

NORTHERN LIGHTS UP

AFTER a hideous winter of floods, the north of England is finally getting back to normal and is well and truly open for business as far as tourism is concerned.

Sadly the message doesn't seem to be getting through, as visitor numbers are well down on last year.

Now Visit England has launched a £1million campaign, called #lovethenorth to spread the word.

There are plenty of reasons to visit the region – or to get out and about more if you live there.

This year is the 150th anniversary of the birth of Beatrix Potter and to celebrate, The National Trust is hosting its first Children's Book Festival Weekend at Wray Castle in her beloved Lake District from March 4 to 6. See nationaltrust.org.uk.

It is also the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charlotte Bronte and there is a new exhibition at the Bronte Parsonage, *inset top*, in Haworth, West Yorks, put together by author Tracy Chevalier. See bronte.org.uk.

The anniversaries don't end there – it is also 300 years since the birth of landscape architect Lancelot "Capability" Brown.

Admire some of his earliest works in the very place he was born, lived and learnt his trade – Kirkharle, Northumberland, *inset bottom*. See capabilitybrown.org.

York's National Railway Museum has a new exhibition on the Flying Scotsman, *below*, the world-famous steam train which takes to the tracks again after a ten-year £4.2million restoration.

The locomotive itself will be on display at the museum following its inaugural journey from London to York on Feb 25. It will stay there until May 10 (except March 10-12, when it is back out on the tracks), before setting off on a two-month tour. See nrm.org.uk.

Virgin Trains has a 30 per cent discount offer on direct services along the west coast to Carlisle, Lancaster, Oxenholme, Penrith, Preston, Warrington and Wigan from Birmingham New Street, Birmingham International, Coventry, Milton Keynes, London Euston, Watford and Wolverhampton.

The discount is also available on east coast services to Alnmouth, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Bradford Forster Square, Brough, Doncaster, Durham, Harrogate, Hull, Keighley, Leeds, Morpeth, Northallerton, Selby, Shipley, Skipton, Wakefield Westgate and York.

Discount valid for travel until May 13 on fares bought in advance from virgintrains.co.uk/lovethenorth.

STAY NORTH

YORK: The 4★ Bentham Lodge Guesthouse was built in the 1890s and is full of original features and old-school charm. Handy for York Minster, Castle Museum and the Shambles. and the National Railway Museum. From £73 per person per night. See booking.com.

KESWICK, CUMBRIA: 4★ Borrowdale Gates Hotel is five minutes from Derwent Water and has a great restau-

rant serving the best of local produce. You can also take afternoon tea in the lounge by the open fire. From £68 per person per night. See booking.com.

PICKERING, NORTH YORKS: 4★ Bramwood Guest House is in a perfect spot for walker and cyclists with access to loads of trails in the North Yorkshire Moors National Park. It's in a quiet side street in the centre of town with local pubs and restaurants within easy walking distance. From £41 per person per night. See booking.com.

