

# THE Clwyds

Capturing

FREE

Have mountain bike  
will travel...

A beginner's tale

Welcoming pubs  
for walkers

History &  
Hidden Treasures



# contents

- 3 Welcome to 'Capturing the Clwyds'
- 4 Where are we?
- 5 History & Hidden Treasures
- 6 Take a little time to go back to nature
- 8 An untypical spring day in the life of a Countryside Warden
- 10 A view of my own • Welsh lives
- 13 Colomendy 1959
- 14 Have mountain bike will travel.....
- 16 An inspiring landscape
- 17 Ask the Warden
- 18 Welcoming pubs for walkers



*"The Clwydian Range is truly  
We hope you enjoy this, the first issue of  
interesting, informative and an essential*

Hugh Evans, Chair of the Clwydian Range AONB Joint Advisory



# Welcome to 'Capturing the Clwyds'



*one of Britain's finest landscapes.  
'Capturing the Clwyds', finding it  
guide to planning your future visits."*

Committee



This Guide has been put together by people who live and work in, visit and have great memories of the stunning landscape of the Clwydian Range. The facts, photography, descriptions, memories and articles have been brought together to 'Capture the Clwyds', hopefully adding to your appreciation of the area and giving you a reason to visit. Whether you enjoy active adventure, relaxing walks, fabulous views or traditional crafts, we have it all.

The area was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1985 and is the most recently designated of the five AONBs in Wales. Together with the three National Parks they form the only landscapes that have statutory protection in Wales.

The Clwydian Range stretches from the coastal resort of Prestatyn in the North, to the deep wooded valley of Nant y Garth near Llandegla in the south. The highest peak is crowned by the Jubilee Tower at Moel Famau, 554 meters.

The landscape is characterised by sweeping moorland, the purple-clad hills dissected by limestone crags and valleys. Most of the spectacular views can be enjoyed from the Offa's Dyke National Trail which crests the highest hills in the Range.

Loggerheads and Moel Famau Country Parks form the heart of the AONB where there is a huge range of activities for visitors to enjoy. Further information can be found in the Countryside Centre at Loggerheads.

We hope you enjoy this guide and take the opportunity to 'Capture the Clwyds' yourself.

**Howard Sutcliffe, AONB Officer**  
**David Shiel, Assistant AONB Officer**

Denbighshire Countryside Service  
Loggerheads Country Park,  
Nr Mold, Denbighshire. CH7 5LH

☎ 01352 810614

Email: [clwydianrangeaonb@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:clwydianrangeaonb@denbighshire.gov.uk)

[www.clwydianrangeaonb.org.uk](http://www.clwydianrangeaonb.org.uk)  
[www.denbighshire.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/countryside)  
[www.ridetheclwyds.com](http://www.ridetheclwyds.com)  
[www.loggerheads-wales.co.uk](http://www.loggerheads-wales.co.uk)

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





# where are we?



**Travel by bus in Denbighshire**  
and help to  
reduce pollution!



**The Passenger  
Transport Group,**

Denbighshire County Council,  
Caledfryn, Smithfield Road,  
Denbigh, Denbighshire, LL16 3RJ.



**01824 706968**

[www.denbighshire.gov.uk/highways](http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/highways)

**CYNGOR**  
**Sir Ddinbych**  
**Denbighshire**  
**COUNTY COUNCIL**

Offa's Dyke Path  
Clwydian Range Area of  
Outstanding Natural Beauty



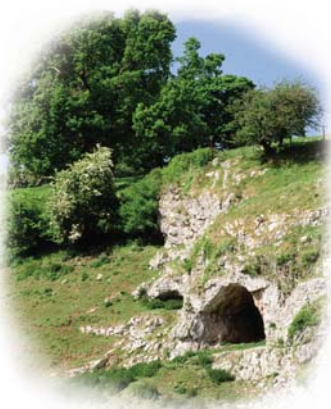
Area of Outstanding  
Natural Beauty (AONB)





## Before 10,000 years ago Palaeolithic/Old Stone Age

People were hunters, travelling through the landscape following the seasonal movements of animals. Tools and animal bones (Hyena, Rhinoceros, Lion, Bear, Horse, Fox and Deer) have been found at Cae Gwyn and Ffynnon Beuno limestone caves in Tremeirchion.



## 2000 years ago Roman

The 20th legion, based in Chester, developed a small settlement in Prestatyn for lead mining, leaving evidence such as a Bath House. Lead may have been extracted further south in the Alyn Valley too, and there are hints that a Roman road crosses the Range at Bwlch pen Barras (Moel Famau) heading for the Roman settlement at Ruthin. What the hillfort inhabitants of nearby Foel Fenlli might have thought of the Romans is pure guesswork although Roman coins and pottery have been found there.



# History & Hidden Treasures

■ Fiona Gale, County Archaeologist

## 10,000 years ago Mesolithic/Middle Stone Age

The hunter gatherers probably stayed in small, seasonal camps. They used delicate tools of flint and chert, to make useful objects like spears and fishing hooks. They left little trace in the Clwydian Range except for a few tools at places like Mia Hall and possibly part of a burial in a cave near Llanarmon.

## 6000 years ago Neolithic New Stone Age

Farming began to take over from hunting and different stone tools like polished stone axes made at Penmaenmawr have been found. These were probably used for tree clearance, to make fields for crop and animal farming. Gop Hill is the UK's second largest prehistoric mound. It may have been built at this time to act as a marker for burials in caves on the slope below.

