

Balancing Tourism and Heritage – a UK Perspective

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Tourism is essential to the UK's economy contributing £97 billion, around 8.9% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and supporting tens of thousands of businesses. It is the third highest export earner and contributes £3 billion to the Exchequer and is growing at 3% per annum, a key economic driver in the UK. *Britain is GREAT*, the UK's campaign, which highlights this, is currently being seen in China.

The Tourism industry is heavily linked to heritage and culture in which **Historic Towns** play a significant role. **Heritage is a key reason for 2/3 of visitors choosing to visit the UK, and the single most important motivation for city trips, and attracting £4.5 billion spending.** The importance of authenticity in the product, the service, and the experience needs to be recognised also with visitors wanting to see and to experience the places they visit.

'There is a sense of history everywhere- the past, present and future – I will definitely come again'

One of the most important group of heritage assets the UK has to offer is its famous buildings and monuments which come under the term **Built Heritage**. Examples of these include Tower Bridge; the Houses of Parliament; Castles and Stately Homes; 47,000 Churches and 56 Cathedrals; 21 UNESCO World Heritage Sites; **Heritage Cities** like Oxford and Bath, 374,000 Listed Buildings, 9,000 Conservation Areas, 20,000 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, and 1,600 historic Parks and Gardens.

The UK's **Cultural Heritage** is also a key asset. From the greats of literature and drama such as William Shakespeare and Charles Dickens who is celebrating his 200th anniversary, to academia at Oxford and Cambridge. Not to forget our Museums which hold some of the most well known artefacts and works of art in the world.



The UK's countryside plays its part with 33 designated sites of Outstanding Natural Beauty within the UK, 4,000 sites of special scientific interest and 600 miles of Coastline.

UK Customs are also part of the UK's heritage offer with the British Pub and Tea Shops; Sport, as the home of Cricket and Rugby and the London 2012 Olympics which is taking place at historic sites such as at Wimbledon and Windsor as well as the new Olympic Park. Our Royal Heritage is also key and this year we celebrate with Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee and 60 years on the throne.

Contemporary Culture But the UK is not a museum piece with Music and Arts Festivals, the West End Theatre, Film locations, and Shopping whether Bond Street of Bicester Village all play their part.

Investing in Heritage

Case Study: Oxford Castle & Prison

This Five acre unused heritage site in centre of the City with 11th century Castle and 19th century prison buildings has been transformed into a commercial mixed use development with a hotel, bars and restaurants, an art gallery, a heritage visitor attraction, and education centre. The main prison wing has been converted into hotel bedrooms to create a 'cool' Malmaison Hotel. The £40 million scheme was a joint partnership between the County Council, private development and Oxford Preservation Trust and was opened by the Queen.

<http://www.oxfordpreservation.org.uk/projects/castleyard>; www.malmaison.com/Oxford



Positive Heritage and Tourism should be inclusive and inviting, engaging, distinctive, fun and appealing, viable and efficient. Tourism is not just about economics, and it is not just about marketing, it is also about managing. The UK is developing a product across all its many and various parts and areas of the four countries. Understanding and maximising the contribution that heritage can make to tourism, and tourism can make to heritage. Maintaining and enhancing the Visitor experience and providing a common vision for all partners to work towards.

Heritage & Tourism Management Increasing understanding amongst decision makers and stakeholders for economic, social and environmental value of effective destination management. Bringing together the variety of interdependent co-existing partners that together can make a destination greater than the sum of the parts. Sharing best practice amongst strategic planners and practitioners to ensure high quality integrated Destination Management strategies.



Destination Management is vital. It provides a collective and holistic approach, enabling the highest quality visitor experience, allowing the offer to continue to develop and adapt and to encourage sustainable and higher returns. A joined up approach allows all those involved in heritage and tourism to reduce costs through greater efficiency, improving quality, creating new jobs and strengthening local economies. Creating a co-ordinated and focused destination management improves the performance of local visitor economy and general wider local benefits. Visitors will gain from an enhanced experience at authentic destinations. Residents will feel the benefits of tourism in a way that does not undermine their local sense of place.

Well managed Destination Management = wise growth and better visitor economy. It accelerates and attracts new investment, adds value through jobs, brings new talent and stimulates innovation. Great destinations are great places to live and work as well as visit.