

Capturing the Clwydian Range

Free

Protecting the Water Vole

Conservation efforts in the Clwydian Range

Where the hills
meet the sea

Countryside a stone's throw away from the coast



A Guide to the Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)



Welcome to 'Capturing the Clwydian Range'

Welcome to the latest edition of Capturing the Clwydian Range, the definitive guide for those looking to learn more about the history, attractions and beauty of the Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The AONB stretches from its northern edge at Prestatyn, down the spine of Flintshire and Denbighshire to the outskirts of Ruthin and Mold, taking in numerous countryside communities that all add a unique quality to the Clwydian Range.

The hills can be seen from far and wide, from the North West of Wales and from the Cheshire Plains and the populated areas of Wirral and Merseyside. It's not a surprise that over half a million of visitors make the journey to the Clwydian Range for that special day out or a holiday in one of Wales' most naturally scenic areas.

There are many organisations involved in managing and protecting the Clwydian Range for future generations. The hills are steeped in history, rich geology and wildlife which needs protecting. This cannot be done without the support of local landowners, businesses, visitors and volunteers.

So what is there to do and see in the Clwydian Range? For a start there are country parks at Loggerheads and Moel Famau that offer miles upon miles of interesting walks, activities for the whole family and opportunities for volunteering.

The views can only be described as breathtaking. Stand on top of the majestic Moel Famau and the panorama will astound you. Looking towards the North Wales coast, you will see the flatlands of the Vale of Clwyd. Looking west and the rolling Denbigh Moors and mountains of Snowdonia are in clear view, looking east to the rural communities of Flintshire, with the more populated towns of Mold and Buckley in the background. Further afield, you can see Wirral and the industrial areas of Merseyside and Cheshire. On a clear day, Blackpool Tower can be seen in the far distance.

We hope that's enough to tempt you to visit the Clwydian Range and share the magical experience with us. We look forward to offering a warm Welsh welcome in our delightful countryside.

Denbighshire Countryside Service

Loggerheads Country Park, Nr Mold, Denbighshire CH7 5LH

☎ 01352 810614 Email: clwydianrangeaonb@denbighshire.gov.uk

www.clwydianrangeaonb.org.uk
www.denbighshire.gov.uk/countryside
www.ridetheclwyds.com
www.loggerheadsarea.co.uk

The views expressed by the contributors are their own. Denbighshire County Council accept no responsibility for any errors or omissions.



