



Objective  
Actions

## SECTION FIVE

# OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS FOR SPECIAL FEATURES

## BIODIVERSITY

The varied landscape types within the Clwydian Range AONB support a rich diversity of wildlife species and habitats. Wildlife habitat is determined by topography, the presence of water, soil, climate and agricultural as well as other land uses. Within the AONB a range of 'semi-natural' vegetation occurs including heather moorland, limestone grassland, wetland and woodland.

Denbighshire and Flintshire's Biodiversity Action Plans, published in 2003, aim to maintain and enhance biodiversity within the counties, to halt the decline of habitats and species and to assist their recovery. LBAPs are a mechanism to implement the UK Biodiversity Action Plan locally, translating national wildlife priorities into local action. They identify the priority habitats and species under threat or declining and recommend the conservation action required. The AONB contains many of the priority habitats and species. Management of these will be guided by the recommendations in the LBAPs. This will ensure that the AONB Management Plan contributes to the delivery of the UK and local BAP targets, and CRoW Act section 74 list.

## Limestone Grassland and Pavement

Calcareous grasslands and limestone outcrops exist throughout the AONB most notably to the North around Prestatyn Hillside and Dyserth as well to the south east around Eryrys and Llanarmon yn Iâl. The outcrops form conspicuous natural features, the distinctive rugged hills with scarp faces, crags and limestone pavements providing some of the most outstanding scenery of the area.

These areas are associated with shallow, free draining base rich soils supporting rich plant communities. This habitat type contributes greatly to the biodiversity of the AONB. The open nature of this type of landscape has traditionally been maintained by grazing animals. Changes in agricultural practices have led to the threat of undergrazing and subsequent scrub invasion on steeper slopes and in some cases deterioration and loss of plant species. This is particularly true on Prestatyn Hillside. Agricultural improvement and over grazing has also had an impact in some areas.

Although some areas of limestone grassland are afforded statutory protection as SSSI or cSAC particularly at Loggerheads and Bryn Alyn, there are numerous smaller sites throughout the AONB that are important locally and depend on the action of landowners to maintain them.

Traditionally these areas have been associated with quarrying and mineral extraction with many large quarries still in operation, and a wealth of industrial archaeology associated with 19th and early 20th century lead mining.

## LBAP significance

This is a UK priority habitat and characteristic feature of the AONB.

## Objectives

- LGPO1** To maintain the current extent of calcareous grassland and pavement within the AONB.
- LGPO2** To bring all areas of County-owned limestone grassland and pavement into a management scheme by 2006 and to provide support for other owners to gain similar schemes.
- LGPO3** To ensure there is no net loss of important areas of limestone grassland and pavement to quarrying activities.





## Action Plan

This is a UK priority habitat and characteristic feature of the AONB.

- LGPA1** To secure a Section 15 Management Agreements for Prestatyn Hillside and Loggerheads Country Park with CCW by 2005.
- LGPA2** Determine the extent of Limestone Grassland and pavement under active management programmes by 2006.
- LGPA3** To gain Local Nature Reserve Status for Prestatyn Hillside by 2005.
- LGPA4** Monitor the extent of limestone grassland and pavement within the AONB every five years through review of Phase 1 Habitat Surveys.

## Broadleaved Woodland

Woodlands are a vital component of both the landscape and biodiversity of the Clwydian Range. Broad-leaved woodlands have traditionally provided a local source of timber and fuel for domestic and local industrial use. Many of the existing broadleaved woodlands represent a link with the landscape as it appeared following the last Ice Age and support a diverse range of flora and fauna. Many of these woodlands are considered to be ancient woodland sites.

With the development of the railway network in the mid 19th century, the dependency on local timber resources declined. This, coupled with a reduction in the agricultural workforce, led to a decrease in the number of woodlands under active management.

Following the setting up of the Forestry Commission in 1919, large areas of less agriculturally productive uplands were planted with fast-growing conifers, primarily a reaction to a shortage of timber during the First World War. Large conifer plantations were planted in the Clwydian Range following the Second World War and now make a substantial contribution to the diversity of the landscape of the area.

