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FINE FOODS ADD FLAVOUR TO HISTORIC TALE OF TWO CITIES

The distinctive tastes of Kent and Italian cheeses have been highlighting the fine local produce and variety of cultures to be savoured by modern travellers along the historic Via Francigena linking two of Europe's greatest cities – Canterbury and Rome.

The wide range of local produce to be discovered along the 1,900Km route is featured in the latest edition of the twice-yearly Via Francigena magazine. The magazine aims to encourage contemporary “pilgrims” and independent travellers to follow in the footsteps of royalty, archbishops and religious devotees since the end of the 10th century.

The new publication was officially launched at Canterbury Guildhall, on Monday (December 13). Guests from Italy, France and Canterbury were welcomed to the city by representatives of Canterbury City Council and Visit Kent, the public/private partnership dedicated to promoting tourism to Kent and Medway.

Amanda Cottrell, chairman of Visit Kent and patron of Produced in Kent, said: “The Via Francigena is a potent symbol of our shared European histories and how much we have in common as well as a real opportunity to travel today and enjoy each other’s local cultural diversity.”

Following the launch celebrations, guests were treated to a tour of Canterbury Cathedral and other areas of the city, raising awareness of the Kent produce to be enjoyed in the local restaurants and hotels as well as the numerous attractions and historic sites to be explored.

The Via Francigena, which passes through France and Switzerland, has been designated as an official Cultural Route by the Council of Europe. The route is being promoted to help forge a greater sense of shared European identity across national borders as well as celebrating local cultural differences.

For further information about the Via Francigena, or to view the magazine articles, go to www.viafrancigena.eu. A limited number of copies of the new magazine are available from Canterbury Visitor Information Centre in the Buttermarket.