SEVERN LINK

LINKING WALES & THE SOUTH WEST

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NEXT SPRING, WE'RE MOVING ENGLAND AND WALES FOUR TIMES CLOSER TO EACH OTHER.

DERREN BROWN, EAT YOUR HEART OUT.

BRITISH COMPANY SEVERN LINK ANNOUNCES THE FIRST MODERN FERRY SERVICE TO CONNECT SOUTH WALES AND SOUTH WEST ENGLAND

Press Release

Under Embargo until 6.00am, Thursday 29th October 2009

Today, ferry operator **Severn Link** has announced plans to transform the lives of thousands of travellers within South Wales and the South West of England – with the creation of a regular fast, fun and affordable passenger ferry service between **Swansea** and **Ilfracombe**, due to commence operation early next year.

The Severn Link service will be the very first time a regular modern ferry route has joined the two shores of the Bristol Channel – creating a unique and much-needed connection between one of England's most visited tourist areas and the populous economic and cultural hub of Wales. **The Severn Link service is a bold new step to reconnect the communities, heritage and history of two areas which, despite lying within sight of each other, have never before had the opportunity within modern times to take advantage of their neighbouring status – whether practically, economically and socially.**

Regular transport links between the two areas have, in modern times, been limited to road or rail travel, adding many hours onto travel times and many more pounds onto travel costs. By travelling via Severn Link ferry, travel times and environmental impact will be drastically cut – with its swift 34 knot, 360 passenger catamarans taking just **fifty minutes** to complete a journey which would take **at least four times as long by car**.

Severn Link is the brainchild of **Chris Marrow**, a highly respected marine professional and pioneer of international repute - and one of the few people in the UK with a proven track record in creating new ferry routes, all of which are in operation today. Chris has brought together a team of the highest possible calibre who share the Severn Link vision - including one of Britain's top marine engineers, a world renowned fast ferry specialist and internationally respected financial expertise.

Speaking of the reasons behind setting up Severn Link, Chris said, “To my knowledge, there is no other comparable stretch of water in the world, linking similarly populated areas, which doesn’t have a heavily utilised ferry service – and market research[1] has shown that there is a huge demand for this ferry route within South Wales and South West England. The Severn Link ferries will open up multiple opportunities – not just for ease of travel between the two regions for tourists, commuters and travellers, but also to help forge business links and bring the two neighbouring areas closer in many positive ways.”

Chris elaborated on just a few ways he perceived the Severn Link service as being beneficial to those living, working and travelling in the two regions. “Not only will the ferry service create easy travel to shopping and airport links in Cardiff and Swansea, it will assist with links to major sporting events and offer previously unviable day tripper and short break connections between the many tourist attractions throughout the wider areas of the South West of England and South Wales. Additionally we see Severn Link as instrumental in bringing the Celtic nations of Wales and Cornwall even closer together, including helping the thousands of families who are separated by the Bristol Channel to visit each other via fast, affordable and easy travel routes.”

The Ilfracombe – Swansea route is just the first route in a series of planned major destinations on both sides of the Bristol Channel, with plans for more exciting routes between South Wales and the northern coast of South West England currently in development and due to be announced next year.

Support for the forthcoming ferry service has been widespread with businesses, tourism chiefs and council dignitaries all lending their patronage. **Councillor Chris Holley, Swansea Council Leader,** said, “This is terrific news that comes in the wake of the announcement that the Swansea to Cork ferry is being reinstated. A fast cat service from Swansea to Ilfracombe would be a boost for the city’s tourism economy and would allow Swansea people easier access to Devon and the South West of England. The service would also introduce many visitors from the Devon area to Swansea Bay for the very first time where I’m sure attractions such as Gower would make a hugely positive impression and would encourage people to return. We’ve got so much in Swansea that would appeal to visitors. Investment in recent years has seen the opening of the £32million LC leisure centre, the National Waterfront Museum and the state-of-the-art Aspers casino. We’re fortunate to have first-class facilities and attractions that cater for all ages and interests.”

Leader of North Devon Council, Councillor Des Brailey commented, "This is fantastic news for Ilfracombe and will provide a tremendous boost to the economy as it presents so many opportunities for the town itself and the wider North Devon. This shows that external private investors have high confidence in the town and paves the way for a really exciting future for Ilfracombe."

Swansea West Assembly Minister, Andrew Davies, spoke of the positive benefits the ferry service will bring to his constituency. "I am delighted that the Severn Link Swansea-Ilfracombe ferry will shortly be operating from the city. This will not only provide a welcome and regular service between south Wales and south west England but will also provide a number of good jobs for Swansea boosting the local economy and tourism. I wish it every success."

The Severn Link website (**www.severnlink.com**) is now live and available to view destinations, ferry information, book advance tickets and discover further details about the company. You can also visit and follow Severn Link on Facebook and Twitter and get a preview of the ferry fleet on YouTube.

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Notes to Editors

[1] – Market research data commissioned by joint Local Authorities (Tourism Research Group), Curnow Study and Severn Link and analysed by the University of Wales in 2008.

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