



# NEW SCOTTISH BRANCH!

## Chief Executive Mike Bugsgang reports on the Association of Group Travel Organisers' latest activities

In line with its strategy to expand its network of Branches around the UK, the formation of an AGTO Scotland Branch was announced at the Association's AGM, held at the Excursions Show in London.

AGTO is extremely excited about this development, which has been made possible by the efforts of AGTO member David Urquhart Travel. Scotland offers a huge variety of destinations and accommodation for group organisers' itineraries and the establishment of an AGTO Branch in the country will provide a forum for networking between GTOs and suppliers to work more closely together.

Commenting on the move, Emma McMillan, Marketing Manager of David Urquhart Travel, said: "We are delighted to have worked with AGTO to bring this project to fruition. Some of the leading GTOs in Scotland have been recruited to form the Branch and we are developing a programme of activities including fam trips and events for members in the year ahead."

AGTO member Rona Wallace, Trade Marketing Manager, VisitScotland, commented: "The arrival of an AGTO Scotland Branch is very timely as there are myriad of opportunities available for groups in connection to 'The Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology' theme in 2017. This themed year will cover all



The V&A has become an AGTO member

parts of Scotland and we are confident it will attract visitors from all over the UK and overseas."

### AGTO QUESTION TIME

AGTO will be running a session entitled 'Question Time: The Changing Face of Group Travel' at the British Tourism & Travel Show (BTTS) at the NEC on Thursday 23 March 2017. The session will include a panel of GTOs and suppliers who will be sharing their thoughts around the current issues and challenges facing organisers. This will be an interactive session with time allocated for GTOs attending to put their questions to the panel.

The panel comprises:

- Mike Bugsgang - Chief Executive AGTO (Chair)
- Yasmin Choudhury - GTO
- Siobhan Harrison - Travel Trade Manager, English Heritage
- Pauline Johnson - GTO, Chair, AGTO Central Branch
- Sam Sciortino - Commercial Team Leader, Towergate Insurance

Some of the topics likely to be aired will include the type of fam trips that are most beneficial, attracting new organisers in to the sector, coach parking in city centres, charging for museum entry, legislation impacting GTOs, hotel prices, 2018 events, new itinerary ideas and using social media for marketing.

The AGTO session at BTTS is one of several being run on 23 March that has been designated National Group Travel Organiser Day. The BTTS AGTO Question Time is exclusively for group organisers and advance booking is necessary to attend. For details contact [cbissell@divcom.co.uk](mailto:cbissell@divcom.co.uk).

### WELCOMING THE V&A

Another major player in the group travel market has become a member of AGTO. The Victoria and Albert Museum is the world's leading venue of art and design, housing a permanent collection of over 2.3 million objects that span over 5,000 years of human creativity. The Museum holds many of the UK's national collections and houses some of the greatest resources for the study of architecture, furniture,



The BTTS AGTO Question Time panel will include Yasmin Choudhury



Siobhan Harrison



Pauline Johnson



Sam Sciortino

fashion, textiles, photography, sculpture, painting, jewellery, glass, ceramics, book arts, Asian art and design, theatre and performance

### DIARY DATE

AGTO Directors will be providing advice for organisers in a special session at Great for Groups: The Beautiful South at Kempton Park Racecourse on Wednesday 26 April 2017. The Group Travel Surgery, sponsored by AGTO member the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, will be running during the event and will enable GTOs to sit down and discuss issues with an AGTO representative on a one-to-one basis. For more information visit [www.greatforgroups.co.uk/south/](http://www.greatforgroups.co.uk/south/)



Mike Bugsgang and Emma McMillan announce the new Scotland Branch at AGTO's AGM