

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

JANUARY 2014

3RD EDITION



blue&green
tomorrow

EDITOR'S LETTER

"Travel makes one modest, you see what a tiny place you occupy in the world." Gustave Flaubert

We're kicking off 2014 with the third annual edition of The Guide to Sustainable Tourism, and this year it's more comprehensive than ever.

We have some fascinating features on holidaying at home and abroad; in bustling urban centres and quiet rural communities. At a time when economic, social and environmental pressures are at the forefront of many people's minds at home, it is wrong to think tourism can be ignored in the essential shift to sustainability.

Going to foreign places and not upholding the same high environmental standards you may do at home, such as recycling, not treating the people you meet with respect and leaving your holiday destinations in a poorer social or economic position than you found it are all immoral and unsustainable in the long-term.

The 'leave only your footprint' policy is more necessary than ever. Knowingly or unknowingly we, as tourists, are the biggest polluters, resource squanderers and people harmers. We could so easily be the opposite.

A poll that we have been running on our homepage for the last month makes for interesting reading. Some 43% of respondents said they would be considering the ethical or environmental footprint of their main holiday in 2014, with nearly 10% saying they would be doing so partially.

While this overall figure of 53% is a little lower than last year's poll it remains encouraging. The change is mainly reflective of our broader readership, which is now six times larger than it was in January 2013. It has never been our aim to preach to the converted.

As one of the largest sectors of the economy (and the primary driver of growth in many small countries and island nations), it is little wonder that the likes of the United Nations give tourism such a high priority when it comes to global sustainable development.

On World Tourism Day 2013, UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon said the industry was "especially well-placed to promote environmental sustainability, green growth and our struggle against climate change through its relationship with energy".

After revealing that over a billion people now travel across international borders annually – a huge 4,000% increase on the 25 million who travelled to foreign lands in the 1950s – he added, "Imagine what one act multiplied by one billion can do."

And so, I hand over to you – the reader, the tourist, the traveller, the intrepid explorer, the potential agent of change. Don't stick with the status quo; make your travel different and better.

Experience the wonderful sites you've always wanted to, but do it in a way that balances the real needs of the people you meet and the environment you come into contact with.

A new year; a new look for Blue & Green Tomorrow's guides. We hope you like it and we look forward to your feedback.

Alex Blackburne



Alex Blackburne
Editor, Blue & Green Tomorrow



Photo by ANNA BELLA BETTS

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Photo by ILARIA BERTINI

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MESSAGE FROM THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL BAN KI-MOON FOR WORLD TOURISM DAY 2013

The Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development emphasised that well-designed and well-managed tourism can make a significant contribution to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

One of the world's largest economic sectors, tourism is especially well-placed to promote environmental sustainability, green growth and our struggle against climate change through its relationship with energy.

"Tourism and Sustainable Energy: Powering Sustainable Development" is the theme of this year's World Tourism Day, selected to advance the goals of the 2012 International Year of Sustainable Energy for All. Hundreds of millions of people around the world depend on income from this energy-intensive sector. Sustainable energy will allow tourism to expand while mitigating its impact on the environment.

Many in the tourism industry have already shown leadership in developing and deploying clean energy solutions, cutting energy consumption and carbon emissions in some regions by up to 40% through initiatives such as the Hotel Energy Solutions toolkit developed by the UN World Tourism Organisation and the UN Environment Programme. Other concrete advances include the growing use of energy efficient fuels in air travel, sustainable procurement strategies and increasingly popular carbon offsetting schemes.

Everyone has a role in sustainable tourism. I commend the tourism community for its growing commitment to sustainable energy. I also thank the tourists who play their part by offsetting their own carbon emissions, choosing ecologically friendly destinations and providers, or simply by postponing having their towels laundered. Every action counts. This year, one billion international tourists will travel to foreign destinations. Imagine what one act multiplied by one billion can do. On this World Tourism Day, I appeal to all who work in and enjoy the benefits of this global sector to join in building a more sustainable future for all. 🌱



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THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE

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Topas Ecolodge
in North West
Vietnam

S **USTAINABLE** (*adjective*)
Able to be maintained at a certain rate or level: **sustainable economic growth**
Conserving an ecological balance by avoiding depletion of natural resources: **our fundamental commitment to sustainable development**
www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/sustainable

TOURISM (*noun*)

The commercial organisation and operation of holidays and visits to places of interest: **a national fund for the promotion of tourism**
www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/tourism

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities. Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments.

UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)
www.bit.ly/1hijKtf

ECOTOURISM

Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people.
The International Ecotourism Society
www.ecotourism.org

GEOTOURISM

Tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place – its environment, heritage, aesthetics, and culture and the well-being of its residents.

National Geographic Center for Sustainable Destinations
on.natgeo.com/1cnTVDu

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Tourism that maximises the benefits to local communities, minimizes negative social or environmental impacts and helps local people conserve fragile cultures and habitats or species.

Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism
<http://bit.ly/KkGxXN>

VOLUNTOURISM

A form of tourism in which travellers participate in voluntary work, typically for a charity.

Oxford Dictionaries
<http://bit.ly/Km9Qs9>



An aerial photograph showing a vast, lush green mountain range with deep valleys. In the upper left foreground, the white wing and tail of a commercial airplane are visible, flying over the landscape. The sky is a clear, pale blue with a few wispy clouds. The overall scene conveys a sense of sustainable travel and nature preservation.

TOURISM FOR THE FUTURE WE WANT

Chair of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)
KELLY BRICKER, speaks with Blue & Green Tomorrow
about the potential of tourism to influence how the world operates.

By SETH KIRBY

“Sustaining places sustains us as human beings”

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HAT IS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM?

One of the best definitions of sustainable tourism is that written by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation, which addresses what sustainable tourism actually should be doing.

Sustainable tourism should

1. Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity
2. Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance
3. Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, which contribute to poverty alleviation in those areas

Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building.

Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary.

Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them.

WHAT'S THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY OF RAISING AWARENESS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM TO TRAVELLERS AND HOLIDAYMAKERS?

Through word of mouth. One of the greatest avenues by which people not only learn about other destinations and activities, but actually ‘trust’ the source, is through word of mouth.

Getting sustainable tourism on social media sites, having folks discuss these products on blogs, National Geographic and other forms of popular media really can be effective.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MAKING THE GLOBAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRIES SUSTAINABLE? WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT DOING THIS?

To me, the obvious benefits are that we actually conserve the wonders of the world and the special places of the world that make our planet environmentally and culturally diverse. We can also improve the quality of people’s lives, who are ultimately very dependent on healthy and diverse ecosystems—for human survival.

As the leading economic driver on our planet, tourism has a unique opportunity to influence how the world operates. Sustaining places sustains us as human beings. Without a healthy planet where industries operate, sustaining ecosystem services, where human rights are respected, where quality of life is improved, we really cannot exist long-term.

IS IT CONTRADICTIONARY TO USE AEROPLANES ON A SUSTAINABLE HOLIDAY?

Air travel is a super highway in the sky. We know the many benefits tourism can bring to regions that have limited development alternatives; therefore, we must continue to look at reducing emissions, better technology and improved methods for air travel.

Countries such as Costa Rica are looking at ways to improve offsets and create carbon neutral experiences



for those travelling to their shores, because of their reliance on international tourism. There are no easy solutions, and improvements must be made. Weighing it all out is an important research problem. Would a destination be better off with no international travellers? I don’t think we have the answers just yet.

WHAT IS THE REAL ECONOMIC CASE FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM?

We reached just over one billion travellers last year. Hence, over a billion opportunities to effect positive change. In some economies, income earned from tourism ‘leaks’ out, and as a result does not benefit local communities. When this happens, the economic benefits are realized in other places.

So the economic case for sustainable tourism is that the income generated must recycle into the local community. When this happens, infrastructure is improved, people benefit directly in ancillary businesses, employment improves, and ultimately poverty is reduced.

ONE ARGUMENT AROUND THE FUTURE OF TOURISM IS THAT WE SIMPLY NEED TO HAVE FEWER HOLIDAYS, PARTICULARLY TO THE MOST FAR-FLUNG PLACES ON EARTH. TO BE TRULY SUSTAINABLE. TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE?

I am not sure I agree and would like to continue to pursue this idea through evidence-based research—real evidence one way or the other. The alternatives for some destinations reliant on tourism are not great. I think we need to continue to explore what other development opportunities are available for destinations or locales.

Fewer holidays are not necessarily the answer; most likely it is more important to look at population growth and what we consume overall. Travel is not necessarily the ‘criminal’. It is more likely that increased population with increased demands on the world’s resources will be the cause of our demise.

We need to learn to live within our means, use resources wisely, conserve the ecosystem services

Photo by
SANDER
KLAVER
via stock.xchng



Photo by
JENNY NERLICH
via stock.xchng

upon which human life really depends, develop in a way that does not create a mess for some other location, etc. There are larger issues at stake here, and travelling may not be the worst of it all. However, we must learn to develop travel experiences in a sustainable way, and as an industry we are clearly not all on the same page just yet.

WHAT ARE THE KEY SUSTAINABLE TOURISM TRENDS FOR THE NEXT DECADE?

Great and difficult question. This is really anybody's guess, but given the current conditions, people are going to increase their own knowledge of sustainable products, and therefore become more educated consumers as evidenced in online programmes.

Companies are going to seek sustainable verification and operations to reduce risk, improve marketing appeal to consumers, and reduce costs overall.

The planet will continue to be under siege, and therefore, sustainability in all sectors of society will be a must, because of human reliance on ecosystem

services, industries will continue to look towards efficiency, low impact improvements to their operations and increasing quality of life attributes, which will increase in importance

Products will be designed to increase connection to the environment, and enhance quality of life at the destination level. Sustainable tourism is moving from a product focus to a destination level focus – sustainability in tourism will focus on supply chains, community and region level sustainability

HOW CAN INVESTORS PLAY A ROLE IN ENCOURAGING A SHIFT TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM?

The United Nations Environmental Programme released the Green Economy Report which really addresses this question. Through this report, the UNEP and experts all over the world explore the case for a different approach for development – through a 'green' economy. This explores how we secure resources, supply chains, and consumption and production methods for many industries.



"Travel is not necessarily the 'criminal'. It is more likely that increased population with increased demands on the world's resources is the cause of our own demise"

This is an excellent resource and I would suggest investors review it and really explore the power they have for positive change. Investors can encourage sustainable production, they can create a demand for sustainable development through the creation of guidelines, such as the GSTC Criteria, to promote sustainable development, long-term vision for strong economic growth, social welfare, and also environmental protection.

WHERE SHOULD SOMEONE START IF THEY WANT TO CONSIDER THE ETHICAL OR ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT OF THEIR HOLIDAYS IN 2014?

Ask questions! We also have GSTC recognised certification programmes that have asked many questions for the consumer. For example, certification programmes have looked in detail at sustainable operations, social and environmental criteria that help demonstrate a tourism operation is actually effecting positive change.

Have a look at the GSTC Criteria. Ask questions regarding the contributions back to local communities,

the commitment to the environment and preserving and protecting biodiversity; ask questions concerning human rights, and laws protecting women and children and all members of society from human exploitation; ask what is the destination doing to contribute to quality of life, protecting the planet and committing to a just and democratic world. In the end, we must really ask ourselves: what kind of world do we want?

Kelly Bricker is chair of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council and associate professor at the University of Utah in parks, recreation and tourism.
www.gstcouncil.org



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PETER
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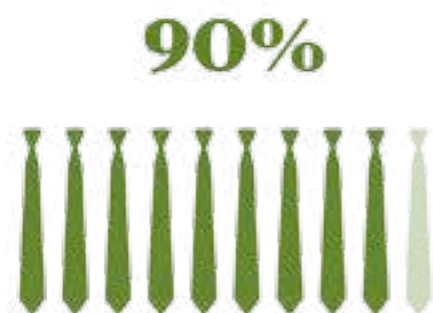
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: THE STATS



of Conde Nast Traveler readers surveyed in 2011 said that travel companies should be responsible for protecting the environment



of TripAdvisor members said in 2012 that they plan to make more eco-friendly choices in the next 12 months, compared to 65% that did so in the past 12 months



of business travellers surveyed in 2008 by Deloitte Consulting say they look "to green while away"



of consumers are willing to pay extra for products and services from socially responsible companies, according to Nielsen Wire survey

47%



of those who responded to a Conde Nast Traveler readers' poll said they are interested in volunteer vacations

68%



of Conde Nast Traveler readers surveyed in 2011 said their hotel choice is influenced by the support the hotel gives to the local community

95%



of business travellers surveyed in 2008 by Deloitte Consulting think that lodging companies should be undertaking 'green' initiatives

30%



of travellers would choose a destination for a trip because it is considered eco-friendly, according to a 2012 TripAdvisor survey

Source: http://www.responsibletravel.org/news/Fact_sheets/Crest_RTI_TrendStats_print_1_4%20%283%29.pdf

WHAT UK TOURISTS BOARDS ARE SAYING ABOUT SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

By TOM REVELL

Photo by
JON WESTRA
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VISIT BRITAIN

Visit Britain says the UK is one of the world's greenest tourist destinations. It argues that the isles' natural assets make it an ideal destination for sustainable tourism, as they can provide experiences with a minimal environmental impact.

