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‘BRECON BEACONS’ BEST DESTINATION IN WALES!

Brecon Beacons was proudly awarded the title of Wales’ ‘Best Destination’ at The National Tourism Awards for Wales 2018 at the Celtic Manor earlier in the year.

Organised by Visit Wales, The National Tourism Awards for Wales celebrates the very best of Wales’ tourism by showcasing the country’s tourism businesses and industry’s achievements.

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and Brecon Beacons Tourism, on behalf of the Brecon Beacons Destination Partnership submitted ‘Brecon Beacons’ into the ‘Best Destination’ category and were selected as regional winners for Mid Wales. They then fought off stiff competition in the National Awards ceremony from Wye Valley and Forest of Dean (South East Wales), Zip World (North Wales) and Fishguard Bay Welcome (South West Wales) to be crowned with the prestigious title.

Visit Wales stated that there was an exceptionally high standard of entries from across Wales this year and in total, across the different categories, there were seven regional winners from within the Brecon Beacons Destination. This highlights the quality of the tourism product within the area and further supports the ‘Best Destination’ award.

The award recognises the hard work, dedication and determination shown by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, Brecon Beacons Tourism, Local Authorities and all the diverse businesses within the region.

The businesses should be extremely proud of this achievement and use it as a way to further market their business and the Destination as a whole.



THE WALES WAY

Have you heard that the A470 through the National Park is one of the most important legs on the new Visit Wales promotion – Wales Way? The idea is for a route through Wales, starting in Cardiff up the A470, across North Wales and down the Cardigan Bay coast. We are the first area of open countryside that visitors will meet and we have been given a major investment from Visit Wales to improve what is called the 'visitor journey' – literally as well as metaphorically.

The idea is to create a series of 'Welcome Points' along the route, where visitors can break their journey, stop for a few minutes or a few hours and find out more about places they can visit off the beaten track. Some of these will be in laybys next to the road and will only have minimal information, primarily signposting them elsewhere. Others will let people stretch their legs and enjoy the area whilst not taking them too far off their journey. Lastly places like the National Park Visitor Centre and Llangors Common will have significant investment in their infrastructure. A gateway feature at the entrance to the destination is also being investigated for the stretch just north of Merthyr.

This work will be implemented over the next 18 months and will be achieved in close cooperation and partnership working with Visit Wales, WG Highways Dept, Powys CC, National Trust, Natural Resources Wales and Llangors & Bwlch Rural Alliance. Please contact Richard Tyler for more detail.

This project has received funding through the Welsh Government Rural Communities - Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.



DOWN TO THE SEA

To celebrate Visit Wales theme of 2018 'Year of the Sea' we have, with funding from Visit Wales, produced four walks for families, four animation films and a story book which lead you on a journey along the canal.

But this is a journey with a difference, it starts by following a family enjoying a holiday on a narrow boat and then flashes back to 1825 when the canal was busy with narrow boats taking coal, lime, iron and more down to the sea and out to the world.

The reason for the canal being built in the first instance was so that these goods could be transported along tramroads and onto the canal.

Take a look at the animations, story book and walking route on:

www.breconbeacons.org/downtothesea

Please feel free to add this link to your website or if you would like them sent to you directly, please contact Carol Williams – carol.williams@beacons-npa.gov.uk



MOUNTAIN & MOORLAND **AMBASSADORS**

Seventeen Mountain & Moorland Ambassadors completed their two and a half day course in June.

The course focused on providing knowledge about the issues facing the uplands in the National Park and specifically looked at the area of the Black Mountains.

It is part of The Black Mountain Land Use Partnership, a public outreach programme funded by the Welsh Government's Sustainable management scheme.

Topics which were covered were bracken management and peatland restoration, visitor management and issues facing the upland farming communities.

The seventeen Mountain & Moorland Ambassadors experienced a visit to Table Mountain, Crickhowell and an informative talk by a local sheep farmer.

Chief Executive for the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, Julian Atkins said " The Mountain & Moorland course allows participants to gain an in-depth knowledge of the area which can then be passed on to visitors; we hope the course will improve knowledge within tourism of the needs of land managers and issues linked to managing visitor pressures".

Evaluation from the Ambassadors was excellent, here are a few sentences of what they felt about the course:

I particularly valued the expert contributions to the course and the way they knitted together to explain the landscape and the way we can convey the issues and pleasures of spending time in the Beacons.

Thank you all very much for these courses. When we decided to go self-employed this sort of thing never crossed my mind. But now I cannot imagine life in Brecon without the Ambassadors.

