



THE BEACONS WAY

Chris Barber encourages us to explore the Brecon Beacons using the newly created Beacons Way

The Beacons Way, a 98 mile trail which crosses the full length of the National Park, was first conceived in October 2001, when committee members of the Brecon Beacons Park Society decided that a trans-park trail would make a beneficial project.

Visitor numbers to the Park had been in decline since the Foot and Mouth disease outbreak and the impact on the rural economy had been considerable. It was plain that walking tourism within the Park was in need of a considerable boost and it was thought that a new long distance trail would create fresh interest in the area.

Most National Parks have specially dedicated trails, waymarked and promoted by a guidebook giving information about the route and also the archaeology, history, geology and folklore of the area. The Brecon Beacons National Park had no such route, so following discussions with National Park officers it was agreed that such a facility was desirable.

The process of creating this trail took about four years and the surveying of the route and compilation of the guidebook was mainly undertaken by the late John Sansom and Arwel Michael. Photography for the book was undertaken by Chris Barber.

A route was selected that would present the National Park in the best possible light. It has also been designed with accommodation possibilities at the end of each day's walk, which sometimes requires the availability of transport, public or private, to take the walker to B&B premises.

The route also begins and ends at a railway station, Abergavenny and Llangadog respectively. Bus routes also cross the trail at the end of five of the eight days, namely at Crickhowell, Bwlch, Storey Arms, Craig-y-Nos and Llangadog.

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route for it traverses areas of wild country and can be difficult to follow in misty conditions. Even the best of days can turn unpleasant and the summits are often enveloped in mist.

Passing through some of the most varied and beautiful countryside in Great Britain, the Beacons Way can be completed over eight consecutive days or explored as a series of linear walks. It crosses the entire length of the Brecon Beacons

National Park from 'The Holy Mountain to Bethlehem' and those who attempt it are usually compelled to return to further explore this beautiful area.

Copies of The Beacons Way guidebook (£12) may be obtained from Information Centres and bookshops in the Park. ☷

Image: Tom Hutton