

For more on the CTA and its member benefits see [www.coachtourismassociation.co.uk](http://www.coachtourismassociation.co.uk)



Encore's John Wales (second from left) with new board members Daniel Kirby (far left), Colin Fawcus and Roger Bull

## The dawn of a new era

Discover why 2018's set to be an exciting year for the **Coach Tourism Association** and its members...

**T**HE COACH TOURISM Association (CTA), the UK voice of coaching holidays, has embarked on a new era following the election of a new chairman and board members at its recent 2018 Conference.

As previous chairman Denise Bridges stepped down after three years, the role was taken over by John Wales of Encore, who's joined by three new board members – Daniel Kirby of Kirby's Coaches, Roger Bull of RB Travel and Colin Fawcus of DFDS Ferries, with Robert Shaw of Harry Shaw taking over as vice-chairman.

John Wales says: "I'm delighted and honoured to be elected chairman of the CTA, having been a board member for over six years

and involved in the industry since 1982 – working in various aspects of the trade, including a ferry company, tour operators, restaurants and, latterly, the founder and CEO of Encore since 2000.

"The timing is perfect. Now we have a new CEO in place at Encore, I have the increased capacity to dedicate to the role, and over the next three months, along with the association's CEO Chris Wales (no relation!), and the new vice-chairman, Robert Shaw, I will be working with the board to devise the vision and strategy for the CTA, that will deliver a clear direction and increased value to members going forward."

### CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

This year's conference was held in Blackpool, where delegates heard details of the iconic resort's future from Philip Welsh, Head of Visitor Economy.

Stressing the long-term repositioning of the destination to attract visitors on a year-round basis, he highlighted developments, such as a new £25 million conference centre, a £16 million rollercoaster at the Pleasure Beach, investment in Blackpool Tower, the Winter Gardens, an IMAX cinema as well as a number of key hotel developments. Blackpool currently has 18 million visitors per year who generate £1.496 billion within the local economy and support over 25,000 jobs.

Turning to the countryside, delegates were treated to a live Q&A session from BBC Countryfile's Anita Rani with producer of the Countryfile Live show Tim Etchells. A major group attraction, Countryfile Live is held this year at Blenheim Palace in August.

Members also learned about the importance of the over 50s market from Silver Travel Advisor's Debbie Marshall, as well as important facts about forthcoming emission rules from Simon Smith of the Confederation of Passenger Transport.

Meeting people was a key element in the three-day conference and AGM, and the B2B workshop involved more than 500 speed-dating appointments with suppliers from all over the UK. [GTW](#)



CTA chief executive Chris Wales (left) and treasurer Steve Lee from Anderson Travel, say a fond farewell to retiring chairperson Denise Bridges from Albatross Travel.



Debbie Marshall talks to conference delegates in the Imperial Hotel, Blackpool.