

VisitScotland

Our History

1960s

26 Aug 1969

Scottish Tourist Board

A voluntary Scottish Tourist Board (STB) was set up in 1945 and consisted of representatives of the main organisations in Scotland with an interest in tourism, together with four people appointed by the Secretary of State. This STB had no statutory powers and was based in a former church in Rutland Place along with an office in Rutland Street.

A recognition of the importance of tourism to the UK economy resulted in The Development of the Tourism Act (1969), which came into force on 25 July 1969.

According to the Secretary of State, the new tourist board would have “a general mandate to encourage people to visit Scotland and people living in Scotland to take their holidays there and to encourage the provision and improvement of tourist amenities and facilities in Scotland.”

The Act provided for the creation of four statutory bodies: the British Tourist Authority (BTA) and Tourist Boards for Scotland (STB), England (ETB) and Wales (WTB). The Act outlined both the functions and the statutory powers of these bodies. The BTA was given the remit of the overseas promotion of the UK.

The STB’s remit was:

- to promote or undertake publicity in any form;
- to provide advisory and information services;
- to promote and undertake research;
- to establish committees to advise the Board in the performance of its functions;
- to contribute to or reimburse expenditure incurred by any other person or organisation in carrying on any activity which the board has power to carry on.

The Act also provided for a scheme of grants and loans for capital projects to refurbish and develop new hotels / accommodation which the STB would operate. Section 4 funding supported the development of the first truly international branded hotels in Scotland – the Holiday Inn (now Marriot) in Glasgow and the Edinburgh Sheraton.

There was also provision for the possible introduction, at a later date, of schemes for the registration of tourist accommodation and the compulsory notification of prices of accommodation.

1 Sep 1969

(until 1974)

Scottish Tourist Board

Sir Hector MacLennan was appointed as Chairman of the STB on 1 September 1969 for a period of five years on a salary of £3,000 per year. He was an eminent gynaecologist.

1 Oct 1969

Scottish Tourist Board

Six other Board members were appointed from 1 October 1969 at a salary of £750 per annum. For continuity, half the members were appointed for two years and half for three years. The first board members were:

- Chairman – Sir Hector MacLennan MD FRCP FRCOG
- A.A. Hughes
- Sir James Mackay, KBE CB
- Mrs E. Murray Usher
- W.A. Nicholson, OBE
- Sir William Slimmings, CBE
- Councillor H.B. Sneddon, OBE

The new Board took over all the functional responsibilities of the voluntary STB – which had been run by W.A. (Bill) Nicholson - on 1 October and the latter then began the process of winding up its affairs.

1970s

1970

Scottish Tourist Board

Lester Borley was appointed the first Chief Executive of the STB from 1 January 1970 –1975.

The STB took over offices and staff of the previous voluntary STB in Edinburgh.

1970

Scottish Tourist Board

The Scottish Tourist Consultative Council was set up to discuss aspects of tourist development and make recommendations to the STB. This was an organisation of 35 members with interests in tourism and included The Caravan Club, Forestry Commission, British Hotels, Restaurants and Caterers Association (now UK Hospitality) and The National Trust for Scotland.

1970

Scottish Tourist Board

Seven Regional Tourist Associations were proposed; to co-operate with the STB in the interest of promoting and developing Scottish tourism and, specifically in their own area, to provide information services for visitors. They were:

1. Highlands and Islands
2. North East
3. East Central
4. West
5. Edinburgh and Lothians
6. Borders
7. South West

The Highlands and Islands Development Board established fourteen tourist areas (and experimented with an accommodation booking service). A series of regional brochures were produced (The Borders, The West, The East, Central Scotland and Edinburgh and Lothians).

1970

Scottish Tourist Board

STB proposed a series of national Tourist Information Centres at major points of entry. It also started a programme to train tourist guides to provide them with the knowledge and skills to ensure that groups of visitors had the best possible visit to Scotland.

The STB established an information desk at the London office of the Scottish Bus Group.

1970
Scottish Tourist Board

The Hotel Development Incentive Scheme was set up to provide financial support to create 5,000 new hotel rooms by 1973 – with a grant of £1,000 per room.

1970
Scottish tourism

The Landmark Outdoor Centre at Carrbridge in the Highlands opened in June and won the BTA “Come to Britain” award.

1970
Scottish Tourist Board

STB’s first limited UK advertising scheme took place, it featured off-season travel ideas and appeared in January, February and March in magazines “chosen for the effectiveness of their circulation”.

Advertising campaign in magazines and national UK newspapers followed and was directed at the motorist market with above-average income and the “Holidays in Scotland” brochure was restyled.

1970/71
Scottish Tourist Board

There were 130 information and interpretative centres of varying scales, controlled and financed by many organisations. There was a proposal for a national, modern, efficient service to be provided at major road entry points and other key locations – each expected to cost £20,000-£30,000.

1970
Scottish tourism

The 1970 Commonwealth Games was held in Edinburgh from 16 - 25 July. This was the first time the name British Commonwealth Games was adopted, and the first-time metric units rather than imperial units were used in all events. And finally, it was the first time the games were held in Scotland.

1971/72
Scottish tourism

The UK’s entry into Europe was imminent with the consideration of VAT and how that would affect tourism.

The poor economic climate meant there was no increase in trips taken in Scotland.

1971
Scottish Tourist Board

The STB March campaign was based on the theme of the Country of Sir Walter Scott, whose bicentenary in 1971 was used to focus attention on the Borders and Trossachs, in particular. A publication called Land of Scott was produced.

1972
Scottish Tourist Board

In March, April and May the “A Taste of Scotland” pilot scheme was developed to promote Scottish food, drink, products, events and attractions. A publication was produced to accompany this. Promotion was mainly via travel trade and PR to 21 cities across the US.

1972
Scottish Tourist Board

New offices for Scottish Tourist Board staff opened in July at 23 Ravelston Terrace, Edinburgh. STB moved to Ravelston from the offices in Rutland Place and Rutland Street.

1972
Scottish Tourist Board

In May the first Regional Information Centre was opened at Whitesands in Dumfries.

1972
Scottish Tourist Board

In April a promotion based on Mary Queen of Scots was underway. 60,000 copies of a publication *The Scotland of Mary Queen of Scots* were distributed to coincide with the premiere of the feature film on Mary Queen of Scots.

STB assisted the Stewart Society in preparing an International Gathering of the Stewarts at Falkland Palace and displays of places associated with Mary Queen of Scots were placed in key Information Centres to influence visitor itineraries.

1972
Scottish Tourist Board

The STB main campaign 'A World of Difference' was launched – this continued until 1977.

Emphasis was on travel by public transport with black and white advertising and TV advertising.

1973
Scottish Tourist Board

The Scottish Tourist Board employed 105 people.

1973
Scottish tourism

The effects of the energy crisis – resulting from coal miners strike - and short-term working during the winter of 1973 impacted on levels of holiday enquiries.

1973
Scottish Tourist Board

Three Gateway Centres for tourist information services were established at – Edinburgh, Glasgow and Prestwick airports and on the M6 at Southwaite.

Intended that by 1974 all centres would be able to provide visitors with an accommodation booking service.

1973
Scottish Tourist Board

Hotel Development Incentives – grants of up to 25% towards capital cost of new hotels and extensions – resulted in 80 new hotels and 180 hotel extensions.

1973
Scottish Tourist Board

The seven proposed Regional Tourist Associations covering the whole of Scotland were established.

1973
Scottish Tourist Board

STB contributed to the making of film with *Films of Scotland* – Gardens by the sea (NTS), The Quiet Country (Galloway), Open to View – to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Scotland's Gardens Scheme.

1973
Scottish Tourist Board

New publications included Conferences, Robert Burns Itinerary, guide to Self-Catering properties, walks in Edinburgh and a Touring map of Scotland.

1973/74
Scottish tourism

The poor economic climate and, in particular the oil crisis, was badly affecting the tourism industry. The Energy Crisis, short-term working and the general poor state of the economy were all adversely affecting tourism.

1973/74
Scottish Tourist Board

A new voluntary scheme for the registration of tourist accommodation was set up. This scheme was mainly used to provide data for publications and accommodation guides.

1973/74
Scottish tourism

Professor A.S. Travis produced his report - Strategic Appraisal of Scottish Tourism. This was “a wide-ranging study which identified the potential of various types of tourist developments”.

1973/74
Scottish Tourist Board

Robin MacLellan was appointed Chairman.

1974
Scottish Tourist Board

In March The Scottish Tourist Industry Advisory Service was set up to give help and guidance to individuals and firms connected with or seeking to become involved in tourism.

1974
Scottish Tourist Board

The STB's “Book a Bed Ahead” scheme was rolled out. The scheme allowed information staff to advise customers on pressure areas and locate accommodation in areas where there was more capacity.

1974
Scottish tourism

Two-tiered local (53) and regional (9) councils were established which meant the demise of the old county councils, many of which, particularly in the Highlands and Islands, had supported local tourist associations.

1974
Scottish Tourist Board

STB had a budget of £2 million which was spent in the main on brochures under the campaign name of ‘Scotland - A World of Difference’.

1974
Scottish Tourist Board

Lester Borley left the STB to become Chief Executive of the English Tourist Board.

Phillipe Taylor (formerly from the BTA) was appointed STB Chief Executive.

1974
Scottish tourism

Monty Python and the Holy Grail was released. It was shot mostly in Scotland including Doune Castle, Castle Stalker and Glen Coe. Doune Castle became a focal point for Python fans and actor/director (and Python) Terry Jones now narrates the audio tour at the HES property on the history of the castle and tales from the Holy Grail set.

1974
Scottish Tourist Board

“Planning for Tourism in Scotland – a Preliminary National Strategy” was published by the STB in August. This suggested preliminary guidelines for tourism policy in Scotland over the next five years. The report was in two main parts.

