

Argyll & The Isles Activity Report: July 2015 - March 2016

Public Relations

Promoting Argyll & The Isles

Carnet de voyage : Islay et Jura,
sur la route du whisky écossais.



VisitScotland delivers economic success by showcasing Scotland on a global stage as a place to visit and invest in. Our consumer PR teams play an important role in this by working closely with travel and lifestyle media to ensure consistent, positive media coverage for our regions across Scotland, including Argyll & the Isles.

Over the six months between April and September 2015, VisitScotland facilitated 44 pieces of coverage over UK & Ireland and international publications that had a potential reach of over 78 million people. All PR activity sought to promote key themes for 2015. Here are some examples of this extensive coverage:

As part of the Year of Food and Drink, the consumer PR teams proactively pitched the Butler Picnic service (provided in a number of sites including Ardgartan in Argyll) which was launched in partnership with Forest Holidays in March / April 2015. This achieved an impressive array of coverage in 16 titles, including national newspapers such as The Sun and The Independent. In addition to this, coverage was achieved in specialist food and drink magazine, Olive, and a range of Scottish newspapers.

Coverage was also achieved for Argyll's Lodge on Loch Goil in the Sunday Mirror as part of the Closer than You Think campaign to support Scotland's Year of Food and Drink.

The region has also received a good level of international coverage from a number of press trips which were organised for the European press to tie in with wider campaigns, including one to promote the Picnic Butler for the Year of Food and Drink. Key coverage resulting from this included the Picnic Butler featuring in Vogue. A blogger from France was invited, resulting in coverage in Le Progrès.

Marketing

Launch of the Spirit of Scotland campaign - February 2016



VisitScotland brought the spirit of Scotland to life in its first ever global campaign and social movement, launched in February, with a lot of Argyll & The Isles content. Details of the 18 month campaign are laid out below.

The campaign will engage and evoke emotion in all those who encounter it worldwide through TV, radio, print, digital advertising and social media. Specific focused investment will take place across the UK, key regions across France and Germany and in New York City - key growth markets for Scotland - and through digital and social media, the reach of the campaign will be worldwide.



Shots of Argyll & The Isles feature not only in the new cinematic-style TV ad, which includes images of The Tiree Wave Classic, but also in a series of new online films which show windsurfer William MacLean. In 'William's Story', he shares his feelings for Tiree and for Scotland, speaking about the lifestyle he and his family enjoy on the island, "the sense of peace and relaxation" it evokes, and his passion for windsurfing.

You can view this video now and share it on your website and across your social media channels.

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park also features in the new TV ad, which includes images of An Ceann Mor - the new wooden pyramid viewpoint on the banks of Loch Lomond near Inveruglas. The campaign also features another new online film, which shows Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Ranger Fiona Thompson going about her work throughout the Park.

Fiona, who has worked for Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority since 2006, shares her passion for the loch itself and the region in 'Fiona's Story'.

In the film she speaks of the many outdoors activities which can be enjoyed on and around Loch Lomond and the fact that it is a place which should be used and enjoyed as well as looked after for future generations. [Watch Fiona's story.](#)

The campaign is one of a series of initiatives that fundamentally change the way VisitScotland markets and sells the country around the world.

A key focus of this campaign is on the #ScotSpirit movement. To help the conversation, VisitScotland introduced 'The Seven Spirits of Scotland' - key traits that can be found within the characters of the people and landscapes of the country.

Argyll & The Isles spring 2016 marketing campaign

After the successful launch of our new Spirit of Scotland campaign in February, we have recently launched the Argyll & The Isles regional spring marketing campaign 2016.

Working with Argyll & Bute Council and Argyll & The Isles Tourism Cooperative, VisitScotland is delivering a multi-touch-point advertising campaign to promote Argyll & The Isles this spring.

The activity reinforces the region's key strengths and challenge visitors' perceptions by promoting the Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design, as well as outdoor activities, inspiring warm prospects to take a break this spring.

Potential visitors are being tempted to learn more about the range of attractions and activities in the region by entering a prize draw to win a break in Argyll & The Isles.



Looking over Loch na Bèa towards Ben Nevis on the Isle of Mull.

ARGYLL & THE ISLES.
WHERE A WALK CAN MAKE YOU FEEL
ON TOP OF THE WORLD.