The authority provides a list of environmentally friendly accredited accommodation, and encourages tourists to travel responsibly.

It says travellers should try and have car free days, while recycling and being energy efficient when staying in hotels and B&Bs – just as they would when they are at home.

Visitors are also encouraged to participate in local events such as carnivals, fêtes and farmers' markets,

to gain an understanding of – while adding value to – local cultures and environments.

Tourists with a particular desire to look after the British countryside can take a volunteer break through the National Trust, working alongside experts and other volunteers on special projects that range from wildlife conservation to gardening and archaeology.

The National Trust's Working Holidays run from two to seven days, with food and accommodation included in the price – from £35.

Each of Britain's national tourism organisations co-operate to share and develop knowledge to push the sustainable tourism agenda forward, while offering practical advice on sustainability to businesses.

*Read more: <http://bit.ly/1f0JUAy>
www.visitbritain.com*

VISIT ENGLAND

Visit England says that sustainability isn't about doing business differently, it is about doing business better.

The authority cites award-winning hotels such as the Bedruthan and the Scarlet, both in Cornwall, as examples of excellence in this area.

Sustainability, it argues, saves money, reduces business risk, increases profitability and allows the country to appeal to an increasing market of environmentally conscious customers.

In advice to owners of English tourism enterprises, Visit England says that even small steps to sustainability provides access to this wide range of benefits. Many of these steps are low-cost and simple common sense, such as promoting locally sourced sustainable products, using energy efficient light bulbs or regularly checking energy and water meters and waste disposal bills.

*Read more: <http://bit.ly/1bDXn9s>
www.visitengland.com*



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English flag by
JIM CHAMPION
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Top left photo by
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SASKA
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Top centre
photo by
NIGEL'S
EUROPE AND
BEYOND
via Flickr

Top right
photo by
ALEX RANALDI
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VISIT SCOTLAND

Under the Scottish Government Economic Strategy and the Tourism Framework for Change, Visit Scotland is provided with a clear mandate to help drive sustainability within the tourism sector in Scotland.

The organisation boasts ambitions to become the leading sustainable national tourism body. Its objectives include encouraging community engagement and the use of more sustainable modes of transport in the tourism sector, while minimising waste and aiding the Scottish government's efforts to cut carbon emissions.

The authority champions examples such as Rabbits Trail Burners, an award-winning tour operator that has saved 21% in fuel use and 36% in electricity use, while reducing its landfill waste to virtually nothing.

Read more: <http://bit.ly/1gwXEjH>
www.visitscotland.com

VISIT WALES

"In Wales, beautiful landscapes and coastlines are the very foundation of tourism", the Welsh tourism authority says.

Visit Wales' vision for sustainable tourism is based around promoting local prosperity, supporting community wellbeing and involvement, preserving natural heritage and culture and minimising damage to the environment.

Wales can claim a number of sustainability achievements, with its clean, well-managed beaches regularly winning awards.

A huge £756m tidal power lagoon – the first of its type in the world – to be constructed in Swansea Bay, is also expected to provide a boost to tourism.

Read more: <http://bit.ly/1cqRyzP>
www.visitwales.com

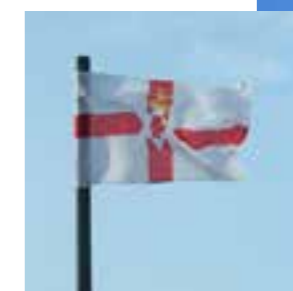
NORTHERN IRELAND TOURIST BOARD

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NTIB) committed to become a sustainable organisation in November 2012, adopting a sustainability policy which pledges to safeguard the country for future generations, promote environmental good practice and make resource efficiency a core requirement of all our operations.

At www.discovernorthernireland.com/ecotourism, the NITB offer helpful advice for tourists on how to *"discover Northern Ireland the green way"*, highlighting environmentally friendly accommodation and alternative ways to see the sights, from scenic rail journeys and harbour cruises to wild cycle routes.

The authority also promotes a Green Travel Code, ten sustainability commandments for any responsible tourist. These include eating local food, teaching children the seashore code and taking care not to bring any unwelcome invasive species to the island.

Read more: <http://bit.ly/19SS9dy>
www.nitb.com 🌱



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HISTORY, CULTURE & SUSTAINABILITY

“To keep these places standing and to help people realise why they are so special is the kind of profound investment in a sustainable way of living – both now and in the future”

By
ALEX
BLACKBURNE

Photos
with thanks to
THE LANDMARK
TRUST

The renovation of Astley Castle was completed in 2012 by the building conservation charity the Landmark Trust. The Saxon property, in the heart of Warwickshire, was rescued from dereliction, painstakingly restored and then transformed into an attractive holiday let.

Since its restoration and just over a year since it was reopened, the building was named the winner of RIBA's prestigious architectural Stirling Prize for 2013. Astley Castle is now one of 194 magnificent properties located up and down the UK, in France and in Italy that the Landmark Trust has acquired and now lets for holidays. Its director, the historian Anna Keay, spoke to Blue & Green Tomorrow.

WHAT IS THE LANDMARK TRUST?

We're a historic buildings charity, and we exist to rescue and provide a secure future for architecturally important, at-risk and historically significant buildings, principally in Britain but also in France and Italy.

Our founder Sir John Smith, 50 years ago, noticed that all around us are these incredibly precious, scarce and unique remnants of our past. Ultimately his reason for starting the Landmark Trust was that if these special, interesting and beautiful buildings were allowed to fall into disrepair, then we would all be the poorer for that.

His vision was to establish a charity which would intervene, to acquire, restore and repair these really important old places. It wouldn't just be a pressure group or a lobbyist; it would actually do it; it would be there restoring these fantastic properties, and giving them a new lease of life.

Those previously derelict buildings would then be transformed into places which absolutely anybody and everybody could rent and stay in for a week or a long weekend. This would mean that the pleasure, interest and understanding, which come from inhabiting these places, would be available to all.

IT SOUNDS LIKE THE VERY ESSENCE OF SUSTAINABILITY.

It is. Putting aside the cultural value of the buildings, the embedded energy that exists in a building of the past is absolutely enormous. The carbon that had to be burned to create the bricks, and the trees that had to be felled to make the timber frames and so on; it is embedded energy from centuries ago.

To keep these places standing and to help people realise why they are so special is the kind of profound investment in a sustainable way of living – both now and in the future.

WHAT'S THE BUSINESS MODEL?

We don't run a membership scheme; we're totally open to everybody. We have a website with 194 buildings that you can book. The money you spend on booking the building isn't something that goes to somebody's profit. It goes one hundred percent into the buildings' maintenance.

As a charity, our objective is rescuing buildings and giving people inspirational experiences. The running costs of our buildings, once they have been restored, are by and large covered by the income from letting out the buildings.

Where we rely hugely on the generosity of our supporters is raising the money to undertake each one



Astley Castle, exterior



Astley Castle, interior

"If these special, interesting and beautiful buildings were allowed to fall into disrepair, then we would all be the poorer for that"



Gothic Temple

of the renovations, and for each we have to look for philanthropic help.

WHICH ARE YOUR FAVOURITE BUILDINGS?

We've got a wonderfully varied selection of buildings, catering to a complete variety of different tastes. We've got the wonderful 18th century, 13-person country manor, Auchinleck House, where James Boswell was brought up and where he hosted and discussed politics with Dr Johnson during their tour of Great Britain.

In contrast to that, the range includes an incredibly simple fisherman's cottage on the shore of Caithness in the north-east of Scotland, which sleeps two. Steeped in a very different side of history, it is where generations of people, cleared and relocated from the Highlands, subsequently learnt how to become herring fisherman and sustained a whole new way of living.

Entering each and every one of our buildings seems to feel like you are opening the first chapter of an

amazing story about its past, so I can never quite choose a favourite. That is the great joy; the story that each one has to tell is amazing, and you get completely addicted.

IS THERE A TYPICAL LANDMARK TRUST SUPPORTER?

We recently had a wonderful gift for a restoration project from somebody who works in fund management. He had been to stay in a Landmark property when he was 22, with friends from university. He now has a vast country place of his own and so doesn't do those kind of holidays anymore, but he wanted to support us because he found it such a wonderful thing as a young man – going to stay somewhere which provided that kind of window to the past – and he loved the idea that we were doing that, opening the door for others.

We tend to have an audience that is intellectually curious – who want to know more about the past and are also looking to go back to a simpler kind of family holiday. We have a real range of customers – those

The Landmark Trust



Pineapple - Angus Bremner

who are very affluent and those who have very little money – but they share an interest in the value of the precious places in this country, and the pleasure of spending time in them.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO RESTORE THESE PROPERTIES?

It's a big operation and a long process. Restoring historic buildings takes a lot of time and care, and one of the things we really believe in is looking after buildings and restoring them in ways that mirror the same level of care as when it was first constructed.

We don't cut corners or find cheap solutions. We work meticulously, absolutely to the highest possible standard, employing age-old methods of craftsmanship whilst using the best possible materials.

When it comes to raising the renovation money, we seek help from trusts, foundations and grant-giving bodies, but also from private individuals who see the work that we do as the sort of charitable body that they would like to support.

Once we've raised the money, we start on site, and it's three or four years from first being approached to seeing a building finally rescued and reopened.

DOES A LOT OF WORK HAVE TO GO INTO MAKING THESE BUILDINGS ENERGY EFFICIENT?

One of the big misapprehensions is that historic buildings are somehow intrinsically inefficient, which I don't think is the case at all. With any building, the way you use it is absolutely key to how energy efficient it is.

We are not the first generation to be concerned about energy efficiency. Millennia of people living in this

country have wanted to be warm, and although they haven't thought about global warming, they have certainly thought about trying to make every joule of heat go as far as possible.

All the buildings we have opened in the last three or four years have had a green energy system in one form or another. We do groundsource heat pumps, air source heat pumps, biomass fuel systems – it just depends on what works for each specific property.

The great thing about doing a building restoration project from scratch is that you're invariably designing a new heating or energy system from the beginning, so you can really think about what works best for the property at hand.

WHY SHOULD SOMEONE BOOK A HOLIDAY AT A LANDMARK TRUST PROPERTY?

The thing about staying in our buildings is that it's completely different. It's a total escape from the drone of modern life. We have buildings that are focused on the beauty of materials and the quality of furnishings and space. We have modern bathrooms and kitchens in all of our buildings, so it's not as if you have to rub two sticks together, but we don't have televisions, Wi-Fi, video games or anything like that.

It's about lighting a fire, sitting around with your friends, drinking a glass of wine and feeling that you and your companions are writing your own great story.

www.landmarktrust.org.uk

HOLIDAYING AT HOME

By
CHARLOTTE
MALONE

Photos
with thanks to
COTTAGES4YOU

Top row:
Beach Bay
Cottage

Second row:
Left - Little Park
Hill Farm
Right - Shark Fin

Third row:
The Old Post
Office

Bottom row:
Shark Fin

Holidays are not always about partying and rushing around seeing sights. Sometimes, you just want to kick back with a glass of wine and take in some culture. Here are four properties where you can do just that.

From cottages to renovated barns to modern eco-homes, cottages4you offers a wide variety of properties to suit the tastes of everyone. The majority of its guesthouses are situated in the UK countryside, allowing visitors to explore beautiful locations and help keep local communities thriving.

By choosing to holiday locally, tourists can cut emissions without compromising on their experience. Many of the featured properties are close to National Scenic areas or heritage sites, with visitors able to explore the natural beauty surrounding them and partake in a range of activities that cater to those who want an adventurous or relaxing holiday.

BEACH BAY COTTAGE, ISLE OF LEWIS

Beach Bay Cottage is in a unique location and offer spectacular views of the Island of Lewis and the unspoilt white sand of Uig Bay, a National Scenic area. The property is a stunning natural stone and turf roofed single-storey detached cottage built into the hillside with a 180-degree bay window with breathtaking views.

The location offers many outdoor activities including hiking, surfing, golf, wildlife watching and cycling. Beach Bay Cottage is perfect for either an active or relaxing holiday.