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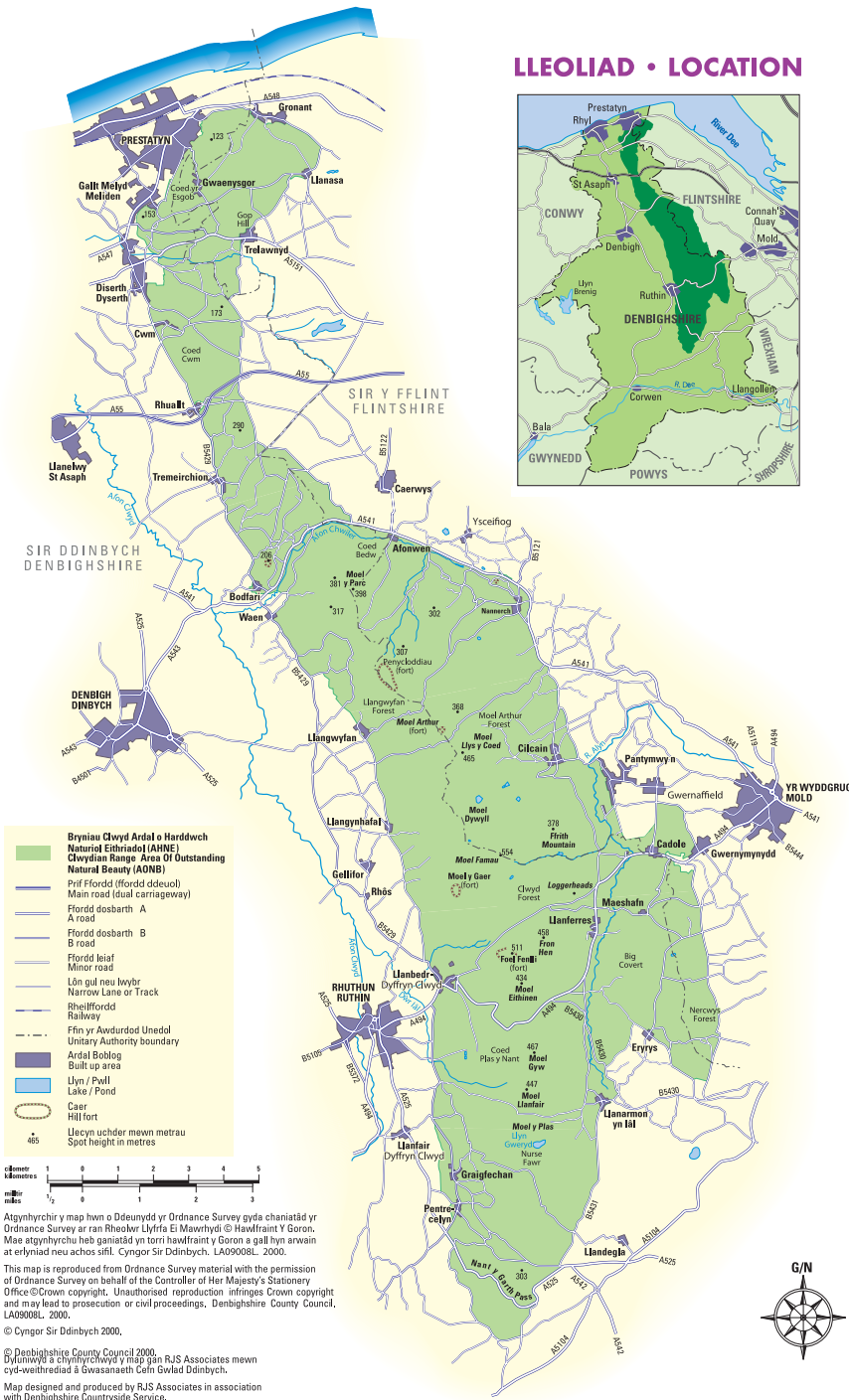
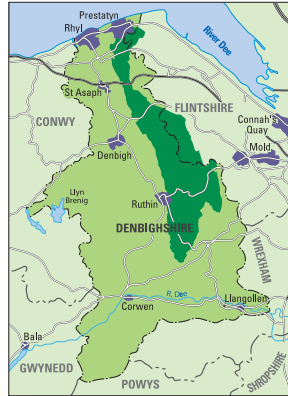
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AONBs and National Parks are the UK's most treasured areas and as such are Protected Landscapes



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Where are we?

The river valleys of the Wheeler and Alyn, which run through parts of the Clwydian Range, have been identified in the AONB management plan as being special features and specific action has been taken to improve the habitats of these areas.

Local consultants were employed to carry out a survey which identified the Bodfari and Loggerheads areas were strongholds for the water vole. However, the habitats were found to be in desperate need of improvement.

Over recent months, work

has been underway to improve habitats, with the support of landowners. Fenced buffer zones have been created around water ditches, to restrict sheep and cattle from grazing when the water vole is not in hibernation. This work allows the vegetation to be eaten by the water voles and the fenced-off areas prevent predators from coming in - it acts as a haven.

Lots of individual habitats have been found in the area, and with a helping hand, they could be joined together to provide an enhanced habitat for the water vole in the Clwydian Range.

Water voles are the UK's fastest declining mammal, down 80% in a century. There has been a catastrophic decline due to over grazing and loss of habitat. However, the greatest threat to the water vole is the American mink.

Plans are in place to do other surveys in the Clwydian Range to identify where water voles can be found.

Llanferres Community Council recently contacted the Countryside Service to ask whether they could have some help with clearing some Himalayan Balsam growing in the area - a highly invasive plant (each flower has 800-1000 seeds). It is taking over river banks in the area. It is an aggressive plant - which means that no other local plants have a chance of growing.

Water Voles: The Facts

The largest type of vole in Britain, they are often mistaken for a rat.

Life span: They live for up to 24 months

Body length: 12-20cm

Weight: 70-320g.

Description: Dark fur, a round body and a short, fat face. They have a long, fur-covered tail.

