



**KERALA TRAVEL MART SOCIETY**

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**Press Release**

## **KTM 2016: Mart opens new horizons for experienced visitors**



*On her 25<sup>th</sup> visit to Kerala in 15 years, Daphne Richards, 84, finds new destinations at KTM 2016*

**Kochi, Sept 28:** Every year for nearly 15 years, Daphne Richards has left the comforts of her home in Hampshire, England, to make two trips to 'God's Own Country'. This year is no exception with the 84-year-old making her 25<sup>th</sup> visit to Kerala.

"I'm living testimony to the pull of Kerala. Not only is it my favourite state in India, it's like a home away from home," said Richards, who first visited Kerala in 2002.

She was at the ongoing Kerala Travel Mart (KTM) in Willingdon Island on Wednesday.

"This is the first time I have been to the KTM. There's always something new to discover in Kerala. With so many stalls and attractions gathered here under one roof, what better place to come decide what to explore next?" she said.

In its ninth edition, KTM – India's biggest tourism conclave focused on a single destination and the largest gathering of tourism stakeholders in the state – has 265 stalls featuring an array of products, packages and services offered by businesses and entrepreneurs.

"I want to keep coming back as long as I'm able and I quite like some of the offerings – like spending time learning the old ways in a traditional village," she said. 'Responsible Tourism', which emphasises



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sustainable, experiential tourism in traditional communities around the state – is one of the themes of this year's Mart.

It's just the thing for Richards, who makes annual three-week trips to Kerala between November and February "to get away from the English winter". She's been across the length of the state but always lands up at Marari beach.

"It's got plenty of space, shady palm trees to take a nap under and a lovely beach to walk and watch the fish boats come in. The people are easy to talk to. They know me now, so I get invited to weddings and high tea chats," Richards said.

She has also introduced her family to the state's charms with a nephew making a trip last year to Kerala. She hopes he will keep the tradition going.

KTM 2016 runs till Friday, September 30.

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