

Press Release

19th January 2015

CrossCountry is on track for The Big Hoot 2015

CrossCountry is the first company to become a 'Parliament Partner' of The Big Hoot, a massive art project set to sweep into Birmingham this summer.

Choochoo-sing to become 'Parliament Partner' means the leading train company will sponsor three – parliament signifies three owls – individually designed 165cm tall statues.

Presented by public art specialists, Wild in Art, in partnership with Birmingham Children's Hospital The Big Hoot will see over 100 beautifully designed owl statues appearing throughout the city over a 10 week period.

Funded by a host of corporate sponsors from across the region, including CrossCountry, the sculptures will be brought to life by local artists, helping to showcase the wide cultural appeal of the city.

At the end of the 10 week trail the owls will be auctioned off with all proceeds going to Birmingham Children's Hospital.

One of the three CrossCountry owls will be bought to life by a local artist and the team at CrossCountry and CrossCountry customers will be unleashing a sprinkling of creative flair on the other two.

Clare Shufflebotham, Head of Marketing at CrossCountry, said:

"We're really excited to be a part of such a fantastic initiative, which is going to bring alive the cultural landscape of this wonderful city.

"We strive to deliver socio-economic benefits to the towns, cities and wider communities we serve which is why this project is so important as it will encourage people from all walks of life across Great Britain to visit Birmingham and explore all that is brilliant about the UK's second city.

"The Big Hoot will inspire, entertain and engage people from all over this summer and with our HQ based in Birmingham and our routes all connecting through to Birmingham we just had to be a part of it. We can't wait to see the sculptures light up the city!"

The Big Hoot aims to inspire people to become a tourist in their own town. Owls will be placed not only in the city centre, but in a host of locations across all 10 districts of Birmingham, encouraging residents to follow the trail and discover areas of the wider region which they may not have explored before.

Additional sponsors from across the city are encouraged to come on board to help the project fly.

Louise McCathie, Director of Fundraising at Birmingham Children's Hospital, said:

"It's fantastic to have CrossCountry aboard The Big Hoot project this summer. Thanks to them and our other corporate partners we will ultimately be able to fund some important projects for our children and young people at Birmingham Children's Hospital and for that we're immensely grateful.

"The Big Hoot is a fantastic opportunity for Birmingham, not only because it will bring in visitors from all over the UK but also because brummies will get to be tourists in their own city, giving them the opportunity to rediscover its heritage and cultural offering."

Charlie Langhorne, Director of Wild in Art, said:

"We are thrilled to have CrossCountry on board as a Parliament Partner. The Big Hoot will be a fantastic spectacle for Birmingham and is an excellent way to raise funds for Birmingham Children's Hospital. Sponsorship packages are still available and we hope the city's industries and businesses will recognise the cultural benefits of getting involved as well as the positives for the local community."

The project is the latest high profile public art project from Wild in Art, which famously hosted a similar event in Bristol which featured various giant statues depicting Gromit of 'Wallace and Gromit' fame, attracting worldwide headlines.

The company has also created exhibitions in locations ranging from Norwich to Sydney, as well as Transport for London's Year of the Bus Sculpture Trails, the Clyde Mascot trails for the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow and the Olympic mascot trail ahead of London 2012, each significantly increasing footfall to the host cities, helping to give local businesses a boost while generating increased profile.

To find out more about the sponsorship opportunities on offer, and for more information about the project, please visit www.thebighoot.co.uk.

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Notes to Editors:

For more information about Birmingham Children's Hospital please contact PR Manager Nicky Weston on 0121 333 8506 ext 6714 or email nicola.weston@bch.nhs.uk

Wild in Art

Wild in Art is one of the leading creative producers of spectacular, mass-appeal public art events. From parades of elephants in Melbourne and crashes of rhinos in Sydney, to BookBenches in London and Commonwealth Games Clyde mascots in Glasgow, Wild in Art events have animated cities and enthralled people the world over, raising over £6m for charity partners along the way.

Wild in Art also provide unique art education resources which engage and inspire young people and enhance learning across the curriculum.

Wild in Art 2015 events include: Bus Art - Year of the Bus Sculpture Trails (London, UK), Christchurch Stands Tall (Christchurch, New Zealand), GoGoDragons (Norwich, UK), The Big Hoot (Birmingham, UK), The Baron's Charter (Salisbury, UK).

www.wildinart.co.uk

CrossCountry

The CrossCountry network is the most extensive passenger rail franchise in Britain. Stretching from Aberdeen to Penzance, and from Stansted to Cardiff, it calls at over 100 stations. Based in Birmingham, CrossCountry connects seven of the Britain's 10 largest cities and delivers 295 services every weekday, equating to some 32 million passenger journeys a year.

For further information on CrossCountry services visit crosscountrytrains.co.uk or follow them online via Twitter at @crosscountryuk, Facebook.com/crosscountrytrains and their student Facebook page, Facebook.com/studentraildeals.

CrossCountry bookings

Passengers can buy tickets for any rail journey in Britain, with any train company and with no booking fee at crosscountrytrains.co.uk or via the free CrossCountry Train Tickets app. Download the app by visiting your app store or by texting TRAVEL to 87080.