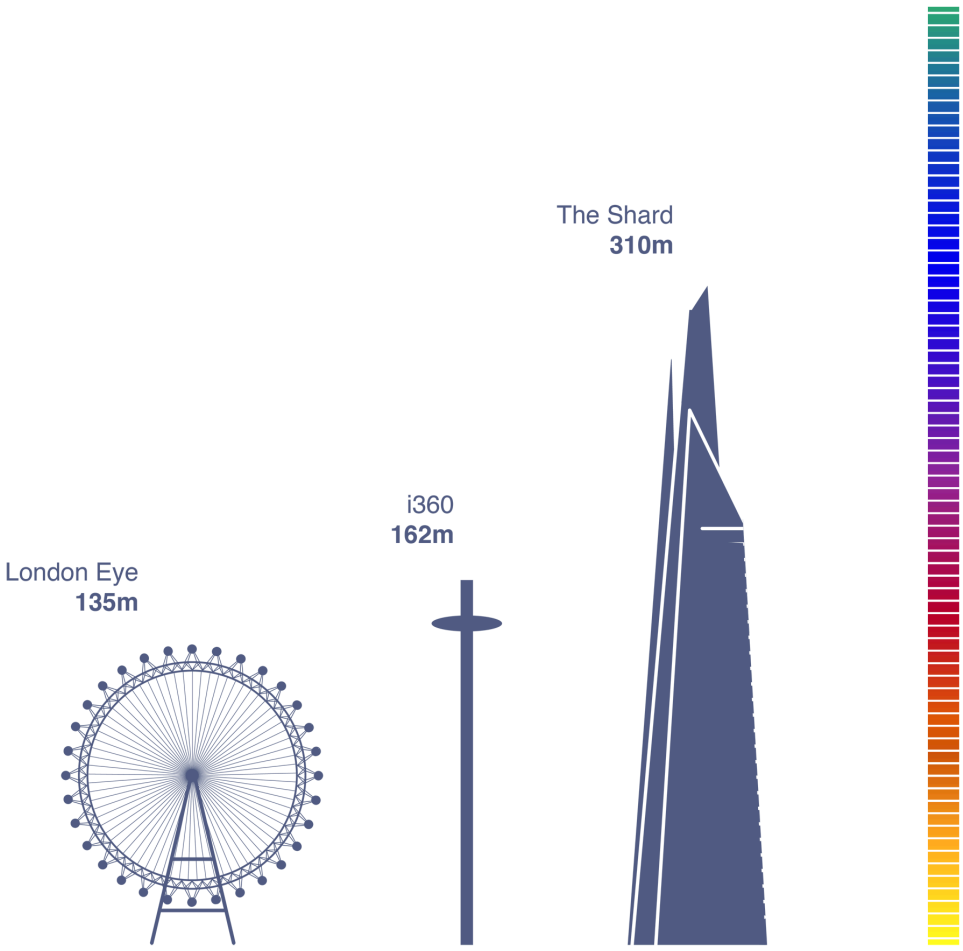