## 4000 years ago Bronze Age

People had perfected the art of farming, clearing land for fields, leaving the hilltops treeless. They had also learnt how to smelt metal, first copper and then bronze. We know very little of how people lived in the Range at this time, but we know quite a lot about what happened when they died. Small mounds, shown on maps as tumulus, cairns or barrows, conceal burials and cremations. These are found throughout the Range, particularly on hilltops such as Moel y Parc and Moel Eithinen.

## 2700 years ago Iron Age

By 700BC, people had learnt how to make tools from iron as well as bronze and stone. Unlike the Bronze Age, little is known about people's deaths, but there is a lot of evidence of where they lived. The remains of six major hillforts in the Clwydian Range show a need to build massive, well defended places to live - why? Possibly colder, wetter weather led to the desire for better shelter. Or maybe elements of power and hierarchy became part of life. There are still very visible hillfort features in the landscape today.



## 1500 years ago Medieval

The medieval period followed the withdrawal of Rome. From the 11th century the Clwyds formed a natural boundary between areas of more English influence to the east and more Welsh influence to the west.

The pattern of churches and villages we see today, began to spread throughout the Range. Distinctive double naved churches like Llanarmon, Llandyrnog, Llangynhafal and Cilcain were some of the first established, although there are more simple churches like the small, ruined church of St Peter in Llanbedr.

From the end of the 13th century to the early 20th century much of the central area of the Clwydian Range was owned by Ruthin Castle. Many of the route-ways through the Range would have been used by farmers and merchants.



## 150 years ago Industrial

The Industrial Revolution had a huge impact on the landscape. In the 18th and 19th centuries lead mining developed in the limestone areas of Prestatyn Hillside, Dyserth and the Alyn Valley.

These areas would have been teeming with people, noise, pollution and production. For a short time gold was mined near Cilcain but there was never enough to make anyone's fortune.

Quarrying has taken place as long as people have built stone houses and field boundaries and it continues today. Moel Hiraddug in the north, an iron age hillfort has been partially destroyed by both quarrying and mining for Cobalt. Iron reserves have also been mined in the Range at Bodfari and Marian Cwm. Although steam engines were used in these industries, water power was vital. The popular Leete Path from Loggerheads Country Park follows a 3 mile long leat which took water from the Alyn to power mines in Rhydymwyn.



## 1985

## The Clwydian Range is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty,

joining Anglesey Coast, Llyn Peninsula, Gower, Wye Valley and the 3 National Parks; Snowdonia, Pembrokeshire Coast and Brecon Beacons, as Wales' finest landscapes.



# Take a little time to go back to nature

I'm not an enthusiastic long distance walker so places like Loggerheads Country Park are ideal for me.

Greeted by the view of Moel Famau as you approach the entrance to the Park, the immediate (outstanding) beauty of the landscape is apparent followed closely by the looming limestone cliffs.

My favourite time of year to visit is in the Autumn and I'm blessed on this fine sunny October afternoon to write about the journey I'm about to take.

Leaves are falling thick and fast in the cool breeze leaving a crunchy layer underfoot. The River Alyn bubbles and gurgles under the bridge gaining flow, too deep and fast now to sink beneath the porous limestone as it does in the summer.

The sound of the rushing water drowns out other noises immersing me in a kind of meditative state of moving. On the other side, the limestone cliffs reach up into the trees giving way to a lesser slope further on. Large beech trees block out a lot of the light here, leaving the forest floor flora free with only the elephant grey of the limestone breaking through at random intervals.

The river quietens as I take the path away from the meander, letting in the sounds of winter birds and children playing. In contrast, interesting remains offer a subtle reminder of the industrial history of the park, when the trees were few and men and boys would spend daylight hours scraping the lead in the tunnels below for their wage.

One of the things I love about coming back to this area is the friendliness of the people. Living now in a more urban area, it is a pleasant, reminiscent feeling to have strangers greet me. Are we now so consumed by our busy lives that these odd moments of sharing something in common with a stranger is something to note?

Moving away from the river, the ascent equates to good aerobic exercise. Although there are many places to stop, I stride up the steps - planning on saving myself a trip to the gym and a few pounds!



Following the carefully restored drystone wall, the beech trees capture my attention. Although they are not native to this area, the colours in dappled shades of green, brown, orange and red redeem them beautifully. The autumn sunlight drifts lazily through the trees exposing the first glimpse of the spectacular view to Moel Famau. Nearing the top of the cliffs, the trees here, more open to the elements, have lost many more leaves, leaving plenty on the woodland floor for me to collect for my Christmas cards.

The first main view point could be the only one on this journey. Framed by the rustling beech boughs, with the sun slowly lowering to the left, the jigsaw of heather moorland and conifer plantation marks the bulk of Moel Famau, giving way to the Jubilee Tower remains at the summit.







I'm distracted by strange grunts and barks and I'm delighted to see the crows bullying three buzzards. Although sounding a little mean, it is an amazing sight! It is just my luck that by the time I reach the clearing on top of the cliffs they've flown away avoiding my enthusiastic camera.

Sitting on an outcrop of limestone I can take in the unusually designed buildings of Colomendy, the 'We three Loggerheads' pub, across the tea gardens and up to the majestic peak of Moel Famau. This has got to be one of the best and most relaxing views. Being fascinated by form, my attention is drawn to the canopy of trees leading away down the slopes, all of my favourite colours blend into a rich carpet full of texture, tempting me to touch.

The surface of the limestone pavement is thick with herbs and moss bringing a fragrant bounce to my route heading into the moody, coniferous part of the Park.

The aroma of pine and the moist mulch of the woodland floor takes over, relaxing me - and the fact that the rest of the journey is downhill helps!

