

## **NEW EURO CAMPAIGN CELEBRATES CROSS CHANNEL CULTURE**

A multi-million pound campaign promoting Kent and the Nord-Pas de Calais as visitor destinations and celebrating their shared cultural, heritage and sporting interests has been launched in Brussels.

In their first joint venture of the new Greet the World campaign, Visit Kent joined the Nord-Pas de Calais at the five-day Zenith travel show in the city to become the only UK destination being promoted at the exhibition.

The combined Visit Kent and Nord Pas de Calais stand, serving apple juice from Biddenden Vineyard in Kent proved a popular addition to the annual exhibition, which features destinations from across the world and attracts more than 32,000 visitors.

The three-year £4.2 million European Union Interreg IVA-funded Greet the World campaign is aiming to promote the two areas together in the run-up to the London Games in 2012 and create a lasting legacy for the tourism industry.

Both Kent and the Nord Pas de Calais will be hosting training camps for competitors taking part in the Games as well as international visitors attending the Games and taking advantage of cross-Channel carriers to explore local attractions and destinations during their stay.

The Greet the World campaign was formally launched at a special reception for the media, travel trade and tourism experts from the two regions at the official residence of the British Ambassador to Belgium, Dr Jonathan Brenton, who pledged his support for the new programme.

Guests were served with local produce from both areas, including Kent cheeses and sparkling wine. Dr Brenton was presented with a hamper of local delicacies from the two regions..

Sandra Matthews-Marsh, Chief Executive of Visit Kent, said that thanks to European funding, made available through the 2 Seas Interreg IVA, the Greet the World campaign will maximise the tourism opportunities presented by London 2012 and create a lasting legacy on both sides of the English Channel.

“The London Games will be the biggest event in the world and they will be on our doorstep. We are keen to ensure that we maximise the benefits to our regions and we are looking for outcomes beyond the Olympics.

“Through our Come and Play initiative we are raising awareness of our shared sporting, cultural and heritage interests and destinations and encouraging local people and visitors to share and explore these – both in Kent and in Northern France.

“Our Nice to Meet You initiative will build on our joint programmes ensuring the highest standards of tourism delivery through our people. These include expanding both our Greeters programmes, promoting green and sustainable tourism, and working together on popular events for local people in Kent and in the Nord Pas de Calais – such as the My Kent Big Weekend, which has grown out of our Kent Big Day Out.

“All activities in these two initiatives will feed into our third – Come Again. This is our drive to ensure that all our programmes are effective not only in the short term but build a legacy. This legacy will bring sustained prosperity by increasing the contribution tourism makes to the local economies in both regions for years to come,” she said.

More than 30 million people cross the English Channel each year taking advantage of Eurostar, the Channel Tunnel and ferry services.

Greet the World will be encouraging people travelling between Brussels, Paris and London to spend more time exploring the many destinations to be discovered en route through the Nord-Pas de Calais and in Kent.



The Greet the World logo representing a rope linking shared cultures and heritage across the Channel



The British Ambassador to Belgium, Dr Jonathan Brenton, savours the popular Maroilles cheese presented to him at the launch of Greet the World by Sandra Matthews- Marsh, Visit Kent Chief Executive, pictured left, and Elisabeth Laurent, Head of Communications for the Comite Regional de Tourisme Nord-Pas de Calais

- Visit Kent Limited is a public/private sector partnership supported by Kent County Council, Medway Council, the district and borough councils, Tourism South East and the leading sector tourism businesses in Kent. Visit Kent champions Kent's £2.5 billion tourism industry by targeting UK and overseas markets, improving quality and skills, and growing investment in the tourism product.
- Greet the World is part of the Kent Campaign for the 2012 Olympic Games, a partnership led and managed by Kent County Council to maximise the benefits and long term legacy to the County off the back of the 2012 Games.

The award winning Campaign primarily works across eight sectors, including tourism, sport, the arts, and education. Further details can be found at [www.kentsport.org/london2012](http://www.kentsport.org/london2012) <<http://www.kentsport.org/london2012>>

*For further media information, please contact Delphine Houlton or Andrew Metcalf, at Maxim, tel: 01892 513033*