

- 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 –

10 March 2008

ROYAL AND CROSS-POLITICAL SUPPORT HELP LAUNCH SECOND BRITISH TOURISM WEEK

Messages from HRH The Prince of Wales and Prime Minister the Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP helped launch the second annual British Tourism Week on Monday 10 March in London.

Representatives from 150 tourism businesses from across the country joined politicians including Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, the Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP, Minister for Tourism the Rt Hon Margaret Hodge MBE MP and Conservative Shadow Minister for Culture, Media and Sport Tobias Ellwood MP at Altitude on London's Millbank.

As well as experiencing a panoramic views of iconic contemporary and historic London attractions from 29 floors up, guests enjoyed a miniature 'food fayre' of cakes, biscuits, cheese, wine and fine foods from around Britain.

In a video-message for the event, released simultaneously on the Number 10 website, the Prime Minister praised the "magnificent countryside, our dynamic cities and our world class events – the unique attractions of a country where heritage and history sit comfortably within a vibrant modern culture." He stressed the importance of doing "everything we can to boost tourism and to spread the legacy of these once-in-a-lifetime events [2012 Olympic Games and 2014 Commonwealth Games] throughout the nations and the regions of Britain."

In his statement, HRH The Prince of Wales praised tourism as "one of this country's great success stories" and British Tourism Week's recognition of the "huge economic difference which [tourism] makes to local communities throughout the country." He spoke too of the unique and precious assets that "lie at the very heart of what makes the United Kingdom such as premier tourist destination" and the need to "value and preserve them".

Tom Wright, chief executive of VisitBritain and co-chairman of British Tourism Week's multi-sector steering committee, says: "It's been another successful launch for British Tourism Week. Our chosen venue perfectly

epitomises the twin appeals of the traditional and the contemporary which sit comfortably together in destinations throughout Britain.

“Our £85 billion visitor economy touches every part of the UK and every constituency. If we are to maintain our success in a world of ever-increasing competition, we must ensure the welcome we offer our visitors is of a globally high standard. British Tourism Week will help us remind MPs, the media, opinion-leaders and consumers of the huge range of quality holidays that Brits and international visitors can enjoy here and get them to take a break over Easter and the summer ahead.”

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. The nation’s fifth biggest economy is worth £85 billion and provides opportunities at every possible skill level and that’s why it’s vital for regeneration and the employment of younger people.

“We’re looking forward to another fantastic week, a strong Easter and a healthy summer for tourism businesses throughout Britain.”

Already 125 different events are taking place around the country with many regions and destination organising something to help businesses or raise awareness of tourism experiences among consumers. Events include the British Travel Trade Fair in Birmingham on 11 & 12 March, a BFI screening of tourism promotional films from decades past, MPs going ‘back to the floor’ at tourism businesses in their constituencies and a series of free walking tours by Blue Badge Guides.

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

Notes to Editors

- **A copy of the script of the Prime Minister’s video message is available from the press office and media can also request a fax a copy of HRH The Prince of Wales statement, which is not available in electronic format.**
- 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.