There is a real higgledy-piggledy mesh of trees here, intertwining, as if in deep conversation - fuelling my overacting imagination... another story..



Back to the final leg, I take the steeper steps down to the river. My concentration here is absorbed by the descent, and the satisfying ache of my leg muscles appreciating the stretch!

Once at the bridge again I'm rewarded by a dipper perched on a rock in the rapids, bobbing his head to a tune known only to him.

Sitting on one of the café benches with a much needed cup of hot chocolate, I can gaze up at the cliffs and feel like I've achieved something. The time on the mini clock tower above the Countryside Centre surprises me - my thoroughly enjoyable immersion in nature has only taken me an hour and a half! All for the meagre cost of the car park, a hot chocolate and a small amount of my time to treat myself - don't we all deserve that?

■ Vanessa Cooke







# An untypical spring life of a Countryside

Whilst most sane people are snugly tucked away in a warm bed sleeping soundly, spare a thought for the Countryside Wardens who at this time of year face several early morning starts in order to count black grouse.

**03:33** Woken up by getting kicked in the shins from loving partner reminding me to get out of bed and switch off the 'annoying' alarm!

**03:55** After a mug of strong black coffee my head and shins feel a bit better and I'm ready to set off to Moel Famau.

**04:30** I arrive at the Forestry Car Park, Moel Famau and despite the early start, there is a good number of staff and volunteers present. It takes a while before I recognise every one in the dark amongst the head torches - they've all got that slightly stunned and

subdued early morning look on their faces. We divide ourselves into small groups and disperse over Moel Famau to count the male grouse who at this time of year congregate into leks - traditional displaying arenas - to perform a ritualistic courtship display (the grouse that is, not us!).

This is really the culmination of a years worth of work on the heather moorland and forest of Moel Famau. Black Grouse numbers declined so much in the 1990s that their survival in Wales was a real concern. A concerted effort from a range of organisations including the RSBP, Countryside Council for Wales, Forestry Commission and local authorities has seen something of a turn around in their fortunes. A massive amount of work has taken place to improve their habitat in key areas, including Moel Famau.







day in the  
Warden!!

As I sit in darkness on the edge of the forest I am able to reflect on the work that has taken place here this year, the heather burning we did over the winter with volunteers and the cutting of heather with a local farming contractor. Three school groups also helped us to plant 300 broad leaf trees just inside the forest on a large clear fell just below where I am sitting. I wonder how those trees are getting on. I am also conscious that in July we surveyed the area with spaniels and found that a female (grey hen) had made her nest not far from where I am sitting and had reared three young chicks. If they had survived the winter I may see them again now trying their chances on the lek

**05:30** It is a glorious morning. As the full moon retreats for another night, up pops an egg-yolk coloured sun revealing the sleepy Vale of Clwyd. The birds of the moorland and forest awaken and start singing their dawn chorus and through the cacophony of sound we manage to hear the strange, primeval bubbling of the black grouse. So as not to disturb the birds, we crawl on our hands and knees to a suitable vantage point and watch three males skid and dance within their lek in an attempt to woo Mrs Black Grouse.

**07:30** We all return to the car park to feedback our findings. It's a bit like the football scores coming in - 4 at the northern lek - one down from last year, - five at the southern lek two up on last year... And so it goes on until everyone has returned to the car park. This year 13 male grouse were recorded which is two more than last year. At least some of the chicks had survived the winter. This figure may seem very low but when put into context that the population in Wales is only 220 pairs; it highlights not only how rare this bird is but also the importance of the management and monitoring to safeguard its future.

**08:00** Many hungry stomachs help boost the local economy as we head for a good hearty mega breakfast at the Loggerheads café. Should get me through the rest of the day.

**09:00** Back in the office I reply to phone messages and e-mails... after all this is the twenty-first century and computers have caught up with us office dodging wardens!

**10.00** We fight off the temptation to sleep and head to Moel Findeg Local Nature Reserve, as part of an ongoing woodland management scheme. Selected Silver Birch is thinned and members of 'Friends of Moel Findeg' come and help us remove the larger lengths of timber so that it can be sold as fire wood. The money raised from this scheme is poured directly back into the management of this site.

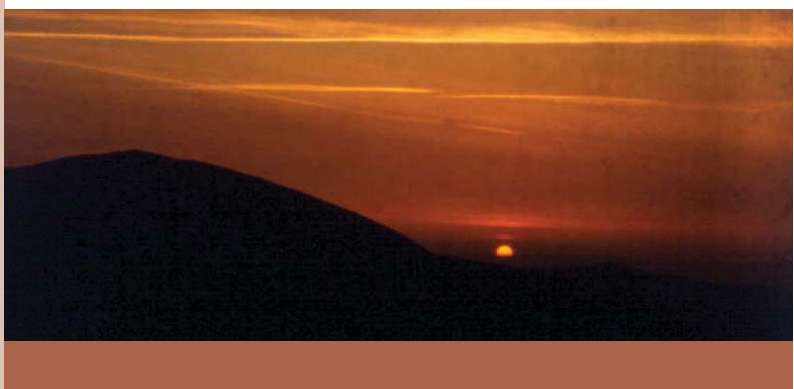
**13.30** It's back to the office for me. The day is starting to catch up with me, but I need to prepare a slide show to present to Llanferres Gardening Society tomorrow night.

