

## Case Study:

# East Midlands Food Festival

### Supporting the largest regional food festival in the UK

Several years ago, Leicester Shire Promotions set up the Melton Promotions board with key local partners to offer a district-focused, representative body for tourism businesses in Melton Mowbray. Melton Promotions was the catalyst for a major re-branding exercise to position Melton Mowbray as 'the UK's Rural Capital of Food & Drink'.

This new branding was based on the EU protected status of the Melton Mowbray Pork Pies and Stilton Cheese – since officially linked to the geographic area of Melton Mowbray – along with the rich and comprehensive range of local produce offered by suppliers, restaurants and cafes in the area.

The campaign has been highly successful and has led to significant amounts of national press coverage and a considerably enhanced profile for the district as a major UK food and drink hub.

### Melton Mowbray – home to the famous East Midlands Food Festival

The status of Melton Mowbray as the UK Rural Capital of Food & Drink was further strengthened by the establishment of the East Midlands Food Festival in 2004.

In October 2009, the annual Festival was held in the grounds of the splendid Brooksby Hall - the award winning 16th century hunting lodge, located near Melton Mowbray. With over 200 stalls and attracting 14,000 visitors, the East Midlands Food and Drink Festival is the largest regional celebration of British food and drink in the country.

Local produce available at the Festival included succulent beef, tender pork, speciality cheeses, freshly baked bread, homemade soups, flavoured oils, cakes, chocolates and honey, found alongside exotic offerings from India to the Mediterranean.

The weekend also featured a wide variety of demonstrations in the Rangemaster Cookery Demonstration Theatre from names such as TV chef Rachel Green and British BBQ team member, Viv Harvey. Teresa Bovey showed visitors how to make 'Meals in Minutes' and renowned Dickinson & Morris pie maker Stephen Hallam provided a hands on masterclass in making an authentic Melton Mowbray Pork Pie.

### Developing the Festival as an attraction for short break visitors

Leicester Shire Promotions has been a primary supporter of the event since its inception. For the 2009 festival, senior representatives from Leicester Shire Promotions provided ongoing project development support and assistance to the East Midlands Food Festival Steering Group to develop and progress major tourism investment and product development.

In addition to tourism advice and the development of short break package ideas, Leicester Shire Promotions also co-ordinated the sale of tickets via its Tourist Information Centre in Town Hall Square, Leicester, and the eshop online ticketing facility at [www.goleicestershire.com](http://www.goleicestershire.com). For the 2009 event, the TIC sold 1,140 commission-free tickets, over 50 per cent of which were sold online.

### A slice of the pie awards

Leicester Shire Promotions has also supported the development of the British Pie Awards, held annually in Melton Mowbray. The awards, co-ordinated by the Melton Mowbray Pork Pie Association, are gaining in stature as a national event, with press coverage ranging from BBC's The One Show through to the Financial Times newspaper.



Melton Mowbray



East Midlands Food Festival

### Showcase for UK coach tour operators

For 2009, organisers of the event, the Melton Mowbray Food Partnership, introduced a new groups package including free places for coach drivers and event organisers, free parking, nearby drop off point, a complimentary Meet and Greet service and, exclusively for pre-booked visitors, a new discount voucher booklet with special offers and reductions off stall holder produce.

To take advantage of the interest from group travel organisers in the East Midlands Food Festival, a familiarisation visit for representatives of 15 of the leading Coach Tour Operators in the UK was arranged. The 'Tastes of Melton Mowbray' trip was organised by Leicester Shire Promotions with support from local tourism partners and presented an ideal opportunity to showcase the Festival and wider area as an inspiring choice for future group travel visits.

The 'Tastes of Melton Mowbray' familiarisation trip included a visit to the East Midlands Food and Drink Festival, along with guided tours of Belvoir Brewery, Melton Mowbray town centre and Ye Olde Pork Pie Shoppe. The trip was supported by Hidden England and developed in partnership with Lincolnshire Tourism.

### Central to development of food and drink proposition

Stephen Hallam is Managing Director of Dickinson & Morris, member of the Melton Food Partnership and part of the Steering Group for the East Midlands Food Festival. Stephen said: "The consolidation and development of the Melton Mowbray food and drink proposition continues to go from strength to strength.

"Leicester Shire Promotions was key to the inception of the whole branding exercise that started the ball rolling and continues to provide linkages throughout the year – not only with their promotion of the Food Festival but with additional activity ranging from food-related short break campaigns and group travel, through to supporting the Melton-based British Pie Awards and raising the profile of the area and its products through national PR."