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Scottish Tourism Week March, 12th – 16th March 2007

Mark the week in your diary!

Interest in the second annual Scottish Tourism Week is already building and STF can confirm a timetable for various events planned for the week. You can now download the agenda from our website; www.stforum.co.uk/

STF MEETINGS

5th Oct 2006 - AGM followed by Open Meeting, Scotland's Hotel, Pitlochry

This year's AGM and Open Meeting are sponsored by Crerar Hotels and will be held at Scotland's Hotel in Pitlochry. The key focus of the Open Meeting is funding and tourism, highlighting global best practice case studies, looking at the relationship between local authorities and the industry, investigating public and private partnerships and exploring the future of public sector funding and tourism. This meeting will advance the national debate on topical issues such as the controversial 'bed tax' and Destination Management Organisations.

We will also hear from VisitScotland.com about exciting new changes planned for the national portal.

Download the agenda for the meeting here:

www.stforum.co.uk/wmslib/events/STF_Open_Meeting_Agenda_.pdf

Places are filling fast. To register for the event (free for members and £30 for non members) contact Elaine: elainet@stforum.co.uk

6th December 2006 - STF Members' meeting, location tbc,

STF Member to Member Affinity Scheme

We will shortly be launching a great new member to member affinity scheme, promoting deals and discounts between STF members. Many of you have signed up for this opportunity already and initial details will be announced at the AGM. If you would like to get involved contact Sharon: sharon.mccord@stforum.co.uk

INTRODUCTION

Destination Management Organisations are the flavour of the month. The launch of the Aviemore and Cairngorm DMO at the beginning of September inspired a veritable avalanche of press commentary – and the newsprint dedicated to A&C DMO had scarcely dried when it was announced that plans were afoot for DMO's for Arran and Loch Lomond.

So, are DMO's the glittering future for Scottish tourism? That issue, and many others, will be hotly debated at the STF Open Meeting on Oct 5th when the renowned Professor Terry Stevens, who spearheaded the A&C DMO, will be addressing the meeting.

Press coverage of the A&C DMO also inspired a new rash of opinion pieces on the **bed tax**, including an article in The Herald by Eddie Friel, advocating the introduction of such a levy. Later in the month the Evening News re-ignited the debate when it reported that Edinburgh city tourism leaders had thrown their weight behind a plan which would see visitors being asked to pay up to £2 extra on their bill to help fund new festivals, events and promotional initiatives.

Interestingly, the **Tourism Alliance**, who continue to lobby against the introduction of a bed tax have suggested that a solution to the funding issue could be for Local Authorities to be able to retain a proportion of the business rates that they collect.

The Alliance outlines what they call a potential "virtuous circle" of funding stating: "These funds could be used to develop and improve local services and facilities, which would make the destination more attractive to visitors who, in turn, would come in increased numbers and spend more with local businesses. Increased visitor expenditure would stimulate the establishment of new businesses that would provide increased business rate funding for Local Authorities to continue with the regeneration work."

The **Route Development Fund** also hit the headlines. An investigation by The Scotsman revealed that the fund is effectively subsidising travellers to the extent of £1.77 per passenger on the new flights. Shortly after this revelation the RDF received a body blow as the European Commission ordered an end to subsidies to flights beyond European Union boundaries. Current services, such as the Glasgow to Dubai service, will be unaffected by the new rules but planned long-haul flights to destinations such as Boston and Shanghai will have to be hurried through before next May's deadline or else be disqualified under the new directive. Read more here:

scotlandonsunday.scotsman.com/business.cfm?id=1335442006

In our forthcoming manifesto STF will argue for the replacement of the RDF with an **Access Development Fund** which would extend the subsidy principle to a range of access routes, including road, rail and ferry as well as air.

Following the news last week that **Swallow Hotels** has gone under administration STF issued a press release emphasising that the 70 hotels the group owned in Scotland had been successfully run and respected local businesses before becoming part of the Swallow group; there is no reason why the hotels should not be able to continue to make a valuable contribution to our tourism industry.

We noted that the priority should be that customers and visitors to Scotland are not let down and that every effort is made to secure the future for the staff (as reported in a full feature in The Herald: www.theherald.co.uk/news/70144.html).

As you may be aware our annual AGM and Open Meeting was originally scheduled to be held in a Swallow Hotel; we are grateful for the support of Paddy Crerar of **Crerar Hotels** who stepped in and offered to sponsor the event at short notice.

