



ANNUAL REPORT 1 October 2004

e-mail: coetirmynydd@aol.com
www.coetirmynydd.co.uk

Membership

Over the year membership grew to 103.

Company meetings

During the year the following meetings were held:

- 5 General meetings
- 11 Board meetings.

Minutes or reports of all meetings are available for inspection at Hirdir Uchaf.

Communication and publicity

Mike Yates set up a web site for Coetir Mynydd – www.coetirmynydd.co.uk

Three newsletters were prepared and distributed around the village – these are available on the web site or from the Secretary.

Several publicity posters were made using funds from Environment Wales.

Coetir Mynydd was featured in articles in the Bangor and Anglesey Mail and Llais Ogwen.

Purchase of Coed y Parc dam, Parc yr Ocar and Parc yr Ynys

The purchase of the dam and land for £1 from the Penrhyn Estate was completed on the 28th April. The Estate also provided a sum of £25,000 to cover repairs to the dam and this has been deposited in a high interest account and will only be used for dam maintenance. The conveyancing fees were paid from the Mantell Gwynedd grant.

Grant aid

Much of the work over the year was funded by grants obtained from Mantell Gwynedd, Environment Wales, Forestry Commission and First Hydro.

Volunteer days

Two volunteer workdays were organised over the summer. BTCV volunteer insurance to cover these activities was paid for from the Environment Wales grant.

Saturday 31 July: Vegetation control on Coed y Parc dam – 14 people spent the morning clearing vegetation from the downstream face and crest of the dam as part of the necessary maintenance of the dam. The remaining vegetation at the centre of the dam has yet to be done.

Saturday 21 August: Pulling of ragwort in Parc yr Ynys

Events

Wednesday 28th July – Moth evening – this was a very enjoyable evening with John Harold, trapping and identifying moths. The weather was perfect and just over 100 different species were identified, some of which are relatively rare and indicate that the woods are in good health.

Saturday 25th September – Day with David Nash – 20 people came to Blaenau Ffestiniog and enjoyed a day looking around Capel Rhiw, David's workshop, the Ash Dome and other living sculptures.

Coed y Parc dam

On 15th September, the Environment Agency (EA) visited the dam to discuss proposed maintenance work requiring overpumping of the dam. The proposed work includes filling in of the crack along the crest, installation of crack tell tales and fitting a permanent coffer dam over the upper valve intake to

enable inspection and possible repair. The EA officer had no objection to the work; however, concern was expressed on the presence of boulder dams and leats upstream of reservoir and their removal is necessary. Preparations are underway to invite contractors on site to undertake the work once EA and CADW approval has been received.

Roadside wall repairs are being investigated. A budget estimate to re-build with a reinforced concrete core to resist severe floods encroaching on the road came to £35,000. Funding for this work is being investigated.

Safety fencing options have been investigated. It has been proposed to exclude access from the roadside completely by installing a 1m high fence on the wall. On the footpath side a boarded walkway with hand railing has been proposed to allow controlled partial access on to the dam. Preparations are underway for quotations for this work.

Woodland management plan

Through the recommendation of Evelyn Over we were offered the chance to join the Forestry Commission trial of the new GLADE grant scheme, which will replace the Woodland Grant Scheme and provide grant funding for activities described in a 5 year woodland management plan. The advantage of being in the trial is that the Forestry Commission paid for professional inputs into the management plan in the form of Evelyn Over who acted as our agent and Bianca Ambrose of Bangor University who helped facilitate management planning meetings. The management plan was developed in several stages:

General Meeting, 12th Sept. 2003 in Memorial Hall – Introduction to the management planning process.

General Meeting, 26th Sept. 2003 in Memorial Hall – This raised a lot of general issues concerning broad objectives for owning and managing the woods.

General Meeting 9 Oct. 2003 in St Ann's & St Mair's – Considered more detailed objectives for particular features of the woods.

Series of on site meetings with CCW Area officer (Charlotte Williams) and Woodland Ecologist (Jim Latham), Gwynedd Footpaths Officer (Dewi Owen) and Forestry Commission Woodland Officer (John Ferguson).

Desk review from Gwynedd Archaeological Society

Site visit, 19 Oct 2003 to familiarise members with the property and garner ideas on management objectives and options.

Circulation of draft objectives and management activities with an invitation for comments

The Forestry Commission also invited Coetir Mynydd to attend a feedback meeting on the GLADE trial on the 10 Feb 2004 in Llandinam.

From this material Evelyn Over prepared first a Scoping Report, which highlighted the main objectives for the management plan; a more detailed Plan of Operations followed. The management plan was substantially complete in Feb 2004 and after minor edits was finalised in September 2004. This plan has now been approved and the contract related to the grant support of activities will be signed in the near future. The grant from the Forestry Commission will cover 50% of the cost of undertaking tree safety work, footpath maintenance and some fencing and amounts to £1,668.75 for work scheduled to take place in 2004/5.

All the reports and paperwork associated with the management process is available for inspection from the Secretary. The final management plan is available on the web site and from the Secretary.

Interest and support from the members for the management plan has been strong and about half the members contributed in some way in the planning process. Many lessons were learnt through this process, about the woods and people's response to them and how to conduct a broad based consultation on woodland issues. Completion of the management plan is a great achievement and probably represents one of the most genuinely participatory planning exercises undertaken in Welsh forestry.

Parc yr Ynys

The Forestry Commission grant does not cover work in Parc yr Ynys because it is not woodland. However, the management plan provides for the installation of a gate, short access path and bench at

the top end of Parc yr Ynys as well as repairs to the fence and grazing by ponies. Through the agency of Bryn Williams, First Hydro provided a grant of £600 towards the purchase cost of a bench and gate. These were ordered in September 2004 and will be installed in the near future.

Ysgol Bodfeurig

During July 2004 Coetir Mynydd assisted with the preparation of a proposal to the Forest Education Initiative (FEI) of the Forestry Commission for funding for a school tree-to-bench project for Ysgol Bodfeurig. The project brought together the school, CL Jones, Eryri Area FC office and Coetir Mynydd. The FEI and CL Jones provided cash while Coetir Mynydd and the school provided volunteers. The children had an introductory talk by Sara Ashton of the FC followed by two visits to Parc y Bwlch. FC staff felled two trees on the first visit and John Sweeny used his mobile sawmill to plank the logs on the second visit. For the older children this was followed by a visit to CL Jones in Caernarfon to see a commercial sawmill. Kevin de Silva plans to make a bench for the school grounds from the timber with the children in the future as the weather was too bad for outside activities in the last week of the Summer term.

Parc y Bwlch consultation

The forest at Parc y Bwlch belongs to the Welsh Assembly and is managed by the Forestry Commission (FC). The recent Better Woodlands for Wales Strategy has public benefit as a major objective of forestry in Wales. This is expressed as a requirement for public consultation on forest management plans. In this light the Board has been in negotiation with the Llanwrst office of the FC on how Coetir Mynydd can contribute to and facilitate the consultation process. One consequence of this was the presence of the FC yurt at the Mynydd Open Day on the 13-14th July 2004. This presented an opportunity for many people to present their ideas and aspirations for Parc y Bwlch to the FC.

In September 2003 the School of Agriculture and Forest Sciences chose Parc y Bwlch as the subject of the final year student management plan. This means that the students will be collecting data on the composition of the forest and will be working up ideas for how it could be managed. The students will be encouraged to include looking at the feasibility of including ideas presented to the FC during the consultation. It is hoped that Coetir Mynydd can pick up the most promising ideas for presentation to the community and after approval as the basis for further negotiation with the FC on practical management alternatives for Parc y Bwlch.