Book: www.chooseacottage.co.uk/bgn/beach-bay-cottage-srrm

LITTLE PARK HILL FARM, SUSSEX

In the heart of Kipling country, this beautifully presented detached oast house enjoys a delightful rural setting and stunning distant views over the rolling countryside. Visitors can admire the Rother Valley,

High Weald and the Ashdown Forest from the property and large sweeping garden.

Peaceful country walks, cycling and riding are abound in the scenic area, with fishing also available locally. This country retreat is ideal for those looking to escape and unwind in a tranquil setting.

Book: www.chooseacottage.co.uk/bgn/little-park-hill-farm-paag

SHARK FIN, CORNWALL

Shark Fin, a scenic costal eco-house in Cornwall, combines high-tech eco features with natural beauty and scenery. Overlooking two of England's best beaches the 270-degree living room with seven sets of patio doors offers guests stunning views.

Situated on Sennen Cove, the location is popular with both surfers and families and the area still retains much of the original atmosphere of a fishing village.

Book: www.chooseacottage.co.uk/bgn/shark-fin-tkk

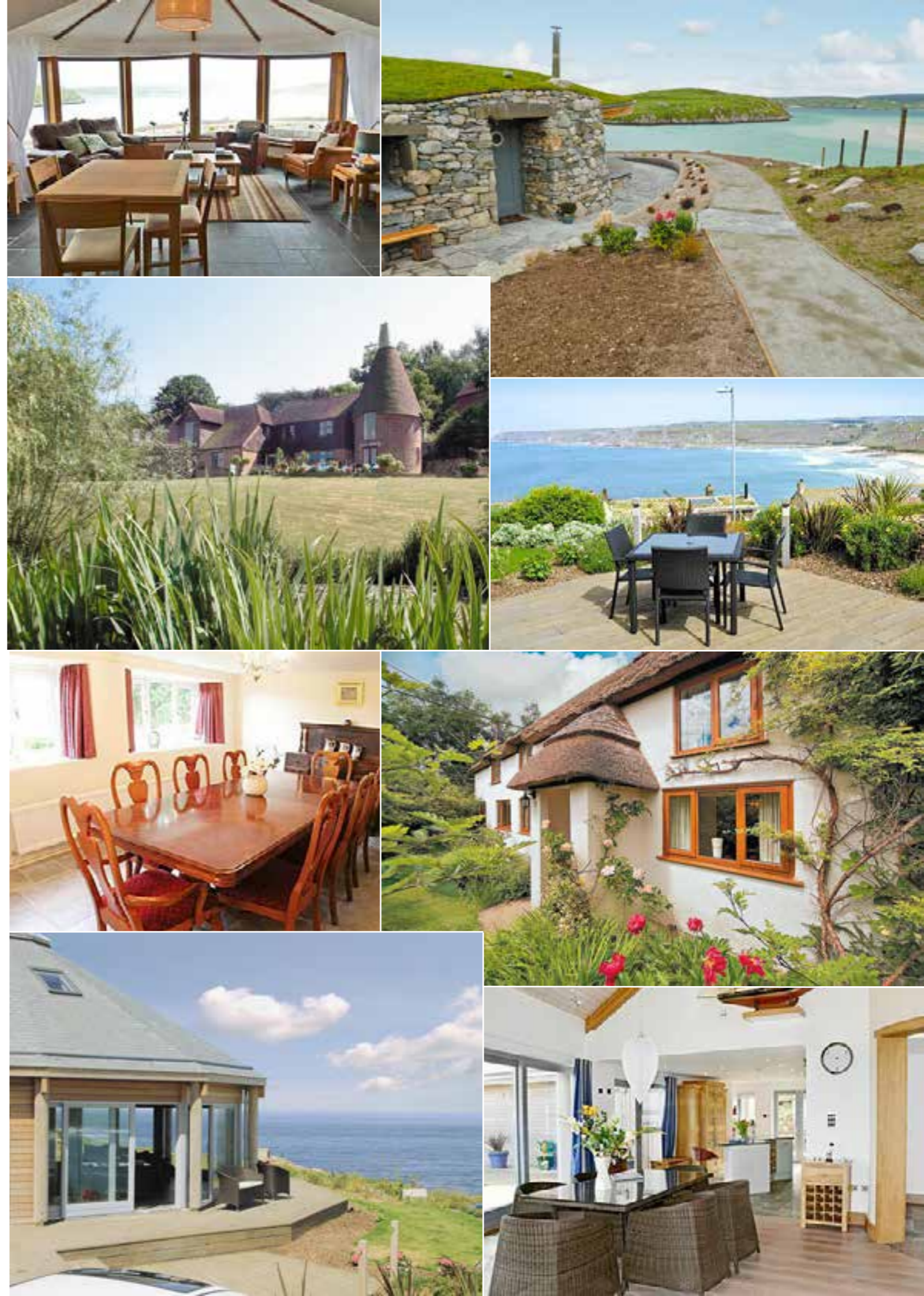
THE OLD POST OFFICE, DORSET

This attractive and charming period cottage served as the village post office until 1935 and is believed to be over 200 years old. The property was formerly three dwellings but now stands as one detached house, providing spacious accommodation for guests.

The house is situated high on the southern slopes of Hardown Hill, facing the National Trust's Stonebarrow Hill. The surrounding countryside and heritage coastline is in some of the most beautiful areas.

Book: www.chooseacottage.co.uk/bgn/the-old-post-office-dsr

Blue & Green Tomorrow receives a small agent's commission from every holiday booked which helps fund our intern and researcher programme. For more properties visit: www.chooseacottage.co.uk/bgn.



THE GREEN, GREEN GRASS OF HOME

Are environmentally-friendly guesthouses and hotels getting the upper hand?



We're trying to make the tourism industry more sustainable by reducing running costs, being more energy efficient, less wasteful and aware of environmental legislation

Photos with thanks to GREEN TOURISM

We're all familiar with the rosettes and stars brandished by guesthouses and hotels, but did you know that they might also sport green awards for their environmental performance? The Green Tourism

Programme has been assessing various kinds of tourism businesses for 16 years, starting in Scotland and spreading throughout the UK and many parts of Ireland. About 2,500 establishments now sport one of the Green Tourism logos on their premises, promotional materials and websites.

Assessments are based on over 150 measures and some can offset others. For example, a historic building could be ruined by double glazing, but earn points for recycling or some form of local community involvement. Once assessed, they are awarded Gold, Silver or Bronze status.

Research by VisitEngland reveals that most people are not that interested in "overt sustainability". Just 7% have taken a volunteering holiday. And only 13% claim to have stayed in accommodation with green awards or environmentally-friendly practices. The

research revealed that over 50% were interested in staying in environmentally-attuned places and about the same number in break locations that benefit the local community. However, the same number agreed, "I don't want to have to think about being green (on holiday in England); I just want to relax."

The general public are not the only users of accommodation. Organisations are huge buyers and, if they have a strong environmental ethic, it's highly likely they will choose hotels and guesthouses with similar values. Given the general drift towards environmental awareness, this can only be good news for hoteliers and the like who seize the initiative now and build a loyal customer base before 'environmentalism' becomes the norm.

At least when everyone's doing it, establishments can still strive for the Gold standard. Of course, environmentalism may become part of the established grading systems, but that's for the future. Now, the Green Tourism logo is a principal mark of credibility.

Andrea Nicholas is managing director of Green Tourism and she talks about the growing demand for

green labelling. "We've seen a definite growth from the corporate market where it's now a must have for a hotel or a conference centre. This is demonstrated by the major brands that have committed to Green Tourism for their hotels, including Radisson Blu, Park Inn, Hilton, Jury's Inns, QHotels, Principle Hayley and Best Western Hotels."

The programme covers resource efficiency in terms of energy, waste and water. It also has much to do with community, social aspects, local inclusion and local food, which means looking at food miles and using the best of what's available locally. Nicholas says,

"We're trying to make the tourism industry more sustainable by reducing running costs, being more energy efficient, less wasteful and aware of environmental legislation. We expect that to influence guests to choose green businesses, and give consumers the green choice."

Nicholas talks about hotels that have gone above and beyond the environmental call of duty. For example, the Lancaster London has installed beehives on its roof and serves guests its own honey; Gleneagles asks

for a voluntary £1 per night towards the restoration of local orchards, which will eventually supply the hotel with crops; and Park Plaza Riverbank has a green calendar with a different green action or charity every month. All of these examples show people taking environmentalism to heart and probably reflecting the culture of the hotel as a whole.

Nicholas believes the way to change the culture in hotels is to ensure that managers are appropriately "green-minded". She even believes that green personality testing will soon become a recruitment requirement, and suggests that any venue would fail to meet environmental standards only by taking "a bolt-on rather than a built-in approach".

These are wise words indeed – and ought to be noted by all organisations that treat environmental activities as somehow separate from their business.

www.green-tourism.com



URBAN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: BEING RESPONSIBLE IN THE CITY

By
RACHEL DODDS
Sustaining
Tourism

Photo by
NNECAPA
via Flickr

Tourism is big business internationally and in cities. In 2012 there were over one billion international tourists and this number is expected to grow to 1.8 billion by 2030. With this growth have come negative impacts and threats. In addition to tourism being consumptive of natural resources such as water and energy, climate also has an important influence on operating costs such as heating or cooling, irrigation, food and water.

There are social impacts, too. More than two-thirds of the revenue from international tourism never reaches the local economy because of the high foreign exchange leakages. Combine these impacts with global changes such as increased urbanisation (around 50% of the world's population currently live in cities and by 2030, two billion people will have moved to cities), stress on natural resources and increased population, there is no question of the need for more urban sustainable tourism.

TOURISM IN URBAN CENTRES

Just because tourists don't tend to be as noticeable in cities as they often are in most smaller communities or rural areas, it does not mean that they don't have a significant impact on a city's infrastructure, natural resources, social and cultural environment. Singapore, for instance, receives three visitors a year for every

permanent resident (about 17 million tourists per year compared to 5 million residents) – a ratio that would strain the social and environmental carrying capacity of many destinations.

Cities should also be viewed as natural areas and as part of an ecosystem. As they contain parks and green spaces, culture and heritage, the impacts on urban centres should not be ignored in favour of remote island destinations or rural areas.

The benefits of urban sustainable tourism are numerous. Often cities are hubs for other areas so can be less carbon intensive. Compared to many rural areas, public transportation is easier and more plentiful. Urban tourists also contribute to the local economy whereas resort establishments may be enclave type developments that do not allow for much interaction with the local community. Urban tourists take public transport, eat local food or participate in local cuisine and farmers markets (e.g. street food

in Bangkok or Vancouver). They will buy locally made handicrafts and may take tours or participate in events where monies go to the local economy/ community (e.g. Sockmob in London offers walks with professional coached homeless guides where the majority of the money goes to help the homeless).

*Image:
Examples of urban sustainable tourism can include green roofs, city cycling, visiting green spaces or parks, contributing to local community initiatives or even visiting heritage sites.*





Singapore receives three visitors a year for every permanent resident



Urban tourists take public transport, eat local food or participate in local cuisine and farmers markets.

Cities should be viewed as natural areas and as part of an ecosystem

Photo by
TIMO BALK
via stock.xchng

PROGRESSIVE STEPS TOWARDS URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

Within urban areas, a number of hotel chains have made progressive steps. Hotels which have implemented an environmental policy generally save on average 20% energy costs and at least 15% on water costs so any measure of efficiency benefits the bottom line. Eco measures can also help building a brand and more. The tourism industry is looking at ways not only to increase their green profile but also to show that they are benefitting the local community.

Many hotels that are claiming to be eco have also started to use LEED certified building standards. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is a certification programme that provides independent, third-party verification that a building is designed and built using strategies aimed at *“achieving high performance in key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality”*. In Europe, it is the city of Amsterdam that boasts the first LEED Platinum hotel – the Hotel Amstelkwartier.

Shangri-La Hotels aims to follow LEED Gold standards for its buildings and have comprehensive environmental footprint-saving measures through the way it deals with water, waste and energy. Sixty per cent of Shangri-La’s properties are ISO14000 certified and the aim is to that the remaining properties become certified within the next three to four years.

BUT HOW GREEN ARE WE REALLY?

Although many accommodations aim to conserve resources, consumer behaviour is not always that green. Consumers in today’s economy tend to expect green or eco rather than demand it. And hotels must be careful to not look like they are only undertaking conservation measures to save costs. Signs asking guests to hang up their towels to conserve water have been found to not alter behavior without a specific explanation of why they are doing it and what other measures they also doing to be more sustainable.

Sustainability awareness in urban areas can also be problematic. Urban attractions also tend to have a harder time disseminating sustainability information to their guests and therefore tend to focus on other aspects for guests rather than their green credentials.

