

# Holyhead welcomes Wales' first Cruise call of the season

The Astoria is a 580 passenger and 236 crew ship which is operated by Cruise and Maritime Voyages. After docking in Holyhead, passengers had a choice of excursions around north Wales, which included visits to Snowdonia, Anglesey and the north Wales coast.

The cruise ship market is big business for Wales and Cruise Wales and partners are working hard to grow the market. In addition to Holyhead an increasing number of cruise visitors are coming to south west Wales through cruise ships docking at Swansea, Milford Haven Port, Pembroke and Fishguard. With the support of Welsh Government support under the Tourism Investment Support Scheme a floating pontoon at Fishguard has been installed to allow larger vessels to anchor, as a result Fishguard calls have increased from 5 in 2015 to 29 for 2017.

Fishguard will get its first call of the season when the National Geographic 'Explorer' vessel – will call for the first time on 6 May. The call is as a result of a National Geographic familiarisation visit last year to see what Wales had to offer as a cruise destination. Passengers will be offered excursions to see the highlights of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and to explore the local flora and fauna.

This season, Welsh ports are set to welcome 37,000 passengers and 15,000 crew – an increase in calls of 33% year on year.

Cabinet Secretary for the Economy and Infrastructure, Ken Skates, said:

“The cruise market has been highlighted in the tourism strategy for Wales as one way of growing the tourism industry in Wales by 10% by 2020 and Cruise is one of the fastest growing sectors year on year. We are working with many outside stakeholders and are looking at various infrastructure developments for the cruise market. I hope that both the cruise operators and passengers are impressed with what Wales has to offer and will return again in the future.”