



TOURISM FORUM

Notes

Wednesday 22 April 2015, 10.00 am - 12.00 noon
Wootton Park, Wootton Wawen

Present: There were over 50 Shakespeare's England partners present at the Tourism Forum. Thank you to all of those who attended and to those who tendered their apologies.

Please note: all documentation relating to the presentations given at the Tourism Forum can be accessed by visiting <http://shakespeares-england.org>.

1. Welcome – Melanie & IanRoy McCall, Wootton Park Events & Business Centre

IanRoy and Melanie McCall, the owners of Wootton Park, welcomed the Forum to the events and business centre set within its own 360 acre valley and which plays host to many weddings and outdoor events as well as conferences and business offices. IanRoy informed the group on how the venue had evolved since 2010 and Melanie invited attendees to join a business card draw to win a Stay in Venice (Venice being the bridal suite in their Farmhouse accommodation!). There would be a showround of the facilities after the Forum. The facilities comprise of function rooms for weddings, business and corporate events up to 150 guests, B&B farmhouse accommodation and glamping pods, acres of outdoor activity space, a hot tub, plus many other event add-ons.

2. Shakespeare's England – Robin Tjolle, Tanya Aspinwall and Gemma Goddon

Robin Tjolle (RT), Chief Executive of SE, updated the Forum on activities since their last meeting and welcomed the businesses who have recently joined the 100+ members of SE:

- Stratford Home and Garden Show
- The Lunar Festival
- Royal Spa Centre and Town Hall
- No 6 Restaurant, Warwick

Event attendance since the last Forum

Domestic event attendance:

- Attendance at the Best of Britain and Ireland (BOBI) trade show which was last month at the NEC, where SE stand-shared with 4 partners and distributed the "Travel Trade & Groups Guide" which included information on an additional 16 partners. This brochure is also being distributed at other events.
- The Tourism & Destinations Show, 18 April 2015 at Newstead Abbey, Nottinghamshire and was attended by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust on SE's behalf.
- Attendance at the South West Group Travel Show, 7 February 2015 at Winter Gardens, Weston-Super-Mare.
- Unfortunately SE cannot attend all the shows but with partners' help SE can be represented at more of them. Thanks to those partners who have attended the various shows.

International event involvement:

- Explore GB was a VisitBritain event held on 25-26 February 2015 at Ascot Racecourse. SE attended for 2 days and met 60 tour operators from 40 key markets including China, Australia, Germany, UAE, North America and Brazil.
- March Market Place 2015 organised by the European Tour Operators Association at Wembley Stadium. SE attended for one day and met 30 tour operators.
- Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and Birmingham Airport attended an Icelandair event in Reykjavik promoting the area to North American Tour operators.
- Shakespeare Birthplace Trust attended the Education Travel Conference in Boston.
- RSC promoted Shakespeare's England partner at their recent New York Launch for Wolf Hall and Bring up the Bodies.
- Hosted trade familiarisation trips from 44 Indian/GCC operators.
- Hosted 10 French tour operators.
- Starting to warm up the tour operators and press with a sneak preview of the 2016 offer in a series of fam trips.
- English Tourism Week March 2015 was to raise awareness of tourism in England. SE helped promote a number of partner offers during this time and also hosted a fam trip with local MP Nadhim Zahawi highlighting the importance of tourism to the region

Business tourism activity:

- SE attended International Confex business trade show for 2 days in March 2015 and was accompanied by partners Royal Shakespeare Company, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and Bicester Village.
- Hosted a German Fam trip and involved a wide variety of partners.
- SE is considering attending the Meetings Show in July but this will depend on whether partners see a benefit in attending. There is still time to get involved if you are interested but do act quickly and contact Gemma.

Press and PR

Tanya Aspinwall, PR Consultant, then proceeded to inform the Forum of SE's PR activity since the last meeting:

- 7 press releases had gone out on the topics ranging from Spring half term, Easter, business tourism, heritage, the Rugby World Cup, Shakespeare's legacy and currently working on May and Summer press releases. The Rugby World Cup PR was specifically targeted at the Japanese World Media as Japan is using Warwick as their tour base.
- Press visits are happening all the time but the key ones to take place recently were:
 - Bent.com – 27/28 February (aimed at the gay market)
 - Travel trade 2016 event – 24 March (worked with RST, SBT and KES)
 - Le Guide du Routard – 25 March (leading French travel guide)
 - Liverpool Echo – 27/28 March
 - Coventry Telegraph/Birmingham Mail – 9-13 April
- And forthcoming ...
 - The Arbuturian – 29 April
 - The Countryman – 21 May
 - 3 major Canadian publications – 17 June
 - Yorkshire Post – 19/20 June
- Press and PR activity was estimated to total over £105,000 of advertising value for the last 3 months (Jan – March), giving a total EAV to date of £1,671,000.

Tanya advised those present that the SE press passes could be used by their holders at any time and for repeat visits and are valid for up to 2 years. She appealed to all SE partners for information and news items that could be included in SE's press releases.

