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Introduction

VisitEngland’s annual report summarises our key activity undertaken over the period 2014/15, reflecting on our operating environment and key achievements in our mission to grow the value of tourism in England.
Chairman’s Foreword

The last twelve months have been hugely eventful for English tourism: English Tourism Week kick-started the tourism season with more businesses than ever getting on board to showcase all that’s great about our industry. We have seen high numbers of domestic and overseas visitors flock to events across the country in celebration of significant historical milestones from the centenary of the First World War and the 450th anniversary of Shakespeare’s birth to the 800th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta, and the 150th anniversary of Lewis Carroll’s Alice in Wonderland – all testament to the rich historical and cultural appeal of England’s tourism landscape.

The product on offer in England has undergone a staggering transformation in recent years. People have rediscovered the fantastic places on offer right on their doorstep. It’s now up to us to harness and develop our strengths to build on the rise in domestic breaks we have seen over the past five years. It is vital that our tourism offer remains competitive to protect our industry in a very competitive market.

In its Triennial Review of VisitEngland and VisitBritain, the Government gave us a new mission to grow the number of visitors outside London by managing a new Product Development Fund. The ambition of this proposal will be to transform England’s great tourism assets; supporting the industry to deliver compelling products and experiences. We know that domestic holidays generate very high levels of satisfaction and there is enormous scope to grow this market. In addition to the increase in people holidaying at home in recent years England has seen increased levels of short-break taking, more trips taken by over 55’s and a greater variety in destination types for leisure trips. City breaks, in particular, have been a driver of growth – not least because the product on offer has improved enormously over the past few years. All of these present clear areas of opportunity.

As always, working in partnership has been crucial to success. The merging of arts and culture to support tourism is at the heart of the Cultural Destinations programme, which forms part of our partnership with the Arts Council. Ten projects were announced in 2014 as part of this partnership to promote and expand upon England’s cultural offer and tremendous progress is being made. By creating and building upon these unique and engaging partnerships our industry will continue to thrive.

In terms of sporting events, we’re still basking in the legacy of the London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games which boasted to the world England’s prowess at hosting major international sporting events. We had the opportunity in 2014/15 to show off once again with the tremendous success of Le Grand Départ in Yorkshire, and the Tour de Yorkshire.

A highlight for the industry this year has to be Rugby World Cup 2015, hosted in 10 cities in England (as well as Cardiff), which is sure to spread tourism benefits far and wide.

We launched a TV campaign earlier this year to showcase England as a fantastic place to book a holiday or short break ahead of the Rugby World Cup, set to the backdrop of Jerusalem – synonymous with English rugby. The poignant words by England’s own William Blake certainly stirred my pride in our green and pleasant land.

We also ran our third Holidays at Home are GREAT campaign in 2014, which saw the return of Britain’s best-loved characters Wallace and Gromit to encourage Brits to book a holiday at home through their local travel agent. The campaign created an incremental spend of £148.5m and led to the production of our fourth campaign this year – starring the award-winning Shaun the Sheep.

We know visitors are increasingly looking for unique, personalised, immersive experiences and we’ve seen the industry embrace this trend. From “locally defining” food and drink to the increasing popularity of cycling to star gazing experiences under some of the country’s darkest skies, England really does continue to delight and surprise visitors with exciting, innovative experiences.

Penelope, Viscountess Cobham, CBE
CHAIRMAN OF VISITENGLAND
VisitEngland is the national tourist board for England. Our role is to ensure that tourism in England thrives, working with the Government and industry to safeguard the sector’s successful and sustainable future and develop the visitor experience across England.

As the lead body for tourism in England, our purpose is to grow the value of tourism, working in partnership with the industry to deliver inspirational marketing campaigns, drive forward the quality, competitiveness and sustainable growth of the visitor economy and provide strategic direction and expertise for our partners.

We actively encourage greater collaboration between the different sectors of the visitor economy; supporting partners at a national and local level to achieve economic growth and to increase investment and employment through developing unique visitor experiences and effective business practices. By leveraging England’s best assets, promoting excellence and encouraging our partners to benefit from collaborative activities (that market England as a destination to domestic and established overseas markets), we can increase the value of the nation’s tourism by five per cent per annum over the next five years. This target is laid out in our first national strategy document, The Strategic Framework for Tourism in England 2010-2020.
Our Operational Environment 2014/15

As the national tourist board for England we aim to operate as efficiently and effectively as possible, bringing partners together and ensuring the sector remains competitive to produce outstanding visitor experiences. Working in partnership, we aim to align activities to achieve a five per cent year-on-year increase in the value of tourism as outlined in England’s tourism growth strategy the ‘Strategic Framework for Tourism 2010-2020’.

