

Coach & Tour Operators' Newsletter

Spring 2010

EXCURSIONS™ success

Nearly 1000 visitors arrived at Alexandra Place in January for the annual Excursions™ show, an excellent turnout considering the less than favourable weather conditions which saw much of the country covered in snow.

Show organisers *Tourism South East* and *Group Travel Organiser magazine*, along with over 200 exhibitors were delighted with the turnout, and subsequent feedback has been extremely positive.

Excursions™ is aimed at group organisers seeking inspiration for days out and short breaks in the UK and overseas. Next year, the team are hoping to build on the success of the 2010 show, showcase even more new exhibitors, and ensure organisers have access to as much information as possible to plan new and exciting itineraries.

We look forward to seeing you at Excursions™ 2011 on Saturday 15th January 2011.

Coach & Tour operators can benefit from bringing their key clients along for a day out at Excursions. Feedback has shown that exposure to a large number of attractions and destinations has resulted in a substantial amount of new business being generated for the coach operator. If that's not enough to tempt you, as an added incentive, a VIP welcome with complimentary refreshments on arrival is also provided for pre-booked coach parties of group organisers.



Taking a break with a free 'London Cuppa'

For further information on Tourism South East or to register interest in bringing a group along to Excursions™ 2011, contact Elaine Pearce or Emma Davis on 023 8062 5409 or email grouptravelenquiries@tourismse.com



Excursions 2010 Show opened by Mike Bedingfield, CEO Tourism South East



Group research published!

A study by Tourism South East has been published, dispelling the myth that Coach Tourism is a low-value market typically involving old age pensioners.

The report shows that the market bolsters the region's visitor economy by approx. £254 million a year. To read the summary report and see what Tourism South East are doing to ensure businesses and destinations gain a better understanding of the coach and tour operator market visit www.industry.visitsoutheastengland.com/groups or call Elaine or Emma on 023 8062 5409



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Festival Fun

2010 sees more festival fun than ever before in South East England, with a range of great events all year round.

If it's music that takes your fancy, then boogie on down to **Bentworth Blues weekend** in Alton (20-22 August), rock up to the **Isle of Wight Festival** (11-13 June), or sit back and enjoy the opera at **Glyndebourne** (20 May - 29 August).

For food and drink lovers, variety is the spice of life with the **Hastings Seafood and Wine Festival** (18-19 September), the **Isle of Wight Garlic Festival** (14-15 August) and even the **Watercress Festival in Alresford** (16 May) all taking place in 2010. After you've had your fill, wash it all down with a trip to the **Southampton Beer Festival** (3-5 June).

The South East also has plenty going on for those who love to be active – stroll along to the **Isle of Wight Walking Festival** (8-23 May), dance at the **Romsey Beggars Fair** (9-10 July) or take to the skies at the **International Birdman Festival** in West Sussex (14-15 August). If you'd rather stay on the ground, then head to the **Basingstoke International Kite Festival** (5-6 June) for an impressive aerial show.

Finally, culture and the arts are well represented, with events such as the **Brighton Festival** (1-23 May), this year curated by Brian Eno, and the **Winchester Hat Festival** (9-18 July) making it a summer to remember.

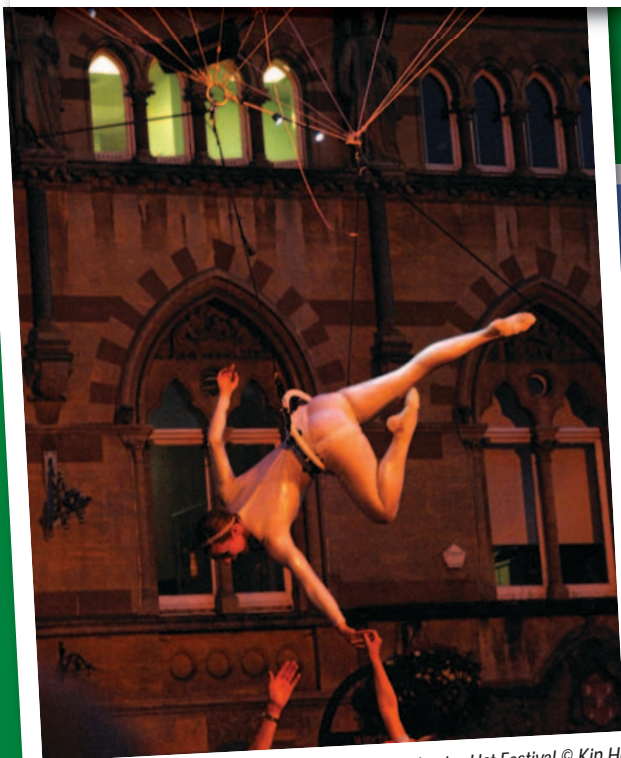
You can find out about all these festivals and many more by visiting www.southeastengland.com/festivals



International Birdman Festival



Arts Alive



Winchester Hat Festival © Kin Ho



The Brighton Festival



Hastings Seafood and Wine Festival



Surrey County Show



Basingstoke International Kite Festival



2010: South East Year of the Museum

be prepared to be surprised . . .

