

ADVERTISER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

This experience is an Island success story

By Kate Cranwell

ISLE of Wight Experience has been blazing a trail for the Island's tourism industry for 25 years.

The successful family-run company brings more than 12,000 schoolchildren from the mainland to the Island for fun, educational trips every year.

Staying at around 30 hotels in Shanklin or Sandown, they visit their school's chosen attractions during a five-day break.

IW Experience is the brainchild of Keith and Donna Woodcock. Donna said: "In the early nineties we were hoteliers at the Corner House Hotel in Sandown and regularly took school parties on trips arranged by mainland companies.

"We ran the travel company and the hotel side-by-side before realising there was an opening for an Island-based company running school trips.

"In our first year, we brought 750 children to the Island — 25 years on, we transport more than 12,000 here and take them all over the Island. They always have such a good time, which helps boost our local economy further as many of them persuade their parents to come back here for a family holiday."

A true family company, Keith and Donna's daughters, Kirsty and Katie, joined IW Experience in 2000 and 2009 respectively.

Keith's role is public relations officer and to co-ordinate transport while Kirsty helps with

PR and ensures all schools are provided with information and risk assessment details required. Isle of Wight experience also offers a 24/7 support team.

Donna and Katie are responsible for arranging itineraries for the groups. The children are aged nine to 11, in Key Stage 2 and their programmes are usually determined by their studies.

"Their itineraries are bespoke to the schools' requests," said Donna. "It's not just about the Island's well-known attractions and companies — we are really pleased to have some smaller IW businesses on board.

"The children really enjoy their boat trips with Needles Pleasure Cruises and love going to the Spotlight Theatre workshops at Shanklin Theatre.

Some schools have been using our services for many years — St Anthony's School from Hertfordshire is one of our longest-standing clients."

IW Experience is looking forward to the busy new season, which starts in April.

Donna said: "It's hard work but we love it. It is so nice being ambassadors for our lovely Island. We send our coaches all over the country so holidays on the IW get advertised wherever we go."



Family firm: from left, Keith, Donna, Katie and Kirsty Woodcock.

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35 cm x 2
County Press..House Ads

Cheque out this donation



The Woodcock family hand over a cheque for £880 to the IW Association for Spina Bifida, left. Above, some of the IW Experience vehicles which are its advertising platforms, spreading the word for the Island all around the country..

CONTRIBUTED

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5 cm x 5
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