

action for tourism

Sustainable tourism in the Brecon Beacons National Park



Tourism in Action!

I was very pleased to chair the first Action for Tourism Event in April. Nearly 100 people came along to enjoy wide ranging discussions about the future of tourism and how we can all work together more closely. It was an exciting day with the buzz of conversation constantly in the air.

The key conclusion from the day was that people really appreciated the opportunity to talk. 'We want more' seemed to be the message - as someone put it 'good communications brings trust'. The newsletter was valuable, an annual gathering was welcomed and trade involvement in the Brecon Beacons Tourism Partnership was considered a good idea.

Notes from the day are on the www.visitbreconbeacons.com website (Information for Tourism Businesses section). We will definitely organise a similar event this winter – watch out for further details nearer the time. We will be talking even more about the future of tourism over the next 18 months as we develop a new Tourism Strategy. We want to include everyone in its development so your ideas will be highly valued.

Look out for your invitation to get involved.

As I announced at the April event, we are applying for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism - an exciting scheme that will help secure the importance of tourism in the area. I look forward to working with all those concerned in and about tourism to achieve this goal together.

Chris Gledhill

Chief Executive, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority



Best Seller for Brecon Beacons!

Sales of the route guide "Mountain Biking in the Brecon Beacons" has topped 1,000 copies.

With over three quarters of a million hits on the website, www.mtbreconbeacons.com makes mountain biking one of the most

popular activities in attracting visitors to the Brecon Beacons National Park.

Arlene Lee from Bikes & Hikes has noticed a real increase in groups wanting to hire mountain bikes and try out some of the routes. "Having a dedicated route pack and website has helped raise peoples awareness which has led to more calls for bike hire".



Five mountain bike interpretation panels have been placed in Crickhowell, Sennybridge, Talybont on Usk, Talgarth and the National Park Visitor Centre.



Tregoyd Mountain Riders

Watch out for the Spring 2006 edition of this bi-annual magazine from the Wales Tourist Board ...why?

The Three Rivers Ride route will be featured in an article written by Owen Sheers, poet, playwright and actor who will be undertaking the 35 miles to write a double page feature about the route.



Crickhowell is challenging Chefs, Cooks, Students, Women Institutes and any food enthusiast to develop a Welsh Breakfast which businesses in Crickhowell can add to their breakfast menus.

The event will be held on Tuesday November 8th at The Manor Hotel, Crickhowell from 10.30am - 3.30pm. Already, students from Coleg Powys have taken on the challenge, together with some Hotels. The best menus will be published in a new recipe book.

All businesses in Crickhowell who adopt one of the new breakfast menus will receive extensive marketing and promotion.

All accommodation & activity providers are welcome to come along and watch the creative and culinary skills of the participants. There will also be a trade food fair with local suppliers and True Taste of Wales giving free food samples, recipes and advice.

We hope that lots of members from the trade will come along and enjoy watching the culinary skills on show as well as sampling food from suppliers. If you would like to rise to the Welsh Breakfast Challenge, please contact Carol Williams.

Holidays - a perfect time to get fit?

Experts are now coming to the conclusion that holidays are a perfect time to start an exercise habit that can be continued at home. On holiday, people have more energy, there are no chores to do and there is time to spend trying a different activity.

This is just one good reason that Brecon Beacons National Park has teamed up with the Sports Science Department at Aberystwyth University to get the Brecon Cycle Break Routes calorie counted.

The Department at the University under the direction of Professor Doust has developed a scientific method to measure calories for walking & cycling routes.



Members from the department will cycle the routes and convert them into calories used.

We aim to launch this additional benefit next Spring, we already have the support of Health Challenge Wales and hope that this will encourage more people to get on their bikes and take a cycle break.

Wildlife Walks

This is a new walking booklet – the first to come out of the Walking Strategy.

It gives details of 12 walks through flower rich meadows, shady woodlands full of bird song and open hills with rare birds of prey. The walks are short and easy - suitable for families and the less adventurous walker as well as the keener naturalist. Most are an hour or an hour and a half long but picnics and bird-watching may take longer!

The 34 page colour booklet will be for sale from Information Centres and a trade price can be offered to businesses for more than 5 copies.

Members of the Association of Bunkhouses have been working together for the last 18 months to package their bunkhouse accommodation with walking routes and The National Park's Cycling and Mountain Biking routes.



