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News round



Secret of Success for Fiona's Solway Tours

It has taken Fiona Stoddart of Secret Solway Tours less than a year from launching her themed tours to the travel trade to reaping the success.

Her tours have been so well received that, due to demand, she is now introducing clients to new tours of the lesser-discovered routes of the north-west Cumbrian coast, and in 2020 will be sharing the secrets of the Solway, in south-west Scotland.

Fiona explains her whirlwind success: "As a local historian and academic, I have long had a passion for the culture, history and natural heritage of the Solway Coast.

"Living in West Cumbria for 18 years, working as a lecturer in sustainable tourism, I have been immersed not only in this stunning landscape but have developed my knowledge and understanding of the unique characteristics of this less-explored corner of Cumbria.

"I began developing my ideas for tours of this area over two years ago but what I did not expect was the speed at which

the travel trade would want to adopt my itineraries and introduce them to their clients. The past year has been phenomenal and I'm already taking bookings for 2020 as the interest continues to grow."

Fiona has realised there is a real hunger for fresh ideas and new places to explore. That interest has led her to create itineraries on the Scottish side of the Solway Coast in Dumfries and Galloway — another area yet to be discovered by many and with a wealth of stories to tell as well as breathtaking scenery and peaceful roads to meander.

has been building her connections as she develops her new itineraries for visitors to explore during 2020 and beyond. An apt time to be introducing tours of the Scottish Solway Coast, being Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters.

Find out more at www.solwayconnections.co.uk or email fiona@solwayconnections.co.uk or call 0749 4489901.

round-up

New transport exhibition opens at Museum of Liverpool

For the first time in 20 years, highlights from National Museums Liverpool's vehicle collection will go on display at the Museum of Liverpool. Liverpool on Wheels: from horses to horsepower (February 14 – November 1) will offer a unique insight into the fabulous array of vehicles built in and around the city.

Visitors to this fascinating exhibition can expect to see bicycles, carts and cars. From a Rushton Velocipede (1870) to a Range Rover Evoque (2012), each object is used as a gateway to tell the story of Liverpool's impressive transport history. Also, on display are a bright yellow Ford Escort MK1 (complete with fluffy dice), a horse-drawn milk float, and a rare AER motorcycle.

More information: www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/wheels



Tour de Yorkshire locations announced

The eight host locations for the pro major international cycle race held in Yorkshire annually have been announced by organisers Welcome to Yorkshire and the Amaury Sport Organisation.

The stages will take place between Thursday April 30 and Sunday May 3 and will either start or finish in:

- Barnsley: The third time in succession the town has been chosen.
- Beverley: Both the 2016 and 2018 editions started here.
- Halifax: The start location for the final stage of the last two editions.
- Huddersfield: The first time the Tour de Yorkshire has visited, although the Tour de France did pass through in 2014.
- Leeds: Three of the last five editions have concluded in the city.
- Leyburn: Making its debut as a host location, although the riders received a rapturous reception when the tour passed through in 2018.
- Redcar: Another new host location for



2020 and the most northerly location the race has ever visited.

- Skipton: Three previous races have passed through but the town has never hosted a stage start or finish.

More information: www.letour.yorkshire.com/

CTA COACH TOURISM ASSOCIATION

By Helen Bowron,
Director of Communications

It won't be long before two important things will be apparent. One, of course, will be the future of Brexit; the other is that Christmas will be but a memory, whatever your way of celebrating that time might be.

For me, having spent the previous 12 months working on behalf of the Coach Tourism Association, it was the sheer level of positive enthusiasm that so many of our members demonstrated at our Christmas get-together in Coventry. And don't forget, this was a long time before important political and Brexit decisions were made.

What many of them did tell me at our Christmas outing to Coventry, was that the CTA's social gathering during the year, with their opportunities to network with fellow professionals, swap notes and write a few of them down when good ideas were discussed, helped them enormously in planning for the future, and realising that they „were not alone“.

This year is going to have its challenges and much is yet to be decided about the minutiae of cross-border business, but our members also know that there is considerable pent-up demand out there for well-organised coach holidays. There are also many under-used opportunities in this country to be made the most of, as our recent fam trip to Devon proved.

So, if you are a coach tour operator, attraction supplier or accommodation provider, why not plug into the CTA's remarkable knowledge bank and join us as a member this year by contacting me at helen.bowron@coachtourismassociation.co.uk