As they are not located in natural parks or by pristine beaches, the guest is not as influenced by their natural surroundings. Many tourists are also not sustainable when in a city; they often only visit major attractions rather than local community projects, and do not always buy local but instead shop in mainstream touristy places where souvenirs are often made outside the country and imported from China where they are produced cheaply. Tourists also do not stay in locally owned accommodation as most large hotel chains are owned by foreign nationals.

The more you ask, the more the tourism industry tends to change its behaviour

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK

So what can you, the traveller do? Ask. The more you ask, the more the tourism industry tends to change its behaviour. Simple questions can be things such as:

- How much of your hotel is run using renewable energy sources like solar, wind or geothermal?
- How does the hotel conserve energy and water?
- Do they support local causes and community conservation efforts?
- Do they try to educate guests to be environmentally and socially conscious?

HOW TO BE A MORE RESPONSIBLE TRAVELLER

- Don't litter. Try to carry your own shopping bag to avoid contributing to the plastic problem in many countries of the world
- Avoid excessive waste and the use of plastic bottles (in many countries there is no way of disposing of these, therefore creating plastic mountains due to tourism)
- Reduce energy consumption. Unplug your mobile phone charger, turn off the lights etc
- Conserve water. Take shorter showers: the average hotel guest uses over 300 litres of water per night. In a luxury hotel, it is approximately 1,800 litres
- Do not purchase or eat endangered species (e.g. turtle egg soup, crocodile handbags)
- Support the local economy. Buy locally made souvenirs, eat at local places – enjoy local culture

- Take public transit. Or if you must, rent a car – why not a hybrid or electric one if available? Support a local charity or organisation that works towards responsible tourism
- Before you go, ask your travel provider (tour operator, travel agent) about the company's environmental and responsible tourism policies. Support those who support responsible tourism
- Ask your accommodation provider (hotel, guest house, lodge) about their sustainability practices – do they compost? Recycle? Do they have fair labour laws? An environmental policy?
- Support responsible tourism organisations – those operators who publicly are aiming to make tourism more responsible

As ever more tourism accommodation and attractions are available for choosing, it is you, the customer who can make an impact by voting with your pounds.

Rachel Dodds is director of Sustaining Tourism – a boutique consulting firm. She is also an associate professor at Ryerson University in Canada, where she joined the Ted Rogers School of Tourism & Hospitality Management in 2006.

For more tips and facts about sustainable tourism see www.sustainabletourism.net/carbon.html#responsible.

www.sustainabletourism.net

Photo by
OLEG
SIDORENKO
via Flickr

FIVE GREEN EUROPEAN CITIES TO VISIT IN 2014

Thinking about a 2014 getaway but not sure where to go?
Look no further than these five urban beacons of sustainability.

By ILARIA BERTINI

Almost 100% of Iceland's electricity comes from renewable sources, most notably geothermal and hydropower.

Photo by HUGH GALLAGHER via Flickr

"The city works with companies, universities and organisations in dedicated forums to develop and implement green growth."

Photo by
ANDREAS
KLINKE
JOHANNSEN
via Flickr

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

The Danish capital is one of the greenest cities in the world, because of its commitments to sustainable energy, recycling and waste management schemes and green spaces.

A large offshore wind farm, Middelgrunden, produces 4% of the city's electricity, while the council has announced its intention of making Copenhagen the first carbon neutral city by 2025. The city's Climate Adaptation Plan, adopted in 2012, manages to combine carbon emission reduction with cheaper energy bills for residents.

The council also launched innovative initiatives to 'train' citizens on climate change and eco-friendly living. It organised a series of workshops on how to save energy at home, adapt to climate change, create green roofs and recycle their waste. The council says about the plan,

"Climate adaptation work must not only focus on minimising the risks in future climate change but also take advantage of the adaptation work to improve the life quality for the Copenhagengers"

Danes have actively responded to the sustainability calls, as clearly demonstrated by the large number of people – including tourists – who prefer to cycle instead of drive around the city – 37% of all citizens.

Copenhagen was ranked first in the 2012 Global Green Economy Index (GGEI) and received the European Green Capital award for 2014 because it "has placed public-private partnerships at the core of its approach to eco-innovation and sustainable employment.

The award adds, "The city works with companies, universities and organisations in dedicated forums to develop and implement green growth."



Middelgrunden wind farm, off the coast of Copenhagen, accounts for 4% of the city's electricity



A statue of William Penn, the founder of the US state of Pennsylvania, in Bristol's Millennium Square, outside the Bristol Planetarium.



Vitoria-Gasteiz, the second largest Basque city, was European Green Capital in 2012.

"A low-carbon city with a high quality of life for all"

"The city council ensures that everyone lives within 300 metres of an open green space."

Photo by
CHARLIE
MARSHALL
via Flickr

BRISTOL, UK

Bristol, the UK's eighth largest city, is often heralded as an innovative and vibrant green city, which was also ranks among the best places to live in the country.

Located in the south-west of England, it is home to an organisation called Bristol Green Capital, which aims to make Bristol "a low-carbon city with a high quality of life for all". Each year, the city also hosts the Big Green Week, which is a festival of sustainable ideas, art and entertainment.

In 2008, Bristol was named the UK's greenest city, because of its environmental performance, climate change strategies, recycling and biodiversity. It has also developed a series of projects called Wild City, which "use contact with the natural environment to meet the needs of the most deprived urban communities in Bristol".

For its efforts in sustainability, Bristol was given the European Green Capital award for 2015, which will allow the city to strengthen its position on energy efficiency, air quality and cycle paths. The European commission said that Bristol had "impressed the jury" with its plans for low-carbon investment.

"Carbon emissions have consistently reduced in Bristol since 2005, despite a growing economy", the European Green Capital website states.

"Bristol has the ambition of becoming a European hub for low-carbon industry with a target of 17,000 new jobs in creative, digital and low carbon sectors by 2030. Bristol demonstrated 4.7% growth in the green economy in 2012".

It adds that Bristol, which is the first and only UK city to have been shortlisted for the award, is a "role model for UK, Europe and the world".

VITORIA-GASTEIZ, SPAIN

Vitoria-Gasteiz is the capital city of the Basque province of Álava in Spain. It is the second largest Basque city behind Bilbao.

Reviewing the city in the Telegraph, journalist Tim Pozzi wrote,

"Vitoria has an impressive history of carefully planned expansion from its medieval, almond-shaped core: recycling and renewable energy schemes are all very well, but what impressed me were its magnificent public spaces."

It held the title of European Green Capital in 2012, because of the great attention it placed on nature and green spaces within its urban quarters. The city council ensures that everyone lives within 300 metres of an open green space.

It has promoted numerous measures to protect biodiversity and ecosystems, monitoring flora and fauna population and enriching green spaces, both for the sake of wildlife and for the public that can learn more about the environment.

The city was also praised for its plan to reduce domestic water consumption to below 100 litres per capita per day, which was also thanks to specific water-related investment that has helped improve water efficiency.

The award was a great achievement for the city, which decided to start proposing to tourists the Green Weekend, with the collaboration of several local businesses, offering visitors both cultural indoor and outdoor experiences.

Photo by
JON E. EGUILUZ
via Flickr



The Jardin des plantes de Nantes is one of the world's most famous botanic gardens.

Photo by
ANNIE
DALBÉRA
via Flickr

REYKJAVÍK, ICELAND

Reykjavík, the Icelandic capital, is the world's northernmost capital city and one of the greenest and cleanest cities in the world.

PM10 pollution levels – smoke, dirt and dust from factories and farms – as well as ozone and nitrogen dioxide, are far below average and almost incomparable with the rest of Europe.

This reflects the efforts made by Iceland, which produces 100% of its electricity from renewable

sources – notably geothermal and hydropower. The mayor of Reykjavík, Jón Gnarr, has pledged to make the city the cleanest in Europe and completely fossil-free by 2050.

He plans to cut greenhouse gas emissions in the city by 35% by 2020. As it stands, inhabitants live within five minutes walking distance of public green spaces. Gnarr said,

“If the city of Reykjavík had not taken the important step to heat all houses in the city with green energy in a sustainable manner – and remained committed to

its decision – our task when it comes to cutting down greenhouse gas emissions would have been much more difficult today.”

Reykjavík is a perfect destination for those who love tranquillity, peace, nature and open space. Right next to the urbanised area, there are numerous parks and nature reserves, accessible through footpaths and cycling routes.

Visitors can enjoy mountains and hiking sites, thermal pools and untouched rivers, and go on tours to spot the famous Northern lights.

“Nantes, known to some as “the Venice of the west”, was ranked the most liveable city in Europe in 2004 by Time magazine.”

NANTES, FRANCE

Nantes, known to some as “the Venice of the west”, was ranked the most liveable city in Europe in 2004 by Time magazine. Located in the western region of Loire in France, it was named 2013 European Green Capital for its efforts in cutting greenhouse gas emissions and improving public transport.

The city was honoured for its carbon dioxide (CO₂) emission reduction plans, most notably changes made to its public transport system – now one of the most efficient in France – and its plans to increase the number of cyclists.

In addition, the city has a number of impressive parks and green spaces, such as the Jardin des plantes de Nantes, famous municipal botanic gardens, and the Japanese gardens of the Isle of Versailles.

“Nantes did a fantastic job of showcasing how culture, the arts and the environment can work together to spark wider citizen interest and involvement in sustainability issues”

The European Commission said after naming it European Green Capital for 2013. It went on to highlight a number of exhibitions that showcased a perfect marriage between conservation and development in the French city.

Nantes was also recognised for an initiative against food waste: it organised a huge public meal for 5,000 people, using products that would otherwise have been discarded. 🌱

WRITE FOR US



Whether anonymously, under a pseudonym, or with your name published loud and clear.

Journalism is changing rapidly through a digital and social media revolution. It is no longer the preserve of press barons and elite groups; journalism is now democratic and everyone has a voice.

And though that means there's a lot of noise and rubbish out there, there's a lot of great stuff too.

The role of media has changed. We still write stories every day about the amazing people and organisations that make a positive difference to the world in which we live, but we also promote and publish the most relevant blogs, tweets and articles from our readers.

We want to report on the diverse voices of our audience and beyond—regular people writing as travellers, investors and consumers.

So, if you blog, tweet or write about sustainability we want to hear from you. You don't need to be an experienced or aspiring writer or worry about article length, spelling or grammar—we'll tidy that up for you.

We can't publish everything, but if it's likely to resonate with our readers or challenge them in some way, you'll fly to the top of our list.

Join us today by emailing
editor@blueandgreentomorrow.com
with your thoughts and contributions.



LIFE CHANGING TRAVEL AND TRAVEL CHANGING LIVES

What if you could holiday in far-flung corners of the planet, experiencing unforgettable sights beyond your wildest imagination, and at the same time leave a significant positive impact to the local community?

Andy Booth, founder and CEO of ABOUTAsia Travel, told Blue & Green Tomorrow how you can do that.

Based in Cambodia, ABOUTAsia is a tour operator that aims to provide visitors with memorable, meaningful and tailor-made holidays, while ensuring

that their travels improve the lives of the local children through education.

Remarkably, 100% of the profits generated from ABOUTAsia Travel holidaymakers are donated to its charitable arm, ABOUTAsia Schools. The funds are then used to upgrade and enhance local schooling.

Booth spoke about charity and sustainability, as well as what he thought the future holds for responsible tourism in south-east Asia and elsewhere.

By
SETH KIRBY

Photos by
ANNA BELLA
BETTS

It is my aim to get visitors to think just a little about their own place in the world

TELL US THE STORY OF ABOUTASIA TRAVEL.

ABOUTAsia Travel is only one part of the organisation, the other being ABOUTAsia Schools. The effort in Cambodia grew out of my desire to promote and support children's education from the proceeds of a commercial enterprise. It just so happens that the best opportunity in Siem Reap is tourism related.

Having visited Angkor Wat on holiday some years earlier, I understood that tourism was not well done in Cambodia, that it was fast growing and that too little of the overall benefit of international tourism seemed to reach the Khmer people. I was determined to help people experience the temples of Angkor in a far better way, go on to discover some of the wonders of this country and make a profit which I could use for supporting local education.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO DO WHAT YOU DO?

Without education, it is difficult to envisage a population improving their living or social conditions. My own chances in life came from the twin influence of caring parents and the opportunity provided by one of the best educations in the world. Growing up on a sheep farm in rural England, I attended the local state

school. It was good enough, though, to provide the chance to get to Oxford University and this in turn opened doors which lead to me being in a position to bring opportunity to so many more people.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO SET UP A TRAVEL COMPANY IN CAMBODIA RATHER THAN ANY OTHER NATIONS IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA?

