

BRITISH TOURISM WEEK 12-20 MARCH 2011

Britain's fifth largest industry – worth £115 billion, 8.9% of Britain's GDP

Supports 2.6 million jobs and over 200,000 SMEs – more jobs than construction or transport

Overseas visitors contribute round £16 billion a year to the economy

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Google™ Street View trikes to capture the best of the UK's piers for British Tourism Week

Google Street View, in collaboration with VisitBritain, will be capturing new imagery of almost all of the UK's great British piers in celebration of British Tourism Week and 'Party on the Pier' 2011.

Google is supporting British Tourism Week by collaborating with VisitBritain to celebrate Britain's iconic seaside landmarks. As a result of this collaboration, over the next few months Google will collect Street View imagery of the piers that will appear in Street View via Google Maps™, for use by both Britons and tourists alike.

Two Street View 'trikes' will be on show during 'Party on the Pier' on Saturday 12th March - one at Weston-super-Mare and the other on Brighton Pier. Local media and public can see the trikes close up.

The great British pier has been an institution at our seaside for two centuries or more. Aside from promenades, buckets and spades, pop festivals and gastro pubs, few things can symbolise British seaside holidays as much as piers.

Developed in the early 1900's, more than 100 of them once stretched out to sea around the country at the beginning of the last century - today, just 55 survive.

Once the imagery is live, these piers will be put right on the virtual map, tempting people at home and abroad to explore Britain's seaside landmarks in an exciting new way. Piers which are being visited by the Google trike include Walton-on-the-Naze Pier, Brighton Palace Pier, Brighton West Pier, Boscombe Pier, Eastbourne Pier, Weston Super Mare and Clevedon Pier. We hope to have most of the 55 current standing piers recorded by the end of the year.

The Google trike is a specially designed bike mounted with a camera. It comes replete with a very athletic cyclist in customised Google apparel. It has the same capability as the Street View cars for collecting street-level imagery and is designed to help Google make special imagery collections in places less accessible by cars, such as historic landmarks and coastal paths.

Images collected by the trike will be processed and carefully stitched together, a technological process that can take several months. They will be made available at a later date in Street View on Google Maps.

David Curtis-Brignall, Co-Chair, British Tourism Week said: "What better way to celebrate Party on the Pier and the fifth British Tourism Week than to have our great piers filmed for Google Street View.

"Using the expanded Street View service people can check out restaurant's on piers before arriving, make travel plans, arrange meeting points on their favourite piers, get a helping hand with their holiday choices, or just get to know their pier better!"

Ed Parsons, Google's Geospatial Technologist said: "We've seen a tremendous amount of enthusiasm from British people to get their favourite places onto Street View. Now it's down to our super fit trycyclists to get cracking and photograph Britain's top piers so that people from far and wide can soon admire a large part of the country's seaside heritage ."

Tim Phillips, Chairman of the National Piers Society said: "Any opportunity to promote the nation's piers around the globe is very welcome and Google is to be congratulated for offering this easy visual check on arguably the best attraction of our outstanding seaside destinations!"

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For more information and interviews, please contact:

Mark Di-Toro, Corporate Press Officer on 020 7578 1098 or 07919 392 137

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

Notes to Editors:

- British Tourism Week (12-20 March 2011) aims to demonstrate the importance of tourism to the economy of the United Kingdom. www.britishtourismweek.com
- British Tourism Week culminates with the Best of Britain and Ireland travel trade forum at Birmingham's NEC from 16-17 March. www.britainandirelandevent.co.uk
- British Tourism Week is organised by VisitBritain with the support of The Tourism Society, and an Executive Committee with representation from the following organisations: The Tourism Alliance; Wales Tourism Alliance; Scottish Tourism Forum; VisitEngland; VisitScotland; Visit Wales; Visit London; the English Regions; British Hospitality Association; UKinbound; Local Government Association; Association of Leading Visitor Attractions; Holiday Cottages Group; British Beer & Pub Association; Coach Tourism Council; and Best of Britain & Ireland Events.

About Street View:

Street View is a hugely popular feature of Google Maps which is already available in more than 100 metropolitan areas around the world. It is also available in Google Earth and on Google Maps for Mobile. We launched Street View imagery in UK in March allowing people to view and navigate 360 degree street-level imagery in 25 British towns.

- The trike weighs nearly 18 stone!
- We will use specially trained, super fit Google employees and contractors to ride the trikes
- The "trikers" wear Google cycle helmets and clothing.
- As with all Street View imagery in the UK, we will apply our face-blurring and license plate blurring to all these images to protect people's privacy. People will be able to report images for removal in the same way as they can now by clicking on 'report a problem' on the bottom left hand corner of the image. From here they complete a short form where they indicate the precise image to be removed.
- 25 UK cities are currently available in Street View (London, Edinburgh, Leeds, Bradford, Cambridge, Cardiff, Belfast, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Oxford, Sheffield, Nottingham, Derby, Bristol, Coventry, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Swansea, York, Newcastle, Dundee, Southampton, Norwich, Scunthorpe).
- Tens of millions of images have been captured for Street View so far.