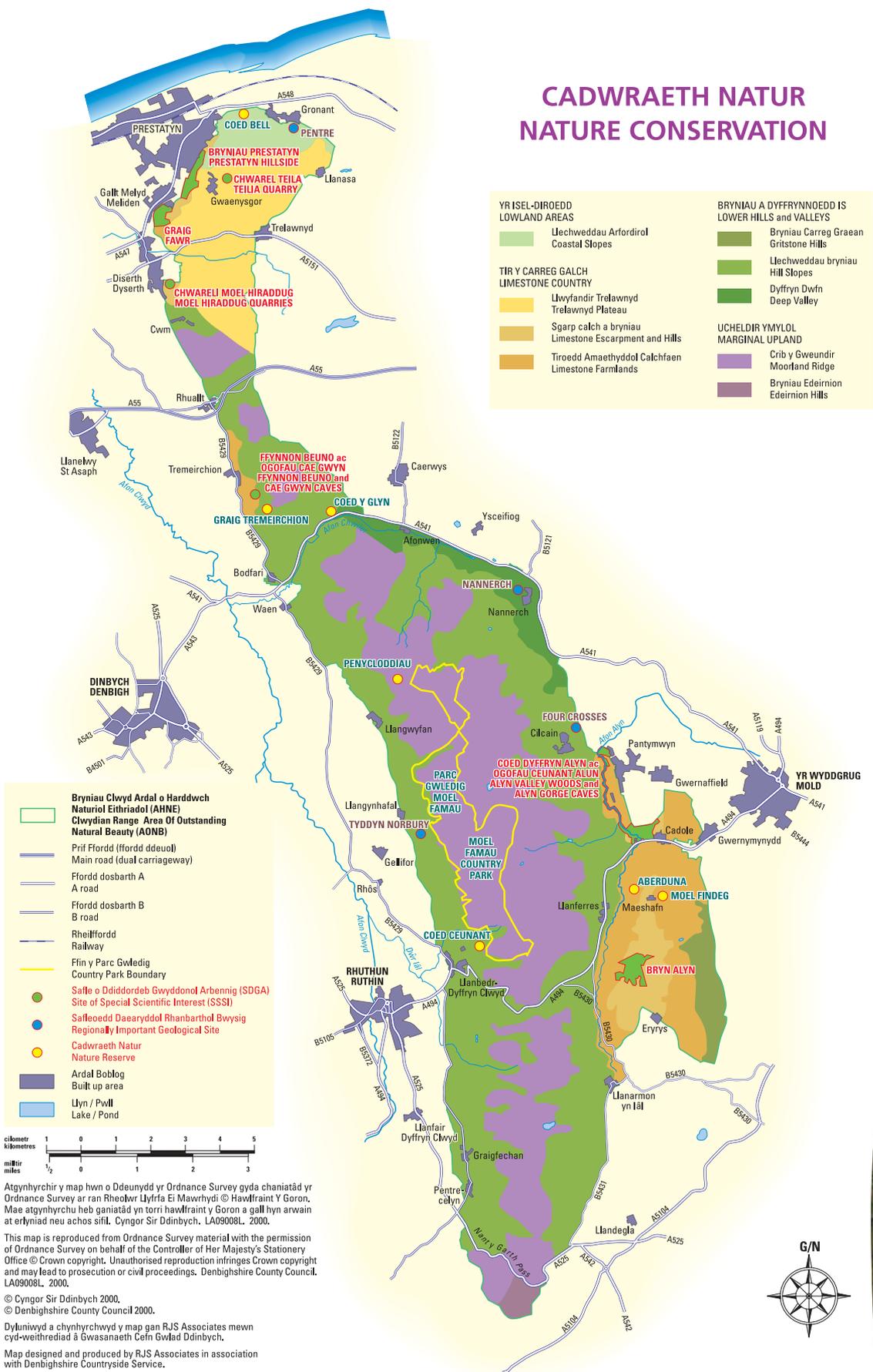


With an increase in the availability of grant aid and the recognition of the important role that woodlands play in nature conservation, recreational management and rural economics, it is imperative that government organisations and woodland owners work together to maintain woodlands not only as a native timber source but also for their wildlife value.

## LBAP significance

Upland mixed ash woodlands, upland oak woodlands and wet woodlands are all UK priority habitats. Lowland mixed deciduous woodland and upland birch woodland are Welsh priorities.