Refreshing England’s Tourism Strategy

Published in August 2014, the Annual Review of the Strategic Framework for Tourism 2010-2020 reported the sector has performed strongly against its targets hitting the five per cent year on year increase in the value of tourism and our ambitious jobs target.

Since the strategy was launched five years ago, the tourism landscape has changed radically with political, economic, structural, technological and social shifts all having an impact. It is therefore essential that the strategy flexes in response to this changed environment for England to stay on track and hit its targets. A mid-term review of England’s Tourism Strategy has commenced, including an industry-wide consultation to help shape the future development of the strategy. The refreshed strategy is due to be completed by the end of 2015 with the ambition to set out the priorities shared by VisitEngland and the industry for today’s tourism landscape. By working together with industry partners, we can ensure our growth continues at the target levels set in the original strategy and achieve our goal of creating a thriving, robust and globally competitive industry by 2020.
Triennial Review

As part of the requirement for Government departments to review their agencies and non-departmental public bodies we underwent a Triennial Review, alongside VisitBritain.

VisitEngland has come through its review well, with a strong endorsement of its track record and ability to deliver tangible results. The success of our work in creating economic growth and jobs for tourism was strongly recognised, along with our commitment to engagement and partnership working. The review concluded a need for the core functions of VisitBritain and VisitEngland to promote Britain and England as tourist destinations in overseas and domestic markets and to promote the development of experiences and products to attract tourists. As a result VisitBritain and VisitEngland will formally separate, with a clear and focused remit on the specific areas each organisation will deliver.

VisitEngland is responsible for developing standout tourism products and domestic marketing

VisitBritain is responsible for the international tourism promotion of Britain, its nations and regions
The Tourism Landscape 2014/15

The onset of the recession in 2009 led to a surge in growth for holidays at home which continued for a period of five years to the end of 2013, whilst at the same time overseas trip-taking fell back. However in 2014 a number of factors emerged which had the potential to impact upon this trend.

In 2014, the UK experienced economic growth and increased consumer confidence alongside a strengthening pound. Additionally, at the start of the year extreme wet weather and flooding hit the country, particularly affecting South West England.

The effect of these changes saw a slight reversal of some of the volume gains from the 'staycation' years and a number of challenges to face the industry. The number of holidays taken by Brits in 2014 was nine per cent lower than the previous year, though spend fell by a lesser extent of two per cent. Holiday trips taken in England overall however are still higher than pre-recession years.

Wider trends in leisure behaviour, specific events and differing experiences of the economic recovery give some detail behind the figures. This is reflected in regional trends including the East of England and Yorkshire outperforming other areas and variances in destination types, with seaside destinations proving more resilient than other types of destination. 2014 brought a slight decline in tourism day trips (two per cent in volume and value).

However, the number of overall leisure trips were flat, suggesting a slight shift towards routine activities closer to home. In this sector regional differences highlighted an increase in trips to London and the South East but declines in the Midlands and North East.

There remains a degree of uncertainty for 2015: increased consumer confidence and economic growth may enable those who have had to reduce the number of domestic holiday trips in recent years to re-enter the market and positive figures for the first quarter could counter the difficult start to 2014.

However, the market remains highly competitive with low inflation, and the stronger pound, a potential trigger for an increase in overseas trip-taking. This is reflected in growth of 11 per cent in the volume of foreign holidays taken by British residents in the year to April in 2014. It is important to note however that although the global economic environment is uncertain, economic trends are only one of the factors impacting market performance.

