

Plymouth joins CruiseBritain ahead of Mayflower 400

UK southwest port of Plymouth is the newest member to join Cruise Britain as part of ambitious plans to re-position itself as a serious cruise destination ahead of the city's Mayflower 400 commemorations in 2020.

Tagged as Britain's Ocean City – and with a strategic position at the western end of the English Channel – Plymouth has a long and prestigious history, being a port and naval base since the early 1600's.

As part of the build up to the Mayflower 400 commemorations, Plymouth is working with CruiseBritain to encourage cruise operators to develop 'Mayflower commemoration' cruises to England.

Over 25 million Americans are descended from the 102 passengers and crew that sailed to America in 1620 and recent research in the US market has shown a keen interest in the anniversary from potential visitors.

Working with 11 destination partners in England and supported by Visit England funding, Destination Plymouth is developing a range of new shore excursions and a year-long cultural and events programme which will showcase the best in English heritage and culture relating to this key anniversary.

In Plymouth itself a huge amount of investment will ensure that the city looks its best in time for the global celebrations of 2020.

A series of projects worth a total of £175m are underway, including landscaping improvements linking the city with its waterfront, new hotels and shopping mall and the creation of 'The Box', a £37m world class visitor attraction, museum and cultural hub.

Plymouth is also a base for exploring other areas of Devon and Cornwall, with popular tourist destinations like the Eden Project and Dartmoor in easy reach.

ABP, the port operator, and key city partners in Plymouth have been working together to develop the existing cruise berth, which is suitable for cruise ships up to 210mtr in length. Plymouth has already accepted four returning cruise bookings for 2018.

The port user experience has been enhanced with the addition of a new shore side welcome team and improvements are planned to develop passenger access to the port.

If demand for calls grows, there is potential longer term ambition to extend the existing berth which would enable larger vessels to take advantage of the growing opportunities available in the city.

The Destination Plymouth and Mayflower 400 team along with CruiseBritain will be attending Seatrade Cruise Global in Fort Lauderdale between March 5-8, 2018.