Welcome

Summer is just around the corner and the Borders countryside should be getting a bit busier with cyclists, general tourists and day trippers.

The next few months sees a mouth watering selection of cycling events to offer the enthusiast with the likes of TweedLove and the Tour of Britain to help put the Borders on the cycling map.

Project Update

Following on from the success of the first phase of the Leisure Cycling Development Project, the Recreational Cycling Group were successful in their application for funding for a further Project which is now underway.

This next phase will continue to work with businesses to develop the cycling product and raise awareness of the area to encourage more visitors. The Tour of Britain will form a key part of the marketing push.

If you want to know more then contact the Project Manager, Neen Kelly on neen@bluebellscotland.com

New Website Underway

Recent research confirmed the need for a new online presence and after a competitive process If Looks Could Kill have been appointed to develop a new cyclescottishborders.com website.

The site needs to be ready as soon as possible to take advantage of the upcoming Tour of Britain and Tour Ride.

The site will have interactive maps with route information and details on where to stay, what to see and do and the cycling support services a visitor to the area will need.

Further updates will follow, but in the meantime if you want to know more then please contact Neen.

TweedLove

Year 2 of TweedLove is almost upon us. A week-long festival of bike riding and good times in the Tweed Valley for locals and visitors alike.

There are many events to choose from including Skinny Tweed, The Glentress Seven, The Peebles Sprint and Hawaii Tweed. Frightened Rabbit are also playing a special gig in Peebles on Saturday 18 June.

Make sure you know what is going on so if you have visitors they know what not to miss.

Tour of Britain and the Tour Ride

The Tour of Britain returns to the Borders in September with Peebles hosting the Grand Depart on Sunday 11 September.

The professional cyclists will make their way from Peebles via Innerleithen to the stunning settings of Megget and Talla Reservoirs. They’ll then pass the Devils’ Beef Tub before finishing in Dumfries.
The Big Breakfast and a window display competition will once again take place in Peebles. Opportunities for other businesses in the Borders will also exist.

If you are interested in finding out more then please get in touch with Neen.

The Tour Ride will also be taking place on Sunday 4 September, where enthusiasts can ride the 170km Tour of Britain route in advance of the main event itself. Both events provide a good opportunity to attract more visitors to the area, so why not include them on your websites and help spread the word.

The Peel

Forestry Commission Scotland’s Glentress Peel, the gateway to Tweed Valley Forest Park, is due to open soon.

Visitors can stop off at the Gateway building to find out more about the seven forests that make up the Forest Park – toilets, shower and changing facilities and the Tweed Valley Wild Watch centre are also housed in this building. Visitors can call into Glentress Bikes, operated by Alpine Bikes, for hire bikes, bikes for sale and an excellent range of accessories and they can round off their visit with a mouth-watering snack in the 200-seater Glentress Peel Café operated by GT Restaurants.

7stanes website launched

The 7stanes Mountain Biking Community Interest Company officially launched its new 7stanes website in May.

The website contains information on the locations of the 7stanes, trail details including conditions, trail grade information, events, skills and tips, competitions, videos, downloadable trail maps, facilities on site e.g. cafes, toilets, parking and information on where to stay and what else visitors can do during a visit.

Cyclists Welcome Scheme

VisitScotland’s pilot project to expand the Cyclists Welcome Scheme to non accommodation providers is gathering momentum.

Over 25 businesses have signed up and these range from cafes and visitor attractions to a bike transfer service. The criteria for these businesses to join the scheme are not onerous and for the duration of the pilot it is free to join.

To find out more, or to register your business please contact Neen.

The Year of Active Scotland

2011 is Year of Active Scotland and an Active Growth Fund is still available from VisitScotland to support tourism businesses undertake marketing projects around this theme.

For further information visit www.visitscotland.org/growthfund
Cycling Itineraries

A series of cycling itineraries for the Borderloop, the Four Abbeys Cycle Route, the Tweed Cycle Way, the Southern Borders Loop and the Scottish section of the Coast and Castles route are available from the Borders Bike Kit.

You can download these and have them available for your guests or pinned up on notice boards. You can even add them to your website to enhance your offering by providing visitors with some useful information to help them decide on the Borders.

You will also find on the Borders Bike Kit some useful information and free photography to help your business attract more cyclists.

The Ken Laidlaw Sportive and Micro Cycling Film Festival

On Sunday 21st August, the Ken Laidlaw Sportive will take place.

The event is organised by Hawick Cycling Club, and is very much a Sportive organised by cyclists for cyclists. With three route options (25, 50 and 100 miles) the sportive offers a great challenge for all cycling levels, and takes you through ever changing scenery on local B-roads. For more information and to book a place visit the website.

This year on Saturday 20 August, a new micro cycling film festival will take place at the Tower Mill Cinema in Hawick. The Flying Scotsman, the biopic of Graeme Obree and starring Jonny Lee Miller and also the critically acclaimed Chasing the Legends which follows Mark Cavendish during the Tour de France.

Bike Week

This year Team Green Britain Bike Week will take place from 18-26 June.

This national celebration of cycling is the UK’s biggest mass participation cycling event – last year almost half a million people participated at events across the country.

The aim is to get more people cycling, more often, and the event offers something for everyone – from families, schools and companies, to seasoned cyclists and those who have never cycled before.

To see how you can get involved then visit the website.

Tourism Intelligence Scotland

Businesses can register on the website to access a fantastic range of FREE and practical resources including:

• A comprehensive and searchable library of the latest research and insights summarised in plain, easy-to-understand English

• Downloadable guides on topics such as Golf, Walking, Knowing our Markets, Adventure Travel and most recently, Food & Drink Experience. Mountain Biking and Sailing are coming soon. And a hard copy of each new guide is posted to registrants.

• Monthly newsletter “Ear to the Ground” full of topical information and comment to update you on what’s happening in tourism in Scotland and elsewhere
• Case studies to learn from other businesses

• Practical tools such as “Listening To Our Visitors” and “At Your Service” – new guidance packed full of down to earth Scottish food and drink knowledge and advice for waiting staff

Reaping all these benefits is easy and free – simply register for unlimited access to the full range of resources, information and ideas - available whenever you want and wherever you are.

Tourism Intelligence Scotland has been developed by the Scottish tourism industry in association with Scottish Enterprise, Highlands & Islands Enterprise and VisitScotland.

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**Looking Out**

Looking at the Cycle Northern Ireland website I noticed an operator offering a mountain biking and canoeing package. Is this something that could be offered along the River Tweed? Have a look at their [website](#) for more information.

The Cycle Northern Ireland site also has a good section on the [sportives](#) taking place. It lists them all with an interactive map to show where they will take place and also the distances involved. Perhaps businesses could list the local Borders events such as Selkirk’s CycleOps Power Road Sportive on 23 July, Hawick Cycling Club’s Ken Laidlaw Sportive on 21 August or Peebles Cycling Club’s Tour of Tweeddale on 3 September. The new cyclescottishborder.com website will also contain details of these events once the site is developed.

Iron Donkey Bicycle Touring are based in Northern Ireland but offer cycle tours to a number of destinations both home and abroad. Their tours are for all abilities and they offer self-guided, group tours and custom group tours to the customers’ own specifications. They also offer independent tours for the experienced cyclist who may want to arrange their own tours but use the knowledge of Iron Donkey. Scotland and specifically the Scottish Borders are on offer to Iron Donkey’s customers. To find out more visit their [website](#).