



February 2008

# Newsletter

## NEWS FROM MEMBERS

### **BROCHURES**

From Gina Barker

The **Visitor Guide** is continuing to be a popular choice with enquirers to the VIC, in person, by telephone or by the web. 25,000 were printed with the majority being distributed nationally.

The **Places to Visit and Attractions** leaflet is also winging its way out to the day visitor areas – Staffordshire, Shropshire, West Midlands, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Warwickshire. 45,000 of these are printed. These are also available for members to send out to potential visitors or have available in their accommodations and attractions.

**The Diary of Events** for 2008 is now out and is also available to members.

### **Other Publications**

The small town trails for Bridgnorth, Much Wenlock and Broseley – a supply is available for accommodation providers – 25 for up to 3 bedrooms and 50 for larger venues.

Available to purchase and sell on are The Bridgnorth, Much Wenlock & District Souvenir Guides These retail at £2.50 and can be purchased at £1.75. Minimum order 10 books. This is an excellent publication produced by Jarrolds and makes a good memento for people to take home with them.

Children's Trail for Bridgnorth is available to purchase at 50p and sell at 75p. If you have families staying or visiting this is a good tool to encourage a more

purposeful walk around the town. It comes complete with pencil and crayons for the activities.

For a supply of the brochures either contact the VIC or Gina Barker at Bridgnorth District Council – 01746 713249 or by email: [gbarker@bridgnorth-dc.gov.uk](mailto:gbarker@bridgnorth-dc.gov.uk) and contact Gina for the other publications.

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## **AGM**

The AGM was held on 29 November at RAF Museum Cosford. After the official business of the meeting and the election of a new committee, there was time to mingle and we were all treated to a look around the fascinating Cold War Exhibition.

### **The 2008 Executive Committee:**

Chairman – Carol Cooper

Vice chairman – Peter Wooldridge

Secretary – Adrian Williams

Treasurer – (this position remains vacant, though Keith Lincoln is continuing to carry out the work behind the scenes)

### **Committee:**

Jean Reynolds – Cliff Railway Anthony Webb – Old Quarry Cottage

John Leach – Severn Valley Railway

Sally Tallents – Hobnill

Keith Allan – The Croft

Dawn Jones – Bearwood Lodge

Jane Priest – Lodge 6 Astbury Falls

Nick Smith – Dudmaston Hall

Karen Crick – RAF Museum Cosford

Peter Iles – past Chairman

### **Co-opted members:**

Gina Barker – Bridgnorth District Council

Bob Braddock – Bridgnorth District Council

Norman Greaves – Bridgnorth Twinning Association

Sue Yardley – Bridgnorth Visitor Information Centre

Simon McCloy – Shropshire Tourism

Doug Brown – Bridgnorth Town Council

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## **CONDOLENCES**

The Association have sadly lost two very long standing members.

Derek Hill of The Sytche Caravan Site and Natalie Hodgson of Astley Abbots Lavender Farm will be sadly missed.

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## **VIC NEWS**

From Sue Yardley

The VIC is gearing up to the new season and gathering in all the 2008 leaflets and brochures. With Easter being early, it is hoped that a flying start to the season can be made and that the weather will be somewhat kinder than it was last year.

Those of you who are inspected by Quality in Tourism should by now have received your copy of "Quality Update". It contains some very interesting and pertinent articles, many of which were highlighted at a recent workshop I attended in Birmingham. Particularly exciting were the developments concerning TomTom sat nav systems. Users can now download locations of all Visit Britain quality assessed accommodation, visitor attractions and VIC details. This could give quite a boost to the marketing of your accommodation. A quote from a hotel in Blackpool was very encouraging "It's remarkable! We have already received three bookings quoting TomTom over two weekends in November – one of our quietest times of the year"

The staff at the VIC were thrilled with the recent results of the Visitor Survey carried out in the summer as part of an exercise to provide an insight into the profile, behaviour and expectations of visitors to Market Towns across the West Midlands. Bridgnorth VIC scored very highly in the survey, which is reassuring as it is sometime difficult to know whether our customers are satisfied with the service they receive. Many congratulations to all members of the team.

