



EASCO News

Monthly news from YOUR trade association

Edition 118 October 2016

EASCO/Greenwich University Report Launched at Westminster



The long-awaited report by the University of Greenwich into the economic impact of self-catering was launched in style at the House of Commons on 11th October.

Hosted by Neil Parish MP (seen in the picture (left) with EASCO Chair Alex Roads (right)), the event attracted several parliamentarians and a range of other guests from the world of tourism.

In October's EASCO News:

Full story – report launch
Key points from the report
Discover England Fund winner
VisitBritain's Annual Review
Tourism is for Everybody
BTA Annual Review

Report Launch at the House of Commons

Guests and the EASCO team queued for almost an hour to get through tight security at the Palace of Westminster to take part in a milestone event for EASCO. Never before has the organisation sponsored an academic research report and the report being launched covers barely-trodden ground, to show how self-catering holidays contribute to the economy of many rural and coastal areas of England.

Members' Dining Room C, although not a large room, was crowded as guests heard short speeches from Neil Parish MP, who is Chair of the House of Commons Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs Select Committee. His Committee is carrying out an enquiry into rural tourism this year and he spoke about that to the guests. Also speaking was Lady Penny Cobham, (pictured below) Chair of the VisitEngland Board within the British Tourist Authority. She recalled the delights of self-catering from some personal experience.



The Report's authors, James Pennel and Dr Ewa Krolikowska (below) of the University of Greenwich, presented the report's findings.



They were introduced by EASCO Council member Graham Wason, who reminded the guests of the economic importance of self-catering with a very pertinent example from the village where his own self-catering property is situated: the pub there might very well not survive without the visitors from self-catering holiday accommodation.

Copies of the printed report were handed out to guests at the launch, who included people from the Department for Culture Media and Sport, the British Tourist Authority, and both houses of Parliament.



Above; Guests chatting after the speeches.

Copies of the report have also been sent to a number of significant opinion-formers in Parliament and the tourism industry.

Getting Your Copy

The report has been made publically available, free of charge, in electronic form. It may be downloaded from the member section of the EASCO website. Non-members may download it from a page on the website, on recording their email address.

The report has been printed to a high standard and is available by post for a small charge to include UK postage, stationery, and a small contribution to the cost of printing. The price is £3.95 to members of EASCO, £4.95 to non-members. Payments can be made online by card or Paypal, or a cheque can be sent to EASCO.

The Report: Key Points

Twenty or more pages of report don't fit into EASCO News but for those who don't have time or inclination to read the whole document, your editor has

tried to highlight below some of the key points of interest to members.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE RURAL AND COASTAL SELF-CATERING SECTOR IN ENGLAND



October 2016
A report for the English Association of Self-Catering Operators by the Economic Development Resource Centre, University of Greenwich

Dr Ewa Krolukowska & James Kennell



Close to the beginning is an answer to that most intriguing of questions; just how many self-catering properties are there? The report looks at other work on this and concludes that there are around 60,000 units, defined as self-contained, with cooking facilities, offered short-term for holidays. As there is no compulsory registration in England an exact figure is almost impossible to ascertain.

The research was carried out using existing sources, a survey of self-caterers, and a database of 191,337 customer bookings compiled from data to which a number of EASCO agencies, plus SuperControl, contributed.

94% of bookings were domestic, i.e. from UK residents, 6% from abroad. Interestingly more women than men make the bookings (54.5% to 45.5% ratio).

The study shows that there is a predominance of guests coming from

London, the South-East, and the East of England, and that guests largely stay in the most popular regions for holidays, the west country, East Anglia, Cumbria, followed by Yorkshire, Kent, and Northumberland.

The average stay length is 6 nights for domestic guests and 7.5 nights for overseas guests, paying an average per person per night of £35.09. The tradition of making bookings in January remains strong. This is by far the busiest month for bookings with a steady fall in the number of bookings made through the rest of the year.

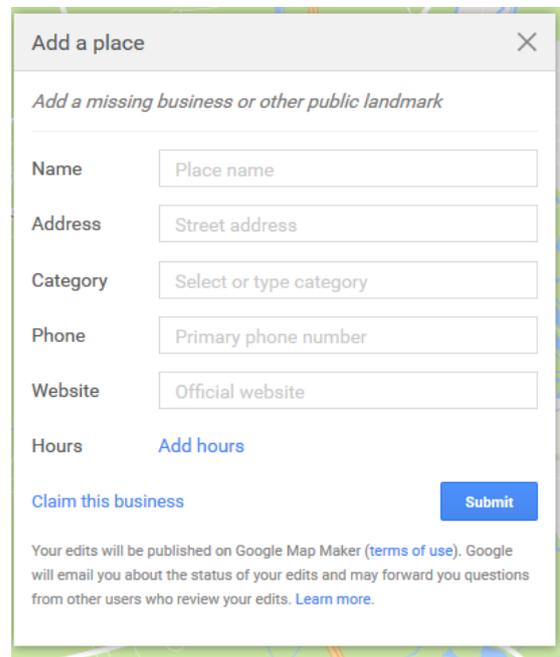
80% of properties were available for all or nearly all of the year, and 67% of them achieved at least 155 days per year of letting.