The first part analysed the main factors influencing tourism policies and the second set out tentative policy guidelines. These included:

- A new emphasis on c.40 existing resorts and other centres.
- A series of major self-catering holiday villages.
- A series of heritage projects.
- A second all-year resort on the scale of Aviemore.

<p>1975/76 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>Double-digit inflation was adversely affecting tourism. The prospect of a devolved Scottish Parliament was also high on the agenda.</p>
<p>1976 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>New Tourist Information Centre in Edinburgh opened, jointly funded by Edinburgh District Council.</p>
<p>1976 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The Licensing Act facilitated positive change in pub, hotel and restaurant operations in Scotland and enabled a much more liberal approach to food and drink service to customers.</p>
<p>1977 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>The STB published a progress report on the importance of tourism to the Scottish economy highlighting a lack of recognition of this by the government. With this in mind, and in the light of the Scotland Bill (for devolution) then in progress a question was raised in parliament:</p> <p>“Does the Minister agree that it is high time that he agreed with the Scottish Tourist Board Chief Executive, Philippe Taylor, to the effect that that board should be allowed to advertise the tourist potential of Scotland overseas? Does he not think it is a disgrace that the STB should be forbidden by statute from advertising overseas the tourist interests of the very country that it is supposed to represent?”.</p> <p>STB opened a new London office in Pall Mall within the Scottish Centre.</p>
<p>1978 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The Association of Scotland’s Self Caterers (ASSC) was founded as the leading source of knowledge on holiday letting and holiday homes in Scotland.</p>
<p>1978 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>“Enjoy Scotland – so near, so different” strapline appeared on national brochure and continued to be used until 1980/1.</p>
<p>1978 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>Edinburgh Jazz Festival was set up by banjo-player and guitarist, Mike Hart.</p>
<p>1978/79 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>The STB published a strategy in which they said that future growth in Scottish tourism was dependent on three key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseas markets – priority must be given to increased information about holiday opportunities in Scotland. • Rate of investment in tourism accommodation and facilities must be sustained and improved. • The need to make Scotland more accessible. <p>Strategic priorities included addressing seasonality and encouraging the development of tourism in economically fragile areas.</p>

1978/79
Scottish Tourist Board

Continued to operate strategic Tourist Information Centres including Edinburgh, London, Prestwick, Southwaite, Stranraer and Jedburgh.

1979
Scottish tourism

1 March: The Scottish Devolution Referendum took place. Although a narrow majority voted in favour this was only 32.9% of the registered electorate, not the 40% required for devolution to be introduced.

1979/80
Scottish tourism

The high cost of petrol and doubling of the VAT rate were adversely affecting tourism.

Overall, the number of tourist trips in Scotland showed no growth at all in the 1970s. In 1971/1972 it was 12.8 million and in 1979/1980 it was also 12.8 million.

1980s

1980/81
Scottish tourism

The start of the 1980s showed no prospect of an increase in tourist trips, with rising unemployment adversely affecting the domestic tourism market.

1980
Scottish Tourist Board

In March 1980 Alan R. Devereux was appointed as the new STB Chairman. He remained in the post until 1990.

1980
Scottish Tourist Board

The first Scotland's Travel Trade Fair (STFF) was held in May 1980 at Ingliston near Edinburgh. In previous years the Scottish Tourist Board held annual workshops at various locations across Scotland but the beginning of the 80s marked the first time a branded event was established.

STFF attracted 180 Scottish exhibitors in its first year along with 80 UK travel agents and tour operators plus 120 from overseas who were brought by the then British Tourist Authority.

1981
Scottish Tourist Board

In March Dr David Pattison, former head of tourism at Highlands and Islands Development Board, was appointed new Chief Executive of the STB.

1981
Scottish Tourist Board

A Director of Overseas Tourism, Norman Chumley, was appointed with the task of doubling the percentage of overseas visitors.

1981/82
Scottish Tourist Board

In the caravan sector the Thistle Commendation Scheme was launched, and this meant the employment of the first qualified inspector.

1981/82
Scottish Tourist Board

STB Board decided to withdraw from the management of all its own Tourist Information Centres (except London) and transfer control to the appropriate local organisations.

STB set up an information desk within BTA's International Information Centre in Cockspur Street.

1981/82
Scottish Tourist Board

The first joint brochure between STB and Highlands and Islands Development Board was launched - 'Ski Scotland'.

1981
Scottish Tourist Board

New "Scotland's for Me" campaign started in 1981 and featured a major TV campaign aimed at boosting activity and family holidays. *Dallas* star Larry Hagman, golf legend Jack Nicklaus and comedian Rod Hull and Emu starred in adverts shown across the UK.

1982/83
Scottish tourism

The Pitlochry Festival Theatre won the British Tourist Authority "Come to Britain" trophy.

1982/83
Scottish Tourist Board

The Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act 1982 passed responsibility for exercising the tourism function to District and Island Councils, removing Regional Authority power.

1983
Scottish tourism

The first Edinburgh International Book Festival was held.

1983/84
Scottish Tourist Board

A comprehensive Area Tourist Board (ATB) network was established with 32 ATBs. Seven districts did not participate at the outset, and a further three district councils, including Edinburgh, chose to retain their autonomy over tourism matters in their area.

The ATBs were partnership organisations funded by local authorities, the Scottish Tourist Board, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the private sector.

1984
Scottish Tourist Board

STB's Business Travel Unit was set up.

1985
Scottish Tourist Board

The Tourism (Overseas Promotion) (Scotland) Act allowed the STB direct access to overseas markets for the first time. The British Tourist Authority was, however, still the principal overseas promotion agency.

1984/85
Scottish Tourist Board

The STB started a survey of tourist numbers – the National Survey of Tourism in Scotland. Prior to this, the research was done as part of an overall British survey.

1985
Scottish Tourist Board

The new verified classification and grading scheme was introduced by Area Operations staff for accommodation.

1985
Scottish Tourist Board

Alan Devereux was appointed Chairman for a further five years.

1985
Scottish Tourist Board

The Isle of Shapinsay, Orkney won the Tourism Community Award Trophy in a competition introduced by STB in 1985 to encourage communities to improve their attractiveness to visitors. Highly commended – Cupar, Ettrick & Yarrow, Falkirk, Kirriemuir, Linlithgow, Lochgoil and New Lanark.

1985/86

Scottish Tourist Board

There were fifty items of print material, totalling more than five million individual pieces of print produced. STB / ATBs served 720,000 requests for literature.

1.3 million copies of the main overseas publication 'Scotland' was produced in ten languages in cooperation with BTA and distributed across the world.

Accommodation guides were available from £1.60 - £2.95 and public demand was high.

1985/86

Scottish Tourist Board

The Information service dealt with 28,000 telephone and 26,210 written requests (including 8,800 from overseas). Local bookings through 150 Tourist Information Centres were up to 120,000 bookings with £3 million.

London's Information Centre in Cockspur Street dealt with 72,800 telephone, written and personal enquiries – 12% increase. The centre handled 500 BABAs (Book a Bed Ahead) and sold 1,275 tickets for the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

1985/86

Scottish Tourist Board

157 press releases issued by STB, more than 200 British and 400 overseas journalists, travel writers and broadcasters were assisted with Scotland trips. Media coverage of an estimated 40 hours on TV & radio and 14,000 column cm's achieved in the press, worth nearly £2 million.

1985/86

Scottish Tourist Board

STB promoted 'Happy Holiday' campaign to attract retail operators into ATB membership and persuade them to give good service to customers. They were given stickers for display and listed in local shopping guides. 1,000 new non-accommodation members were recruited.

1985

Scottish tourism

Welcome to Scotland signs erected on the main road crossings into Scotland.

1985/86

Scottish tourism

Top visitor attraction in 1985 – Burrell Collection, Glasgow 1,065,951 visitors.

1986

Scottish Tourist Board

In January the Surprising Scotland theme was launched. TV spots, posters and advertising 'teaser' campaign highlighted attractive aspects of holidaying linked to overcoming wildly held misconceptions about Scotland without revealing the destination was Scotland. In February, the destination was revealed.

1986

Scottish Tourist Board

3 February - Geoffrey Hare was appointed the new Chief Executive.

1986

Scottish Tourist Board

SCOTS Agents training programme was launched and originally open to travel agents in the US and Canada. In the summer of 2007, the programme was adapted to make it global and there are now qualified agents in China, India, Korea and the Middle East.

In addition to adapting the training programme to make it more global, both a Chinese language and a Japanese language version of the programme are available.

In 2003 a decision was made to launch the programme online, reflecting the changing needs of the travel agent industry and the new travel distribution model in the US. In 2007 the programme was updated and launched worldwide, with particular emphasis on the Middle East, Asian and Pacific markets.

Around the world 10,744 travel agents and operators have undertaken our Scotland destination education programme.

1986

Scottish Tourist Board

By March the accommodation grading and classification scheme was expanded with 1,600 accommodation operators applying to take part. This comprised two parts:

- Grading of quality of facilities and standards of welcome and services with a scale of Approved, Commended or Highly Commended.
- Comprehensive classification of the establishment's facilities and general services with a scale from Listed to "Five crowns.

1986

Scottish tourism

St Kilda was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

1986

Scottish tourism

In July Edinburgh hosted the Commonwealth Games.

1986

Scottish Tourist Board

In November 'Scotland. The Best Getaway in the UK' campaign was launched and had direct mail, holiday package brochure, national press and poster advertising.

1986/87

Scottish Tourist Board

A comprehensive Business Plan was produced "as an important first step in strategic planning for tourism's future". Three key areas identified:

- Jobs – tourism has the potential to create between 11,700 and 26,500 new jobs by 1990, depending on the growth rate.
- Quality – aim to upgrade Scottish tourism with products of high quality and high perceived value.
- Development – priorities included development of new facilities and the upgrading and improvement of existing ones.

1986/87

Scottish Tourist Board

STBs databank of 20,000 establishments was widely used to produce accommodation guides and specialist marketing activities such as conference and business travel. Progress was made in computerising the wide variety of information available to the STB.

