



NEWSLETTER 7

Summer 2009

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This newsletter follows on from the AGM and other Coetir Mynydd meetings over the Winter and lays out the programme of activities for the Summer and Autumn 2009. Over the past couple of months we have been able to secure some funding from CCW and have accepted an invitation to work with the Forestry Commission Wales on a Pathfinder Project to explore community involvement in forestry. There are only six groups across Wales that have been selected as Pathfinders by the Forestry Commission which is both a privilege and responsibility as how we conduct the project will influence the opportunities offered to other communities across Wales.

Wildlife project

We have been able to secure a small grant (£3,500) from CCW towards a programme of wildlife themed events. The events have both a serious function to serve as a record of the wildlife of Mynydd and also as a focus for social events to which everyone is welcome – it doesn't matter if you can't tell a frog from a toad come along and find out more about the wildlife that lives within the village. The following events have been planned – please contact Bryan Dickinson 602124 or email CoetirMynydd@aol.com if you would like more information or to suggest other events.

Crazy Cuckoo Count – 21st May many of the children from Ysgol Bodfeurig helped count the Cuckoos calling around Mynydd Llandygai. At least three Cuckoos were heard calling around the village.

Non-native plants – Saturday May 23rd – Meet at 11 am at Twillukstump, Lon y Grug. Learn about some of the problems caused by Spanish Bluebells and other non-native plant species and carry out practical work.

Woodland Tidy-up & Practical work - Sunday 31st May. Meet at 11 am at Ynys Uchaf. A variety of practical jobs need doing in Parc yr Ocar: general litter-pick, repair of dry-stone wall, etc. Bring suitable clothes & picnic lunch.

Wildlife survey session – midweek evening in June (date to be announced) Learn what species to look out for and help create a 'wildlife map' for the village.

Woodland Bird picnic - Saturday 6th June. Meet at 11 am at Ynys Uchaf. A chance to watch, listen, and identify some of our woodland birds. Bring suitable clothes, binoculars & a picnic lunch.

Nature walk with North Wales Wildlife Trust - Saturday 20th June. Meet at 10 am at Felin Fawr. An informal walk to enjoy & identify whatever wild plants or animals we come across in Mynydd Llandygai and Bryn Eglwys area.

Garden Pond survey – Date to be arranged. Dragonfly survey & mapping of garden ponds in Mynydd Llandygai.

Evening Bat walks – July & August. Starting at 9:30 pm. A slow walk around the village at late evening to listen to & watch the village bats. Bring warm clothes, a torch & midge repellent!

Events for later in the year include: bird ringing, bird and bat box making and siting, survey of mosses and a fungi foray.

Garden bird research

Together with Dr Rachel Taylor we are developing a proposal for a study on garden bird feeding and breeding behaviour which we hope will be funded by the Beacon for Wales (grant support for community and university partnerships). If you would like to be a part of this project and are prepared to keep a record of ringed birds visiting your garden then contact Bryan to put your name on the list for further information.

Parc yr Ynys

The management plan and associated Better Woodlands for Wales grant from Forestry Commission for Parc yr Ynys runs out at the end of 2009. The Board has appointed Simon Maskrey to act as the Woodland Agent for the revision of the management plan. The Forestry Commission are interested in helping us with this as part of the Pathfinder Project in order to research the steps and costs of woodland management planning by a community group. Over the next six months Simon and a facilitator will first be reviewing the operation and impact of the previous plan and then working out what is needed to maintain the woodlands over the next five years. If you have any comments on what has happened in the woods over the past five years or ideas for what is needed next then please contact Simon Maskrey 602254 / simonmaskrey@yahoo.co.uk.

The Forestry - Parc y Bwlch

Over the past Autumn a group of young people did a village-wide questionnaire survey of what people think of the Forestry at Parc y Bwlch. The report of their findings is attached and clearly shows that the majority of people value and use the forest. This report is the first of its kind in Wales and is generating a lot of interest from people interested in youth work and forestry. Well done! A big thankyou to all the kids, and also to Martin Daws and Kirsten Hails for assisting.

The Forestry Commission have taken the results of the consultation seriously and wish to shape the future management of Parc y Bwlch to meet local people's needs in the form of a Pathfinder project. However, this is not possible based only on a consultation in Mynydd Llandygai and so we are applying to GwirVol for a second grant to undertake consultations in Tregarth and Rhiwlas. The application will be submitted by the end of June and if successful, consultation projects will be launched in Tregarth and Rhiwlas in September 2009 for completion by January 2010.

In the meantime the Forestry Commission are going to fund a consultant to look at the silvicultural (tree and forest management) options for Parc y Bwlch.

Once the consultations and silviculture reports are completed there will be a series of public meetings to work out how the forest will be managed and developed over the next 10 years and into the future.

Moely Ci

John Harold - Conservation Officer - Moelyci Environmental Centre

Many of you will have noticed that the next phase of work is underway to bring the heathland habitats on Moelyci mountain into a favourable condition. We are pleased that the support of Dŵr Cymru has enabled us to bring in a specialist conservation contractor to carry out the cutting of heathland vegetation where western gorse (*Ulex gallii*) has been taking over, mostly on the southern and western sides of the mountain. To control western gorse and prevent it squeezing out the heather and bilberry, we need to cut the vegetation to allow heather a chance to 'catch up' with the gorse, and then graze the areas which have been cut.

We are working with local graziers to ensure the right livestock are available for the mountain - we now have some of the Carneddau ponies on site - hardy animals which thrive in these conditions.

Moelyci is working closely with the Countryside Council for Wales' area staff and heathland officer to ensure the continued recovery of this outstanding example of upland heath after the catastrophic fire of 2003. The importance of the habitats and wildlife on Moelyci are recognized in the site's designations

as Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation.

As a good example of its type, our heathland supports some charismatic wildlife species: the mountain has breeding red grouse, skylark, stonechat, whinchat, meadow pipit, linnet, and cuckoo. The rarest species on the mountain is the Weaver's Wave moth (*Idaea contiguaria britanniae*). This charming little moth is endemic to upland heaths in northwest Wales, where it has only ever been recorded from about a dozen sites - Moelyci mountain is one of the strongholds of this species.

Our heathland management aims to support all these species by providing the conditions which suit a balanced heathland composed of heather, bell heather, bilberry and other typical heathland species, with a diverse age structure. The resulting patchwork of areas of short and taller vegetation will also reduce the likelihood of catastrophic wildfires recurring.

The mountain is precious to local people, and is used for walking, running, picnicking, bilberry picking, birdwatching and many other forms of quiet enjoyment. We hope that the work of our staff and volunteers, with the support of our partners, will ensure that the mountain continues to be a haven for a rich diversity of wildlife and people.

Bushcraft weekend

This is an overnight wild camp in the forest for young people, sponsored by the Forest Education Initiative and Camre Cymru. This has been arranged and cancelled twice because of ill health and appalling weather. There are 15 places on this weekend course for young people from Mynydd. The weekend is provisionally arranged for either 11-12 July or 18-19 July and there are still seven places left. Can all those who want to go on this let Martin Daws know which weekend would be best. Application forms are available from Martin (tel: 605470).

Micro-hydro

We haven't forgotten about this! It is proving difficult finding funding for the feasibility study of the three options identified by Bryn which is the next step in the process. At the moment we are approaching First Hydro, Environment Wales, Gwynedd Sustainability Fund and CAE. Hopefully one or more of these will provide what is needed and we can move beyond the current impasse.

Contacts:

Simon Maskrey - Parc yr Ynys management plan
Bryan Dickinson - Wildlife survey and project
Martin Daws - Youth events
Jenny Wong - Grant applications