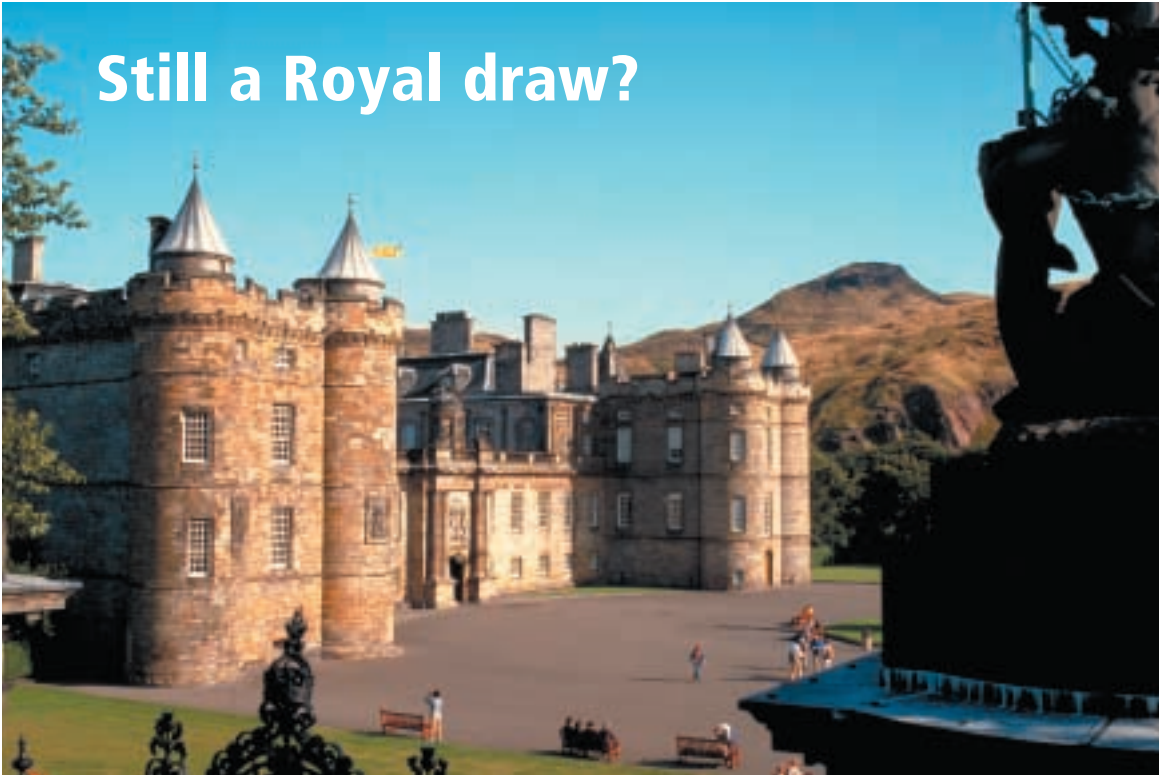


Still a Royal draw?



In the 50 years since the Coronation, Britain's image abroad has evolved significantly. Pomp and pageantry alone are insufficient to draw enough to our shores. VisitBritain's Tom Wright (pictured right) looks at a very modern relationship between Royalty and revenues.



Every year millions of visitors from Britain and overseas enjoy visits to places and events associated with the royal family and earlier kings and queens. Pageantry and royalty have been an intrinsic part of the British tourism experience since the early days of the industry and there are no signs that interest is waning. The Lonely Planet 'Britain' Guide agrees and states that 'lots of people come to Britain because they're enthralled by the royalty'.

VisitBritain estimates that there are 2.1 million jobs in tourism in the UK, some 7 per cent of all people in employment. This means there are more jobs in tourism than in construction or transport, making tourism the UK's sixth most important industry.

As part of this huge industry, the top five royal attractions in the country - the Tower of London, Windsor Castle, Hampton Court Palace, Buckingham Palace and the Palace of Holyroodhouse (pictured above) - alone account for over 4 million visits each year.



Newer royal attractions such as the former Royal Yacht Britannia berthed at Leith in Edinburgh also attract hundreds of thousands of visitors, as do places such as Sandringham House, Kensington Palace, Balmoral (pictured below) and the Royal Mews. Clarence House, which will be The Prince of Wales's official London residence, will open to the public from 6th August to 17th October 2003 and will undoubtedly draw a huge number of visitors.

Of course not only are these heritage attractions highly popular, contemporary attractions such as the Eden Project, the London Eye and the Tate Modern, all only a few years old, now sit alongside the traditional in the top five listing.

