



AGTO Western Branch members at their AGM and fam visit to Warner Leisure Hotels' Littlecote House



MIKE BUGSGANG CEO OF AGTO

New beginnings

As the new year beckons, it's all change for AGTO Chief Executive **Mike Bugsgang**...

FOLLOWING A THREE-YEAR term of office, I'm standing down as CEO of the Association of Group Travel Organisers (AGTO). My role has been tremendously rewarding and I'm delighted to be leaving the association in a much a stronger position than when I joined. The strategy I implemented has enabled it to achieve a real growth in membership, and strengthened its position as the voice of the group travel sector.

I have steered the association through a name change and re-branding exercise, as well as considerably raising its profile, resulting in a sharp increase in membership. The work has included a wider use of communication channels, such as upgrading the AGTO website and social media platforms, implementing marketing campaigns to recruit new members, the creation of a Scotland Branch and the revision of various governance controls. I intend to remain close to the group travel market through my marketing consultancy work, my Tourism Society board membership, and the non-executive director roles I'm now seeking.

GO WESTERN AT WARNERS

AGTO's Western Branch had a successful AGM and fam visit to associate member Warner Leisure Hotel's Littlecote House in Berkshire. Members experienced the full range of activities on offer, including archery, bowls

and putting, as well as taking advantage of the swimming pool, spa and gym facilities. Everyone enjoyed the entertainment programme, which featured comedians, quizzes, games and dancing.

WORLD TRAVEL MARKET

I was greatly encouraged to see so many AGTO associate members' stands so busy at the annual World Travel Market show at Excel in London in November. While some countries invest huge sums in exhibiting at WTM, watching the business being transacted by AGTO members demonstrated that you don't need to have expensive stands to engage with buyers and negotiate contracts.

AGTO WELCOMES RIVIERA TRAVEL

Another high profile tour operator, Riviera Travel, has become an associate member of AGTO. The company has been operating for over 30 years and offers a wide range of holiday types, including river cruises, escorted tours, city breaks and solo traveller holidays in the UK and worldwide. Find out more at www.rivieratravel.co.uk

AGTO DIARY DATES

Don't miss...

■ The AGTO AGM, sponsored by Made Tourism Marketing, which will take place at

Excursions 2018 at Alexandra Palace in London on Saturday January 27, 2018.

■ AGTO's newest Scotland Branch will be holding a meeting at the Mackay's Hotel Strathpeffer, Ross-shire, Scotland on February 11, 2018. David Urquhart Travel will host the event and a complimentary B&B overnight stay available to AGTO Scotland members.

■ AGTO's Southern Branch is arranging a meeting at St Paul's Cathedral on February 23, 2018.

■ For more information on AGTO events visit www.agto.co.uk [GTVV](#)



Mike Bugsgang and Linda Moore on the Chelsea FC stand at World Travel Market