<p>1986/87 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>STB won an ASH Award from the Scottish Committee for Action on Smoking and Health for its contribution to the campaign for a healthier Scotland by including non-smoking symbols in its accommodation guides.</p>
<p>1986/87 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>Mary, Queen of Scots Liaison committee was set up to arrange a wide range of events to mark 400th anniversary of the Queen's execution, including brochures and parades in Edinburgh's Royal Mile and in Glasgow and Aberdeen.</p>
<p>1987 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>In June Tom M. Band was appointed as new Chief Executive (until 1994).</p>
<p>1987 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>"Scotland - A Different Holiday Every Day" marketing slogan was launched to underline the infinite variety and activity of a Scottish holiday. It was aimed at 35-55-year-old married couples living in north and south east England, holidaying with or without dependent children.</p>
<p>1987/88 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>Scottish tourism reached a new milestone as Scotland's number one industry creating 130,000 jobs and bringing £2 billion to the economy.</p>
<p>1987/88 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>On behalf of the industry, STB continued to campaign in key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct flights – the frequency and quality of direct services to Scotland was challenged. • Unleaded petrol – high proportion of European visitors to Scotland requiring unleaded petrol prompted STB to campaign for a price differential in favour of the fuel and to encourage petrol stations in remote areas to stock unleaded petrol. STB published a leaflet showing where these were. The Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced this in his spring Budget encouraging petrol distributors to extend the network of unleaded petrol supplies.
<p>1988 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>In November, The Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions (ASVA) was established to support and inspire Scottish visitor attractions to deliver sustainable and world class experiences, through the sharing of best practice.</p>
<p>1989 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The first Edinburgh International Science Festival and Storytelling festival was held.</p>
<p>1989 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>Quality Assurance Grading was made compulsory.</p>
<p>1989 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>Although the number of tourist trips rose slightly in the mid-1980s, the final years saw a fall back to a level below that at the start of the decade: in 1989 there were 11.5 million tourism trips, a fall from the 12.8 million at the end of the 1970s.</p>

1989/90
Scottish Tourist Board

English Tourist Board and Wales Tourist Board adopted the STB grading system for serviced accommodation.

1989/90
Scottish Tourist Board

Customer Liaison Officer post was created to deal with customer complaints.

1990s

1990
Scottish Tourist Board

In March, Ian Grant was appointed as Chairman.

1990
Scottish tourism

The first Edinburgh International Children's Festival was held.

1990
Scottish tourism

Glasgow becomes European City of Culture. Regarded to be a game-changer for the city, it catapulted Glasgow into the cultural limelight - the city's creative image continues to thrive.

1990
Scottish Tourist Board

There were 170 Tourist Information Centres throughout Scotland.

1990
Scottish Tourist Board

STB agreed on a strategy for improving information and facilities for disabled visitors to Scotland following the publication of the Tourism for All report.

1990
Scottish tourism

Direct flights between Chicago and Glasgow International Airport were introduced.

1991
Scottish tourism

The inauguration of full electric service on British Rail's East Coast Main Line from London King's Cross railway station through to Edinburgh Waverley was carried out.

1991
Scottish Tourist Board

STB's "Eagle-eyed" TV advert was released. It featured a father and son pair of eagles deciding to migrate to Scotland – most shots give an "eagle-eyed" view of Scotland from above.

1991
Scottish tourism

Outlander (Cross Stitch in the UK), written by Diana Gabaldon, was published. It would become a TV series in 2014 and tourism phenomenon.

1991/92
Scottish tourism

The Gulf War affected tourism from the US but an increase in European visitors balanced this and led to income from overseas being maintained. There was also an upsurge in domestic visitors, which had been in decline.

1991/92
Scottish Tourist Board

The Scottish Convention Bureau was set up to promote Scotland as a conference and incentive travel destination. This replaced the STB Business Travel Unit.

<p>1991/92 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The British Tourist Authority's "Come to Britain" trophy was awarded to the New Lanark Visitor Centre.</p>
<p>1992 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>The first Scottish Thistle Awards were held in Glasgow to recognise and celebrate excellence in the Scottish tourism industry.</p>
<p>1992 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The Fergusson Gallery opened in Perth in what was once the city's waterworks building, providing a permanent home to the world's largest collection of artwork produced by the renowned Scottish artist, John Duncan Fergusson, one of the most influential and important Scottish artists of the 20th Century.</p>
<p>1992/93 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>The focus was on the growth of the Grading and Classification Scheme with a target of 10% rise to around 4,600 establishments. In future, only members of the grading scheme would be promoted in the STB guides.</p>
<p>1993/94 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>The Secretary of State for Scotland gave the go-ahead to reshape the role of the STB as the lead agency for tourism in Scotland.</p> <p>A new National Strategic Plan for Tourism was produced by the STB setting out challenges, opportunities and threats facing Scottish tourism.</p> <p>The Area Tourist Boards (ATB) were to be reduced to 14 by 1996 and to become statutory bodies. The STB would have responsibility for all ATBs – in the past some were responsible to Highlands and Islands Enterprise.</p> <p>The STB ceased accepting applications for new grants for hotel development under Section 4 of the Act and the budget was transferred to SDI and Scottish Enterprise.</p>
<p>1993/94 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>A new office was opened in Inverness and some staff transferred there from Edinburgh.</p>
<p>1994 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>Tom Band retired as Chief Executive and Derek Reid was appointed in April (until 1996).</p>
<p>1994 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>Edinburgh's Hogmanay became a fully organised event, delivering great musical acts, a massive party area and fantastic midnight fireworks. It has become one of the world's greatest New Year celebrations.</p>
<p>1994 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>In January, 35,000 people gathered to celebrate Celtic culture during the first Celtic Connections Festival, using all available spaces in The Glasgow Royal Concert Hall.</p>

1994

Scottish Tourist Board

The first French consumer campaign was launched featuring poster advertising on buses, SNCF (trains), Metro stations and prime outdoor sites in the Paris metropolitan area. The slogan “Entre Legend et Realite” became the message through which “The Brand Scotland” was presented for the first time. The food halls of 12 Marks and Spencer’s stores were converted to a Scottish flavour for the duration of the promotion.

1994

Scottish Tourist Board

The first German consumer campaign was launched. Scotland was presented as an active and “different” destination using wording that was both colourful and amusing. The first two in the series picked up “Advert of the Week” awards in German trade press.

1994/95

Scottish Tourist Board

The review of tourism instigated by the Scottish Office in 1993 had the following outcomes:

- The STB assumed the responsibility as the lead agency for marketing and promoting Scotland.
- The Local Enterprise Companies assumed responsibility for funding tourism projects.
- Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise assumed key role in helping the STB and Scottish Office formulate a tourism strategy and for the delivery of training in tourism.
- The proposed reduction in the number of ATBs was agreed.

1994/95

Scottish Tourist Board

The new STB thistle branding was established.

1995

Scottish tourism

Braveheart was released. The movie drew inspiration from the life of Scots national hero William Wallace. Decades later, it is still cited by visitors as one of the inspirations behind their decision to visit Scotland. A report the following year showed that the film had generated up to £15 million more in tourism revenue for the Scottish economy.

1995

Scottish Tourist Board

Rob Roy starring Liam Neeson and Jessica Lange is also released this year.

In the US a series of adverts were introduced for the first time to national magazines encouraging distribution of STB’s main guide – which featured quotes Neeson and Lange enthusing about Scotland and their time filming there.

1995

Scottish Tourist Board

Scotland on Your Doorstep initiative launched.

1995

Scottish tourism

Old and New Towns of Edinburgh were designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

1995

Scottish Tourist Board

The Autumn Gold initiative was launched to stimulate domestic tourism to Scotland in October and November. It generated £9.7 million. The priority was to stimulate the English market.

<p>1996 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>Tom Buncle was appointed as Chief Executive (until 2000).</p>
<p>1996 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>14 ATBs were established following the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994 which integrated the previous 32.</p>
<p>1996 Scottish tourism</p>	<p><i>Loch Ness</i> movie released starring Ted Danson and Joely Richardson who attended an event with the Highland Council.</p>
<p>1996 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>STB's "Wild Mountain Thyme" TV advert was first aired. The soundtrack was Wild Mountain Thyme by Scottish band The Silencers. It focused on a woman travelling by train to Scotland and a man surfing and travelling by car interspersed with images of Scotland such as castles, salmon and a family in Edinburgh. Edinburgh poet Norman MacCaig appeared on screen with his voiceover reading a line from one of his poems "Only men's minds could have unmapped into abstraction such a territory". The strapline was When Will You Go?.</p>
<p>1996 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>New Quality Assurance scheme was launched. The star ratings replace the previous crown scheme.</p> <p>By 1997/98 it was shown to be driving up standards across Scotland.</p>
<p>1996/97 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>A new STB web site was set up – www.holidays-scotland.net.</p>
<p>1997 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The Clyde Auditorium opened in Glasgow. The architecture of this unique 3,000-seat conference and events space sets the tone for the city's progressive approach to architecture along the banks of the Clyde. Affectionately known as The Armadillo, it's become one of the city's most celebrated landmarks.</p>
<p>1997 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>In June, JK Rowling published her debut novel, <i>Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone</i>. No one could have predicted the wildly successful book sales and box office smashing blockbusters that would follow and the impact it would have on Scottish tourism.</p>
<p>1997 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>Project Ossian began at the end of 1997. This was an IT project to link the STB, ATBs & enterprise networks under one website. The project was not a success and lead to the development of visitscotland.com.</p>
<p>1997/98 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>There was more interest abroad in Scottish culture following the devolution vote and the future Scottish Parliament. This was shown in the first "Tartan Day" in New York on 6 April 1998.</p>
<p>1998 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>Lord Gordon of Strathblane became the new chairman for STB (until 2001).</p>