STF ACTIVITIES

Submission to the Committee for the Christmas and New Year Trading Bill:

STF made a submission to the Justice 2 Committee at Holyrood on Sept 5th. The Forum submitted that while we do not take a firm position on the issue of trading on Christmas Day we believe that the core product offering of a New Year city break will be vastly reduced should retailers be forced to close on New Year's Day, therefore making Scotland a less attractive must stay must return destination.

Lobbying: With an election looming STF has begun to lobby politicians to ensure that the tourism industry's needs are prominent within their manifestos. Last month we had a positive introductory meeting with Chris Balance of the Scottish Green Party. Meetings with the SNP and Conservative Party are in the diary and others are being scheduled. The forum is currently preparing a draft **manifesto** which will be circulated around all members shortly - your feedback is sought for this important document.

Sustainable Tourism: STF participated in the first meeting of the Sustainable Tourism Partnership, an industry-led body which brings together key players from the private and public sectors to promote sustainable tourism throughout Scotland.

Sunday Herald Talk:

Alan was invited to contribute an essay to the Sunday Herald's online debate forum. You can read his views on transport and tourism here: sundayheraldsalon.com/salon/2006/09/take_care_of_transport_and_the.html#more

RED TAPE NEWS

St Andrew's Day Public Holiday: The Scottish Executive has announced it will support Denis Canavan's private member's Bill because it is likely to encourage wider celebrations of the annual St Andrews Day on November 30th. Canavan has agreed a compromise that the bill will be largely symbolic- i.e., employers and employees will be encouraged to substitute an existing local holiday in favour of a National St Andrew's Day. STF supports this position which does not advocate creating an additional paid annual holiday. Identifying a national celebration day could be helpful in boosting end of year day trips.

Maternity Changes: Advance warning that new regulations will apply to employees whose expected week of childbirth is on or after 1st April 2007. The Statutory Maternity Pay and Maternity Allowance period will increase from 26 to 39 weeks (and to 52 by 2009.) All employees entitled to 26 weeks' ordinary maternity leave, whatever their length of service will be entitled to 26 weeks' additional maternity leave.

Work Permits: After 10th October, Work Permits (UK) will assess work permit applications for hospitality occupations against new guidance at www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/businessandcommercialoccsheet/ See the separate sections on "chefs/cooks" and "hospitality occupations."

Minimum Wage Reminder: The National Minimum Wage rises on 1st October as follows: the adult rate (age 22 plus) will be £5.35 an hour (up from £5.05); the youth rate (age 18, 19, 20 and 21) will be £4.45 (up from £4.25); the 16/17 year

rate will be £3.30 (up from £3.00); and the daily accommodation offset will be £4.15, equal to £29.05 a week (up from £3.90/£27.30).

Age Discrimination Reminder: Laws prohibiting discrimination in employment on grounds of age and particularly affecting retirement ages and procedures come into force on 1st October (in relation to pensions on 1 December.) Also, the upper age limit (65) for unfair dismissal claims will be removed, as will the lower (18) and upper (65) age limits on redundancy pay entitlement.



The Age Partnership Group is providing free information products to help employers prepare for 1st October, including a Personnel Organiser, a CD Rom and a newsletter. Employers can order this free material direct from the APG by calling 0845 715 2000 or by emailing apg@tgreuropeplc.com

Further info can be found at www.agepositive.gov.uk/agepartnershipgroup

Fire Certificates Reminder: Fire Precautions Act 1971 certificates cease to be valid at midnight on the 30th, to be replaced by a requirement for risk assessments. BHA have developed an online risk assessment system and you can pre-register now for details by emailing them at riskassessment@bha.org.uk

NEWS SHORTS

Scotland United becomes bi-annual The Scotland United Conference Committee has announced that the annual tourism conference, Scotland United, has been changed this year in favour of a smaller, more focussed industry event entitled 'Scotland's Strategic Future: Tourism'. The full-scale conference will return in 2007 and from then on will continue as a bi-annual event, with strategic events held every other year. A full press release is posted in the STF website: http://www.stforum.co.uk/wmslib/events/Scotlands_Strategic_Futu.pdf

Tiscover VisitScotland.com has announced a strategic partnership agreement with Tiscover, stating that the new technology platform agreed will mean a refreshed, faster and better service for the Scottish Tourism industry. VisitScotland.com promises these changes will mean greater flexibility for businesses with an enhanced range of e-commerce services rolled out to tourism businesses in 2007. In addition, the partnership with Tiscover brings new investment leading to an adjustment in the shareholding of VisitScotland.com: VisitScotland are now the largest shareholder, Tiscover is second largest followed by the others (Partnership UK and Atos Origin). The company are currently recruiting a new independent chairman and will also have a new tourism industry advisory group.