The very successful pantomime at the Theatre on the Steps has just finished but there are a number of exciting shows lined up for the spring. Do call in and collect the new programme (due very soon) and spread the word amongst your visitors that they can book tickets through the VIC.

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## **SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY UPDATE**

From John Leach

The SVR is pleased to announce that the section of line between Bridgnorth and Hampton Loade is reopening on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> February. Services will then operate daily until Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> February, then weekends until Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> March.

Mother Nature permitting(!), the whole Severn Valley Railway will reopen throughout between Bridgnorth and Kidderminster on Good Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> March. The opening weekend of Easter will see an intensive 45-minute frequency service operating on all 4 days, and then a daily service will run through to Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> April.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April is 1960s Transport Day and sees a variety of road vehicles at stations along the Valley. Again, a frequent service of steam and a diesel train will operate.

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> April is part of the SVR Members and Shareholders Weekend but there is an additional attraction when a railtour from London will arrive at Bridgnorth. The passengers will have approximately two hours in the town before leaving for the capital behind 'King' class locomotive no.6024 'King Edward 1'.

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April is the annual Diesel Gala. This is a chance to ride behind the Railway's fleet of historic diesel locomotives, including D821 'Greyhound' which is celebrating it's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday this year!. There will also be at least two diesels visiting the line for this event. Both Thursday and Friday see a full schedule of diesels, although there will be two steam locomotives in use on the Saturday.

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## **BUSIEST YEAR EVER FOR MUSEUM**

Last year, an unprecedented 357,000 people visited the Shropshire-based museum, breaking all previous attendance records. The centre of attention was the £12.4m National Cold War Exhibition, which was opened by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, in February 2007.

The General Manager of RAF Museum Cosford, Alex Medhurst, says: *"Clearly the exhibition has captured the interest of people nationwide. Visitor Numbers are up by over 100,000 on 2006 and we are hoping that 2008 will also be a prosperous year for the Museum."*

He added: *"Royal Air Force Museum Cosford houses a display of international significance. We have noticed an increase in the number of international visitors and have attracted Museum professionals from across Europe wanting to learn from the success of the National Cold War Exhibition. "*

One of the main features within the display is Britain's three post-war V-bombers – Vulcan, Victor and Valiant, as well as aircraft involved in the Berlin Airlift. Several of the exhibited aircraft are suspended from the strengthened ceiling and can be viewed from a high level gallery. The exhibition also embraces American and Soviet aircraft and missiles.

Admission to Royal Air Force Museum Cosford and the National Cold War Exhibition, exhibition is FREE.

The exhibition has been made possible with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Advantage West Midlands, the European Regional Development Fund, the Rural Regeneration Zone, Ministry of Defence and Bridgnorth District Council. Full details of the National Cold War Exhibition and the overall displays at RAF Museum Cosford are available on 01902 376200 or at: [www.rafmuseum.org](http://www.rafmuseum.org)

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## **AWARD WINNING YEAR FOR RAF MUSEUM COSFORD**

In a year which began with the successful opening of the National Cold War Exhibition, the Museum has garnered a number of awards in many fields.

The unique exhibition, opened by The Princess Royal in February of this year, has been hugely popular with visitors and has raised the profile of the Museum and local area. It has received a number of accolades including the following:

- 'Large Visitor Attraction of the Year' at the Tourism West Midlands, Excellence Awards,
- 'Building of the Year Award 2007', at this years British Construction Industry Awards,
- Royal Institute of British Architecture Award, Regional Winner,
- 2007 Sandford Award for Education from the Heritage Education Trust
- European Structural Design Award.
- TCAT Apprentice of the year.

