



The Brecks

Making Tracks

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BRECKS TOURISM PARTNERSHIP

Message from Vanessa Scott, Chairman, Brecks Tourism Partnership

Dear Colleagues

On behalf of the Brecks Tourism Partnership may I wish all of you a very Happy Christmas and New Year. We hope that 2004 will be successful for everyone and that we shall have an opportunity to meet you at the range of events scheduled for next year.



Winter farmland - graham portlock

Brecks Awareness Days voted a great success



Over 30 members of the Brecks Tourism Partnership have attended Brecks Awareness Days and have voted the events a great success.

Events have been held at the Dower House Touring Park on 24th September and at Oxburgh Hall on 23rd October. Delegates attending came from B&Bs, Hotels, Attractions and TICs throughout the area. The event has been designed to provide tourism organisations

with an overview of the Brecks landscape, wildlife and attractions and the impact that tourism has on the area both economically and environmentally. A highlight of the day is a Guided Coach Tour which involves visiting various sites, places of interest and meeting

key managers. An example of the Oxburgh Hall day included a visit to Cranwich Camp (Neil Jarvis, Brecks Heathland Project Officer), Weeting Heath National Nature Reserve (Steve Titman, Norfolk Wildlife Trust) and Santon Downham (Nick Gibbons, Forest Enterprise)

Margot Pickering, Moat House B&B said "I really enjoyed the Brecks Awareness event at Oxburgh Hall. We really do forget just what a lovely area the Brecks is and I am now better placed to pass information on to my visitors. I also found the networking with other tourism businesses particularly useful".

Action

Complete the enclosed nomination form to register a place and return to Brecks Tourism.

Local Produce

Do you know any local Brecks food producers? Two Brecks Taster Days are to be held in 2004 which will give both residents and visitors an opportunity to sample some of our local produce and see demonstrations by local chefs using local ingredients. B&Bs, Hotels and Restaurants will also be encouraged to include local produce on menus and even come up with ideas for a Brecks dish. Producers can be large or small but produce must come from this area.



Brecks carrots - Nick Sallmarsh

Action

Contact Brecks Tourism and let us know if you have a favourite local food producer or ask them to contact us direct

FREE - Register now for 2004 Brecks Awareness days. Morning coffee, lunch, afternoon tea and guided coach tour are all included

Tuesday 9th March - West Stow Country Park and Anglo Saxon Village

Wednesday 21st April - Lynford Hall Country House Hotel, Mundford

email: brecks.tourism@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk • www.brecks.org

Brecks Christmas Stuffing

Mary Kemp of Hill House Farm has provided this sausage meat stuffing recipe which is full of flavour and will make enough stuffing for a good sized turkey or goose. If you are not a lover of nuts try using chopped apricots.

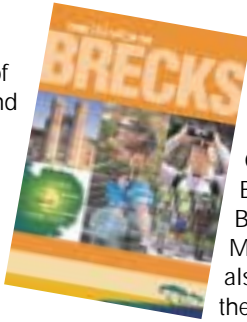
- ◆ 50g butter
- ◆ 2 large onion, chopped
- ◆ 200g fresh breadcrumbs
- ◆ 900g pork sausage meat
- ◆ 4 thickly sliced rashers of dry cured smoked back bacon, roughly diced
- ◆ 50g fresh parsley, chopped
- ◆ A handful of sprigs of fresh thyme, chopped
- ◆ Rind and juice of 1 lemon
- ◆ 1 x 100g packet shelled pistachio nuts
- ◆ 2 eggs, beaten
- ◆ 225g chicken livers
- ◆ Salt and freshly ground white pepper

In a large pan, heat the butter, add the bacon pieces and gently cook, then stir in the onions cover and cook over a low heat for a few minutes, until softened but not coloured. Remove from the heat and stir in the breadcrumbs; leave to cool a little. Put the sausage meat, herbs, lemon rind and juice, nuts and beaten eggs into a large mixing bowl and squeeze the ingredients together with your hands to mix. As soon as the onions and breadcrumbs are cool enough, work them into the stuffing. Chop the chicken livers and gently work them into the stuffing mixture without breaking them up. Season with salt and pepper and enjoy!