Services offered were analysed and this analysis produced few surprises, except that a high figure of 80% of owners provide a welcome hamper or basket.

By a small margin, the majority of owners made the decision to use an agent to achieve bookings, but some 18% handle bookings directly themselves. (Some do both). A wide variety of sales channels and advertising methods was used by survey respondents. Perhaps surprisingly, 39% of owners do not have a website of their own, presumably because their agency provides the necessary online presence. Very few of us are advertising in print these days – the days of a small advertisement in an up-market magazine are over. Many owners advertise with a variety of consortia and online outlets. Social media is not heavily used – only 49% of owners used any social media at all.

Just 20% for example used Pinterest, which costs nothing and requires little maintenance.

Online reviews were studied in the survey and the agent's own review system was the most heavily used.



The image shows a screenshot of the 'Add a place' form on Google Maps. The form is titled 'Add a place' and has a close button (X) in the top right corner. Below the title is the subtitle 'Add a missing business or other public landmark'. The form contains several input fields: 'Name' with a placeholder 'Place name', 'Address' with a placeholder 'Street address', 'Category' with a placeholder 'Select or type category', 'Phone' with a placeholder 'Primary phone number', and 'Website' with a placeholder 'Official website'. There is also a section for 'Hours' with a link 'Add hours'. At the bottom left, there is a link 'Claim this business' and at the bottom right, a blue 'Submit' button. Below the form, there is a small text block: 'Your edits will be published on Google Map Maker (terms of use). Google will email you about the status of your edits and may forward you questions from other users who review your edits. Learn more.'

Google Maps "Add a missing business" form allows any business to be nominated for inclusion in Google and therefore for Google reviews to be added, but most self-caterers seem not to be aware of this.

The survey showed a low level of understanding by owners with a significant number believing that there was nowhere for guests to leave a review. 8% thought reviews could be left on Google – in fact a guest who wanted to go to the trouble could leave a review for any business, adding it to the Google Maps database if he or she wished.

The economic impact of self-catering is of course the key finding of the report. Annual spending on self-catering in

England is estimated at £1,085,788,800. Adding a multiplier of 1.8 to this figure (to account for the industry effects of this expenditure), spending on self-catering accommodation adds £3,040,208,640 to “Gross value added” each year. In more straightforward terms, the sector supports 20,107 full-time-equivalent jobs per year.

These figures don’t take into account tourist spending on attractions, transport, meals out, souvenirs, or ice cream! The authors point out that there is scope for further research to be carried out to estimate the total value of all expenditure by self-catering holidaymakers.

One of the interesting points made in the conclusions of the report is that self-catering creates wealth transfer from the richest areas of England – where the guests come from – to some of the least prosperous parts of the country. This is a powerful point for policymakers.

Tourism for Everybody



A new campaign has been launched to promote accessibility for disabled guests and they have a campaign badge that they ask businesses to

display if they can make a number of pledges. The pledges are:

We recognise equality

We recognise that **everybody**, including disabled and less able visitors, has the right to enjoy all aspects of tourism and travel. We work to promote and support this.

We welcome all customers

We make it our priority to meet customers’ individual needs through personal attention. We aim to provide the same high quality levels of service for **everybody**.

We train and empower our staff

We train our staff in disability awareness as well as customer service and strive to meet the needs of **everybody** to ensure an enjoyable and rewarding travel experience.

We provide access information

We have completed an Access Statement, which we keep up to date and which is available to **everybody** through our website and through other channels.

We seek an inclusive environment

We are committed to planning and carrying out improvements to our infrastructure, products, services and information. We aim to use a ‘design-for-all’ approach, in order to remove or minimise access barriers.

We have an Access Champion

We have appointed a member of staff to be our Access Champion, to ensure that we comply with Disability and Equality regulations, to be a contact point for disabled customers, to co-ordinate our staff disability awareness training, to maintain our Access Statement, to review the accessibility of our infrastructure,

products, services and information and to evaluate and follow up on customers' comments and complaints.

We monitor our performance

We monitor our customer service standards through our feedback systems. We evaluate all comments and complaints received from customers and seek always to resolve issues promptly and fully. Our Access Champion evaluates and responds to comments and complaints which relate specifically to the accessibility of our infrastructure, products, services and information.

We expect high standards of our suppliers

We strive to work with suppliers who recognise and respect the principles contained in our Code of Practice. Their performance and reputation are paramount in their appointment.

We act responsibly

We regard accurate and helpful information, good access for all visitors and the employment of enthusiastic and helpful staff, regardless of race, gender or ability, as being part of our wider social responsibility.

EASCO has signed up to the campaign and will keep you informed as it develops. At present the website www.tourismisforeverybody.org

Offers a limited range of resources but will no doubt grow into a useful resource. The main focus of the campaign is to get tourism businesses to make the commitments and display the badge.

