

STF Newsletter January 2005

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After the recent events, the Scottish Tourism Forum wishes all help and speedy recovery to the areas which have been so badly hit by the Tsunami. Most of the countries rely heavily on tourism, and will need medium-term help to train staff while the infrastructure is being rebuilt.

With a strong focus on human resource development and training, the money pledged to the PATA Fund will directly help rebuild skills and livelihoods of tourism employees. For information see <http://www.pata.org/patasite/index.php?id=1112> Donations can be given via the website.

We will give you news of other ways to help as they come into place.

Latest Figures Show Visitors Spending More

Figures released on 6th January show 6.7 million international visits were made to Britain between September and November 2004 – a five per cent increase on 2003, VisitBritain announced.

Furthermore, the year-to-date figures for January to November show international visitor spending is nine per cent up on the same period in 2003 at £11.8 billion and almost level with figures from 2000 (25.2 million international visitors to Britain spent £12.8 billion) before the impact of the foot and mouth outbreaks and September 11.

VisitBritain continues to exploit the potential of new and emerging markets. This year will see significant marketing initiatives including the development of new local-language websites for a number of countries such as the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Malaysia and Thailand.

VisitScotland Appointments

5 out of 6 Director's posts have now been filled:

Director of Network Operations - David Noble

Director of Industry Engagement - Eddie Beyers

Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Communications - Riddell Graham

Director of Marketing - Malcolm Roughead

Director of Corporate Services - Ken Neilson

Tourism Alliance Chair Brigid Simmonds, chief executive of Business in Sport and Leisure, is to be the new chairman of the Tourism Alliance. She succeeds Bob Cotton (chief executive of the British Hospitality Association) as chair of the Tourism Alliance on January 13.

New Year Honours In this year's New Year's Honours list Peter Lederer, chairman of VisitScotland and managing director of the Gleneagles Hotel and golf resort in Perthshire, received a CBE in addition to his OBE for work promoting the region.

Martin Couchman, deputy chief executive of the British Hospitality Association, was made an OBE in recognition of his work for the hospitality trade.

“Quitters-in-Waiting” STF Members benefit

All those wishing to give up smoking as their New Year’s resolution can try a drug-free course, which has been used by several major Scottish organisations. With legislation about to force us to ban smoking in the workplace we want to help smokers to quit. This will take the form of a new STF members’ benefit, to be announced later this month. Watch this space!

Scottish Islands Network seeks new Committee

This is a community based network with the aim of promoting, publicising and advancing the interests of Scotland’s island communities. While different challenges apply to individual islands, most of them face issues associated with their peripheral location, transport costs and limited opportunities for employment or services. There are 95 inhabited islands in Scotland spreading from Shetland to Ayrshire, with a total population of just under 100,000. Until now, the Network has been managed by a voluntary group of representatives from Councils, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Chambers of Commerce and Habitat Scotland, but they are now seeking to re-form the Management Committee.

One of the Network’s key aims is to involve all sectors of island communities in its work. If you, or someone you know, can make a valuable contribution to the future development of the Scottish Islands Network, please contact Lisa on 01478 611285 / email lisa@scottishislands.org.uk . The closing date for nominations is 24th January 2005, so if you are interested visit their website for more information - <http://www.scottishislands.org.uk/Membership.html>

HIT scholarship is now available from Hospitality Industry Trust, in association with Springboard Scotland.

They will be awarded on up to three levels, and will be tailored to suit the candidate needs:

- A learning experience to the Disney Institute Florida, or a Hospitality University in Europe for example, to develop your management skills.
- A hands-on experience to Dubai, USA or Europe to develop hospitality skills in a practical environment.
- A craft course of your choice to learn and develop fine skills, whether that’s in specific niche areas at home or abroad.

To qualify for a Scholarship, you must be working within the industry or studying a course leading to employment within the industry. All you have to do is tell them why you deserve this opportunity! Please pass the application form on to your staff or students who you feel could benefit - email Caroline to request the form on carolinem@springboarduk.org.uk or visit <http://www.hitemergingtalent.co.uk/scholarships/>. Forms must be returned by 21st January 2005.

