

We remain a strong partnership

The coach and group travel industries have been locked together in a mutually beneficial partnership ever since the first coach operator thought he'd make some money from organising 'a party' and the attraction painted some white lines on the 'Tarmac with a sign saying 'Coach Park'.

As a look through these pages will confirm, the industries are in good health. There's a greater range on offer than ever before and plenty of expansion happening throughout the country.

Indeed, if we consider the eye-watering costs of developing a new high-tech ride at an amusement park, or the renovation of a much-loved heritage building, none of this would be possible if those organisations were not confident of a profitable future.

And, having now had time to immerse myself in the day to day business of coach touring, I think it is fair to say that Coach Tourism Association (CTA) members not only feel similarly bullish about the forthcoming years, but have been putting their money where their mouths are regarding investment in new vehicles.

For these reasons, when organising groups privately, I would always recommend partnering with a CTA Coach Operator, to gain their expertise and commercial advantages. They can help in practical itinerary planning or simple things like knowing which restaurants can offer groups menu choices.



Talking of shrewd judgement, it would be irresponsible not to reflect on the changes and challenges facing both the travel sectors in 2019. Coach operators will have some difficult and potentially 'business changing' decisions to make about the effects of London's Ultra-Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ) which could lead to increased costs for group travel. At the same time the entire tourism business will face the big unknown of Brexit.

Equally we must not forget the positives. Many industry leaders say that there is no reason to think that Brexit will adversely affect tourism and, even without the new Euro 6 standard coaches, the industry has a positive eco story to tell. Existing coaches represent a very green way of taking 50 plus people around the country. Post ULEZ this becomes an even stronger message.

On a personal level, and after my many years of running Encore Tickets, I am getting a great deal of satisfaction from being involved at a nuts and bolts level of an industry I have worked in partnership with for so long. From a CTA perspective I am confident that our coach operator and supplier members will see domestic group business grow in the coming year.

We remain 'locked together' and long may that continue. Enjoy finding new ideas and inspiration within the pages of this year's Coaching Venues & Excursions Guide.

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CTA
COACH TOURISM
ASSOCIATION

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