

Manchester

The Cradle of Everything Modern

Explore the charm of Manchester and the various day trip options to the most scenic locales Northern England has to offer. Yes, Manchester is as much heritage-proud as it is uber-cool. It's time travellers to the UK looked beyond London

BY ATHUL LAL A G

Manchester
Town Hall and
Albert Square

Photo courtesy
VisitEngland/Marketing
Manchester



The Beatles Story



Felicitating Team Marketing Manchester



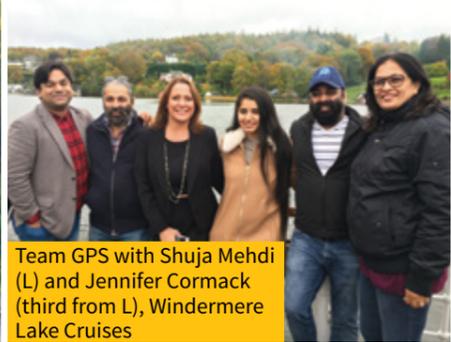
Tanuska with Sheona Southern



Harmandeep goes candid



Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway



Team GPS with Shuja Mehdi (L) and Jennifer Cormack (third from L), Windermere Lake Cruises



EDWINs at Gilpin Hotel and Lake House



EDWINs at Clitheroe Castle



A view of the new passenger terminal at Muscat International Airport from Oman Air



Manchester United FC Museum



Athul Lal, Vishal Bhatia, Tim Manley, Harmandeep and Shuja Mehdi



EDWINs with trade delegation from Northern England



EDWINs visiting Manchester Science and Industry Museum



EDWINs at Manchester Airport



In 2017, the total number of overseas visits to the UK stood at 39.2 million, an increase of 4 per cent. Of this, visitors to London itself were a whopping 20 million. While Scotland and Wales recorded 3.2 million and 1.1 million international visits respectively, for the rest of the UK, outside of London, it came to around 16 million. Figures show that India was the 17th largest source market for the UK in 2017, with the region receiving about 5,62,000 visitors from the country. For Indians also, London is the leading destination on a trip to Britain with the figure touching 68 per cent. While 36 per cent Indians visited the UK for a holiday, the Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) and business travel segments stood at 38 per cent and 20 per cent respectively.

So, the question is why is there such a huge difference in the number of tourists coming to London and the rest of the UK? Tricia Warwick, Director, Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa, VisitBritain would like to put it this way. "A lot of people in the world think that, in the UK, life begins and ends in London," she says. "Yes, there is so much going on there. But if you just step outside and experience the culture, vibrancy of the people and stunning locations, then you can have a great holiday here."

To promote a mono-Britain itinerary among Indian tourists, VisitBritain joined hands with Global Panorama Showcase (GPS) India and thus was born EDWIN@UK program in association with Marketing Manchester and supported by Oman Air and TrawellTag Cover-More. The six-day-long itinerary was customised to help explore Northern England with Manchester as the hub. EDWIN (Educational Destination Workshop International) program of GPS aims at educating the sellers so as to equip them to sell a particular tourism product in the most effective way. "EDWIN@UK was conceptualised when VisitBritain started its association with GPS India for our B2B events. They attended all the eight GPS events in India," says Harmandeep Singh Anand, MD, GPS India.

NAMASTE EDWINS!

Even after having been to London thrice before to take part in WTM London, I had never considered Manchester or Northern England for that matter, as a standalone destination. Oman Air being the Airline Partner of EDWIN@UK, we flew via Muscat on October 11, 2018. For the 30 EDWINs (what GPS calls those who attend the EDWIN program), who had been hand-picked by GPS from its eight travel trade events across the country, and hailing from 18 different cities in India, the first meet-and-greet point was

the newly-launched passenger terminal of Muscat International Airport. The hassle-free transit facility at the terminal, even for economy class, literally surprised us. To be frank, EDWINs hardly got time to know each other before they boarded the flight for they were busy capturing the majestic views of the facility, including the Business Class Lounge, on FB and Instagram.