The Scottish Licenced Trade Association has claimed that the smoking ban could cost pubs £150 million this year. The Association, which represents around a third of pubs in Scotland, claims that 46% of pubs have reported a drop in trade since the ban came into effect on March 26, with only 5% reporting an upturn in sales. Other stats conflict with SLTA's.

Tourist Board Training, the training and development arm of VisitScotland, has been welcomed into learndirect scotland's national network of learning centres. The aim of Tourist Board Training is to develop innovative, flexible and sustainable training initiatives to support the tourism industry, Visit Scotland and

Tourism Information Centre staff. It's now working with learndirect Scotland to transfer a range of its products onto Skillnet, the learndirect Scotland learning management system.

Attitudes to ethical tourism More than one in four adults is prepared to pay more for an 'ethical holiday', according to new research by TNS Travel & Tourism, a global market information provider. The study revealed that 3% of the adults questioned were "very willing" to pay a premium while a further 25% were "quite willing" to pay more. Those aged 25-34 and 35-44 showed both a willingness to pay and a belief in the importance of ethics in determining destination choice but those aged 16-24 were less swayed by both factors, People aged 65-plus were the least willing to pay a premium.

Chinese Tourism –The Executive has signed a Co-operation Agreement with Shandong Province in China with the aim of delivering real benefits in various areas including tourism. In 2004 Scotland attracted 11,000 tourism from China's mainland who spent an estimated £4 million, The target is to grow tourist numbers from China by at least 30,000 per annum by 2010 and to increase their spend in Scotland to at least £11 million. Read more about this agreement here: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2006/08/30110635>

Ryanair: the key to Ayrshire's future prosperity? A new study by Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire, which claims that passengers using Ryanair flights to and from Ayrshire in 2005 generated £140 million, more than double that generated in 2004. The report also claims that passengers on new Ryanair routes spend an average of £294 on their stay throughout Scotland. The report will feed into a three tier multi-million funding proposal for public and private finance to revamp the Ayrshire coast.

Low air fares boost domestic travel: A survey by low fares airline Flybe contends that budget air travel is encouraging more people to take breaks in the UK. A quarter of those surveyed has spent a period of time discovering the British Isles last year- although 20% claimed they would never holiday in the UK due to the unpredictable weather! 42% of those surveyed said flying was their preferred mode and one in ten people rated Edinburgh's green spaces as the UK's answer to Central Park in New York. The Scottish capital was also rated top for culture, best city views and romantic hideaway.

Airport terror alert cost BAA £13m Airports operator BAA has revealed that last month's airport security alert cost the company £13 million. Passenger numbers fell by 5% against the company's August forecast, resulting in loss of revenue and costs. This included one-off costs specifically related to the immediate period following the introduction of new security measures.

UK domestic services were most affected by the disruption, with passenger numbers down 7.6%, while North American traffic was down by 3.3%. Heathrow and Glasgow airports saw passenger numbers fall by 2.2%, with Edinburgh down by 1.3%. BAA said fewer than two per cent of a total of 116,000 flights were cancelled at its seven UK airports.

Thundering Hooves met by Thundering Silence Senior arts figures have urged the Scottish Executive to make a public response to the report on the future of Edinburgh's festivals. Edinburgh City Council responded within a month of the report's publication with a £1 million fund but the Scottish Executive has made no response to date.

Permira the private equity firm that recently acquired Travelodge for £675 million has re-entered the hotel sector by acquiring Principal Hotels for an estimated £300 million. Principal, which is being sold by Royal Bank of Scotland, has six four-star hotels in the UK, including The George in Edinburgh.



Scottish Youth Hostels Association has launched its new international gateway hostel, Edinburgh Central on Leith Walk. SYHA's £10 million investment has transformed a former office block on Leith Walk into a 300+ bed city centre hostel which offers all en-suite rooms, seminar facilities, café/ bistro, restaurant plus traditional self catering facilities, Internet access, a travel information desk and 24 hour access.