# CADWRAETH NATUR NATURE CONSERVATION





## Objectives

- BWO1** To maintain the current extent of broadleaved woodland within the AONB.
- BWO2** To maintain and restore broadleaved woodland towards a favourable condition through the implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plans for Upland Mixed Ash Woodlands, upland oak woodlands and wet woodlands.
- BWO3** Develop County-owned woodlands as models of best practice in broadleaf woodland management.
- BWO4** Investigate means of increasing financial incentives for farmers to take wooded areas out of agricultural management.
- BWO5** Develop a programme of community involvement in woodland management in order to engender them as cultural, social and financial assets in relation to publicly owned woodlands and Section 9 Common.
- BWO6** To support Coed Cymru in continuing to deliver support for woodland owners, championing best practice in broadleaf woodland management and developing markets for locally sourced hard woods.

## Action Plan

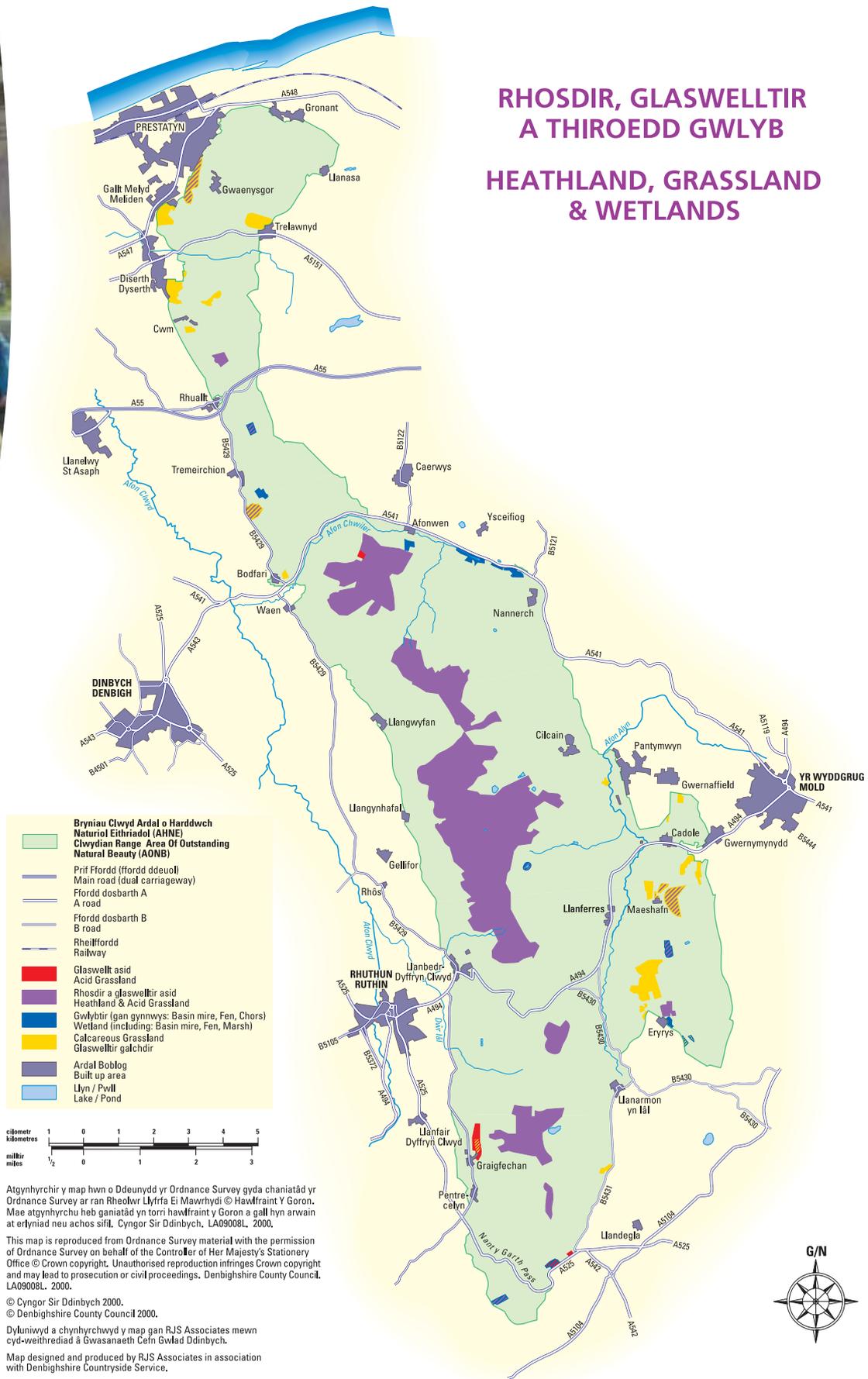
- BWA1** To ensure that all County-owned broadleaved woodlands are in a Woodland Grant scheme by 2005
- BWA2** To secure a Locational Supplement within the Woodland Grant Scheme from FC for farm woodland within the AONB to readdress funding balance by 2005.
- BWA3** Monitor the areas of woodland brought into FC WGS and the new Native Woodland Plans every five years.
- BWA4** Agree a management programme for Bishops Wood with Prestatyn Environment Association by 2005
- BWA5** Sample monitor Woodland Grant Schemes across the Clwydian Range to ensure that biodiversity objectives are being met.
- BWA6** Confirm action plan with the Woodland Trust for their woodland holdings within the AONB by 2004.