Bootsbikesbunkhouses.co.uk has been in the pipeline for many years and finally went live this summer - inspired by the fact that since many of the National Park's bike routes came close to their establishments, the owners decided there was an opportunity to capitalise on these if they could have some walks published as well. Working with 2 experienced walkers each bunkhouse commissioned walk descriptions and

photographs to inspire their guests to walk from the bunkhouse door. All the walks are on current footpaths or bridleways but had not necessarily been linked together before. Potential bunkhouse guests now can get a feel for the routes via the website www.bootsbikesbunkhouses.co.uk and once, resident will have the opportunity to browse through an impressive folder that each bunkhouse holds. The association hope that this will encourage guests to use their vehicles less and the project allows the operators to offer a 'packaged' trip to the area.

For more information you can call The Bunkhouse Association on 07071 780259.

Mid Wales Tourism - Working Together

Tourism businesses across the Brecon Beacons National Park now have the opportunity to get involved by joining over 2000 tourism businesses across North & Mid Wales who already enjoy the benefits of tourism membership.

With over 15 years experience, MWT understand the needs of members businesses and the product on offer in Wales.

Why Join?

Firstly – you can start enjoying a wide range of benefits that will inform, assist and help you develop and market your business.

Secondly – a voice for tourism businesses. Your voice can be heard through the Wales Tourism Alliance- the national lobbying voice for the industry in Wales.

Additionally – access to exclusive membership discounts and services and internet marketing through two regional websites www.visitmidwales.co.uk and www.visitsouthwales.com. Any tourism business can get involved.

To find out more contact Val Hawkins or Rhian Lionel on 01654 702653 or email member@midwalestourism.co.uk

Walking Tourism Strategy



Thank you to everyone who has contributed towards this strategy. It is now complete and available on the visitbreconbeacons.com website.

Any observations would be most welcome. It is telling us that we have to provide far more for the more casual walker and also work with yourselves in the business sector even more closely.

We are looking at ways of achieving this and we hope you will see changes developing over the coming months and years.

Find out what's involved in this exciting project!

Come along to the introductory workshop on 19th October and you could join the 32 businesses already reaping the benefits.

Further details from Richard Tyler.

Rewarding Sustainability

This year the National Park Awards are acknowledging people and tourism businesses that have done the most work towards sustainability.

If you have been involved with Green Dragon or other sustainable projects, you could enter! The closing date is 23rd September.

Further details from Richard Tyler.



Sticky Situation!

Car stickers have been produced to promote the new equine web site.

If you would like one for your vehicle please contact Carol Williams.

Lets see how far they travel!

Wish You Were Here!

A new suite of postcards promoting the equine web site is now available for tourism businesses to use as a free promotional tool.

Some are already sending them to prospective visitors as compliment cards or just saying "Wish you were here!"

All pictures were taken on the Three Rivers Ride Route by Mari Fford. From June until end of July the site received 54,568 "hits".

If you would like to receive some free postcards please contact Carol Williams.



Bed & Breakfast for Horses

The Three Rivers ride has highlighted the demand for riders to enjoy a holiday with their horse by undertaking a trail with overnight stops.

If your accommodation is accredited by Wales Tourist Board and you are able to accept horses too and you would like to appear on the www.horseridingbreconbeacons.com site please contact Carol Williams.



Courses For Horses!

"Imagine my surprise to find Andrew Powell waiting on me hoof and mouth at the Visitors Centre after completing the 35 miles of the Three Rivers Ride" said Foxy Lady from Tregoyd Mountain Riders

Not only does the restaurant cater exceedingly well for visitors but it also has a mouth watering welcome for equines. This makes the final stage of the ride something for riders to look forward to, especially if they have completed the whole route from Worcestershire. There is ample space both to park horse boxes and load horses. There is a wide range of splendid food to be sampled from the restaurant whilst drivers are waiting.

Riders are also able to purchase rosettes from the visitors centre to commemorate their achievement. Bed & breakfast providers along the route have been very pleased with the extra custom the route brings them. Comments from some riders have been very complimentary: "What a wonderful place. We don't want to leave, you made two strangers very welcome. The evening meal was delicious and the ponies had a restful night in a plentiful field".



Give cyclists and walkers the confidence that they are booking accommodation that meets their particular needs!

As many of you know, the Cyclists and Walkers schemes have successfully operated in Wales for a number of years.



However, some of you may not know that the Cyclists Welcome and Walkers Welcome Award Schemes were revamped last year (in association with the YHA and the Countryside Agency). The criteria for the awards are now applied consistently throughout Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

If you are interested in viewing the requirements of these awards and also our recommended 'Best Practice', please visit our trade website www.btonline.com

Any accommodation operator interested in applying

for one or both of these Awards should contact the Quality Assurance Department in Machynlleth on 01654 702584 in the first instance, as participation in the Star Quality grading scheme is a pre requisite for gaining these awards.