<p>1998 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The new building of the Museum of Scotland opened to tell the nation's history from earliest times to the present day. Sitting adjacent to the original Victorian, the new building was designed to suggest a modern interpretation of a Scottish castle.</p>
<p>1998 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>Having been decommissioned following a farewell tour of the UK in 1997, The Royal Yacht Britannia opened to the public as a visitor attraction the following year. For the first time, visitors gained an insight into the lives of the Royal Family and the yacht's crew aboard this unique vessel as she sailed the world over a 44-year period of service.</p>
<p>1998 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>Opening of the National Mining Museum Scotland at Newtongrange, featuring one of the finest surviving examples of a Victorian colliery in Europe, the Lady Victoria Colliery.</p>
<p>1998 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>The "Touchstones" campaign was launched. It was aimed at 25 - 44-year olds and focused on the lasting effect a Scottish holiday can have on the psyche, with the strapline 'It stays with you'. Two TV adverts were produced.</p>
<p>1998/99 Scottish Tourist Board</p>	<p>The STB organisation was re-shaped to re-focus on key objectives and created a Tourism Futures department.</p>
<p>1999 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>Our Dynamic Earth opened in Edinburgh. The first Landmark Millennium Commission project to open in the UK, it was designed as a focal point in the regeneration of Edinburgh's Old Town, and unique cultural and scientific learning resource.</p>
<p>1999 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The 'Heart of Neolithic Orkney' was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The designation included Maes Howe, the Stones of Stenness, the Ring of Brodgar and the prehistoric village of Skara Brae.</p>
<p>1999 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>Glasgow crowned UK City of Architecture and Design 1999. This saw a yearlong programme of major events and the opening of The Lighthouse.</p>
<p>1999 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>On 12 May, the Scottish Parliament convened for the first time. This had direct responsibility for tourism and its funding. However, there was not a Minister for Tourism – this came under the remit of the Minister of Enterprise and Lifelong Learning, Henry McLeish.</p>
<p>1999/2000 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The weak Euro meant that Europeans were not coming to Scotland and more UK residents were going to Europe.</p>

2000s

2000 Scottish tourism	In February, The Scottish Parliament produced “A New Strategy for Tourism”. This set a target of 14.3 million tourist visits by 2005 with revenue from tourism of £3.1 billion. The 1990s had shown no growth at all in the numbers of tourist trips – 11.5 million in 1989 and 11.8 million in 1998. It noted that there was a growth in “cash-rich, time-poor” travellers resulting in more frequent, shorter holidays, especially in urban areas.
2000 Scottish tourism	It was announced that Inverness was Scotland’s newest city, having been awarded city status.
2000 Scottish Tourist Board	American campaign “Explore the Past, Glimpse the Future” began with magazine adverts, leaflets etc.
2000 Scottish Tourist Board	The single most expensive print advert STB ever purchased was bought in the Christmas special issue of the Radio Times, featuring a map of Scotland and boxes to tick to request brochures for every area of Scotland. This so-called ‘tick box’ advert cost £120,000.
2000 Scottish Tourist Board	Peter McKinlay became Interim Chief Executive in December.
2000 Scottish tourism	The Scottish Tourism Forum was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee on 4 December 2000. It changed its name on the 19 June 2012 to the Scottish Tourism Alliance.
2000/1 VisitScotland	In July 2000 Henry McLeish, then Enterprise Minister in the Scottish Parliament instigated a management review of the STB. This recommended that the STB underwent a process of reinvention under new leadership and with more effective partnerships. As a result, the STB was rebranded VisitScotland.
2001 Scottish tourism	<p>The foot and mouth crisis affected tourism particularly badly in the south of Scotland resulting in a major marketing investment – including the first investment in 7stanes. 9/11 impacted airline travel throughout the world - particularly from America.</p> <p>VisitScotland estimated losses from foot-and-mouth would reach £350 million, while the terrorist attacks would account for £150 million.</p>
2001 VisitScotland	<p>Peter Lederer became the new chairman. He remained in post until 2010.</p> <p>Philip Riddle became Chief Executive in August 2001. He remained in post until 2010.</p>
2001 VisitScotland	“Spring into Summer” campaign launched and generated £19.1 million additional expenditure.

<p>2001 VisitScotland</p>	<p>Future Chief Executive Malcolm Roughead joined VisitScotland as Director of Marketing in May 2001.</p>
<p>2001 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The £75 million Glasgow Science Centre opened. The new centre featured a Science Mall, Imax theatre, the Glasgow Tower and more than 300 exhibits.</p>
<p>2001 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The Cairngorm Mountain Railway opened. The £15 million funicular railway replaced the chairlift which had been in operation in 1961 and has played a role in the development of the Cairngorms as a year-round visitor destination.</p>
<p>2001 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>New Lanark was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The 18th century village was acclaimed as having a unique insight into an important period of Scotland's industrial heritage and the progressive thinking of the mill village's manager Robert Owen.</p>
<p>2001 VisitScotland</p>	<p>A new ancestral tourism website was launched ancestralscotland.com and a new scheme was set up to grade eating places with a medallion symbol.</p>
<p>2001 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>There was growth in the low-cost airlines – Ryanair and Easyjet – and work was done to establish new routes to Scotland. The Rosyth to Zeebrugge passenger ferry service was opened.</p>
<p>2001/2 VisitScotland</p>	<p>VisitScotland went through ongoing restructuring with a focus on effective consumer-based marketing, e-business improvements and stronger strategic direction.</p>
<p>2002 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>For only the second time in the competition's history, The Ryder Cup was awarded to Scotland. This first time was in 1973 at Muirfield.</p>
<p>2002 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The inaugural UCI Downhill Mountain Bike World Cup was held at the Nevis Range in Fort William. The multi-award winning event has gone from strength to strength and is now a firm favourite on the sporting calendar.</p>
<p>2002 VisitScotland</p>	<p>The popular "Senses" UK consumer campaign was launched in spring, promoting the ways in which a holiday in Scotland brings the senses alive. The campaign proved a major success, running for nine years.</p> <p>Three versions of the advert were produced to encourage year-round visits to Scotland from the UK market. It generated many enquiries from the public about the music featured in the advertisements.</p> <p>'Live It. Visit Scotland.' brand slogan was used as a call to action - an invitation to experience the diversity of product and culture on offer and to meet and get to know first-hand the warmth and friendliness of the Scots themselves.</p>

<p>2002 VisitScotland</p>	<p>Loch Lomond and the Trossachs was designated as a National Park – the first National Park in Scotland. VisitScotland supported the opening by coordinating and delivering a TV advertising campaign on behalf of strategic partners.</p>
<p>2002 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>Stirling was granted city status in an announcement coinciding with HM the Queen’s Golden Jubilee year.</p>
<p>2002 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The Falkirk Wheel opened. The world’s first revolving boat lift makes it possible for visitors to take a boat trip connecting the Forth and Clyde Canal with the Union Canal using less energy than it takes to boil a kettle.</p>
<p>2002 VisitScotland</p>	<p>VisitScotland worked with Scottish Canals, Falkirk Council and other partners to promote the new attractions, including delivery of a TV advertising campaign aimed at the domestic market.</p>
<p>2002 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The spotlight of the football world was on Glasgow as the city’s Hampden Park hosted the 2002 Champions League Final featuring Real Madrid and Bayer Leverkusen.</p>
<p>2002/3 VisitScotland</p>	<p>EventScotland was established in May 2003 to raise Scotland’s reputation as the perfect stage by supporting and securing a portfolio of events and developing the industry. One of its first supported events was the 2003 MTV Europe Music Awards held at Ocean Terminal.</p>
<p>2003 VisitScotland</p>	<p>A public private partnership (between VisitScotland and Schlumberger Sema) was set up to run visitscotland.com - initially under the trading name of eTourism Ltd. The first CEO was Steve Langmead who was replaced later by Marco Truffelli, CEO from 2004 until 2009 when it was brought into public ownership. visitscotland.com had five themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of Scotland. • Culture and heritage. • Active Scotland. • Business tourism. • City breaks.
<p>2003 VisitScotland</p>	<p>Working in partnership with Scottish Government and fellow agencies, VisitScotland delivered one of the biggest ever showcases of Scotland’s culture and crafts, taking over the Mall in Washington DC as part of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival 2003, showcasing artists, makers and performers from right across the country.</p>
<p>2003 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>VisitScotland further extended the initiative with tourism activity in partnership with the Smithsonian Magazine, Smithsonian Journeys travel arm and a programme of seminars targeting the membership of the Smithsonian associates.</p>

<p>2003 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The Cairngorms National Park was officially opened on 1 September by Liz Hanna, the great, great granddaughter of John Muir, founder of the National Park movement. At 3,800 square kilometres, the Cairngorms is Britain's biggest national park, and features one of Scotland's five highest mountains and 43 Munros.</p>
<p>2003 VisitScotland</p>	<p>The 'longest poster' saw VisitScotland take over a London Waterloo Underground station and fill every advertising slot with a single stunning panoramic image of the Highlands, with a timeline showing how you can enjoy a perfect day.</p>
<p>2003 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>On 9 August, temperatures at Greycrook in the Scottish Borders reach 32.9 °C - the highest ever recorded in Scotland.</p>
<p>2003 Scottish tourism</p>	<p><i>The Da Vinci Code</i> by Dan Brown was published. Seen by some as controversial, the book's main characters find themselves at Rosslyn Chapel and, as a result, the Chapel itself comes to worldwide attention. Since its publication, an estimated 80 million copies have been sold, making <i>The Da Vinci Code</i>, one of the bestselling books of all time. In 2006, a film based on the book was made, with scenes filmed at Rosslyn Chapel.</p>
<p>2004 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>Edwin Morgan became Scotland's first ever official national poet, The Scots Makar.</p>
<p>2004 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>Edinburgh became the world's first UNESCO City of Literature. The idea was conceived by a group of book lovers who came up with the idea of approaching UNESCO to form a global network of creative cities. Nearly 30 cities have since been inspired by the example set by Edinburgh, and have secured city status.</p>
<p>2004 VisitScotland</p>	<p>UK common standards for grading introduced using the Scottish methodology across the UK.</p>
<p>2004 VisitScotland</p>	<p>"White Line" campaign launched in European markets (with Welcome to Our Life strapline). It spanned city breaks and touring mailers and adverts. It lasts through to 2007.</p>
<p>2004/5 VisitScotland</p>	<p>Following extensive consultation, the Tourism (Scotland) Bill Consultation Paper proposed the new VisitScotland network is established as one single national tourism network with 14 area offices, effective 1 April 2005. VisitScotland and the 14 ATBs were to merge.</p> <p>The new head office opened at Ocean Point, Edinburgh.</p>
<p>2005 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The Scottish Government set a goal to grow tourism by 50% by 2015.</p>
<p>2005 VisitScotland</p>	<p>VisitScotland launched EatScotland as its standalone food and drink Quality Assurance Scheme, with much of the development, and the operation of the scheme, contracted out.</p>

2005
VisitScotland

First Challenge Fund (the forerunner to the current Growth Fund) launched to encourage collaborative tourism marketing campaigns across Scotland.