# RHOSDIR, GLASWELLTIR A THROEDD GWLYB

## HEATHLAND, GRASSLAND & WETLANDS



## River Valleys

There are two major River Valleys in the AONB, the Wheeler and the Alyn.

The valleys in which they lie contain a rich mix of woodlands, wetlands and associated river habitats. The rivers have also both seen the return of the otter to them which illustrates the purity of the water. Drainage of adjacent fields has also been undertaken over the last 30 years.

## LBAP significance

Linear habitats are a local biodiversity priority habitat. A number of UK biodiversity priority species such as otter and water vole use waterways.

## Objectives

- RVO1** To maintain in favourable condition river valleys for biodiversity priority species.
- RVO2** Encourage and seek funding through SDF, the Countryside Enhancement Grant Scheme and Tir Gofal for riparian habitat management
- RVO3** Determine the extent of key indicator species such as otter and water vole in order to gauge habitat condition.
- RVO4** Work in partnership with the Environment Agency to find solutions for instances of otter road kills where this is identified as an issue.
- RVO5** Raise awareness of the importance of the rivers in the AONB as habitats for otter and water vole.

## Actions

- RVA1** Carry out one riparian habitat management project on the River Alyn or River Wheeler every year through Tir Gofal, SDF or Countryside Enhancement Grant Scheme.
- RVA2** Carry out annual monitoring of otter and water vole populations on the River Alyn and Wheeler every year in order to prioritise management.
- RVA3** Construct an otter holt at Loggerheads Country Park in order to raise the profile of the importance of river habitats with the public by 2005.





## Heather Moorland

Heather moorland is an important habitat of the Range. Consisting of a mix of heather, bilberry and gorse, it has a distinct range of birdlife including grouse, stonechat, whinchat and curlew. It is also an especially important component of the landscape in the central part of the range, centred on Moel Famau Country Park.

Heather moorland is recognised as a habitat of national and international importance. The area of upland heather in Wales has declined by over 50%, largely as a result of reclamation and afforestation since 1947 and is under continued pressure from bracken encroachment and over grazing. With this decline, which is also reflected in the AONB, there has been a parallel reduction in population of many upland bird species, with black grouse, red grouse and merlin numbers becoming critical in Wales.



Lowland heath is largely confined to Moel Findeg where lack of grazing is resulting in the development of scrub woodland.

Within certain areas of the AONB heather represents a valuable grazing resource for sheep and in some areas levels of overgrazing have led to a loss of cover and subsequent increase in bracken encroachment.

With much of the heather uplands consisting of common land, the control of grazing numbers and the large scale control of bracken encroachment is difficult. In order to ensure a balance between environmental value and agricultural and grazing pressure, a long term maintenance and management regime must be initiated. Without a coherent management plan for heather moorland with the AONB, the landscape and wildlife value of these essentially wild areas will be lost.

### LBAP significance

Upland and lowland heath are a UK priority habitat which is well represented in the AONB. However, much of the area is in a mature or degenerate state due to lack of management and is possibly declining locally in supporting specialised upland bird populations.



## Objectives

- HMO1** To maintain the current extent of heathland/moorland within the AONB. (Monitor CCW upland survey).
- HMO2** Develop a model of good management practice on Moel Famau Country Park.
- HMO3** Maintain and restore towards a favourable condition heathland habitat. (Monitor from the number of schemes/area that are brought under Tir Gofal)
- HMO4** Develop a partnership with RSPB and Forestry Commission Wales in respect of the Black Grouse Recovery Project.
- HMO5** Develop a training course on the management of the cultural and natural heritage of moorlands aimed at local communities and landowners.
- HMO6** Secure funding through HLF to deliver the Heather and Hillforts programme within the Clwydian Range.