Use local producers for ingredients

New Brecks Visitor Guide in 2004

100,000 copies of a free new Brecks Visitor Guide will be available early in 2004 and will be distributed across East Anglia by Leisure Target and at exhibitions in Holland as part of the East of England overseas marketing campaign. The publication will be A5 size, 16 pages, in full colour and will contain a map of the Brecks.



A key objective of the publication is to encourage visitors to stay longer and visit throughout the year. Copies of the publication will be delivered to Bed and Breakfasts, Hotels, Camping and Caravan parks, Attractions and Tourist Information Centres throughout the Brecks with the Brecks Browser in February/March 2004. A rack will also be provided to display the visitor guides.

Please tell us your story!

Please let us have your stories about your accommodation or attraction, however, bizarre you might feel they are. Perhaps you have had visitors from a remote part of the World. Or, you may have had visitors who have specially come to the Brecks to find one of our rare species of plants or wildlife.

You maybe surprised to learn that what might be of no interest to you, might actually be of significant interest to the media!

A c t i o n
Call Victoria Brooke at Shorthose Russell on 01603 785765 with your stories or ideas for press coverage

BRECKS HITS THE HEADLINES - thanks to you!

The Brecks' appointed PR Agency, Shorthose Russell, have been using their vast range of media contacts to bring journalists to the Brecks.

The Oxford Times recently dedicated a page "Breaking into the Brecks" following a visit by Travel Writer, Geoff Hedge. Geoff also mentioned all of the tourism businesses he visited by name. Yours Magazine (circulation 400,000) spent a weekend in the Brecks in August and are covering the Brecks alongside a competition with the prize of accommodation at the Bell Hotel, Thetford.

Following a visit by Yorkshire TV they are now more familiar with the area and have promised to promote the Brecks in the future. New Editor, Dave

Devenport, also raved about Brecks local produce, taking 6 bottles of local apple juice back home to Yorkshire! Our sincere thanks go to all accommodation providers, attractions and tourism businesses that have offered complimentary hospitality to journalists. There are too many to mention individually.

A c t i o n
Can you offer complimentary accommodation to journalists in return, we hope, for media coverage? Please contact Brecks Tourism to discuss the benefits of participating in the Brecks media campaign.

Brecks Browser

A Brecks Browser folder is currently being put together and copies will be delivered to accommodation providers and attractions with the New Visitor Guide

The Browser will contain a whole range of information to enable visitors to have a more enjoyable experience during their visit to the Brecks. Information is currently being collated from all major attractions and places of interest and will highlight activities such as walking, cycling and riding.

A Distributor, commissioned by the Brecks Tourism Partnership will be delivering copies of the Visitor Guides and display rack and Browsers in February/March 2004

Funding available to help hotels to "green" their energy use and save money!

A new EU funded campaign has been launched aimed at helping accommodation providers to make energy savings and to use renewable forms of energy. The scheme involves a site survey to identify opportunities for renewable energy installations and energy efficiency measures as well as advice on costs.

The cost of the survey is part-subsidised and will cost participants just travel expenses - savings on energy should more than cover this.

Action - Further information Catherine Streater/Gareth Ellis on 01908 665555 email catherine@greenenergy.org.uk or gareth@greenenergy.org.uk

Register for the Green Tourism Business Scheme

"84% of holiday-makers would pick accommodation and attractions with a green award English Tourism Council"

We are delighted to offer 10 businesses in the Brecks the opportunity to participate in the Green Tourism Business Scheme developed by the East of England Tourist Board.

The aim of the Scheme is to recognise the importance of good environmental business practice, reduce business running costs and to make consumers aware of the business's commitment to the environment.

The Scheme involves an

assessment visit from a qualified assessor who will carry out a detailed audit of the business and award a grade accordingly. The format and content complements the Green Audit Kit which is a guidebook providing advice on undertaking environmental improvement and has an approach that values the environment as a business asset.

