



Caswell House Open Day: MP supports Tourism Industry in West Oxfordshire

Witney MP, the Rt Hon David Cameron, met with owners of bed and breakfasts, hotels and other local tourism accommodation and industry representatives at an open afternoon on 3 April, at Caswell House near Brize Norton.

The open afternoon, held during British Tourism Week and was organised by the Council's tourism team as part of its work to support and promote tourism in the Oxfordshire Cotswolds.

Caswell House, a family run business offering self catering accommodation within a 15C manor house, was the winner of the 2008 regional Tourism ExSelling award for Self Catering.

David Cameron congratulated the Matthews family, who own and run Caswell House, on their achievements. He said, "There is a great opportunity for tourism in West Oxfordshire as the district has so much going for it - we are very fortunate to have beautiful landscaping, a rich heritage and great leisure facilities. Congratulations to Tourism South East and West Oxfordshire District Council who do such a good job of promoting tourism."

Latest figures from Tourism South East show that tourism related spending brought in £224.6 million to West Oxfordshire in 2007, with almost 3.7 million visitors to the district. The District Council recognises the significant role that tourism plays and, as well as supporting the sector through investment in tourism services and development, operates Visitor Information Centres in Burford, Witney and Woodstock.

National figures: 2008

The United Kingdom Tourism Survey figures for 2008 have been announced. The key findings show that last year there was a significant drop in trips made (down 5% nationally and almost 9% in the South East). However increases in length of stay and average spend per trip meant that the total expenditure for the year was more or less unchanged on the 2007 figure: 16.4bn in England (down 0.6%) and 2.35bn in the South East (down 0.13%). Full details can be found on the [VisitBritain trade website](#).

Changing Trends Emerge

One in five people who went abroad on holiday last year would consider switching to the UK in 2009 to save money according to research by the new domestic tourism body, VisitEngland.

The VisitEngland study found that 90% of the population is cutting back on its overall spend, but the importance of holidays means that they are "more protected" than other areas of expenditure.

Their findings were confirmed by research from the RAC, which found that two-thirds of people who had gone abroad last Easter were staying in the UK for Easter 2009. The same survey found a 33% increase in plans for short distance travel over last year. People are cutting back by spending less and staying closer to home, but are still travelling on short breaks or day trips.

All of this spells good news for rural towns and villages. Most of our visitors tend to be domestic, often on day trips from within the region. This key market is growing, presenting a real opportunity for rural destinations like the Oxfordshire Cotswolds.

South East Offers

South East Offers is Tourism South East's special offers website, which has been live since January 2009, with over 90,000 page views and 5,000 voucher downloads. This is a dedicated offers website, targeting families with a range of discounts and offers. There is a new family tab, which lists child-friendly attractions and accommodation, making it easier to plan a short break in the region.

If you would like to add an offer on to the site, please complete our online form at www.southeastoffers.com/upload_offer. Please note that whilst this is free for TSE members, there is a fee for non members.

Explore Oxfordshire

During March, we organised the first Explore Oxfordshire exhibition, designed to highlight the quantity and quality of attractions that the county has to offer. Held in Oxford, the event had 40 exhibitors and generated significant local media interest, including coverage by BBC Oxford TV and BBC Radio Oxford.



All the participating attractions have been asked for their feedback. If you have any comments on the event, please contact [Diane Blackwell](mailto:Diane.Blackwell).

ENJOY EVERY MINUTE, enjoyEngland.com 

'Enjoy Every Minute, Enjoy England' is a new £3 million multi-media campaign, the first campaign under the auspices of the new VisitEngland.

The campaign showcases England as a good value destination for short breaks, holidays and day-trips by communicating the wide range of experiences and activities available on our own doorstep and for all budgets.

TV advertising is the key platform with the new ad running for two weeks on ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5 and across a selection of key satellite channels. A second burst will start in September. It will also be shown in cinemas and on moving posters on the London Underground and at main commuter rail sites.

Print advertising will include a series

of supplements with The Guardian and The Mail on Sunday, with further advertising and supplements across national newspapers.

VisitEngland is also developing a Social Media Wizard – including Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube - which will enable campaign partners to harness the public's appetite for such networks and their ability to extend the reach of the campaign.

All the information about the campaign, along with who to contact with questions, is available on: www.enjoyengland.com/enjoyeverminute

Idyllic Burford

According to Forbes, famous for their annual rich list of the world's most wealthy individuals, Burford is the 6th most idyllic place to live in Europe.

The online list, originally published in November of last year, talked briefly about Burford the Gateway to the Cotswolds, a 'mountainous and beautiful' region! The story was eventually picked up by the local and national media leading to some excellent free publicity for Burford with the Mayor David Cohen quoted as saying he was only surprised that Burford did not come higher.

"It's a wonderful town and it's lovely it has been recognised as idyllic, which it is.

"There are beautiful views of the Cotswolds, lovely pubs, a good high street and a great community. It's in a great location and I'm sure that's very important."



