



Accommodation Owners' Network Newsletter - Summer 2003

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Growing the Network

We are rapidly building up a portfolio of UK Discovery Breaks based around a 'positive' tourism business network of accommodation owners, their suppliers and service providers.

These UK short breaks are marketed and sold by Natural Discovery. The breaks promote local activities and services and demonstrate the value of considering the environment in a positive and enjoyable way.

We would like to welcome those accommodation owners who have already signed up.

Aims & benefits of the network

The purpose of this network is to help bring further value and improved sustainable practice to accommodation businesses, including the following:

- √ Mutual exchange and support from like-minded businesses, eg through network links and events.
- √ Marketing support from Natural Discovery, eg through website exposure and targeted campaigns.
- √ Increased annual occupancy rates, eg through added promotion of low season special interest short breaks.
- √ Enhanced *Discovery* information, eg providing additional information that introduces guests to features of the accommodation, the local natural environment and other attractions in the local area.
- √ Extra guest facilities, eg electric bicycles for guests to explore the locality.
- √ Flexible commercial agreements, eg Natural Discovery sales on a commission basis with the freedom to sell your accommodation to your own guests.
- √ Environmental improvement, eg regularly considering opportunities in a green and businesslike way.
- √ Discounted eco-friendly products, eg recycling aids and other products from Natural Discovery's product range.
- √ Discounted environmental consultancy, eg for renewable energy installations.
- √ Collective buying power, eg for buying green tariff electricity.
- √ Positively promoting sustainable living to guests and local people, eg through discovery of environmental features and successes within accommodation and the local area.
- √ Giving back what has been taken out, eg investing in local environmental and social projects – see page 4.

The search continues for like-minded accommodation...

We are looking for more accommodation that would add value to the network. Ideally establishments will already demonstrate sustainable practices – or should be interested in becoming more sustainable in the future.

If you know of anyone who may be interested in joining our already expanding network, please let us know. JamesLittle@naturaldiscovery.co.uk

Welcome



'The Project', Pevensey Levels, East Sussex

Pat Flowers and Kathryn Webster

- √ 4 Star two bedroom Lodge.
- √ Winner of the South East England Tourist Board's 'Self Catering Holiday Accommodation of the Year 2002' award.
- √ Designed for passive solar heating, saving 30 to 70% of typical heating costs.
- √ Constructed from UK sourced and certified sustainably managed timber, insulated by cellulose fibres made from waste paper.



'The Place', Camber Sands, East Sussex

Matthew Woolman and Mike Ashdon

- √ Newly refurbished 4 Star hotel with 20 bedrooms and brasserie.
- √ Menu based on local, free range and organic ingredients.
- √ Decorated using natural fabrics and finishes. Includes local art.
- √ Championing local projects to help further protect the SSSI (Site of Specific Scientific Interest) denoted beach and enhance the local area.



3 Shublands, Ashdown Forest, East Sussex

Paul Adams

- √ One bedroom 200 year old woodman's cottage.
- √ 'Woody break'. Discovery of Ashdown forest, the local restored windmill, Llama trekking and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- √ Fully restored cottage constructed from local Ashdown sandstone and heated by an open wood burning fire.
- √ Cleaned in an environmentally sensitive and healthy way.

Welcome



Penmaendyfi Hotel and Penmaenbach Farm Cottages, Dyfi Valley, Wales
Aled and Shana Rees

- ✓ A 16th Century country mansion hotel with 7 bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms.
- ✓ Three self-catering cottages sleeping 4, 5 and 6 people.
- ✓ Welsh speaking family farming and tourism business.
- ✓ Solar heated swimming pool. Log fires in winter.
- ✓ Restaurant using produce from the farm.



Pentre Bach Cottages, Snowdonia National Park, Wales
Nick and Margaret Smyth

- ✓ Three self-catering cottages refurbished from old farm buildings sleeping 3, 6 and 7 people.
- ✓ 'A breath of fresh air', by the sea.
- ✓ Landrover tours of local countryside, history and archaeology.
- ✓ Permaculture, organic gardening and recycling.
- ✓ Green Dragon environmental accreditation



Min Afon (Riverside Cottage), Dyfi Valley, Wales
Val & Arthur Britton

- ✓ 5 Star two-bedroom self-catering cottage attached to a refurbished traditional Welsh Long House on the River Dulais.
- ✓ Wood burning stove.
- ✓ Riverside haven attracting woodpeckers, nuthatches and dippers as well as heron, mink and wild duck.
- ✓ Walking distance to The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) - demonstrating many ways to enable people to live more sustainably.