Results will be announced at the Emerging Talent Conference (10th Feb, see our Events section)

China Bites at Tourism Trade show

China’s tourism and travel industry is set to witness an astounding increase in the coming years. According to statistics 15.99 million Chinese travelled abroad in the first seven-months in 2004 alone. China also played host to 70 million foreign tourists in the first eight months of 2004, which was a 20% increase from 2003. The number of outbound travellers from China since 2003 has surpassed those of Japan, making them the highest in Asia.

Beijing International Tourism Expo (BITE) started in 2004 with 325 international companies and agents from 27 countries and regions and over 4,000 trade visitors from 50 countries. To find out more about exhibiting at, or visiting BITE 2005, please contact Caroline Laspas, 0208 943 94 49 e-mail bmluk1@onetel.com or visit: <http://www.cems.com.sg/bite05>

Want a Better Business?

The Department of Trade & Industry (DTI) has launched two new publications including *Achieving best practice* in your business. "Accountancy services – a guide to best practice" is aimed at small to medium businesses that need advice on accounting issues.

With businesses increasingly relying on accountants for broader finance and business advice, from accounting records to technology, this publication outlines what to look for when choosing an accountant and what services are on offer. For a copy of the publication, go to <http://www.dti.gov.uk/bestpractice/assets/accountancy.pdf>

There's an excellent practical site of business tips – <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk>. The site offers tailored tax deadline reminders, how to get a personalised, easy to understand list of licences and permits relevant to your business, and which rules and regulations your business needs to comply with using their online questionnaire.

Management Guidelines

Environmental legislation is increasing and businesses have a legal requirement to comply with environmental law. **NetRegs** provides the UK environmental agencies' guidance for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) on this legislation. They have produced a specific guide for **Hotels and Restaurants** – which includes sections for self-catering, campsites & caravan parks, pubs and mobile catering: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/netregs/sectors/278280/>. Other sectors are also covered such as Food & Drink, Forestry, commercial fishing and angling, and Office Business – see the "Sectors" section on <http://www.netregs.gov.uk>

A good environmental policy should reduce operating costs and enhance your image. There are "**management guidelines**" on noise, solid waste, packaging etc. on: http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/netregs/mgmt_guidelines/?lang=e®ion.

Congestion charging Consultation

The Edinburgh Council will run a referendum in February, and the STF will run a **member's referendum** to gauge how tolls may impact on tourism businesses and marketing of the city. STF has already started the consultation process by sending a questionnaire to members in Edinburgh and Lothians, and will follow on with consultation with all members.

Online, All Year Research

A new ongoing, online visitor survey is now being used in Edinburgh, by STF member **Lynn Jones Research**. The survey will take place from May 2004 – May 2005, with a vast amount of data from over 1500 visitors being analysed online. From August onwards visitors have asked for their views on **smoking in public places** and from September on, how likely visitors would be to buy a **city card** – should one be available. To view an executive summary of the Edinburgh Visitor Survey visit the STF website <http://www.stforum.co.uk>

One survey comment was: "*The terrible traffic situation getting in and out of Edinburgh. We would have taken the train but for the outrageous price. Why is there no **Park and Ride?***"

- **Fastlink** opened in December. Fastlink provides a fast, efficient modern bus service running from the Gyle and Edinburgh Park to the city centre.

- **Edinburgh Fastlink** sees recent openings of 3 new **rail stations**. Following the addition of Edinburgh Park to the rail network, passenger numbers on Crossrail increased by 50%. A further survey of passenger numbers will take place at the beginning of 2005.

We hope that next years' responses to the survey will show there has been some positive progress in this area.

The Edinburgh Airport Rail Link is not just about connecting to the city, as it will connect with existing train services to Glasgow, Fife and the North. SCDI chief economist Iain Duff said:

"The Edinburgh airport rail link preferred route is ambitious, but cut-price options would seriously disadvantage passengers from the Highlands, North-East and West of Scotland.