Habitats: Ditches, rivers, streams and grassed areas.

Food: Mainly green plants that can be found in or near rivers

Protected? Yes, in Britain. American Mink continues to be the biggest and most feared predator.

Protecting the

Did you know that the water vole,
a protected species is alive and kicking



Denbighshire Countryside Service has worked with local residents on up to 6 separate weekends to clear the balsam. By better managing river banks, we are more likely to create habitats where water voles are more likely to relocate.

Education is extremely important - if people spot a water vole in the area, they should contact the Countryside Service, so that it can be investigated and registered. By having a clearer picture of where they are located, we can use our resources to try and protect the water vole and create habitats which will encourage them to breed, allowing a new generation of water vole to make the Clwydian Range river valleys their home.

Himalayan Balsam

(Impatiens glandulifera) belongs to the same family as the Busy Lizzie. It is a tall, annual plant that produces purple flowers in the shape of helmets. Each plant can produce up to 800 seeds. Introduced to the UK in 1839, it can be found especially on riverbanks and increasingly in waste places and has become a problem weed.

The main method of control, and usually the most appropriate, is pulling or cutting plants before they flower and set seed. Conservation bodies regularly organise 'balsam bashing' work parties to clear the weed from marshland and riverbanks.

water vole

in the Clwydian Range?



Mrs Beeton re-vi is recipe for success

The culinary legend Mrs Beeton has inspired the rebirth of one of North Wales' best known cafes.

Jane Clough has embraced the wholesome methods and values of the Victorian kitchen queen to step back in time at Caffi Florence at Loggerheads Country Park, between Ruthin and Mold.

Jane's desire to reduce food miles is also reflected in the way she has adopted the traditional approach championed by Mrs Beeton, one of the most famous cookery writers in British history.

Jane uses local produce - the potatoes are grown in a field just 200 metres away from the café!

The area has been a popular destination for visitors since the early 20th Century and the land was bought by the Crosville Motor Bus Company in 1926. They established tearooms, gardens, a bandstand and a boating lake for day-trippers at Loggerheads. Countless families came on regular weekend bus excursions from



sited

Liverpool and the Wirral to enjoy the delights of the Crosville Tea Rooms.

The area was developed as a country park after being brought into public ownership in 1974. Subsequently, in 1985, the surrounding Clwydian Range - including the magnificent landmark

that is Moel Famau - were not surprisingly officially designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Mother-of-two Jane, 48, lives nearby in the village of Tafarn y Gelyn.

"I got into catering from home, baking cakes and Bara Brith which I sold to local shops and at food festivals and farmers markets. Very quickly though the demand for what I was producing exceeded the capacity of my kitchen at home. I came to the conclusion that I either needed a production unit somewhere or the other option was to go down the café route.

"Whilst I was thinking about which direction to take, the café at Loggerheads became available. It is owned by Denbighshire County Council and they put it out to tender. As I live just a five minute walk away, it was perfect.

"Between us, we have carried out major refurbishments. The kitchen has been gutted and totally re-done, we've knocked down half the external wall and put in sliding doors so in the summer we will open up onto the outside terrace.

"There's a new floor of 'home-grown' oak and a bright, clean feel to the eating area. The floor is part of a project managed by the European-

funded Cadwyn Clwyd rural development agency and is part of their Coetir Clwyd project to promote the use of local timber and local craftspeople.

"I didn't want the chintzy, coffee shop look. I wanted something contemporary that also said tradition and quality because everything we serve is home made. We wanted to be distinctively different and I think we have achieved that.

"All the staff are local people and my food is as local as possible. The potatoes haven't generated a single food mile - they're grown by a local farmer, Sam Griffiths, in a field just 200 yards from the café.

"Our meat comes from Ruthin or Mold and we have organic vegetables from the Welsh College of Horticulture, in Northop, and wonderful Cheshire Farm ice cream.

"Right from the beginning, Denbighshire County Council wanted to do this as a partnership - they wanted a café here that reflected the wonderful quality of the park.

"It's an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, it is just stunning and they wanted the two to be complementary."

bilberry muffins



Muffins are great cakes to make. Very simple yet delicious. Bilberries are a traditional ingredient but this recipe makes use of the bilberries found growing wild on the hills of the Clwydian Range.