Given the troubled past of Cambodia through the 1970s and 80s, the country lags in a number of respects. It is rich in assets yet poor in the ability to use those assets for the benefit of its people. Infrastructure and tourism improve year by year and the sheer numbers of visitors rise year on year.

Tourism is relatively young and underdeveloped providing opportunities for the visitor to experience the country and its people in a genuine unaffected manner. It also provides opportunity to those who are prepared to spend the time and effort to develop better visitor experiences.

The first thing one notices, however, about Cambodia is the genuine warmth and openness of the people. Rationale aside, this had a significant influence on why I chose to dedicate myself to helping these people.

WHO ARE AND WHERE ARE YOUR CLIENTS FROM?

Our services and attention to detail are best appreciated by independent travellers, couples, family groups and groups of friends. We like getting our guests out into the countryside, wading through streams and back gardens, discovering temples away from the coachloads of tourists. Yet we enjoy seeing them delighted by the surprise comfort and refinement of our country house, for example out in the rice paddies, miles from the nearest electricity.

Our market reach is wide and the origin of our guests is diverse. The largest market for us is the US, but even that is less than 20% of the whole. Europeans feature highly as do Australians and ex-pats from regional centres such as Hong Kong and Singapore.

Chris Smith
with the children





It is almost a prerequisite now for travel companies to have responsible credentials

PROFITS ACCRUED BY ABOUTASIA TRAVEL HELP FUND VOLUNTEERS AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES FOR ABOUTASIA SCHOOLS. CAN YOU EXPLAIN MORE?

All of the profits of ABOUTAsia Travel, yes 100%, are used to further education in Cambodia. There are major programmes supplying classroom consumables, school uniforms and repairing the fabric of the schools. English language is a key focus of our attention as it opens up opportunities for the young adults to find promising jobs in the tourism industry.

To this end, we run a free volunteering programme that supports the English teaching in many schools and we also employ teachers full-time to provide English language classes in dozens of primary schools.

HOW DO YOU PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY AND MINIMISE YOUR IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT?

We are arguably the ultimate responsible tourism company as all of our benefits go back to the local economy, either through the schools or through wages to locally based employees and fees to local service suppliers. Over time, the linkage between the environment and tourist attractions benefitting the local economy is reinforced, motivating people to protect the source of their livelihood.

We promote diversification of the concentration of tourism away from the honeypot sites of the archaeological park towards lesser visited sites, thereby reducing the impact of the sheer footfall at the most popular sites.

HOW DO YOUR TOURS COMPARE TO OTHER RESPONSIBLE TOUR OPERATORS IN THE REGION?

I know of no other tour specialist that is so focused with such effort and resources on a single country. We live, work and play just two miles from Angkor Wat itself so have a depth of knowledge as a true local. Coupled with forward thinking management and investment in systems, we are able to customise travel to a degree few can match and at a price and value that

none can match. The result is a level of service and guest experience which is outstanding.

APART FROM YOUR OWN EFFORTS, HAVE YOU SEEN ANY OTHER SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS IN RESPONSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN ASIA?

It is almost a prerequisite now for travel companies to have responsible credentials. Some are genuine in their efforts but many are somewhat cynical in their claims, for example often asking their guests to contribute to social projects without significantly dipping into their own profits.

WHAT ARE THE MOST POPULAR TOURS YOU OFFER?

Close to 100% of visitors to Cambodia set out to see the monuments of Angkor. Our most popular tour is our Single Magical Day which aims to get you around all of the key sites while avoiding the worst of the tourist crowds. Our special interest tours are many and various. Probably my favourite is to bring my guests out to experience the best of the Cambodian countryside through our Countryside Senses tours. There are places I can bring visitors where little has changed in 1,000 years yet they can relax in a wonderful environment, meet the friendliest people and even reflect on what brings people real happiness.





WHAT PROJECTS ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING ON FOR ABOUTASIA TRAVEL?

We continue to develop and extend our Countryside Senses tours and have recently built a beautiful traditional villa where our guests can enjoy sundowner cocktails or have dinner prepared by a wonderful chef we bring into the house from Siem Reap. Sampling our 11 dish classic or 17 dish celebratory menus by candlelight, knowing that you are so far away from the town, the nearest tourist and even miles from mains electricity is a very special experience.

We have almost completed our VIP boat, also aimed at destination dining.

My guidebook, the first purpose designed field guide to the temples for the mainstream visitor, will be published early in the new year.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACING RESPONSIBLE TOUR OPERATORS IN CAMBODIA?

Political unrest from time to time in the region. Corruption. The lack of an independent system or body for recognising and helping the tourist identify which are the real responsible operators and which only play lip service. Everyone claims to be a responsible operator nowadays but who would really achieve a five star rating for such?

Recently we won recognition from both Conde Nast Traveler and Travel + Leisure magazines for our outstanding ability to bring the benefits of tourism back to local communities. While these awards are terrific, I would still love to see an independent rating system for 'responsibility' akin to the comfort and facilities rating stars awarded to hotels.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO HAVE ACHIEVED IN THE NEXT DECADE?

My aim is to educate 250,000 children. So far we support schools covering 53,000 children so we have a good way to go. It is also my aim to get visitors to think just a little about their own place in the world. As a good friend of mine coined: life changing travel and travel changing lives.

Andy Booth is founder and CEO of ABOUTAsia Travel, whose profits go towards supporting 108 local schools and over 53,000 children in Cambodia via ABOUTAsia Schools.

www.aboutasiatravel.com 🌱

CREATING BETTER PLACES TO LIVE AND VISIT

NIKKI WHITE, head of destinations and sustainability at ABTA, the Travel Association, on what travel agents and tour operators are doing to create longevity and intergenerational pleasure for all.

WHAT DOES SUSTAINABLE TOURISM MEAN TO ABTA?

Sustainable tourism means that we and our members are working to ensure thriving destinations and that in doing so we manage finite resources in the host countries. Put simply, it's about creating better places to live and visit. In practical terms, this means that tourism minimises its impacts on the environment, ensures that local communities benefit from tourism and that respect is shown for local culture and traditions. This means working with the destinations our members take customers to, this is done so in a number of ways. For example, through the industry initiative Travelife, which certifies the hotel supply chain on its environmental and social impacts, or through strategic partnerships with the host country to work on their major challenges, such as water resources.

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU THINK THE GENERAL PUBLIC UNDERSTAND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM?

Many aspects of sustainability have become part of our everyday lives. So when it comes to holidays,

customers are much more aware of some of the main environmental aspects of sustainable tourism. The social issues such as employee working conditions are more challenging and are more of any industry's responsibility anyway. Customers do have a good understanding of ethical and responsible companies and they have a good awareness that they want their holiday choices to be so. Sustainable tourism doesn't have to be complicated, it's simply about tourism that helps to create better places to live and visit.

WHAT ARE ABTA MEMBERS DOING TO SPREAD THE SUSTAINABILITY MESSAGE?

Members are working on many initiatives to spread the message through their programmes, from the websites and brochures through to welcome meeting information and promoting responsible excursions.

One of the main initiatives that members are getting behind is Travelife. As the industry driven sustainability scheme that has been driven by the need to have a more transparent and responsible supply chain, members work with Travelife and their own hotel suppliers to go through an audit and work on the

By ALEX BLACKBURN

Photo by NADIA ARAI via stock.xchng

GOOD ADVICE FOR A SUSTAINABLE HOLIDAY

“If tourism isn’t sustainable, destinations may change so significantly that the product they offer now is no longer viable in years to come”

areas that are highlighted through the audit process. Hotels that are doing well have the opportunity to earn a Travelife Award which members can then feature in their marketing materials. The hotels then have the award in the hotel and many have areas where they provide customer information on local produce, excursions and their sustainability initiatives.

TELL US ABOUT THE TRAVEL AGENTS AND TOUR OPERATORS LEADING THE WAY IN SUSTAINABILITY.

The number of ABTA members that are delivering sustainable tourism is increasing. Through ABTA’s committee processes, like-minded businesses come together on non-commercial issues to develop solutions to help achieve a more sustainable travel and tourism sector. ABTA has a number of committees dedicated to enabling members to work collectively on all aspects of sustainable tourism such as destination infrastructure developments, sustainable supply chains and sustainable products in destinations.

Individually, too, many members of ABTA have been developing their responses to key challenges the industry faces. Examples would be:

- Continually improving efficiencies and reducing energy consumption across their global operations
- Training suppliers on eco-efficiencies to help them to reduce energy consumption and save money

- Developing internal audit and award schemes for excursions that really embrace sustainability and highlighting this in customer communications
- Providing seed funding and on the ground support to enable local communities to start SMEs that provide goods and services to the tourism industry in destinations

WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THE FUTURE OF THE TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY?

I see a successful industry. As travel is such a fundamental way of life now, be it for a short break or a holiday to completely recharge the battery and see new places. However with the predicted growth in the number of tourists over the coming years, it will become even more critical to ensure that the whole industry is taking responsibility for working to deliver thriving destinations and take responsibility for the world’s finite resources.

This also requires the destinations to have a more sustainable approach to their national plans and ensure that tourism is developed alongside the needs of the local communities. If this doesn’t happen, then destinations may change so significantly that the product they offer is no longer viable in future years.

www.abta.com

RESEARCH YOUR DESTINATION

Researching your destination is a great way to help ensure you have a better holiday. You’ll likely find out interesting things about the local climate and culture, about great things to see and do in the destination and maybe even pick up a few words of the local language (this is normally really appreciated by locals).

CHOOSE A HOTEL THAT HAS A TRAVELIFE AWARD

The Travelife Sustainability System is a scheme that works around the world to help hotels to best manage the impacts they have on the environment and on culture. The top performing hotels receive an award for how well they perform and are then indicated in tour operators’ brochures and websites. Travelife hotels are doing great things to help ensure you have a better holiday.

To find out more, visit www.travelifecollection.com.

BUY LOCAL

Treat yourself to something but make sure it’s something locally made. This way, not only will you have the perfect item, but you’ll have a feel-good factor too, knowing that your purchase has helped make a difference to someone in the destination. Don’t be shy of asking questions about where the item was made and what materials it’s made from.

EXPLORE YOUR SURROUNDINGS

When you’re in the destination, make sure you get out and explore your surroundings. Speak to your

tour operator, travel agent or the hotel staff to find out about the must-see sites and great things to do and see how you can work them into your holiday plans. Will it be a morning on the beach followed by an afternoon market visit where you pick up the perfect gifts or treat yourself? Or maybe a day of pampering and then a delicious dinner at a local restaurant where you excite your tastebuds after relaxing your senses?

PLAY YOUR PART

Many of us are now doing things in our daily lives that help to ensure we have a lower impact on the world around us – whether it’s recycling at home, for example, or sharing a lift to work. There’s a range of simple things that we can all do to help play our part whilst on holiday too, such as:

- Saving water: in many holiday destinations water is a scarcer resource than it is in the UK so try to remember this and try taking shorter showers
- Turn electrical items off when not in use just as you would do at home
- Leave packaging at home: that way, if there is no recycling availability within the destination you’ll make sure you can recycle packaging and will also be carrying less weight in your luggage
- Use local public transport in the destination: this is usually a great way to see more of the destination. Speak to your tour operator or hotel for tips on how to get around.

ASK YOUR TOUR OPERATOR WHAT THEY ARE DOING

Whether it’s during the booking process, before you go, whilst there or when you get back, ask your travel provider what they’re doing to help ensure we can have better holidays for many years to come.

By NIKKI WHITE
ABTA

WHEN ON A RESPONSIBLE HOLIDAY, DO AS THE LOCALS DO

Culture is not part of the past, but living and evolving

By
FRANCESCA
BAKER

When visiting a country you are exactly that: a visitor, not a local – correct? But putting yourself in the mindset of a local person not only results in a more authentic, thrilling and enlightening experience for you, but allows for a more sustainable tourist economy for the destination.

One of the easiest ways to travel like a local is to travel with a local. Meeting up with inhabitants of your destination and exploring the sights and surroundings with them provides a lens on a place that you may not have been privy to otherwise. Companies such as Tours By Locals, Global Greeter or Unseen Tours, where homeless people are the guides, act as facilitators between visitors and local guides, pairing up those who will be most suited and letting them explore together.

You will get a unique perspective on a city (even hearing how the voices of my Vietnamese guides dipped when discussing communism was fascinating), visit places off the beaten track, and drink in local bars. None of which your guide book can enable. It's all about getting a feel for a place, the people, the politics, the culture, food and the way of life.

Photo by
LUCAS JANS
via Flickr



Culture is not part of the past, but living and evolving. Often we think of a country's culture as that of historic importance, and whilst a past is hugely influential on the present, the present is pretty important, too.