Water powered cliff railway Centre for Alternative Technology, Wales

Action towards sustainable tourism

We believe sustainable tourism should be enjoyable for guests, positive for local people, healthy for the environment as well as being sustainable & businesslike.

Enjoyable for guests

- Providing good quality comfortable guest accommodation.
- Easy access to the best a local area has to offer.
- Opportunities for guest feedback to help enhance our service and performance.

Positive for local people

- Promotion of local suppliers wherever possible.
- Small-scale, human and integrated activities within the local community.
- Local projects that maintain and enhance the diversity of the local environment.
- Short breaks to support an all year round, local & thriving sustainable tourism industry.

Healthy for the environment

- Offsetting carbon emissions of guest travel and stay by investing in accommodation and local energy efficiency projects.
- 'Positive' accommodation, giving guests the opportunity to discover the ideas and value of sustainability and encouraging them to take-home the experience, allowing them to make a real difference everyday.

Sustainable and businesslike

- Support to accommodation owners and suppliers to identify opportunities to enhance environmental performance and business profitability.
- Promotion of the experiential benefit of environmental features of accommodation and other local initiatives to provide additional marketing and business benefit.
- Regular review of policies and approach for maximum value.

10 easy actions that accommodation owners can do...

- 1. Find out how energy efficient you are.** We can provide feedback on how you compare to others - all we need is information about your current energy and water use.
- 2. Buy green tariff electricity.** Electricity from renewable sources can cost you no more than from other sources.
- 3. Provide recycling aids to encourage guests to segregate their waste for recycling.** Using compartmentalised bins, table-top composters and can & plastic bottle crushers can help to recycle or compost more of your waste.
- 4. Encourage guests to come by public transport.** Made more practical by offering to pick people up from the station if possible and promoting local transport, car and bicycle hire.
- 5. Make use of low energy light-bulbs where possible.** A 23W compact fluorescent energy efficient lamp will do the same job as a 100W tungsten filament bulb and will last 10 times longer - it typically pays back in one year, saves over £40 of energy per bulb and can contribute 330 kg of carbon dioxide emissions savings over its life, savings that would fill a balloon 7m in diameter.
- 6. Maintain cleanliness with environmentally friendly products.** Better and better natural and allergen-free products are becoming available all the time - that serve to promote healthier cleaning and a healthier stay for your guests.
- 7. Provide information to guests so that they make the best use of, respect and discover the local area.** A Discovery Booklet typically includes information on local habitats, local walks, cycle routes and promotes local produce and local suppliers and services where possible.
- 8. Install water saving devices in toilet cisterns.** Most of the water we use goes down the toilet! A *Hippo* saves 3 litres per flush for older toilets and a *Hog* saves 1 litre per flush for modern toilets. Such devices can save up to 10,000 litres of water per toilet a year. *Available free from Natural Discovery.*
- 9. Consider environmental solutions when upgrading or refurbishing your accommodation.** Some steps are as easy as decorating with natural allergen free paints. Government grants and incentives are currently available for energy efficiency technologies and renewable energy options.
- 10. Allow Natural Discovery to sell breaks to your accommodation,** thereby benefiting from our positive approach of investing in local projects and inspiring guests to take-home their experience. See page 4 for information on current projects.



These are just a few ideas outlining some easy actions that you can take. Further support to help you with your green - and businesslike - approach will be a regular newsletter feature. Please contact us for more information on the above.

JamesBrittain@NaturalDiscovery.co.uk

Discovery Booklet Focus Example Extracts

The Discovery Booklet is developed for each accommodation in association with accommodation owners to provide information to guests on the accommodation, local area and services as well as including discovery focus pages on special interest topics, from local walks to local menus.

Local Sussex Bike Rides

Extracts written for Natural Discovery by Martin Brown, Assistant County Archaeologist, East Sussex County Council



... this route really shows you the different landscapes here. The Level is flat and wet, dykes criss-cross it, reminding one of the drainage from the middle ages onwards (Horace Walpole recorded seeing boats close to here even in the 18th century).

The landform of the past is preserved in place names like Horse Eye, or the island of the horses, indeed and -ey suffix shows that there was a rise in the marsh occupied by the folk who used the area for fishing, fowling and seasonal grazing before drainage and the introduction of agriculture. The small lanes one uses on a bike wind their way from eye to eye across the marsh, reflecting patterns of drainage.

