

Denbighshire Countryside News

January 2012

Happy New Year!

We would like to introduce our first e-newsletter providing regular information about what is happening in Denbighshire's Countryside and the Clwydian Range & Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Family Fun Theatre to tour our Countryside Sites in August



The Shed Theatr Co. will present a new outdoor production inspired by our vibrant countryside and bursting with lively (and sometimes naughty) characters and infectious songs.

The tour takes place in August and will visit countryside sites across North East Wales from Moel Famau and Loggerheads to Rhuddlan in the north and Llangollen in the south. Tour details will be announced in the spring, check out www.denbighshirecountryside.org.uk or



our facebook page '[Denbighshire Countryside Service](#)' for updates.

Bronze Age Make-Over at Brenig

A fantastic Bronze Age burial ground in Denbighshire has had a make over in the form of new interpretation for visitors. The Llyn Brenig Archaeological Trail covers the site of a Bronze Age cemetery, high up in the hills of Hiraethog. Thousands of years ago, people used the area to bury and remember their dead, and they left dramatic monuments behind which have survived to this day. In the 1970s, before the dam was constructed and the valley flooded, an archaeological excavation was carried out on over 20 sites. This provided us with lots of information, and as the sites were reconstructed after the digging, the monuments are clearly visible today.

Denbighshire County Council's Countryside Service has been working with Dwr Cymru Welsh Water to redevelop the interpretation of the site, which includes; interpretation panels, an audio trail, and two new leaflets, including one for children.

The Trail is around 4 km long, and takes about 2 hours to complete. The audio trail needs to be downloaded from the website – www.brenigarchaeology.co.uk in advance, as there is patchy mobile phone signal on site.

This project has received funding through Denbighshire County Council, the Countryside Council for Wales, Cadw, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water and the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013 which is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

(Fact - Last year Denbighshire Countryside Service volunteers put in over 2000 days of valuable hard work and expertise)

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Schools planting trees for the future.

Pupils at Ysgol Esgob Morgan, St. Asaph are transforming their school grounds by planting up areas with trees. The trees were sourced from the Woodland Trust who supplied the school with a "community tree pack" that contained 420 native trees that will be beneficial to local wildlife.

Headmaster Tim Redgrave said, "Tree planting is a fantastic and fun way for the children to do something lasting in the school. We hope that our trees will help attract wildlife and make a real difference to everyone who sees them".

Coed Cymru Officer Mike Hughes who applied for the trees on the school's behalf and is overseeing the planting operations said, "I believe that every child should be given the opportunity to plant a tree and it is incredible to think that that in just five years the trees will be as tall as us"

Telling stories at Loggerheads Country Park



Improvements have been made to the signage and interpretation at Loggerheads.

Road signage, gateway features, interpretation panels and a series of hidden creatures help to orientate visitors and reveal some of the stories of the Park.

"As much as possible, wood from the Park has been used and local artists and designers worked with Park staff to ensure that the installations were sympathetic to this beautiful Country Park" Vanessa Warrington, Countryside Officer.

"The bigger pieces needed heavy duty equipment and a lot of paperwork to install! We would like to thank our staff and visitors for their help and patience during this time."

Further improvements will be carried out over the next two years with an interactive audio-visual room next to the mill, new picnic benches and a covered area for picnicking in inclement weather.

Works were funded by the Rural Development Plan (financed through the European Union and the Welsh Assembly Government) and the Clwydian Range Sustainable Development Fund. Local artists included wood carving by Simon O'Rouke from Wrexham, Mike Owen from Caerwys and metal sculpture by Richard Jones, local blacksmith from Meliden.



(Fact - Last year Denbighshire Countryside Service turned £500,000 budget into 1.5million by matching to various funding pots)

Clwydian Range Geology Education Resources used throughout the UK.

We all know how valuable it is for young people to learn outdoors or 'in the field' and how important it is that we understand our planet, how it works and changes. This new resource, for GCSE Geology and KS3 geography; The Sustainable Earth, uses 3 key field sites and digital presentations from in and around the Clwydian Range making this a local and unique resource for teachers.

The free resources are available from the Clwydian Range website www.clwydianrangeaonb.org.uk
The GCSE Geology resources have been produced through the Clwydian Range Local Geodiversity Action Plan with financial support from The Aggregates Levy Fund for Wales, Countryside Council for Wales, Clwydian Range AONB Sustainable Development Fund and the Association of Welsh RIGS Groups. Grateful thanks go to Hanson of the Heidelberg Cement Group for allowing the use of Cefn Mawr Quarry and Padeswood works.

Extension of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation.

In November the Welsh Government Environment Minister John Griffiths confirmed a southerly extension to the Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Councillor Carolyn Thomas Chair of the Clwydian Range AONB JAC, said: "I am delighted that this area has been designated an AONB. This designation recognises that it is one of the finest landscapes in the United Kingdom. The achievement of designation comes from the endeavours of the three County Councils, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham, together with the Countryside Council for Wales and other partners." The landscape in question includes much of the Dee Valley from Corwen to Newbridge, including the picturesque town of Llangollen. Some of the stunning natural features are the Eglwyseg Escarpment, Horseshoe Pass and Esclusham Mountain. Historical features include the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, Chirk Castle and Valle Crucis Abbey.