A spellbinding fusion of dramatic Highland terrain, **glorious beaches** and **beautiful gardens**.
Basking with cockies, spring to the perfect time to escape to Argyll & The Isles with excellent
transport links. To reveal their secrets to explore the unending ancient coastal landscapes, you'll be
amazed by this **natural paradise** with more than 3,000 miles of **idyllic coastline**, 20 fascinating
island islets, 10 **mysterious castles** and 14 **world-class distilleries**.
Don't forget to share your experience #ScotSpirit

WIN
A luxury 5-star break for two in
Argyll & The Isles!
To enter, go to:
visitScotland.com/winargyll

ARGYLL & THE ISLES
VISITSCOTLAND.COM

The campaign prize for two people includes a 2-night stay at the luxury 5-star Lodge on Loch Goil near Arrochar, a tasting dinner in the Treehouse Leiper Restaurant, a boat trip with a Scottish produce hamper and a cookery lesson.

A strong focus has been placed on digital advertising during this campaign, reaching new audiences through direct emails to over 630,000 people.

Press advertising is also being used to reach a potential audience of over 44,460 readers, through The Sunday Times Scotland.

Eyes on the prize in Argyll - August 2015



VisitScotland's spring/summer 2015 UK-wide Brilliant Moments campaign promoted things to see and across the Scotland but also offered prospective visitors the chance to win a stay in Oban and Mull in the marketing activity.

The extensive prize included a two night stay at the Oban Bay Hotel, return ferry travel from Oban to Mull, one night stay at the Isle of Mull Hotel and Spa, adult passes for West Coast Tours Isle excursion and £100 travel expenses.

The activity for the campaign consisted of:

- Large-scale Facebook activity.
- An email to a database of 20,000 of Metro's English contacts.
- An Evening Standard email to 20,000 on their London database.
- An online display advert on the Lonely Planet website.
- A lonely Planet e-newsletter to a database of 165,000.
- Online banner adverts on Goodfood.com.
- Deliciousmagazine.co.uk online banner adverts.

All channels were chosen to acquire new contactable names to the database and inspire consumers to come to Scotland and experience the wealth of brilliant moments for themselves. The campaign targeted UK visitors with a bias towards London and the south of England and latterly expanded to the north of England.

The campaign offered over 10 million total opportunities to see this promotional content, with over 2,800 direct referrals to businesses in Scotland and over 44,000 contactable names for future promotions.

Lights, Camera...Argyll!



Boasting screen credits in movies featuring lead characters ranging from the world's most famous spy to a man-eating alien and TV hits from *Downton Abbey* to *Balamory*, Argyll & The Isles' starring roles were celebrated in a film locations guide created by VisitScotland.

The spectacular scenery of Argyll & The Isles has featured in a wide selection of films through the years, from the 1960s Bond blockbusters *From Russia With Love* and *Goldfinger* through to 1985 quirky comedy *Restless Natives* and 2013 sci-fi horror and Scarlett Johansson hit, *Under The Skin*.

Due to the fact that it was shot almost entirely on location in the region, the film most closely associated with Argyll & The Isles is family favourite *Ring of Bright Water* (1969). The semi-autobiographical story of a writer who brings his pet otter to the west coast of Scotland relies on the region's scenic beauty and makes it easy for film fans to follow in their footsteps in and around Oban and the village of Ellenabeich on tranquil Seil Island.

One of the region's finest heritage gems, Inveraray Castle, was also beamed into homes worldwide in 2012 when it played host to one of television's most famous families, the Granthams, and the stately property starred in *Downton Abbey* as the fictional Duneagle Castle.

Written by VisitScotland's own Tom Maxwell, specialist research and consultation for 'Set in Scotland, A Film Fan's Odyssey' was provided by David Martin-Jones, Professor of Film Studies at the University of Glasgow.

With 40 per cent of visitors to the UK inspired to come here after seeing it on film or on television, VisitScotland hopes the new guide will tempt visitors to set-jet to Argyll & the Isles and follow in the footsteps of their favourite film stars.

Argyll born inventor features in new film



As we celebrate the 90th anniversary of Helensburgh born, John Logie Baird's first public demonstration of his now famous invention - the television (26 January 1926), VisitScotland released an animation that illustrates how different the world would have been without Scottish innovators.

From the invention of television to the MRI scanner, ATMs to cloned mammals, toasters to the kaleidoscope, the two minute animation includes over 25 key Scottish innovations and developments that have shaped the world we live in today.

The film is being used by VisitScotland to promote the 2016 Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design, a 12-month programme of exciting events and activity that will showcase Scotland's position as an "innovation nation".

It is hoped the animation, which will be promoted worldwide through social media, will motivate visitors across the globe to visit the country that has inspired leading pioneers, inventors, creatives, architects, scientists and designers.

Helensburgh born innovator, John Logie Baird gave the world's first demonstration of true television before 50 scientists in an attic room in central London on 26 January 1926. In 1928 Baird sent television pictures from London to New York by short-wave radio. He also demonstrated television in colour, and developed a video recording system which he called 'phonovision'.