As always, Oman Air was on time and the 7.35 hour-long journey in WY 105 was a pleasant experience with really good food and in-flight entertainment. Thanks to VisitBritain, we EDWINs were accorded a fast track welcome at the immigration counter at Manchester Airport. "Namaste!" Tim Manley, Marketing Manager, Marketing Manchester (MM), with an ever-smiling face, greeted us. He came to receive us together with Harmandeep, who had flown to Manchester a few days before to get things ready.

From the airport, we went straight to Scene Indian Street Kitchen at Irwell Square in Manchester for the welcome dinner with Tricia Warwick (VisitBritain), Vishal Bhatia, Country Manager – India, VisitBritain; Shuja Bin Mehdi, B2B Manager – India, VisitBritain; Sheona Southern, MD, Marketing Manchester and Victoria Braddock, Director of International Marketing, MM. With Indian street food-inspired delicacies, we had a sumptuous dinner at Scene, done up in a contemporary setting with elements of Bollywood as well. After dinner, we had an informal session to thank officials of VisitBritain, Marketing Manchester and Oman Air for making EDWIN@UK possible. Harmandeep handed over mementos to them along with some signature Indian sweets.

"Steeped in heritage, Manchester is a fantastic tourism product not much known to the Indian market," feels Manley. "People know London. Perhaps, they know Edinburgh as well. But they are hardly aware of tourism products on offer in Northern England. So, we are now working with our partners across Northern England like Liverpool, Lake District, North Wales and Yorkshire to showcase what the region has to offer."

Manchester currently receives about 1.55 million international visits per year making it the third most visited destination in the UK. A majority of these visitors are from the US, mainland Europe, China and the GCC. Out of those 1.55 million, international visits from India is only 14,018. The number of holiday visits from India to GM in 2017 stood at 2655. The average spend for Indian visitors per trip was around £538.

"Our aim is to double the number of international visits from India over the next few years. In the recent months, we have noticed an increase in the number of Indian visitors owing to better connectivity to Manchester via the GCC. The direct flight connectivity from Manchester Airport to Mumbai, starting from November 5, will further open up Northern England to Indian tourists," Manley adds.

In the first-ever direct flight service from Mumbai to Manchester, Jet Airways will initially fly on Monday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday and operate an A330-200, with 254 seats, on the route. Jet Airways' flight 9W 130 will depart from Mumbai at 0230 hrs (Local time) and will arrive at Manches-



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SHEONA SOUTHERN MD, Marketing Manchester



Go Offbeat in Manchester

The Tim Manley Way!

What better way to make the most of a trip than by sprinkling it with some unconventional outings. Tim Manley of Marketing Manchester wants you to try these options

MANCHESTER THREE RIVERS GIN

This is my favourite unique experience in Manchester. The City of Manchester Distillery is a new distillery named after three rivers – the Irwell, the Chirk and the Medlock – on the confluence of which the Manchester city is situated. It offers visitors a unique opportunity to appreciate and participate in the Gin Renaissance. Here, the visitors get a three-hour experience, which comes across as a sort of ‘Gin school.’ You can have a lesson or two about the often illustrious and sometimes dark, but unquestionably intriguing history of Gin, which help you understand how Gin’s diverse flavours are concocted. Then you get to make your ‘own Gin’ on the mini copper pot stills. You have 40 different flavours to choose from. At the end, you can walk away with a bottle of self-distilled Gin.

NORTHERN QUARTER

An ideal place for shopping lined with small designer wear boutiques. Also, there is the Street Art trail wherein you can go with a guide and enjoy street corridors decorated with paintings and listen to their stories. Once you are through, you can get into any of the trendy bars and have a whale of a time.

THE CITY AND THE CITY

This combines a stadium tour delivered by one of our veteran tour guides who gives you special insights into the history of Manchester City FC. After that he will take you to the bars and back streets in the city where the footballers used to drink and enjoy in the company of fans. Transform yourself into a celebrity footballer!

SCRANCHESTER TOUR

Scran is another word for food. It’s a walking tour with information about the history and stories of Manchester being



(Clock wise from top) Manchester Three Rivers Gin, Northern Quarter, Scranchester Tour, The City and The City, Robinsons Brewery



served all through. It has 10 stops. At each stop, you go into a restaurant and have something to eat or drink. Everything you have at these restaurants will have a story to tell about Manchester’s history.