Twelve hours into the day and I'm finally at home... although starting to hallucinate! I'm drifting towards sleep when my three cats agree that it's feeding time and decide to use my face as a trampoline to remind me. Luckily once they're satisfied - sleep takes hold...//////////

If you would like to help the management or monitoring of the Black Grouse

 01352 810614

■ Rhun Jones





# A view of my own



## Welsh lives

■ Gwen Evans

Offa's Dyke, to the east of the AONB, was at one time the border between England and Wales, so many of the villages of the AONB could be described as 'frontier' villages. Until recently however, the area was predominantly Welsh speaking. In all the villages of the AONB there still remain remnants of the Welsh culture and the Welsh language.

all subjects are taught through the medium of Welsh. Many parents for whom Welsh is not a first language often choose these schools for their children.

At Cilcain a bilingual Gŵyl, (festival) is held annually in October, where there is a very high standard of musical events both traditional and modern. The Choir (Côr Cilcain), conducted by Perin Clement Evans, has a repertoire of pieces sung in Welsh and English as well as in other European languages.

In the Royal Oak at Hendre there is a regular Saturday evening sing-song to organ accompaniment. A bilingual booklet is provided so that singers can sing in both Welsh and English. Soloists are regularly invited here to entertain in the Welsh language. Learners of the language are given a warm welcome with games like 'treasure hunt' and quizzes designed to build confidence in their use of the language. Many of the other villages provide Welsh classes for non-Welsh speakers with



In many village chapels and churches religious services are conducted in Welsh. As you visit the area, you will notice that many, if not most, of the houses and streets have Welsh names. All children are taught the language in schools from an early age, the aim being for all children to be fluent in both English and Welsh languages. The ones for whom Welsh is a first language are often taught in 'Welsh Medium' schools, both primary and secondary, where



The weather forecast mentioned rain as I set off from the lay-by at Llanferres to climb my favourite hill on the Clwydian Range. The clouds were low, dark, and ominous. However the weather was a small inconvenience. I was doing what I had done many times in the past - climbing Bryn Alyn for a dose of my favourite view on the Clwydian Range. This experience (and the exercise) is indeed therapeutic, medicinal even. It has proved a stress-buster, a relaxation, an opportunity for reflection and a chance to think on numerous occasions. Although I was on my own this time, the walk has also served as a period of peaceful discussion and decision-making with my wife (a rare event with two little children) and a chance to catch up on news and gossip with friends and relatives.

As I started up the steeper climb from the track on to the limestone escarpment, it struck me that doing a very familiar walk is not about 'the doing'. We know where we are going. There is no route finding, no map reading. We know what is round the corner. It is about other things - the changes in the seasons, the detail of the surroundings, the comments and opinions of our companions, our thoughts and reactions. Every time we repeat the experience this recipe is different and makes even the familiar special. We wrap it up with

our mood, our demeanor and feelings. We use it to sort our problems and troubles, make the unclear clear. We are not merely looking for a vista; we are searching for a personal view- something that touches us in a deeper way even if we don't realise it.

In no time at all I was on the top. A sharp cold breeze tested my hood but the rain had stayed away. I was taking in the vista of the southern Clwydian Range - Moel Llanfair, Moel Gyw, Moel Eithinen, up to, on my far right, the highest point of the Range, Moel Famau. As if to reward me for my efforts the sun came out briefly and changed the vista to a view, my view. It never fails. I was back on track again. Perhaps there was time for a quick pint in the Druids Inn!

The walk to Bryn Alyn begins at Plymog layby, west of the village of Llanferres. GR SJ 187 598.

### Other great views on, or of, the Clwydian Range.

- ▶ From the top of Moel Famau, the highest point.
- ▶ From Penycloddiau hillfort looking south down the range and west into the Vale.
- ▶ From the B5105, between Ruthin and Clawdd Newydd.

What's your favourite view?



qualified tutors.

Other public houses in the area, for example, The Three Pigeons in Graigfechan, hold evenings of Welsh entertainment regularly.

There are five monthly Welsh language newspapers which, between them, cover the area. Papur Fama covers the Mold area, y Bedol the Ruthin area, y Bigwn reports on activities in the villages closer to Denbigh, Y Glannau has news of the area nearer the coast, y Clawdd the areas to the South. All the contributors and editors are volunteers. There is a tradition in some villages of issuing an invitation to a social evening at the local village hall where volunteers fold and pack the papers to be delivered to homes in Wales and posted abroad the following day.

The Eisteddfod tradition continues strongly in the area. These are contests for children and adults including music and literature, these often continue late into the night. Both the long standing annual eisteddfodau at Treuddyn and Llandyrnog draw competitors from the

AONB. The Urdd Eisteddfod is an national, annual competition and celebration which takes place in a different area of Wales each year. For a whole week in May, children and young people from all parts of Wales will be travelling to the area to compete.

In some of the villages there is a branch of Merched y Wawr, a national organisation for women - meetings are held monthly and Welsh learners are made very welcome.

Any more information on Welsh or bilingual groups, and activities in the Range would be appreciated.





# Ask the Warden

## Motivating teenagers.

My husband and I love walking, but it is really difficult to encourage our teenage children to come out with us. Do you have any ideas on how we can motivate them and convert them to the excitement of the countryside?



Our annual programme of events 'Out & About in Denbighshire's Countryside' offers a huge variety of guided walks, family activities and practical tasks. Many of our guided walks are themed, i.e., Moth trapping, historical, tree myths, etc. There is also a Maths and Animal Puzzle Trail at Coed Moel Famau and a Rubbings Trail at Loggerheads. This may give them a purpose to walk and show them that you can be entertained and find out some fascinating facts about the countryside.



## Identifying boundaries

We live on the outskirts of the AONB and our area is just as beautiful, why aren't we within the designated area?