## Actions

- HMA1** As a full partner of the Heather and Hillforts Partnership Board submit an application to HLF for the Heather and Hillforts project by end of April 2005.
- HMA2** Through the Heather and Hillforts project determine current agricultural practices in the uplands by 2006.
- HMA3** Through Heather & Hillforts Project determine the current extent of heather moorland under active management programmes by 2006.
- HMA4** Work with Llysfasi Agricultural College to provide training courses in Countryside Skills as part of their National Diploma course by 2006/7
- HMA5** To carry out one hectare of heather management and forest edge management at Moel Famau Country Park per year.
- HMA6** To target SDF funds to encourage graziers to carry out heather management at Moel y Parc and Penycloddiau
- HMA7** Monitor Black Grouse populations and other upland birds every year at Moel Famau, Penycloddiau and Moel y Parc.
- HMA8** To gain a Tir Gofal Agreement on Moel Famau and Moel y Parc by 2006.

## Related Plans

Denbighshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan  
Flintshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan  
Heather and Hillforts  
Farming for the Future – WAG  
Woodlands for Wales





## THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

The AONB has a wealth of archaeological and historic remains which date from the early prehistoric period right through to the Second World War. Sites range from the massive Iron Age Hillforts to the less conspicuous crop marks and finds in the lower areas.

Many of these archaeological sites are Scheduled Ancient Monuments and are afforded protection through Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments. Many other historic features, such as boundary stones, village wells and milestones are not protected and as such are much more vulnerable.

Many of the archaeological sites within the Range are important components of the wider landscape; the evidence of past mining and quarrying, settlements and burials forming a familiar unseen backdrop to our life today.

### Hillforts, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Archaeology

The Clwydian Range contains sites of past human activity and occupation dating back to at least 30,000 BC. Indeed the whole way the landscape looks today is a result of the way people have managed their environment for farming, subsistence, extraction, transportation and recreation over perhaps the last 5000 years. A database of all the known archaeology, the Sites and Monuments Record, exists. This is maintained by the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust who continually add to and enhance this record. Some sites are scheduled as being of national importance by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments. Most notably in the Clwydian Range these include a line of six impressive hillforts dating from around 700BC on the main ridge as well as many burial mounds from around 1500 BC. Part of the Clwydian Range, including several of the hillforts, was identified in 1998 as an outstanding Historic Landscape and there are also parts of several historic parks and gardens as noted in the Register of 1995, within the Clwydian Range. Public consultation has identified the nationally important hillforts as a particularly important element within the historic landscape of the Clwydian Range. There are pressures on these monuments from recreation, agriculture and burrowing animals as well as a very marked lack of knowledge of how these important settlements functioned in the landscape.