ROBINSONS BREWERY

It is one of the oldest names in British brewing history. You can have a unique tour starting off with Bobek and Mojo, which are the latest in a long line of Shire horses which have served Robinsons Brewery for over 100 years. You can see how the beer used to be made earlier. Watch how it is brewed now. And, you finish the tour by tasting Robinsons, the classic English brew.

(For more details, send a mail to tim.manley@marketingmanchester.com)



ter’s Terminal 2 at 0755 hrs (Local time). The return flight, 9W 129 will depart from Manchester at 0935 hrs (Local time) and arrive at Mumbai’s Terminal 2 at 0040 hrs (Local time).

“The direct flight connection to Mumbai is a monumental leap forward for Manchester,” says Southern. “We have ramped up our in-market activity, persuading the people of India to visit, meet, invest and study in Manchester. India is an incredibly important market in Greater Manchester’s international ambitions with Indian visitors to the UK spending more than £400 million in the UK annually.”

Adds Warwick, “Indians love and adore coming to the UK and typically, that means London. We want to introduce Manchester as a standalone destination. Coming from London, it is two hours from Euston Station to Manchester Piccadilly Station at the city centre here. This is the gateway to Northern England.”

Greater Manchester (GM) recorded a total of 11 million staying visits in 2016. MM’s strategy is to increase staying visitor numbers to 13.7 million in 2020. GM’s tourism economy supported around 94,000 full time jobs in 2017. The aim is to increase the number of jobs supported by tourism to 112,447 in 2020. In 2017, the value of the MICE sector to GM was £904m. The sector generated 22,000 direct jobs within the region, through its core activity, and 35,100 jobs when including the indirect jobs in the supply chain. Around 4.4 million delegates were hosted in 2017.

At dinner, Southern was keen to know about Indian culture, weddings and the travel habits of the people. In a brief chat, she told me that the rate of growth of international visitors to Manchester has been increasing over the years, thanks to investments happening in the region. “We are still developing. As you might have noticed on your way from the airport, our skyline is full of cranes. Over the next three years, our cultural attractions will grow over 200 per cent. The hospitality industry is also on expansion mode. 6922 new rooms are confirmed for Greater Manchester from new openings and property extensions within the next five years, a growth of 28 per cent on the current supply. In terms of Manchester city centre, a planned 4046 rooms are due to come on board that would increase the current supply by 40 per cent. The holiday visits to Manchester in 2017 showed an increase of 28 per cent. That’s a



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VISHAL BHATIA
Country Manager - India, VisitBritain

record for us,” says Southern, before we proceed for the customary group photograph.

According to Bhatia, the positive response elicited from GPS’ B2B events in eight cities in India reinforced the fact that UK as a destination needs to be showcased in tier-II cities in the country and the need to inspire stakeholders to develop customised products to suit their clientele. “Traditionally, Indian tourists would come to London for a few nights and then proceed to mainland Europe. Of late, we have noticed a new trend wherein tourists opt for mono-Britain itineraries and travel beyond London. The main reason behind this is the improved flight connectivity through the Middle East. With the new direct flight from Mumbai, visitors now have the option to do an exclusive Northern England itinerary,” says Bhatia.

As expected, the six-day EDWIN@UK coupled with a B2B meet turned out to be an eye-opener for the Indian travel agents. For Jay Kishan Shivram Khurana, the itinerary in the UK was limited to London, Glasgow and Scotland till EDWIN@UK. “Thanks to EDWIN and GPS, I am now convinced that I can sell more destinations and experiences in the UK to our clients,” he says. “I came to know about GPS this year when I participated in GPS Pune. It’s a unique concept whereby sellers are being trained to market a destination. Nowhere are sellers educated about what they are supposed to be selling. Most of the time, sales are happening without the seller experiencing the product. With EDWIN, sellers are provided with comprehensive information not only about selling the destination but also about increasing their revenues.”

Abhishek Jaiswal, CEO of Fly High India Holidays, has been a regular to London and Scotland for the last few years. “But, I have never been to any destination in Northern England. It’s really a wonderful experience and definitely, I would be recommending these tourism products to my clients in a big way. The coming summer onwards, I will have a new itinerary combining Manchester, Liverpool and Lake District,” he says.