VisitBritain, formerly the British Tourist Authority, has been marketing Britain overseas for more than fifty years and - if the visitor attraction figures weren't enough proof - listening to the overseas consumer has taught us that top of the list for the majority



The Royal Yacht Britannia, now berthed at Leith in Edinburgh



of first-time visitors to this country are tourist 'icons' such as royalty and Shakespeare locations.

However, our experience of marketing Britain in twenty seven countries has also taught us that what works in one market does not work in all, and we must adapt our messages according to whether people are first time or repeat visitors and according to a range of lifestyles and life stages.

On any given day, we will be communicating with thousands of potential visitors from around the world.

Depending on their interest we may lead with Hidden Britain, Outdoor Britain, contemporary city culture, British heritage, Walking in Britain, Golfing in Britain, gay and lesbian, sports and activities – the list is endless.

For example, plans are currently underway for a European campaign to promote short breaks in British cities this autumn, a strategy described by Marketing magazine as being 'grounded in common sense'. This

will include cities such as Newcastle/Gateshead, Birmingham, Cardiff, Bristol and Liverpool which were all short listed for European Capital of Culture in 2008. The power of culture and creativity as an engine for regeneration of such cities, and their vibrant nightlife, will be promoted more widely across Europe, all of which is made easier by the growth of low cost carriers.

British movies and TV programmes also play a huge part in image building and are responsible for one in five

overseas visits. Last year's campaign based around Harry Potter was proof of this and led to us receiving the highest ever number of e-mail enquiries in one week, a huge increase in the number of 'walk-ins' to many of our information centres worldwide and unprecedented TV coverage.

Past movies such as Shakespeare in Love, which link heritage and humour, have played well to some of our target





audiences and, this year with Rowan Atkinson and 'Johnny English', the theme again is royalty, and a plot to steal the crown jewels, playing on the image of eccentric Britain.

As discussed earlier, sites associated with royalty are hugely popular among visitors to and within Britain and the engagement in tourism related activity by members of the royal family has given the industry a much needed boost. In 2001, at the height of the foot and mouth outbreak, the Duke of Edinburgh gave the industry tremendous support by hosting part of VisitBritain's programme for the World Travel Leaders Summit. This summit proved to be the turning point in the battle to win back overseas opinion about Britain as a safe destination.

The Prince of Wales undertook a similar role last year when he invited some of VisitBritain's key overseas partners to Highgrove for a private reception as a form of thank you for their support for British tourism during the difficulties experienced by the industry in 2001. As part of VisitBritain's targeted activity programme linked to the Golden Jubilee



celebrations last year, the Prince of Wales also provided the foreword to the Royal Heritage Map distributed in all overseas markets. The campaign was an enormous success and not only promoted Britain's royal heritage but the regional diversity of the whole of Britain's heritage product.

Tourism has also benefited from the Duke of York's export promotion work on behalf of British industry. He has hosted

many events, including a reception organised by Seatrade and VisitBritain on behalf of the Cruise UK consortium, for the world's most influential cruise operators.

More recently, the Princess Royal has been observing the work of VisitBritain's New York call centre and spoke to the British Tourism Interest Group in the USA urging them to see the bigger picture for Britain, work towards the essential recovery of the US market and highlight value-for-money campaigns.

Global awareness of the Golden Jubilee celebrations last June, when scenes of over one million people flocking into the Mall (pictured above) were beamed around the world,



proved an incredible draw for visitors. Indeed, the Golden Jubilee celebrations coupled with the Commonwealth Games and major television advertising by VisitBritain and partners overseas last year, contributed to recovery of 19 per cent in the fourth quarter of last year.

VisitBritain is currently working with the royal household to finalise itineraries and arrangements for a unique Royal Tourism Day on 10 June when all the senior members of the royal family will celebrate Britain's tourism industry through visits to tourism businesses and attractions. In London the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh will together visit Legoland and the Britain and London Visitor Centre on Regent Street. They will also take part in separate visits to the Museum in Docklands, the Design Museum and the Museum of London and the celebration will be rounded off with a reception at Buckingham Palace that evening for leaders of the British tourism industry.

Additional Royal Tourism Day activities involving the other senior royals will take place around the country on 10



June in locations including Edinburgh, Surrey, Sussex, Cumbria, Wales, the West Country, North Yorkshire, Leicester and Oxford.

The royal family's focus on tourism in recent times has given not only a morale boost, but real support to this vital industry. A series of crises and difficulties, only recently compounded by SARS and the war in Iraq, has meant that recovery of inbound tourism, at

least for the first quarter of 2003, has somewhat slowed.

Despite these factors, however, VisitBritain is confident there is a strong latent demand for travel to and within Britain and with two major campaigns already underway at home and in the USA and a third planned for later in the year, prospects for the remainder of 2003 look bright.