- 28 successful groups .
- Total of £281,706 funding awarded.

2005
Scottish tourism

Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act passed by the Scottish Parliament, the first piece of legislation in the UK to give formal recognition to the Scottish Gaelic language.

2005
Scottish tourism

Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art was launched.

2005
VisitScotland

EventScotland developed a landmark associate agreement with The R&A to support the hosting of The Open Championship, one of the world's biggest annual sporting events, in Scotland on a regular basis.

EventScotland coordinated a feasibility study to consider the potential for Scotland to host the Commonwealth Games.

2005/6
VisitScotland

Following the re-organisation of 14 ATBs into one national body, five core activities were highlighted:

- Providing strategic direction to the industry.
- Marketing Scotland and its tourism assets worldwide.
- Providing information and inspiration to visitors so they can experience the best of Scotland.
- Providing Quality Assurance to visitors and quality advice to industry partners to make sure the industry meets or exceeds visitors' expectations.
- Promoting partnerships across the industry to make sure we all reap the economic benefits of collective effort.

The organisation employed around 1,000 people. There were 14 offices responsible for marketing and industry relationships within a local area, a larger office in Inverness and the main office in Edinburgh. There was also a small presence in London.

There were six directorates and 16 departments. The directorates were:

- Marketing;
- Industry Engagement;
- Visitor Services and Quality;
- Network Services;
- Strategy, Partnership and Communications; and
- Corporate Services.

2005/6
Scottish tourism

There was a strong focus on city breaks in Edinburgh and Glasgow as well as promoting events and festivals throughout Scotland with the adoption of new technology, including the first podcast city tour of Edinburgh.

<p>2006 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The National Theatre of Scotland was established as a peripatetic company. Since its inception, the company has produced a variety of work ranging from large-scale productions to projects tailored to the smallest performing spaces.</p>
<p>2007 VisitScotland</p>	<p>The Tourist Board (Scotland) Act 2006 came into force on 1 April 2007, formally changing the name of the Scottish Tourist Board to VisitScotland.</p>
<p>2007 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>A new Culloden Battlefield visitor opened. Following the acquisition of adjacent land during the 1990s, the National Trust for Scotland was able to add additional features to the visitor experience. Additional exhibits on archaeological research and interactive interpretation were introduced to showcase the history of the site.</p>
<p>2007 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>St. Andrew's Day was a designated bank holiday in Scotland for the first time.</p>
<p>2007 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The Shetland Museum and Archives opened in Lerwick. This initiative brought the extensive and rich collections of both Shetland Museum and Shetland Archives together under one roof for the first time, to tell the fascinating story of Shetland's heritage and culture.</p>
<p>2007 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>In April, The Hebridean Way was launched. This dedicated long-distance walking route connecting the islands of the Outer Hebrides offers visitors an exciting new way to discover island life and explore the unique character of each island in the archipelago. The 156 mile Way takes in 10 islands, 6 causeways and 2 ferry crossings.</p>
<p>2007 VisitScotland</p>	<p>EventScotland relaunched Scotland's only Ladies European Tour golf tournament, the Ladies Scottish Open in Gullane.</p>
<p>2007 VisitScotland</p>	<p>Date a Hot Scot launched in the UK and across 13 countries in seven languages.</p> <p>The proposition was fun and innovative; namely the opportunity to go online, check out our most eligible 'Hot Scots', vote for your favourite and win a dream trip to Scotland to meet him, his fellow Hot Scots, and experience Scotland's warmth of hospitality, stunning scenery and vibrant cities. Stuart Duncan is voted the Hot Scot.</p>
<p>2007 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>On 9 November Glasgow was announced as host city for the 2014 Commonwealth Games.</p>
<p>2007 VisitScotland</p>	<p>A sophisticated customer segmentation strategy was implemented to allow VisitScotland to engage with Scotland's prospective and returning visitors in a more personalised and relevant way.</p>

2007
VisitScotland

The first Winter White campaign launched (November 2007 – March 2008) encouraging visitors to explore the beauty of Scotland during the winter months, enjoying accommodation deals, winter sports, wildlife watching and country breaks. It went on to win several prestigious marketing awards and boosted the economy by more than £46 million.

2008
VisitScotland

VisitScotland activities centred on four directorates:

- Visitor Engagement.
- Business Engagement.
- Strategic Partnerships.
- Corporate Services.

Local activities were organised around six regions and three island areas. This geographical regrouping aligned activities with those of Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

2008
Scottish tourism

Tolls were abolished on the Forth and Tay Road Bridges.

2008
Scottish tourism

The Antonine Wall, part of the ancient Roman lines near Falkirk, was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

2008
Scottish tourism

Glasgow was designated as a UNESCO City of Music.

2008
VisitScotland

In February, Fort William information centre became the first to be rebranded as a VisitScotland Information Centre, sparking the start of a major refurbishment programme across Scotland.

2008
VisitScotland

New Growth Fund launched (replacing Challenge Fund). Round one (we're currently on GF7), delivered on 21 August, saw three successful applications:

- Lanarkshire Visitor Attractions and Accommodation - £14, 970.
- Oban and Lorn Tourism Association - £20, 021.
- West Coast Whisky Trail - £19, 745.
- Total of £54,736 funding awarded.

2008
Scottish tourism

Scotland hosted the IAAF World Cross Country Championships in Edinburgh against the iconic backdrop of Holyrood Palace and Arthur's Seat.

2008
Scottish tourism

An agreement was reached for Scotland to host Women's British Open every other year from 2011 to 2019.

2008
VisitScotland

Promotion of Scotland's first Year of Homecoming commenced in the US, Canada and Australia, with the new "I am a Scot" campaign – celebrating the fact that anyone, no matter your ethnicity or background could be "a Scot". Either by birth, ancestry or affinity, "Scots" were invited to "Come home to Scotland" in 2009, the Year of Homecoming.

Long Haul Touring Campaign 'I Am a Scot' had a budget of £898,274 generating £57 million in additional expenditure in 2009.

2009
Scottish tourism

In 2000, the Scottish Government had set a target of 14.3 million tourist trips by 2005 with revenue from tourism of £3.1 billion. This figure was achieved – with 17.3 million trips in 2005 and a revenue of £4.2 billion. However, these numbers had fallen to 15.1 million trips in 2009 with a corresponding drop in revenue to £4.1 billion.

2009
VisitScotland

"Perfect Day" campaign was launched in 'silver spot' slot in cinemas – aimed specifically at London audiences to show them how they can spend a "Perfect Day" in Scotland.

It delivered more than £70 million for the Scottish economy, generating £35 pounds for every £1 invested, making it the "most successful seasonal marketing campaign ever".

2009
VisitScotland

Scotland's first Themed Year - Scotland's Year of Homecoming – took place throughout 2009. The Year featured a programme of more than 400 events and activities to encourage those with Scottish roots, or who felt a particular affinity with Scotland, to visit.

It proved to be a great success with 72,000 visitors coming to Scotland exclusively as a result generating £53.7 million in additional tourism revenue, 22% above target.

2009
Scottish tourism

Galloway Forest Park was officially unveiled as the first Dark Sky Park in the UK, boosting tourism in south west Scotland. The award, announced by the International Dark Sky Association, confirmed Galloway as one of the best places for stargazing in the world.

2009
Scottish tourism

MOBO Awards were held outside of London for the first time in a multi-year deal for Glasgow.

2010s

2010
VisitScotland

VisitScotland took ownership of visitscotland.com and started its first phase of redesign.

A new directorate called Digital and Media was created.

2010
Scottish tourism

In April, the ash cloud from Icelandic volcano Eyjafjallajokull caused travel chaos in Europe and affected VisitScotland Expo; with buyers stranded.

2010
VisitScotland

The Tourism Leadership Group was set up during the year to lead the required action to grow tourism in Scotland. VisitScotland played a key role in this group which works collaboratively across the industry to establish a vision for Scottish tourism and develop a strategy and action plan.

2010
VisitScotland

Peter Lederer retired as Chairman on 31 March and Mike Cantlay was appointed from 1 April.
In September, Malcolm Roughead was appointed Chief Executive.

2010
VisitScotland

The 'Meet the Scots' campaign first launched in European markets and later rolled out into long haul also. It became our first ever pan-regional campaign across all international markets. It had a budget of £1.25 million and generated nearly £97 million additional expenditure in 2010.

The campaign focused on the passion of more than 20 different Scots ambassadors who each represented a different theme associated with Scottish tourism such as food and drink, Scottish culture and the activity or event sectors.

2010
VisitScotland

Following the success in collaborative working and marketing across the Scottish tourism industry with the Homecoming 2009 initiative, a programme called 'The Winning Years' was launched. The first stage was Year of Food and Drink from May 2010 to May 2011. The focus was on celebrating and enhancing Scotland's reputation as a land of food and drink.