As well as the staycation effect, recent years have seen increased levels of short-break taking, more trips taken by over 55’s, and a greater variety in destination types for leisure trips - in particular, city breaks, which have been a driver of growth. All of these present clear areas of opportunity for the industry in the longer term, despite the potential for more variability of performance in the short term.
Regional spend 2014/15

Tourism trips and spend

£82 BN

Was spent on tourism in England in 2014

£19 BN

Inbound trips

Number of trips 29.8M

Source: IPS 2014

£18 BN

Domestic overnight trips

Number of trips 92.6M

Source: GBTS 2014

£45 BN

Day trips

Number of trips 1.35M

Source: GBDVS 2013

Visitor satisfaction

86%

Would “definitely” or “probably” recommend the destination they visited in England to friends and family

Source: 2014 Satisfaction Research

86%

Domestic visitors say that the destination they visited was “excellent” or “very good”
Leading the Industry, Working in Partnership

Sharing the Government’s vision of the sector playing a vital role in driving economic growth, we continue to champion tourism through working with the industry and influencing a wide range of policies. We engage and communicate with a breadth of partners to provide a co-ordinated approach to driving forward the implementation of the Strategic Framework for Tourism in England 2010-2020, sharing intelligence and examples of innovative delivery and addressing key issues and challenges affecting growth.

Formulating strategic partnerships to generate growth

We are developing three-year strategic partnership agreements with public agencies that set out joint priorities to deliver visitor economy growth. In 2014/15 we continued to progress and implement key actions from the partnership agreements already in place and signed new agreements with key partners:

- **Creative England**: a three-year strategic partnership agreement was signed in January 2015 which aims to support and create economic growth through the creative industries and tourism. Research on the potential value of screen tourism (television, film and digital) from inbound markets was a key output from the partnership.

- **Historic England (formerly English Heritage)**: a partnership agreement was signed in October 2014 which recognises heritage as a key driver for growth with a focus not only on promotion of heritage assets, or initiatives to raise productivity and competitiveness, but also on maintenance, conservation and product development to drive up the quality of the visitor experience.

- **Arts Council England**: now half way through our three-year strategic partnership the 10 projects funded through the £3 million Arts Lottery-funded joint Cultural Destinations Programme have moved into delivery.

- **National Parks England**: promotional support was provided to the National Parks England partnership for the ‘Love Your National Parks’ campaign. In addition, we encouraged greater national parks’ involvement in Regional Growth Fund campaigns and increased the profile via our website, as well as developing an itinerary for the travel trade.
Supporting the Government growth agenda

As part of our role to increase growth potential, we worked across central Government departments and executive agencies to ensure that the tourism sector benefits from Government measures and continues to achieve its targets. In addition to working with our sponsor department, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), supporting Ministers and staff with briefings and responding to general enquiries, we have extended activity with other agencies and departments to continue to achieve its growth potential. These included working with:

- **Defra**: on existing and future Rural Development Programmes for England (RDPE), EU investment funds and rural broadband

- **The Department for Business and Skills**: on local growth and Local Enterprise Partnerships

- **The Department for Transport and Highways Agency**: to complete a review of Tourism Brown Signs

- **The Marine Management Organisation**: on the next phase of Marine Plans (South Coast) ensuring destination organisations are engaged at local level

- **The Big Lottery Fund**: on round three tourism-related projects under consideration by the Coastal Communities Fund

- **The OFGEM / National Grid Visual Impact Provision (VIP) Stakeholder Advisory Group**: advising on the undergrounding of pylons and landscape improvements in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)

- **The Natural England Landscape Advisory Group**

Leading the tourism debate

In our mission to raise the profile of tourism in England and drive forward growth in support of the business agenda we hosted a series of events at the International Festival for Business (IFB), in Liverpool during June-July 2014.

This year the tourism industry had a significant presence with VisitEngland, British Destinations, European Tourism Association (ETOA) and The Tourism Society delivering a full programme of events.

Our keynote event was entitled, ‘Mind the Gap – Addressing the Tourism Divide’, which took place on 10 June at the Museum of Liverpool. It discussed the challenges around the widening gap between the growth of tourism in London and the rest of the country. High profile guest speakers included Tourism Minister Helen Grant MP, and Deputy Chair of the Regional Growth Fund Independent Advisory Panel, Lord Shipley OBE, along with other members of central Government, the tourism and transport industries and the private sector. The conference also included a video presentation featuring Economist, Journalist and BBC presenter, Evan Davis. Delegates engaged in further panel discussions and presentations designed to explore the opportunities and challenges facing the regional growth of tourism.
Highlighting industry resilience

Our Chairman, Penelope, Viscountess Cobham CBE, joined His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales, on a visit to Somerset on 8 July 2014 to meet with tourism businesses and local communities affected by the floods earlier in the year and to champion the tourism industry. We brought together tourism representatives from across the South West for a reception at Glastonbury Abbey where local tourism businesses welcomed the opportunity to highlight new developments in the area to The Prince of Wales and demonstrate the resilience of the industry following the floods.