Picking up local magazines and listings guides enables you to step away from this and engage in the activities that your contemporaries in 2013 are doing, not those from the days of yore. The latest art exhibitions, music movements and even cinema screenings can be hugely revelatory about a country and its people.

Put yourself in the local mindset and share in activities and experiences as locals do. Ticking off the guidebook must-sees can be draining, so don't – explore what interests you in the different surroundings you find yourself in.

One of my first experiences of travelling local was back in 2008 in Romania. Chatting to an American man on a public bus, he laughed at us visiting a palace. "Are you not?" I asked. "I saw everything the first time I came. This time I want to feel it."

Another way to see more is literally by travelling. Get that public bus, take a bike, and walk. Save yourself money and see the sights. The coins you do spend will go on local infrastructure rather than tour companies, both enhancing public and tourist facilities.

Ensuring that your money benefits the right people is one of the most important ways to ensure a sustainable travel economy and local business development. This increases the opportunities to retain local values and practices within business models rather than being mass produced.

Let's not forget why many of us travel, and one of the best things about it: food. Trying new dishes and sampling never tasted before cuisines is a delight, and can be done more authentically, and not to mention more cheaply, in local restaurants.

New foods eaten whilst watching the world go by is a travel highlight. I would never have discovered rice



With intimate and in-depth knowledge of a destination, and the passion to reveal its depth to you, a local guide is the best window to any place

paste and shrimp parcels in banyan leaves in Vietnam, timpana in Malta, or black bean sushi in São Paulo without stepping off the tourist track.

Pick somewhere a few streets away from the tourist sites. Listen to the chatter from within – do you understand it? If not, it is likely to be local, and usually by default, pretty good. In some places it is best to ensure that you can see the food being cooked, and cleanly, but more often than not you will be safe from tummy trouble.

There is an economic benefit to you, too. Tourist mark-ups on menus can be avoided; you don't visit the tourist shows or tat; and by staying with locals you can really save money.

The acclaimed Couchsurfing lets you really get into a local way of living, and even if you are not keen on staying on a sofa, they organise numerous events and meet-ups to get involved in. If you prefer a home to

yourself try Airbnb, a rental service for local homes or even home swapping.

With intimate and in-depth knowledge of a destination, and the passion to reveal its depth to you, a local guide is the best window to any place. "A tour guide should be more than just a guide", said mine in Ho Chi Minh City recently. "They should be your friend."

Charm and personality go a long way to making a trip, and are more readily available in a person than mass produced guidebook. A charming holiday – what could be better than that?

Francesca Baker is a freelance journalist, event organiser, and minor marketing whizz. She writes about music, literature, life, travel, art, London, and other general musings, and organises events that contain at least one of the above. You can find out more at www.andsothethinks.co.uk.

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HUMANS, NATURE AND RESPONSIBLE TOURISM: CHRONICLES OF AN ITALIAN HOLIDAY

By
ILARIA BERTINI

Photos by
ILARIA BERTINI

People treat the sea, the land and animals as property, commodities, something that is owed and something that does not have to be respected. This is making our travel and tourism increasingly unsustainable.

While driving south along the eastern coast of Sicily, I felt mixed emotions. I was pleased by the arid landscape, occasionally coloured by almond and lemon trees, but I was horrified by the amount of rubbish in the streets – the result of people's ignorance and the local administration's laziness.

When I arrived in Avola, home to some beautiful small lakes, I immediately felt that the place was being respected for its natural beauty. But a closer look made me realise that people – both Italians and foreigners – were treating the place as somewhere to leave their lunch leftovers. I ended up collecting someone else's rubbish, because I couldn't stand the sight.

Something similar occurred a few days later in Porto Empedocle, when I visited the stunning white rocks of the Scala dei Turchi, one of the most impressive spots in my country. Again, the breathtaking panorama was contrasted by the cigarette butts, shamefully abandoned on the white stones, and with the writings and engravings made by teenagers in love. Even worse, the sea around this beauty spot is so polluted that it is forbidden to swim in the harbour.

I spent the following days in Lampedusa, close to Tunisia, which is well-known for being the first place that migrants from Africa try to reach. They leave their homes full of hope for a better life but often meet a tragic destiny at sea, as 359 people from Eritrea, Somalia and Ghana did in October 2013. In total, over

18,000 people have died in these waters since 1988. There is a migration museum on the island where things carried by these people have been collected, including personal items, food, clothes and hand-written notes. Outside, shipwrecks rest under the sky.

Lampedusa is a beautiful island, with wonderful beaches. The most famous one, the Isola dei Conigli (Rabbit Island) has been chosen by the marine turtle *Caretta caretta* to lay eggs. It is therefore monitored

24/7 by volunteers, in order to prevent people from putting up parasols and leaving their waste on the beach. It is a rare case of controlled tourism in Sicily (the beach closes at 7.30pm to allow the turtles to have some peace and quiet; otherwise they wouldn't lay eggs), but this does little to dispel the impression that tourists are more important than nature.

Before leaving Lampedusa, I had the opportunity to learn more about one of the most silenced fights going

on in Italy. In Niscemi, a desolate and poor part of Sicily already devastated by pollution from oil drilling, the US armed forces installed a Mobile User Objective System (MUOS), a satellite system to allow global communications for the US and its allies.

There are several stations around the world, but these are usually located in uninhabited areas. But in Sicily, the MUOS is near a village, in a site of natural interest.





The sea around Scala dei Turchi was so polluted that it was forbidden to swim in the harbour

There are many reasons why the locals are protesting against this satellite. First of all, it is a war instrument. This means that if a war occurs, the base and its surrounding area would be an easy target, especially considering it is close to the Middle East and areas in which the US have many economic interests.

Second, it destroys the nearby cork oak trees that are traditionally vital for the local communities. And third, as professors Massimo Zucchetti and Massimo Coraddu claimed, there are health implications due to electromagnetic pollution by the MUOS that pose “serious risks to people and the environment”. The professors said the machine should not be placed in densely populated areas – such as adjacent to Niscemi.

Mothers in the town have been protesting against the MUOS and Sicily’s militarisation. But it will take more than a group of defenceless women to overcome the world’s number one superpower, especially considering that since the second world war, Italy’s government has arguably been a ‘doormat’ for the US. Activists from No MUOS pointed this out on the night they presented their documentary film in Lampedusa www.nomuosfilm.it.

I left the island with mixed feelings of sadness and nostalgia, to visit the small volcanic island near Lampedusa called Linosa. A black pearl, calm and out of time and space, it has only 400 inhabitants who seem to live the slowest life imaginable, just spending

their days chatting in the streets and seeking rest from the burning sun.

Linosa also hosts a laying site for turtles, but as a veterinarian in the rescue centre explained, people often stay with boats near the beach, listening to loud music and throwing rubbish in the sea. They sometimes refuse to leave when they are asked to, because, they say, “*the sea is everyone’s*”.

Turtles come to the rescue centre because they have eaten too much plastic or hooks and fishing lines. I saw turtle shells seized by the police from poachers and learnt how difficult it is for them to survive: only one out of 1,000 cubs reaches the adult age. The centre was set on fire last year, probably because somebody felt uncomfortable with it there. This is how it works in a forgotten place, where the institutions are nothing but puppets.

So what is left from this holiday? Many beautiful memories and some hope for sure, because things must change. But also a feeling that the world is going down an increasingly worrying path, as people treat the sea, the land and animals as property, commodities, something that is owed and something that does not have to be respected.

To prove my point, I’ll leave you with something I saw years ago, which has always stuck with me.

On a beach once, I saw a child screaming because there was a jellyfish in the water. His father, instead of telling him to swim somewhere else to avoid the animal, took a net and removed it from the sea, from its natural habitat and home, and left it to melt under the sun.

Because humans, evidently, are more important. 🌿



1884 map of Sicily

Photo by VINCE HAPPYARM via Flickr

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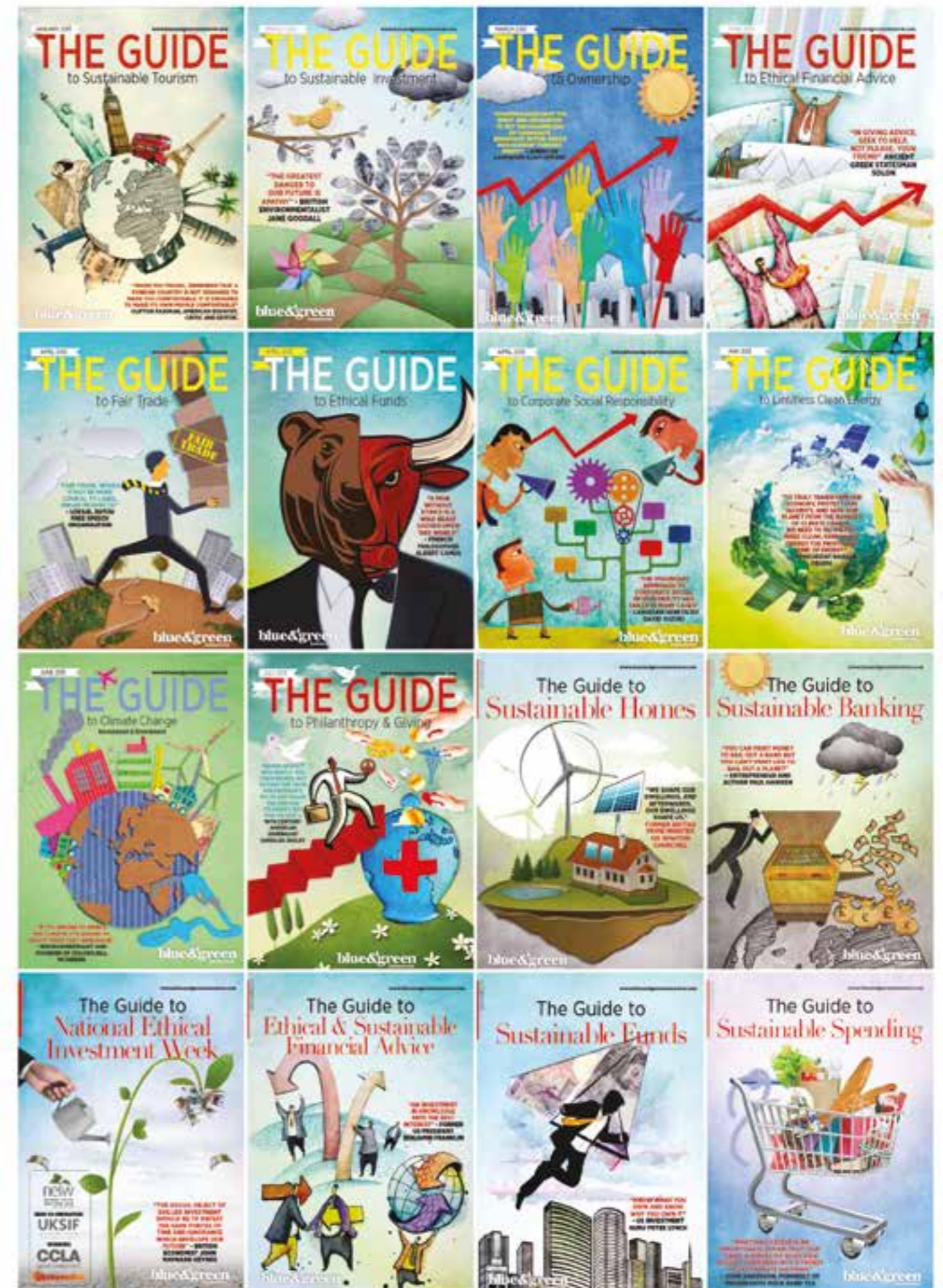
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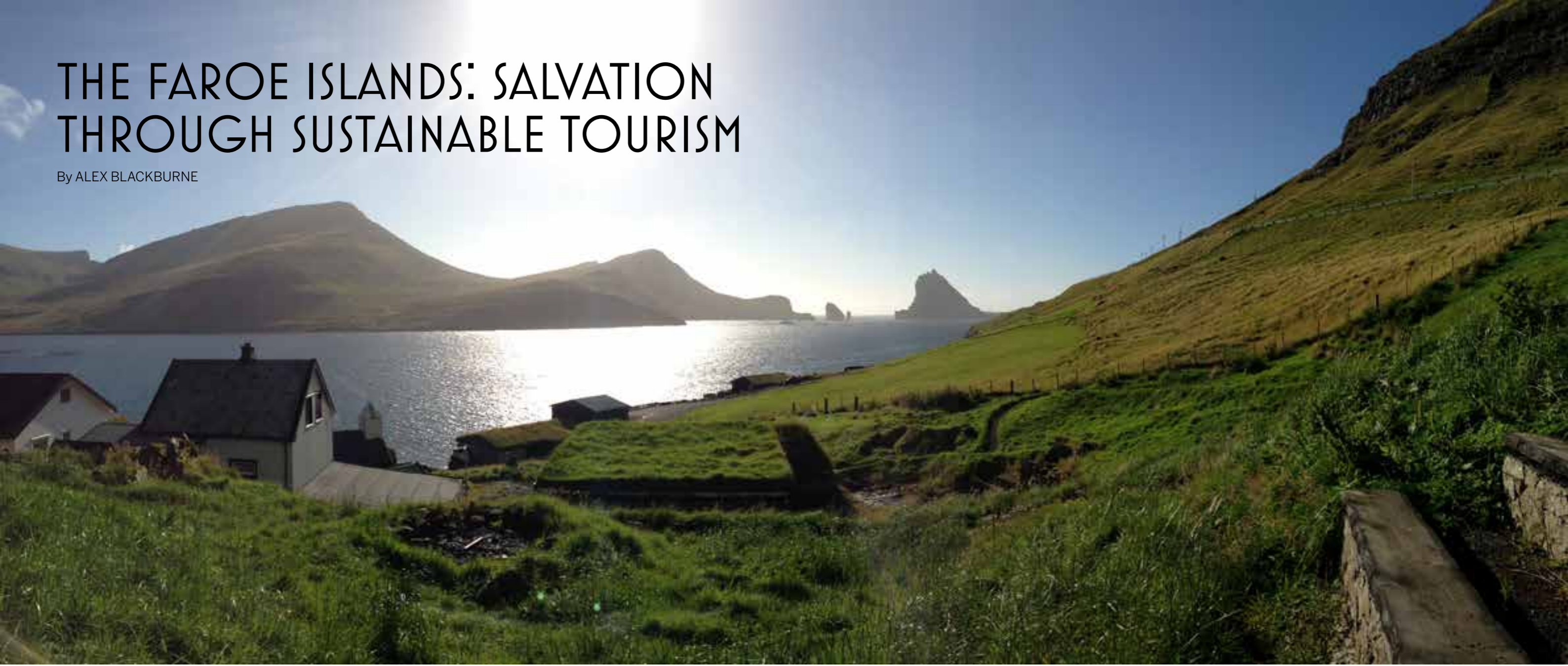


