



3 February 2011

GROUP VISIT SET TO BOOST TOURISM IN KENT AND MEDWAY

More than 250 group travel organisers and suppliers from across the UK have been exploring destinations in Kent and Medway.

The Group Travel Organisers Association (GTOA) held its national conference and annual meeting in the county for the first time and members were introduced to new and established internationally-renowned attractions and local produce.

Visit Kent investors and partners took part in a trade exhibition during the conference held at the Ashford International Hotel and some introduced delegates to their attractions in a series of familiarisation visits.

Conference guests were welcomed to the county by Amanda Cottrell, Visit Kent Chairman, who highlighted many new and forthcoming destinations including the No1 Smithery maritime museum at The Historic Dockyard Chatham, Turner Contemporary, the new Marlowe Theatre and this year's Folkestone Triennial.

During their stay, delegates visited The Historic Dockyard Chatham, Rochester, Dover Castle, Walmer Castle, Penshurst Place, Quex Park, the RAF Manston Spitfire and Hurricane Memorial Museum, Brogdale, Canterbury Cathedral and Shepherd Neame Visitor Centre.

Sandra Matthews-Marsh, chief executive at Visit Kent, said: “Group travel organisers are very important to tourism, leisure and hospitality businesses in Kent and Medway.

“So this was an excellent opportunity for us to showcase our many destinations and, with the help of our investors and partners, enable group travel organisers to experience destinations and our stunning countryside for themselves.

“From the feedback we received during the conference, I am confident many will be bringing their groups back to Kent – either to visit our new and leading attractions or to take advantage of the many themed itineraries that we can help develop to match the interests of their parties.”

Phil Moon, Group Travel Organiser Association chairman, described the conference as one of the most successful in the association’s history.

“The undoubted success of the event was very much due to the superb support from Visit Kent who worked tirelessly with their tourism partners to provide numerous possible destinations for our group travel organisers. I have every confidence that a large number of them will return with their groups to this beautiful part of the UK in the months and years ahead,” he said.