This was a follow up to The Prince of Wales’s visit to the Somerset Levels in February and a £2 million Government-funded campaign run by VisitEngland to support businesses affected by flooding.

Developing new routes with regional airports

We continued our engagement with English regional airports to generate growth in areas outside London and encourage new routes. Activities included:

• Working with the English Regional Airports Taskforce

• Delivering a number of marketing campaigns in partnership with carriers, airlines and ferry companies including Aer Lingus, Monarch Airlines and Jet2 in international markets

• Showcasing England at World Routes 2014, the global route development forum for airlines and airports. The forum provides a platform for regional airports including Bristol, Cambridge, Leeds Bradford, Liverpool and Newcastle to facilitate meetings with key airlines and promote the inbound tourism product offer in their destinations to these key decision makers.

Engaging the Travel Trade

We organised the annual Big English Tourism Breakfast at the ABTA Convention on 23 September 2014 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in association with major UK operators Bourne Leisure, Hoseasons, Shearings Holidays and Superbreak. Journalists from key national and trade titles including ABTA magazine, Daily Mirror, Daily and Sunday Telegraph, Travel Weekly and The Sun attended. A panel discussion took place covering key topics from the impact of the weather to investment in products and marketing.

Growing the business tourism market

We conducted a range of activity aimed to increase our share of business tourism:

• The Ministerial Bid Support Initiative introduced in 2013, co-ordinated by VisitEngland, has seen 12 support bids made, with two bids successfully gaining ministerial support for prestigious international events

AN ESTIMATED ECONOMIC IMPACT OF £6.7M

• We provided international sales platforms for business event suppliers at over 25 trade shows, missions and events, generated over 900 new leads and supported destinations to attend international trade shows

CONFIRMED BUSINESS GENERATED FOR THE YEAR TOTALLED £8.9M

• We developed an economic model to estimate the impact of our influence on business tourism events and the results demonstrated

INCREMENTAL SPEND TRANSLATING INTO 240 TOURISM JOBS £13.5M


English Tourism Week 2015

English Tourism Week 2015 took place from 14-22 March and saw increased corporate communications activity and support by a wide range of stakeholders. Engaging local people and decision makers, the week showcased the important contribution tourism makes to employment, economic growth and quality of life. Highlights included:

- The release of a news story highlighting a shortage of trained chefs across the country, backed by figures from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills’ (UKCES) Employer Skills and supported by industry partners including British Hospitality Association, British Beer & Pub Association, Hilton Worldwide and People 1st, in a bid to encourage young people to enter the industry

- The launch of VisitEngland’s consultation on the refreshed ‘Growth Strategy for English Tourism’ attended by key stakeholders

- Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport, Sajid Javid, and Tourism Minister, Helen Grant MP, and a host of MPs showed their support for English tourism at the Tourism Alliance’s Parliamentary Reception held at the House of Commons

- Matthew Henderson from Beamish Museum in County Durham was named our fourth ‘Tourism Superstar’ following a campaign run with the Daily Mirror aimed at rewarding those unsung heroes of the tourism industry who work to make visitor experiences extra special

- The ‘Unlocking the Purple Pound’ conference in Blackpool at Sandcastle Waterpark aimed to help owners and managers of tourism businesses improve their facilities and services for disabled people and others with accessibility needs. The conference emphasised the value that becoming accessible for all can bring to the tourism industry. 97 per cent of attendees said they would make improvements to their business as a result of the conference.

English Tourism Week 2015 generated:

- Over £500,000 in advertising value equivalent including pieces in The Times, key catering, hospitality and travel titles, Classic FM and regional news

- A record number of 21,000 public votes on the Mirror website was reached this year for the Tourism Superstar campaign

- Over 5,000 mentions of #ETW15 hashtag on Twitter during the week and over 65K impressions
Supporting a Thriving Industry

As the lead body for English tourism and the visitor economy, we continue to provide specialist business support, intelligence and encouragement to the industry at a strategic level, to develop a richer visitor experience. We continually look to identify future trends as part of our ongoing tourism research, enabling the sector to develop and improve its performance by adapting to changes in this thriving market.