A few statistics...

The Visitor guide

During 2008, of the 45,000 guides printed and distributed, over 10,000 were mailed out directly by the tourism team in response to various marketing campaigns - 82% of which went to the domestic market. 2009 figures are currently 33% up on last year's figures, with over 5,000 guides already sent out, 90% to UK addresses. Hopefully this is another sign that 2009 may be an excellent year for domestic tourism.



Our website

The first full year for the new [Oxfordshire Cotswolds website](http://www.oxfordshirecotswolds.org) saw almost 2.5m hits to the site and 63,000 unique visitors. Figures for the first four months of 2009 were 25% up on the comparable period last year.

Roughly 50% of visitors come to the site directly, 40% find us via search engines (with Oxfordshire and Cotswolds the two most commonly used search words) and 10% via links from other websites.

If you haven't already got a link to the Oxfordshire Cotswolds from your own website, please get one! Reciprocal links are mutually beneficial.

If you would like any further information on the website or web links please contact [Chris Jackson](#).

West Oxfordshire Week

WOW! This year's event, offering local residents discounted entry to local attractions, will run from Monday 21 to Sunday 27 September.

For more information, please contact [Chris Jackson](#).

Bedroom Browser available

This year's Oxfordshire Cotswolds Bedroom Browser, available free of charge to accommodation providers, was published just before Easter. Copies are still available and can be collected from the Visitor Information Centres (in Burford, Witney and Woodstock) or the Town Centre Shop in Chipping Norton.



BRIEFbites

Escape to The Country

The BBC filmed in and around Witney on 12 May for the BBC Two programme Escape to The Country. The programme is due to be aired sometime in November

New York Times

We recently helped organise a visit to the area by a journalist and photographer from the New York Times, who were working on an article about traditional Cotswold pubs in Oxfordshire. Heythrop Park very kindly hosted their stay.

Oxfordshire Cotswolds in print

A new publication has been released "The Best of Britain - Cotswolds" by Katie Jarvis. There is a whole section on the 'Oxfordshire Cotswolds' - the first time that the brand has appeared in a saleable print item. Copies are available from the VICs

VICs

The VICs are now selling tickets for the Festival for Heroes on 20 June and Battle Proms Concert on 18 July - both at Blenheim Palace.

Best of Britain and Ireland (BOBI)

At the end of March, we attended BOBI under the Explore Oxfordshire banner. The stand was funded by the Oxfordshire Economic Partnership and shared with representatives from across Oxfordshire including Blenheim Palace, Bicester Village and Oxford City. The event, being held for the first time this year, lasted four days - two days for trade, two for the general public - and took place at ExCel in London Docklands.



Awards 2009

Congratulations to Blenheim Palace, winners of last year's regional final, who recently won silver in the Large Visitor Attraction of the Year category at the national Enjoy England Awards for Excellence.

The regional Tourism ExSellenCe Awards 2009, whose winners go on to the 2010 national finals, will launch in May. This is your chance to put yourself in the frame for the tourism industry's most prestigious awards in the South East. The Tourism ExSellenCe Awards recognise excellence, quality and innovation, achieved over the last 18 months, across all sectors of the tourism industry.

The programme generates extensive consumer and industry media coverage including regional TV and radio and provides tourism businesses with a superb opportunity to associate with some of the best organisations in the South East.

The criteria and entry forms are simple and straight forward and this year can be completed online. The closing date for entries is 5pm Wed 1 July 2009.

For more details or to enter visit www.getdiscovered2009.co.uk or contact Dan Holmes on 023 8062 54498 or email getdiscovered@tourismse.com

Green thoughts?

If you want your business to have lower utility bills and make less impact on the environment, then why not consider joining the Green Tourism Business Scheme.

For more details contact [Chris Jackson](mailto:Chris.Jackson@westoxon.gov.uk).



DIARY dates

- Tue 9 June 'Master Class - Vegetarian Twist' (TSE training)
Oxford Brookes University
- Wed 10 June 7 - 9pm Tourism South East
Networking Evening
Farmer Gows, Nr Faringdon
- Wed 10 June 'Meeting the Media' (TSE
training)
Hobbs of Henley, Henley-
on-Thames
- Wed 19 Aug 7 - 9pm Tourism South East
Networking Evening
Waterperry Gardens, Nr
Oxford
- Wed 9 Sept 'Welcoming the World'
(TSE training)
Hobbs of Henley, Henley-
on-Thames
- Tues 29 Sept 2 - 4pm Attractions, Events,
Hotels & Conferencing Sub
Group
West Oxfordshire District
Council, Witney
- Wed 30 Sept 2 - 4pm B&B, Self Catering
and Caravan & Camping Sub
Group
West Oxfordshire District
Council, Witney
- Wed 25 Nov 6.30pm Oxfordshire
Cotswolds Tourism Forum
Blenheim Palace

For information on TSE training events:
Call: 023 8062 5533
Email: train@tourismse.com

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