

SIMPLY LONDON



THE COACH GROUPS GUIDE TO LONDON BROUGHT TO YOU BY COACH MONTHLY AND LONDON & PARTNERS

Issue 7

April 2015



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London wins best city destination for groups

We are thrilled to share the news that London has been awarded Best City Destination for Groups at the European Group Travel Awards and we hope that the April Simply London supplement will inspire you to come and check out the fantastic group offering of the capital.

In this issue we explore recently opened attractions like The View from the Shard alongside some of London's most sought-after destinations such as Kew Gardens and the City of London. We jump aboard City Cruises, which has been awarded 'UKInbound's Best Attraction' and explore the River Thames on the London Duck Tours. For the fashion and design lovers, we look into what's coming up at the Design Museum.

We are very excited to be one of the host cities of the Rugby World Cup, which is taking place in September, and invite you to visit Twickenham Stadium and Rugby Museum ahead of this thrilling event.

We also update you on accommodation options in London with a view of The Langham, London which is celebrating 150 years. Another historic address, the Royal Horseguards Hotel, is offering a special menu at its OneTwentyOneTwo Restaurant. Turn the page to find out how you can benefit from this exclusive offer to Simply London readers.

With new exhibitions and events taking place all the time you will always find the perfect itinerary for your group in London. For the latest on what's going on in London go to visitlondon.com/travel-trade
Enjoy your visit!

P. mediavilla

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www.londonandpartners.com/traveltrade

London & Partners

London & Partners is the official promotional organisation for London. Our company attracts and delivers value to business, students and visitors. London & Partners is a not-for-profit public private partnership, funded by the Mayor of London and a network of commercial partners.

Our remit is to drive leisure and business visitors as well as bidding to secure major events in London, to unlock the city for overseas businesses who want to set up or expand in London and to promote the capital's world class universities to international students.

Our intention is to work in partnership with organisations in London and across the world to deliver our goal - that London is globally recognised as the best big city on Earth.



To advertise in Simply London please contact Sally or Louise on **01733 405746** or email sales@coachmonthly.com

City Cruises voted 'best attraction' by UKInbound members

With a fleet of 18 boats, City Cruises provides sightseeing cruises every day of the year (special schedule on 25 December) between Westminster, London Eye, Tower and Greenwich.

Introduced in 2014, the Thames Circular Cruise is suited to coach groups as it provides a set departure, separate queue and shorter boarding and disembarking times (due to the size of the vessel). The 45-minute cruise departs and returns to Tower Pier on a regular basis between April and November. The Thames Circular Cruise can even be chartered for private sightseeing cruises from as little as £695 (capacity 130 passengers).

Lunch and Afternoon Tea Cruises take place daily from Tower Pier and are ideal for coach groups, partly due to the vicinity of the coach park at Tower. Groups can enjoy a leisurely lunch or tea whilst cruising along the Thames, taking in the iconic sites of the Capital. At affordable prices, why not combine a dining cruise with a visit to the Tower of London or Tower Bridge Exhibition; both of which can be booked directly with City Cruises.

➤ Call 020 77 400 400, email: info@citycruises.com or visit citycruises.com



Hop aboard the London Duck Tours



Are you looking for something more exciting than just an ordinary sightseeing tour or a river cruise? Then why not hop aboard one of London Duck Tours' distinctive yellow vehicles and enter the wonderful world of amphibious travel. See the world famous

sights of London, learn interesting facts about the city, and be entertained with an action packed live commentary before the thrilling splashdown onto the river Thames! It's terrific fun for everyone, from three to 93.

We also offer a range of fun-packed themed tours including our swashbuckling Pirates of Westminster Treasure Hunt, our super smooth James Bond Tour or if you'd prefer something a



little more historic than try our D-Day Duck!

Each vehicle seats 30 passengers with each tour lasting approximately 75 minutes.

➤ Find out more at londonducktours.co.uk

Sightseeing day trips by open top bus and luxury coach

Premium Tours & Premium Coaches welcome both leisure and corporate private hire enquiries and our experienced team of specialists can save you both time and stress by putting together great packages including transportation and entrances to some of the top visitor attractions and events in and around London.

We'd be delighted to assist you in designing bespoke packages for your group requirements - whether it's an outing to Stonehenge, a visit to The Making of Harry Potter at Warner Bros Studios, or maybe an exploration of London's dark side on our Jack the Ripper & Haunted London Open Top Bus Tour.

We are also able to provide competitive quotes for any extended tours in the UK you are putting together. Our prices are based on owning our own fleet of vehicles, ranging from eight seat Mercedes Vianos to 79-seat coaches, and obtaining excellent rates from a broad range of accommodation providers, thus enabling us to work with both ends of the spectrum depending on your specific budget requirements.

