



2004-2005  
Promoting Sustainable Tourism

# Visitor payback project - On the Right Tracks

On the Right Tracks is a visitor payback project that is raising funds to help restore the unique network of green lanes in the South Hams.

The term Green Lane can be defined as an unsurfaced, minor, rural lane. Many of these lanes are hundreds of years old and have interesting histories as packhorse tracks or even smuggler's lanes. Unfortunately the course of time has meant that



many have become overgrown, eroded and gullied, resulting in them becoming unusable. Yet when properly cleared and maintained, these deep, steep-sided tracks, offer an exceptional resource for local communities, local businesses and visitors.

So extensive are these early trails – there are over 300 of them - throughout the South Hams that, properly cleared and repaired, it is hoped that they will become the finest and most accessible network of their kind in Britain. It is our aim that Green Lanes should provide not only a vital and vibrant ecosystem but a real source of real pleasure and enjoyment that is freely available to all.

The project is looking for support from visitors, industry and the local communities, in turn they will receive a number of benefits from the project.

When the project was initiated its aims included:

- *To generate £39,500 from visitors, businesses and local people contributing towards green lanes heritage conservation*
- *To involve 110 businesses in green lanes heritage conservation*
- *To support 10 traditional rural businesses in undertaking heritage conservation work*
- *To develop a long term funding mechanism for the On The Right Tracks payback initiative as a non-profit making organisation or charitable trust*



Businesses are encouraged to raise money by placing a voluntary levy on key products or by asking for a small donation in return for the use of a particular service, such as tickets, accommodation, food and drink. A variety of innovative ways were



used to raise funds last year, including a donation of 50p from every visitor bringing a dog by one self catering accommodation, and an opt-out levy of £1 for every person ordering a Dartmouth pie by one hotel.

The money raised is used to:

- *Improve access to and awareness of green lanes for everyone's enjoyment*
- *Promote new routes for walkers and riders*
- *Improve the quality of lanes and repair erosion damage*
- *Conserve hedge banks, boundaries and heritage features*
- *Conduct surveys in conjunction with Devon Wildlife Trust to ensure that work on the lanes has a positive effect on wildlife habitats*
- *Link green lanes with other rights of way through the countryside and into towns and villages*

Local communities can help by taking part in events organised by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) to help clear scrub, or lay stone banks on the lanes. On lanes where more intensive work is required local contractors will be used.

To date:

- *£17,145.74 has been raised*
- *36 businesses are committed to raising funds*
- *26 rural businesses have undertaken heritage conservation work*

The book 'Exploring Green Lanes in the South Hams' by Valerie Belsey is available to buy for £4.95 from Green Books, Foxhole, Dartington, Totnes, TQ9 6EB Tel: 01802 863260 [www.greenbooks.co.uk](http://www.greenbooks.co.uk). The royalties from the sale of the book are donated to On the Right Tracks.

For further information see [www.somewherespecial.co.uk](http://www.somewherespecial.co.uk) and [www.southdevonaonb.co.uk](http://www.southdevonaonb.co.uk)

**On the Right Tracks** links into a new project called **Life into Landscape** (see Information Sheet)

This year the green lane project aims to successfully plan, restore and sign off 22 lanes in the South Hams area with the money raised, continuing the target of having the finest most visible network of paths and green lanes in the country.

## Case study: The Venus Company



Proof that small contributions can add up to worthwhile sums very quickly is shown by the example of the Venus Company. The Venus Company is a chain of three beach cafes and shops located in the South Hams. Customers are encouraged to support 'On the Right Tracks' through a voluntary opt-out levy of 5p placed on the price of a cup of tea and an ice cream flake. To date the Venus Company and its customers have raised over £12,000.