The next Mountain & Moorland course is **FULL** in the Autumn 2018, but there are places on next years' spring course 2019:

Wednesday 8th May

Wednesday 22nd May

Wednesday 5th June (half day)

To book a place contact **Carol Williams 01874 620478**
carol.williams@beacons-npa.gov.uk

You will need to have completed the three day core Ambassador course to participate in the Mountain & Moorland course.



NEW! CRIBARTH GEOTRAIL

Looking for a new walk to tell your visitors about? Then mention the Cribarth Geotrail which starts at Craig-y-nos Country Park. The circular trail is just over 3 miles long and explores the rocky slopes of the spectacular hill rising above Craig-y-nos. Being within the Fforest Fawr Geopark which covers the western half of the National Park guarantees a dramatic landscape; in this case one of limestone crags and abandoned tramroads, remains of the area's industrial past. Copies of the geotrail leaflet are available free to tourism businesses and can be collected from Craig-y-nos Country Park, the National Park Visitor Centre or by contacting Alan.Bowring@beacons-npa.gov.uk.



Photo: The Cribarth Geotrail leaflet

FOLLOW THE GEOPARK ON INSTAGRAM!



The Fforest Fawr UNESCO Global Geopark now has its own Instagram page. Follow @fforestfawrgeopark and share your photos of the west of the park by tagging #fforestfawrgeopark.

Photo: @fforestfawrgeopark

ATLANTIC GEOPARKS UPDATE

The Atlantic Geoparks Interreg Project is now well underway and promotion of the new, awe-inspiring trail of magnificent geoparks, the 'European Atlantic Geotourism Route', is underway. Along with the 11 other geoparks taking part, Fforest Fawr is one of the must visit destinations being marketed across the European Atlantic Area. Various digital channels have been created including a Facebook page; @AtlanticGeotourismRoute, a website www.geotourismroute.eu/ and printed materials (pictured). During the summer a video of the route will be created and will allow each destination to showcase its must see features to potential visitors.

Funding from the project recently supported the annual Geofest Family Activity Day at Craig-y-nos in May half term. Around 400 visitors attended the popular event which encourages different generations to discover more about the Fforest Fawr UNESCO Global Geopark. Families spent the day finding out about the rocks, history, wildlife and communities of the Geopark as well having a go at some of the different activities available in the wider Geopark including canoeing and orienteering.

Project funding will also support the next Geopark Ambassadors training course which will take place in the autumn.

Photo: The newly launched European Atlantic Geotourism Route leaflet.

This project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund through the Interreg Atlantic Area Programme.



GEOPARK AMBASSADORS

Two day training course for Brecon Beacons National Park Ambassadors.

23rd October and 27th November 2018.

Did you know the western half of the Park is also a Geopark? This two day course is perfect for those Tourism businesses wanting to get to know the Fforest Fawr UNESCO Global Geopark in more detail. Day one is based in Craig-y-nos Country Park with a visit to Penwyllt Quarries and Ogof Ffynnon Ddu National Nature Reserve, and and day two is at Pontneddfechan with a walk to Craig y Ddinas and Bwa Maen

WATERFALL COUNTRY UPDATE

We continue to work in partnership with the three Local Authorities, Community Council and Natural Resources Wales (amongst others) to address the issues associated with high visitor numbers mentioned in our previous Newsletter.



We are approaching the end of the initial phase in our work, gathering the findings of our consultant and the views of local people and their representatives.

Whilst lots of progress is being made behind the scenes in identifying long term sustainable solutions, we're working closely with stakeholders to test

and implement quick wins, easing pressure and improving the experience for both visitors and the local community.

For visitors who wish to visit the area, we advise the following simple steps in order to get the most from their visit:

- **Avoid peak times such as weekends and bank holidays in fine weather – plan your trip for the early part of the week**
- **Park considerately as directed in designated car parks or bays – remember that local people will be going about their daily lives**
- **Remember where you set out from and stick to marked routes to avoid getting lost**
- **Wear suitable footwear and be prepared to walk along forest paths and down steep gorges – the majority of the falls are a fair distance from car parking and facilities**

Further information is available at:

www.breconbeacons.org/waterfalls

DOGS CODE



Are you a dog friendly business? – Want to promote positive behaviour? - Have ideas, suggestions or comments?

Then please read on...

As you may be aware, we have been working on a new version of our National Park Dogs Code and are delighted to announce that it is now available to view on our Website:

www.breconbeacons.org/dogs

We would encourage you to use the code, share a link to it on your web-site and advise your customers how best to look after their four legged friends when out and about.

We wish to arm them with the information they need in order to get the most from their visit whilst helping to look after our wildlife and rural economy - keeping the Brecon Beacons a special place to live, work and visit.