Sumburgh Airport Runway Extension Opened: The new £9.75 million runway extension at Sumburgh Airport in Shetland opened earlier this month, on the same day that figures for the first 10 weeks of the Air Discount Scheme (ADS) in the islands is showing a take up rate of 92 per cent. Read more ([link to Scottish Exec doc](#))

Visiting anglers bring £1.9 million to Orkney each year and help sustain up to 75 jobs, a new survey by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) has found. The survey also claims that angling tourists spend significantly more than the average visitor. The report suggests ways in which an acceptable expansion of the freshwater fishers can be achieved in a way that is sustainable in environment, economic and social terms and recommends that an Orkney Fisheries Forum be set up which would draw together relevant stakeholders.

People in the News

Congratulations to **Hans H Rissman**, Edinburgh International Conference Centre Chief Exec, who was appointed to be an honorary Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to workforce development. Accepting the honour Rissman OBE, a German citizen who has lived and worked in the UK for over 30 years said: "I am very pleased to accept this honour in my adopted country and being recognised for assisting the development of our ultimate resource in business, our people, is most gratifying."



Geoff Fenlon has stepped down as Chair of People 1st Scotland after remaining in the post for longer than the year he had originally agreed to. The new Chair of People 1st Scotland is Debbie Taylor, the award winning GM of the Balmoral Hotel in Edinburgh.

Ralph Klinkenberg has been appointed as General Manager of SYHA's new hostel, Edinburgh Central (see **News in Short** above).

EVENTS



Thistle Awards 2007 This year's Awards Ceremony and Gala Dinner takes place on

Friday 27th Oct at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre. Tickets cost £100 per head and are available on a first-come, first-served basis. A shortlist of nominees has now been announced and can be downloaded from the awards' website at <http://www.scotexchange.net/thistleawards>.

The STF would like to congratulate the following members who have scooped these well deserved nominations:

- The Howard - Customer Care: Hotel
- Haggis Adventures - Customer Care: Visitor Attractions
- The Royal Yacht Britannia - Customer Care: Visitor Attractions
- Glasgow Science Centre - Marketing Initiative
The Tall Ship at Glasgow Harbour (part of Glasgow's Leading Attractions) - Off Peak Success

Investors in People: No More Heroes? 12th Oct: Peter Russian, Chief Executive of Investors in People Scotland challenges business leaders to redefine excellent in leadership at this Aberdeen Entrepreneurs event at the Copthorne Hotel, Huntly Street, Aberdeen. 6.30pm for a 7pm start. Members £10, non-members £15 (£2.50 supplement for payment on the night). Book your place by emailing booking@aberdeenentrepreneurs.com

Acorn Scholarship 2007 Nominations are now open for the Acorn Scholarship 2007. This self-nominated award is open to individuals below the age of 25 who are UK and able to work in the UK without restriction. The objective is to seek out young, talented individuals within the catering and hospitality industry and help them realise their ambitions and reward their determination. For more information visit the Acorn website: www.acornscholarship.org.uk

Tartan Week, New York, April 1st – 8^{thm} 2007 The Executive has produced guidance notes for organisations seeking sponsorship for proposed activity in the U.S. in April 2007. These are designed to ensure that prospective partners propose events or activities that are in line with Ministers priorities for Scotland whilst promoting their organisation to an American audience. Click here to read these guidance notes:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/International-Relations/usa/tartan-week-guidance>

Visit Scotland India Sales Mission, 29th Jan – 3rd Feb 2007 VisitScotland will be joining VisitBritain's India Sales Mission and B2B workshop for the first time and are inviting Scottish trade partners. Providing marketing opportunities, networking dinners and a forum for the development of business contacts between key trade buyers in India and suppliers in Britain the trip, including 5 nights accommodation, will cost £1,385 per delegate. The booking deadline is 25th Sept 2006. Contact Po Ling Lee at tradepromotions@visitscotland.com for more information.

Considerate Hotel of the Year Awards This year's awards take on a new and innovative format, inviting hotels to participate on one or more challenges mainly focused around eco-awareness, energy and sustainability (e.g., promoting seasonal British produce). The challenges are open to all hotels with 6 or more bedrooms operating in the UK which have a written environmental policy or statement or who have a current environmental action plan. The closing date for applications is November 24th and you can get more information from the Considerate Hoteliers website:

<http://www.consideratehoteliers.com/awards.html>



Scotland's 1st National Snowdrop Festival, 1st Feb – 11th March 2007

VisitScotland has teamed up with the National Trust for Scotland, Royal Botanic Gardens, Peebles, Cambo Estate, Fife and Floors Castle, Kelso to introduce Scotland's first National Snowdrop Festival, aimed at both increasing awareness of Scottish Gardens and encouraging visitors to visit gardens during the winter months.