Recent marketing activity

Gemma Goddon, Marketing & Communications Consultant for SE, then proceeded to inform the Forum of her work in the last three months:

- VisitEngland Heritage campaign – a mix of digital and radio adverts in conjunction with media partner Classic FM. It featured Kenilworth Castle & Elizabethan Garden and 5 other partners were also featured (Wroxall Abbey, Alveston Manor, SBT, RSC, HMC) in the competition which had an excellent 3900 entries. The campaign created an extra 20,000 page views over the period.
- VisitEngland Family campaign – digital only, our media partner was Heart FM which had a highly appropriate listenership. Family friendly partners featured were Warwick Castle, Mary Arden's Farm, Stratford Butterfly Farm, Holiday Inn, MAD Museum, Northmere Cottages Kenilworth and the Warwick B&Bs. This campaign was live in February and March and we received 25,000 extra page views.
- Following last summer's Marylebone station takeover event, Gemma has been working hard to develop reciprocal marketing opportunities with both Chiltern Railways and London Midland. Those interested in joining SE at Marylebone again this Summer should contact Gemma and there will be something similar taking place in Birmingham with London Midland.

Forthcoming marketing activity:

- SE's first consumer booklet (12-16 pages) to be produced. 40,000 copies to be distributed by Take One Media to include London and the trainlines of London Midland and Chiltern Railways.
- SE Blog will be launched and Gemma appealed for partners to contribute one or more blog items to ensure that the blog has a varied content.

- Rugby World Cup 2015 – SE is advertising in the official guide which will be distributed to all ticket purchasers internationally and domestically
- Shakespeare 2016:
 - There is still time to be included in the first press release this month.
 - ‘One Year to Go’ info pack available to partners soon - please use.
 - Shakespeare Lives project – more info will be provided at the next Forum.
 - London Underground campaign/national media partnership – currently seeking funding for these projects.

Destination Management Plan

Robin then announced that the DMP is in the process of being signed off by all the local authorities and the LEP. It is due to be launched in late May with invitations being sent out next week. The DMP steering group board has been agreed and will be chaired by Jo Lloyd of Birmingham Airport.

Emma Wellstead, Warwick Events, raised the matter of using the SE Blog to promote business tourism as well as leisure tourism. Gemma responded saying that she would welcome business blog entries and would discuss with the blog designer whether or not a separate business blog was appropriate. Gemma would welcome the input from Emma and any other business tourism partners.

3. Top Tips for Accessible Marketing – Ross Calladine, VisitEngland

Ross Calladine, Head of Business Support at VisitEngland, talked about Accessible Marketing, highlighting just how large a segment of the tourism market accessible tourism represented and that it was growing much faster than the wider market.

Accessible tourism refers to building experiences that everyone can enjoy, whatever their impairment – such as wheelchair bound, autistic, hearing or sight loss. It contributes £12.4 billion to the economy and includes spend on day visits, overnight and inbound visits, the spend of the disabled person and those with them.

Many tourism businesses are realising that catering for disabled and older customers is now a necessity and a win-win situation that brings a host of business benefits. With an aging population this market will only continue to grow.

Only 6% of those with an impairment use a wheelchair and many visitors’ disabilities can go unnoticed. So its not just about providing physical facilities, but its also about supplying suitable information, promotion and customer service.

Ross then provided 13 Top Accessibility Tips for tourism businesses:

1. Access Statement – a written description of your offer can help those who need to research before their visit;
2. Make use of a Video Access Statement to make the information available to all;
3. Make interpretation and information easy to read;
4. Provide an Access To All section on your website (visible from the homepage);

5. Provide information in alternative formats, ie subtitles, videos, sign language, large print;
6. Undergo Disability Awareness Training to improve confidence in handling all situations (see DisabledGo online training which is currently free of charge for to up to 6 staff members - www.disabledgo.com/tourismtraining);
7. Agree an Evacuation Plan and offer to see if any customers might need help in the eventuality of an emergency;
8. Get input from access advice and disabled groups;
9. Install and regularly test hearing loops;
10. Improve disabled toilet etiquette (eg fliptop bins v pedal bins, do not use for storage);
11. Think beautiful not clinical, making the space appealing and versatile for disabled and non-disabled customers alike;
12. Know your legal obligations;
13. The National Accessible Scheme – use it to improve and promote your accessibility.

For a full range of guidance, tools and resources to help provide access for all go to www.visitengland.com/biz/advice-and-support/businesses/providing-access-all.

4. A Brewing Success Story - John Conod, Purity Brewing Co.

A presentation was given by John Conod of award-winning Purity Brewing Co. on their brewing success story, from how the farm first decided to start brewing in one small shed to becoming a serious commercial consideration. Purity want to convey their strong message of ethics and sustainability which they try to carry through to all aspects of their production, marketing and distribution.

John entertained the group with stories of how their different brands have acquired their names and how Purity offers a fresh approach aimed at the new younger audience and have an interesting national and international tourism offer which includes brewery tours & shop, meeting room and venue hire with catering, provision of event & festival bar support along with training to pubs and bars.