Discover England Fund: Winners Announced

The Discover England Fund, a centrepiece of the government's tourism policy, has awarded funding to 21 projects in the first year.

1. Golf Tourism England

This seems to be a website portal for gold tourism

2. Telling the Stories of England:

The creation of geographic and thematic historical, cultural and countryside tours for the US alumni and affinity (special interest) markets.

3. Gardens and Gourmet

Visit Kent, working with the destination teams in Cheshire, Essex, Hertfordshire and the Peak District, will package each region's outstanding gardens and gourmet offer as bookable products

4. South West Coast Path – Amazing Experiences and Making Memories

A whole range of bookable experiences will be brought together using new technology along the South West Coast Path for German and Dutch visitors who want to explore on foot.

5. England's Seafood Coast

The project aims to transform the Riviera's status as an international seafood destination in Western Europe as well as to scope the development of a new national product England's Seafood Coast to attract international visitors.

6. Incentive England

Another website and database project, this will create a marketing platform for incentive travel

7. Self-guided activity app

Compass Holidays' current mobile app uses a mapping system to guide tourists. This project will enable them to upgrade their product

8. The Great West Way

this project, will define the best approach for developing, branding and marketing the route from London to Bristol and create and roll out bookable itineraries.

9. Growing Manchester as an International Gateway

The project will additionally develop a city sightseeing itinerary and identify the ways for Manchester to act as an international gateway to Northern England.

10. Town and Country

This project will see SuperBreak take its strong domestic product to the Australian and US markets.

11. Growing new audiences for England's Heritage Product

This project will develop new content to increase the appeal of England's heritage with the under-35s in the US using techniques such as augmented reality.

12. Discovering the mighty rivers and majestic canals of England

Targeting visitors from Germany and Scandinavia, Marketing Birmingham together with industry and destination partners in the Midlands, will develop two

itineraries along a stretch of waterway known as the Warwickshire Ring.

13. Brit Xplorer

Visitors from near European markets and further afield will be able to purchase multi-day coach travel passes before they travel to England.

14. BritRail England Pass M-Ticket

The Rail Delivery Group (RDG), will be fast-tracking the migration of their BritRail England pass to a m-ticket (mobile) enabling visitors to purchase the England pass online right up to the day of departure

15. Britain Fix(-ed): STA Travel

STA Travel will develop an exciting range of bite-size, easy-to-digest packages suited to the international youth market. The packages will be designed to address the lack of regional accessibility and to improve visitor circulation across England.

16. London and Manchester: Gateways to England

The project will develop two-centre holiday packages and address intercity travel to increase awareness and enhance the appeal of travelling beyond London and experiencing one of England's great northern cities.

17. Passport to the Coast

The National Coastal Tourism Academy will engage tourism businesses along the coastline of the East of England between Hull and Harwich to produce thematic itineraries to inspire visitors to choose the coast.

18. The last mile by e-car

Tackling the issue of how to see some of England's best rural product in an eco-friendly way, e-car club will place electric car club vehicles at convenient locations so that international visitors can combine public transport and car travel to explore England's glorious countryside.

19. Cultural England from Hull to Liverpool

Hull will lead on a project that highlights the cultural offer of northern England by developing an itinerary that can be accessed by German and Dutch visitors travelling with P&O Ferries.

20. The Friendly Invasion

Packaging up a range of experiences that includes the essence of England combined with themed events and tours of the former WW2 East Anglian US airbases, this new product will be promoted to US consumers through the well-established memorial societies.

21. Delegate engagement

The Core Cities group, led by Marketing Liverpool, will develop and test an online booking mechanism to encourage international conference delegates to stay in England for longer.

BTA Annual Review Published

Launched at an event in London, the British Tourist Authority has published its Annual Review.

The headline claim is that over £800 million of extra spending in England Wales and Scotland was generated from the BTA's activities. They also say that British

people holidaying at home spent an additional £97.2m as a result of their Holidays at Home are GREAT campaign

The figures come on the back of a bounce from inbound tourism to the UK in July with more visits than ever before, up 2% to 3.8 million compared to the same month last year, with spend up 4% to £2.5 billion. It continues a long-term pattern of growth. Domestic visitors also spent more in England last year than ever before, with £19.6 billion spent by Brits on overnight trips, up 8% on 2014.

British Tourist Authority Chairman Christopher Rodrigues said that

"Tourism is a shining star in an uncertain world. As our fourth biggest service export, and one of our fastest growing sectors, tourism's importance as a key economic driver and job creator is clear. While the talk is of trade deals with new markets, tourism is already leading the way, competing strongly in our most valuable source markets such as the US and in markets that are crucial for our future including China."

Tourism Minister Tracey Crouch said: "These amazing figures show that Britain continues to be a world-class visitor destination. Together with VisitBritain/VisitEngland, our tourism strategy is working and it is fantastic news that so many overseas and domestic visitors are exploring the stunning countryside, historic buildings and vibrant culture that our country has to offer."

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