Our excellent database of professional guides enables us to offer our sightseeing products in a wide range of languages so please get in touch with your request.

➤ [Please contact groups@premiumtours.co.uk](mailto:groups@premiumtours.co.uk)



Visit the City of London and discover London's past

With must-see attractions, museums and galleries all within a short walking distance of each other, the City – the oldest part of London – is the perfect destination for a group trip or day out. From Sir Christopher Wren's spectacular St Paul's Cathedral to the Barbican Centre and iconic Tower Bridge, there's plenty to explore.

Don't miss the glorious heritage hub at Guildhall Galleries, six wonderful attractions all on one site. See Victorian and Pre-Raphaelite works at the Guildhall Art Gallery as well as London's only Roman Amphitheatre, the Heritage Gallery, the medieval Great Hall, Guildhall Library and historic St Lawrence Jewry.

Coach parking

Use Tower Hill coach park, or on-street coach bays at Angel Street (short stay, near St Paul's Cathedral), Fore Street (long stay, near the Barbican Centre and Guildhall Galleries), St Martin's Le Grand (short stay, near the Museum of London and Guildhall Galleries) or Queen Victoria Street (long stay, near the CIC).

Finding your way around

Visit the City Information Centre for help planning your perfect day or check out visitthecity.co.uk. The centre's friendly, multi-lingual staff can provide free maps and enable you to buy fast-track tickets for the day ahead. Avoid the queues, get great group discounts and have a hassle-free day.

➤ [Get more info at cityoflondon.gov.uk/coaches](http://cityoflondon.gov.uk/coaches)



Twickenham Stadium tours and World Rugby Museum

With the Rugby World Cup in England fast approaching later in 2015, rugby is very much on everybody's radar and there's no better time to take advantage of this and experience the Twickenham Stadium Tour and World Rugby Museum. In the past two years the Stadium Tour route has been wonderfully refurbished to make the Tour better than ever and perfectly showcases a behind the scenes look at the Home of Rugby.

Your groups visit will include experiencing the key locations of this historic stadium such as the pitch itself, which was refurbished in the



summer of 2012. See where the England players prepare in the Home Dressing Room and you can share their walk through the Tunnel out on to the hallowed turf, always kept in immaculate condition by the fantastic Twickenham Stadium ground staff.

Experience royalty in the form of the Royal Box, recently refurbished in February of this year, and the other VIP areas such as the Council Room, President's Room and Members Bar, all with a new look from November 2014. End your Tour in the World Rugby Museum and discover the game's history, from its origins to the present day and get the stories behind some of the greatest players, matches and tries.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to experience a unique insight into this magnificent sport!

➤ [For more information visit \[englandrugby.com/twickenham/stadium-tours\]\(http://englandrugby.com/twickenham/stadium-tours\)](http://englandrugby.com/twickenham/stadium-tours)



Go behind the scenes at Wembley

Guided tours of London's largest sports and music venue run all throughout the summer and include the England Dressing Room, Players' Tunnel, Royal Box, The FA Cup and much, much more!

With onsite parking, excellent facilities and the London Designer Outlet shopping centre next door, there has never been a better time to visit Wembley.

Fantastic Travel Trade rates apply.

➤ [For further information email \[tours@wembleystadium.com\]\(mailto:tours@wembleystadium.com\) or call 0208 795 9616](mailto:tours@wembleystadium.com)

THE STATE ROOMS BUCKINGHAM PALACE



A Royal Welcome

AT THE SUMMER OPENING OF BUCKINGHAM PALACE

1 August – 27 September 2015

This year's special exhibition, *A Royal Welcome*, provides a unique insight into creating the magic and magnificence of an official visit to Buckingham Palace. From the food prepared in the royal kitchen, to the linens and porcelain chosen, this exhibition reveals the preparations behind State Visits and official royal occasions.

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Science, horticulture and history at Kew Gardens

Walk along a soaring, tree-top walkway; wander through extensive glasshouses or simply stroll through the 326-acre site and find a peaceful spot to enjoy a picnic.

Kew's glasshouses – including the iconic Palm House where temperatures are maintained at a tropical 27°C all year round – provide hours of discovery for visitors of all ages. The Princess of Wales conservatory offers the chance to experience 10 climatic zones all under one roof. The smaller glasshouses are no less impressive with examples of the world's largest lily pads in the Waterlily House and some of the smallest trees in the Bonsai House.

Kew Palace, Britain's most intimate royal palace and the adjacent Georgian Royal Kitchens are open from April to September. Admission to both is included in the cost of entry to the Gardens.

Upcoming highlights include this summer's festival focusing on spices and the vital role Kew played in naming and identifying them. And in early summer 2016, we are delighted to announce that Kew will be unveiling the world's largest herbaceous border, stretching more than 300 metres either side of the Broad Walk.