- 267 Scottish or local producers showcased their produce at the events funded by the Year of Food & Drink.
- Research from funded events indicated the majority of visitors spent £11-£20 on food & drink at the event.
- £1 in every £5 of visitor spend is spent on Food & Drink.

2010
Scottish tourism

Scotland's Winter Festivals Programme was launched.

2010
Scottish tourism

Edinburgh hosted three major international sporting events in September - the ITU World Duathlon Championships in Holyrood Park, Archery World Cup Final in Princes Street Gardens and IFSC World Youth Championships at Ratho International Climbing Centre.

2010
Scottish tourism

In December the £21 million Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway, South Ayrshire opened.

2011
VisitScotland

Year of Active Scotland saw Scots residents and visitors alike were encouraged to get active in Scotland's great outdoors. Activities ranged from world-renowned walking and mountain biking to adrenaline-pumping activities such as kite surfing and canyoning.

2011
VisitScotland

The "Surprise Yourself" campaign was launched, including new television adverts to highlight "some of the fantastic things to see and do across Scotland". This continued through to 2013. The campaign aimed to celebrate and remind people about all the great things Scotland could offer for a holiday, but also challenge stereotypes and show the wide range of activities and attractions people could enjoy in addition to our renowned beautiful scenery.

The 2011-12 campaign generated an additional £68 million for the visitor economy from a dedicated budget of £2.78 million.

<p>2011 VisitScotland</p>	<p>World Gymnastics Championships bid was secured by for 2015 by EventScotland.</p>
<p>2011 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The Riverside Museum at Pointhouse Quay in the Glasgow Harbour was opened.</p>
<p>2011 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>There was a 9% increase in visitors to Scotland with strong growth of 15% from North America.</p>
<p>2012 VisitScotland</p>	<p>Scotland's programme of Themed Years continued with Year of Creative Scotland 2012. The nation's creative industries were platformed under a number of pillars, as well as featuring a packed events and festivals programme.</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flxggT0qoyE Year of Creative advertising</p>
<p>2012 VisitScotland</p>	<p>A partnership with Disney Pixar for the animated film <i>Brave</i> saw VisitScotland running a £5 million campaign to promote Scotland through everything from the World Premiere of the film to TV adverts.</p>
<p>2012 VisitScotland</p>	<p>The 'Winning Years' campaign was established with the following themes planned over three years to showcase Scotland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Brave</i> 2012. • Year of Natural Scotland 2013. • Open Championship, Muirfield, East Lothian 2013. • Brilliant Moments 2014. • Homecoming 2014. • European Eventing Championship 2015. • World Artistic Gymnastics 2015. • World Orienteering Championships 2015.
<p>2012 VisitScotland</p>	<p>Conference Bid Fund launched: £2 million national fund aimed at attracting more business tourism to Scotland over three years. Glasgow was the first city to prosper.</p>
<p>2012 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The Office for National Statistics and the Great Britain Tourism Survey showed a 10% rise in domestic visitors, a 15% rise in visitors from North America, and a 9% rise in overnight visitors in a survey published in April 2012.</p>
<p>2012 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The change of name from the Scottish Tourist Forum to the Scottish Tourism Alliance was confirmed on 19 June.</p>
<p>2012 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>Perth was one of the 26 bidders for city status to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. On 14 March, Perth's city status was successfully reinstated. It became Scotland's seventh city.</p>

<p>2012 VisitScotland</p>	<p>VisitScotland led the delivery of ‘Scotland House’ in London during the London 2012 Olympic Games, working with public and private partners to promote Scotland at this massive international event.</p>
<p>2012 Scottish tourism</p>	<p><i>Skyfall</i>, the 23rd James Bond film, directed by Sam Mendes was released. Shot partly in the Highlands with Glen Etive and Glen Coe featured. An iconic shot of Bond and M standing on the A82 near the peak of Buachaille Etive Mor saw a surge in visitors seeking out the spot to recreate it.</p>
<p>2013 VisitScotland</p>	<p>In 2013 all standalone regional websites (13) were brought under visitscotland.com allowing all regional content to be viewable under one site.</p> <p>Due to a European Directive, VisitScotland withdrew online booking from its website in December 2012, and by summer 2013 web booking engines had been integrated onto the site offering direct interaction between the business and customers.</p>
<p>2013 VisitScotland</p>	<p>Year of Natural Scotland 2013 – Scotland’s outstanding natural beauty was celebrated throughout the year. Promotions featured stunning natural landscapes, surprising wildlife, art inspired by nature and delicious, locally produced food and drink.</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8eDB3IRx4A</p>
<p>2013 VisitScotland</p>	<p>Shetland ponies in jumpers photoshoot and video was released as part of the Year of Natural Scotland. Said to be VisitScotland’s first viral campaign, it received global recognition with the story featuring on CNN in New York. There were more than 600 million global opportunities to see the Shetland ponies in jumpers.</p> <p>https://youtu.be/KFDNabOqg3Q</p>
<p>2013 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>In September the £125 million SSE Hydro opened in Glasgow providing the city and Scotland with a brand-new entertainment venue built to accommodate world class events. Within months, it was listed at No. 3 in the Pollstar ‘Top 100 Worldwide Arena Venues’ list.</p>
<p>2013 VisitScotland</p>	<p>Launch of the Taste our Best scheme. Established as the latest addition to VisitScotland’s Quality Assurance Scheme programme, it was introduced to bring together the tourism and food and drink industries in Scotland following the publication of research which showed visitors are prepared to pay up to 15% more for produce of Scottish or regional origin.</p>
<p>2013 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The Turner Prize 2015 was secured in Scotland for the first time and would be hosted at Glasgow’s Tramway.</p>
<p>2013 VisitScotland</p>	<p>The hosting of the 2014 MTV EMAs was secured for Glasgow.</p>

<p>2013 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The Scottish Open became the first European Tour event in history to be broadcast live on network television in the United States through NBC TV.</p>
<p>2014 VisitScotland</p>	<p>The year when ‘Scotland Welcomes the World!’</p> <p>The main focus was the Year of Homecoming 2014 with over 1,000 events, attended by 4.6 million people. Scotland’s Year of Homecoming was repeated following the success of the 2009 initiative.</p>
<p>2014 VisitScotland</p>	<p>The first National Tourism Development Framework was published and identified an estimated £8.4 billion of investment impacting Scottish tourism. It set out the framework to assist and promote growth in Scotland’s visitor economy to 2020.</p>
<p>2014 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>In April, The Kelpies - 30-metre-high horse-head sculptures designed by Andy Scott - in Falkirk first opened to the public.</p>
<p>2014 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games received acclaim for its organisation, attendance, and the public enthusiasm of the people of Scotland, with Commonwealth Games Federation Chief Executive Mike Hooper hailing them as “the standout games in the history of the movement”.</p>
<p>2014 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>Scotland hosted The 2014 Ryder Cup at Gleneagles, only the second time that biggest golf event in the world has taken place in Scotland (first time was at Muirfield in 1973).</p>
<p>2014 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>Glasgow was selected as a host city for UEFA EURO 2020.</p>
<p>2014 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The Renfrewshire town of Paisley was the only UK starting point for the Monte Carlo Rally – a tradition it has upheld every year since.</p>
<p>2014 VisitScotland</p>	<p>Brilliant Moments campaign was launched, enticing visitors from across the UK to discover their own brilliant moments in Scotland. The campaign was designed to complement the programme of high profile events taking place across the year.</p> <p>https://youtu.be/n6To0Gf707o?list=UU1FdvQG5MFwzv0PY6dMsaFg</p>
<p>2014 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The <i>Outlander</i> TV series was first aired in the United States. Based on the books by author Diana Gabaldon and inspired by events surrounding the Jacobite Uprisings, the series is an immediate hit with US consumers, and kick starts a strong boost in visitor numbers to HES and NTS attractions featured in the show, as well as the real-life locations involved in the story.</p>

<p>2014 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The new Battle of Bannockburn Visitor Centre outside Stirling opened its doors for the first time on 1 March. Developed in partnership between the National Trust for Scotland and Historic Scotland. The centre was created to deliver a world-class immersive experience in time for the Battle's 700th anniversary.</p>
<p>2014 VisitScotland</p>	<p>The anniversary of the Battle itself was marked by Bannockburn Live! – this was a signature event within the Homecoming 2014 programme and had an exciting battle re-enactment at the heart of the event.</p>
<p>2014 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>Dundee was designated as the UK's first UNESCO City of Design.</p>
<p>2015 VisitScotland</p>	<p>In December, VisitScotland announced three new female Board members to achieve a gender balanced Board for the first time.</p>
<p>2015 VisitScotland</p>	<p>Digital Tourism Scotland was launched - a partnership that's made up of seven organisations; Business Gateway, Scottish Government, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Tourism Alliance, Skills Development Scotland and VisitScotland.</p>
<p>2015 VisitScotland</p>	<p>Year of Scotland's Food and Drink 2015 put the focus on Scotland's unique produce, exploring the unspoilt habitats which lie behind the country's cuisine. Businesses promoted quality food and drink, culinary specialities, foodie trails and our whiskies famous across the globe.</p> <p>Over 200 events took place, celebrating the role food & drink plays in shaping Scotland's economic success, with over one million attendances at the 47 events that received funding.</p>
<p>2015 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>North Coast 500 was launched. This route, billed as the ultimate road trip starts and finishes in Inverness and takes in around 500 miles including Wester Ross, Sutherland, Caithness, Easter Ross and The Black Isle.</p>
<p>2015 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The Forth Bridge was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.</p>
<p>2015 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The 144th Open Championship was staged at The Old Course in St Andrews, Fife attracting 237,024 spectators for the world's oldest golf Championship.</p>
<p>2015 VisitScotland</p>	<p>On 16 September a new ten-year collaborative strategy to grow Scotland's £3.5 billion events industry was unveiled.</p> <p>"Scotland – The Perfect Stage" sets out how Scotland can enhance its reputation nationally and internationally as the perfect stage for events.</p>

2015
VisitScotland

Following a competitive process, Scotland was awarded The 2019 Solheim Cup ahead of Sweden. The event will take place at Gleneagles in Perthshire in September 2019, making the venue the only European golf resort to have hosted both the Ryder Cup and the Solheim Cup.