The key to great muffins is not to over stir them. When mixing the wet and dry ingredients just stir gently to ensure all the dry ingredients are mixed in. The mix may look lumpy but that doesn't matter.

The recipe makes approximately 12 muffins.

INGREDIENTS

2 Free Range Eggs

240ml Milk

120ml Vegetable Oil

100g Granulated Sugar

100g Soft Brown Sugar

375g Plain Flour

4 Teaspoons Baking Powder

1 Teaspoon Salt

175g Bilberries

25g Demerara sugar for sprinkling on top

- ① Preheat the oven to 200°C (gas mk 6, 400°F).
- ② Place the eggs, oil, sugars and milk in a large mixing bowl and quickly beat together. In another bowl, thoroughly mix the sieved flour, salt and baking powder.
- ③ Add the dry ingredient mix to the liquid, and roughly mix it in - it does not have to be absolutely smooth.
- ④ Stir in the bilberries.
- ⑤ Fill a muffin tray with paper muffin cases and then fill each case to near the top with the muffin mixture.
- ⑥ Sprinkle with Demerara sugar.
- ⑦ Bake the muffins for 25 minutes.

buzzard's

flight

By Diana Rivaz

*Wind from Moel Famau uplifts wings,
Tearing through the bwlch down to Ruthin.
Amongst patchwork violet and cowslip,
the heavy stench of fox lingers,
nicotine on frail skin.
Lines of trees like Spanish combs
stand proud of soft turfed curving mounds.
Offa's Dyke cuts through butterfingerted gorse,
slipping and staggering over limestone.*

*Bulrush and Aaron's Rod reclaim
the bedrock and litter of Pistyll Gwyn.
Rabbit-scrapes and warrens fray and pock
the disused quarry shoulders.
Around the collar jackdaws rise in quick argument,
climbing higher to mob and harry,
subsiding to bicker then lift again
in a ragged, noisy Mexican wave.*

*From working quarries, sirens wail.
Charges blasting hill guts from dawn till dusk
to dress unwitting highways.*

*The wind pauses, caught and cwtshed in the dyke
with the memory of ancient footfall,
tramping the crowns of these worn pegs of hills.*

*Hill forts wheel around the crests,
sheep punctuating their paths, passing blue print secret
through faultless memory of genes.
A solitary voice commands, Co-ome co-ome, co-ome
and distance-fractured answers bump out unevenly
as the flock converges cloud-like on the caller.*

*Heather's wiry, black crabbed fingers hold fast
despite wind's rising thrust and spiral over
Moel y Gaer, Foel Fenlli, Penycloddiau.*

*Small creatures run from wing shadows
in water meadows winding through to Denbigh.
Farms dot the grassy folds and wooded crannies.*

*The land shimmers and teems,
Pauses in silence, breath held.
Stillness blurring at the edges.
Silence unwraps, secrets unfold,
Wings quiver, and the buzzard stoops.*



Diana Rivaz is a Denbighshire based writer who gave up a career in education to follow her passion for writing.

Living and working in the Clwydian Range has given Diana inspiration to write poetry, inspired with ideas by her surroundings.

She hosts regular workshops in Mold and Ruthin and runs workshops on demand in schools and community groups around the area.

Stepping back in time...



An architectural historical delight

A question: What do Wookey Hole in Somerset and the Clwydian Range have in common?

The answer: a man named Professor Boyd Dawkins.

Professor Dawkins (1837-1929) of Manchester University trained as a geologist and became immersed in looking for evidence for paleolithic people across Britain. Visit Wookey Hole in Somerset and you will see Boyd Dawkin's name as someone who excavated the remains of ice age

animals there. The limestone caves of the Clwydian Range did not escape the Professor's attention.

In 1886 Boyd Dawkins was excavating Gop Cairn, Trelawnyd, Flintshire, unsuccessfully trying to establish the date of the site he was invited to

investigate the caves just below. He found a layer containing the bones of hyaena, bison, stag, reindeer, roe deer, horse and woolly rhinoceros, not exactly the types of animals now roaming the Clwydian Range but common during the ice age, perhaps the cave was a hyaena den?. Above the animal bone,



© Moel Fenlli: The Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales.

and

bones from Cae Gwyn and Ffynnon Beuno caves, Tremeirchion. Bones of animals including lion, wild cat, spotted hyaena, wolf, bear, wild boar, woolly rhinoceros and mammoth were found and Professor Boyd Dawkins considered that the cave was at this time being used as a hyaena den.