The Clwydian Range was designated in 1985 and as part of the function is as a planning designation, a definite boundary has to be set with no vagueness. The boundary is drawn onto a map and it is difficult to accurately apply that to the ground. Landmarks such as roads and rivers are used to make it easier to follow and identify what is in and what is out of the designation.

## Help for teachers

I'm a teacher and I'm very interested in setting up a project in our class based on the countryside and the effects of visitors on it. How can I get more information?



You can visit our website [www.clwydianrangeaonb.org.uk](http://www.clwydianrangeaonb.org.uk). There are also downloadable Teachers Packs with photocopyable worksheets available from [www.denbighshire.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/countryside). If you have any further questions please ring our office at Loggerheads Country Park on 01352 810614.

## Funding for AONB projects

My friend lives in the next parish from me and has been involved in the design of a fantastic leaflet about the history and wildlife of her village. We are also within the AONB and are interested in doing one too, how do we go about it?

The Clwydian Range AONB manages a fund called the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF). This scheme can provide 50% funding towards projects that improve, support and promote the heritage landscape, biodiversity and culture of the AONB. ☎ 01352 810614 for an information pack to get you started.

## Reducing dog waste

I was really impressed that you were clamping down on irresponsible dog owners that don't clear up after their dog. I thought that having staff on site to give out information and goody bags was a great idea. I also liked the biodegradable, green dog bags you were providing, where can we get more from?

We have them available in the Countryside Centre at Loggerheads Country Park.

## Opportunities to help your countryside.

I'm really interested in a career in countryside management and was hoping for some advice on how I could 'get my foot in the door'!

I feel like I want to do something worthwhile



in my free time and I have a passion for the countryside. I'm also keen to get some fresh air and exercise. Are there any ways I can help in the conservation work you do.

Absolutely, we have a valued team of volunteers who work really hard on all sorts of aspects of our conservation work, from tree clearance to drystone walling and plant and wildlife surveys. Our 'Out & About in Denbighshire's Countryside' leaflet has a number of taster volunteer days throughout the year for you to get an idea of what is involved. Once you know what you like we have a full 'Volunteer's Programme' which comes out twice a year with long term projects that enable you to see the fantastic effect we can have on the environment. ☎ 01352 810614 or visit [www.clwydianrangeaonb.org.uk](http://www.clwydianrangeaonb.org.uk)



## What's the Heather & Hillfort Project

A few people have mentioned a Heritage Lottery Bid to me called Heather & Hillforts. What is it all about?



Heather & Hillforts is a project that will look after both the archaeology and the ecology of the fragile heather uplands of the Clwydian Range and Llantysilio Mountain. It will also raise awareness and understanding of this special environment and link communities back to what was once a vital part of the local economy. In 2003 we applied for a project planning grant which was used to further the application. The Heritage Lottery Fund have now approved our Landscape Partnership Stage 1 Application for the project. This means that £1.5 million has been set aside for the project and £101K will be granted to us to further develop the bid to bring it to the Stage 2 and (we hope) final approval. If all goes according to plan we will be in a position to start the work on the ground in early 2007.



One of the great joys of my life, in recent years, has been the chance to relive the part of my childhood spent at Colomendy near Loggerheads. This was due to a reunion group being set up for boarders in 1990. I went as a boarder to Colomendy in 1956 when I was thirteen years old and left just after I turned fifteen. I can honestly say that those two years leave me filled with many happy memories.

I was born and bred in Liverpool. We were a large family of ten and when my father was diagnosed with cancer and my mum had to help nurse him, it was suggested that we four youngest should go to Colomendy to make mum's load lighter. I went first, on my own and then my brothers followed. I think I was meant to test the water!

I did have a few weeks of intense homesickness but then I made friends - friendships that have lasted a lifetime. I was, at that time, a big reader of Enid Blyton and so my idea of boarding school was based on 'Mallory Towers!' What a shock those wooden dormitories were to me. However I soon accepted the way of life. I found I was an 'outdoors' kind of person. I had always loved sports and now discovered that walking in the countryside was a tremendous experience. The Leete walk up to the Devil's Bridge, over the top of the Catwalk and Pothole Crag were my favourites. The country roads to Llanferres Church on Sunday and the end of term walk up Moel Famau. I loved them all, rain, hail or snow.

At one of our early reunions someone asked me if as a child I was aware of the beauty

# Colomendy 1959



■ Rita Sharp, Liverpool

surrounding me and I laughed and told them probably not. I went away, but the thought stayed with me, had I just taken it for granted? I found myself on a stone seat in the bottom camp not far from the dormitory I had slept in when I first arrived. Sitting there I remembered one occasion when I woke very early, got out of my bunk bed and came out into the playground. The sun was not yet up. The playground had a very different slant to it and I went and sat at the highest spot with my arms wrapped around my knees and I watched the sun come up over the mountains and trees until it hit me sitting in that yard. I remember feeling a great gratitude that I lived there.

Sitting on that stone seat I also recalled that on returning home to Liverpool, I had noticed how dark and narrow our street seemed. The houses looked as if they were very tall and sort of looming over me. But my life was not unhappy and I soon adjusted to the noise of the traffic instead of the birds. However I do count myself as being incredibly lucky to have spent what was probably the most impressionable time of my life at Colomendy.

The Colomendy Connection is a reunion set up 16 years ago to enable people who stayed at Colomendy between 1940 and 1969 to reminisce. If you stayed in Colomendy at this time 'when the huts were wooden and you had to run to the ablutions!' write to the group at 29 Darby Rd, Grassendale, Liverpool. L199BP.

A collection of pictures and postcards of Loggerheads dating from the early 1900s can be viewed at Loggerheads Countryside Centre.