➤ **Discounted rates are available to parties of 15 people or more. For more details call 020 8332 5648 or email groups@kew.org**

Exclusive packages from The View from The Shard

The View from The Shard, the premium visitor attraction at the top of Western Europe's tallest building, offers a range of exclusive packages for group travel operators.

The only place where you can see all of London all at once, guests can enjoy breath-taking 360 degree views of the capital for up to 40 miles. Interactive 'Tell:scopes' enable exploration of the cityscape in every direction, with information on surrounding landmarks, and the chance to see how the capital's architecture has changed over the centuries with historic views from the Museum of London archives dating back to Roman times. New for Summer 2015, the open-air sky deck 800ft / 244m above the city will be transformed by decorations inspired by the Great British summertime.

To make group visits even more memorable, champagne, goody bags and guided tours can be added to bookings, and from 1 March – 30 April 2015 groups can add 'The Shard - The Official Guidebook' to their bookings for the exclusive rate of just £6 per person (RRP £9.95).

Groups of 15 or more to The View from The Shard can receive a discounted rate of £22.46 per person (saving 10%). Goody bags priced from £15.50pp.

➤ **For more information and to book, contact the Reservations Team on reservations@theviewfromtheshard.com or visit theviewfromtheshard.com/en/travel-trade/groups-booking-process/**

Innovative fashion & design

The Design Museum is the world's leading museum devoted to architecture and design, its work encompasses all elements of design, including fashion, product and graphic design. Since it opened its doors in 1989 the museum has displayed everything from an AK-47 to the Duchess of Cambridge's wedding dress. It has staged over 100 exhibitions, welcomed over five million visitors and showcased the work of some of the world's most celebrated designers including Thomas Heatherwick, Paul Smith, Zaha Hadid, Jonathan Ive, Miuccia Prada, Frank Gehry, Eileen Gray and Dieter Rams.



In 2015, your groups can experience a variety of different exhibitions at the Design Museum. Until 26 April, discover Women Fashion Power that looks at how influential women have used fashion to define and enhance their position in the world. Then there is Designs of the Year (until August) that celebrates design that promotes or delivers change, enables access, extends design practice or captures the spirit of the year. AXA PPP Health Tech & You (until 26 April) showcases over 20 new personal health technology devices and Life on Foot (May – November) is devoted to the much-loved Spanish footwear brand Camper. And finally Bicycles (September 2015 – February 2016) is a major exhibition that brings together a range of definitive bicycles from our time.

➤ For more information please visit designmuseum.org

Take a fresh look at Westminster Hall

Westminster Hall, the oldest surviving part of the Houses of Parliament, has undergone major cleaning work in recent months revealing more of the medieval detail. Until November, this awe-inspiring space is home to a colourful banner exhibition commissioned to commemorate 800 years since the sealing of Magna Carta in 1215 and 750 years since Simon de Montfort's parliament in 1265 when cities and boroughs were represented for the first time.

Houses of Parliament tours begin and end in Westminster Hall. During the tours visitors follow in the footsteps of the Queen at the State Opening of Parliament, through the ornate Robing Room and Royal Gallery, before entering the Lords Chamber to view Pugin's magnificent gilded throne canopy and the Woolsack. The House of Commons offers a contrast in style, having been badly damaged during the Blitz and re-built in the late 1940s. The entrance to the Commons Chamber is dominated by a full length statue of Churchill and the smoke-blackened archway that bears his name.

A choice of audio and guided tours are available on Saturdays all year round, and on most weekdays during Parliamentary recesses. Selected tours can be followed by stylish afternoon tea in the riverside Terrace Pavilion. Foreign language tours and discounted group rates are offered; audio tours £14.40 and guided tours £19.



➤ For more information, call 020 7219 4114, email visitparliament@parliament.uk or go to parliament.uk/visiting

The magnificent Buckingham Palace



In 2015, A Royal Welcome will provide a unique insight into what goes into making the magic and magnificence of an official visit to Buckingham Palace. From the food prepared in the royal kitchens and the linens and porcelain chosen for a State Banquet, A Royal Welcome will reveal the preparations behind official royal events, including State Visits, Garden Parties and Investitures. Buckingham Palace is the official headquarters of the monarchy and one of the few remaining working palaces in the world. It has been hosting magnificent events for more than 150 years and today welcomes tens of thousands of people from around the world and from all walks of life each year.

A Royal Welcome is part of The Summer Opening of the State Rooms at Buckingham Palace, August – September 2015. Details of group discounts and special Private Talks and Visits are available in the Group Visits & Private Tours 2015 brochure.

