

VisitScotland Report – to 31 July 2010

STRATEGIC

In Argyll & Bute VisitScotland has been working very closely with the following local marketing groups to establish business development opportunities and overcome some recessionary challenges:

- Oban & Lorn Tourism Association (OLTA) - assisted with Oban Passport Launch & Campaign, and discussed opportunities for Oban as a host port for the Cruise in Company element of the Tall Ships Race 2011, with input from Councillor Duncan MacIntyre.
- Heart of Argyll Marketing Group (HOAMG) - advised this group of Mid Argyll businesses building on the successes of the Dalriada Project on priority activities (marketing and information web resource and collaborative visitor circulation solutions)
- Explore Kintyre - met new consortium of businesses operating in and from Kintyre. A new group poised to make an application to the VisitScotland Growth Fund 2 in 2011 to create and market integrated consumer packages around golf, walking, accommodation and transport options
- Destination Dunoon & Cowal - sector support for HIE colleagues, business leaders and Argyll & Bute Council Officers and Elected Members
- Supported HIE colleagues at Business Development Workshops for Islay and Jura - signposting Tourism Intelligence Scotland, Insights, Marketing and Quality Assurance teams for advice and support.

The Regional Director has had ongoing priority development dialogues with Jim Mather MSP, Minister for Enterprise, Energy & Tourism, Argyll & Bute Council Officers and VisitScotland staff. Agenda items have included:

- CHORD Programme and THI projects
- Visitor Information provision network
- Isle of Jura Passenger Ferry
- Loch Lomond Seaplanes
- West Highland Railway Lines
- Caledonian MacBrayne Islay services
- Highland Games circuit development
- Kintyre Offshore Wind Farm proposal
- Isle of Bute Cabinet Meetings and EatBute Festival
- Argyll & the Isles destination development
- Tall Ships Race 2011
- marine tourism development
- Argyll & Bute Council Development Plans
- Ardrishaig Development Trust
- Lochgilphead Phoenix Project
- Forestry Commission Scotland Tourism Development Grant
- local marketing and infrastructure improvements.

In addition Visit Scotland is a member of the Parliamentary Cross Party Group on Recreational Boating & Marine Tourism and Local Authorities are now represented by Argyll & Bute Council Officer, Stuart Green. In Luss we have successfully negotiated independent visitor information provision to cover loss of VIC. Operational Guidelines are being revised in preparation for the next Argyll & the Isles Strategic Tourism Partnership Meeting scheduled for September.

COMMERCIAL

On billboards this summer: Robert Pattinson, Leonardo DiCaprio... and Mid-Argyll.

Taynish National Nature Reserve near Tayvallich has been one of the biggest stars pasted on to billboards across Scotland this summer, thanks to the latest phase in VisitScotland's activity targeting the market within Scotland—a joint campaign with **Scottish Natural Heritage**. Also in this update, how the our marketing **benefits Oban and the Isle of Bute**, how we're supporting the **Year of Food & Drink** in Argyll and some good news from the **Duke and Duchess of Argyll**.

VisitScotland has teamed up with Scottish Natural Heritage for a major new strand in our summer 'Perfect Day' and 'My Scotland' campaigns that will raise the profile of Scotland's National Nature Reserves.

A stunning image of Taynish National Nature Reserve (pictured above) is one of four reserves across Scotland that were **posted on billboards and bus stops** across the country in June and July. The campaign was designed to communicate to the home market and visitors to Scotland alike that National Nature Reserves are not just for wildlife — they are also **very special places to visit** that offer physical and emotional benefits.

The campaign has also included press activity and a series of targeted e-mails promoting the reserves and the online information at the VisitScotland Perfect Day site (pictured below).

The partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage is expected to make a significant contribution towards the overall Perfect Day target of a **£25 million return** for the national economy.

Mount Stuart in Perfect Day e-zine

As part of the Perfect Day campaign, a series of e-zines is issued to our target customer groups on a monthly basis, with content tailored according to their interests.

Mount Stuart appeared in many of these e-zines last month. The highlight feature in the e-mail headed 'Be captivated by a stunning stately home' links to a full page at the campaign website where visitors can expand on the information about Mount Stuart and other nearby 'perfect experiences'.

My Scotland campaign

While the overall Perfect Day campaign targets the UK & Ireland, this summer brings a new campaign-within-the-campaign that promotes Scotland to the Scots, titled 'My Scotland'. Activity to date has included a full-page travel feature on Argyll in the Daily Record last month, and a second feature with a focus on the Cowal Peninsula is planned in the run-up to this year's Cowalfest.

As with the wider Perfect Day campaign, My Scotland also involves direct e-mail to our target customers within Scotland. Again, different e-mails are sent that focus on those consumers who are within an easy travelling distance of the events, attractions and other experiences on offer within the e-mail.

In this way, consumer prospects on our database in the Edinburgh area were targeted earlier this month with a My Scotland/Perfect Day e-mail promoting the new summer Edinburgh-Oban Sunday day trip offer currently available from Scotrail. The highlight feature links to further coverage at the Perfect Day website.

The **My Scotland campaign** aims to grow the number of day and overnight trips taken within Scotland by the home market, and is expected to generate **£7.5 million** for the national economy. Around 3 million Scots will be reached by the campaign during its run.

Scotland itself is an important market for Scottish tourism, and its potential is growing. Over **40% of trips were taken by Scottish residents last year**, with overnight stays from January to June increasing by 6.8% (173,000 trips) compared to the same period in 2008.

Other news in brief

eatBute pitched to 1,200 overseas journalists

A significant part of VisitScotland's activity to support the current Year of Food & Drink is our work with the global travel media.

Today, around 1,200 travel writers in long-haul and European markets were sent a monthly update with consumer news stories from across Scotland, all of them on the theme of food and drink. September's eatBute festival is among the culinary events highlighted in the update.

Duke and Duchess hail success of European campaign

The Duke and Duchess of Argyll are currently among the 'real Scots' faces promoting Scotland as part of VisitScotland's £1.25 million touring campaign in Europe.

They have welcomed the news that Lufthansa's new direct service from Dusseldorf to Inverness is close to selling out in July and August and say that the benefits are being felt in Inveraray too.

"We are seeing a great rise in foreign visitors, in particular German and Italians, with many bringing their families as well.

"Already, June saw a rise of 6.9% in trade, and we're really hopeful about the rest of the summer being a similar story," they said.

The annual European touring campaign is VisitScotland's biggest and most successful in our key European markets—Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Belgium and the Netherlands—and last year delivered an **additional £85m to the national economy**.