For further details, contact John Conod on john.conod@puritybrewing.com or go to <http://puritybrewing.com>.

5. A History of Stratford Town Walk - Helen & John Hogg, Stratford Town Walk

Helen and John Hogg of Stratford Town Walk gave a lively presentation on the history of Stratford Town Walk which has been offering guided Town and Ghost walks around Stratford since 2002.

The public can turn up at the central tour rendezvous point each day of the week to join a walking tour (although booking is recommended). Tours can be specially arranged for private, corporate or school groups and can be tailored to take in other activities such as a river cruise or a stop at the fish n chip shop. The walks are informative and entertaining with the guides being often either actors or magicians.

Stratford Town Walk work to promote both Stratford and the wider district, working closely with various other partners, and has recently won the Pride of Stratford Award for 'Tourism Initiative of the Year 2015'.

For further details, contact stratfordtownwalk@btinternet.com or go to <http://stratfordtownwalk.co.uk>.

6. Information Exchange

Robert Elliot – Hogarths Hotel

Hogarths Hotel is a luxury hotel and restaurant on the outskirts of the village of Dorridge, Solihull, and has a sister hotel, Stone Manor, located on the way to Kidderminster. Hogarths pride themselves on quality, receiving an AA 4 star award last year and currently working towards rosette accreditation for their recently extended Restaurant.

www.hogarths.co.uk

Steph Lester – Blooming Marvellous

The Stratford Home & Garden Show would be running on the Stratford Recreation Ground on 17-19 July 2015 and their luxury Christmas Fair would be taking place on the Stratford Racecourse on 23 – 25 October 2015. Steph was keen to use the website www.stratfordhomeandgardenshow.co.uk to cross-promote other events, activities & tourism providers in the area and appealed to partners to get in touch. There would also be a local craft marquee at the H&G Show and appealed for suitable small businesses to get in touch to take up this low-cost space in the marquee.

Steph Lester: 07764 588501, stephanie@bloomingmarvellousevents.co.uk

Lisa Benjamin – Go Cotswolds

Lisa and husband Ben set up Go Cotswolds tours in July 2014 and offer scheduled minibus tours every Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. Minibuses also available for private hire, ie by local groups, for airport transfers etc. They are keen to discuss ideas with partners for cross-promotion and SE partners are invited to attend a free tour.

Lisa and Ben: 07786 920166, tom@gocotswolds.co.uk, www.gocotswolds.co.uk

Ali Gray – South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust

Ali Gray, Fundraising Manager for SWFT, appealed to partners for support with the new eye and cancer facilities that the new Stratford Hospital will provide. With the multi-storey car park currently underway, the new hospital completion date is set for end of 2016. Charitable funds will help create a homely and less institutionalised environment for patients and their families, something that can aid recovery and make hospital visits so much less daunting. As well as financial donations, partners can help in other ways including raffle and auction prizes. Please contact Ali if you can help.

Ali Gray: 01926 495321 (Ext. 8049), Ali.Gray@swft.nhs.uk
www.stratfordhospital.co.uk/Default.aspx?id=652534

Richard Biggs – Stratford Antique & Interiors Centre

Stratford Antique & Interiors Centre is 1.5 miles outside Stratford and is currently being reinvented into a lifestyle destination. A new French-style café is currently being built and there is a strong emphasis on Handmade in Britain. New owner, Richard, is keen that the

Centre works more closely with SE partners in Stratford, Warwickshire and the Cotswolds and is keen to develop the Asian tourism market with its love for British antiques.

Richard Biggs: 01789 297729, hello@stratforduaantiques.co.uk

Under construction: www.stratforduaantiques.co.uk

David Collins – Royal Shakespeare Company

David advised that at recent Broadway event in New York, he was pleased to see how aware the VisitBritain team were of Shakespeare's England.

He and Robin were sitting on the Local Enterprise Partnership's Culture and Tourism Group and would be reporting developments there in time.

The RSC is hosting a Major Incident Planning Conference in London on 13 May 2015 and all were invited. To book tickets visit www.uktheatre.org/Events/EventsList.aspx.

As part of the Shakespeare 400 Celebrations, there was to be a live broadcast from the Theatre on BBC Two on 23 April 2016 (Shakespeare's birthday) hosted by David Tennant. The RSC's first major tour to China had been announced for February 2016 and they will also be returning to New York in March 2016.

7. Any Other Business

Nancy Singleton thanked Wootton Park for hosting this Forum and appealed to partners for a Leamington/Warwick based venue to host the Tourism Forum in July 2016.

Nancy also requested that partners RSVP to each Forum invitation within the timescale give to assist with the administration of the event.

Stratford District Council would be holding its third Business Conference on 3rd July 2015 at the RST and all businesses within the Stratford district were invited. The theme was "Open for Business" and attendance would be free of charge.

www.stratford.gov.uk/business/stratford-business-conference-2015.cfm

8. Date & Time of the next Tourism Forum

Wednesday 15 July 2015, 10.00 am – 12.00 noon, kindly hosted by the Lord Leycester Hospital, Warwick.