2015
Scottish tourism

The IPC Swimming World Championships were held at Tollcross International Swimming Centre in Glasgow.

2015
VisitScotland

The final year of our Meet the Scots campaign with some 23 “Scots” ambassadors.

2015
VisitScotland

Sustainable credentials were introduced as a minimum standard in QA.

2015
Scottish tourism

The Borders Railway opened on 9 September. This £294 million project re-established a 30-mile section of the former Waverley line, linking Edinburgh and Tweedbank in the Scottish Borders, via Midlothian.

2016
VisitScotland

Scotland’s Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design 2016 saw the nation shine a spotlight on Scotland’s achievements across these three important fields. More than a million people attended events during the Year.

The Festival of Architecture 2016, led by the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland and a key part of the Year also welcomed an audience of over 1.25 million across a range of events.

2016
VisitScotland

Marketing investment was focused on VisitScotland digital channels such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

2016
VisitScotland

Launch of VisitScotland’s first Ambassadog. George, a golden retriever from Glasgow, was named top dog in May.

2016
VisitScotland

On 10 February VisitScotland brought the Spirit of Scotland to life in its first ever global campaign and social movement.

- Over 66 million potential visitors worldwide viewed the ‘Spirit’ films and documentaries.
- #ScotSpirit was a major success with 1,000 daily uses by national and international visitors, businesses and locals.
- Unprecedented engagement across VisitScotland social media channels with followers averaging an increase of 100%.
- ScotSpirit holidays in collaboration with the Family Holiday Association saw more than 300 people from disadvantaged backgrounds—including 200 children—received a much-needed break as a result.
- iKnow online community and trip planner launched.
- VIP Programme launched – supporting businesses in giving out information to customers and showcasing their unique local knowledge.
- 7 out of 10 businesses in Scotland stated they were aware of the campaign.

<p>2016 VisitScotland</p>	<p>VisitScotland's first Coo Van arrived on 21 April 2016 and was on display at VisitScotland Expo at the Royal Highland Show, Edinburgh.</p>
<p>2016 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>Ten new galleries opened at the National Museum of Scotland to showcase internationally important collections of decorative art, design, fashion, science and technology.</p>
<p>2016 VisitScotland</p>	<p>The 2019 European Athletics Indoor Championships was secured for Emirates Arena in Glasgow.</p>
<p>2016 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>BT Murrayfield Stadium was the stage for the first Guinness PRO 12 Final to be held outside of Ireland.</p>
<p>2016 VisitScotland</p>	<p>Launch of Scotland's new Ambassador Network for Business Events, Innovate the Nation. A series of talks showcasing Scottish expertise across the nation.</p>
<p>2016 VisitScotland</p>	<p>Lord John Thurso was appointed Chairman on 1 April 2016.</p>
<p>2017 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>In February, Scotland was named the most beautiful country in the World by Rough Guide, beating Canada, New Zealand and Finland.</p>
<p>2017 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>In November, Scotland was voted the most welcoming country in the world, also by Rough Guide. Its readers said: "Whether you're propping up a bar in Edinburgh or trekking the hills of Glen Coe, you're sure to feel a warm Scottish welcome from whomever you meet."</p>
<p>2017 VisitScotland</p>	<p>The 25th anniversary of the Scottish Thistle Awards.</p>
<p>2017 VisitScotland</p>	<p>Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology celebrated important places across Scotland including UNESCO World Heritage Sites, ancient monuments, listed buildings and battlefields. It also captured our cultural traditions, captivating myths, stories and legends.</p> <p>Visits to HES locations hit a record high of 5 million and overseas visitors to Scotland were up 16.9% to 3.2 million.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 271 funded and partner events with more than 273,000 people attending funded events. • 50,000 uses of #HHA2017 generating millions of impressions. • Global media coverage reached 615 million people.
<p>2017 VisitScotland</p>	<p>A European-first collaboration between VisitScotland and TripAdvisor saw Scotland's world-class tourism offering promoted to almost 70 million new potential visitors, generating a potential additional spend of £150 million.</p>

2017
VisitScotland

In May the Shop Local was launched after the success of the pilot the previous year. VisitScotland's retail team have been working closely with the iCentre network to deliver an exceptional in-store experience, providing customers with a quality range of Scottish themed literature, food and gifts.

The Shop Local initiative is key to the success of the retail strategy and provides a platform for communities, local businesses, craft makers, artists, designers and others to promote and sell their products to visitors via the VisitScotland iCentre network.

The initiative is aimed at artisans without a retail platform and has been developed to provide a unique sales channel for small businesses producing 'Made in Scotland' products. The Shop Local initiative is progressing well with more than 280 Scottish suppliers throughout the iCentres network and St Andrews iCentre the most successful retailer.

2017
VisitScotland

Scotland: Life campaign launched with the release of a film by the popular US YouTube channel Devin Supertramp reaching more than 7 million globally.

2017
VisitScotland

In February, ScotlandVR was revealed - a ground-breaking virtual reality travel experience that allowed people, wherever they are in the world, to be immersed in Scotland's remarkable attractions.

At launch it was so popular on Apple devices that it was selected to be on the 'Hot this Week' listings. Selected from over 2 million apps on the app store, this gave huge exposure to ScotlandVR.

2017
Scottish tourism

Edinburgh marked the 70th anniversary of the Edinburgh International Festival, Edinburgh Festival Fringe and Edinburgh International Film Festival.

2017
Scottish tourism

The Queensferry Crossing opened, making it the third bridge over the River Forth, joining the 1970s road bridge and the iconic Victorian Rail Bridge, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

2017
VisitScotland

On 6 November, Scotland's first-ever business events digital campaign Legends was launched in collaboration with all of Scotland's Convention Bureaux, transforming the global messaging of Scotland to the world.

2017
VisitScotland

In October, a new Information Strategy was launched to address the diverse transformation in the way visitors access information on what to see and do while in the country. Following a 58% drop in footfall, a two-year programme to streamline the number of Information Centres to 26 in high impact areas is announced.

2018
VisitScotland

Year of Young People 2018 was a global first, providing a platform to showcase the personalities, talents and achievements of Scotland's young people.

2018
VisitScotland

The Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) was launched on 30 March in response to overtourism issues. Administered by VisitScotland, the Fund supports sustainable, well planned, inspiring and collaborative infrastructure projects to enable more visitors to enjoy Scotland's rural communities.

Around £3 million from the first round of the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) shared among 18 projects across Scotland to help meet the demand of growing visitor numbers - including:

- £300,000 for new toilet and motorhome facilities at the Old Man of Storr, Skye.
- £269,906 for additional parking for 100 cars and 10 motorhomes at the Glenfinnan Viaduct.
- £260,000 for improvements to toilets along West Loch Lomond at Luss, Tarbet and Inveruglas.
- £226,000 for new paths linking car parks, visitor attractions and accommodation at the Cairngorms National Park.
- £58,000 for toilets and other visitor facilities at the Otter Pools in Dumfries and Galloway.
- £131,660 for a parking hub at the village of Hoswick in Shetland.

2018
VisitScotland

In April, an exciting new initiative bringing together the Scottish Government, VisitScotland, Scottish Development International and Universities Scotland is launched via the 'Scotland is Now' campaign to promote the country globally.

A ground-breaking augmented reality app that invites the world to step into Scotland was created in close collaboration with Google as part of the Scotland Is Now global campaign.

2018
Scottish tourism

In May, Dundee was named in the top ten Best in Europe places to visit cementing its place as a thriving new city to visit - and building on its UNESCO City of Design Award in 2014.

2018
Scottish tourism

In September, V&A Dundee opened its doors. As Scotland's first design museum it tells a global story, investigating the international importance of design alongside Scotland's outstanding design achievements. It welcomed its 100,000 visitor three weeks after opening to the public.

2018
Scottish tourism

Avengers: Infinity War was released. Part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, production came to Edinburgh in 2017 and was at the time the biggest production to be shot in the Scottish capital film. Waverley Station, Cockburn Street, St Giles' Cathedral, The Royal Mile all feature as the actual locations.

2018
Scottish tourism

The Macallan Distillery and Visitor Centre opened on 5 June. The venue unveiled its new £140 million distillery and visitor centre, designed by internationally-acclaimed architects, Rogers Stirk Harbour & Partners. The project took more than three years and will allow production to increase by about a third. VisitScotland's Quality Assurance Scheme awarded the venue five stars in November.

<p>2018 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>The Scottish Highlands and Islands were named one of the top regions in the world for travellers in 2019 - in its top 10 Best in Travel destinations.</p> <p>Featuring fifth on the list, the guide describes the Highlands and Islands as “one of the wildest, least inhabited and most scenic parts of Europe”. It gives special mention to the North Coast 500 driving route, the North East 250 and the Snow Roads.</p>
<p>2018 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>IPS Figures for Scotland – 2017 revealed that International tourism was booming.</p> <p>Visits - Up 17% from 2016 - overall visits 3,210,000. Spend up 23% - £2,276m.</p>
<p>2018 Scottish tourism</p>	<p>In August, Glasgow and Scotland co-hosted the inaugural European Championships with Berlin. An exciting new multi-sport event, it brought together some of the continent’s leading sports including the existing European Championships for Athletics, Aquatics, Cycling, Gymnastics, Rowing and Triathlon with a new Golf Team Championships.</p>

Sources

- Scottish Tourist Board and VisitScotland Annual reports.
- Tourism Key Sector Report – Scottish Government- 2009.
- Financial Scrutiny Unit Briefing, Tourism in Scotland, Jim Dewar, 2011.
- <https://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Tourism>
- A Narrative about Institutional Developments in Scottish Tourism – 1969-2008, Stephen A Harwood, 2008.

