

# Western Morning News

75p FRIDAY FEBRUARY 3 2017

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## South West Tourism Awards



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### Western Morning News

THE VOICE OF THE WESTCOUNTRY

## Awards night shows West is a powerhouse in tourism

The cream of the Westcountry tourist industry received plaudits last night at the holiday business event of the year. The South West Tourism Awards are the showcase for the top talent in the South West's hospitality sector – and the winners and runners-up are all shining examples of the way our region continues to innovate and improve to keep the region at the top of its game when it comes to satisfying the visitors, from the UK and overseas.

The breadth of the holiday businesses collecting gold, silver and bronze awards grows wider every year. As people look for new experiences, rising quality and better value for money, so the tourist industry has to keep raising its game.

Tourism is a global industry and here in the South West we are competing with alternative offerings from around the world. We have to be good.

There are still some critical of the Westcountry's reliance on tourism, sceptical of its ability to deliver decent, well-paid jobs and doubting that it can continue to thrive through the downturns that, inevitably batter the global economy from time to time and may well become even more pronounced in what looks to be an increasingly unstable world. Tourism is by far and away the Westcountry's biggest earner and nothing looks likely to touch

it. So it is in all our interests to keep supporting it, ensure the region continues to be as welcoming as possible to visitors and do what we can to maintain the overall quality of the area's tourism offering.

Those in the business have learned that while it is important to keep costs down, in order to remain competitive, most tourists are far more interested in getting value for money than rock bottom prices. Over the last 30 years or more our region has moved from being a bargain basement holiday destination for many, with low quality accommodation, dubious food and attractions that often compared poorly with offerings overseas, into a first class destination with an increasingly discerning clientele prepared to pay for excellence.

Those businesses that offer value for money were the ones on the receiving end of the top awards last night at the South West Tourism Awards in Bristol.

The judging process is rigorous and recognises that there is no excuse for providing a second rate service, however much people are paying. Everyone deserves to have the best and it is getting good value that keeps them coming back. There is always room for improvement, but the South West Tourism Industry is now a match for any in the world. Let's keep it that way.



# South West leads way yet again in tourism excellence

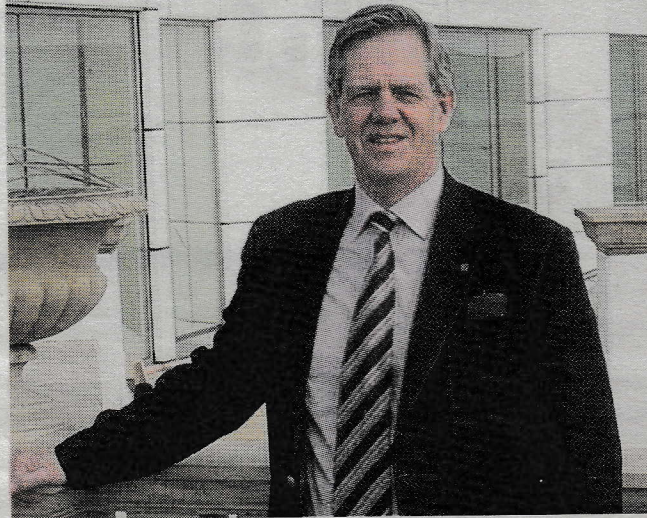
BY WMN REPORTER

Records tumbled last night at the annual South West Tourism Excellence Awards finale, as ten months of work culminated in the presentation of 135 trophies to the South West's leading tourism businesses.

Held in the new Lansdown Suite of Ashton Gate Stadium in Bristol, this year's awards were announced alongside performances from LED jugglers 'Feeding the Fish' and an introductory presentation from adventurer Alastair Humphreys. With 469 people booked, it was the biggest ever regional gathering of South West tourism businesses, with 135 different awards presented following a rigorous judging process in which a record 605 entries were considered.

