Plymouth shimmers in the sunshine as the city welcomes Cruise Britain

Britain's Ocean City shimmered like a jewel in the June heatwave as over 60 delegates from Cruise Britain were hosted in the city for the annual summer meeting and member conference on June 24th and 25th.

Delegates included representatives from across the cruise industry including ports, service providers, shore excursion companies and cruise line executives. Over the two day event the city showcased key venues including the award winning 'The Box' cultural attraction, museum and gallery, walking tours of the Hoe, Barbican and waterfront and famous Plymouth Gin distillery. The second day was hosted in the recently restored Tinside Lido with its spectacular views across Plymouth Sound National Marine Park and its stunning waterfront.

Ian McQuade Chair of Cruise Britain said "It's been an absolute pleasure to bring our members to Plymouth for our annual summer 'on the road' meeting. As an association, it is really important that we showcase a different member port every summer and offer our members and guests an insight into that port and destination.

In addition, it is the opportunity to explore maritime-related topics that we don't always have the time to stop to consider fully. Working together is the key to growing our industry and delivering customer satisfaction, and these showcases are a key point in our calendar. Thanks must go to Destination Plymouth, the cruise partnership and our generous sponsors for the welcome and support that we have received".

The first day of the conference included a tour of Associated British Ports (ABP) ferry terminal and cruise facilities at Millbay Docks, which have recently undergone a multi-million-pound refurbishment. Dan Whysall, Commercial Manager at ABP commented "We enjoyed the opportunity to showcase recent investments at Millbay Docks, include a state-of-the-art Adelte seaport passenger boarding bridge with enclosed walkways, a strengthened West Wharf and a modernised terminal with enhanced amenities and improved check-in and processing facility, which can accommodate vessels up to around 215m LOA, ideal for expedition vessels and turnaround calls".

The delegates also enjoyed a showround at Commercial Wharf which is where cruise calls tender right into the heart of Plymouth's historic Barbican area. Richard Allan, Cattewater Harbour's CEO and Harbour Master who operates the facility commented "Plymouth is in the top three most beautiful ports I have worked in globally. For cruise passengers arriving through Plymouth Sound, the experience starts long before they step ashore as they tender into the Barbican. We are proud to showcase the great offer we have here to Cruise Britain members and guests as well as the warm cruise welcome provided by our award winning ambassadors".

Some of the key speakers at the event included Sacha Rougier of luxury brand Orient Express Sailing Yachts; Sarah Marjoram of Haskoning; Willie Wilson CEO of the Marine Biological Association; Ian McFadzen CEO of the Ocean Conservation Trust; Richard Allen Harbourmaster for Cattewater Harbour; Dan Whysall of Associated British Ports Millbay; Mike Deegan, Maritime Skills Association; Amanda Lumley, CEO of Destination Plymouth; and Ian McQuade Chair Cruise Britain as part of a packed programme. Sessions were moderated by Holly Payne, Seatrade Cruise; Isla Haddow, Denholm Port Services and Kay Greenway, Cruise Britain.

The day included a masterclass on ultra-luxury sailing yacht experiences, and a panel session on marine

conservation and the ocean environment highlighting the challenges as well as some of the work which is being done to reduce environmental impacts globally by the cruise industry.

During the event a special presentation was made to Douglas and Annemarie Kerr and the Plymouth Cruise Ambassadors to celebrate 10 years of volunteering for the city and providing a very special port welcome to all cruise guests.

Amanda Lumley, CEO of Destination Plymouth commented, “We are delighted to be able to showcase Plymouth over the past two days to the UK cruise industry. Not only demonstrating the fantastic offer the city has for cruise guests but also the warm welcome that the city provides internationally.

We hope that many of the delegates will go away with positive and changed perceptions of the city. Not just our amazing and unique heritage, culture and waterfront offer, but also our leading role in the maritime innovation through the national centre for marine autonomy, defence growth and investment into the naval base and globally significant marine research”.

The event was generously sponsored by Associated British Ports (ABP), Cattewater Harbour Commissioners, Teamwork Security, Haskoning, Akorn DMC; and supporting partners The Box, Plymouth, Plymouth Boat Trips, Plymouth Walking Tours and Plymouth Gin and Plymouth Waterfront Partnership.