The Scotland's Creativity at your fingertips film is available to view online and you can share it with your customers across your social media sites and on your website now.

Awards aplenty for Argyll & The Isles



A number of businesses from Argyll & The Isles celebrated successes in the Scottish Thistle Awards Regional Final, at the Highlands and Islands Tourism Awards and in the Scottish Thistle Awards National Final.

Businesses based in the Helensburgh and Lomond area were entered into the Central South West Scottish Thistle Awards with the rest of Argyll & The Isles heading north for the Highlands and Islands Tourism Award.

Forest Holidays Ardgartan won the award for Best Holiday Accommodation at the Scottish Thistle Awards regional finals with La Barca Spanish Tapas and Wine Bar, Riverbank Bar & Restaurant and Cattle & Creel Steakhouse and Seafood Bar picking up the the Scotland CAN DO Award for Innovation in Tourism.

Gail Ritchie of Ardmay House International Summer School was the winner of the HIT Scotland Regional Young Ambassador Award and Amy Lyons of Cameron House Hotel was a finalist in the same category.

At the Highlands and Islands Tourism Awards almost half of the sixteen awards on offer went to Argyll & The Isles businesses.

Argyll & The Isles businesses and events winning their category were:

- Best Cultural Event - Tìree Music Festival
- Best Sporting Event - Tìree Wave Classic
- Best Holiday Accommodation - Torrisdale Castle Estate, Kintyre
- Best Restaurant Experience - Ninth Wave Restaurant, Isle of Mull
- Most Hospitable B&B / Guest House - Ardtorna Bed and Breakfast, Oban
- HITA Hospitality Hero - Emma Clark, Glenegadale House, Isle of Islay
- HITA Ambassador of the Year - Calum Ross, Loch Melfot Hotel, Oban

The winners of both the regional finals went on to fly the flag for Argyll & The Isles at the glittering national Scottish Thistle Awards final which was held in March at the EICC in Edinburgh during the 2016 Scottish Tourism Week's Signature Programme.

National winners included:

Forest Holidays in Ardgartan won the Best Holiday Accommodation

Ardtorna B&B in Barcaldine picked up Most Hospitable B&B/Guest House

Ninth Wave Restaurant on the Isle of Mull took home the Best Restaurant Experience

Treasured Tastes of Argyll & The Isles



Produced by VisitScotland, *You'll Have Had Yer Tea? Treasured Tastes of Scotland* features more than 40 recipes submitted by members of the public and local chefs following a nationwide appeal.

Secret Scottish family recipes and delicacies, including those originating from Argyll & The Isles, have been captured in the new recipe book.

The section featuring memories of West & Central Scotland includes a recipe for Islay Crab Pâté with oatcakes submitted by David Barnett who recalls summer holidays spent with his grandparents on Islay and collecting seafood from the pier at Portnahaven.

Another recipe for 'Nettie's Helensburgh Toffee' recipe was submitted by Patricia Sutherland who recalls that her mother, Nettie - who was 'famous for her tablet, which she called Helensburgh Toffee' - learned the recipe at school in Helensburgh from 'a grim domestic science teacher'. And although it's more than 25 years ago since Nettie passed away, Patricia and her family still love making and savouring her 'melt-in-the-mouth, decadent tablet'.

The book is published after new research, carried out by Scotpulse on behalf of VisitScotland, reveals that more than half of families in Scotland do not sit down for meals together on a daily basis. VisitScotland is urging families to enjoy dining together and create more mealtime memories.

The idea behind this recipe book was also to create a legacy for the Year of Food and Drink 2015, which has been a great success in helping to raise the profile of Scotland's outstanding natural larder on the world stage.

You'll Have Had Yer Tea is available free of charge in VisitScotland Information Centres throughout the country. **It is also available online.**

Social Media

Putting Argyll & The Isles in the picture



Some of Scotland's top social media snappers took over VisitScotland's Instagram channel, with one from Argyll & The Isles showing the best the region's landscape has to offer.

For three days every week in October 2015, the influential Instagrammers showcased the best of Scotland through their own lens on the our [@VisitScotland](#) Instagram account and Lochgilphead's own Eilidh Cameron ([eilidh__cameron](#)) was showcasing the region.

Other Scottish Instagrammers who have featured on the VisitScotland account so far include Rab Ritchie ([@itsrab](#)) from Central Scotland, Fiona Annal ([@fionaannal](#)) from Orkney and Ellis O'Connor ([@ellisconnor](#)) from the Highlands.

VisitScotland's Instagram account now has over 78,000 followers and can be found at <https://instagram.com/visitscotland/>.