Providing advice and support to industry

We underwent a digital transformation in 2014/15 to enable us to improve communication, engagement and support for the industry. We launched a new Industry and Media website www.visitengland.com/biz at the end of March 2015 containing a new Business Advice Hub which provides a wealth of advice and support materials including:

- An online marketing toolkit designed to help small and medium sized businesses make the most of the opportunities offered through digital marketing

- The 2014 edition of our popular Pink Book: Legislation for Tourist Accommodation published online for the first time

- A vast range of new online tools, case studies and signposts to other helpful online resources including webinars, e-learning modules and YouTube videos

- A new guidance document called ‘Welcoming Coaches and Groups’ in partnership with the Coach Tourism Council, designed to assist destination managers on how best to work and support coach operators to achieve better visitor experiences and improve profitability for tourism enterprises.

VisitEngland’s three core websites are now on one single platform www.visitengland.com These are:

- **Holidays** (targeting the consumer market)

- **Plan a Business Event** (targeting the business visits and events market)

- **Industry and Media** (targeting those that work in the tourism industry, providing insight, advice and support)

“The Business Advice Hub is a great resource. The Pink Book is really useful to have online – otherwise you don’t know where to start”

Karen New, New Inn Lane Nurseries & Holiday Cottages

“it’s brilliant having a one-stop shop for ideas”

Nick Symes, Stane House Bed & Breakfast
Providing robust research and insights

We successfully delivered a national research programme measuring the volume and value of tourism in England, accommodation occupancy, visitor satisfaction and the impact of the economy on consumer attitudes and behaviour. This year we further developed our research programme to include:

- A new nationwide brand satisfaction survey jointly commissioned with VisitScotland and VisitWales
- An investigation into the role of deals and discounts
- An approach to measure the impact of activities on overnight and day tourism
- A review of the short breaks market

Promoting accessibility for all

The European Commission confirmed a grant of up to €125,000 to deliver a new Access for All project, to run over an 18 month period to March 2016. Partnering with seven destinations, including Brighton, Lincoln and Northumberland on product development and consumer marketing activities, the project launched alongside our new “Purple Pound” factsheet highlighting the value and volume of the accessible tourism market.

Driving quality and customer service

We oversee a range of services aimed at encouraging the success and sustainability of tourism businesses. This includes engaging individual businesses in a one-to-one capacity via our National Quality Assurance Schemes, setting the standards and ensuring their implementation and creating partnerships to develop and promote best practice. This year we:

- Worked closely with online travel agents to integrate official star ratings into their offering by developing a new partnership with Trip Advisor and HomeAway
- Implemented a set of recommendations (based on the conclusions from the review of the Visitor Attraction Quality Assessment Scheme in 2012) designed to grow the scheme’s influence and effectiveness; participant numbers have grown as a result
- Began work on a number of opportunities aimed at influencing the visitor experience and supporting business productivity including the delivery of a number of Quality Assured Schemes:
  - Racecourse Scheme
  - Motorway Service Scheme
  - Boats scheme - in association with the British Marine Association
  - Pubs scheme - in association with the British Beer & Pub Association

Total volume and spend of Accessible Tourism in England
VisitEngland Awards for Excellence 2014

The 25th annual VisitEngland Awards for Excellence, celebrating the very best tourism products in England, were held at a ceremony at The Jockey Club, Cheltenham Racecourse in Cheltenham on 12 May 2014. The Outstanding Contribution to Tourism Award was awarded to ‘The Travel Agent’ in recognition of the outstanding and continued level of support from domestic travel trade in promoting the UK as a holiday destination, and to celebrate the high quality of service and knowledge they provide to customers when booking a UK break.

This prestigious accolade was one of 17 awards announced at the ceremony including the best Bed and Breakfast, Small Hotel, Tourism Experience, Tourism Pub of the Year, Taste of England, Sustainable Tourism, Business Tourism and Access for All Tourism Award.

The Awards Generated
£500,000
Advertising Value Equivalent

Revolutionising tourist information

Following an extensive engagement programme with tourist information centres (TICs) nationwide, destination partners across the country were recruited as part of a new initiative, working in partnership with Twitter. March 2015 saw the launch of realtimetravelguide.co.uk, an online hub (and tourist board first!) that delivers real time visitor information via Twitter. The site provides an easy to access, local information service that reaches a wider, non-traditional audience. With over 34 towns and 68 destinations signed up the aim is to grow the online community to include the entire country.