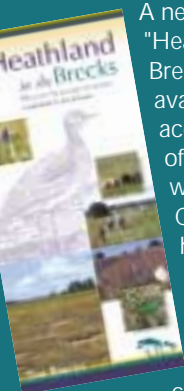
There are three levels of award Gold, Silver and Bronze. Strattons Hotel at Swaffham already has a Gold Award.

The cost of the assessment and plaque will be covered by the Brecks Tourism project. The scheme is open to a range of tourism businesses including Bed and Breckfasts, Hotels and Attractions and will be undertaken week commencing 1st March 2004.

A c t i o n

Contact Brecks Tourism if you are interested in being involved in the Green Accreditation Business Scheme

New Free Brecks Heathland leaflet



A new free leaflet "Heathland in the Brecks" is now available. This accompanies the range of leaflets and packs which the Brecks Countryside Project have designed to help visitors discover and learn more about the natural and cultural heritage of the Brecks.

Our recent visitor survey said that only 6% of visitors were aware of the range of Brecks leaflets and packs yet visitors overwhelmingly thought that they represented good value for money. Please order copies of the publications now and provide our visitors with the information which will enable them to have a better experience whilst in the Brecks.

A c t i o n

Order copies of Brecks publications using the enclosed order form and return to Brecks Tourism

Non car Exploration

Our special thanks to Miriam Thomas and Trevor Mason of Manor Farm, Great Hockham, who have put together a range of non-car options for visitors.

Miriam and Trevor approached the task by looking at places of interest within 2, 5, 10 and 20 miles radius of Great Hockham. They then thought about what their guests' interests were which included natural history, bird watching, fishing, photography, geology and green tourism. This information then enabled Miriam and Trevor to design itineraries which included walking, cycling and horse-riding and transport options such as the Post Bus to encourage visitors to explore the area without a car.

The Brecks Tourism Project have presented Miriam and Trevor with a presentation folder to display their itineraries for visitors which includes copies of Brecks cycling, walking and horse-riding packs.

We are still recruiting businesses to help us complete this project. We will help

those that are interested in being involved in this project to source local trails and routes, services such as bike hire, drop off and pick up points for cycles, local transport timetables and other services close to you. The Brecks Tourism Partnership will provide a presentation folder and copies of Brecks cycling, walking and horse-riding packs free to tourism businesses signing up to the scheme.

A c t i o n

Contact Brecks Tourism now to register your interest in the scheme.



Brecks Visitor Survey

The East of England Tourist Board has carried out the first of three annual visitor surveys during the summer. 300 visitors were interviewed across five locations – Knettishall, Brandon and West Stow Country Parks, High Lodge Forest Centre, West Stow and Oxburgh Hall. The aim of the survey was to identify where visitors came from, what they thought of the area and how it could be improved; and the range of information available. Additional aims included assessing the split between day and staying visitors, identifying main activities undertaken and the average levels of expenditure.

Here are just a few statistics:

- ◆ 52% of visitors were aged between 36 and 55.
- ◆ 60% of visitors were not familiar with the term 'Brecks' when used to describe the area.
- ◆ 32% of those on holiday found out about the particular site they were visiting from local Tourist Information Centres.
- ◆ 78% were visiting as part of a day trip.
- ◆ 10% visiting as part of a weekend break
- ◆ 12% were on a holiday.
- ◆ Only 6% were aware of the range of Brecks leaflets, booklets and cycling, walking and riding packs.
- ◆ Yet 94% of visitors said that they thought the prices of these publications represented good value for money. This suggests that if more people were made aware of their availability, more would be sold!

Contact Brecks Tourism for an electronic copy of the survey.

What's on

Brecks Countryside Project Walk – Sunday 11th January – Knettishall Heath. Reserve your free place by phone 01842 765400

Brandon Country Park – Park open every day. Visitor Centre closed 24th, 25th and 26th December – 20% off all merchandise. Accompanied walk every Friday at 1pm – distance will depend on the abilities of the group and is particularly suited for those who do not wish to walk alone!