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THE FAROE ISLANDS: SALVATION THROUGH SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

By ALEX BLACKBURNE



Photos by
ALEX
BLACKBURNE

The Faroe Islands – a group of islands 200 miles north of Scotland – faces an uncertain future as its young people seek better education and jobs elsewhere. But for this beautiful country, sustainable tourism could be its saviour.

It was 7am and the sun in Gjógv, on the northern tip of the Faroe Islands, was peering through the clouds on the horizon, casting a yellowy-orange glow over the island of Kalsoy in the distance. It had been raining overnight, with the early morning rays reflecting off the dew-covered grass.

The striking landscape outside my window was more akin to Narnia or Middle Earth. And despite a long first day in the Faroes, mostly spent walking and travelling, it was unsurprisingly an even more attractive option than sleep.

After a breakfast at the Gjáargarður guesthouse made up of assorted bread, cheese and meat, I met with Olga Biskopstø, head of the government-funded Útoyggjafelagið, also known as the Outer Islands Association. The Faroe Islands consists of 18 separate islands, and the smallest eight – Fugloy, Svínoy, Kalsoy, Mykines, Koltur, Hestur, Skúvoy and Stóra Dímun – form part of the coalition.

Whereas the main islands are connected by bridges and underwater tunnels, these eight are only reachable by boat or helicopter. There are few jobs (most are farmers) and even fewer services – meaning the islands’ 200 or so inhabitants are often forced to travel elsewhere for work and supplies.

Stóra Dímun, for example, one of the smallest islands in the Faroes, has only one family – a brother and sister, their spouses and children. The children are taught partly on the island and partly via Skype.

While this way of life may have once been unavoidable across the Faroe Islands, better and cheaper transport links, and a greater need for employment, means families are moving elsewhere – perhaps to the country’s capital, Tórshavn, or worse: abroad. Population across the outer islands therefore declined by an incredible 40% between 1999 and 2010 (though the Faroese population has been fairly stagnant, if anything, grown over the past few years).

The Outer Islands Association was set up in 2001 to reinvigorate the eight outer islands – and put an end to their population decline. Olga, from Klaksvík – the Faroes’ second largest town – works at the university in Tórshavn, and heads up the association when she has some spare time.

“*They wait and hope*”, she said of the outer islanders – many of whom have gone to great lengths to really engage with the work Olga and her team are doing.

The eight islands were once alone and anonymous; now they are together and have a voice.

For the Outer Islands Association, tourism is playing a key role in attempting to refresh the eight islands it covers. It is often the case that the people who moved from the outer islands to the towns such as Tórshavn, Klaksvík and Hoyvík, kept hold of their original properties as a holiday retreat of sorts.

The problem is, Olga said, such houses are therefore unoccupied for as much as 50 weeks of the year. The owners are also either reluctant to rent them out or unwilling to sell up, or both. Olga added that Gjógv, where I stayed for the first night, is made up almost entirely of summer houses, making an already sleepy village even sleepier.

However, there is a concerted effort to attract a greater number of visitors to the islands. Around 40,000



“People come to the Faroe Islands for the quietness,
for village life and to feel anonymous.
We don’t want to be another Spain”



people a year visit the Faroes from abroad – a figure that is increasing. “We don’t want a lot of people here”, Olga said, pointing out that the Faroese way of life and the country’s nature should not be sacrificed in the name of tourism.

“It needs to be sustainable. People come to the Faroe Islands for the quietness, for village life and to feel anonymous. We don’t want to be another Spain.”

By that, of course, she means that the islands don’t want to become a hotspot for budget holidays. But that seems very unlikely given that most things in the country are really quite pricey (my guide from the first day, Andrias, said that one of the only things cheaper in the Faroe Islands than in the UK is petrol). Reykjavík, the capital of neighbouring Iceland, may have become a popular destination for exuberant stag weekends, but as long as the high cost of living remains so, it’s unlikely that anywhere in the Faroe Islands will follow suit.

In the outer islands specifically, it’s hoped that by increasing tourism, women will stay on the islands. The ratio between men and women already favours the men in the country generally, but in the eight smallest islands, the mismatch is even greater. The possibility of jobs in tourism and small crafts could well go some way to solving this.

The Outer Islands Association is also at the forefront of calls for young people to get better education and aim higher than farming, carpentry and fishing. But by doing this, Olga said, they’re shooting themselves in the foot – as many then move away to work.

There’s a clear goldilocks zone on this issue, in which it’s stressed to the young people that they can be successful in other, newer areas in their home country, instead of abroad. Sustainable and responsible tourism, done properly, could be crucial for the Faroe Islands in this transition. 🌱

RESILIENT TOURISM AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE

The CoaST project, a social enterprise in Cornwall, works towards One Planet Tourism – tourism that benefits communities, the economy and the environment in a sustainable way. **MANDA BROOKMAN**, a director in the network, speaks with Blue & Green Tomorrow.

By SETH KIRBY



An overarching sustainable tourism economy is about and requires common sense

Photo by
JANE
HASELDEN
via stock.xchng

WHAT IS COAST?

CoaST is a social enterprise that has been operating for over ten years. CoaST contributes and encourages sustainable tourism across all stakeholders, from tourism-related businesses of all sizes, through to national governing bodies and local communities.

WHAT PROBLEM DOES COAST UNIQUELY SOLVE?

CoaST provides a means for people to join the dots, as well as all issues relating to sustainable destination management. It encourages enlightened self-interest. Everything is connected; we understand and encourage people to share their passions – destinations, communities and local businesses.

WHAT DOES ONE PLANET TOURISM MEAN?

One Planet Tourism encourages living and tourism within its social, economic and environmental limits. There are countless examples regionally of those abiding by One Planet Tourism and actively contributing socially, environmentally and economically. Tourism is an agent of change and needs to be more resilient and sustainable today.

WHAT TRENDS HAVE YOU NOTICED IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS?

Greater engagement in the importance of environmental sustainability for businesses. A trend that is occurring more and more is social sustainability.

WHAT SINGLE THING COULD GOVERNMENTS DO TO BOOST SUSTAINABLE TOURISM?

Governments could acknowledge their lack of understanding of how the economy works. They should turn their thinking to environmental growth. There are many different views on how to rearticulate to deliver healthy economic activity.



WHY IS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STILL PERCEIVED AS A NICHE INDUSTRY?

There are more people involved now in sustainable destination management, and those operating more environmentally friendly. We need to continue to grow environmental output. An overarching sustainable tourism economy is about and requires common sense. We still have difficulties in terms of economic growth.

TELL US ABOUT SOME INSPIRING OR INTERESTING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PROJECTS YOU'VE FOUND.

There many interesting and inspiring projects from individuals to businesses, in places like the New Forest and the Forest of Bowland. Individuals have been involved in reducing their environmental impact, deliberately investing and developing local communities through local procurement.

In parts of Northern Europe, transport systems have been integrated to support local produce providers. There are 1,000 members in our network and they are focusing on activities such as marine impacts, energy policies, straw-bale builds and water management.

ANY TIPS FOR TOURISTS SEEKING TO BE RESPONSIBLE OR SUSTAINABLE WHILE TRAVELLING?

To consider what they are doing, try to adopt a 'One Planet Visitor Model' – investing in the local community and thinking about how they can contribute to the local habitat and through buying local. This leads to a much richer experience and leaves the destination in a better place than they found it. Choose businesses that offer a choice to have a positive impact.

www.coastproject.co.uk

"Everything is connected"





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The following is a selection of the best, most popular and most sustainable AITO members.



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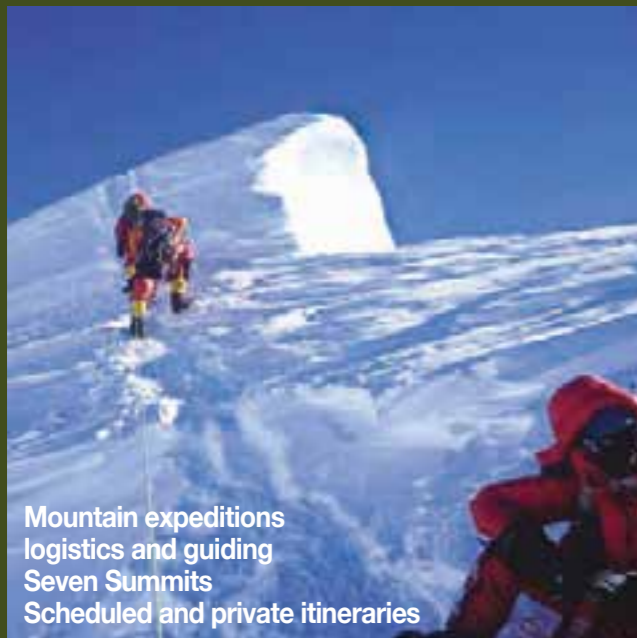
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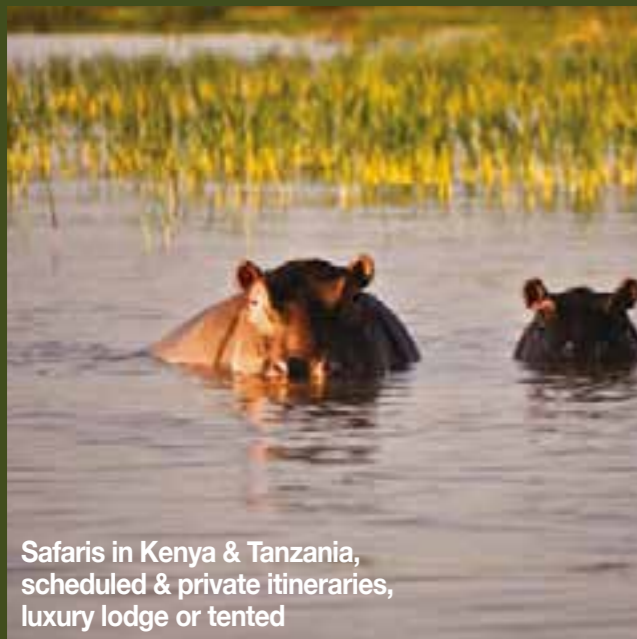
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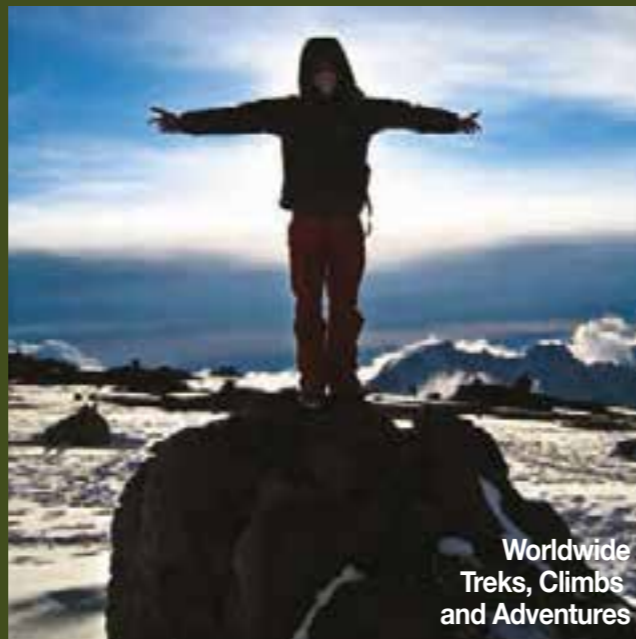
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www.oasisoverland.co.uk