“I was absolutely delighted and proud to receive this award on behalf of the team who work hard to provide educational and entertaining tours and it was wonderful for this to be recognised at a national level. We were able to apply this prestigious accolade to our marketing campaigns and feel sure that it contributed to an increased footfall and increased the profile of our amazing heritage site.”

Nicola Burley, Executive Director, Galleries of Justice Museum

“We’re delighted with our Gold Award. It shows that the team’s hard work has been recognised as the best in the county, gives confidence to visitors and opens doors to potential partners.”

Paul Gossage Director of Marketing & PR, Ironbridge Gorge Museums
Stimulating Consumer Demand

Providing great products and experiences that meet and exceed visitors’ interests and expectations is essential to achieving growth. We continue to develop a marketing and partnership led approach for England, to leverage England’s best assets and stimulate demand for the country’s tourism products, services and experiences - at home and overseas.

Regional Growth Fund delivery

The three-year Regional Growth Fund (RGF) ‘Growing Tourism Locally’ programme successfully entered its third and final year of delivery. We worked across both strands of the programme (Primary Destinations and National Thematic Marketing activity) managing the delivery of:

• RGF-funded activity plans of 14 primary destinations and elements of media buying to increase the size and scale of the campaigns

• Six national themed campaigns relating to England’s city, coastal and countryside product offers. The first campaign, Hair-Raising Histories, aimed at families with school-age children, launched with a supplement in the London Evening Standard, Independent and i

• Three final campaigns, Heritage in Spring, Rugby and Family Summer Holiday, brought together 47 destinations under a single umbrella proposition.

The RGF programme, aimed at inspiring UK residents to take more holidays at home and to create jobs in the tourism sector, has generated:

• A total of £659.58m additional tourism spend

• A record number of 12,256 jobs for the sector – far exceeding the overall three-year funding agreement target of 9,139 jobs

WIN

7 nights in a 5 star lodge in Cornwall

IT’S SUMMERTIME...

RESORT PASS

get to Birmingham

ONe tICKet NINe tOP AttrACtIONs sAVe OVer £50*

blackpoolresortpass.com

It’s summertime…

londonmidland.com/birmingham

More people travel for less!

*3-9 people travelling together (adults or children) save 34% when buying an adult Off-Peak ticket

fares shown valid for travel on London Midland trains, prices may change on 7 September 2014

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Big Brum Open Top Bus Sightseeing Tour

Birmingham Back to Backs

Birmingham Botanical Gardens

The National SEA LIFE Centre

Sherborne Wharf Canal Cruises

The Electric Cinema

The Leisurebox

Cadbury World

Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

book early

one way

from

walk up

return

from

GroupSave*

return

per adult

London Lime Street

Liverpool South Parkway

Runcorn

Acton Bridge

Hartford

Winsford

Crewe

Birmingham

is so easy to get to with up to 2 trains per hour

£9

£7

£7

£7

£7

£7

£6

£27

£19

£27

£19

£27

£19

£21

£23

£24.15

£16.85

£16.85

£16.85

£16.85

£17.80

£18.50

londonmidland.com/offers/2for1
Holidays at Home are GREAT

The third Holidays at Home are GREAT campaign was delivered in 2014. Working in partnership with Aardman Animations, we repeated the Wallace & Gromit advertising campaign which was designed to inspire Brits to book a holiday at home through their local high street travel agent.

Following on from the success of the previous campaign, additional funding secured in 2014/15 led to the production of a fourth Holidays at Home are GREAT campaign starring the BAFTA award-winning Shaun the Sheep, coinciding with the global release of the animated comedy film by Aardman Animations in February 2015. Once again aimed at inspiring Brits to take a holiday at home this year by encouraging consumers to book a holiday through their local travel agent, the campaign includes a television ad, posters, artwork, merchandise, a dedicated consumer website and travel trade activity.

Both campaigns were led by VisitEngland and supported by the home nation tourist boards of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, working alongside three GREAT delivery partners – the British Council, UK Trade and Investment and VisitBritain – to ensure all creative assets were utilised to maximum effect. Tour operators, high street travel agents and retail partners were recruited, including Great Railway Journeys and the Global Travel Group, as part of the travel trade component for the fourth Holidays at Home are GREAT campaign.

