



Celebrating 25 years of The Association of Leading Visitor Attractions 1990-2015

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## **LONDON VISITORS ATTRACTIONS SEE 1.61%% INCREASE IN VISITOR NUMBERS IN 2015 -Scotland sees 5.48% increase, while the UK as a whole sees 3.2% increase -**

The Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) announced its members' visitor figures for 2015 today (Monday, March 7, 2016), which saw an average increase of 1.61% on 2014 visitor numbers to London attractions. Scottish attractions had the greatest increase of 5.48%. Overall 124.4million visits were made to the top 230 ALVA sites.

A staggering 65,218,272 people visited attractions in London and therefore it is no surprise that the Top 10 most visited attractions were all London based. The **British Museum** continued to be the most popular visitor attraction overall for the 9<sup>th</sup> year running with 6,820,686 visitors and remaining in 2<sup>nd</sup> place was the **National Gallery** with 5,908,254 visitors. 3<sup>rd</sup> place was achieved by the **Natural History Museum**, which saw 5,284,023 visitors.

Temporary Exhibitions played a crucial part in this year's figures throughout the UK. The largest increase in visitor numbers in the top 10 attractions was **Somerset House**, which saw an increase of 31% (3,235,104 & 8<sup>th</sup> place) – mainly as a result of their temporary exhibitions and public programmes. In addition the **National Maritime Museum** saw a 10.6% increase following the opening of the new AHoy! Children's Gallery and their family-focused exhibitions such as *Against Captain's Orders* last summer and the **Royal Academy** credited their 33% increase to *Ai Weiwei* plus the hugely popular *Summer exhibition. Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty*, which closed in August was the V&A's most visited exhibition with 493,043 people seeing it in total during its 21-week run. For the final two weekends, the V&A opened the exhibition throughout the night for the first time in its history to accommodate unprecedented demand. Also hugely popular with the visitors and press was *Audrey Hepburn: Portraits of an Icon* at the **National Portrait Gallery**.

Bernard Donoghue, Director of ALVA, commented: "2015 continued to be a record year mainly due to our members continuing to show how diverse the UK is to both

domestic and overseas visitors. More people visited the **V&A**, the Natural History Museum and the **Science Museum**, combined, than visited Venice. More people visited the **British Museum** and the National Gallery, combined, than visited Barcelona and more people visited the **Southbank Centre**, **Tate Modern** and **Tate Britain**, combined, than visited Hong Kong.”

He continued; “The current weakness of the £ to the \$ and Euro is making the UK a more affordable destination and 2016 is on target to be another memorable year for ALVA members, *Vogue 100: A Century of Style* runs at the **National Portrait Gallery** until May 22; ZSL **London Zoo** unveiling *Land of the Lions* to the public on March 25, this will be a brand new Indian-inspired home for Asiatic lions. The **British Museum**’s major summer exhibition is *the BP exhibition Sunken cities: Egypt’s lost worlds*, which opens on 19 May, while the highly anticipated extension at the **Tate Modern** will be opening on June 17. Wolfgang Buttress’ award winning 17 metre high installation, *The Hive* from the UK Pavilion at the Milan Expo 2015 will be coming to **Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew** in June and later in the year, **Tate Britain** will host an exhibition devoted to David Hockney.”

“Throughout the year, several of our members will be marking the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Shakespeare, notably **the Globe** and **the Royal Shakespeare Theatre & Swan Theatre** and **Shakespeare’s Birthplace** in Stratford-upon-Avon, plus the **British Library** has a major new exhibition opening on April 15, *Shakespeare in Ten Acts*, and an extensive Shakespeare events programme. The centenary of Battle of Jutland will be a focus for the **National Museum of the Royal Navy** (Portsmouth) in collaboration with **Imperial War Museum** with an exhibition *36 Hours: Jutland 1916, the Battle that won the war* which opens on May 12 and, separately, the **National Maritime Museum** with *Jutland: The Battle and its Legacies* which opens on May 20.”

For further information on ALVA and to download images,  
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**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

ALVA’s Members are the UK’s most popular, iconic and important museums, galleries, palaces, castles, cathedrals, zoos, historic houses, heritage sites, gardens and leisure attractions. The 64 ALVA members manage some nearly 2,200 tourist sites and welcome over 119 million domestic and overseas visitors each year; some 28% of the visits made annually in the United Kingdom.

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