... and down to Herstmonceux. The parish church is beautiful, set on a fine platform for viewing the level and looking out to the sea and the chalk downs above Eastbourne. Inside the church is a fine tomb, complete with medieval carved knights recumbent upon it. The statues are meant to represent the builders of Herstmonceux Castle but they are, in fact, other knights bought at the sale of Battle Abbey under Henry VIII and brought to Herstmonceux and placed on the original, effigy-less tomb, to provide instant ancestors!

Birds in the Garden

Extracts from 'The Project' Booklet (Pevensey Levels. East Sussex)



House Sparrows

We have two families nesting here this year – one under the roof of our shower room and the other in one of the artificial house martins' nests that we installed under the eaves – we have never attracted any house martins but the sparrows make good use of them. House sparrows dine at the bird feeder.



Starlings

These are especially active if we fill the half coconut shell with fat and corn! They squabble a lot! They also dine off the cherry trees. Young starlings are brown, whereas the adults are black. They are marvellous singers and mimics. Normally a pair successfully nest in a hole in a huge oak tree in our car park but for the first time this year no one used the nest.



Green Woodpecker

He digs up the plants on the path to find ants – and makes a very distinctive call as he does so. A great privilege!

Viewing the Summer Night Sky

Some constellations to look out for...

Ursa Major, the plough, also known as the Great Bear.

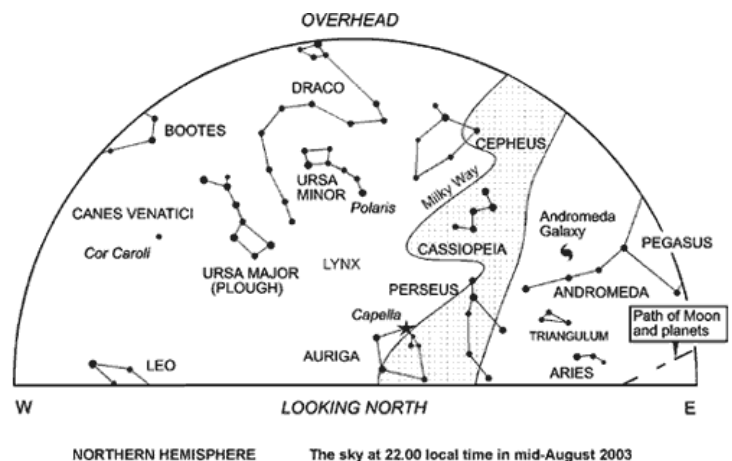
Ursa Minor, the little bear, contains the Polaris star.

Draco, or the dragon, rears up above Ursa Minor.

Cygnus, the swan, in full flight soars downstream along the Milky Way.

Delphinus, the starry dolphin, is one of the smallest and most elegant of all constellations with its four brightest stars arranged in a tiny perfect diamond.

Aquila, the eagle, flies up from the South – its wings outspread over the milky path...



NORTHERN HEMISPHERE

The sky at 22.00 local time in mid-August 2003

Welcome



Felin Crewi, Dyfi Valley, Wales
Alan and Lynn McGaskell

- ✓ 16th Century converted water-mill with working water-wheel.
- ✓ Riverside walk in 3 acres of grounds.
- ✓ Local bird wildlife including dippers, red kites, herons and even the elusive kingfisher.
- ✓ Original slate floor and mill gear wheels encased behind a glass panel in The Mill & Inglenook fireplace in the Granary.



East Lochhead Farm, near Glasgow
Ross and Janet Anderson

- ✓ Gold Award with the Green Business Tourism Scheme.
- ✓ Five cottages and B&B in sympathetically restored farmhouse and cottages.
- ✓ Promotion of recycling and composting.
- ✓ Sustainably managed farmland and two-acre garden
- ✓ Adjacent to the Glasgow to Irvine to Carlisle cycle track with private access.



The Green Business Tourism Scheme is an accreditation scheme for tourism businesses relating to environmental good practice. Natural Discovery is working with the scheme to bring high quality accommodation to the network.



Our Aims

To provide sustainable tourism that is enjoyable for guests, positive for local people and healthy for the environment, enhancing quality of life for all.

Discovery Breaks

Short breaks that give guests a chance to discover a local area all year round.

Discovery Accommodation

Allowing guests to discover and live with inspiring new ideas in a stylish, comfortable and innovative way.

The Take-home Experience

Taking home environmental products, technologies and ideas so we can make a big difference in our everyday lives.

The Team

JamesBrittain@NaturalDiscovery.co.uk
07970 221 251

James is championing the Strategy and Technical aspects of our work. He is a chartered engineer, passionate about the environment, with degrees in engineering and business management.