Liverpool Road is the oldest surviving passenger railway station in the world

History and Heritage

The birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, Manchester has a rich history of many firsts and renowned heritage.

- Manchester was the world’s first industrial city and hailed as the cotton-making capital of the world in the 18th century. It was known as ‘Cottonopolis’ and the ‘Warehouse City’ during the Victorian era
- The first modern computer, ‘Baby’ was made at the University of Manchester. Built using technology developed for World War II communications equipment, ‘Baby’ ran the world’s first stored program in 1948
- Frederick Henry Royce and Charles Rolls founded Rolls-Royce company after a meeting between them in 1904 at The Midland Hotel in Manchester
- In 1803, John Dalton developed his atomic theory in Manchester and later, an atom was split for the first time by Ernst Rutherford, in an experiment at Manchester University in 1919
- The Halle’ Orchestra, the UK’s oldest symphony orchestra (and the fourth oldest in the world), was founded in 1857 by German conductor and pianist Charles Halle’ to perform at the Manchester Art Treasures exhibition
- Liverpool Road is the oldest surviving passenger railway station in the world, built in 1830. It was the world’s first urban railway, connecting industrial Manchester with Liverpool’s docks



The Cavern Club

Holmes Mill, Clitheroe

EDWIN@UK's Top Five Experiences

Athul Lal A G, Director & Executive Editor of *Destination Reporter* suggests five must-visit spots that made an impression while he was exploring Northern England

THE CAVERN CLUB

Wow! What a night life experience?! You have to see it to believe it. Home to The Cavern Club and Cavern Pub, Mathew Street is the hub of Liverpool's night life. The Cavern Club, where The Beatles performed 300 times, is one of Liverpool's top music venues. Here, nights remain always young.

WINDERMERE, LAKE DISTRICT

Windermere is the largest natural lake in England. With stunning scenery and great accommodation around the lake, Windermere is a perfect romantic getaway. Lake District, a UNESCO® World Heritage Site, got the outside world's attention through William Wordsworth's 'Guide through the District of the Lakes' published in 1820. Don't miss the voyage on Windermere Lake Cruises, which offers a 45 minutes, three-hour or all-day cruise on the lake.

HOLMES MILL, CLITHEROE

The afternoon tea at this beautifully renovated former textile mill is an experience indeed. It is home to the fabulous new showcase and tasting parlour, Beer Hall, of Bowland Brewery.

TITANIC HOTEL LIVERPOOL

Simply an attraction in itself. The property is part of the redevelopment of the historic Stanley Dock and is located in what was the 1850's North Warehouse which once stored rum. It's all about space: bedrooms are 56 sq.m.

MAN U AND MCFC STADIUM TOURS

Perhaps, you might think what's in a stadium? But, believe me, you will love them for sure. Sit on the gallery and you can imagine the ground brimming with life. You can 'hear' the crowd cheering up their stars, and above all, walk to the turf like the players do.



DID YOU KNOW?

UK's North West was an important centre for the manufacture of locomotives. Many of these were exported to countries of the former British Empire. The locomotive, built in 1911 for the North Western Railway of India, is on display at Manchester's Science and Industry Museum. After 1947, the same engine was used by Pakistan Railways until 1982

International visitors from outside the European Union (EU) are entitled to reclaim the Value Added Tax (VAT) of 20 per cent. Tourists can request a tax refund form from the retailer, along with the receipt. Before you leave the UK, present the form to the Travelex counter or the Customs desk located at airports for refund. Selfridges, the popular high-end shopping store at Manchester, has a Tax Refund Lounge exclusively for its international customers ensuring a hassle-free journey

During the Brexit Referendum in 2016, Manchester had the strongest 'remain' vote in the North West region – but a majority of the districts in Greater Manchester region voted in favour of exiting the EU. Manchester voted 60.4 per cent to stay, followed by Trafford and Stockport but with an overall average of about 55 per cent favouring Brexit which helped sway the nationwide result substantially in favour of exit from the EU. Experts pointed this out as an indication of the 'long-simmering frustration over immigration and its perceived impact on jobs'