Traffic at Edinburgh airport is predicted to more than double by 2030. That is why the creation of a public transport hub at the airport, including rail, trams and buses, and the development of passenger-friendly smart cards are essential for Scotland's economy.

Crucially, the preferred option will use existing train services to connect with the airport. This means that no extra capacity will be required at Waverley, which is already struggling to cope with increased traffic through its western approaches."

Transport Minister Nicol Stephen told MSPs in December "In 1999, just 25% of the transport department's budget was spent on public transport, but by 2008 it would be 70%".

If you have comments on the proposed rail link, but missed the public consultation in 2004, see <http://www.earlproject.com/>, email the Forum on mail@stforum.co.uk, or write to Susan Clark, TIE Limited, Verity House, 19 Haymarket Yards, Edinburgh EH12 5BH.

Devolved Powers

The transfer of greater rail powers to Scottish Ministers came a step closer with the introduction of the UK Railways Bill at Westminster at the end of November.

The proposed legislation will transfer full responsibility for specifying track and infrastructure improvements, as well as all of First ScotRail's services. The changes are subject to the necessary transfer of funding from the UK Government to the Scottish Executive. This work is ongoing.

The changes proposed are:

- Transfer of the Strategic Rail Authority's powers to manage and monitor the performance of the First ScotRail service, creating a closer relationship between the Executive and First ScotRail
- Sole responsibility for securing future rail franchises
- Power to take long term strategic decisions about future investment for Scottish services
- Power to fund Network Rail in Scotland, specifying the network outputs and the priorities for Network Rail to deliver.

Say No to Cold Calls Businesses can block unwanted phone calls from direct marketing firms under new measures coming into force. The service is now available **online** on <http://www.tpsonline.org.uk/>. What is NOT clear is that you can also register against Fax cold calls. Faxes often invite you to fax back to remove you from their list, but cost (in small writing) "uk rate 1.5 min" – which in plain language represents £1.50 minimum charge per fax back! See the FPS (Fax Preference Service) section on the same website: <http://www.tpsonline.org.uk/fps/>.

EVENTS

14th January 2005 Futures Lecture, VisitScotland, Edinburgh

The Barnett Formula and Fiscal Policy - What this Means for Public Sector Finances

For over 20 years the Barnett Formula has governed the block grant which the UK Government makes to the Scottish Executive (and before devolution to the Scottish Office) to cover the costs of delivering public services in Scotland. However, the formula is riddled with anomalies. Prof Iain McLean will explain how the Barnett formula works, why it fails, and what might replace it.

Iain McLean is Professor of Politics at Oxford University and a specialist adviser to the House of Commons Treasury Committee. A light buffet will be served at 12 noon, with the lecture commencing at 12.30. Only one or two (free) places remain - please tel. 0131 472 2389 or email marian.hamilton-kerr@visitscotland.com

19 Jan Scottish Enterprise Tourism Masterclass– “Future Perspectives: the customer” with Scott Williams, Chief Creative Officer at Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc.

This Masterclass at the Gleneagles Hotel will provide you with an insight into Scott’s visionary creative spirit and passionate commitment. You will learn how effective customer focused marketing can reap dividends in your business. Cost to attend is £80 + Vat. To register please call Katharine at Starkevents on 0141 357 2235 or email: katharine@starkeventsuk.com

23 to 26 Jan Scotland’s International Food Fair, SECC Glasgow, is a spectacular showcase of the very best in fine food and drink. Cookery demonstrations will include Nick Nairn, Wendy Barrie and Isabella Massie. At the same time the International Trade Fair hosts the best of crafts and retail giftware. See <http://www.madeinscotland.uk.com> for the up to date exhibitor list.

24 Jan International Learning Journey As a result of the success of previous Scottish Enterprise Executive Development Learning Journeys in 2004, SE will host a trip to Germany in January 2005.