Overall the Holidays at Home are GREAT campaign has achieved:

- Over half a billion in incremental spend
- Over two million domestic overnight holiday trips
- An Advertising Equivalent Value of £200m
Ride England

Cycling became a key focus with Le Grand Départ of the 2014 Tour de France starting in Yorkshire. We sought to raise awareness of the wide range of accessible places for families to get on their bikes and experience cycling, building upon the strong interest in the Tour de France and increased enthusiasm for the sport following the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Campaign activity included:

• A TV ad aired on Channel 5 on 11 July 2014, ahead of the arrival of the Grand Départ in Yorkshire

• A 100 page guide produced in partnership with the Guardian referencing key cycling events taking place around England, with editorial content replicated on www.guardian.com

Rugby World Cup 2015

We continued to raise awareness during 2014/15 of the tourism opportunities associated with Rugby World Cup 2015. Campaign activity included:

• Working closely with England Rugby 2015 we created promotional material and rich media content for use both in the UK and internationally

• The launch of a TV ad with support from Rugby Football Union, featuring an exciting collection of sports personalities including England Rugby coach Stuart Lancaster, inviting people to ‘Discover Your England’. The ad showcased the variety of scenery on offer in England to encourage Brits to explore the destinations on their doorstep and set out to find what makes a holiday or short break in England special for them.

THE VIDEO OF THE RUGBY AD HOSTED ON YOUTUBE BECAME OUR MOST POPULAR EVER, WITH OVER 220,000 VIEWS
England’s Hall of Fame

A consumer PR campaign launched to establish England’s Hall of Fame began in February when we asked the public to submit their suggestions for England’s ultimate claims to fame. The Hall of Fame app launched as part of the campaign received almost 1,000 submissions from Harry Potter to Harry Styles, the mini skirt to the tuxedo, The Beatles to punk music, and Earl Grey tea to the Scotch Egg. To celebrate St George’s Day, a one-off exhibition was held at London’s Southbank in April 2014, displaying the winners of England’s Hall of Fame. The campaign won the Public Sector Communications Award 2015 for Best Digital Campaign of the Year.

First World War Centenary

To mark the centenary of the First World War, we partnered with the Imperial War Museum (IWM) and the First World War Centenary Partnership to showcase a cultural programme that included more than 500 new exhibitions and 1,500 events. We hosted a First World War Centenary press trip with international press from Australia, Belgium, India, Ireland, US and The Netherlands. The programme commenced with a dinner held on HMS Belfast in London and a special preview of the new IWM First World War galleries.

Winnie-the-Pooh ‘Simple Pleasures’

We collaborated with Disney to create a Winnie-the-Pooh ‘Simple Pleasures’ PR campaign. The aim was to inspire families with all the simple things they could see and enjoy in England. A list of ‘25 Simple Pleasures’ was compiled. The top 10 were ‘storyfied’ in the style of the original books with exclusive illustrations by a Classic Pooh illustrator.

TOTAL MEDIA COVERAGE GENERATED ACROSS BROADSHEET, BROADCAST, REGIONAL AND ONLINE WAS £510,686 ADVERTISING VALUE EQUIVALENT

Further PR activity during the year included a media event in partnership with the Churchill Committee to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the death of Sir Winston Churchill, held at the Stafford Hotel and an Anglo/American press trip to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the sealing of the Magna Carta. We also held the annual PR Workshop and Meet the Media event for Destination Organisations which was themed after the ‘Mad Hatter’s Tea Party’ as a nod to the 150th anniversary of Alice in Wonderland.

TOTAL COVERAGE GENERATED BY THE PR ACTIVITY IN 2014/15 RESULTED IN ALMOST £50M IN ADVERTISING VALUE EQUIVALENT IN THE DOMESTIC MARKET AND ALMOST £25.5M IN ADVERTISING VALUE EQUIVALENT IN THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET

THE CAMPAIGN SAW A GROWTH

VisitEngland Facebook 16%
VisitEngland Twitter 10%

THE ACTIVITY GENERATED OVER 220 PIECES OF GLOBAL MEDIA
Opportunity lies ahead
Our industry has enjoyed a period of rapid change and growth in recent years. Pleasingly, the trend to holiday at home has continued and English tourism is strong, but we’re entering a new phase which presents both challenges and opportunities for the sector. Consumer confidence is returning as people begin to feel the effects of economic recovery. This combined with a stronger pound saw a four per cent rise in travel outside the UK by British residents in 2014, and nine per cent fewer domestic trips taken in England compared to the previous year.