## Objectives

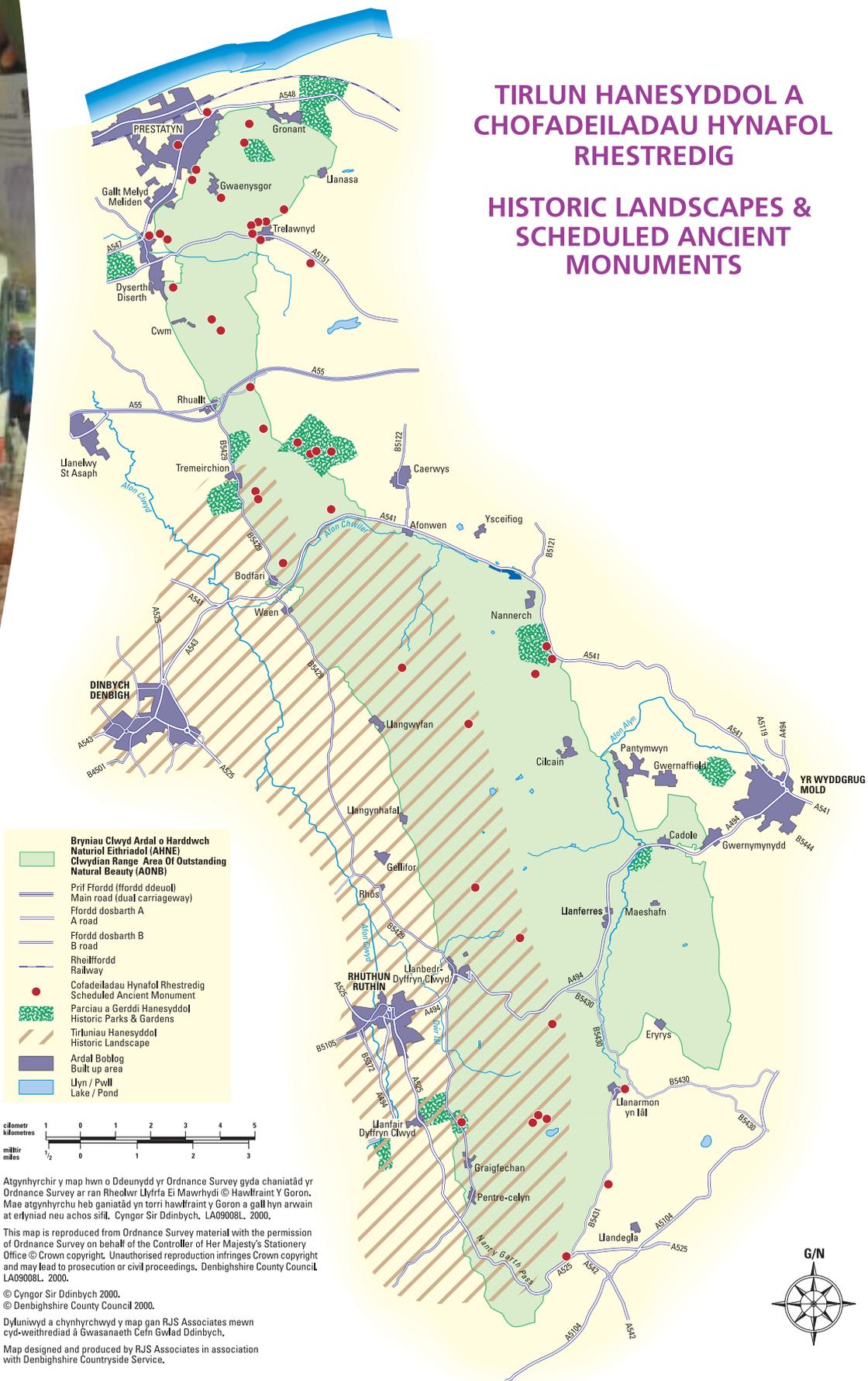
- SAMO1** Through the Heather and Hillforts Project assess the condition of the 6 hillforts, in order to prioritise erosion control measures by 2005.
- SAMO2** Establish a baseline of information regarding the condition of the hillforts utilizing the information from the Cadw 5 yearly survey programme by 2006.
- SAMO3** Initiate a programme to increase the understanding and awareness of the hillfort sites through the Heather and Hillforts project which will assess different audience and media requirements and produce interpretive material by 2008.
- SAMO4** Set up a programme of study of the hillforts under the Heather and Hillforts project which will provide information to feed into an awareness raising programme by 2008.
- SAMO5** Encourage owners of Historic Parks and Gardens within the Clwydian Range to maintain and restore existing parkland features as noted in the Register by encouraging planting of replacement parkland trees.
- SAMO6** Incorporate information gathered as part of the Sites and Monument Record into the continuous management process within the Clwydian Range, ensure updates of information take place at six monthly intervals.





# TIRLUN HANESYDDOL A CHOFADAILADAU HYNAFOL RHESTREDIG

## HISTORIC LANDSCAPES & SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS



## Actions

- SAMA1** Utilize Heather and Hillforts Heritage Lottery Fund (2004-8) application process to implement survey work, erosion repair work and interpretive strategies for the hillforts in the Clwydian Range.
- SAMA2** Formalise 6 monthly exchange of Sites and Monuments Record information.
- SAMA3** Investigate opportunities for grant aid to help with Parks and Gardens restoration projects by 2008.
- SAMA4** Establish contact with owners of the Historic Parks and Gardens within the Clwydian Range, and establish a minimum of 1 project each year. Source possible grant aid and carry out improvement work such as specimen tree planting.
- SAMA5** Develop a management plan for the hillforts in the Clwydian Range through the Heather and Hillforts by 2008.

