



Walk Unlimited Brings A Fresh New Look To National Trails

New National Trails website puts you one click away from the best trails in England and Wales

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The official launch of the new National Trails website takes place today (Monday 13 January 2014). This site (www.nationaltrail.co.uk) is packed with practical information and new maps for the 15 National Trails in England and Wales offering over 2,500 miles of some of the best walking, riding and cycling experiences for people who love outdoor adventures. National Trails pass through many stunning and diverse landscapes, and there is something to suit everyone: from short walks to a life-changing 630 mile long-distance coastal trek.

The new web site is the result of an innovative partnership between Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, and site developer and owner, Walk Unlimited. The site uses high quality mapping thanks to support from the Ordnance Survey, showing the Trails in great detail as well as nearby attractions and facilities to visit – such as castles, churches, parks and museums.

Recommended itineraries for walking and cycling are easily downloadable, and there are ideas for tailored outings such as geocaching trails too. Families, outdoor enthusiasts and walkers – solo or in groups – can use the website with ease to plan the best exploration of our National Trails.

For the first time, new interactive features mean that local businesses can upload details of the services they provide to people visiting the area. This includes how to get there and where to stay, what to see and where to eat, and where to find facilities such as bike hire shops, horse-riding stables and outdoor equipment shops.

Trail users and local residents can upload content including photographs, word-of-mouth recommendations and reviews, plus details of visitor events. Together they give an insider's view on National Trails, from where to eat fabulous ice cream, to where to see spectacular views, find hidden treasures and spot wonderful wildlife. They can even use the site to report any relevant 'breaking news' issues – making the website a topical, as well as useful, resource for planning your Trail visit.

Environment Minister, Dan Rogerson, said: "National Trails pass through some of the most stunning landscapes in Britain and are a welcome attraction for visitors. This new website will make it easier for people to make the most of the countryside and can help build stronger local economies and businesses."

John Griffiths, Minister for Culture and Sport at the Welsh Government said: "This development should enable businesses to further benefit from our well established National Trails, as well as improve the experience of visitors. The Wales Coast Path has provided a significant economic boost for Wales and local businesses since it opened, and capitalises on the Welsh countryside and coast being a fantastic draw

for visitors to Wales. It's important that we continue to invest in the trail facilities and information so that they are up to the job of giving people a quality experience."

Anne Clark, Walk Unlimited's Managing Director, said: "We're really excited to have the responsibility for promoting National Trails. They are the best trails in the country and we want to make sure everyone has the opportunity to enjoy them. The new website is just the start of our work to raise awareness of these fabulous trails, and the amazing landscapes they pass through."

Liz Newton, Natural England's Access and Engagement Director, said: "Our countryside is inspirational – this web site will help more people to discover it. Walk Unlimited have been a great partner to work with and are running the site as a self-funding commercial enterprise meaning that National Trails can be effectively marketed without having to draw on the public purse."

Emyr Roberts, Chief Executive of Natural Resources Wales, said: "Walking is hugely popular in Wales with both local people and visitors who enjoy our beautiful and varied countryside – bringing with them a welcome boost to our economy."

"As well as the financial benefits walking also brings with it many health benefits, we already know that *34% of visitors to National Trails are motivated by the health benefits they will get from the exercise. The website will be a really useful tool for everyone looking to get out and enjoy our magnificent countryside."

The URL for the new website is: www.nationaltrail.co.uk
Follow @NationalTrails and visit Facebook (thenationaltrails)



ENDS

* This percentage can be attributed to the Natural England (NE) MENE additional report on National Trails 2013.

Notes to Editors

1. Walk Unlimited was previously known as Walk England. It is a social enterprise dedicated to encouraging more walking: www.walk.co.uk

It recently partnered with Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and relevant local authorities and organisations to promote the National Trails in both countries. The four-way partnership is designed to ensure that this new web site will be self-funding in the future.

2. Technically, the site went live in November 2013 giving staff working on the Trails and local businesses the opportunity to develop more content before today's official launch. This initial preparation period means that visitors to the site can get the information they need to enjoy all 15 National Trails to the full from today onwards.

3. The National Trail symbol of quality is the acorn. This symbol is used on the waymarks and fingerposts which mark the routes of the National Trails.
4. The [Ordnance Survey](#) maps on this new website include the 1:25,000 scale, which is very popular with walkers.
5. The 15 National Trails in England and Wales are:

Cleveland Way
Cotswold Way
Glyndŵr's Way (Wales)
Hadrian's Wall Path
North Downs Way
Offa's Dyke Path (Wales)
Peddars Way / Norfolk Coast Path
Pembrokeshire Coast Path (Wales)
Pennine Bridleway
Pennine Way
South Downs Way
South West Coast Path
Thames Path
The Ridgeway
Yorkshire Wolds Way

6. England Coast Path

The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 places a duty on the Secretary of State and Natural England to secure a long distance walking trail around the open coast of England, together with public access rights to a wider area of land along the way for people to enjoy. The [England Coast Path](#) will be a new long distance National Trail that will eventually allow people to walk 4,500km (approximately 2,800 miles) around the whole of the English Coast.

7. Natural Resources Wales

Natural Resources Wales is a Welsh Government Sponsored Body. Its purpose is to ensure that the natural resources of Wales are sustainably maintained, enhanced and used, now and in the future. For more information please visit:
www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

8. Welsh Coast Path

The 870 mile (1400km) [Wales Coast Path](#), which opened on 5 May 2012, runs from the Welsh border in north Wales to Chepstow in the south.

Creation of the Path was a key Welsh Government commitment. The aim was, and still is, to bring economic benefit to coastal areas and encourage active lifestyles.

The route will be subject to further improvements, in terms of alignment, infrastructure and information.

Creation of the Wales Coast Path was funded by the European Regional Development Fund, Welsh Government and the Local Authorities through which it passes. Welsh Government is committed to the long term future of the Wales Coast Path and is funding a new two year programme totalling £1.15 million to further improve the Path during 2013/14.

9. For more information, please contact:

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