

BRITISH TOURISM WEEK 23-29 MARCH 2009

- Britain's fifth largest industry – worth £114 billion – 8.2% of the nation's economy –
- Supports 2.7 million jobs and over 200,000 SMEs – more jobs than construction or transport
- 2009, a defining moment: weak pound makes Britain more affordable than ever –
- 4.9 million Britons will consider taking a holiday at home instead of overseas –

6 March 2009

TOURISM URGED: GET INVOLVED AND RAISE AWARENESS OF CRITICAL INDUSTRY

As Britain heads into another holiday season, public sector and commercial tourism businesses – accommodation providers and attractions, Tourist Information Centres and tour operators, regions and destinations – are being reminded that there's still time to organise or attend an event under the British Tourism Week banner.

The third annual event takes place from 23 to 29 March this year and, with the support of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, aims to galvanise organisations and individuals to take pride in being part of the nation's fifth biggest industry. Events aim to raise the profile of a £114 billion visitor economy and draw national awareness to its critical importance and the contribution it makes local economies and millions of livelihoods.

Already around 120 events are listed on the website and organisers hope that every region and destination will organise something to help businesses or raise awareness of tourism experiences among consumers. Those unable to organise or attend anything for the week are being urged to download and display a poster from www.britishtourismweek.com in their business.

David Curtis-Brignell, co-chairman of British Tourism Week's multi-sector steering committee and past-chairman of the Tourism Society, says: "Around 2.7 million people and 200,000 small and medium-sized enterprises in a wide range of sectors depend on tourism for their jobs and livelihoods. We are asking them to help us raise awareness of the tourism experiences that can be enjoyed in this country. We hope that if nothing else, MPs, the media, opinion-leaders and consumers will take time to learn and talk about our industry during British Tourism Week."

This year British Tourism Week recognises that investment in tourism is investment in an industry that can rapidly benefit the UK economy and generate jobs. As well as a political lunch and reception to launch the week, on Friday 27 March, Members of Parliament are being urged to visit tourism businesses in their constituencies.

More...

Says Bernard Donoghue, head of government relations at VisitBritain and co-chairman of British Tourism Week: "We want to ensure that the many sectors that make up our industry, the private and public sector, are prepared to unite in generating a lasting legacy.

"This year more of us are considering taking a holiday at home instead of overseas thanks to the economic climate. Every day, more of us are inspired by the appeals of heritage sites and historic buildings, our stunning countryside and cinematic landscapes or contemporary cities. Becoming ever more familiar with world-renowned events from Wimbledon to Ascot, we are also rediscovering the eccentricities – from worm-charming to sedan-racing, cheese-rolling and bog-snorkelling – and quintessentially British, cultural qualities that make us unique."

The week of events includes Best of Britain and Ireland, showcasing excellence in destinations and experiences from around the country. Taking place at London's ExCeL for the first time from 26-29 March it involves two days exclusively for business-to-business meetings between the industry and domestic and international travel buyers (26 and 27 March) followed by two consumer days when visitors will be able to get a real taste of all this country offers for a 2009 holiday.

Visit www.britishtourismweek.com for more information on the week of events being organised around the country.

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For further information, please contact Elliott Frisby, Press and PR on 020 8563 3035 or 07951 996241

Notes to Editors

- British Tourism Week (23-29 March 2009) has been established to demonstrate the critical value of tourism to the economy of the United Kingdom. Through a week of events throughout the UK it will:
 - Increase awareness of the success and importance of the tourism industry
 - Raise quality standards
 - Promote training and professionalism
 - Improve competitiveness of the UK tourism industry
 - Support the preparations for hosting the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games
- British Tourism Week culminates with the Best of Britain and Ireland trade and consumer event at London's Excel from 26-29 March. www.britainandirelandevent.co.uk
- British Tourism Week is organised by VisitBritain and UKinbound with the support of the Tourism Alliance, Tourism Society, ABTA the Travel Association, VisitScotland, Visit Wales, Visit London and Britain's regional tourist boards.