**Downloadable walks, events and information on Country Parks, biodiversity and history in Denbighshire's Countryside visit**

[www.denbighshire.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/countryside)





# Have mountain bike

## A beginner's tale... ■ Huw Rees



So this was it! I had talked the talk and it was time to walk the walk. There was a feeling of slight fear mixed with excitement and anticipation as I fiddled with the brakes and gear shifters pretending I knew what I was doing. It can't be too difficult can it, this mountain biking lark? I was finally sitting astride a mountain bike after some months of finding excuses not to and about to set off on a 8 km ride around the purpose built trails in Llandegla Forest. Jim had given me the safety talk, checked my hire bike for faults (fortunately found none), shown me how to use the gears and brakes and given me a helmet. There was nothing left to do so off I set, wobbling over the car park to the start of the trails.

The start was steep but Jim had assured me that it was the hardest bit and soon over. He was right! It was steep and hard, but thankfully short and I was soon picking up speed on a nice wide trail that climbs gently deeper into the forest. The trails here are made for mountain biking. You





can't get lost as there are coloured arrows around the route pointing you in the right direction. However if you are worried there is a map you can take with you. I was getting the hang of it now and starting to enjoy the experience. It had been raining so the trails were pretty muddy with all the other tyre tracks. In a funny way, getting sprayed



with mud all up your front and back seemed part of the process and not at all unpleasant. I was bonding with the forest! Earlier Jim was telling me the Centre was becoming very popular. The car park was full most of the time and thousands of riders had ridden the different trails since the Centre had opened. I was beginning to see why. After about half an hour of gentle climbing, I had reached the top of the forest and it looked like it was downhill all the way from here.

I picked up speed and almost immediately encountered a series of bumps to match any decent rollercoaster at an amusement park. What a laugh! The ride continued downhill with switchback corners and uneven ground. I couldn't tell you where I was but suddenly the trail opened up to reveal a fantastic view over heather moorland and beautiful countryside. Time for a rest, a drink while taking in the view, so far so good! I hadn't fallen off and all my fears about fitness and handling the bike had been unfounded. Refreshed, I remounted and pressed on. What's the phrase? Famous last words! The dip came out of nowhere and suddenly I was skidding off the trail towards a tree. Luckily I managed to come to an abrupt halt before impact and prise my hands off the handlebars.



# will travel...

A little reminder that although this is called the beginner's route you need to be careful.

Fortunately the last bit of the trail back to the Centre was great and I swooped down the final section of turns with a big grin. I had earned my mug of tea and one of Jim's Mum's famous flapjacks. I wonder if there is enough daylight to do it again. Good fun this mountain biking.

Llandegla Mountain Bike Centre is easily found on the A525 between Wrexham and Ruthin. The Centre has a café, shop and workshop, classroom, toilets and bike wash. Ian Owen and Jim Gaffney run the centre on behalf of the owners, Tilhill Forestry. For more information contact them on 01978 751656; [info@oneplanetadventure.co.uk](mailto:info@oneplanetadventure.co.uk), and check out their website: [www.oneplanetadventure.co.uk](http://www.oneplanetadventure.co.uk)

[www.coedllandegla.com](http://www.coedllandegla.com)  
email: [info@coedllandegla.com](mailto:info@coedllandegla.com)

**oneplanet**  
adventure

For loads of routes using bridleways, byways and minor roads all over the Clwydian Range, log on to **[ridetheclwyds.com](http://ridetheclwyds.com)**. There are a host of different routes for all abilities to download and lists of places to stay, eat and drink. See the Range from a different perspective!





The Clwydian Range has been an inspiration to people for centuries.

The purple clad hills are a fantastic site in September heralding in the turning of the seasons. The golden month of October with the large old wizened and gnarled trees shedding their russet leaves is a wonderful sight! The wildness of the hills are in contrast to the sheltered villages that lie at the foot of the Range.

Perhaps the most famous painter to live in the area was Richard Wilson, commonly known as the Father of the British landscape painting, who reputedly inspired Constable and Turner. He often stayed with his cousin Catherine Jones at Colomendy Hall and was there when he died in 1782.

Perhaps one of the areas of the AONB that has inspired the most talent is in the quieter, but equally special northern hills.

Tremeirchion is a captivating landscape boasting a limestone ridge of rocky outcrops, cliffs and caves with a wide view across the lush and fertile Vale of Clwyd. Some of the earliest human remains (35,000 years old) have been found in the caves at Ffynnon Beuno.

St Beuno's Jesuit college on the nearby hillside was home to famous poet Gerald Manley Hopkins who trained there as a priest. Over a third of his mature writing was done during his three years walking, exploring and observing the area.

Popular in Victorian England, Felicia Hemans spent most of her life in the village of Waen writing popular poetry including her most famous poem 'Casabianca' whilst reputedly standing on an old bridge 'Pont Dafydd' over the River Clwyd. The opening line is more easily recognised, 'The boy stood on the burning deck'.

## An inspiring landscape



Howard Sutcliffe & Lorna Jenner

Also from this area is the famous Victorian explorer H.M Stanley, whose real name was John Rowlands. Abandoned by his mother to work in the St Asaph Workhouse, he then moved to live with his Aunt in Ffynnon Beuno before leaving for Liverpool and ultimately America. There, he fought on both sides during the US Civil War later becoming a journalist and eventually landing an assignment to Africa to find the missing missionary Livingstone. He is probably best known for his greeting, "Dr Livingstone, I presume", and his work to help create the Congo Free State. Stanley had fond memories of his life in Tremeirchion, writing about his love of the hills, especially Y Graig which some people say gave him a taste for adventure!