**IN THE SADDLE**

In The Saddle combines horse riding with travel to every corner of the world. Founded in the 1990s and based in Shropshire, the company offers trail rides, centre based rides, camping rides, 5 star luxury rides, short breaks, expeditions, holidays for experienced riders, holidays for novice riders and even holidays for people who have never ridden before.

www.inthesaddle.com

**MARTIN RANDALL TRAVEL**

Martin Randall launched his eponymous travel company in 1988. The company specialises in high-brow cultural tours to far-flung places. From archaeology to ballet, history to music; Martin Randall Tours covers all bases. In January 2010, the Daily Telegraph described the company as “the leader in the field of expert-led cultural tours”.

www.martinrandall.com



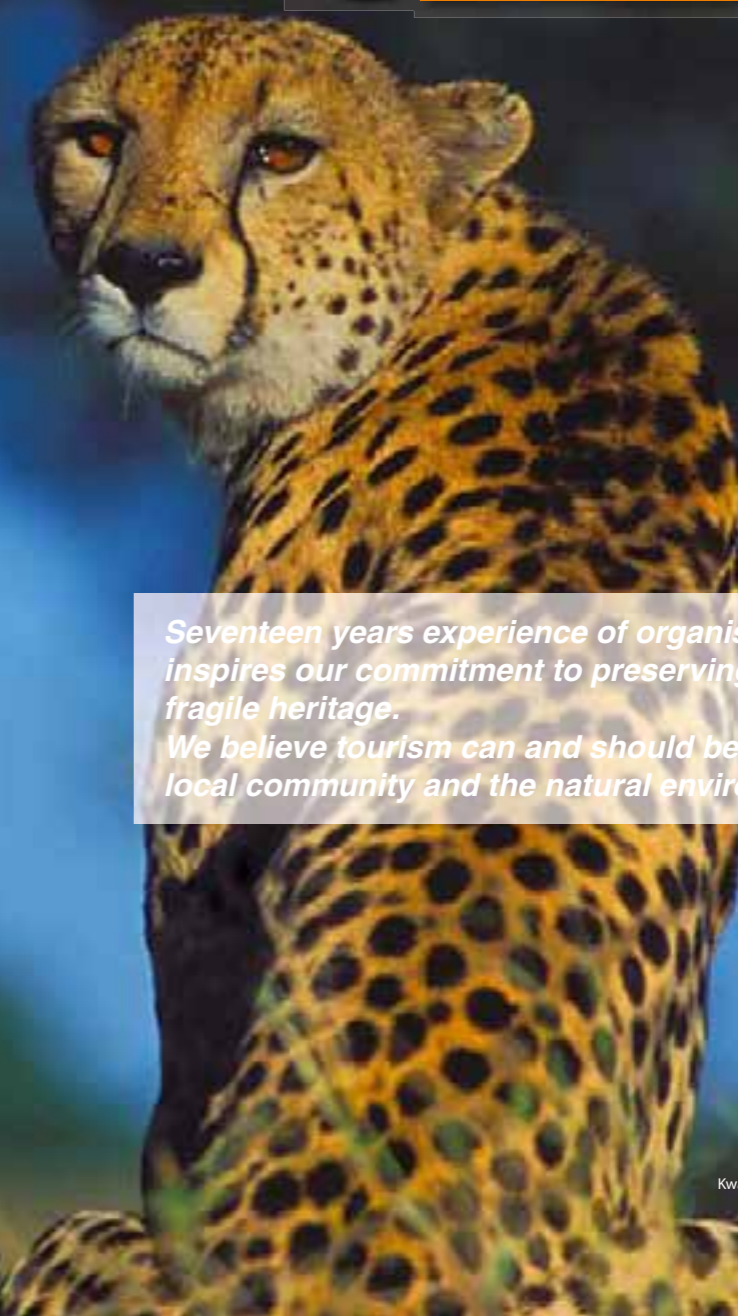
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www.safari-consultants.co.uk

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www.sunvil.co.uk

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Explore has been running small group adventure holidays since 1981. It currently boasts over 450 tours in over 120 countries, and has won awards for its services – making it one of the most popular tour operators in the world. It is strongly committed to responsible travel, looking to maximise the community benefit in each of its holidays.

www.explore.co.uk

EXPLORE!

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According to founder Chris Burkinshaw, “Audley Travel specialises in tailor-made travel itineraries for discerning travellers seeking authentic experiences around the world.” Its dedicated team of specialists work to pick out the best holiday possible all the while taking into account its environmental and social impact. It was recently voted top tour operator at the 2012 Wanderlust Readers’ Travel Awards.

www.audleytravel.com

AUDLEY

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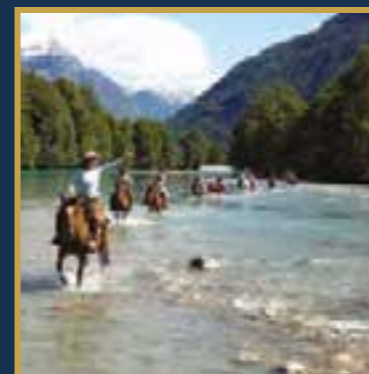
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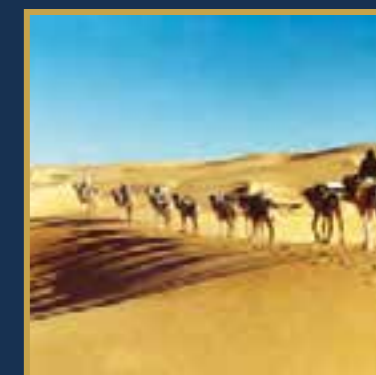
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www.onfootholidays.co.uk



KUDU TRAVEL

Kudu Travel specialises in guided cultural walking tours with music festivals, opera, art and architecture, wildflowers, birdwatching, wildlife and gourmet food and wine. It is committed to sustainable tourism, saying, "The privilege of travel has a counterpart in properly considering our impact on the places and people visited."
www.kudutravel.com



TRIBES

Tribes offers tailor-made holidays to destinations in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and South America. Founded in 1998 by husband and wife duo Guy and Amanda Marks, it aims to offer customers the best possible experience while also ensuring environmental and social responsibility. It was named the world's leading green tour operator at the World Travel Awards in 2008, 2009 and 2010.
www.tribes.co.uk



CACHET TRAVEL

Cachet Travel is a small, independent tour operator that aims to provide a high level of personal service. Its detailed local knowledge and excellent contacts makes it one of the UK's leading specialist operators to Crete, Samos, Turkey, Madeira, Porto Santo and the Canary Islands a position that enables it to offer a uniquely appealing range of properties in these destinations.
www.cachet-travel.co.uk



WILDLIFE TRAILS

Wildlife Trails was founded in 1999 by biologist and conservationist Allan Blanchard. It specialises in tailor-made wildlife tours around the world; with a focus on expert advice, realistic stays in National Parks, quality private guides and giving something back to the local communities that surround the parks, and believes strongly in responsible tourism.
www.wildlifetrails.co.uk



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AITO MEMBERS DIRECTORY

(ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT TOUR OPERATORS)

In Autumn 2008, AITO launched a star rating system for responsible tourism. Two stars and above means the member has gone above and beyond the minimum requirements expected by AITO.

FIVE STAR TOUR OPERATORS

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ARCHIPELAGO CHOICE
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AUDLEY TRAVEL
www.audleytravel.com

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www.coxandkings.co.uk

DISCOVER
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DISCOVER ADVENTURE
www.discoveradventure.com

DRAGOMAN
www.dragoman.com

EURO CAMP
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EXPLORE
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NATURETREK
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SERENITY HOLIDAYS
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SUNVIL TRAVELLER - REAL LATIN AMERICA
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THE TRAVELLING NATURALIST
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TRIBES TRAVEL
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TUCAN TRAVEL
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WILD FRONTIERS
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WILDERNESS SCOTLAND
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WILDLIFE TRAILS
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TRANSINDUS
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THREE STAR TOUR OPERATORS

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MCCABE PILGRIMAGES
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www.onfootholidays.co.uk

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www.lajoiedevivre.co.uk

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OKAVANGO TOURS & SAFARIS
www.okavango.com

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www.oxalis-adventures.com

PAX TRAVEL
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SCOTT DUNN
www.scottdunn.com

TABER HOLIDAYS
www.taberhols.co.uk

THE DISCOVERY COLLECTION
www.thediscoverycollection.com

NEW ADDITIONS

Sustainable tourism ranking not yet listed on AITO website

ACACIA ADVENTURE HOLIDAYS
www.acacia-africa.com

AFRICAN PRIDE
www.african-pride.co.uk

ART PURSUITS ABROAD
www.artpursuitsabroad.com

CHINA LINKS TRAVEL
www.chinalinkstravel.co.uk

FRONTIER TRAVEL
www.frontier-travel.co.uk

INSPIRED BY ASIA
www.inspiredbyasia.co.uk

PLANET HOLIDAYS LIMITED
www.planetweddings.co.uk

UNDISCOVERED DESTINATIONS
www.undiscovered-destinations.com

WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

Having read through the Guide to Tourism 2014, which we hope has inspired you to think twice about how you holiday, you might be wondering how else you can make a difference in your life. We encourage you to read our other in-depth reports, from both this year and last, on topics as varied as investment, energy and the media. But above all, we encourage you to act upon what you've read.

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FIND A SPECIALIST ETHICAL FINANCIAL ADVISER NEAR YOU

Sustainable investment is what we write about day in, day out. Contrary to the early-90s Des'ree hit 'Crazy Maze', which begins, "Money don't make my world go round", money is what governs almost every decision we as consumers and businesses make.

It's important, therefore, that we use it as a force for good. All the financial advisers listed are specialists in ethical investment and will help you choose the best possible financial solutions that match your values.

RELATED REPORT: The Guide to Ethical & Sustainable Financial Advice 2013 - <http://bit.ly/GZegUA>

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RELATED REPORT: The Guide to Limitless Clean Energy 2013 - <http://bit.ly/16LOBsW>

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While we wax lyrical about the wonders of doing good with your money, we're also of the mindset that consumers also want to have fun, kick back and relax. That's why we encourage sustainable tourism and responsible travel.

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RELATED REPORT: The Guide to Sustainable Tourism 2013 - [http:// bit.ly/VU57xj](http://bit.ly/VU57xj)

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ETHICAL FINANCIAL ADVISER DIRECTORY

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You may even find you sleep easier at night if, like us, you want a better future for all. Your hard-earned money can do some of the hard work of making that happen while you sleep.



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- 3 Equity Invest**
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- 4 Ethical Futures**
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e. invest@ethicalfutures.co.uk
w. ethicalfutures.co.uk



- 5 The Ethical Partnership**
t. 01609 771 197 (North England Office)
e. simonk@the-ethical-partnership.co.uk
w. the-ethical-partnership.co.uk



- 6 The GAEIA Partnership**
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e. office@gaeia.com
w. gaeia.com



- 7 Holden & Partners**
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e. mhoskin@holden-partners.co.uk
w. holden-partners.co.uk



- 8 in2 Consulting**
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e. enquiries@in2consulting.co.uk
w. in2consulting.co.uk



- 9 Investing Ethically Ltd**
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e. contactus@investing-ethically.co.uk
w. investing-ethically.co.uk



- 10 Lighthouse Impact Ltd**
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w. financialadviserinderby.com



- 11 Smythe & Walter**
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w. smytheandwalter.co.uk



- 12 Stewart Investment Planning**
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e. sip@stewartinvestmentplanning.co.uk
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- 13 Virtuo Wealth**
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France – F6337 – Whether you prefer to stay in a popular town or in a remote rural location you will find a great selection of villas and gites. Visit this beautiful region of France where you will find many reasons why you will want to come back.



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