

Press release – with pics

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WELCOME TEAM SEE RISE IN CRUISE VISITORS

Visit Kent's Cruise Welcome crew has helped wave after wave of Dover cruise visitors so far this season – up more than 50 per cent on last year's figures.

The four-man tourism team has provided assistance to more than 11,500 Port of Dover visitors since March this year, up from 7,000 in 2010. Their busiest day saw 1,300 guests stop off at the Cruise Port Welcome desk seeking useful tips on the top destinations in the coastal town and across the county.

Ships' crews are also catered for and receive a warmer welcome at Dover than any other port in the UK. They are invited to pick up a unique Crew Pass offering them free entry to a range of attractions.

Sandra Matthews-Marsh, Chief Executive of Visit Kent, said: "We are very proud of the professional and dedicated Kent Cruise Welcome staff, who add value to passengers and crew members' experience of arriving at Dover.

"I am delighted that more than 11,500 visitors have turned to the team for help and advice so far this season, a figure that clearly reflects our commitment to Kent and further boosting the local tourism industry.

"We are keen to build upon this success and have helped train more Blue Badge Tourist Guides, who can all speak a foreign language, to help meet the increased demand from the new ships."

The Port of Dover now offers a wider range of cruise liners and operators than ever before, with the new additions including Holland America Line's luxury cruise to New York.

Kate O Hara, Head of Commercial and Marketing at Port of Dover, said: "The UK cruise business is blossoming, catering for hundreds of thousands of cruise enthusiasts each year. Dover Cruise Terminals is continuing to encourage this growth in popularity with holidays to suit all tastes and budgets.

"Dover Port is also delighted to have welcomed the extremely popular Aida, Ibercrueros, Pullmantur, Nippon Maru, Costa, and

Phoenix Reisen all with passengers eager to explore Dover and the surrounding areas, that ultimately contribute significantly to the Kent economy.

“Expert advice given from the Kent Cruise and Welcome team ensure passengers are equipped with a vast array of attractions and options to suit all ages and interests and is a great service that we regularly refer to when promoting Dover to new and existing Cruise Lines.”

Visit Kent and the Port of Dover are key members of the Kent Cruise Partnership, which also includes English Heritage, Leeds Castle, Canterbury Cathedral, Dover District Council and The Kings Ferry Ltd. The partnership has been welcoming cruise passengers to Kent for 12 years.

For further information about the Visit Kent Cruise Welcome visit www.visitkent.co.uk/cruise.

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Picture captions:

Sandra Matthews-Marsh.jpg – Sandra Matthews-Marsh, Chief Executive of Visit Kent

CRU850.jpg - Cruise ship and white cliffs

CRU80.jpg - Cruise ship alongside Cruise Terminal

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