Thomas Pennant, the most well known of the Tremeirchion land-owning family was brought up in the area. It is believed that a gift of a bird book on his twelfth birthday fuelled him to write many books and papers on zoology. He is more famous, however, as a pioneer travel writer. His 'Tour of Wales' which began in 1773 promoted North Wales to wealthy young Englishmen encouraging them to explore the Welsh mountains.

The Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty continues to inspire artists, scientists and explorers today. Many local artists exhibit their

work in galleries in Denbighshire, Flintshire and beyond. Keep an eye out for indication of that inspiration.

If you have any stories or information about people that have been inspired to do great things by the Clwydian Range, its landscape, people or culture please write to us using details on page 3.



For information on the Wales' Countryside including, new access land and the countryside code please visit the Countryside Council for Wales on

[www.ccw.gov.uk](http://www.ccw.gov.uk)





# Ask the Warden

## Motivating teenagers.

My  
a  
l  
o  
v  
u  
n  
n  
d  
s  
b



e  
w  
a  
l  
l  
i  
g  
b  
i  
r  
a  
l  
y  
d  
i  
f  
f  
i  
c  
u  
l  
t  
c  
o  
u  
r  
e  
a  
g  
e  
t  
e  
n  
k  
u  
t  
s  
e  
l  
i  
f  
f  
i  
c  
u  
n  
c  
o  
u  
r  
o  
u  
r  
e  
n

a  
g  
e  
c  
h  
i  
l  
d  
r  
o  
t  
c  
o  
m  
e  
t  
h  
o  
u  
t  
w  
i  
t  
h  
o  
u  
t  
u  
s  
D  
o  
y  
o  
u  
h  
e  
a  
v  
e  
a  
y  
i  
d  
e  
a  
o  
n  
h  
o  
w  
w  
c  
o  
t  
i  
v  
e  
n  
t  
a  
h  
e  
m  
d  
c  
o  
n  
v  
e  
r  
t  
t  
h  
e  
m  
t  
o  
e  
x  
c  
i  
t  
e  
n  
t  
m  
o  
f  
t  
h  
e  
c  
o  
u  
n  
t  
r  
y  
s  
i  
d  
e  
?

Our annual programme of events 'Out & About in Denbighshire's Countryside' offers a huge variety of guided walks, family activities and practical tasks. Many of our guided walks are themed, i.e., Moth trapping, historical, tree myths, etc. There is also a Maths and Animal Puzzle Trail at Coed Moel Famau and a Rubbings Trail at Loggerheads. This may give them a purpose to walk and show them that you can be entertained and find out some fascinating facts about the countryside.

## Identifying boundaries

We  
e  
t  
o  
u  
t  
s  
h  
i  
r  
t  
s  
o  
f  
A  
N  
B  
a  
n  
d  
a  
e  
a  
s  
j  
u  
s  
t  
s  
o  
f  
O  
n  
d  
r  
s



b  
e  
a  
i  
f  
u  
w  
h  
l  
y  
r  
n



,  
w  
w  
i  
t  
h  
n  
h  
e  
s  
n  
t  
d  
r







# Welcoming pubs

What better combination than a refreshing walk in the beautiful Clwydian Range followed by a meal in a traditional pub, with real ales and freshly cooked food? Or you may prefer to walk afterwards to wear off the effects of the beer and hearty lunch!

**T**he villages, within and surrounding, the Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty offer a wonderful choice of pubs to compliment a walk.

Here's a taste of the local pubs, but check out [www.clwydianrangeaonb.org.uk](http://www.clwydianrangeaonb.org.uk) for more details.

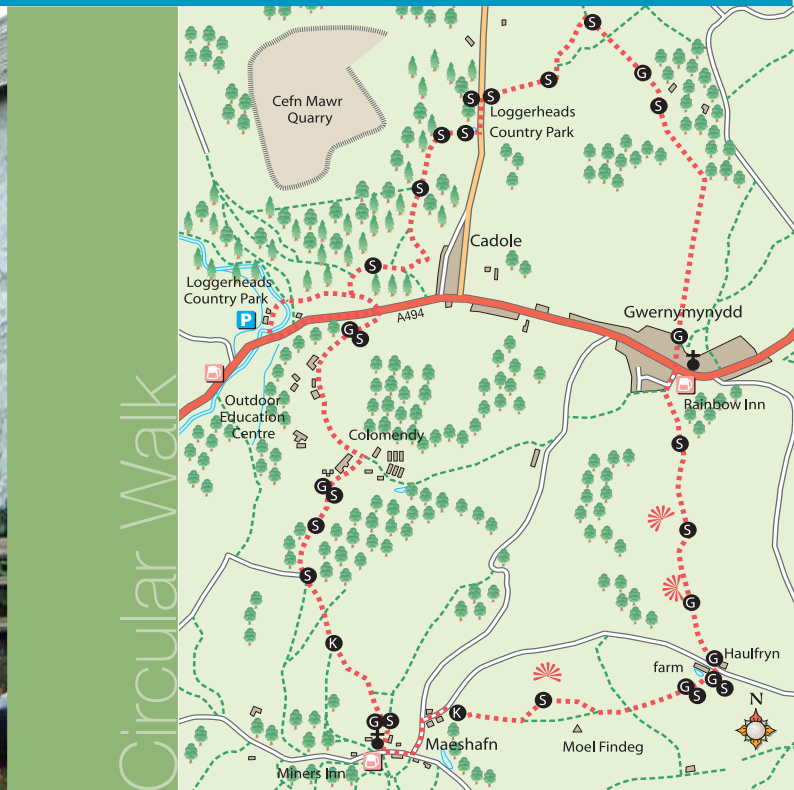
If you're looking for fine food using local produce, **The White Horse** at Hendrerwydd is the place. Walkers are welcome in the cosy bar or, during warm weather, the outdoor decking is ideal. There is even an information panel for walkers. There's another popular **White Horse**

in the picturesque village of Cilcain. They serve great food lunchtimes and evenings 7 days a week (no children under 14 though).