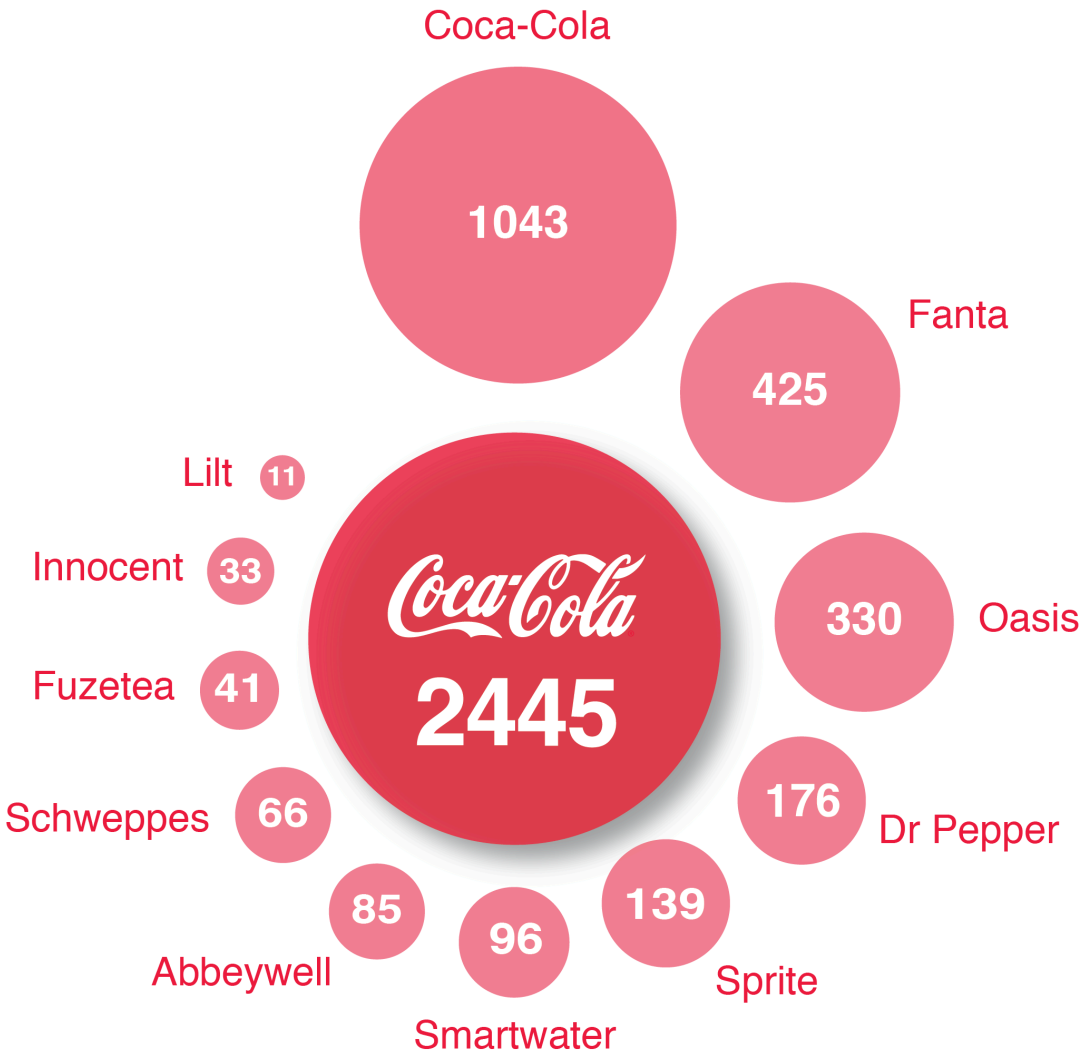
A Drop in the Ocean
449m