Amongst the winners there was an Outstanding Contribution award given to Graham Grose, owner of Thurlestone Hotel, and Harry Murray MBE, chairman of Lucknam Park, both for their service to and their lobbying on behalf of the region's top industry. The Winner of Winners award went to The Gloucester Tourist Information Centre for its innovation, consistency and service over many years.

This year's awards event was hosted by ITV news presenter Kylie Pentelow, with an inspiring opening address by travel journalist and chair of Family Holiday Association Alison Rice. Alison was also this



Graham Grose, owner of the Thurlestone Hotel and, right, the kitchens at the Glazebrook Hotels. Both winners at the Tourism Awards last night

year's chair of judges and commented: "Yet again the South West leads the way in tourism excellence. Whatever 2017 throws at this very special region of Britain, tonight's award winners will excel at what they do best – offering all comers the best possible visitor experiences."

The event broke new ground being hosted at Ashton Gate stadium, the home of Bristol Rugby and Bristol City, and the largest conference and events venue in the South West. Entries were 23% up on the year before, helped by a new county scheme encouraging more entries from Somerset,

Bristol and Bath. Winners were spread across the whole region from the Isles of Scilly and Cornwall in the west to Bournemouth, Dorset and Salisbury in the east, and from Kingsbridge in the south to Bristol, Bath and Gloucester in the north.

Many finalists in the awards were also nominated to represent the region in the VisitEngland awards, the finalists for which will be announced in March.

All entrants in the South West underwent a rigorous short-listing process with 380 being visited by a team of 36 mystery shoppers. Entry was

free, and all entrants received feedback on how they had done, giving them useful tips for future success.

Richard Stanbrook, director of Title Sponsors, South West Water Business, said: "We're committed to playing our part in delivering a sustainable economic future for the South West and feel there's never been a better time to showcase the individuals and businesses who pioneer, create jobs and help drive the region's economy and growth. We understand how crucial the leisure & tourism industry is to the region and how important water is for such businesses, so we're thrilled to be supporting the Tourism Awards again and celebrate the hard work, innovation and determination that goes into making the thriving tourism industry in the South West such a success."

Robin Barker, of Services for Tourism, added: "Excellence is elusive. It takes creativity, commitment, investment, and persistence to achieve. Standards have to be maintained for every guest, in all situations, at all hours of every day. Achieving excellence is one thing, maintaining it in a world of ever-rising expectations is an even greater challenge. So well done to all of this year's winners – you are at the cutting edge of this region's top industry and are genuine business icons."

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## 2016/17 SOUTH WEST TOURISM EXCELLENCE AWARDS IN ASSOCIATION W

### ACCESS & INCLUSIVITY AWARD

#### Gold

- Eden Project, Cornwall, [www.edenproject.com](http://www.edenproject.com)
- Mylor Sailing School, Cornwall, [www.mylorsailingschool.co.uk](http://www.mylorsailingschool.co.uk)

#### Silver

- Kernock Cottages, Cornwall, [www.kernockcottages.com](http://www.kernockcottages.com)
- Thelma Hulbert Gallery, Devon, [www.thelmahulbert.com](http://www.thelmahulbert.com)

#### Bronze

- At-Bristol Science Centre, Bristol, [www.at-bristol.org.uk](http://www.at-bristol.org.uk)
- Moors Valley Country Park and Forest, Dorset, [www.moorsvalley.co.uk](http://www.moorsvalley.co.uk)

### ACTIVE & SPORTING EXPERIENCE AWARD

#### Gold

- GoSkydive, Wiltshire, [www.goskydive.com](http://www.goskydive.com)

#### Silver

- Newquay Activity Centre, Cornwall, [www.newquayactivitycentre.co.uk](http://www.newquayactivitycentre.co.uk)
- SUP Bristol, Bristol, [www.supbristol.com](http://www.supbristol.com)

Cornwall, [www.rickstein.com/school](http://www.rickstein.com/school)