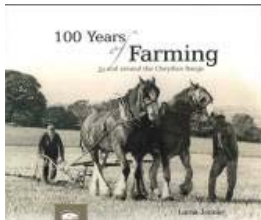


Raising the Ramparts Exhibition at Clwyd Theatr Cymru

Paintings of excavations at Moel y Gaer hillfort and the local landscape by artist Bill Kneale and reconstruction paintings by artist Tim Morgan are on display. These are based on archaeological surveys of the hillforts, aiming to give an impression of what life was like in the hillforts around 2,500 years ago.

The exhibition will be on show at the Community Gallery Clwyd Theatr Cymru until 21st January and tour Denbighshire and Flintshire venues in 2012.

to catch the essence of farming in the Clwydian Range and to document some of the changes that have taken place over the past century. I have been overwhelmed by the warm reception I have received from the farming community, whether visiting older farmers in their homes or chatting informally to regulars at the local livestock markets. My only regret is that I had to be so selective and so much good material has been missed out.'



The book has been produced with the help of grant-aid from the Clwydian Range AONB Sustainable Development Fund. Both English and Welsh versions are available to buy, priced £9.99, from Loggerheads Country Park, at all the local bookshops or by mail order from Mold Bookshop www.moldbookshop.co.uk

Loggerheads hoists its Green Flag as one of the best !

Loggerheads Country Park has been officially recognised as one of the best parks in the country by being awarded Green Flag status for the third year in a row. Loggerheads Country Park is managed as part of the Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty by Denbighshire County Council with support from Flintshire County Council.



The Green Flag award scheme began in 1996 to recognise and reward the best managed green spaces in the country. It is a way of encouraging others to achieve the same high environmental standards, creating a benchmark of excellence in recreational green areas.

David Shiel – Senior Countryside Officer for the Clwydian Range said, “ Loggerheads is a very special place not only for the thousands of visitors who enjoy coming here every year, but also as one of the most important conservation sites in Europe so it is important that we get it right. It is a great compliment to get this award. “

“It is particularly pleasing that this award recognises the role played by volunteers in helping to manage the park. Last year volunteers carried out over 2000 hours practical conservation work which is a huge contribution to the park. “

Ancient Ponies help secure future of Nature Reserve

Denbighshire Countryside Service is turning to an ancient breed of native ponies for help in managing the Local Nature Reserve at Moel Findeg. Carneddau Ponies are a traditional breed dating back over 2000 years to the Iron Age.

The open heathland on the site is rapidly disappearing as trees and gorse are taking over. The ponies will help to keep all this under control. The Carneddau ponies are a hardy breed, from some of the highest mountains in Snowdonia so are well suited to grazing upland areas. The Countryside Service is working with PONT – the Welsh Grazing Animals Partnership, an organisation that aims to encourage and facilitate grazing projects for the benefit of conservation, landscape and heritage.

David Shiel, Senior Countryside Officer with the Clwydian Range said “ *Moel Findeg is a very important area of heathland but over the years it has been a constant battle to keep it clear from scrub. Introducing grazing to the site is going to help to keep the area open and allow the heathland species to thrive.* ”

The Friends of Moel Findeg have provided the funding to bring the ponies to the site and have funded the new fencing. The Friends of Moel Findeg were formed in the late 1990s when the hillside was threatened with quarrying. They were instrumental in raising the funds to buy the mountain and are actively involved in the management of the site as a Local Nature Reserve.



Glyn Williams – the Clwydian Range AONB Warden said – “*the ponies have settled in very quickly and I think they will enjoy their new home in the Clwydian Range. Provided they are not disturbed or distracted they will be quite content eating young birch trees, trampling bracken and grazing gorse so please don't try to feed them.*”

Up and coming events

Tuesday 14th February

Willow weaving

10am – 3pm

Family volunteering opportunity to help weave fencing along the riverside at Loggerheads Country Park. Not suitable for children under 8 years old. Please Book.

Wednesday 22nd February

Round the County 1, Bodfari – Cyffylliog **Part of our 100mile Round the County Challenge**

9.30am – 4.30pm

Join us on a 10-mile hike across the Vale of Clwyd in the shadow of the Clwydian Range.

Some of the walk will take in the new extension to the Hiraethog Trail. Transport will be provided to take us to the start of the walk. Meet at Red Lion, Cyffylliog SJ060578

This is a challenging walk, please book.

Thursday 23rd – Friday 24th February

Composting Creations

10am – 3pm

Two days building heavy duty composting bays at the recently transformed community allotments in Prestatyn community woodland. Meet Coed Morfa Car Park Prestatyn

For further information visit www.denbighshirecountryside.org.uk or  our [Facebook page Denbighshire Countryside Service](#).

(Fact – In the last 18 months 8 children and 4 grandchildren have been born to Denbighshire Countryside Service staff – something in the water perhaps!)

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