**The Three Pigeons** in Graigfechan, once a drover's watering hole, has an excellent reputation for real ales, while the **Salisbury Arms** in Tremeirchion, is ideally located for those wanting to explore the quieter northern part of the AONB.

Llanferres is home to **The Druid** which has a varied menu and also offers B&B. As well as welcoming walkers and cyclists, it is also the





# for walkers

■ Lorna Jenner, Cilcain

starting point for the Gallon Walk, that visits 8 local pubs in one night (hence the name!). If you think you could manage that, a leaflet showing the route from the pub is available to buy.

## Circular Walk

### Loggerheads/Moel Findeg circuit

**Distance:** 8km / 5 miles **Time:** Allow 3.5hrs

**Parking and start:** Loggerheads Country Park car park (G.R. SJ 198626)

**Grade:** Moderate (some gentle climbs and many stiles)

**Pubs:** **The Miner's Arms** at Maeshafn (but also plenty of others nearby: **Owain Glyndwr**, **Rainbow Inn**, **Colomendy Arms**, and **We Three Loggerheads**)

### The Walk

1. From the Countryside Centre walk past the café and Outdoor Shop to cross stone bridge over River Alyn. Turn R up some steep steps. At the top of the steps continue to the path T-junction. Turn R and continue along the



path to the main road. (Alternative start, avoiding steep steps: Cross wooden footbridge near Centre to join the main road. Turn L along the road for 400m to the boundary stone and gate).

2. Cross the road and take opposite path, signed Maeshafn. Cross the gate/stile, and follow a waymarked path through Colomendy Outdoor Education Centre. At the outbuildings follow the arrow L along the lane. Turn L at T-junction and follow the road bearing L. Take R fork



signed to Glan Alyn. When the tarmac track turns sharp R continue ahead on the grass path to cross the stile/gate. Follow the path across the field, past a redundant stile, to the visible stile at the edge of the woodland. Cross into the wood and follow path R. Cross the stile and turn immediately L uphill. Go L when the path forks thro' a kissing gate (KG) and continue ahead. At the marker post, turn L uphill to KG. Go thro' KG, turn R to a marker post, then L to ascend the slope. Bear diagonally R thro' an opening to join a sunken lane. Continue along the lane branching L before buildings to cross a ladder stile beside a gate. Follow the lane between houses to Maeshafn village, opposite **Miner's Arms**.

**The Miner's Arms**, Maeshafn is a long low building dating from the 1700s and, as its name suggests, has had a close association with lead mining. The miners were paid here, given 'tallies' rather than money, which could only be used in the mine owners' shops. The dining area behind the open fire was once a separate mineworker's cottage and the building opposite the car park was the dynamite store.

The building has been a pub for 100 years and the original brew house was next door. It was one of 7 or 8 in the village - not traditional pubs as we think of them often merely rooms within cottages or shops serving beer.

The landlords welcome walkers and the restaurant menu regularly offers an imaginative choice of freshly cooked local produce but you are equally welcome for tea, coffee and snacks. Good ranges of bar snacks are offered and there is also a children's menu. The pub is open 7 days per week and food served everyday except Sunday and Monday evenings. Ring 01352 810464.

3. Turn L along the road and L at the junction. Turn R along the road past Ty Newydd then R through KG to enter Moel Findeg

# welcoming pubs for walkers



Nature Reserve. Follow a rising path and when the path forks, take the L fork. Cross a stile and continue along the ridge (superb views). Then drop down to the R to join a path just beyond a mast. Then go L past a group of trees and continue downhill towards the farm, crossing a gate/stile. Continue toward RHS of a small pond, crossing 2 stiles to reach a lane. Turn R and after 40m, turn L thro' gate by Haulfryn. Follow the track, thro' another gate by an old railway wagon, and on past limestone crags to cross a stile on the L. Head diagonally R across open ground, down past old workings to cross a stile on the L. Follow the path down thro' the wood. Turn R to reach the A494 with Rainbow Inn on the R.

4. Cross the road to continue on the track opposite. Go thro' the gate by a cattle-grid and continue on the rising track. After 1km, just before house, turn L and cross a stile. Follow the stone wall on the R to go thro' a gate. Turn L and follow LH boundary down to cross a stile in the bottom corner. Turn L and continue to join the track. Turn L and continue for 200m. Then take the path to L of 'Path side'. Cross a stile then head down the field to LH corner to cross another stile onto the road. Cross the stile opposite and follow the path L for 70m to a stone monument by Deborah's Well on the LHS.

5. Continue along wood edge and, at a stile on the L, turn R uphill to cross another stile. Continue keeping the wire fence on LHS. Cross a stile and after

15m bear L. At the fork bear R to a footpath sign, then turn L. Cross the stile and continue ahead. Keep on the main path, swinging diagonally L by a small clearing to reach a T-junction. Turn R to follow a gravel path then over a stile.

6. Continue ahead turning L at the fingerpost, signed Cadole. Join a track and after 50m bear L to reach a bench on the LHS. Turn R down some steep steps to a stone bridge. Cross the bridge to return to the Countryside Centre.