The Festival is the brainchild of Catherine Erskine from Cambo Estate, who has run a Snowdrop event every year since 2001 at Cambo Estate, resulting in increased visitor numbers and revenue for her garden and local area, one year raising £9,000 in an honesty box alone. The group is currently recruiting other gardens to take part in the festival: funding and marketing support is available. For more information contact Felicity Madelin on 0131 472 2282 or check out the Visit Scotland website: <http://www.visitscotlandupdate.co.uk/Article.aspx?id=264>

Angus & Dundee Ancestral Tourism Forum 'Roots Festival' Workshop, Wed 25th Oct

This one-day workshop, which will take place at Angus Digital Media Centre in Brechin from 9.45pm – 4.30pm, is open to all tourism businesses, community group representatives and members of the public with an interest in developing ancestral tourism in the Angus & Dundee. It will explore the development of a 'Roots Festival' for the area to be piloted in 2008. If successful, it is hoped that the Festival can form a key part of the celebrations for Scotland's Year of Homecoming in 2009. For more info or to book your place please contact Gillian Harrower, Angus & Dundee Ancestral Tourism Project Manager at gillian@tals.co.uk or telephone 01738 860523.

The Soil Association Organic Food Festival, 4th-5th Nov, Old Fruitmarket, Glasgow. The festival will showcase the best Scottish organic produce and products, plus more from around the UK and abroad.

www.soilassociationscotland.org.

Scottish Council for Development and Industry Gala Dinner & Awards 2006, Glasgow Hilton, Fri 17th Nov

A Brazilian theme dominates this year's SCDI awards dinner, to be hosted by Carol Smillie. Tables for 10 cost £1500 plus VAT and single tickets are £150 plus VAT. Contact Jane Martin on 0141 352 8544 or jane.martin@scdi.org.uk

Golf Tourism Scotland 2006 Awards Dinner, Wed 15th Nov, 2006 This year the event will be held at the Dalmahoy Marriot Hotel & Country Club at a cost of £70 per head. For more information or to book contact Denise McKee denise.mckee@perrygolf.com

Farmers Markets To find out where your local farmers market is visit www.scottishfarmersmarkets.co.uk

PRODUCT NEWS

New Products

Whisky, whisky everywhere... and not a drip to drink Consumption will be of a strictly audio-visual nature when 'Singlemalt', a new subscription based internet television channel, dedicated solely to single malt, launches later this month. Diehards of uisge beatha can wallow in round-the-clock whisky info overload. 'Singlemalt' has already created so much interest in the States that the server hosting the place-holder website for it has crashed due to the volume of traffic!

FACT OF THE MONTH

Chilly Welcome

Tourism tax adherents should note this cautionary tale from Alaska where voters have just approved a \$50 levy for any visitor arriving by cruise ship. One survey of cruise passengers indicated that many will now choose to stay on ship and admire the state from afar...

NEW MEMBERS AT STF

We are delighted to welcome the following new members. We would like to encourage all members to pass on details of the Forum to potential new members or give their contact details to the STF office.

Patron Member

MacDonald Hotels

Macdonald Hotels has joined the Forum as a patron member and we look forward to working closely with this significant hotel group. This privately-owned, Scottish-based firm has a collection of over 60 across the UK, from former coaching inns and elegant manor houses set in extensive grounds, to modern and contemporary hotels in bustling city centre locations. Click on their website for more info: www.macdonald-hotels.co.uk

British Waterways Scotland: British Waterways Scotland manages the 137-miles (220km) canal network which includes the Caledonian, Crinan, Forth & Clyde, Union and Monkland canals, balancing the conservation of Scotland's heritage and environment with developing leisure, tourism and business opportunities to generate income to reinvest in the waterways for further sustainable regeneration. The Falkirk Wheel visitor attraction is part of the organisation. Click on their website for more info: www.scottishcanals.co.uk/

Elaine has made a plea to members to let her know of any contact details that change within your organisation. If you have had any changes please let Elaine know by email elainet@stforum.co.uk or calling the office. We're always glad to hear from you!

STF Team