We look today at the Clwydian Range and note how much it has changed in the last 100 years or so, just imagine how much it has changed since those woolly rhino, bears and hyaena's Professor Boyd Dawkins was finding were wandering around the area!

Imagine a home 2000 years ago. There were houses, neighbours, livestock and friends. People worked and played. The only difference being that people lived high up on wild summits in simple roundhouses, surrounded by impressive, imposing forts and the evidence is still visible today.

The magnificent hillforts of Moel Fenlli, nestled between Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd and Llanferres, and Pen y Cloddiau towering over Llangwyfan and Llandyrnog give the surrounding villages a direct link with people living in the same areas during the Iron Age.

Local artist Tim Morgan of Llandyrnog has created reconstruction paintings of Pen y Cloddiau and Moel Fenlli. Mr Morgan used surveys, aerial photographs and wire-framed models, as well as site visits and photographs to try and capture the colours and mood of the present day hillforts and surrounding landscape.

He chose aerial viewpoints to help with the preliminary sketches, using the topographical descriptions and archaeological records to suggest the way the defences were constructed, as well as some indication of domestic and agricultural activity within the hillforts.

Professor Boyd Dawkins uncovered evidence of bones

from a range of animals, but what kind of wildlife occupy the areas today?

Birds include red and black grouse, ring ouzel, red kite, merlin, chough, hen harrier on both hillforts, and the nightjar is known to be present in the forest that flanks the ramparts at Pen y Cloddiau. You may even spot a Cuckoo! Other species include the Dung Beetle, the Ground Violet Beetle, which has a neon purple streak along its sides, the Green Hair Streak Butterfly, which you can find in groups of 50-60, the Bilberry Bumblebee and the Emperor Moth.

Moel Fenlli: The Facts

- ❖ In July 1816 a hoard of more than 1500 Roman coins were found dating back from 250 to 307 AD. The 43 surviving coins are on display in the Grosvenor Museum, Chester.
- ❖ There is a Bronze Age barrow on the highest point on the hill.
- ❖ Artefacts found there include Roman pottery, flint arrow heads, a stone axe and a stone hammer.



Pen y Cloddiau: The Facts

- ❖ Three parishes meet in the middle of the fort - Nannerch, Ysceifiog and Llandyrnog
- ❖ Largest hillfort in Wales, rising over 1400ft, made up of an area of 21 hectares.
- ❖ The name literally translates as Hill or Head of the Ditches.
- ❖ The rocks forming the hillside consist of deep water mudstones and sandstones and there is geological evidence of water flowing over the sea floor.

in a separate chamber, he found the remains of 14 people, buried perhaps five thousand years ago.

Boyd Dawkins became involved in debate and disagreements which developed in the 1880s following the discovery of Pleistocene animal



On the trail of history

Geology is considered to be a male-dominated industry and this was no exception in the early part of the last century.

However, the work of four female geologists provide a fascinating insight into the history of the Clwydian Range.

More than a century ago, Gertrude Elles, Ethel Shakespear, Ethel Woods and Margaret Crosfield were sent out to unravel the complex rocks of the Clwydian Range and the Berwyn Mountains. It was considered 'suitable and appropriate work for women, as it required great patience and perseverance'!

The women used tiny, now extinct, colonial creatures called graptolites for this work and took fossil specimens from the rocks all over the Clwydian Range and the Berwyn Mountains.

Ethel Woods and Margaret Crosfield concentrated on the central part of the Clwydian Range, but until recently their work had been forgotten. They detailed their work in a map of their findings and a list of locations and specimens. The hunt was on to try to find these specimens and if possible their original field notebooks.

The trail started with a reference in the annual report of the Chester Society of Natural Science in 1924. Initially these specimens could not be found but re-cataloguing of specimens revealed a collection with distinctive labels that could be correlated to the specimens and localities from the original paper. Further work revealed that another part of the collection was lodged with the British Geological Survey in Nottinghamshire. Specimens were found there, together with their original field notebooks.