The good news is that tourism in England has a competitive advantage. We know people have rediscovered the wonderful and varied destinations we have to offer. We know we cater really well to the rising trend to take short breaks and activity based holidays, and that visitor satisfaction levels are high. However, the global tourism industry is ever changing and we need to keep up with the pace of change to ensure we maintain that edge and continue to grow, especially in regions beyond London. To do this, the industry needs to invest in new consumer experiences that are exciting and stack up against the rest of the world.

Quality product and experiences
In 2014 the government undertook a triennial review of VisitEngland and VisitBritain. I am delighted to say that we have come through the review well, with our leadership role as the national tourist board reaffirmed and backed by the industry. The review recognised our success so far in creating economic growth and jobs for tourism, and our commitment to partnership working.

The review has also recommended a number of exciting responsibilities for VisitEngland which will change the way we work and deliver significant benefits to English tourism. One of the major outcomes is that VisitEngland will separate from VisitBritain to become a stand-alone body for English tourism. We will also focus mainly on supporting the development of high-quality tourism experiences through the management of a Product Development Fund. Our ambition is to use what we hope will be a substantial Fund to encourage destinations with geographic connections or shared thematic links to come forward with imaginative proposals for big ideas which will grow whole regions and tourism sectors – creating unique and authentic products that appeal to consumers today and in the future. While we await Government confirmation of the Triennial Review recommendations, we will be working hard to ensure we are ready to hit the ground running when we get the green light.

Innovation is key
A thriving tourism industry is an inspired and innovative industry. We need to keep abreast of rapidly emerging trends and understand what our competitors are doing to ensure we’re not left behind. I am really excited and proud about VisitEngland’s latest digital initiative – and tourist board first, RealTimeTravelGuide.co.uk. It is without doubt an indication of how innovation and technology can be applied to our sector. Working with Twitter UK and Tourism Information Centres across the country, we have developed a new online hub which provides consumers with real-time information direct from local experts. This year we’ve also launched our Business Advice Hub – providing easily accessible insights, information and support for tourism businesses, travel trade and the wider sector online.

Strength in partnership
Change lies ahead in the area of structural support for the sector and with that of course comes a degree of uncertainty for the domestic tourism industry, but of one thing I am certain – as the national tourist board we will continue to work in partnership to build upon our strengths and inspire visitors with our great destinations. By showcasing our product and growing tourism in England, which already accounts for over 80 per cent of the UK’s £127bn tourism industry, we can ensure a truly world-class offer for all visitors.

James Berresford
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OUR PEOPLE

ENGLISH TOURIST BOARD MEMBERS

Penelope, Viscountess Cobham CBE
Chief Executive of the Blenheim Estate
APPOINTED: 30 MAY 2011
EXPIRES 29 MAY 2019

Sarah Dunning OBE
Chief Executive of the Westmorland Family
APPOINTED: 01 APRIL 2009
EXPIRES 13 JANUARY 2014

Sarah Stewart
Chief Executive of NewcastleGateshead Initiative
APPOINTED: 30 MAY 2011
EXPIRES 29 MAY 2016

Denis Wormwell
Chief Executive of Shearings Group
APPOINTED: 22 JUNE 2009
EXPIRES 21 JUNE 2017

John Hoy
Chief Executive of the Blenheim Estate
APPOINTED: 30 MAY 2011
EXPIRES 29 MAY 2019

Nigel Halkes
APPOINTED: 13 JANUARY 2014
EXPIRES 12 JANUARY 2018

Suzanne Bond
Chief Executive, Cornwall Development Agency

Sally Balcombe
BTA Accounting Officer/Chief Executive, VisitBritain
APPOINTED: JULY 2014

ENGLISH TOURIST BOARD OBSERVERS
VisitEngland is the country's national tourist board responsible for driving forward England’s Strategic Framework for Tourism with industry partners. We work in partnership to lead the development of a thriving tourism industry, supporting our national and local partners to achieve economic growth and increase investment and employment by encouraging the development of excellent visitor experiences and effective business practices. For information on the wide range of support and opportunities we offer to the different sectors involved in England’s visitor economy visit visitengland.com/biz and for further information on England, visit visitengland.com