Oxburgh Hall – Range of events throughout December Open to 21st December Weekends only 11am-4pm. Free admission to garden, woodland walks, shop and restaurant. Tel 01366 328258 for information

High Lodge – Themed evenings and events throughout month of December. Burns Night, 25th January, Valentine's Evening, 14th February. Telephone 01842 816031 for What's On programme

West Stow Country Park – Christmas opening times – Park open every day. Village, Café and Shop closed 24th, 25th and 26th December.

The Brecks visits Holland

13 members of the Brecks Tourism Partnership visited the Hoge Veluwe region of Holland in October. Those represented included accommodation providers, attractions, community groups and agencies. 2 days were spent meeting local tourism professionals and visiting the Hoge Veluwe National Park and tourism businesses.

Members stayed in typical but simple farm Bed and Breakfast accommodation. Members are producing a report of the visit which will be published in the next newsletter. The cost of the trip was covered

by those participating with partners funding transport.

The area was chosen for its many similarities to the Brecks with a landscape of forest, heathland and having agriculture as a key industry. As you would expect from Holland it also had excellent cycling routes.

Whilst all delegates agreed that a great deal had been learned from the visit, it was also agreed that the Brecks landscape and environment is very special and can compete at the very highest level.

What's new around the Brecks

Hill House Farm, East Harling – Mary and Neville Kemp have recently achieved a 4 diamond grading for their farmhouse bed and breakfast. Mary also offers cookery courses and has conference facilities for exclusive groups.

Strattons Hotel - A stunning stag made from recycled scrap iron now adorns the front lawn of Strattons Hotel at Swaffham. Les and Vanessa Scott commissioned Rachel Long to design the stag which they felt symbolises the Brecks and represents their commitment to environmental practices.

High Lodge – Oak Lodge was opened in October and is available for community and business events. The splendid building was commissioned using timber from the Forest. To make a booking telephone Nicky Hooton 01842 810271

Lynford Hall Hotel – Anna Richmond is the new General Manager and is looking forward to networking with tourism businesses in the area. Lynford have a range of discounted rates available. Anna can be contacted on 01842 878351

Training

◆ EETB are providing tourism businesses within the Breckland District Council area with a one day E-Business Seminar aimed at SMEs in the tourism sector on 17th February 2004 at Ecotech, Swaffham and is free, apart from lunch. Tel 01362 656846 or email: louise.wilkinson@breckland.gov.uk

◆ Green Advantage Training programme – duration 1 day – Cost £35 plus VAT at Thornham Field Centre, Thornham Magna, Eye on 30th January. Contact Jenny Sheppard at EETB on 01473 825626

New Brecks bus services:

The Brecks Explorer, A bus service is planned to operate daily between April and September 2004 and at weekends only during the winter months to December 2004. The bus will connect with trains at Thetford station and will be a circular route to Brandon linking to attractions, places of interest and cycling and walking routes.

Swaffham to Thetford – Service 77 a new service is operating connecting Swaffham to Thetford via Watton.

For timetable information for both services contact Traveline East Anglia - 0870 6082608

Llama trekking in Thetford Forest!

Wellington Lodge Llamas are to celebrate 10 years of Llama trekking by returning to High Lodge, Thetford Forest, on 16th, 17th and 18th April 2004. Bookings are now being taken for day treks each of which can accommodate around 15 people. The cost of the guided trek is

£40 per person which includes morning coffee, lunch with wine and afternoon tea. All catering uses local produce and is freshly prepared by the Wellingtons. There will also be an opportunity to meet with conservation and wildlife specialists during the day.

Action

Further details are available from Bruce Wright, Wellington Lodge Llama Trekking, Tel 01723 871234 email: info@llamatreks.co.uk www.llamatreks.co.uk



Congratulations

Go Ape – received the NFU Countryside Award for the Best Rural Tourist Attraction of the Year - 2003



The Brecks

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