



HOLIDAY and LEISURE CHOICES TRANSFORMED FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

The holiday and leisure choices for millions of disabled people, their families, carers and friends are to be transformed following the announcement today of an alliance between disability organisations Tourism for All UK and DisabledGo on major project OpenBritain. OpenBritain is set to become the UK's premier information service on accessible tourism as the two leading brands for disability information, OpenBritain and DisabledGo, come together, with over 50,000 inspected venues being supplied by DisabledGo to the www.openbritain.net website.

DisabledGo, established in 2000, is the UK's premier provider of personally-surveyed access information and details over 70,000 venues on website www.disabledgo.com. Working directly with public and private sector partners UK wide, DisabledGo researches and inspects all kinds of venues. It is the website's wealth of information relating to tourism and leisure venues that will be primarily promoted on www.openbritain.net.

Tourism for All's Chief Executive Jenifer Littman MBE said:

“The new partnership with DisabledGo transforms OpenBritain's ability to provide high-quality, comprehensive information, while at the same time reinforcing the value of access guides commissioned by local authorities and available on one of disability's best kept secrets, www.disabledgo.com”

OpenBritain, launched by three Ministers in July 2009 has rapidly gained the support of disability groups and tourism organisations from both public and private sectors. OpenBritain's aims are to become a one stop shop for all those with access needs, providing a wide range of information and contact resources together with developing social networking and supporting communications between users and providers.

Founder and Chief Executive of DisabledGo Dr Gregory Burke said, 'We are absolutely delighted to be working with Tourism for All UK on OpenBritain. It is a fantastic initiative and so important for those wanting to travel, holiday and enjoy everything Britain has to offer.'

The first 'OpenBritain' Guide, published by Heritage House Group, OpenBritain's commercial partner based in Norwich, came out on 30th November, and the website www.OpenBritain.net recently went live. Forewords were contributed by Tessa Jowell MP, Minister for the Olympics, and Paralympic expert and former paralympian Chris Holmes MBE. A second guide, OpenLondon, is currently in production.

Kelvin Ladbrook of Heritage House Group said:

“We will work together to roll out further 'Open' guides across the UK along with other OpenBritain initiatives including the development of an online community forum.”

For further information, please go to:

Tourism for All UK: www.tourismforall.org.uk or contact Jenifer Littman T:
01278 671863 E: jeniferlittman@tourismforall.org.uk

DisabledGo: www.disabledgo.com or contact Anna Borthwick T:
01438 842710 E: anna.borthwick@disabledgo.com

OpenBritain guide and website: Kelvin Ladbrook at Heritage House Media
T: 01603 813319 E: kelvin.ladbrook@hhgroup.co.uk or www.openbritain.com

Notes to Editors:

OpenBritain combines the resources of three of the UK's leading charities for people with disabilities - Tourism for All, RADAR and Shopmobility UK with those of the national tourist boards, VisitEngland, VisitScotland and VisitWales. OpenBritain also enjoys the support of a wide range of corporate and charitable bodies including the Regional Development Agencies, the National Trust, English Heritage, the Automobile Association, British Hospitality Association and the Historic Houses Association.

Tourism for All UK is the UK's voice for accessible tourism, and works closely with the government and disability groups with the aim of creating the UK as Europe's most accessible destination. It offers a helpline providing the assurance of personal advice to help enable disabled people to enjoy travel and holidays. It was established as a national charity, originally 'Holiday Care' in 1979, and changed its name in 2004. Its patrons include Dame Tanni Grey Thompson, Chris Holmes and Judith Chalmers.

DisabledGo is supported by Marks & Spencer and assists the retailer in providing employment opportunities to people with disabilities through its Marks and Start scheme. DisabledGo also works with over 200 public sectors partners, including NHS trusts, universities, FE colleges and local authorities to provide detailed access information regarding the services on offer in their area. All included venues are visited in person by a trained access surveyor, ensuring that users of www.disabledgo.com can trust the information provided. All of the details collected have been decided by disabled people through ongoing consultation.