

Major Conference Cruises into Portland



Picture: Trade association Cruise Britain held its annual summer gathering at Portland Port, Dorset. Events were held onboard Princess Cruises' Regal Princess during her call. The port is set to welcome a record 130,000 guests on cruise calls this year with many heading into the local area on shuttle buses.

Portland Port has hosted a major national conference for leading lights from the cruise industry.

It hosted trade association Cruise Britain's annual summer gathering for the first time during a record-breaking year for the port.

Delegates came from across the country for the two-day event hosted in partnership with Princess Cruises, including representatives from cruise lines, ports, tour operators and service providers.

It featured a welcome reception at the EBIKE café at Custom House Quay on Weymouth harbourside and a conference including presentations, workshops, networking, and panels based on Princess Cruises' Regal Princess during her call at the port.

Ian McQuade, Portland Port's commercial general manager and chair of Cruise Britain, said: "The Cruise Britain summer event at Portland Port was a great success.

"It was a privilege to host this prestigious cruise gathering and welcome delegates from across the country to celebrate our world-class industry and the role it plays in supporting the economy and promoting Britain's place in the world.

"Portland Port alone contributes about £10m to its local economy from its cruise activity, a figure magnified many times over by ports and destinations across the country.



“The event was also an opportunity to showcase Portland Port’s newly developed deep-water berth and some of the superb tourism destinations we have on our doorstep.”

Ian added: “Our thanks go to all involved, in particular the staff and crew of the beautiful Regal Princess, who helped make the event such a success.”

The conference programme on the Regal Princess included welcomes from Captain Tim Stringer of the Regal Princess, Mr McQuade and Portland Port chief executive Bill Reeves.

It was followed by a panel discussion hosted by Mary Bond, group director of Seatrade Cruise, which featured Sander Groothuis, vice-president port and shore operations at Carnival UK, and Hayley Moore, director of marketing at Princess Cruises.

There followed a social media workshop with cruise operations manager Louis Colpitts of SCH Group and a presentation by Simon O’Sullivan from TUI Musement about Intercruises, whilst Amanda Lumley, chief executive of Destination Plymouth, spoke about the new tourism landscape.

There were also presentations from Karen O’Gorman of Abbotsbury Swannery and Owen Davies of Athelhampton about how they have engaged successfully with Portland Port and the broader cruise industry.

The event also included a reception, lunch and tours of the Regal Princess.

More than 50 delegates attended the summer gathering, with many staying overnight in Weymouth and Portland.

Some 3,600 passengers from the Regal Princess arrived on board and headed out on 25 tours to local destinations such as Abbotsbury Swannery, Athelhampton House, Bovington Tank Museum, Corfe Castle, Langham Wine Estate and Weymouth harbour as well as further afield to Forde Abbey in north Dorset and Stonehenge.

Cruise Britain is a network of cruise operators, ports, destinations, service providers and cruise lines who work together to welcome ships to the country and promote the industry. Its annual summer event is held at different member ports each year.

Portland Port’s newly developed deep-water berth is part of a £26m redevelopment project to boost capacity and drive growth in its cruise business and cargo handling operations as well as its service provision for vessels including those from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

It will enable the port to meet rising demand and keep ahead of the trend for increasing sizes of cruise ships, including liners of up to 350m in length.

The port is set to welcome a record 130,000 guests on cruise calls this year with many heading into the local area on shuttle buses.

So far in 2023, calls have included a record 5,000 passengers on a single ship, the MSC Virtuosa, which was the first to use the port’s new deep-water berth.





Picture: Trade association Cruise Britain held its annual summer gathering at Portland Port, Dorset, during her call. The port is set to welcome a record 130,000 guests on cruise calls this year with many heading into the local area on shuttle buses. Pictured from left, Josephine Parker from the EBIKE Café at Custom House Quay on Weymouth harbourside, Ian McQuade, Portland Port's commercial general manager, and Amy Sandford Smith, the port's cruise and marketing manager.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

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Portland Port

Portland Port is based in South Dorset and has operated on a commercial basis since 1996.

Prior to this operated as a HM naval base. It employs 53 staff and lets space to a number of tenants, including dry and liquid bulk cargo businesses, which provide employment for more than 270 people.

The port also provides maritime and marine related services, including berthing facilities for visiting vessels. It is currently rebuilding one of its six deep-water berths to accommodate larger ships.

The port is operated and privately owned by the Portland Port Group.

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