Window stickers and certificates are issued to those operators who are successful and meet the criteria.

Outdoor Festival Success

The first Beacons Outdoor Festival took place on July 16th & 17th this year. The Festival was twinned with The Welsh Open Mountainboard Championships at Penpont and put together by Beacons Active . The group are endeavouring to help local tourism businesses and those linked to the outdoors, work together and to understand what each has to offer.



The weekend showcased some of the activities that people can do in the area and were able to have a taster on site. The Cave Rescue team ran a straw cave maze; Ellesmere Stables had a pony for the children; Bikes & Hikes tested bike skills on a challenge course; Absolute Adventure operated a zip wire and there was archery with Black Mountain Activities. Off site, people could try their hand at golf, clay pigeon shooting, pony treks, canoeing & climbing. In addition a marquee on the lawn displayed art submissions

from local school children portraying their perceptions of what you can do in the area and local businesses displayed their information for the general public. The event was filmed by The Sleeping Giant Foundation who will be producing a DVD of the weekend.

For more information on Beacons Active please call 01874 610071.

Sponsored Ride Sunday 18th September.

The British Heart Foundation, The British Horse Society Cymru and Brecon Beacons National Park are organising a sponsored ride to celebrate the anniversary of the Three Rivers Ride.

All proceeds will be donated to the British Heart Foundation. There are three distances, 5 miles, 10 miles and 15 miles. Chief Executive of Brecon Beacons National Park, Chris Gledhill and Chief Executive of British Horse Society Graham Cory will undertake the five mile route.

For sponsorship forms contact Jan Roche 01656 724700.

In conjunction with the three Regional Tourism Partnerships, we have commissioned R&M Ltd to undertake a "Face to Face" tourism survey of the Brecon Beacons area.

Self-complete Visitor Satisfaction surveys are also being undertaken in Brecon, Crickhowell & Talgarth. This will give us a solid idea of who are our visitors , what they have come here for and what we can all do to exceed their expectations. Summary of the results will feature in the Spring Newsletter.



The following courses are provided free and are highly subsidised by “Medrwn” in partnership with Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. “Medrwn” is a training programme for tourism operators that aims to improve the quality and competitiveness of tourism. If you would like further information about “Medrwn” please contact the project facilitator, Helen Jones 07980 267677.

Getting the Most From Your Guests

October 5th The Manor Hotel, Crickhowell, 10am-3.30pm.

A one day course structured to help you and your staff get the best out of all your interactions with your customers from initial contact through to departure.

The course will include:

- Telephone and email skills
- Skills to help you really understand visitors needs and how to satisfy them
- Effective conversion of enquiries into bookings
- Creating a memorable stay-creating a rapport

Getting PR for Your Business

October 10th National Park Visitors Centre, Libanus 10am-3.30pm.

How can tourism businesses get local and national press interest?

What are the secrets of writing a press release?

Where do you start?

Led by local journalist Daniel Butler (Country Living, Daily Telegraph etc) with support from Angela Magee, Press & Communications Officer Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. You will be taken through step by step of how, who and what you need to do to get the media to write about you.

Developing Your Own PR Campaign

October 17th National Park Visitor Centre, Libanus 10am-3.30pm.

A course for tourism businesses who are serious about planning a PR campaign for their business and implementing the campaign.

There will be a limited number of places to enable Dan Butler & Angela Magee provide individual support & guidance to all participants.

Geopark - Hot Spot Tour!

November 10th from Brecon Beacons National Park HQ 10am-3.30pm.

The proposed European Geopark status for the western half of the National Park will certainly raise visitor's awareness about the spectacular landscape.

Join the National Parks' Geopark team on an exciting tour to the geological hot spots and find out how 470 million years of earth history has made this such a special place.

Welsh Breakfast

16th November, Coleg Powys, Brecon 10am-3pm.

A practical days cookery course with Ivan Langford on how to source local ingredients, prepare, cook and present a Welsh Breakfast.

A real hands on day where you will be doing the cooking! This will follow on from the On You Marks - Get Set - Cook! event and you can learn how to create some of the recipes.

Cooking for Vegetarians

23rd November, Coleg Powys, Brecon, 10am-3pm.

A practical days course with Ivan Langford looking at the wide range of meals for vegetarians. A hands on day where you will be doing the cooking.

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