



Sustainable Tourism Network

Newsletter 2 - Winter 2003/4

Welcome to our 2nd newsletter. Inside this issue:

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UK sustainable tourism projects and accreditation schemes

We are all hearing that people in the UK are becoming increasingly interested in greener holidays, though their buying decisions are often still mainly driven by other factors such as quality. This has come from recent research by Visit Britain (formally the English Tourism Council), The New Economics Foundation, The Co-operative Bank, Tearfund and others.

It's also great that so many tourism businesses are already doing their bit. This effort can be helped by coordinating with others, either through a local sustainable tourism network or a green accreditation scheme. Here are some example schemes operating across the country:

- The South-East AONB Sustainable Tourism project has set up clusters of tourism businesses around their local Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and already includes clusters on the High Weald coast, Ashdown Forest, The South Downs, The Chilterns and The Surrey Hills.
- The Dyfi Valley Sustainable Tourism Project, in Mid-Wales, is run by EcoDyfi which has been spearheading many local sustainable projects since 1997, supporting the thriving bilingual community and local tourism.
- Green Dragon accreditation has also been developed in Wales to recognise effective environmental management in commercial organisations and is attracting more and more tourism businesses.
- The Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) is the largest environmental accreditation scheme for tourism in the UK with Gold, Silver and Bronze awards - already over 550 tourism businesses have signed up; the majority located in Scotland but the scheme is spreading south.
- 'Somewhere Special' is an extension of the GTBS in the South Hams District of Devon.
- Other local schemes that are developing include The Responsible Tourism Scheme in the Lake District, The Green Lantern in Lancashire, The Little Acorn in the New Forest, The Green Acorn in South-East Cornwall, The Green Island Award Scheme on the Isle of White, and other projects such as The Real Bath Breakfast.
- More national and international schemes also include Hospitable Climates (run by the Hotel & Catering International Management Association), BenchmarkHotel (from the International Hotels Environment Institute), The David Bellamy Conservation Awards and GreenStop rated tourism accommodation.

More details available from Regional Tourist Boards, Local Authorities or from Natural Discovery.



Welcome



East Lochhead Farm, Greater Glasgow
Ross and Janet Anderson

- ✓ Five cottages and B&B in sympathetically restored farmhouse and cottages.
- ✓ Superb food from organic and local sources.
- ✓ Gold Award with the Green Tourism Business Scheme.
- ✓ Thistle Award for Customer Care.
- ✓ Many environmental features and library.
- ✓ Adjacent to the Glasgow - Irvine - Carlisle cycle track with private access.



Loch Ossian Youth Hostel through the Scottish Youth Hostel Association
Loch Ossian, Nick Priest
Reservations: Donna Thompson

- ✓ SYHA Hostels in Scotland range from cottages to castles and have excellent environmental credentials.
- ✓ For example: Loch Ossian, a 20 bed hostel near to Fort William, with:
- ✓ wind-generated electricity from a 2.2kW turbine.
- ✓ Water recycling and reed bed filtration.
- ✓ Dry toilets, requiring no flushing, producing compost and solar powered liquid evaporation.
- ✓ Windows made from recycled glass.



Greenacres B&B, Perthshire
Hazel Harward

- ✓ Comfortable and elegantly refurbished B&B.
- ✓ Gold Award with the Green Tourism Business Scheme.
- ✓ Winner of the Gardens of Perthshire Award for an environmentally green garden.
- ✓ A sheltered 1 acre garden, a sanctuary for birds, an organic garden, free range hens and a wild-life pond.
- ✓ Solar heated hot water.

Welcome



New Lanark World Heritage Village, Clyde Valley

- ✓ Conservation focussed regeneration of 18th Century industrial site. Managed by the New Lanark Conservation Trust.
- ✓ Now an award winning World Heritage Village.
- ✓ The Robert Owen story and visitor centre – the social pioneer developing social welfare and regeneration.
- ✓ Electricity generated locally by refurbished 1930s hydro turbine in the Clyde.
- ✓ Gateway to the Falls of the Clyde Wildlife Reserve, following the footsteps of famous artists and poets.
- ✓ 100s of bird species including nesting Peregrine Falcons.



New Lanark Mill Hotel Tracey Cameron

- ✓ Thirty-eight twin or double bedrooms, all with ensuite bathrooms.
- ✓ Refurbished in its heritage style from the original mill building.
- ✓ Good practice lighting control.
- ✓ Use of fresh local Clydesdale produce where possible.
- ✓ Award-winning facilities for the disabled.



Self-catering Waterhouses Tracey Cameron

- ✓ Eight self-catering lodges, perfect for families and those who prefer some extra space.
- ✓ Built over the tail race of the Mill, literally on the River Clyde.
- ✓ Available for short breaks with minimum stay of 3 nights.



New Lanark Youth Hostel Brian & Annie Thompson

- ✓ Grade 1 listed SYHA offering excellent budget accommodation with sixty bed spaces.
- ✓ Each bunk room has ensuite facilities.
- ✓ Restored from original mill workers tenement row.

Natural Discovery update

What we have been doing...