These books contain a huge amount of personal detail as well as their tentative ideas on the geology of the Clwydian Range. More than 30 detailed notebooks tell us where they stayed, their thoughts on the quality of their accommodation, how they were feeling and of day to day life in North Wales a hundred years ago. One lady recounts a story of how she was roundly harangued by a landowner for being out without a chaperone.

The specimens, notebooks and sites have now been catalogued and conserved so the important contribution that these intrepid women made to the history of geology is preserved for future generations.

mouth-watering delights

The Mold Food and Drink Festival, launched in 2006, offers the chance for food producers and businesses in the Clwydian Range and other regions to display and showcase their produce to hundreds of people that flock to the festival.

Mold is a gateway town on the western side of the Clwydian Range and is only a few minutes away by car.

The 2008 Mold Food and Drink Festival is taking place on the weekend of September 20 and 21 at New Street Car Park in Mold.

The Festival has gone from strength to strength since the first event in 2006. In 2007, in only the Festival's second year, nearly 12,000 visitors came through the gates.

Like the previous two successful events, there will be live cookery demonstrations by celebrity chefs on both days. There will be even more local producers exhibiting this year, as well as entertainment, other demonstrations and activities throughout the weekend.

For more information on the Mold Food and Drink Festival 2008, please visit the website

www.moldfoodfestival.co.uk



Out & About in the



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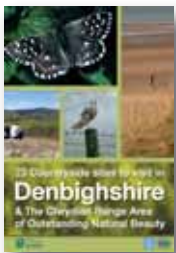
Ridetheclwyds.com

is a must for all mountain bike enthusiasts and the official website www.ridetheclwyds.com offers downloadable maps, information on bike specific facilities, 3D 'flythroughs', details of accommodation and news and events.



Enjoy Prestatyn's Countryside

is your guide to exploring walks in the Prestatyn area. See feature on page 18 for further information.



23 Countryside sites

to visit in Denbighshire and the Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is designed to show you the countryside sites in the area, how you get to them, what you can do when you get there and why they are such valuable places to visit and protect.

Discover Moel Famau and Loggerheads

provides you with all you need to know about Moel Famau and facilities for walking, relaxing, cycling, horse riding and gliding, as well as information on how to get there.

Loggerheads Industrial Trail

gives you details of a mile long trail revealing the industrial heritage of the Park in just one hour.

Loggerheads Discovery Trail

is your definitive guide to a mile long trail revealing the wildlife and history of the Park in one hour.



e Clwydian Range



the Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty?
websites and leaflets produced to promote the region.



The Out and About

booklet offers a wealth of activities in the Denbighshire countryside throughout the year. From Reptiles and Raptors to Volcanic Eruptions, from Teddy Bears Picnics to Forest Fun, there's something to entertain the whole family in our wonderful countryside.



The Volunteer Programme

booklet gives information on the practical opportunities in the countryside for which we need your help. There is a whole range of opportunities, with tasks ranging from tree planting to dry stone walling, footpath construction to creating wildlife habitats.



Rural Walks in Flintshire

A guide to the best walking opportunities in Flintshire - illustrated with clear maps, directions and information. Includes a guide to the east of the Clwydian Range.



Rural Walks in Denbighshire

A guide to the best walking opportunities in Denbighshire - illustrated with clear maps, directions and information. Includes a guide to the west of the Clwydian Range.

Booklets are available free at Tourist Information Centres in Flintshire and Denbighshire, as well as libraries and Wepre, Greenfield and Loggerheads Country Parks. Alternatively, they can be found on www.flintshire.gov.uk/countryside or www.denbighshire.gov.uk/countryside and www.clwydianrangeaonb.org



Caught on film

Two schools have been helping to bring back to life archive films of the Llanarmon and Llanferres areas taken in the 1940s and 50s.

