

BESST Project : Activity Report 1 July 2004 – 31 October 2004

1. In June and July the remaining documents related to the first Business-to-Business Exchange visit in Hylte were distributed. They included a synopsis of ideas and impressions from the five Peak District businesses involved. These included ideas for Hylte and Fyresdal businesses to consider and ideas for activities in the Peak District. A photo-album was also produced and distributed as a simple story of the event and the ideas it generated. Both these documents were included in the first Activity Report submitted to the Secretariat in August.

2. At least three specific projects are now being followed up by Peak District businesses. These are:

a. A 'Meet the Bees' project organised by Mark Dennison (a honey producer) in collaboration with the farms where he keeps his hives, which also have tourist accommodation. The farm holiday businesses offer their guests an opportunity to 'Meet the Bees (and the beekeeper) to learn about honey and to help manage the hives. Mark has purchased sets of protective equipment for guests to use. He charges £20 for the event and it is also an opportunity for him to sell his honey. This is a direct result of the 'Learning Tourism' concept Hylte are leading on for BESST.

b. Sue Prince was so inspired by the Hylte tradition of 'Bonad' paintings that she produced a pair of original Bonads telling the story of the Hylte visit. These are paintings on unstretched canvas using so far as possible earth based pigments. The completed Bonads were displayed at the Fyresdal meeting in October and will be copied for use by all the partners. This will be an unusual promotional feature for use by all the BESST partners and seems likely to generate a new Bonad-based initiative by Sue in her own business.

c. Ian Saville has produced proposals for three BESST lecterns made from wood and metals from the three partner areas and crafted by craftsmen from the three areas. A detailed proposal is now being considered by the partners and, if approved, the lecterns will be used as a unique promotional tool for the BESST project and will be a permanent record of the BESST project.

In addition the idea of using the Great Peak District Fair as a new experience for Hylte and Fyresdal businesses was a direct result of the Hylte meeting and was followed up (see 6 below).

3. The procedure for approving activities in each of the three partner areas by using a standard project template and email exchanges has been put into operation. In the four months of this report 10 different projects have been approved. Action is now in hand to implement all ten. These are:

a. A village trail being developed in conjunction with the village society of Femsjo, which will feature the story of Elias Fries (a famous botanist) and will include a tourism package developed in conjunction with local businesses – Hylte.

b. An Elias Fries museum project expanding the current museum (which is solely about Elias Fries) to become a better tourism information facility for the area.

c. A Rydobruk trail developed with the local village society – Hylte.

d. An upgrade of a horse-riding trail crossing Hylte Kommun together with promotion of overnight accommodation for visitors and their horses.

e. A learning tourism package developed around the legend of Ebbe Skammelsson (a Viking warrior) in conjunction with the Unaryd village society - Hylte.

f. A wilderness Fishing Guide to the lakes and rivers of Fyresdal.

g. An upgrade of visitor information at the Fyresdal open-air museum.

h. The development of coach parking facilities at the southern end of the Tissington Trail in the southern Peak District (a 30 km cycling and walking route based on an abandoned railway). This will create opportunities for visitors to come by coach or bus rather than by car and open up opportunities for businesses to develop new cycle based holiday offers.

i. The creation of a new Peak District 'Trails Triangle' – by establishing a 'third side' linking two existing cycling routes (the Tissington and High Peak Trails). This new third side will convert

existing minor roads into cycling priority routes and will involve off-road sections to avoid busy roads (including a completely new 400metre section of cycle route).

k. The establishment of a network of well maintained paths based on four villages and the paths between them and linking 10 key historic features. This will create a network of new 'Heritage Walks' and will be accompanied by an illustrated guidebook.

4. The first Periodic Report was submitted to the Secretariat in August. Feedback from the Secretariat was generally favourable (with some detailed points that will be dealt with). This feedback was reported to the team meeting in October.

5. The BESST project featured in an Interreg Tourism Seminar in Lund (Sweden) in September and a presentation was given by the Project Leader. The innovative features of BESST are clearly the active involvement of businesses in the project from the start and the stimulation to business activity that has been generated by the Business-to-Business exchanges.

6. The two day Great Peak District Fair held in Buxton in early October included two stands from Hylte and two stands from Fyresdal. All four businesses enjoyed the experience and learned how to present their businesses at such an event (there were 90 stands and 13,200 visitors to the Fair). Aketun Fisk from Fyresdal did a cookery demonstration and the businesses were interviewed by BBC Radio Derby (both were new experiences for the businesses concerned).

7. A new leaflet on BESST was produced for the Fair as a short life expedient to promote the project. A better quality printed leaflet will be produced in 2005 once the website is fully operational with a good range of businesses from the three partner areas featured (a main focus of the leaflet will be to encourage the use of the website by potential BESST customers).

8. The second Business-to-Business exchange and team meeting was held in Fyresdal 16-21 October. This was as successful as the Hylte meeting in March and action to consolidate the ideas from Fyresdal and to organise follow up action is in hand. As well as businesses previously engaged in the project some additional businesses were involved.

9. A BESST logo has been developed and agreed by the partners. It is a spiral of growing leaves symbolising the BESST spiral concept and the organic, environmentally based nature of this business development programme. This logo is being introduced to various activities. A banner printed on unbleached cotton has been produced and was used at the Great Peak District Fair and at Fyresdal. It compresses down into a compact foldable tube for easy transport.

10. The University of Derby has produced a final proposal for a BESST website and this should be operational in November as www.besst.org

11. The effort involved in moving from Project approval to operational project dominated the first six months of 2004 and meant that there were delays in moving to on-the-ground activity. As recorded at 3 above there are now 10 projects being implemented. The consequence of the delays will be some under-spending of the 2004 budget. There will be a request to carry forward into 2005 any under-spending from 2004.

Ken Parker
BESST Project Leader
11 November 2004