

- Britain's fifth largest industry – worth £85 billion – 3.5% of the nation's economy –
- employs 2.1 million people – 7.7% of the workforce – more jobs than construction or transport –
- generates over £16 billion in export earnings –
- inbound visitors pay £3.3 billion in tax, the equivalent of the salary of 195,000 nurses –

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## **INTERNATIONAL AMBASSADORS ARE AMBASSADORS FOR BRITISH TOURISM**

Diplomats from around the world are taking time to explore a variety of destinations throughout Britain during their tenure in London. While many visit iconic attractions in England's capital, some are already familiar with more far-flung parts of the country.

Ahead of the launch of British Tourism Week (10 – 18 March), national tourism agency VisitBritain asked the ambassadors of 17 countries – from Australia to China, Hungary to Sweden – where they had visited. Each represents a country that is an invaluable source of international visitors to Britain.

Popular London attractions included the British Museum, Buckingham Palace, Royal Albert Hall, Tower of London and Cabinet War Rooms. And, despite annual figures showing that 48% of inbound visits are taken just in England's capital, the high-profile visitors also experienced the pleasures of city and rural destinations such as Bath, Canterbury, Cumbria, Cornwall, the Isle of Arran, Norwich and Stratford-upon-Avon.

Traditionally, more mature, near-European markets such as France or Belgium can be expected to have a greater familiarity with Britain's nations and regions. Perhaps surprisingly therefore, the ambassadors of countries such as China, the Czech Republic and Poland showed an awareness of other places ... and a desire to explore them. Parts of the country as diverse as Bath, the Highlands, Stonehenge, Jane Austen's House (Hampshire), Arundel Castle, Ely, Lincoln, Liverpool and the south-east coast were all mentioned in the survey.

Tom Wright, chief executive of national tourism agency VisitBritain, says: "This brief survey illustrates that the diplomatic community – among our most important visitors – takes time off during their posting to travel around the UK. Like many people they have discovered the appeals of heritage sites and historic buildings, of exploring our stunning countryside and cinematic landscapes or taking a break in contemporary cities.

“These are influential people who could easily be ambassadors for Britain and British destinations in their day-to-day work and whenever they return home. Their enthusiasm for our country can help us increase the £16 billion international visitors spend here every year.”

The appeals of British destinations are being promoted ahead of the Easter holidays and the second British Tourism Week from 10 to 18 March. With the support of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, more than 100 events aim to galvanise organisations and individuals to take pride in being part of the nation’s fifth biggest industry. The week will further raise the profile of an £85 billion visitor economy and draw national awareness to its critical importance and the contribution it makes local economies and millions of livelihoods.

Stephen Dowd, co-chairman of British Tourism Week’s multi-sector steering committee and chief executive of UKinbound, says: “Around 2.1 million people – nearly eight per cent of the workforce – in a wide range of sectors depend on tourism for their jobs and livelihoods.

“We hope that if nothing else, MPs, the media, opinion-leaders and consumers will take time for a day visit or overnight stay during British Tourism Week and help showcase the huge range of quality holidays that Brits and international visitors can enjoy here.”

Further details of each High Commissioner’s/ Ambassador’s favourite destinations:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Australian High Commissioner, His Excellency Richard Alson, has already visited Corfe Castle, the Isle of Arran and Cumbria</li> <li>• He would like to visit Chester, Padstow and the Isle of Skye</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Italian Ambassador, H.E. Giancarlo Aragona, has already visited Stonehenge, Stratford-upon-Avon and the Rosslyn Chapel in Scotland</li> <li>• He would like to visit the Lake District, Cornwall and Northern Ireland</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Austrian Ambassador, H.E. Gabriele Matzner-Holzer, has already visited Henley-on-Thames, Iona Island and Somerset House.</li> <li>• She would like to visit the Lake District, North Wales and Bath</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Japan’s Transport Counsellor, Mr Ichiro Shimizu, has already visited Buckingham Palace, Big Ben and Tower Bridge</li> <li>• He would like to visit the Cotswolds, Greenwich and St Andrews</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Belgian Ambassador, H.E.. Jean-Michel Veranneman de Vattervilliet, has already visited London, Portsmouth and Norwich.</li> <li>• He would like to visit Scotland, the Lake District and Cornwall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Malaysian High Commissioner, H.E. Abd Aziz Mohammed has already visited Trafalgar Square, Buckingham Palace, the V&amp;A and Natural History Museums</li> <li>• He would like to visit the Scottish Highlands, Cornwall and Northern Ireland</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chinese Ambassador, H.E. Madam Fu Ying has already visited the British Museum, Stonehenge and Jane Austen's House</li> <li>• She would like to visit the Highlands of Scotland and the south-east coast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Dutch Ambassador, H.E. Pieter Willem Waldeck, has already visited the Cabinet War Rooms, Dover Museum and the village of Bosham near Chichester</li> <li>• He would like to visit Coverack in Cornwall, the Hebrides and York</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Czech Republic's Ambassador, H.E. Jan Winkler, has already visited the Lake District, Edinburgh and Arundel Castle</li> <li>• He would like to visit Ely, Lincoln and Liverpool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The New Zealand High Commissioner, Mr Jonathon Hunt, has already visited the Tower of London, Windsor Castle and the V&amp;A Museum</li> <li>• He would like to visit the deep south west of England, the Isle of Man and inland Wales</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Danish Ambassador, H.E. Birger Riis-Jorgensen, has already visited the Royal Albert Hall and throughout London at Christmas, Newcastle for its modern architecture and connections to Danish seamanship and Edinburgh's cultural delights</li> <li>• He would like to take a cycle tour from Norwich to York through Dane Law Country, visit Land's End and take a railway journey through Wales and tour the nation's castles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Polish Ambassador, H.E. Cezary Krol has already visited the British Museum, Windsor Castle and the Isle of Wight including Osborne House</li> <li>• He would like to visit Cornwall, Bath and the Scottish Highlands</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Finnish Ambassador, H.E. Jaakko Laajava, has already visited London, Edinburgh and the Isle of Wight</li> <li>• He would like to visit the Orkney Islands, Liverpool and Land's End</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Spanish Ambassador, H.E. Carlos, Count of Casa Miranda, has already visited Edinburgh, Norfolk including Sandringham, the New Forest and Beaulieu</li> <li>• He would like to visit Canterbury Cathedral, the Isle of Wight and the Scottish Highlands</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The French Ambassador, H.E. Gerard Errera, has already visited Canterbury and its cathedral, Stratford-upon-Avon and Shakespeare Country and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew</li> <li>• He would like to visit Liverpool during its celebrations for European Capital of Culture, the Eden Project and the Scottish Highlands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Swedish Ambassador, H.E. Staffan Carlsson, has already visited Bath, Chartwell and Glyndebourne</li> <li>• He would like to visit the Lake District, the Isle of Iona and Sir John Soane's Museum</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hungarian Ambassador, H.E. Barbara Czako, has already visited Warwick Castle, Canterbury and Cornwall</li> <li>• She would like to visit the Isle of Man, Pembrokeshire and Jersey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Thai Ambassador, H.E. Bansarn Bunnag, has already visited the Cotswolds, Lake District and the V&amp;A Museum in London</li> <li>• He would like to visit Cornwall, North Wales and enjoy a flight on the London Eye</li> </ul>

Visit [www.britishtourismweek.com](http://www.britishtourismweek.com) for more information.

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**Notes to Editors**

- British Tourism Week (10-18 March 2008) 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 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.