

British ex-pat wants to show there's no place like home

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Susan Butterfield is making the pilgrimage to her hometown in England and she wants to bring a few New Brunswickers along.

Stroll across the pond: Susan Butterfield, owner of Morag Walks, holds up a promotional poster at her home in Douglas.

Butterfield, who will soon retire from the civil service after more than 30 years, has started Morag Walks.

The business is named after her late border collie Morag and will see Butterfield guide two seven-day walking tours of Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, each year.

The first group leaves Sept. 25 and Butterfield hopes to have 10 people along for the trip.

"This takes people to a place in England that they might never have thought of going in the first place, and I think it will appeal to those with an adventurous spirit," she said.

"I know the area and I still have family there, so I'll also be able to provide a unique perspective."

Hebden Bridge is a town of about 4,000 people north of Manchester.

Butterfield said the tour will focus on the natural beauty of the area and include day trips to York, a city of about 140,000 that's home to a well-known Gothic cathedral and Haworth, where the Bronte sisters grew up.

"It is a small community, but in England small communities tend to butt up against each other and there is a lot of empty green space between these villages. So for the seven days it's a combination of walking in those various communities, but also doing a couple of day trips," she said.

"Some days it will be all walking and other days it will be catching a train to York, but I think what people will find is that on the days that it's not really classified as a walking day like going to visit York, you're actually more on your feet that day."

Butterfield said she has wanted to start Morag Walks for close to 10 years, but only got serious about it recently. She said she visited Hebden Bridge in October to plan the tour and recruited several local historians to help lend some local colour to the tour.

"I have met three other people who will act as guides, so there will actually be local people guiding some of the walks," she said.

For more information, contact Butterfield at 459-0282.