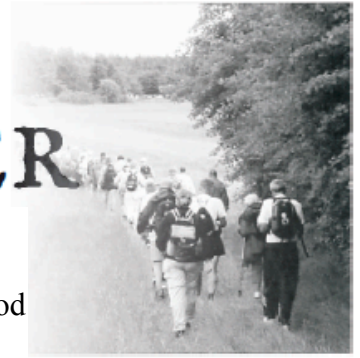


N Walking for a cause NEWPORT MUSTER

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PRESS RELEASE

Saturday, August 14 2010

I'VE BEEN MUSTER'D, SAYS LOCAL MP

Local celebrities have been polishing up their image for a 'rogues gallery' photo-session in support of one of the largest community events in the area.

Under the slogan 'we've been muster'd', the gallery of VIPs – which includes an MP, two mayors and a beauty queen – is helping to publicise the Newport Muster, a day of organised walking in and around Newport Pagnell on September 11.

A photo of one of them is being released every week in the countdown to Muster Day, and begins today with Mark Lancaster, the Tory MP for Milton Keynes North.



Pic: Williams/Stoneman

- Local MP Mark Lancaster expects to take the Newport Muster in his stride this year. The Tory MP for Milton Keynes North and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Development is a volunteer soldier whose fitness should see him march ahead of the crowds at the walk-day extravaganza on September 11. Entrants can select courses of 3, 6 or 15 miles in and around the historic old Civil War garrison town and many will raise money for causes like Willen Hospice, this year's chosen charity.

More info: www.newportmuster.org

Pic: Mark wears his Muster shirt with pride

Other notable 'rogues' include –
Coun. Debbie Brock, the Mayor of Milton Keynes
Anna Watts, the 2010 Miss London beauty queen
Coun. Ian Carman, Mayor of Newport Pagnell, and
Alan Tootill, current holder of the oldest walker title.

This year's Newport Muster features three walking routes in the town and its spectacular Ouse Valley:

'The picnic' - a three-mile stroll around Bury Field, the ancient town park, and ideal for families with a picnic and scavenger hunt;
'The history' – a six-mile signposted route around the town and featuring some of its most important and historic buildings; and
'The challenge' – a 15-mile circular test for serious walkers that takes in Haversham Lakes, Hanslope, Gayhurst, and the disused rail line from Wolverton.

The event is in celebration of Newport Pagnell, which sprang to national prominence as a Front Line garrison in the Civil War of the 17th century and is this year recognising several landmarks.

John Bunyan, the best-read Christian writer and a soldier at the fortress, was a member of the United Reformed Church that began there when hostilities ceased in 1660. Then, 200 years ago, a bridge was erected across the River Ousel in Tickford Street. Still in use today, it is believed to be the oldest cast iron bridge in the country carrying main road traffic.

Organised by a group of local residents called "The Levellers" (another expression from the Civil War days), the Muster is a not-for-profit multi-purpose event whose aims include improving community involvement, attracting visitors to the town, and encouraging walkers to raise funds for local charities and worthy causes. This year, the organisers are recommending Willen Hospice after the recession has left it desperately short of funds.

A spokesman for the organisers said: "We are so grateful to all of the VIPs for taking time out of their busy schedules to join in this photo-shoot and for showing their support of the Muster in this way. It is clear too, that although fund-raising during the Muster is not compulsory, Willen Hospice has a special place in their affections."

The entrance fee for all walkers is £2 to cover administration, walk cards and completion certificates. There is no charge for walkers aged under 14, but children must be accompanied by an adult and appropriate clothing should be worn.

Prizes will include: Oldest walker, youngest, largest team and best fancy dress.

Visit www.newportmuster.org for more info and downloadable entry forms

The Muster is grant-aided by the Milton Keynes Community Foundation and endorsed by the councils of Milton Keynes (environment directorate) and Newport Pagnell.

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