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VISIT KENT WOWS GERMAN GROUP TRAVEL TRADE

The number of German group visits to Kent and Medway has leaped by 516 per cent following successful targeting of the country's travel trade industry.

For the past four years Visit Kent has attended the German RDA-Workshop, which attracts more than 11,200 group leisure and coach tour companies.

For the past three years Kent has been the only UK destination represented at the major European travel trade fair in Cologne.

Visit Kent Marketing Manager Lynnette Clark led the team promoting the county, and its many attractions, to group travel organisers.

The Kent and Medway German trade fair team included representatives from seven Visit Kent business partners – Canterbury Cathedral, English Heritage, Hever Castle, Eurotunnel, P&O Ferries, Medway Council and the University of Kent.

Sandra Matthews-Marsh, Chief Executive of Visit Kent, said: "This is a perfect example of how working in partnership enables Kent tourism, leisure and hospitality businesses to take part in trade exhibitions which no company can afford to undertake on its own.

“Buyers were delighted with our team approach showcasing such a wide range of what Kent and Medway has to offer.

“Tourism is vital to the economy of Kent and Medway. It supports more than 3,000 small and medium size businesses and 50,600 jobs. Our 45 million visitors each year contribute £2.5 billion directly to the local economy.”

Earlier this year Visit Kent, a public private sector partnership, was named Destination Marketing Organisation of the Year by UKInbound – the body representing businesses with an interest in inbound tourism including tour operators and suppliers – beating off strong opposition from such high-profile competitors as Visit London.

Therese Heslop, Head of Visitor Services at Canterbury Cathedral, said: “A typical German wholesale coach operator brings 1,100 groups to the UK each year. One wholesale operator alone has doubled its volume of group visits to Canterbury Cathedral in the past three years directly as a result of the relationships we have built by attending the German trade fair.”

Christina Ott, of JAC Travel, a regular visitor to the German trade fair, said: “ Visit Kent and partners attend RDA each year which provides valuable help to JAC Travel as an incoming agent into the UK.

“Visit Kent is raising awareness of the region and supports us by providing a wide range of information for our German clients. With no other UK Tourist organisation present at RDA, Visit Kent and partners do an outstanding job representing the Kent area.”

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- 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.

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