You can also follow Eilidh on her account.



Images by Eilidh Cameron on Instagram (L-R) Jura from Islay, Kilchurn Castle, Mid Argyll.

Growth Fund, Events Fund and in-kind events support

Six Argyll events received funding



Three internationally-renowned events taking place in October 2015 in Argyll & The Isles benefited from funding granted through EventScotland - part of VisitScotland's events directorate.

The Mull Rally, The Royal National Mod and BWA Tiree Wave Classic all received funding.

Three events in spring and summer 2016 also received funding including Oban Live, ButeFest and The Highland Fling in Oban.

EventScotland is a team within VisitScotland's events directorate and is working to make Scotland the perfect stage for events. By funding and developing an exciting portfolio of sporting and cultural events, EventScotland is helping to raise Scotland's international profile and boost the economy by attracting more visitors.



ButeFest 2015.

Growth Fund awarded to joint partnership



A unique collaboration designed to boost the number of short breaks taken in Glasgow and Loch Lomond, including Argyll, was given £34,000 by VisitScotland.

Destination marketing organisations Glasgow City Marketing Bureau (GCMB) and Love Loch Lomond teamed up with ScotRail for a £68,000 marketing campaign, which VisitScotland has match-funded through our Growth Fund.

Aimed primarily at potential visitors from Edinburgh and Aberdeen, the campaign will highlight the close proximity between the urban experiences of Scotland's largest city and the beautiful scenery of Loch Lomond.

A key message is the fact that ScotRail operates a regular train service between Glasgow Queen Street and a number of train stations in the Loch Lomond area, including Balloch which has a maximum journey time of 50 minutes.

The marketing activity also included the creation of website landing pages and a short film as well as radio, online and press advertisements.

The money will also be used to host press trips and to allow the partners group to attend Travmedia International Media Marketplace in London - a showpiece media event for the travel trade.

Industry events

AITC Tourism Summits

VisitScotland continue to dedicate its support to this event in the form of partner funding. AITC does an excellent job of rallying the industry in Argyll and the Tourism Summit is a great opportunity for everyone to come together and look forward to the coming season and find out how we can all continue to work in partnership.

We supported the AITC Tourism Summit in March in Helensburgh by paying for the locally-sourced lunch.

Argyll hosts national food tourism event



The national food tourism event, held in Oban and delivered in partnership between Argyll & The Isles Tourism and Food From Argyll with support from VisitScotland, Argyll & Bute Council, Highlands & Islands Enterprise and CalMac, was designed to inspire Scottish tourism and food businesses and ask the question - has Scotland got what it takes to become a global food tourism destination?

VisitScotland's Head of Global Brand & Marketing Communications, Helen Campbell, facilitated two workshops based on our future marketing plans and Taste Our Best and how food and drink and tourism businesses could get involved.

VisitScotland provided financial and in-kind event support in the run up and during the event

Taste Our Best Case Study

Creel to meal at The Colintrave Hotel



VisitScotland produced a number of case studies on Taste Our Best businesses at the end of the Year of Food & Drink including this one for the Colintrave Hotel. These were featured on visitscotland.org, on social media and in our industry enewsletter.

The award winning **Colintrave Hotel** sits on the coast of the Cowal Peninsula at the Kyles of Bute and is open every day of the year, making it a hub for the local community. The 3 star Gold Award Inn is described by its owner, Patricia Watt, as a gastro pub and restaurant serving amazing local shellfish and the best meat from the Isle of Bute.

The hotel has recently been nominated for Rural Hotel of The Year Inn and was awarded a Silver Medal for Chef Excellence at the Scottish Hotel Awards 2013.

Patricia found out about Taste Our Best through a routine Quality Assurance visit from her VisitScotland Advisor. The Colintrave Hotel has already gained a VisitScotland 3 star Gold Award and Patricia saw the advantage of being assessed for Taste Our Best at the same

time as being assessed for Quality Assurance as they were already doing as much as they could to source locally.

This was highlighted when the Assessor passed the Hotel with no need for any changes to the menu or how the provenance of the food and drink was promoted. In Colintraive's case, the Hotel didn't require any advice to achieve the award but this is available from VisitScotland's experienced Advisors to businesses who apply to the scheme.

Patricia states the main reason behind applying for Taste Our Best was "So that people can recognise that we're providing Scotland's best produce and we're very proud to be able to do so." She says the award heightens the awareness of what the hotel offers.

The Colintraive is able to keep the same menu all year round, with some seasonal variations, and for new visitors the menu is a delight of local produce. Patricia often encourages visitors to come in and sample the local seafood.