Do not miss out on this fantastic opportunity to visit Klaus Kobjoll’s award winning Schindlerhof Hotel & Creative Conference Centre, in Nuremberg. The Learning Journey is an intensive tailored programme for tourism managers and business owners. Leaving Monday 24th January and returning late Wednesday 26th, it costs £495 + Vat. Only one or two places remain, so to confirm your place please contact Ann, Starkevents, 0141 357 2235, ann@starkeventsuk.com.

26 Jan The Highland Games are Open

The Service and Business Excellence Conference is to be held in the Drumossie Hotel, Inverness on 26 – 27th January. Meet the players and play them at their own game. Key hospitality operators, including Andrew McPherson of Skibo Castle, will hold seminars on how to challenge industry norms and the way forward for future excellence in tourism. Excellent hospitality equals “creativity, positivity and flexibility”, and each conference speaker has been hand-picked to help put the WOW factor back into your business. For agenda and information see <http://www.tourism-excellence-scotland.co.uk/>

10 Feb Emerging Talent Conference, Aviemore Highland resort. The conference aims to bring together the 3 generations as defined by a recent report into the lifestyles and dynamics of people who work in the hospitality industry. The Chess Partnership and Caterer Group report named them: Generation Y aged 16-25, Generation X aged 26-39, and Baby Boomers aged 40+. The conference will bring together existing leaders and emerging talent to provide them with the opportunity to voice their views about key issues facing the industry in Scotland today. To book your place, visit the website at <http://www.hitemergingtalent.co.uk/>

News in Short

Surge in Swedish tourists

High-spending Swedes are flocking to Scotland, according to figures. The increase has taken place over the last two years in the wake of direct air flights and a marketing push in Sweden, the Scottish Executive said.

Talks start over new ferry link to Norway

A twice-weekly service between Rosyth and either Kristiansund or Trondheim in mid-Norway is being considered, serving both the tourism and freight markets.

Minimum wage a must for tourism

A holiday company based in Devon & Cornwall paid £177,000 last month in wage arrears to 41 workers. The company employed husband and wife teams as Park Managers. Since April 1999 some of these workers were sometimes on duty over 100 hours per week carrying out duties such as unlocking the premises at 7 am and finishing in the bar/club at 1am or later. Several of the 41 workers involved received between £5,000 and £10,000 each.

The national minimum wage rates are:

£4.85 for workers aged 22 and over

£4.10 for workers aged 18-21 inclusive

£3.00 for 16 and 17 year olds (above compulsory school leaving age)

Any employees that aren't getting the national minimum wage, and think they should be, need to check with the Inland Revenue on 0845 6000 678.

Aberfeldy Watermill restoration

The Aberfeldy Watermill Bookshop, Art Gallery, Music and Coffee Shop is scheduled to open in Spring 2005, after a programme of sympathetic restoration which will see much of the industrial machinery and artefacts, including a working waterwheel and ancient millstones, retained as an integral part of the cultural experience.

The £500,000 project will create a major venue for the arts in Scotland, and support an emerging literary and artistic community in Aberfeldy.

Lochaber going all out to attract bikers

Lochaber is going all out to attract even more bikers with a new website, <http://www.ridefortwilliam.com>, which has been possible thanks to European funding, and aims to answer local cycling questions and highlighting biking routes as well as attracting more visitors to the area.

Separately, a Liberal Democrat MSP called for rugby, football and mountain biking to take place in Scotland should the bid for the London 2012 Olympic Games be successful.

The Scottish Tourism Forum is the lead independent body in Scottish Tourism and was formed to represent industry views and to take these views to government and the public agencies. The Forum comprises tourism trade associations, companies, individuals and local marketing groups who earn their living from tourism or have an active interest in tourism. If you wish to know more about the benefits of joining the Forum, please contact Fiona Maclachlan on fionam@stforum.co.uk, 0131 220 6321, or visit <http://www.stforum.co.uk>