Its been a little over a year now since we incorporated. So far, we have been developing our core business – putting together, marketing and selling good quality *Discovery Breaks* in the UK. But it has been slow progress... Our complementary parts of the business – operational support services and selling environmental products – have developed much more rapidly, up to now.

Natural Discovery 'sustainable tourism' support

Offsetting guest 'emissions'. On a basic level, for each break that we sell, we offset the 'emissions' associated with our guest travel and stay. This is done by investing in energy saving measures locally. *For example, we are providing low energy light bulbs for our partner accommodation.*

Environmental advice and consultancy services. We want to help our partners improve their environmental credentials. We provide these consultancy services in partnership with specialist consultant companies. *See box below for some current government initiatives.*

Short breaks. We promote short breaks to attract people all year round to help fill the traditionally empty 'out of season' beds, providing a more balanced seasonal spread of visitors throughout the year. *This is a key part of our approach and more opportunities will arise once we have more accommodation in our focus areas.*

Promoting diversification. More positively, we also get involved in other local regeneration initiatives. For example, we are helping partners aid farmers to diversify into tourism, recycle redundant buildings or encourage local product innovation. *At the moment, we are applying for grant funding to develop a new type of barrel composter with a Sussex cider producer. This would be featured in local accommodation and sold locally.*

Guest take-home experience. This additional opportunity is core to our breaks. Guests receive our unique Discovery Booklet before their trip which not only helps them plan their break in advance but draws out *natural discovery* experiences in the accommodation where our guests stay, in the local area or from other elements of their break – in an enjoyable and interactive way for all. *The Discovery Booklet is the key to inspiring guests to take-home and trying out these environmental ideas, technologies and products themselves.*

Our next steps...

Continue to build up portfolio of Discovery Breaks. The problem so far has been finding enough suitable 'Discovery' accommodation (that meet our environmental aspirations) local enough to each other to develop clusters in each of our areas. We need a good selection of accommodation to offer the other local elements of our breaks – for example to promote specialist activities as part of out-of-season short breaks. We are aiming to work closer with existing local initiatives and networks in the future, such as those on mentioned on Page 1, to offer accommodation that is committed to such sustainable initiatives. We are already working with many of them.

Introduce more enhanced discovery experiences.

Those of you at the launch of the Ashdown Forest AONB Tourism Cluster would have seen the Honda IMA, electric petrol hybrid car, that we are planning to incorporate in our breaks. We are also looking for opportunities to makeover and/or refurbish existing buildings into showcase 'Discovery' Accommodation. Concept themes developed with architects include solar, water, air and earth 'Discovery Lodges'.



Government Incentives and Free Consultancy

Our James Brittain is an accredited Government consultant, meaning that he can provide free or discounted consultancy for you, paid by the government.

ACTION ENERGY – free initial and follow-up energy surveys and consultancy if your total energy and water bill is over £50,000 a year.

DESIGN ADVICE – free initial advice session and discounted further consultancy for building development projects over 500m².

INCENTIVES – Grants, enhanced capital allowances and interest-free loans for energy saving measures for all types of businesses.

Contact James Brittain, JamesBrittain@naturaldiscovery.co.uk, 07970 221 251 for more information.

Product focus

Introducing ICP Solar – portable solar chargers and backup power systems

ICP Solar owns and operates the solar electric photovoltaic manufacturing plant at Bridgend. The company was originally formed in Canada in 1988 and has put in place a very good local supply and support network servicing their customers in Europe and the UK.

ICP specialises in quality portable and backup power systems for individuals, or homes and holiday cottages, or outdoor and leisure pursuits. The *iSun* provides portable power, protected in a case, that can be used to charge small power requirements, such as a mobile phone. More portable power can be provided by the *Powerflex*, a rolled up form of solar power as shown, or, for example, a more fixed charge-up station fitted on your roof.



Natural Discovery can supply ICP products.

Natural paints

More and more people are interested in 'natural' paints and there are now many different products on the market. People are buying them not only because they are better for the environment but also for their health benefits, reducing the amount of toxic chemicals in the home.

Some products are based upon traditional recipes used for centuries (eg lime). Natural solvents are also used, such as D-limonene (derived from citrus fruits) or Turpentine (from pine trees). The Ethical Consumer states that Turpentine has been criticized for its toxicity but it is considered to be far better than petrochemical solvents, such as white spirit. Some natural paints use animal products as paint binders such as Casein, derived from milk.

Ethical Consumer Issue 79 (November 2002) compares the following brands: Auro, Biofa, Casa, Craig&Rose, ECOS, Green Paints, Keim, Livos, Nutshell and OS Color.

Our expanding product range at www.naturaldiscovery.co.uk

The range of products that can be bought through Natural Discovery is continuously expanding. Please visit our website to see new products as they are included in our range.

Our range aims to provide quality-plus products for our partners and customers that will help us all achieve a more sustainable future – products, for example, that need less resources, last longer and pollute less than other - usually more accepted - options.

Our approach is to provide the opportunity for our tourism guests to try out good quality environmental products within the accommodation where they stay on holiday.