## Small Historic Features within the Landscape of the Clwydian Range

The landscape and particularly the villages of the Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty contain many small features which cumulatively help enhance the area and give it its character. Some still form a useful function, like K6 red telephone boxes, post boxes and 'green spaces' the village greens and parish commons. Others like old fingerpost road signs, no longer maintained by the Highway Authority, and milestones which have been superseded by modern distance signs have, in places been cared for by local communities, as at Cwm, Waen and Tremeirchion. Wells have been very important in the past as a vital source of water for communities as well as often having important spiritual associations. A good example of a well that has been restored by local residents as an important feature within the village can be seen at Gwaenysgor. Water troughs for animals such as those at Cwm and Afonwen also add to the diversity of our settlements.

These everyday features are often taken for granted but our settlement landscapes would be the poorer without them. It is important to care for and preserve these features by maintaining their functional role where appropriate and also by encouraging public bodies and local people to take ownership of them.

## Objectives

- HFO1** Identify and map features within each community on a standard database with description and comments regarding condition by 2007.
- HFO2** Link information to local sites and monuments record and utilize to initiate a programme of care and conservation. Collect information for one community per year.
- HFO3** Raise awareness of the importance of these features within both the planning and highways environments by providing training sessions to professionals one session per year through the life of the plan
- HFO4** Encourage communities to 'adopt' these features and act as their champions, by raising awareness within community councils and youth groups by 2007.





## Actions

- HFA1** Establish a database format for recording these features by 2004
- HFA2** Gather data from communities by 2007
- HFA3** Conduct CPD (Continuous Professional Development) session for Local Planning and Highways Authorities by 2006
- HFA4** Establish Community Champions by 2007

## Boundaries

Boundary features in the Clwydian Range largely reflect local circumstances and geology. In the limestone areas the boundaries are predominantly stone built, in the more recently enclosed upland areas boundaries are predominantly fence lines and in the agricultural areas of the lower slopes in both the east and west, hedges predominate. These hedges are in a variety of states of health. A dominant boundary within the Range is the stone wall, made from the local shale, which runs along the central area of the ridgeline from Moel Famau to Moel Arthur. This forms the historic boundary between Flintshire and Denbighshire. Flintshire came into existence as part of the Statute of Rhuddlan issued in 1284 by Edward 1 while Denbighshire came into existence as part of the Act of Union between 1536 and 1543, which superceded the Statute of Rhuddlan.



This boundary wall will certainly date from the 16th century and in all likelihood from the 13th century. The boundary wall itself uses the western ramparts of two iron age hillforts to mark its line. This boundary epitomizes the liminal or borderland nature of the Clwydian Range, for centuries the area has acted as a boundary between different cultures with allegiances and alliances shifting across the Range.

## Objectives

- BO1** Identify Boundaries which would benefit from conservation work and target schemes like SDF and the Countryside Grants Scheme to achieve improvement by 2008
- BO2** Use Tir Gofal farms to achieve improvement to boundaries, both drystone and hedged. Actively liaise with Tir Gofal Officers and target farms to encourage applications which will enhance these boundary features.
- BO3** Raise the skills base amongst the local workforce to increase the number of people who can carry out the necessary conservation and repair work.
- BO4** Identify County Farms within the AONB to act as models for this and other conservation work, work with the tenant to achieve measurable improvements to boundaries by 2008.
- BO5** Involve local quarries in the repair work of stone walls by encouraging the donation of materials, investigate the possibility of sponsorship or 'adopt a wall' scheme.

## Action

- BA1** Gather information on the current condition of boundaries throughout the AONB by 2007.
- BA2** Target Countryside Grants scheme and SDF to facilitate boundary improvement. Two schemes per year.
- BA3** Liaise with Tir Gofal officers to help target grant aid to areas/boundaries identified as in need of care and conservation as information from boundary survey emerges.
- BA4** Work with Llysfasi Agricultural College to provide training courses in Countryside Skills as part of their National Diploma course by 2005/6
- BA5** Continue to offer training days for Denbighshire and Flintshire Countryside volunteers for hedge laying and dry stone wall construction. Two of each per year.

## Related Plans

Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales

Heather and Hillforts

Denbighshire's Countryside Strategy

Access to Open Country in the Clwydian Range AONB

Denbighshire Countryside Service Interpretive Strategy