- Seaton Tramway, Devon, [www.tram.co.uk](http://www.tram.co.uk)
- Virtual Jet Centre, Devon, [www.virtualjetcentre.co.uk](http://www.virtualjetcentre.co.uk)

### BED & BREAKFAST OF THE YEAR

#### Gold

- Kaywana Hall, Devon, [www.kaywanahall.co.uk](http://www.kaywanahall.co.uk)
- The 25 Boutique B & B, Devon, [www.the25.co.uk](http://www.the25.co.uk)

#### Silver

- Dorset House, Dorset, [www.dorsethouse.co.uk](http://www.dorsethouse.co.uk)
- Roundhouse Barn Holidays, Cornwall, [www.roundhousebarnholidays.co.uk](http://www.roundhousebarnholidays.co.uk)

#### Bronze

- Higher Gitcombe Boutique Bed and Breakfast, Devon, [www.highergitcombe.co.uk](http://www.highergitcombe.co.uk)
- Wadebridge B and B, Cornwall, [www.wadebridgebedandbreakfast.net](http://www.wadebridgebedandbreakfast.net)

### CAFÉ & TEAROOM OF THE YEAR

#### Gold

- Crealy Meadows Caravan and Camping Park, Devon, [www.crealy Meadows.co.uk](http://www.crealy Meadows.co.uk)
- Hendra Holiday Park, Cornwall, [www.hendra-holidays.com](http://www.hendra-holidays.com)
- Wareham Forest Tourist Park, Dorset, [www.warehamforest.co.uk](http://www.warehamforest.co.uk)

#### Bronze

- South Lytchett Manor Caravan and Camping Park, Dorset, [www.southlytchettmanor.co.uk](http://www.southlytchettmanor.co.uk)
- Waterrow Touring Park, Somerset, [www.waterrowpark.co.uk](http://www.waterrowpark.co.uk)

### DOG FRIENDLY BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

#### Gold

- Deer Park Country House Hotel, Devon, [www.deerpark.co.uk](http://www.deerpark.co.uk)
- Kernock Cottages, Cornwall, [www.kernockcottages.com](http://www.kernockcottages.com)

#### Silver

- Lucknam Park Hotel & Spa, Wiltshire, [www.lucknam-park.co.uk](http://www.lucknam-park.co.uk)

#### Bronze

- Bed & Basket, Cornwall, [www.bedandbasket.co.uk](http://www.bedandbasket.co.uk)
- Cary Arms, Devon, [www.caryarms.co.uk](http://www.caryarms.co.uk)
- Karma St Martin's, Isles of Scilly, [www.karmastmartins.com](http://www.karmastmartins.com)

[www.bournemouth.hilton.com](http://www.bournemouth.hilton.com)

### GLAMPING BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

#### Gold

- Longlands, Devon, [www.longlandsdevon.co.uk](http://www.longlandsdevon.co.uk)

#### Silver

- Dimpsey Glamping, Somerset, [www.dimpsey.co.uk](http://www.dimpsey.co.uk)
- The Orchard Retreat, Devon, [www.theorchardretreat.co.uk](http://www.theorchardretreat.co.uk)

#### Bronze

- Crafty Camping, Dorset, [www.mallinson.co.uk](http://www.mallinson.co.uk)
- Yurts Cornwall, Cornwall, [www.yurtscornwall.com](http://www.yurtscornwall.com)

### HOLIDAY PARK & VILLAGE OF THE YEAR

#### Gold

- Darwin Beach Cove Ltd, Devon, [www.beachcoveretreat.co.uk](http://www.beachcoveretreat.co.uk)
- Hendra Holiday Park, Cornwall, [www.hendra-holidays.com](http://www.hendra-holidays.com)

#### Silver

- Hele Valley Holiday Park, Devon, [www.helevalley.co.uk](http://www.helevalley.co.uk)
- Pentewan Sands Holiday Park, Cornwall, [www.pentewan.co.uk](http://www.pentewan.co.uk)

#### Bronze