

MARKETING PEAK DISTRICT & DERBYSHIRE

News release

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OVERSEAS TOURISM BOOST FOR PEAK DISTRICT AND DERBYSHIRE

Around 50 travel industry buyers and journalists from the UK's largest and most valuable overseas markets – including high spenders such as China and the Gulf countries – have been discovering the delights of the Peak District and Derbyshire.

Representatives from key tourism targets such as The Netherlands, Belgium and the USA have been touring highlights of the area as diverse as Buxton Opera House, Bolsover Castle, Chatsworth, The Heights of Abraham and Thornbridge Hall and Brewery as part of VisitBritain's annual flagship travel trade event ExploreGB.

VisitBritain joined forces with official area tourist board Marketing Peak District & Derbyshire to defy severe winter weather and bring four overseas parties to enjoy a taste of what the Peak District and Derbyshire has to offer both groups and individual visitors, comprising:

- Dutch and Belgian travel industry buyers (March 4 and 5)
- USA travel trade buyers (March 4)
- Gulf countries travel trade buyers (March 5)
- Chinese journalists, social media specialists and influencers (March 7)

All the visits were tailored to complement face-to-face business done by more than 280 international travel buyers from 29 countries with more than 330 tourism suppliers from across the UK, including Marketing Peak District & Derbyshire, at ExploreGB, held in NewcastleGateshead on March 1 and 2.

As well as visiting key attractions, some of the groups stayed overnight to sample the area's varied accommodation offer, including The Old Hall Hotel in Buxton and The New Bath Hotel & Spa in Matlock Bath.

The programme offered the tourist board a welcome opportunity to build on work it is already doing in close partnership with Derbyshire County Council and Derby City Council to attract more Chinese visitors to the Peak District and Derbyshire, including:

- Training and support as part of VisitBritain's GREAT China Welcome campaign
- Building links with Hino Travel, a Chinese inbound travel agent, to create itineraries for everyone from businesspeople and VIPs to students and first-time group travellers
- Working with Marketing Manchester and other partners to bring more staying Chinese visitors to northern England using Manchester Airport as a gateway for direct flights to and from Beijing
- Hosting a fact-finding visit from the Anhui Tourism Bureau, scheduled for June 2018

"All these initiatives reflect our commitment to working closely with VisitBritain, local councils and a range of other partners to sell the Peak District and Derbyshire as a world-class destination on a global stage," said Jo Dilley, Managing Director, Marketing Peak District & Derbyshire.

"By targeting high-spending markets such as China, we can bring in more staying visitors from overseas, bringing more money into the local and regional economy and helping a wide range of visitor-focused businesses to flourish."

China is the world's most valuable outbound tourism market, and council leaders in Derbyshire have been strengthening international links with Anhui Province.

They hosted a delegation from the region to explore how the two areas could work together in the future on trade, education, culture, tourism and skills.

In November last year tourism and business representatives from Derbyshire County Council visited China to showcase the county at the Huangshan International Tourism Festival and the China International Industry Fair.

Leader of Derbyshire County Council Councillor Barry Lewis said: "Culture and tourism is an essential part of the local economy, employing almost 28,000 people and worth more than £2 billion in visitor spend.

"We share Marketing Peak District & Derbyshire's ambitions to promote Derbyshire and tourism to overseas markets to generate new growth, investment and trade opportunities for our businesses. This latest work as part of ExploreGB builds on the links we've been forging with China.

"China's interest in the UK is clearly growing, and we want Derbyshire to be at the forefront of its thinking when it comes to overseas travel and investment in business and industry."

Ends.

For further details, please contact Janette Sykes, PR Manager, Marketing Peak District & Derbyshire, at janette.sykes@marketingpdd.com, or on 07792 924839.

Note to Editors

A high-resolution image is attached for both print and digital media. Caption: VisitBritain Beijing representative Jo Ma (centre) with Chinese journalists, social media specialists and influencers who visited Bakewell, Chatsworth and Edensor during a whistle-stop tour of the Peak District and Derbyshire on Wednesday March 7.

The Peak District and Derbyshire's visitor economy currently supports almost 28,000 jobs and is worth £2 billion a year.

Marketing Peak District & Derbyshire's mission is to develop and grow a successful and sustainable tourism economy, working closely with a wide range of partners to make the Peak District and Derbyshire the destination of choice – regionally, nationally and globally.

Research by VisitBritain reveals that overseas visits to the UK are forecast to top 40 million for the first time in 2018, reaching 41.7 million – up 4.4 per cent on 2017. Spending by overseas visitors in the UK is forecast to reach £26.9 billion in 2018, up 6.8 per cent.

Tourism is worth £127 billion to the UK economy, creating jobs and boosting economic growth across its nations and regions. For more information, including details about Explore GB, visit <https://www.visitbritain.org/>. For further details about the Chinese tourism market, visit <https://www.visitbritain.org/markets/china>.