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Dr Pepper
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Abbeywell
Smartwater
Sprite



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Plastic bottle tops would tower over i360 and The Shard

As we head into the summer holidays and a season of seaside events, A Drop in the Ocean – the wave of colour, made of plastic bottle tops – has released the final figures for its bottle top collection project, highlighting the issue of

rubbish generated along the Brighton & Hove seafront. The numbers reveal just how much these tiny pieces of plastic can add up.

In just 8 months in 2018, over 29,000 bottle tops were collected along the Brighton & Hove seafront and intercepted at beachside cafes, bars and kiosks. Stacked on top of each other they would be more than **2.5 times the height of the British Airways i360**, the UK's highest tallest moving observation tower, **over 3 times the height of the London Eye**, and **over 100m higher than The Shard**, London's tallest skyscraper. And these were only a fraction of the bottle tops that were used, discarded and washed ashore along this sliver of coast during that time.

The final data for the project also showed that, of the 29,684 bottle tops collected between 1 March and 20 October 2018:

- 25% came from milk bottles.
- Of the bottle tops that were clearly branded, 27% came from products made by The

Coca-Cola Company. A total of 2445.

- Nestlé was the biggest identifiable water brand (Buxton & Pure Life; 1129 tops) representing just over 13% of all branded tops.

Unfortunately the data doesn't reflect the huge increase in rubbish and bottle tops that large events and sweltering days cause. Given the tonnes of rubbish that result from thousands of extra visitors, and the speed at which the beach must be cleaned so that the rubbish doesn't get blown away or taken out on the next tide, those collecting rubbish were unable to take time to separate out the bottle tops at these peak times. If those had been included in the final count the stack would have reached far higher.

So, if you're heading down to the beach or the seafront this summer, here are a few things you can do to leave less behind you:

- Pack your own refillable drinks bottle and coffee/tea cup
- Download the Refill App (https://refill.org.uk/get-the-refill-app/) so that you can find places where you can refill your water bottle for free
- Take everything you carry on to the beach back off it when you leave, and if the bins are full, take your rubbish home with you
- If you're coming to Brighton Pride this year, join in the Big Pride Silent Disco Beach Clean the next day (https://www.brighton-pride.org/beach-clean/)

More about A Drop in the Ocean

The project ran from March to November 2018 and consisted of three three-month phases. At the end of each phase, the bottle tops collected were counted, sorted and, with the help of over 150 local volunteers, most of them added to an ever-growing wave of colour along the fence of the Volks Railway in Brighton. On completion the wave stretched more than 50 metres.

The bottle tops that weren't used in the wave are destined to be part of a project that

will be running at the city's Jubilee Library in Autumn 2019.

Kemp Town resident, permaculture designer and project initiator, Irene Soler, chose bottle tops for the project because they were something she was finding almost every time she walked on the shore. They are also small enough to be swallowed whole by many sea creatures, may be slow to degrade, may float for a long time, and are among the top 5 items found on beaches around the world according to the North Sea Foundation's 2017 Bottle Cap Report.

Besides being easy to store and count, Soler felt the tops' bright colours would make an eye-catching design. This she hoped would raise awareness about the impact of our lifestyle choices and the impact this has on our oceans:

"The question I was asked most often when I was hanging strings of bottle tops on the fence was: 'Have you dyed or painted them to get those colours?' The question surprised me at first. But then I realised that bottle tops are just another part of our wasteful every day that we don't even see. They're 'invisible'. Stringing them up on a fence made people really see them."

Although the project was launched by Soler and The Appreciation Society without any funding, The Rampion Fund saw the potential of the project and granted funding a month after the project was launched. It was also supported by City Clean, the city's waste management service and the Volks Railway.

[ENDS]

Notes to editors

- The final data from the project is available at https://medium.com/@irenesoler_75411/bottle-tops-would-tower-over-i360-and-the-shard-ce3a683e53c6?source=friends_link&sk=723fa12a52cfc9f222bf7cdd5d7bf7ea

- You can find out more about A Drop in the Ocean at https://www.adropintheocean.org.uk/
- Here's how we calculated how high the bottle tops would be if we stacked them on top of each other:
  (18,768 drinks bottle tops x 15mm) +
  (1937 sport drink bottle tops x 40mm) +
  (7556 milk bottle tops x 10mm) +
  (1,423 Tetrapak lids x 10mm)
  = 281.52m + 77.48m + 75.56m + 14.23m
  = 448.79m
- The official height of the i360 is 162m.
  The official height of the London Eye is 132m.
  The official height of the Shard is 310m
- Project initiator, Irene Soler is a graphic designer and a director of The Appreciation Society, a not-for-profit Community Interest Company based in Brighton. You can find out more about it at http://www.theappreciationsociety.org and about her experience of organising the project at https://medium.com/@irenesoler_75411/https-medium-com-3-things-you-can-do-to-organise-a-meaningful-awareness-project-d598b40f1c2?source=friends_link&sk=3bbdbc80dc53482c4be0c1f6fecbf327
- The Rampion Fund is a community benefit fund set up by Rampion Offshore Wind Ltd and managed by Sussex Community Foundation. More information is available here: https://sussexgiving.org.uk/give-to-your-community/our-funds/named-funds/rampion-fund/
- A selection of data visualisation graphics and photographs of bottle tops, the workshops and the final installation are available for publication.

Contact

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She is available for interviews.