

- 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 –

7 February 2008

GET YOUR MP TO GO 'BACK TO THE FLOOR' FOR BRITISH TOURISM WEEK

As Britain heads into another holiday season, businesses – accommodation providers and attractions, Tourist Information Centres, regions and destinations – are being urged to encourage their local MP to gain a first-hand understanding of tourism and the issues they face.

The second annual British Tourism Week takes place from 10 to 18 March this year and the Constituency Day – when MPs are being encouraged to 'go back to the floor' in tourism businesses – takes place on Friday 14 March.

Tom Wright, chief executive of VisitBritain and co-chairman of British Tourism Week's multi-sector steering committee, says: "I hope that MPs will take this chance to lead the way in demonstrating their commitment to Britain's fifth largest industry and visit a tourism business in their area during British Tourism Week.

"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."

Last year many MPs – including Nadine Dorries, Michael Howard, Simon Hughes, Theresa May, Dawn Primarolo and Andrew Smith – visited their local tourist information centres, holiday parks and centres, farms, accommodation providers and attractions.

MPs are also being asked to show their support ahead of the Week by signing a pledge card at the House of Commons on Wednesday 5 March. They also have the opportunity to enjoy a 'Blue Badge' guided coach tour of attractions around their London 'office' on Thursday 13 March.

Stephen Dowd, co-chairman of British Tourism Week and chief executive of UKinbound, adds: "We urge businesses to write, email or call their local MP and persuade them to take some time to show their support for tourism in their area and the people who depend on the industry for jobs and livelihoods."

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 fifth biggest industry. 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 60 different events are listed on the website, but organisers hope that every region and destination will organise something to help businesses or raise awareness of tourism experiences among consumers.

Visit www.parliament.uk/people and enter your postcode to find your local MP.

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

- ends -

Elliott Frisby, Corporate PR Manager, VisitBritain on 020 8563 3035 or 07951 996241

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.