



Over 60 events at first Broads Outdoor Festival

A packed programme of over 60 events will kick off the first ever Broads Outdoors Festival, showcasing the best of the Broads, which will run from Saturday May 7 to Sunday May 15.

The new nine day festival, which links in with the Norfolk and Norwich Festival is designed to give a boost to tourism in the lull between Easter and Whitsun. It has been partly funded with money from the European Regional Development Fund as part of the STEP Interreg Two Seas Programme which promotes sustainable tourism in estuarine parks.

The festival was the brainchild of Bruce Hanson, Head of Tourism at the Broads Authority, who inspired Broads businesses, organisations and charities to work together to promote collectively the many different ways to enjoy the Broads.

“The Broads is primarily known for boating, but there is so much more to do and we want to show that off as well,” said Bruce. “The festival will give people the chance to do things they might not otherwise do and see things they might not otherwise see. Broads businesses have really pulled together to produce a fantastic programme of events and I’m amazed myself at all there is to do.”

The festival, which will be launched at Whitlingham Country Park on Saturday May 7th at 11am is a week of walking, canoeing, cycling, geocaching, train trips, boating, art and photography.

Many of the guided walks which range from 1.5 to 8 miles take people to wild parts of the Broads not normally open to the public. They include dawn chorus

walks, (if you can get up for 5am!) wildflower walks, ghost, keep fit and beach walks and a walk taken by the chaplain of the Broads, biologist Brian Smith, at Upton Fen. Heigham Holmes National Nature Reserve will open on one of its rare occasions.

There are evening strolls, family days out and a Techno Treasure Hunt at Ranworth which will take you into the world of geocaching.

Imaginative outings combine train journeys with guided walks, cycling and boat trips. They include a visit to the Land of the Windmills on the River Yare arriving by train, and walking back to Reedham along the Wherryman's Way, with tours of the historic wind, steam and diesel pumps. A "Huff and Puff" alongside the Bure Valley Railway suggests huffing one way on foot or bike then puffing back by train. Another visit to Bure Marshes National Nature Reserve sends you off paddling by canoe downstream and on a guided walk before returning to Salhouse Broad by canoe.

On the morning of Saturday 14 May you can try your hand at canoeing for free at any of the 10 Broads Canoe Hire Association centres throughout the Broads.

The CanoeMan will be running guided canoe trails combined with walks through Fairhaven Woodland and Water Gardens, as well as an otter spotting canoe trail from Honing Lock to Barton Broad. You can spend a day on a bush craft course learning survival techniques or go sailing aboard the oldest surviving trading wherry, the Albion.

A special festival website will be launched on April 15 giving full festival details. Visit www.outdoorsfestival.co.uk or www.enjoythebroads.com

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