2019

Working in partnership with Scottish Government, British Cycling, UK Sport, Glasgow City Council, we secured the right to host the inaugural Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) Cycling World Championships in August 2023.

2020s

2020

Our new Themed Year, [Year of Coasts and Waters 2020](#), launched to showcase and celebrate Scotland's Coasts and Waters with a programme of activity designed to support the nation's tourism and events sectors. Activity was later paused and restarted in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2020

The first part of the Scotland Is Now European campaign reached more than 80 million Europeans. The second phase launched in January 2020.

2020

The South of Scotland featured in its first ever regional TV advertising campaign across Channel 4, thanks to a partnership with Expedia.

2020

In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, we brought together key players in the industry to respond to the crisis. The STERG group (Scottish Tourism Emergency Response Group) met regularly to look at the impact on the industry.

2020

We initially paused all proactive paid-for marketing activity and focused on supporting tourism and events businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic. This included:

- Communicating Scottish Government advice and guidance to tourism and event businesses
- Delivering funding to tourism and events businesses and later Scottish Government-funded projects under the Tourism Recovery Programme Overall, we delivered more than £115 million in funding to more than 3,000 businesses
- Chairing the Scottish Tourism Emergency Response Group (STERG) and establishing the Event Industry Advisory Group (EIAG).
- Chairing a Visitor Management Strategy Steering Group to respond to issues which emerged after restrictions were eased in summer 2020

2020

The tourism industry re-opened (with restrictions) in July and VisitScotland marked this by launching a £3 million marketing campaign aimed at the domestic market. [Only in Scotland - Why Scotland Needs You](#)

2020

Virtual travel trade event, Scotland Reconnect 2020 took place in November. The event saw 264 international travel agents and tour operators ('buyers') from 23 countries meet with 240 Scottish tourism businesses, operators and destination organisations online.

2020

Also in November, we became the first national tourism organisation in the world to sign up to the [Tourism Declares](#) initiative aimed at finding solutions to the climate crisis. The initiative aims to encourage positive contributions toward addressing climate change.

- 2021** The year began with the country in lockdown and the tourism and events sector was once again unable to operate as normal.
- 2021** In March, we launched a responsible tourism campaign to raise awareness of the importance of exploring the outdoors responsibly. [Scotland, Yours to Enjoy. Responsibly.](#)
- 2021** Also in March, the First Minister announced a new £25 million tourism recovery programme. Projects included international demand building, the ScotSpirit Holiday Voucher Scheme, Destination Net Zero and the Scottish Tourism Observatory.
- 2021** The tourism industry re-opened in April after a series of lockdowns.
- 2021** The underlying strength of the tourism industry was demonstrated by Scotland Reconnect 2021, an online travel trade event which saw over 7,000 pre-arranged business meetings take place over three days. Almost 390 buyers from 26 countries connected virtually with almost 300 Scottish suppliers for business meetings aimed at booking and creating tour packages for future visitors.
- 2021** In June, we launched our first Scottish Gaelic toolkit to help the tourism industry to build upon the lure of the language with visitors. The asset highlights ways to use Gaelic and its culture to create a more immersive visitor experience such as teaching staff some basic phrases and translating place names to reveal their Gaelic origins and meanings.
- 2021** A new purpose-built Great Tapestry of Scotland gallery, visitor centre, cafe and workshop space opened in Galashiels, Scottish Borders, in August. It achieved 5-star Quality Assured status in January 2022.
- 2021** The size and scale of Scotland's agritourism sector was measured for the first time in a census of farms, crofts and estates. The annual growth tracker with Scottish Agritourism shows the diversification, innovation and entrepreneurialism within the industry.
- 2021** New whisky visitor experience, Johnnie Walker Princes Street, opened in Edinburgh in September. It's the centrepiece of Diageo's £185 million investment in Scottish whisky tourism, which also includes the transformation of the company's distillery visitor experiences the length and breadth of Scotland.
- 2021** Scotland is Calling, our first global campaign since the beginning of the pandemic, was launched in October. It rolled out to key markets to support the recovery of the tourism and events industry.

- 2021** The same month, the world's first ever UNESCO trail, bringing together some of Scotland's most iconic, diverse and culturally significant sites, was launched. The digital trail – which is available on visitscotland.com/unesco-trail – provides information and inspiration to visitors across the world.
- 2021** The Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise, Ivan McKee MSP announced the reappointment of Lord John Thurso as Chair of the Board of VisitScotland.
- 2021** COP26 (Conference of Parties), the 2021 United Nations climate change conference, was held in Glasgow, turning the eyes of the world to Scotland. VisitScotland helped to draft the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism which was launched at COP26. It calls for decisive action to be taken to reach net zero emissions.
- 2021** The Omicron variant of COVID-19 caused the cancellation of some events and further restrictions on tourism businesses.
- 2022** In response to the impact of Omicron, we delivered more funds on behalf of the Scottish Government. A total of £27.5 million was paid out to 2,257 businesses working in tourism and events.
- 2022** [Scotland's Year of Stories 2022](#) began. The Themed Year, with its focus on communities, saw the return of in-person events in a nationwide programme. A range of partners from national organisations to community groups delivered the programme spotlighting wealth of stories inspired by, written, or created in Scotland.
- 2022** The Burrell Collection in Glasgow was reopened in March after a major refurbishment.
- 2022** Dandelion - Scotland's contribution to UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK, a nationwide programme of creative events and engagement, began in March. It invited people all over the country to get growing, sharing and celebrating food, music, and ideas, in and with their communities. Over 580,000 people took part in the programme.
- 2022** Dunfermline in Fife was named Scotland's newest city in May as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.
- 2022** 2022 marked a momentous year for the Scottish golf and tourism industry as five of the world's biggest and most prestigious golf tournaments returned home to Scotland. In total, 421,000 spectators watched 748 world class players tee off.

- 2022** Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II died at Balmoral Castle in Aberdeenshire on 8 September and the United Kingdom went into mourning. The Queen was taken to lie in state at St Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh before her funeral took place in London.
- 2022** Scotland's status as a leading world destination was demonstrated once again when the South of Scotland was named one of Lonely Planet's Best in Travel destinations for 2023. The Scottish Highlands was later named as one of National Geographic's 'Best of the World' destinations for 2023. The publication revealed that the region is one of only two UK destinations to make the annual list.
- 2023** After a break of three years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Scottish Thistle Awards National Final returned to Edinburgh International Conference Centre in February. The awards celebrate the best in tourism and events, with a focus on responsible tourism.
- 2023** In February we relaunched our consumer website, visitscotland.com. This was a significant, complex and lengthy project driven by insights with the long-term goal of helping the sustainable growth of Scottish tourism.
- 2023** The Burrell Collection is named as Art Fund Museum of the Year 2023 at a ceremony in London, and on the BBC.
- 2023** The inaugural 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships brought together 13 existing UCI World Championships into a new mega event in Glasgow and across Scotland from 3 to 13 August 2023. It had more than 8,000 cyclists and para-cyclists from over 120 countries taking part.
- It had over a million attendees, and more than 1.5 billion people reached through media coverage. The event generated £344 million of incremental spend resulting in gross value economic impact.
- 2024** A new [Gaelic Tourism Strategy for Scotland](#) / Ro-innleachd Turasachd na Gàidhlig do dh'Alba was launched. The strategy was aimed at delivering authentic and memorable visitor experiences by celebrating Gaelic culture, heritage, and language.
- 2024** The Perth Museum opened its doors on 30 March 2024 after a £27 million redevelopment project. This world-class cultural and heritage attraction highlights the fascinating objects and stories that put Perth and Kinross at the centre of Scotland's story. At its heart sits the Stone of Destiny, also known as the Stone of Scone.
- 2024** Stephen Leckie was appointed Chair of VisitScotland on 1 April 2024.

- 2024** May saw the launch of Scotland's refreshed National Events Strategy 2024-2035 designed to provide strategic focus for all involved in the planning, securing, and delivery of events across Scotland. [Find out more about the National Events Strategy 2024-2035.](#)
- 2024** The 152nd Open took place in July at Royal Troon, showcasing Scotland's natural beauty and world-class golfing heritage to a worldwide audience. The event was attended by a record-breaking 258,174 fans and generated over £303.3 million in total economic benefit for Scotland.
- 2024** Vicki Miller became Chief Executive of VisitScotland on 1 October 2024.
- 2025** The City of Edinburgh became the first local authority in Scotland to approve plans to introduce a visitor levy. From 24 July 2026, a 5% levy will be applied to the cost of overnight accommodation up to a maximum of five nights.
- Accommodation providers will keep 2% of the money collected to offset some of the costs involved. The majority of the funds will be spent on city operations and infrastructure, culture, heritage and events and destination and visitor management.
- 2025** In March as part of the Business Support Programme we launched our Business Support Hub website and VisitScotland Business Essentials Bitesize Webinars. Providing tourism and event businesses access to free tailored advice, resources, and opportunities to help them operate and grow their business in a sustainable way.
- 2025** Also, in March it was announced that Scotland would welcome the Tour de France in 2027 with Edinburgh hosting the Grand Départ.
- 2025** Scotland's visitor economy initiative was launched in April, highlighting the significant contribution tourism and events make to the lives of people across Scotland.
- 2025** Isle of Arran was designated UNESCO Global Geopark status. The island joined more than 200 UNESCO Global Geoparks around the world, including the North-West Highlands UNESCO Global Geopark, and Shetland UNESCO Global Geopark. The designation recognised the Isle of Arran's unique geological heritage, rich biodiversity, and commitment to sustainable development.
- 2025** Orkney welcomed athletes and officials from 24 islands around the world to the 20th International Island Games. Held from 12 - 18 July 2025 it was the smallest island ever to host the Games, with 1,630 athletes competing across 12 sports. The Games drew a total attendance of over 63,000 people and contributed over £4 million to Orkney's economy.