Patricia describes the collaboration with other local businesses as very important to the village and the community and has seen more of this in 2015, being the Year of Food and Drink. The hotel keeps in close contact with suppliers and often passes on their details to customers who want to know more about where the food came from, such as the local Auchenbreck Pig Farm in the village, venison from Winston Churchill of Dunoon, hot smoked Salmon from Ritchie's of Bute and Kyles of Bute Langoustines. **Argyll & Bute Council**

Strategic Alignment, Visitor Economy Development and Stakeholder Engagement

VisitScotland remains committed to supporting the development of the visitor economy in Argyll & Bute, and works closely with council officers and partner organisations to create and maintain an attractive environment for investment in tourism, recreation and leisure products, services and facilities; and a total quality experience for residents and visitors.

Maintaining the visitor economy as a priority for economic recovery and growth necessitates strategic alignment with Scottish Government policy and involves collaborative planning and working with other agencies, the local authority, the destination organisation, marketing groups, sector groups, industry associations, the European Union and elected members at all levels.

The destination organisation, Argyll & the Isles Tourism Co-operative Ltd (AITC) undertakes regional marketing activity and destination development work on behalf of its membership of local marketing groups and VisitScotland is a member of the steering group and a number of sub-groups devoted to particular development areas. This is a mature and rewarding relationship, bringing expertise and experience together to maximise the benefits of public, private and third sector investment.

Regional Brand Awareness

VisitScotland supports AITC in a brand awareness exercise. Marketing specialists have agreed to work with AITC and the group's creative agency to strengthen consumer understanding of Argyll and what it means to UK and international markets. VisitScotland and AITC have agreed a regional marketing strategy with rich online and mobile content planned to extend the reach of traditional media campaign activity over 2016-17 and will deliver some of this on behalf of AITC and Argyll & Bute Council.

Economic Forum

VisitScotland contributed to Argyll & Bute Council's Economic Forum, chaired by Nick Ferguson, firmly emphasising the importance of wildlife, scenery, the maritime environment, food and drink, quality and authenticity of experience, investment, connectivity, community, culture and heritage and events and festivals. The consumer-facing links between tourism, aquaculture, agriculture, forestry and renewable energy should not be overlooked and indeed present significant business opportunities. VisitScotland continues to work with AITC and partners on identification of unique market appeal factors from a long and diverse list of regional specialities:

- Culture (Gaelic, Art & Design, Music, Literature , Film & TV, Poetry, Song)
- Heritage (Species & Habitats, Scenery, Ancient Monuments, Archaeology, Genealogy, Nationhood, Castles, Clans)
- Marine environment (Sea and Islands, recreation, leisure, aquaculture, offshore energy)
- Food & Drink (local produce, quality, agriculture & diversification, extra-regional impact, distilling & brewing)
- The Great Outdoors (Long Distance Routes, sailing & boating, board sports, paddle sports, climbing & hillwalking, walking, cycling)
- Opportunities (dog friendly, accessible tourism, markets, service partnerships, community development, rural development, amenity development)
- Events and festivals (VisitScotland/EventScotland continue to support consumer and industry-facing events across the region - please see Activity Report 2015-16; organisers of events and festivals can upload details for entry on www.visitscotland.com free of charge)

Regional Performance

In 2014 the total number of trips to Argyll & the Isles was 1,067,000 and the total visitor spend was £270 million. This prompted AITC and partners to increase the target for visitor spend by 2020 to £300 million, as the original target of £250 million had already been exceeded. 2014 was an exceptional year for tourism in Scotland generally, but the statistics demonstrate that the region has the capacity to sustain growth to increase its share of revenue and the number of jobs the visitor economy supports.

Influence

VisitScotland maintains membership of, or consultative and advisory functions for the following groups working towards economic growth in Argyll & Bute:

- Argyll & the Isles Tourism Co-operative Steering Group
- Argyll & Bute Economic Forum
- Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park
- Love Loch Lomond
- Broadband Scotland
- Ferry Users Group
- Clyde and Hebridean Ferry Services Economy, Business & Tourism Working Group

- Scottish Government Marine Strategy Forum
- Scottish Parliament Cross-party Group on Marine Tourism
- Marine Tourism Development Group
- Interface
- Scottish Government Economic Geography Project
- Argyll & Islands Long Distance Routes
- West College Scotland Industry Advisory Group
- Argyll & the Islands LEADER
- Argyll & Ayrshire FLAG

David Adams McGilp
Regional Director
david.adams.mcgilp@visitscotland.com
07818 873256

Leo Plaster
Partnership Communications Executive
leo.plaster@visitscotland.com
07794 849182
0141 566 4020

April 2016