned to all facing forwards .

= = Characteristics = =

= = = Location = = =

The Swarm is located on a reclaimed island adjacent to the Stealth roller coaster , with parts of the ride being built over water . A bridge links the core of Thorpe Park to an island which hosts the roller coaster station , merchandise outlet , a games zone and toilet buildings .

= = = Trains = = =

The Swarm features two 28 @-@ seat Bolliger & Mabillard Wing Coaster trains . Each train is made up of seven rows of four seats each . One pair of seats in each row is located on either side of the ride 's track and slightly lower than the track , as with all Wing Coasters . The trains are themed to resemble alien @-@ like creatures ( the ride 's eponymous " Swarm " ) , with a number of red LED lights placed across the train .

= = = Theme = = =

The area is designed to appear as if it has been partially destroyed by explosions associated with a major disaster . The ride recreates the experience of flying through a crash scene and features a crashed aeroplane , upturned ambulance , half @-@ submerged fire engine and a helicopter .

= = Ride experience = =

The roller coaster begins in the station , which is built to look like a partially destroyed church , and climbs up a 38 @. @ 7 @-@ metre ( 127 ft ) chain lift hill . Upon reaching the top of the lift hill , the track twists 180 degrees anticlockwise , so that riders are upside down , before plunging down the world 's first dive drop element . The train then proceeds to dive under the wing of a wrecked plane and into a zero @-@ g roll 30 @. @ 6 metres ( 100 ft ) above the ground before passing through a billboard and entering an inclined loop 23 metres ( 75 ft ) in height . It then enters a turnaround with a wrecked helicopter with slow @-@ spinning rotor blades in the centre . This is followed by a corkscrew , which passes through the inclined loop . Upon leaving the corkscrew , the train curves past a crashed fire engine with water and fire effects and proceeds through a keyhole : a partly destroyed church tower . The ride then flies over the station and enters into a last inline twist before a mid @-@ course brake run . Following this , the train makes a banked left @-@ hand turn into the final brakes . The train then goes back into the station . The ride previously featured an on @-@ ride video camera , filming riders and allowing the purchase of a DVD afterwards ; this was removed sometime in 2015 or 2016 .

= = Marketing = =

In late April 2011 , Thorpe Park began an advertising campaign for LC12 consisting of " The end is coming " posters in the park and a teaser website , LC12.net. The LC12.net website featured a brief description hinting at the possible theme of the ride alongside a countdown until 1 August 2011 . As the date of the ride 's announcement approached , Thorpe Park released a video via Facebook stating that " WAR is coming " .

On 25 January 2012 , it was reported that an incident occurred when testing The Swarm . Limbs of test dummies were broken off when the ride passed an object that was located too close to the track . The Daily Mail suggested that the incident might have been a publicity stunt .

In March 2012 , Thorpe Park announced it had contracted the band You Me at Six to create the world 's first roller coaster single for the launch of The Swarm . The song , " The Swarm " , was released on iTunes on 18 March 2012 , a few days after the opening of the roller coaster . The song entered the UK Singles Charts at number 23 .

= = Reception = =

The Swarm has generally been well received . Nick Sim of Theme Park Tourist praised the ride and its theme , saying that it packs " a number of incredible elements into its compact circuit " . Sim stated the ride had " fallen just short of our sky @-@ high expectations " mainly because of " its short ride time " . He rated the ride 4 out of 5 . Joanna Churchill of the Daily Mirror gave a review of the backwards ride , stating that it is " a whole new adrenaline @-@ pumped experience that is simply not for the faint @-@ hearted " . Churchill stated that her " blood pressure and heart rate went through the roof " , but " there was barely time to process what was happening before we were back on terra firma " .

In Mitch Hawker 's worldwide Best Roller Coaster Poll , The Swarm debuted at position 68 out of the 365 roller coasters in the poll . When compared with other Wing Coasters debuting in the 2012 poll , The Swarm performed fairly well ; X @-@ Flight at Six Flags Great America ranked 58 , Wild Eagle at Dollywood ranked 87 , and Raptor at Gardaland ranked 113 . It did not place in Amusement Today 's Golden Ticket Awards in 2012 , 2013 and 2014 , but made its first appearance in 2015 ranked at 30 .

Despite the positive reviews however , The Swarm failed to increase attendance . In fact , park gate figures fell by 200 @, @ 000 following the addition of the coaster . The park as well as many others have blamed the parks branding from 2009 to 2012 as the issue .