The code has been developed over a period of time with the intention of being clear, friendly and informative.

Our aim is to evolve its content over the coming months, taking on board the views and opinions of the public and partner organisations before a more publicised launch next spring – just in time for lambing season!

If you would like to know more about future plans, help to support positive behaviour or contribute to the discussion, then please contact James Lawrence on:

James.Lawrence@beacons-npa.gov.uk



DARK SKY RESERVE

"The Brecon Beacons National Park is an Internationally recognised Dark Sky Reserve, with low levels of artificial lighting making it an ideal destination for star gazing. The National Park Authority organises a number of star gazing events at its National Park Visitor Centre, in partnership with Dark Sky Wales and the Cardiff Astronomical Society. Tickets are now on sale for these events, and details can be found on our website www.breconbeacons.org/events

This year's events are:

Perseid Meteor Shower – 10th August

2018 7.00pm start £15 per ticket

Star Gazing Night – 26th October 2018

7.00pm start £15 per ticket

Geminids Meteor Shower – 7th

December 2018, 7.00pm start, £15 per ticket

These events always sell out early, so booking early is recommended."

SUMMER SHOWS

There are some simply stunning shows taking place this Summer in the Brecon Beacons. If you haven't been to one, it is one thing to add to your "must do" list.

Listed are the shows which you and your guests can enjoy in August & September this year.

AUGUST

4th Brecon County Show www.breconcountyshow.co.uk

4th Llangadog Show www.Llangadogyfcshow.com

4th Llanthony Show www.llanthonyshow.co.uk

11th Vaynor Show www.vaynorshow.co.uk

11th Llanigon Show www.Llanigonyfcshow.com

18th Llandeilo Show www.visitllandeilo.co.uk

25th Talybont on Usk Show www.talybontshow.org

26th Llangynidr Show www.llangynidrshow.org

25th - 27th Talgarth Festival of the Black Mountains

SEPTEMBER

1st Sennybridge Show www.sennybridgeshow.com

8th Usk show www.uskshow.co.uk

15th Trecastle Show

22nd & 23rd Llandovery Sheep Festival
www.llandoverysheepfestival.co.uk



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

CORE AMBASSADOR TRAINING:

→ Tuesday 12th September 2018

Sense of Place, Brecon Beacons National Park Visitor Centre, Libanus.

→ Tuesday 2nd October 2018

Park in your Heart, Brecon Beacons National Park Visitor Centre, Libanus.

→ Tuesday 16th October 2018

Knowing me, knowing you, Brecon Beacons National Park Visitor Centre, Libanus.

Book your place by using Eventbrite

www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brecon-beacons-national-park-ambassadors-course-tickets-47172744950

BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK MOUNTAIN & MOORLAND AMBASSADOR TRAINING COURSE

Seventeen Ambassadors attended and successfully passed the new Mountain & Moorland Ambassador course in June.

One comment from an Ambassador *"I particularly valued the expert contributions to the course and the way they knitted together to explain the landscape and the way we can convey the issues and pleasures of spending time in the Beacons"*.

The Autumn course is now full but there will be a Spring course in 2019, the dates are:

8th May, 22nd May, 5th June

→ DAY 1

Introduction to the work of the Black Mountain Land Use Partnership

→ Session 1

Interview with a Mountain – followed by a quick quiz)

→ Session 2

Geology of the Black Mountains – Alan Bowring (BBNPA)

→ Session 3 – Archaeology and History – Amelia Pannett (Cadw)

→ Session 4 - Optional site visit to Table Mountain, near Llanbedr – Upland management and habitat degradation – Clive Williams and Richard Ball (BBNPA)

Day one round-up (Steve & Gareth)

→ DAY 2

→ Session 1

Understanding 'natural capital' and 'ecosystem services' (Steve) – followed by 'The Natural Capitalists' Game (Gareth)

→ Session 2

Wellbeing Assessment – Luke Maggs (Natural Resources Wales)

→ Session 3

The trouble with bracken! Presentation (Steve)

→ Session 4

Visitors 'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly' quick on the draw challenge (Gareth)

→ Session 5

Introduction to hill farming and commons – Presentation (Steve)

→ 1.15 pm – Site visit

Upland farming in practice 'A year in the life' – (Jeff Gwillim, hill farmer and Clive Williams BBNPA)

Day two round-up (Steve & Gareth)

→ DAY 3

Welcome & 'round-robin' introductions (Consultants & Participants)

→ Summary of key issues to be addressed (Consultants - Steve)

→ Group work - 'what will ambassadors do next?' (All)

→ Facilitated discussion & action planning (All)

→ Round-up & summary (Consultants)

→ Lunch & networking



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