

SURPRISING FIGURE OF BRITISH OLYMPIC VISITORS



Fewer tourists visited Britain in July, 2012. Surprising statistics reveal that fewer overseas visitors made the trip to Britain in July. This is contrary to expectations of increased levels of visitors which prompted measures aimed at coping with the anticipated throngs.

The actual figures show 3.18 million overseas tourists made the trip during that month, 180,000 fewer than in July, 2011. These revealing numbers were announced by the ONS (Office for National Statistics).

Not only were there fewer visitors, but their total spend was also lower than the previous year, dropping by some £120 million for July 2012 compared to last year's figures.

It is though there might have been a similar trend in August. A drop of 2% in the number of travellers passing through BAA-controlled airports in August was reported.

Operators of tours to Britain had earlier revealed that higher hotel prices resulting from the expected rush had deterred many potential visitors from making the trip. It seems that few visitors came just for the Olympics or the Jubilee.

Other Olympic cities have had similar experiences, especially those that are normally popular tourist destinations. In Beijing, for example hotel prices were inflated up to 10 times normal rates, which may have caused the dramatic 30% drop in tourist visits in 2008 which was experienced

These figures represent a setback to recently announced British Government plans to attract 4.5 million more foreign visitors during the following four years. ONS figures reveal that the number of visitors in the first seven months of 2012 increased by 1% (approximately 180,000 visits), which translates to some 1.4 million more visitors in four years, so Government plans do seem quite bold.

In contrast, the number of Britons who made overseas visits during July increased by approximately 10,000 to 5.75 million. However, their total spend abroad increased disproportionately by more than £220 million to £3.56 billion.

It seems that the Olympic Games are not a drawcard which can utterly derail common sense and those cities which are to host them in the future should bear this in mind. Keeping prices within bounds may have much better overall results than allowing greed to predominate.

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