



Case Study...

Down House - The home of Charles Darwin

Smye-Rumsby helps evolve the radio communication system at Down House

Down House is the home of world-renowned scientist Charles Darwin. The house, owned by English heritage, is a busy visitor attraction open to the public 7 days a week for 8 months of the year. It was here that Darwin penned his famous 'On the Origin of Species' published in 1859. The house offers visitors a large collection of Darwin memorabilia, including original manuscript pages, personal possessions and notebooks.

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Bryony Atkins - Site Manager

An old, out-dated System

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“Some of the original foundations of the building go back to the 16th century. There is an attic, basements and 33 acres of land across the estate. There’s a large area to cover and we need a clear radio signal”.

Bryony Atkins - Site Manager

Staff struggled to keep in contact with their operations manager, with communications repeatedly dropping out. This was a particular problem in the site’s over-flow car park, causing visitor management and safety issues.

The bulky handsets were a further concern - the staff found them heavy and awkward to carry throughout the day. The battery life was also poor, frequently depleting after just half a day.

Migrating to Digital Radio

After considering a number of options, the team chose new Hytera handsets supplied by Dover based radio company Smye-Rumsby.

The PD505 Hytera handset was demoed to the team in the spring of 2016, and left for staff to test in day-to-day operations across the site.

The digital radios offer a number of additional features, including 2 voice parts per channel and background noise cancellation.

This allows users to make two simultaneous transmissions with enhanced call clarity.

The handsets also use a lithium-iron battery, giving them a superior talk time per charge.





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The Benefits

Smye-Rumsby has helped the Down House team to greatly improve operations and manage visitor flow in the house. The staff noticed enhanced call clarity, particularly in the more remote areas of the building and surrounding estate.

The team have also found the radios discreet, lightweight and comfortable to carry throughout the day. Thanks to their clear functionality, the handsets are used by all Down House staff, who range in age from 16 to 77.

Staff have made daily use of features such as personal calling to help with the safety of staff working in remote areas of the site. What's more they no longer lose communication due to either coverage or depleted batteries.

“It makes sure that my team is safe and that they feel safe; that they can communicate with me in an area on their own.”

The battery life is excellent, so I have no worries that someone's battery will run out halfway through the day.

Thanks to the new handsets, Down House now have a reliable communication system that supports the day-to-day running of their busy operation, whilst offering the Site Manager and her staff peace of mind. The radios help us to make sure the operation runs smoothly, that we're giving the best customer service to our visitors and that we can keep in contact over the 33 acres of land that we have here.

Bryony Atkins - Site Manager

