

Britain's Best Guides

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the formation (April 1st, 1974) of the AWCTG, (Association of West Country Tourist Guides). Members of which have been through rigorous training to become professional Blue Badge Tourist Guides and are recognisable by their distinctive blue badges.

In 1950 with the Festival of Britain looming, it was realised that London would need trained guides to enhance the visitor experience by introducing incoming guests to our iconic capital city. Over the years this training was also taken up by the regional tourist boards, such as the West Country Tourist Board, to train guides up all over the country.

As well as taking national and regional knowledge exams at the end of a year long course, guides are trained in vocal techniques, to use a microphone, to manage groups safely, and also how to create content that will inform and entertain guests. Once qualified as guides, they carry public liability insurance and can be relied upon to give a professional guiding service.

Nowadays, Blue Badge Tourist Guides in the West Country fulfil many roles. They act as ambassadors to the area, introducing our stunning landscape and culture, they lead guided walks around towns, cities, on the South West Coast Path and the moors and parkland. They introduce clients to museum's, galleries and attractions across the area, including our World Heritage sites. They devise itineraries for incoming visitors, and work with some of the biggest cruise ship operators in the world to give their passengers a day out to remember in the region.

This year will see over 60 port calls into the region, from the Isles of Scilly up to Portland, and each one will be served by local guides, taking passengers off by coach to visit attractions or walk in our amazing countryside. As Malcolm Bell has stated....

'The cruise sector is growing and drives local economic boosts to the ports and local areas. The estimated value of the business to the region this year 2024 across Devon & Cornwall plus the Isles of Scilly would be around £5m and is likely to increase in the coming years'

Malcolm Bell, Visit Cornwall

The first cruise call of 2024 is in Falmouth, on April 10th, when guides will be actively entertaining disembarking passengers. At the end of the day, having safely returned guests back to their ship, Guides, clients and friends will gather at 6pm in the Garden Room of the Falmouth Hotel, to celebrate our Golden Anniversary with fizz and a special cake. If you or someone from your business would like to know more about the role Blue Badge Guides undertake, and how they could work with you, please feel free to contact the association for an invite.

If you can't make it but would still like information, contact them anyway!

For more details, please contact us at

southwest.tourguides.uk@gmail.com

'A Blue Badge Tourist Guide will bring your visit to life'.