

The impact and cultural importance of heritage and tourism on regional image and economic prospects

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Economic

- The 'visitor economy' generates £3.6 billion pa
- Supports 54,000 jobs
- Over 10,000 SMEs are tourism or tourism-related businesses
- A diverse sector including:
 - » Hotels
 - » Heritage and Cultural attractions
 - » Transport providers
 - » Retail and hospitality
 - » VFR
 - » Many others

Cont.

- 6.7 million overnight visitors in 2012 – up by 10% since 2003 and up 18% in Newcastle Gateshead
- Service beds in County Durham up by 11%
- Beamish Museum in 2012 had over 500,000 visits
- Hadrian's Wall Museums receive over 1 million visits

Potential in period 2010 – 2020

(as set out in area destination plans)

- 2000 more jobs in Newcastle Gateshead
- 2300 more jobs in County Durham
- 2300 more jobs along Hadrian's Wall
- 1500 more jobs in Northumberland
- 2300 more jobs across Tyne and Wear

All as a result of more visitors and increased expenditure

Investment needed in new 'products':

- Conference and exhibition facilities in Newcastle/Gateshead and Durham City
Output: more high value city breaks/business tourism
- Rural Tourism – walking, cycling, food, adventure, dark skies
Output: more longer stays
- Coastal Tourism – blue flag beaches, marinas, water sports hubs, family-friendly recreation
Output: day visits

Investment needed in existing products:

- The UNESCO World Heritage sites: Hadrian's Wall and Durham Castle and Cathedral – birth of railways?
- The heritage/cultural offer – Beamish, Newcastle Quayside etc.
- Transport routes – transatlantic air route, ferry routes to Europe, and open new air routes to Far East and BRIC countries
- Better relationship with London and Scotland to draw their tourists here
- Better evidence and data collection – to lobby for investment
- Market intelligence – to fill knowledge gaps, particularly re business tourism, VFR, educational tourism.

Issues

- Loss of One NorthEast – still felt
- Regional Growth Funds focused on SMEs in manufacturing
- European structural funding (ERDF and ESF) does not invest in the visitor economy
- BREXIT
- Cross cutting investment needed from various public and private sources – including (and steered by) NELEP

Current arrangements

- Visitor economy led by the Destination Management Organisations (DMOs): Hadrian's Wall Trust, Newcastle Gateshead Initiative, Northumberland Tourism and Visit County Durham; NGI
- In North and South Tyneside and Sunderland, the visitor economy is led by Local Authority Tourism teams
- Implicit in the DMOs' structures is leadership by private sector led boards
- The Northern Tourism Alliance (NTA) pulls together all the above along with the NE Hoteliers Association and other sectorial associations to cut across the place-based structures in order to take a more regional approach
- The NTA liaises with NGI and NELEP and the Combined Authority

Economy qua Culture

- All policies are focused on growth
- Public/private partnership working stressed
- NELEP wants DMOs and LAs to be self generating and entrepreneurial
- Such an entrepreneurial culture relies upon conveying a particular (global) image of the North East that will appeal to and accommodate those external to it
- Can we, then, think of the North East heritage/tourism product or is it an ammalgum of different, disconnected heritage and tourism products?
- Moreover, is there an authentic North East, does it matter, and what/where is it?

The 'Global' North East

- A destination
- Sting
- Gena McKee
- Robson Green
- Hadrian's Wall
- Durham Cathedral
- Newcastle Quayside
- The universities
- Newcastle United
- Sunderland AFC
- Mobility/image/consumption

The 'Local' North East

- A place
- Andy Capp
- Flo
- Bobby Thompson
- The Byker Wall
- Sacriston Church
- Newcastle Quayside
- Factories/shipyards
- Newcastle United
- Sunderland AFC
- Fixity/identity/production

Some Issues

- Can we develop a regional brand/image without sanitising the past?
- Is that even desirable if it makes the NE a destination rather than a place?
- Can we promote and develop the North East primarily as a place of diversity and distinction beyond being the local hinterland to certain, eminently saleable, global cultural icons?
- How can cultural development reach beyond the city centre, the sports arena and the iconic heritage/cultural attraction?
- Simply put, how do we spread (locally and regionally) the economic and cultural benefits of heritage and tourism?