➤ For more information contact: telephone: +44 (0)20 7766 7321, email: groupbookings@royalcollection.org.uk.
Website: royalcollection.org.uk

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Prices quoted are per ticket. Exclusion periods may apply. London production only.

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- Cutty Sark, Zone 2
- Greenwich, Zone 2
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Special lunch and pre-theatre menu offers

OneTwentyOneTwo Restaurant at the historic Royal Horseguards Hotel in central London would like to offer Group Travel Organisers a special lunch and pre-theatre menu offer of £22 for two-course and £25 for three-course meal with a glass of wine, which is valid until 30 December 2015. Groups of up to 40 people can be accommodated in the restaurant, with private dining rooms and al fresco dining as additional options.

➤ Please contact Sally Kefford to enquire, quoting "Group Travel Organisers & Coach Operators":
sally.kefford@guoman.co.uk / 020 7451 9301



Award-winning Planet Hollywood



Crowned the UK's Best Group Dining Experience at the prestigious Group Travel Awards in summer 2014, Planet Hollywood guarantees an unrivalled, fun, delicious and hassle-free group dining experience for groups of all sizes.

Tables are prepared and are always ready to seat groups at the pre-booked time, ensuring no curtain calls are missed! Everyone can enjoy plentiful portions of the best quality food – delivered with an efficient, friendly service. Catering to all tastes and budgets there are many set menus on offer and all at extremely competitive prices.

The UK's only Hollywood inspired restaurant, Planet Hollywood showcases over 60 pieces of iconic and authentic memorabilia like Charlie Chaplin's trademark cane and numerous 007 pieces spanning several decades. Whatever the time of day the atmosphere is always buzzing. Groups are welcomed with their name up in lights on the plasma screens which switch between movie clips,

music videos and happy messages to and from fellow diners.

Planet Hollywood's in-house sales team is able to provide an instant response to all group enquiries and help make arranging group dining as hassle free as possible.

➤ For any group sales enquiries and for further group menu information please e-mail salesuk@planethollywoodintl.com or call 020 7024 8455



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▶ **To book or for more information call Josephine Somers, Director - Group Sales on 44 (0) 20 7973 7578 or email josephine.somers@langhamhotels.com or Anika Bolz, Sales Manager - Groups on 44 (0)20 7973 7533 or email Anika.Bolz@langhamhotels.com**



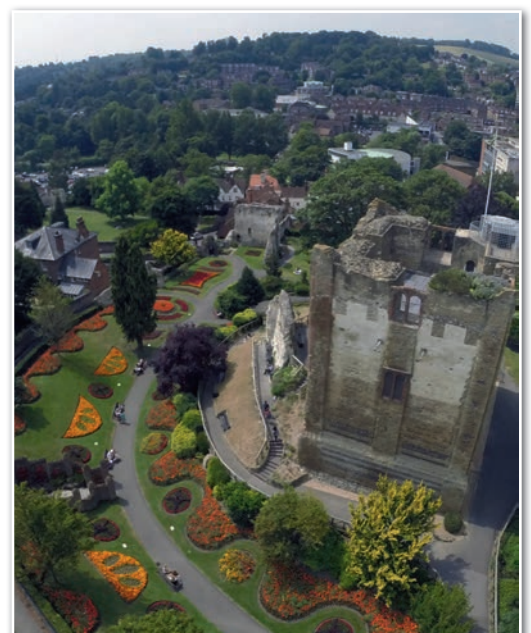
Celebration year in Guildford

Guildford is looking forward to welcoming visitors from all over the UK for National Armed Forces Day on 27 June. Celebrations will include a service at Guildford Cathedral, a ceremonial march up Guildford's cobbled High Street, followed by events on Stoke Park, including fly pasts, arena events and music. Full details of events can be found at: <http://guildfordarmedforcesday.co.uk/>

Although National Armed Forces Day will be a spectacular day out, why not make a week of it and explore other attractions in the area with a military connection, such as Brooklands Museum on the site that produced aircraft for the Royal Flying Corps in WWI and Wellington Bombers and Hawker Hurricanes for the RAF in WWII. Visit Clondan Park (National Trust) that was a military hospital during WWI and is now the home of Surrey Infantry Museum, or simply explore the number of homes and gardens, galleries and museums.

Whilst in the area it is recommended that you try some of the local produce served by many pubs and restaurants. Take a tour of Hogs Back Brewery just outside Guildford and nestled in the Surrey Hills, with generous tasting sessions, a souvenir Hogs Back glass and the opportunity to visit the shop to buy some to take home! Denbies Wine Estate is also ideal for groups with Grape and Grain tours, Cheese and Wine Tastings, a train tour of the vineyards plus restaurant and shop.

▶ **For more information, call 01483 444333, email tic@guildford.gov.uk or go to www.visitguildford.com**



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