A staggering 340,000 visitors came to the Museum to see the National Cold War Exhibition within the first 10 months of opening. It has marked the biggest ever expansion to the site near Albrighton, which is now a beacon for Shropshire and the West Midlands.

Alex Medhurst, General Manager says: *"The number of awards and short listings we have received this year for the National Cold War Exhibition has been outstanding. It is recognition for all the hard work and dedication staff and other partners have put into this key attraction in the West Midlands".*

This project was made possible thanks to funding from the Heritage

Lottery Fund, Advantage West Midlands, the European Regional Development Fund, Bridgnorth District Council, the Rural Regeneration Zone, the Ministry of defence, and the Museums own fundraising initiatives.

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## **PRACTICAL MATTERS**

### **NEW EMAIL ADDRESS**

Bridgnorth Visitor Information Centre has got a new email address:  
[bridgnorth.tourism@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:bridgnorth.tourism@shropshire.gov.uk)

Please note that all County Council email addresses have dropped the  
“-cc”.

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### **INVITATION**

**Welcome Host** – please see the attached. With the approaching Olympic Games in 2012 there is an increased interest in Much Wenlock’s Olympian Connections and the day has been tailored to include some useful pointers to help attendees dispense the right information. Members are welcome to attend but as places are limited must book their place through Gina Barker at BDC.

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### **SHROPSHIRE TOURISM**

Shropshire Tourism on behalf of the Shropshire & Telford Destination Management Partnership is hosting a series of 6 network meetings for the Attractions, Golf and Restaurant sectors in Shropshire.

The first three meetings have already taken place in November with the next three meetings taking place in February.

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February – Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme (VAQAS) Awareness Day/Attraction Network Meeting at the new National Cold War Exhibition, the RAF Museum in Cosford.

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February – Restaurant Network Meeting at Ludlow Castle

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> February – Golf Networking Event at Arcscott Golf Club, Nr Shrewsbury.

As well as the network meetings, 3 bespoke websites will also be created to specifically promote Attractions, Golf and Restaurants in Shropshire.

For further information contact Shropshire Tourism on 01743 462462 or email  
[enquiries@shropshiretourism.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@shropshiretourism.co.uk)

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## **SHROPSHIRE TOURISM RESEARCH UNIT (STRU)**

STRU provides a research service to the tourism industry in Shropshire.

They can help you to:

- Design questionnaires and analyse findings
- Survey your visitors for profiling and customer satisfaction monitoring
- Benchmark your business against the competition
- Evaluate marketing and advertising initiatives
- Monitor your business activities
- Provide relevant statistics and information to support business planning
- Explore the viability of business expansion/diversification
- Evaluate the impact of festivals and events
- Research specialist areas of interest

Provided that you are an existing business and operate within the Shropshire Objective 2 area, STRU can offer you five days **FREE** consultancy support.

For more information on what STRU can do for you please contact Emma Smith on 01743-252598

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## **WEBSITE NEWS**

### **IMPORTANT**

The member web pages have now been updated to feature your prices and information for the 2008 season. Please do take a look at your page to ensure that you are still happy with your images and content and that the information showing is still relevant.

Amendments to web pages can be made at any time. Simply send your information or images to Sarah at Shropshire Tourism by email at [swhittall@shropshiretourism.co.uk](mailto:swhittall@shropshiretourism.co.uk)

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### **WEBSITE STATS**

September	06 -	10,554	Unique visits
	07 -	9,491	
October	06 -	11,082	
	07 -	9,248	

November	06 -	9,551
	07-	7,617
December	06 -	11,614
	07 -	13,815

End of year figures for the Bridgnorth website for 2007 have been released. From January – December 2007, the website received a total of 149,818 unique (first time) visits. This is an increase of 18,606 visits from the same period January – December 2006.



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If you would like to contribute to the next newsletter please contact me on:  
01746-763257, e-mail: [bridgnorth.tourism@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:bridgnorth.tourism@shropshire.gov.uk)