For Indian tourists opting for a 10-day vacation in Europe, Northern England would be an ideal choice, feels Amit Navlani of Travel Solutions. "Most clients combine London and some other destinations in mainland Europe. When you can have the same kind of experience here, why would you have to spend on two visas – UK and Schengen, for such a short duration trip? The city life at Liverpool, wide range of shopping options available at Manchester and also Liverpool, the cruise at Windermere, all of these would make your trip one of the most memorable experiences in a lifetime. I have seen so many places in Europe like Prague, Budapest, Switzerland, Croatia and the like. But the destinations that we have seen in Northern England are equally good," vouches Navlani.

With Manchester's position in the heart of the UK, it is the perfect gateway to the North of England and North Wales. Be it a visit to the pristine national parks of Lake District or Peak District, charming Chester or vibrant Liverpool, it can all be done in a day from Manchester by rail or road. "Personally, I would suggest that our travel agents sell Manchester and Northern England as a standalone destination," says Harmandeep.

"For tourists coming to London, they can extend the stay in the UK itself rather than combining it with two different cities on mainland Europe. Through EDWIN@UK, the sellers not only got a firsthand experience of the tourism products available here but also had a chance to interact with the who's who behind them. They now have that competitive edge

to customise exclusive packages for their clientele and reap extra benefits out of it. A win-win situation for all," he adds.

In Manchester, EDWINs visited Etihad Stadium, home ground of Manchester City FC; Emirates Old Trafford, home ground of Lancashire County Cricket Club; Manchester United FC stadium at Old Trafford; Science and Industry Museum; Cloud 23, the 23rd floor of Hilton Hotel offering stunning panoramic views of Manchester, and Selfridges store. At Liverpool, the itinerary included Liverpool Anglican Cathedral, the biggest in Britain and the fifth-largest in the world; The Beatles Story; Royal Albert Dock; Merseyside Maritime Museum and The Cavern Club. The next stop was Lake District, where EDWINs boarded a classy yesteryear steam locomotive-drawn train of the Lakeside and Haverthwaite Railway, the 3.2-mile-long heritage rail line in Cumbria. After an exciting cruise on the Windermere Lake, EDWINs had a sumptuous Indian lunch at Gilpin Hotel and Lake Resort before going for the Minibus tour by Mountain Goat. We also got an exclusive opportunity to visit the upcoming Steam Boat Museum at Windermere, which will be thrown open to public next Spring. While returning to Manchester, we got to enjoy afternoon tea at Clitheroe. The dinner at Mowgli Street Food restaurant at Corn Exchange in Manchester city centre on the penultimate day was literally the icing on the cake. The trade delegation from India also had fruitful B2B interactions with 29 suppliers across Northern England at Renaissance Manchester City Centre Hotel.

How to get there



By Train

There are direct rail services to Manchester from across the UK. Operators include: TransPennine Express, CrossCountry Trains, Great Western Railway, Northern Rail and Virgin Trains. Train journey times from: London – 2.06 hrs, Edinburgh – 3.15 hrs and Birmingham – 1.28 hrs



By Road/Coach/Bus

National Express and Megabus provide services from all over the country into Chorlton Street Coach Station in Manchester city centre. Car journey duration from: London – 4 hrs, Edinburgh – 4 hrs and Birmingham – 1.45 hrs



By Flight

Manchester Airport is the third largest airport in the UK. For Indian tourists, Oman Air is an ideal option to fly to Manchester via Muscat. From November 2018 onwards, Jet Airways will operate direct flight to Manchester from Mumbai

Mobility

To use the Metroshuttle, buses, trams and trains, log on to www.tfgm.com. Purchase a System One Travelcard for seamless transfer from one mode of transport to the other. (www.systemonetravelcards.co.uk)

To explore the city centre, walking is an option as most areas are a 20-minute walk away. Manchester's team of friendly street hosts are on hand to help guide tourists around. (www.manchesterbid.com)

The author was hosted by Global Panorama Showcase (GPS)

Etihad Stadium

Windermere

Titanic Liverpool Hotel