



National Coach Tourism Awards 2015: Winners announced

Coach tourism community honoured at national awards

The winners of this year's coveted National Coach Tourism Awards were announced on 14 May at a prestigious ceremony held at West Midland Safari Park.

Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, the annual awards, hosted by leading coach tourism trade magazine *Coach Monthly*, brought together over 400 industry professionals to recognise and celebrate excellence and innovation across the sector. This is the only national awards scheme that specifically focuses on coach tourism; an industry estimated to be worth over £2.35bn to the British economy.

With over 120 finalists, including coach tour operators, destinations, attractions and industry suppliers, competing for the top spot across 19 specialist categories, coach tourism was the real winner of the night. And it had much to celebrate. As a snapshot of the industry, the exceptional standard (and record number) of entries across the board for 2015 reflects a thriving industry and is a testament to the strength of commitment of the individuals working within it. Making the achievements of this year's award winners even more impressive, says organiser Diversified Communications UK (whose portfolio includes the National Coach Tourism Awards, *Coach Monthly*, *CDC News*, *routeONE magazine*, British Tourism & Travel Show, Coach & Bus Live, and Euro Bus Expo).

On a night of many announcements, the awards also proved the perfect backdrop to unveil Diversified UK's plans for 2016. After extensive consultation, and in accordance with industry wishes, next year's National Coach Tourism Awards will now run alongside the highly successful British Tourism & Travel Show – the leading annual meeting place for the UK's multi-billion pound domestic tourism industry (formerly known as Best of Britain & Ireland).

The venue and date has been confirmed, with the 2016 awards set to take place at The Vox, Resorts World, NEC Birmingham on 16 March 2016; the opening day of the British Tourism & Travel Show.

The move marks an exciting new development for the awards and will further strengthen the synergy between the brands, ensuring that both the National Coach Tourism Awards and British Tourism & Travel Show stay at the forefront of the UK and Ireland's domestic tourism calendar.

National Coach Tourism Awards 2015: The Winners

Coach Friendly Destination: **Liverpool** (also won in 2012)

Coach Friendly Visitor Attraction: **Woburn Abbey & Gardens** (also won in 2014)

Coach Friendly Shopping Destination: **Ashton-under-Lyne Market**

Cross-Sea Carrier: **Irish Ferries**

River and Inland Cruise Operator: **Windermere Lake Cruises** (new award for 2015)

Heritage Railway: **Ravenglass & Eskdale Steam Railway** (new award for 2015)

Accommodation Provider – Hotel Groups: **Menzies Hotels**

Accommodation Provider – Individual Hotels: **Portbyhan Hotel, Looe**

Ticket Supplier: **Encore Tickets** (also won in 2012)

Tour Wholesaler: **Albatross Travel** (also won in 2011 and 2013)

Holiday Programme: **Lucketts Travel Group**

Day Excursion Programme: **Woods Travel, Bognor Regis**

Coach Tour Operator Brochure: **Epsom Coaches**

Coach Tourism Innovation: **The Grand Pier, Weston-super-Mare – 'Video brochure'**

Coach Tourism Professional of the Year: **Alan Clough, tours and contracts manager at Edwards Coaches**

Coach Tour Driver of the Year: **Glyn Bowden, Edwards Coaches**

Coach Tour Operator – Small Fleet: **Tally Ho! Coaches**

Coach Tour Operator – Medium Fleet: **Woods Travel, Bognor Regis**

Coach Tour Operator – Large Fleet: **Edwards Coaches** (also won in 2012)

Coach Monthly ‘Special Award’: **John ‘Bernie’ Miles, commercial director at Galloway Travel Group**

John Miles – the recipient of this year’s *Coach Monthly* Special Award for outstanding contribution to coach tourism – is often cited as a “guiding influence” within the industry. Known as Bernie to his friends (after the actor Bernard Miles), over the past thirty years his enthusiasm and commercial flair have helped generate not only a thriving Galloway business but also a reputation within the industry for his depth of knowledge and foresight. As founder member of CITO (the Consortium of Independent Tour Operators), he has helped to shape the future of coach tourism – recognising the importance of providing a quality experience for customers.

Commenting on this year’s *Coach Monthly* Special Award winner, Sean Taggart, chief executive of the Albatross Group, and chairman of the Coach Tourism Council, said: “I have known Bernie for nearly 20 years and he has always stood out for his professionalism, honesty, open-mindedness and personality. Whilst not always the loudest voice, his well-considered advice, sharp wit and collaborative approach always make him someone that I and others single out to spend time with whenever the chance arises.

“Bernie commands huge respect throughout the industry whilst also being valued as a great friend by many – and deservedly so. Coach travel and tourism is very lucky that he gave up architecture to pursue and champion his passion for travel and logistics through Galloway, CITO and others.”

Stuart Render, editor of *Coach Monthly* and host of the National Coach Tourism Awards 2015, says: “In recognising excellence and innovation across the industry, the National Coach Tourism Awards continues to play a vital role in encouraging destinations and visitor attractions to improve the welcome they offer to coaches and groups. Since launching in 2006, the awards scheme is now recognised for the work it has achieved, and with continued support from across the industry, has established itself as a major event in the coach tourism calendar.”

The National Coach Tourism Awards 2016 will take place at The Vox, Resorts World, NEC Birmingham, on 16 March 2016. The new look British Tourism and Travel Show will return to the NEC Birmingham on the 16-17 March 2016.

For more information, please visit www.ncta.co.uk

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Notes:

High res images available upon request.

Diversified Communications UK (Diversified UK) is a fast growing trade event organiser and publisher based in Brighton, Peterborough, Leamington Spa, and Nailsworth. In addition to National Coach Tourism Awards, Diversified UK’s portfolio includes Coach Monthly; British Tourism & Travel Show, CDC News; Route One magazine; The Route One Operator Excellence Awards; Coach & Bus Live, Euro Bus Expo; SITS – The IT Service Management Show; ServiceDesk360; office; Casual Dining; Natural & Organic Products Europe; Natural and Organic Awards; Nordic Organic Food Fair & Natural Products Scandinavia in Malmö, Sweden; camexpo; Natural Products magazine; Natural Beauty Yearbook; Ocean Business (including Offshore Survey Conference & Ocean Careers); OceanBuzz; and MARELEC Marine Electromagnetics conference.*

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