

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**11 March 2010**

### **Tourism South East go back to their roots for British Tourism Week**

The team at Tourism South East have been getting back to their roots and working on the ground with tourism businesses as part of the annual British Tourism Week which takes place from 15 - 21 March 2010. This key week in the annual tourism calendar sees events taking place nationwide to celebrate and raise awareness of the importance of the UK's £114 billion tourism industry, Britain's fifth largest industry accounting for 8.2% of the country's gross domestic product.

Over 40 employees have dedicated their time across the region with jobs ranging from serving customers at Tourist Information Centres to lending a helping hand in the receptions and restaurants of hotels. Others assisted tour guides at attractions and some helped businesses gear up for the 2010 season.

The Directors of Tourism South East led the way with Chairman John Williams and Chief Executive Mike Bedingfield getting stuck in at Port Lympne Wild Animal Park in Kent and Marwell Wildlife in Hampshire respectively. Malcolm Lane, Corporate Services Director, assisted at the East Sussex National Golf Resort & Spa and Marketing Director Nigel Smith polished up his skills in car cleaning at Mercedes-Benz World in Surrey. Development Director Peter Colling donned his gardening gloves for the day at Waterperry Gardens and amateur dramatics enthusiast and Partnership Director Simon Matthews went back in time to take on a new role at Dickens World in Kent.

Mike Bedingfield, Chief Executive of Tourism South East helped muck out the animals at Marwell Wildlife in Hampshire. "Team South East has been hugely enthusiastic in partnering with tourism businesses for British Tourism Week with over two thirds of our staff taking part. The initiative has helped us to better understand the local level issues of operating tourism businesses

enabling us to better represent them in our day jobs. As we come out of the recession tourism, which is worth in excess of £12 billion p.a. to the regional economy and supports over 300,000 jobs, will be an invaluable industry for skills and employment.”

To find out more about British Tourism Week visit  
[www.britishtourismweek.com](http://www.britishtourismweek.com)

For more information about Tourism South East visit  
[www.tourismsoutheast.com](http://www.tourismsoutheast.com)

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**Note to Editors:**

Photos show Mike Bedingfield at Marwell Wildlife, for more photos or further information please contact Hannah Payne on 023 8062 5471,  
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Full list of participating businesses is as follows

**Berkshire**

Nirvana Spa & Leisure, Wokingham  
The Look Out Discovery Centre, Bracknell

**Hampshire and the Isle of Wight**

Blue Reef Aquarium, Portsmouth  
Chewton Glen, New Milton  
Chilworth Manor, Southampton  
Enchanted Manor, Isle of Wight  
Exbury Gardens, Exbury  
Hoburne Holiday Parks, Bashley and Naish  
Romsey Tourist Information Centre, Romsey  
Lainston House Hotel, Sparsholt, Winchester  
Marriott Meon Valley, Southampton  
Marwell Wildlife, Colden Common, Winchester  
National Motor Museum, Palace House and Beaulieu Abbey, Beaulieu  
New Forest Activities Centre, Beaulieu  
Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, Portsmouth  
Princess Coaches, Southampton  
Royal Navy Submarine Museum, Gosport  
Shorefield Holidays, New Forest  
Whitley Ridge Country House Hotel, Brockenhurst

**Kent**

Dickens World, Chatham Maritime  
Port Lympne, Hythe  
Smallhythe Place, Tenterden

**Oxfordshire**

Bicester Hotel, Golf and Spa, Bicester  
Bicester Village, Bicester  
Fallow Fields, Kingston Bagpuize  
The Beetle & Wedge Boathouse, Wallingford  
Waterperry Gardens, Wheatley

**Sussex**

Chichester Cinema, Chichester  
Cowdray Heritage Trust, Midhurst  
East Sussex National Resort & Spa, Uckfield

**Surrey**

Birdworld, Farnham  
Denbies Wine Estate, Dorking  
Mercedes-Benz World, Weybridge  
Painshill Park, Cobham  
The Lightbox, Woking

Tourism South East is the official tourist board for South East England, covering Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East and West Sussex, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire and Surrey.

The South East is the largest region for tourism in Britain outside of London, worth in excess of £12 billion p.a. to the regional economy (7% of regional GVA) supporting over 300,000 jobs.