We aim to source our products from suppliers with good environmental and social policies and credentials. Ideally this will be a local supplier but where there is no local supplier we will introduce products from elsewhere with the intention of encouraging a local supply chain to be created in the future. We endeavour to develop this approach as we grow.

While we aim to make good choices, we are not infallible and would welcome any comments and feedback from our partners and customers if they know of any reason why they think we should not sell certain products or do business with certain suppliers. Please also let us know if you have any ideas for other products we should be selling.

Welcome



The Winnock Hotel, Loch Lommond and the Trossachs

David Warnes

- ✓ Gold Award with the Green Tourism Business Scheme.
- ✓ Traditional coaching Inn, parts dating from the 18th Century.
- ✓ Demonstration of energy and water reduction initiatives.
- ✓ Green Team regularly meet and action ways to improve their environmental approach.
- ✓ Arranged local guided walks. Promotion of local cycling.



Trossachs Holiday Park, Perthshire

Joe Norman

- ✓ Holiday park with cottage and lodge accommodation.
- ✓ Gold Award with the Green Tourism Business Scheme.
- ✓ On site energy, lighting and water saving measures demonstrated.
- ✓ Gold David Bellamy Conservation Award.
- ✓ An Oak wood with nature trail, wildlife pond, all managed for biodiversity.
- ✓ VisitScotland 3 star Bike Activity Centre award.



Sheraton Grand Hotel & Spa, Edinburgh

Fiona Miller

- ✓ Silver Award with the Green Tourism Business Scheme.
- ✓ 5 star city centre hotel with a modern exterior and traditional Scottish decor. 260 bedrooms, conference facilities, and leisure club.
- ✓ Luxury spa and health centre, operated in an environmentally conscious way.
- ✓ Association with the Business Environmental Partnership for energy savings and waste management projects.
- ✓ Promoting recycling, eg passing their old furniture on to be reused.



Our Aims

To promote sustainable tourism with a guest take-home experience - 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 leads the Strategy and Technical aspects of our work. He is a chartered engineer, 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: 0845 – 458 2799

Marketing Roundup

Examples of what's going on...

We are continuing to build up our marketing effort. This will increase further particularly once we have expanded our accommodation base, and can include other *natural discovery* elements in our breaks, and so be able to take more advantage of marketing opportunities.

Press success so far...

includes national press exposure (eg in the Financial Times as pictured), exposure in local papers (such as the East Grinstead Courier), and in a specialised publications (such as 100 Woody Things to do in Sussex).

The March edition of Water and Environmental Manager (the Journal of the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management) includes a joint feature, introducing Natural Discovery and the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) in Wales. In the longer-term, we want to offer 'executive' de-stressing' away days, introducing staff to discovering places local to their place of work, or just team building exercises further a field.

Food writer Ysanne Spevack has recently been up to visit some of our Scottish accommodation and is writing pieces for OrganicFood.co.uk and other food and travel magazines. Her recent piece on The Place, Camber Sands featured in Waitrose Food Illustrated's January travel special. A focus on food complements our regular presence at local farmers' markets (in the SE at the moment) – promoting our breaks and showcasing environmental products.

Many more press opportunities are being explored.

Ergo within Natural Discovery Accommodation

Natural Discovery is developing a strategic partnership with Global Action Plan. As a starter, we are placing copies of their *ergo* magazine in our accommodation.

Ergo is the UK's only 'sustainable' lifestyle magazine, championing up-to-the-minute ideas for greener living. Contents range from sustainable style and innovative home design to hard-hitting features on the big questions like GM foods and renewable energy. Plus interviews with forward-thinking celebrities, good food guides, stories shared by fellow readers and actions you can take right now to help make your lifestyle more eco-friendly.

Global Action Plan, runs a range of practical activities that help people make positive environmental changes at home, work and in the wider community. The national independent charity's programmes achieve impressive results and have encouraged thousands of people to change their lifestyle in simple but effective ways. You can support Global Action Plan by becoming a member of '*ergo-living*'. Please see www.globalactionplan.org.uk and www.ergo-living.com for more information. If you want to subscribe to *ergo* magazine or join *ergo-living*, then please mention Natural Discovery.

"The best organisation to engage people in environmental change is Global Action Plan." Jonathon Porritt, Chair, UK Sustainable Development Commission.

"Global Action Plan's work to bring sustainability into people's lives, homes and communities is helping redraw the frontline of environmental change."

Tony Juniper, Executive Director, Friends of the Earth

Website update: www.naturaldiscovery.co.uk

Our website continues to develop as it is a key resource for our customers.

Information on our breaks is complemented by giving access to articles on Natural Discovery, information on new services (such as carbon neutral car hire), and extracts from our Discovery Handbooks online. Look out for our Scottish breaks launching soon.

On the products side, we are soon launching an enhanced product range with the ability to purchase online.

We continue to feature very well on search engines, such as Google, and our links page is growing. If you have any suggestions for organisations, products or service suppliers that you feel we should include on our links page, then please let us know.

Next Issue:

If you would like to suggest a topic to be reviewed in our next issue, please contact James Brittain.

