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WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

For immediate use

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## **'Explore Oxfordshire' exhibition**

A countywide exhibition showcasing Oxfordshire's tourist attractions is taking place on March 23 at the Barceló Oxford Hotel, between 10.30am and 3pm.

As tourism businesses across Oxfordshire prepare for Easter and the new season, this 'first ever' event marks the start of British Tourism Week 2009. It is being organised by West Oxfordshire District Council's tourism team on behalf of all the Oxfordshire councils.

Over 40 Oxfordshire attractions are exhibiting and amongst these will be major attractions including Bicester Village, Blenheim Palace, Cotswold Wildlife Park, Didcot Railway and Oxford Castle. The exhibition is set to appeal to a wide audience and it is expected that many smaller businesses involved in the tourist industry will be attending.

One of the museum attractions exhibiting is Kelmscott Manor, the former home of William Morris. Jane Milne, the Manor's Property Manager said: "It is a really good opportunity to advertise the forthcoming season alongside other museums and attractions in the county. For us it is particularly important as this year we are opening up more of Kelmscott Manor to the public and there will be more Saturday openings than in previous years."

Cllr Hilary Biles, West Oxfordshire District Council's Cabinet Member with responsibility for Tourism said: "This is a brand new event which is attracting a lot of interest. We believe it will serve a range of needs from guesthouse owners to travel operators. For tourism businesses it is an important meeting place before the season begins and is likely to result in new working relationships for several companies.

"For local residents it is an opportunity to find out what's on offer close to home – and there is even a chance to enter a competition to win a 'Day Out'. Everyone is welcome to attend this free event."

Tourism is an important industry in Oxfordshire, contributing almost £1.5 billion a year to the local economy and providing employment for nearly 28,000 people. It is estimated that about 23.5 million people visit Oxfordshire each year.

The exhibition is being promoted by all the Oxfordshire councils, Tourism South East, newspaper advertising and the British Tourism Week website. To find out more about the event visit the Oxfordshire Cotswolds website: [www.oxfordshirecotswolds.org/site/industry](http://www.oxfordshirecotswolds.org/site/industry) or telephone 01993 861553.

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