He specialises in buildings, energy, the environment and sustainability.

JamesLittle@NaturalDiscovery.co.uk
07971 969 132

James drives the Operations and Supply side of the business. He has worked in the tourism industry for the last 10 years with Neilson, Thomson Holidays and IntoFrance.co.uk.

He is a manager with a tremendous capacity and enthusiasm for getting things done.

RichardTurpin@NaturalDiscovery.co.uk
07791 576 344

Richard's focus is on Marketing, Customer Relationship Management and Sales. His approach is customer-led, having specialised in customer feedback and strategic market research with Customer Concern and at the Barbican Centre.

Richard understands people, what interests them and how to keep our customers happy.

To be kept informed of latest breaks and Natural Discovery Developments, please visit our website or contact us to join our mailing list.

www.NaturalDiscovery.co.uk

Telephone: 01428-681592

Marketing Roundup

Examples of what's going on...

Press week planned for August

A number of journalists have been invited to come and stay in Natural Discovery accommodation from 16th to 23rd August. We are very grateful to 'Powabyke' and 'Heath Cycles, Eastbourne' who have provided two electric bicycles for the week. The aim is to get at least 5 journalists writing in national newspapers and magazines, discussing the accommodation, local area and, more generally, the Natural Discovery experience. Articles will appear during September and October, launching and promoting our low season winter breaks. This PR is an ongoing effort. Future press events will include other discovery experiences, for example we are in discussions with several companies about the use of environmentally friendly cars.

Offsetting guest carbon emissions and other local projects

Breaks booked through Natural Discovery include investments to offset guest emissions associated with their travel and stay. Current projects include donating energy efficient light bulbs to accommodation and working with the East Sussex EcoSchools Programme - an initiative that encourages children and teachers alike to improve their local environment in areas such as waste, water, energy and transport. We are also developing a partnership with the 'Phone Co-op', an ethical telephone service supplier, to help further boost our local projects investment fund.

Promoting train travel

We are currently in discussion with train companies negotiating packaged ticket prices to help encourage our guests to come by train - for example on sleeper services up to Scotland. This will be linked to being able to hire vehicles locally - ideally with environmentally friendly hire options - at terminus' where possible.

Natural Discovery at summer fairs

This summer we are showcasing sample environmental products and ideas at a number of fairs and markets. These include Spitalfields Organic market, Redbridge Green Fair, The Ambient Picnic (Guildford), Sutton Environmental Fair, guest appearances at farmers markets in the South-East and many more. We are using these events to increase our exposure, tell people about latest breaks and to expand our mailing list.

New website in development

www.naturaldiscovery.co.uk is being further developed to allow more accommodation and breaks to be included and to be more customer sales driven. The new look website will come on line in September. Our website is currently top of many of the search engines and we aim to maintain this marketing position by incorporating more good links with other like-minded organisations. The website will also include an 'Introduce a Friend' competition to help further build our mailing list by encouraging current friends of Natural Discovery to introduce friends to be kept updated on latest breaks and development.

Strategic partnerships and marketing links

We are building relationships with many organisations with a view of working together on projects as well as developing strategic marketing links. Look out for events we are co-organising for the autumn, eg in Chichester Harbour, Sussex, and the Dyfi Valley, Wales. We are also looking to support and promote allergen free accommodation, offering a healthy holiday to all. As well as this, we are developing a project that can help farmers diversify into tourism by identifying existing accommodation that they could use as well as opportunities from redundant buildings.

Some key partnerships include: Action in Rural Sussex, Battle Cider, Bioregional, Centre for Alternative Technology, Chantry House Oak, Chichester Harbour Conservancy, Chichester District Council, Court Lodge Organics, East Sussex County Council, Ecodefi partnership, Green Business Tourism Scheme, Green Choices, Guildford Borough Council, Havant Borough Council, Honda, Hospitable Climates, Naturesave, NEF Renewables, Phone Co-op, Powabyke, SE AONB Sustainable Tourism Project, Solstice, South Hams District Council, Sponge, 1066 County, The Village Forest, Tourism SE, Toyota, TRL Ltd, Woodnet and others...

We thank them all for their ongoing support.

For more information on marketing initiatives please contact us.

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Next Issue

- ➔ Tourism environmental accreditation schemes.
- ➔ Governmental grants and incentives
- ➔ Sustainability focus on positivity for local people.

If there is anything you would like us to consider, please contact one of the team.