With over 300 museums to choose from within the South East, there is something to suit every interest . . . why not make this year the year to discover more?

Here are just some ideas to get you started. Museums listed here are MLA (Museums Libraries and Archives) accredited museums; for details on these and other museums visit www.culture24.org.uk/southeast.

Arts & Music

Art lovers will find plenty of places to satisfy them in South East England, such as the **Sir Stanley Spencer Gallery** in Cookham, Berkshire. Opened by Spencer's friends and supporters, this fantastic museum is devoted entirely to the works of the renowned British painter.

Further south in Woking, Surrey, **The Lightbox** is one of the region's newest museums. It hosts a huge range of monthly exhibitions, from contemporary art by local and nationally famous artists, to loans from major museums and galleries in the UK and overseas.

Music lovers will be excited by the **Bate Collection**, which can be found in Oxford and has one of the most magnificent collections of musical instruments in the world. The Bate has over 2,000 instruments, ranging from the Western orchestral music traditions, right through to exhibits from modern times.

For the more 'hands on' visitor, **Allen Gallery** in Alton, Hampshire is an inspiration. It houses one of the South East's most outstanding ceramics collections with over 3,000 pieces of English, Continental and Far Eastern pottery, porcelain and tiles, dating from 1250 to the present day.

Those with theatrical interest may well be inspired by a visit to the **Flora Twort Gallery** found at the Petersfield Museum. As well as work by local artist Flora Twort, this gallery houses the Bedales Historic Costume Collection, and exhibitions are changed regularly with different artefacts, costumes and paintings on display.



The Lightbox

Military Defence

The British Armed Forces have a rich history within South East England . . . Portsmouth, the traditional home of the Royal Navy, has a great naval legacy dating back to Roman times, along with many other great military attractions located in the surrounding area. HMS Victory and the Mary Rose can be found at **Portsmouth Historic Dockyard**, whilst at the **Royal Navy Submarine Museum** close by in Gosport you'll find World War II vintage submarine HMS Alliance and the X24, the only surviving WWII midget submarine.

Heading further along the coast to West Sussex, a visit to **Tangmere Military Aviation Museum** is a must. The old RAF Tangmere airfield houses priceless historic aircraft such as Neville Duke's world record breaking Hawker Hunter, and a full sized replica of the Spitfire prototype. You can even try your hand at flying in a flight simulator!



HMS Ocelot - Historic Dockyard Chatham

Alternatively, why not take a visit to one of Kent's top tourist attractions, **Historic Dockyard Chatham**, now on the Government's shortlist of potential World Heritage Sites. This 80-acre estate tells the story of how the Dockyard played a vital role supporting the Royal Navy for over 400 years.

These museums and many others offer unique and rewarding visitor experiences that will excite, educate and entertain you - whatever your age!

Sports Enthusiasts

The **National Motor Museum** in **Beaulieu** contains a range of motorsport exhibits, including World Record Breakers like Bluebird and Formula 1 legends. New to the museum is the Top Gear Exhibition, featuring the infamous cars ruined during the challenges on the world's biggest car show. You can also take a rare behind-the-scenes view into the show's production office, and enjoy clips of some of the best Top Gear moments.



Brooklands

An alternative motorsport museum is **Brooklands** found in Surrey, the birthplace of British motorsport and aviation, and the home of Concorde. The Museum displays a wide range of motoring and aviation exhibits including an unparalleled collection of Hawker and Vickers/BAC-built aircraft, and the only Concorde with public access in South East England.

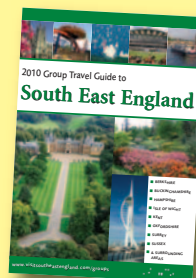
For something a bit different, the **River and Rowing Museum** in Henley-on-Thames provides a superb opportunity to discover the story behind the international sport of rowing in a truly dynamic way, allowing you to experience the sport and understand what it's like to compete on the water.

The Group Travel Guide 2010

is now available, pick up one at Best of Britain and Ireland

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