

NEWS RELEASE

16 March 2010

Tourism South East go back to their roots in Kent for British Tourism Week

The team at Tourism South East have been getting back to their roots and working on the ground with tourism businesses as part of the annual British Tourism Week which takes place from 15 - 21 March 2010. This key week in the annual tourism calendar sees events taking place nationwide to celebrate and raise awareness of the importance of the UK's £114 billion tourism industry, Britain's fifth largest industry accounting for 8.2% of the country's gross domestic product.

Kent will benefit from four Tourism South East employees getting back to their roots including amateur dramatics enthusiast and Partnership Director Simon Matthews who went back in time to take on a new role a Dickens World in Chatham Maritime. The National Trust also got involved, putting team members to work in preparations for the Spring season at Smallhythe Place in Tenterden and Chartwell, Westerham.

John Williams, Chairman of Tourism South East got involved at Port Lympne Wild Animal Park in Hythe, finalists in this year's Enjoy England Awards for Excellence. "British Tourism Week is a celebration of how diverse the UK tourism industry and it emphasizes just how important tourism is to the British economy. Here in the South East our 'back to our roots' initiative has helped us to better understand the local level issues of operating tourism businesses which collectively support more than 300,000 jobs in the region."

Bob O'Conner, Managing Director of Port Lympne added: "Staff at Howletts and Port Lympne Wild Animal Parks are justly proud of what they give back to the South East area. Not only do the parks offer two top class visitor attractions but they also provide significant employment opportunities to local communities and beyond. We were delighted to work in partnership with

Tourism South East and to show John Williams the hard work that goes on behind the scenes at Port Lympne and The Aspinall Foundation, the charity which manages both parks. I hope he enjoyed getting involved!”

To find out more about British Tourism Week visit www.britishtourismweek.com

For more information about Tourism South East visit www.tourismsoutheast.com

For further information please contact Hannah Payne on 023 8062 5471, hpayne@tourismse.com

ENDS

Note to Editors:

Photos show John Williams at Port Lympne Wild Animal Park, for more photos or further information please contact Hannah Payne on 023 8062 5471, hpayne@tourismse.com

Tourism South East is the official tourist board for South East England, covering Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East and West Sussex, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire and Surrey.

The South East is the largest region for tourism in Britain outside of London, worth in excess of £12 billion p.a. to the regional economy (7% of regional GVA) supporting over 300,000 jobs.