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ABB helps keep Pleasure Beach riders dry

Visitors to Blackpool Pleasure Beach can be sure of a warm reception after a ride on the £15 million Valhalla, the world's biggest dark water ride, thanks to an innovative drying system powered by a drive and four motors from ABB.

The dryer, installed by Haystack Dryers, is an open framed air conditioning system, which uses four high-volume cross-flow fans to create a vortex of warm air around the users, drying up to two adults and three children at a time. The four 80W fans are powered by ABB motors, driven by an ABB 1.1kW AC drive.

The Valhalla ride takes the form of a voyage in a Viking longboat, plunging visitors down several drops into a series of water pools. As with most water rides people can end up with damp clothes.

To avoid customers being blasted by a high-speed jet of hot air as soon as they enter the cabinet, Haystack decided to use a variable speed drive for the dryer. The drives are used in two modes, Idle and Operational.

The Idle mode is used when the dryer is unoccupied. The drive operates the fans at a low speed to continually recycle the air.

In the Operational mode, the fans are driven to full operational speed, recycling the air at an increased rate to remove moisture. Together with the infra-red lamps, this produces a sensation similar to that of a warm, windy day. After the drying cycle is complete, the infra-red lighting is reduced and the fans are reduced to idle speed.

Variable speed drives also allow the use of frequencies above 50 Hz. This gives higher fan speeds and provides up to 20 percent more drying capacity compared to running at 50 Hz, due to the improved air flow. The fans achieve an air velocity of 9 m/s, changing the air in the dryer four times per second.

Brian Trim, Technical Director of Haystack Dryers, explains why he chose ABB for the drive and motor combination: "ABB was the only company who could give us a complete drive and motor package. We couldn't find any other company who could give us what we wanted at the right price.

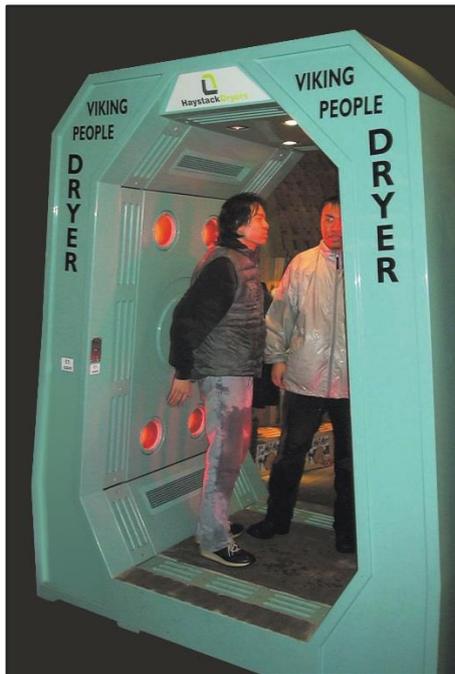
"Cost was central to us when developing the dryer, as was the availability of the drives and motors. We have had a great response from ABB – drives and motors have always been available whenever we wanted them."

The dryer at Blackpool Pleasure Beach is proving popular with visitors. Situated in the souvenir shop of the Valhalla ride, each drying session costs £1 and the dryer has taken over £1000 in its first week of operation. Blackpool Pleasure Beach is considering installing another dryer. Mike Brown, Director, Blackpool Pleasure Beach, says: "We thought the Haystack dryer would be a good facility for customers of the Valhalla ride and it has proven very popular. As far as I know, this is the first time this type of facility has been offered at a theme park. We are very pleased with it."

The dryers have other applications in sports centres, swimming pools, nursing homes and hospitals. Haystack Dryers are particularly keen to break into the medical market and see the capabilities of the

ABB drive and motors as a key to this goal. “Speed control across the range is vital for this application in the medical field, as patients may have burn injuries that are obviously sensitive to blown air. We also need to be able to interrogate the system for fault finding and the serial link of the drive can be linked to our PLC to provide the data we need” said Trim.

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Caption: The popular ‘people dryer’ made by Haystack Dryers and powered by a drive and four motors from ABB is providing a warm reception to visitors of the Valhalla dark water ride at Blackpool Pleasure Beach.

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