

- 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 earning –
- inbound visitors pay £3.3 billion in tax, the equivalent of the salary of 195,000 nurses –

6 March 2008

## **MPS PLEDGE SUPPORT FOR BRITISH TOURISM WEEK**

Parliamentarians from Devon to Dumfries and Galloway, Colchester to Clwyd West and around Britain took time out from Prime Minister's Questions yesterday (5 March) to sign a special pledge in support of the second annual British Tourism Week from 10-18 March 2008.

Among those who gave their backing to the series of more than 100 events nationwide were Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, the Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP, Minister for Tourism the Rt Hon Margaret Hodge MBE MP, Shadow Minister for Culture, Media and Sport Tobias Ellwood MP and Liberal Democrat Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport Don Foster MP.

MPs from Devon to Dumfries and Galloway, Colchester to Clwyd West signed a special pledge card at the House of Commons. Among those who gave their backing to the event were Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, the Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP, Minister for Tourism the Rt Hon Margaret Hodge MBE MP, Shadow Minister for Culture, Media and Sport Tobias Ellwood MP and Liberal Democrat Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport Don Foster MP.

Tom Wright, chief executive of VisitBritain and co-chairman of British Tourism Week's multi-sector steering committee, says: "This is a fantastic start ahead of British Tourism Week. It demonstrates MPs support for Britain's fifth largest industry, for tourism in their area and the people who depend on it for their jobs and livelihoods. Their help will highlight the appeals of heritage sites and historic buildings, of exploring our countryside and cinematic landscapes or taking a break in contemporary cities."

Parliamentarians are also being encouraged to 'go back to the floor' during British Tourism Week's 'Constituency Day' on Friday 14 March and gain a first-hand understanding of tourism businesses and the issues they face. Last year many MPs visited local tourist information centres, holiday parks and centres, farms, accommodation providers and attractions.

With His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales as patron, British Tourism Week aims to galvanise organisations and individuals to take pride in being part of the nation's £85 billion visitor economy. Events aim to raise the profile of an £85 billion visitor economy and draw national awareness to its critical importance and the contribution it makes to local economies and millions of livelihoods.

Already more than 100 different 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.

Visit [www.britishtourismweek.com](http://www.britishtourismweek.com) for more information on the week of events being organised around the country.

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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.