Pupils from Ysgol Bro Farnau have stepped back in time to work alongside freelance community film-makers Lal and Huw Davies and local expert Lorna Jenner to help bring to life a series of cine films of the Clwydian Range taken over 60 years

ago by the late W.H. Crawford. The project to produce an educational resource pack based on the cine films of the late W.H Crawford, was made in the Llanarmon yn lâl and Llanferres areas. Mr Crawford was a remarkable gentleman who had the foresight and

expertise to make a series of cine-films. These films contain a substantial amount of material, unusually shot in colour and include footage of community activities in Llanarmon, Llanferres, Maeshafn and Tafarn y Gelyn. Over the past four years, staff from



They brought the films to the attention of the National Screen and Sound Archive in Aberystwyth who recognised their importance and agreed to digitise the films and most importantly house the films in the right conditions.

An edited version of some of the original film footage was shown to local groups during 2006 and 2007 and generated considerable local interest. Some contemporary filming was done with local residents and an extensive archive of old photographs, press cuttings and memorabilia has also been gathered.

A number of older residents agreed to help pupils from Ysgol Bro Famau in



Headteacher Sian Hilton said: "The educational benefits of the project are considerable. It is an inter-generational skills exchange, with the older people supplying the memories and the

younger people supplying the technical skills. The children have also developed their investigative and research skills, scripting skills and interviewing techniques and have had film-making training using industry standard digital editing equipment."



David Shiel, Countryside Officer for the Clwydian Range AONB, said: "The films provide a unique window on

Llanarmon and Llanferres to use the original films to learn about life in their communities in the 1940s and 50s. The children recorded interviews with the older members of the community who themselves featured in the original films as children. The pupils then used clips of the original 1950s film to illustrate their interviews to produce a series of short clips.

life in this area 50 years ago and being able to get the older members of the community to talk to the youngsters about these times has been fascinating. In making their own films, the children are making something of real value to the school and the community and contributing to the mantle of William Crawford by adding to the film archive of the area."

They will now form the basis for a range of educational material the school is helping to produce, based around the Crawford cine-films and linking to the National Curriculum.

Emma, a Year 6 pupil, said: "I really enjoyed learning about our village. I loved hearing about all the naughty things they did at school and what they got up to in the holidays!"

Denbighshire Countryside Service and the Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty have worked with Mr Crawford's family to safeguard these films and ensure they are available for future generations.

With its rolling beaches and views of the Irish Sea, Prestatyn is well known as a Victorian seaside resort and a mecca for holidaymakers, year after year.

But take a look inland and, within a mile of the sea, you will be pleasantly surprised to find the northern end of the Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This is the gateway to miles of rolling hills straddling the borders of Denbighshire and Flintshire and a must for keen walkers and countryside lovers wanting to sample breathtaking scenery.

Offa's Dyke National Trail follows part of an ancient border that separates Wales from England. The trail starts at Prestatyn and ends in Chepstow. But you don't need to walk the whole 177 miles of the path to sample some fascinating countryside steeped in history, and only a stone's throw from the coast.

Take a walk from the sea up Prestatyn High Street where there is a wealth of shops, places for refreshments and local sites of interest before you venture up to the hills.

Prestatyn Hillside, which offers superb views out to sea and across the Vale of Clwyd, is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, in recognition of its rich plant life and oak woodland.

Wildflowers like harebell, wild thyme and knapweed thrive on the grassy upper slopes. Rare juniper plants are also found on the hillside, one of only

Where the mountains meet the sea



three conifers native to Britain. The ancient oak woodland of Bishop's Wood, Coed yr Esgob survived tree clearing as the slopes were too steep for cultivation. Many trees and shrubs grow here and clumps of ferns thrive in the damp woodland. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, the hillside was mined for lead and calcite and quarried for limestone. Nature has reclaimed the slopes, but evidence of its industrial past can still be found.



The Prestatyn - Dyserth Way is an old disused railway line that runs along the base of Prestatyn Hillside. The railway linked Dyserth and Meliden with the Chester to Holyhead line at Prestatyn and was used to transport limestone and lead products from 1869 until the mid 20th century. It is now a flat surfaced path suitable for use by families with pushchairs and wheelchairs, as well as cyclists and walkers.

For more information about walking the Offa's Dyke National Trail, including maps and guide books, visit the Countryside Centre at Loggerheads Country Park **01352 810586** (weekends and holidays) and **01352 810614** (office hours off season), or visit **www.nationaltrail.co.uk**

'Explore Prestatyn's Countryside' leaflet is available from Loggerheads Country Park free of charge.

Or visit **prestatyn.org.uk**