

**NEWS RELEASE**

**10 February 2010**

**Group Travel Fairs 2010 off to a successful start**

Tourism South East has commenced its popular series of Group Travel Fairs for 2010 with a successful opening exhibition which took place at the stunning Hall Place and Gardens in Bexley, Kent on Saturday 6 February 2010.

The free entry trade fair saw over 300 visitors from leading travel organisations arranging trips for groups from 10 to 600 people.

Elaine Pearce, Travel Trade Manager and show organiser at Tourism South East said, 'we have been very pleased at the success of the first fair, and glad to see such a positive attendance. There was very much a buzz around the venue throughout the show, strengthened by the presence of theatrical Dickens characters interacting with visitors as part of the celebrations for Dickens 2010. Very positive feedback has been received by both visitors and exhibitors.' Head of Marketing at Tourism South East, Karen Roebuck, commented 'I am pleased to see the fairs continuing to be such a valuable opportunity for businesses and group travel organisers within the tourism industry to meet each other face to face and discuss their needs directly.'

Lola Andrews from Mapledurham exhibited at the show, 'it was the best show we have been to in ages. A good venue which brought in lots of very interested people. We were worried we were going to run out of leaflets! I am sure this show will produce lots of bookings.'

There are still plenty more opportunities for visitors to come and see what South East England has to offer groups with two more fairs being held at other venues within the region over the coming months. The next fair is due to be held at Milestones Living History Museum in Basingstoke, Hampshire on 20 February followed by another at the River & Rowing Museum in Henley, Oxfordshire on 6 March. This fair will be opened by the Mayor of Henley and will also offer visitors the opportunity to part take in a complimentary ½ hour river boat tour being provided by Hobbs of Henley.

**For further information about the Group Travel Fairs 2010, please contact the Group Travel team on 023 8062 5409 or email Elaine Pearce, [epearce@tourismse.com](mailto:epearce@tourismse.com)  
Register to attend online at [www.grouptravelfairs.co.uk](http://www.grouptravelfairs.co.uk)**

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**Note to Editors:**

Tourism South East's Group Travel Fairs offer the perfect opportunity for group travel organisers to obtain a wide range of information for their future itineraries and tours; including family attractions, accommodation, destinations, refreshment stops, stately homes, tour operators and steam railways. Visitors will be spoilt for choice with over 40 exhibitors at each event from the South East region available to discuss requirements, suggest new and exciting ideas, plus help plan tours.

Tourism South East is a not-for-profit company and is the official tourist board for the region, covering Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey and West Sussex.

Tourism South East receives core funding from SEEDA, and is active in a range of programmes to support the tourism sector in the South East region, which is the second largest outside of London and is worth in excess of £12bn p.a. to the regional economy (7% of regional GVA), and supports over 300,000 jobs.