

Good PR gets Muncaster noticed

MUNCASTER Castle holds the award for the best tourism attraction in the North West. In 2003 it also won the award at an England level. That success has been achieved because of the Pennington family's commitment to a quality product and good promotion.

Muncaster includes an historic castle, glorious rhododendron gardens and the World Owl Centre. However, despite having such a strong product the Pennington's have certainly not been complacent. Instead they have refreshed the attraction with a number of innovative developments.

Last year the Pennington's launched an imaginative new lighting scheme – Darkest Muncaster – which transforms the gardens at night into an exciting and colourful spectacle. Muncaster Interactive is another new initiative. It gives visitors access to computers with games, quizzes, facts and figures on Muncaster and access to the Castle's on-site cameras.

Muncaster also recognises how valuable good public relations can be. They know that with a strong product it is possible to get media coverage worth far more than they could spend on advertising. That is why Muncaster took on Osprey Communications earlier this year to give their public relations a boost.

Osprey Communications has already secured significant coverage for Muncaster on television, radio and in the newspapers. Osprey Communications has made the most of Muncaster's stories but they also do much more than that.

Paul Gardner, a director of Osprey Communications, suggested holding a competition to appoint Muncaster's first jester for over 350 years. The competition caught the imagination of the media as well as Muncaster's visitors. It got well over 40 items of coverage including in three national newspapers, on radio stations across the UK, Granada Reports and Border. Next year Muncaster plans to hold a five day Festival of Fools. As well as the competition to appoint a new jester, there will be performances by different entertainers throughout the week.

Peter Frost Pennington, who is the Managing Director at Muncaster, says: "I'm delighted with the way Osprey Communications have worked for us. They have certainly improved our media exposure. Muncaster has appeared on television on average once a month since they started working for us.

"They work well at spotting newsworthy stories, developing ideas, and giving good advice. They are an effective bridge to the media, and ensure our business gets noticed."

www.muncaster.co.uk

www.ospreycommunications.co.uk