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ewelcome

an electronic bulletin from
Tourism Partnership North Wales

Tourism campaign
provides path to
prosperity

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Tourism campaign provides path to prosperity

A major tourism campaign is getting into its stride in North Wales and tapping into the UK's most popular pastime.

Walking is three times as popular as swimming, its nearest competitor among physical activities, with 44.5 per cent of adults regularly enjoying a walk of more than two miles.

Now, a network of guided town walks – the Seven Wanders of North Wales – is to be launched this summer.

The announcement was made at the annual Walking North Wales Forum held in St Asaph and hosted by Tourism Partnership North Wales.

The walks will take in seven of the region's most historic towns and will run every week from July to September.

The towns taking part this year are Beaumaris, Caernarfon, Conwy, Holyhead, Llandudno, Llangollen and Menai Bridge but it is hoped to extend the scheme to other towns, including Ruthin, Denbigh and Holywell in future.

They are the brainchild of the North Wales Tour Guides Association and their chair, Mandy Whitehead, said: "We have chosen seven core towns where we can support the initiative with our qualified guides.

"That means that whatever happens, at the appointed time there will be a guide standing on the corner in that town ready to escort a walk even if there is only one person there.

"If you're on holiday in North Wales and the weather

makes it impossible to go up Snowdon you can be sure there will be a guided walk for you to enjoy instead."

The walks begin on July 4, last from one to one and a half hours and cost £4 for adults, £3 for seniors and £1 for children.

Mandy Whitehead added: "The walks will celebrate the rich heritage of these towns and tell the people's stories bringing the history to life."

They were welcomed by TPNW chief executive Dewi Davies who said: "This is an absolutely brilliant initiative, spot on.

"Being able to get quality first person information from an expert is a fantastic way to find out the story behind a town – it's a sure-fire winner.

"It creates a reason for someone to spend time in a town instead of going back to their hotel or moving on

The guided walks are part of an extensive campaign aimed at enabling people of all abilities to enjoy walking in North Wales.

According to Visit Wales Media Promotions Manager Beverley Jenkins, walking is "a priority campaign area" for tourism in North Wales and there is an extensive programme of walking activities throughout the region

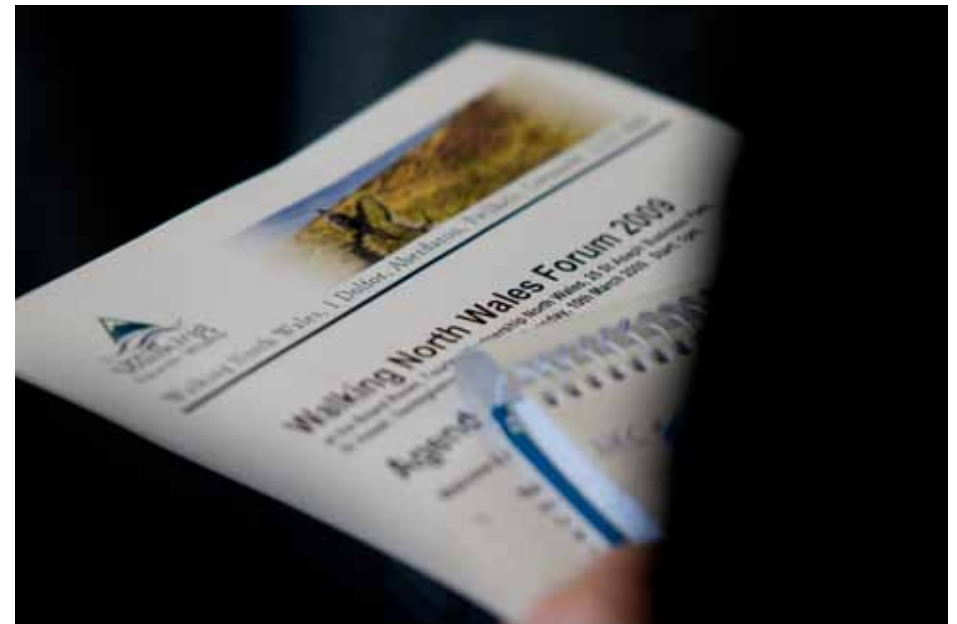
this year.

These range from coastal paths and walking festivals to the intensive exercise of Nordic walking and the use of GPS – global positioning satellites for the 'treasure' hunting game geocaching.

There is also a national Walkers Are Welcome scheme which covers 18 towns and villages in the UK and five of them are in North Wales, Prestatyn/Meliden, Rhuddlan, Pentrefoelas, Llanfairfechan and Penmaenmawr.

Project Co-ordinator Malcolm Wilkinson said: "This is a powerful initiative that tells visitors that we want them to come here.

"It encourages the opening up of footpaths and



increases access and is a stimulus for the bed and breakfast trade.

“It is part of our job to push North Wales as a destination for walkers throughout the world.”

The forum also heard from Colin Antwis, of Fieldsman Trails, on encouraging walking for the disabled and from Rob Hanna, of the Ramblers Association, on their role in opening up access and in embracing new technologies for walkers.

This includes GPS but also information about routes, landmarks and points of interest that can be downloaded to mobile phones either before setting out or live.

He said: “It means you can take a whole theatre of experts around with you to enrich your walking experience.”

Dewi Davies added: “There’s no doubt that North Wales is a top destination for walking and the work of the

Forum is to promote that and to promote the crossover between various sectors including culture and sport.”



Speakers at the Walking North Wales Forum, from left, Beverley Jenkins, Media Promotions Manager, Visit Wales, Peter Snape, Nettability Web Solutions, Rob Hanna, Ramblers Wales, Peter Hewlett, Walking North Wales, Colin Antwis, Fieldsman Trails, Dewi Davies, Tourism Partnership North Wales, Mandy Whitehead, chair North Wales Tour Guides Association and Carole Startin, TPNW.