

Friends of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley - Newsletter No.2

April 2016



## Chairman's Letter

Dear Member

Our aim is to make our Newsletters easy to digest, with short articles about matters of interest to our members! Having said that, I cannot resist bringing to your attention Article 5 of the European Landscape Convention, which I saw for the first time the other day. It says

**“Each party (ie the UK) undertakes to recognize landscapes in law as an essential component of people’s surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity.”**

Pretty dense language, but if you read it carefully, don't you agree that it sums up exactly what our little Society is all about? The landscape of our AONB is our **cultural and natural heritage**, and we like to be **identified** with it. Couldn't put it better myself.

On a more practical level, we need a few more committee members, or

Trustees. If you share our enthusiasm for the AONB, do consider getting in touch with me. No special skills are needed – just enthusiasm, and a willingness to help run interesting events or help in some way with administrative work. Please do get in touch 01824 702973

Regards,

Mike Skuse, Trustee

## Henry V Pilgrimage

On Friday 25 October 1415 Henry V defeated a numerically superior French army at the battle of Agincourt in France. The following year, 1416, he made a pilgrimage to St Winifred's Well in Holywell, walking barefoot (so it is said) from Shrewsbury, to give thanks for his victory and before preparing his next French campaign. Some say it was in atonement for his actions at the battle. His exact route is not known but this year, 600 years later, North Wales Ramblers have plotted a route and organised a 6-day trek in commemoration, from Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June to Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June. On the Wednesday and Thursday of that week the modern-day "pilgrims" (probably not barefoot) will be in our AONB, walking from Froncysyllte to Llandegla and from Llandegla to Cilcain respectively. Full details will be available soon on the [North Wales Ramblers website](#). You might like to join them for parts of this long walk?





## Choose your Views

Friends of CRDV are initiating a project to catalogue and plot all the special viewpoints within our AONB so we would like members to submit photographs and their locations. This is not a competition; we want to catalogue all such locations whether accessible by car or off the roads. Please [send us](#) your suggestions.

To start the catalogue here's one of our favourites, taken from the western summit of Bryn Alyn (SJ 197 588) looking south west and west to Moel Gyw, Gyrn, Moel Eithinen and Foel Fenlli.



## Future Events

We are looking forward to a number of events for the remainder of 2016 including a number of visits to Historic Properties and Gardens as well as several walks to sites of particular heritage or landscape interest. We also plan some talks and lectures. We are lucky to have many of these events led by professionals but all will be led by enthusiasts.

We also hope to have something to interest the naturalists amongst us. Do you want to see a lek or hear a jar? Further details are distributed in our regular events programme, or visit our [website](#) for details.



## Annual General Meeting, 2016

In March 2015 a grant was made available by the AONB Sustainable Development Fund to form a charity to “Discover, Enjoy and Protect” our AONB. With a committee of dedicated Initial Trustees the group has been formed, has achieved charitable status (a Charitable Incorporated Organisation officially), has organised and promoted events and has over 100 members. So the time is ripe for an AGM to seek membership views on the direction and organisation of the group.

**On Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2016 the National Trust has agreed to give free access to the Chirk Castle to members of the Friends.** Our 1<sup>st</sup> AGM will be held in the Function Room of Chirk Castle at 1pm. There will be a talk afterwards, and then members can wander around the Castle and the gardens at will. If you have not been there before, it's well worth seeing, and there are plenty of things to do and see, so we hope you will be able to come and meet us and have an enjoyable day there. Full details of the agenda and timings for resolutions, nominations etc, will be circulated in due course. Please put the date in your diary! (with thanks to Dennis Oliver for the Photograph)



### **Become a AONB Guide**

Friends have the opportunity to apply for two sponsored places on the AONB Guide Course. It is a bespoke course and covers an array of topics such as wildlife, history, farming, language and heritage. The course will run over a period of seven months and will place an emphasis on getting out with specialists to experience first-hand the rich natural and cultural heritage of the outstanding landscape.

People who are interested in putting their names forward for consideration need to be able to commit to the following dates:

- 13/04/2016 Historical environment and guiding skills (full day)
- 6/05/2016 Moorland Management (am only)
- 9/06/2016 Farming and Agriculture (half a day)
- 14/07/2016 River and Welsh Language (full day)
- 15/09/2016 Refresher (evening)
- 22/09/2016 Assessment (full day)

As a condition of attending the course in association with the friends, the people given this opportunity must commit to arranging 2 events on behalf of the Friends.

**If you are interested in this opportunity, please email both [loggerheads.countrypark@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:loggerheads.countrypark@denbighshire.gov.uk) and [michael.skuse@btinternet.com](mailto:michael.skuse@btinternet.com) by the 7th of April with a short sentence about why you would like to complete the course. Please put AONB Guide Course – Friends as the subject.**



## Meet the Team

One of the regular articles we hope to include in the Friends newsletter is a feature on a member of the AONB team. Friends recently caught up with **Rachel Jones**, Community Partnership Officer based at Loggerheads, who agreed to be first to go under the microscope! Born and brought up in the Vale of Clwyd, Rachel has a genuine enthusiasm for the countryside and her work in it. Rachel is on the right, talking to volunteers Mike and James. Here's how she responded to the questions we asked her:-

*How did you come to work for the AONB ?* I started my working life in a similar role at Brenig after graduating from Harper Adams in Shropshire. A vacancy for a graduate warden came up with the AONB, I applied, got it and six years later I'm still here. I'm told my willingness to get my hands dirty was the telling factor – I won't go into detail !!

*What does a community partnership officer do?* Lots of everything really which makes the job so interesting. I'm based at Loggerheads and also help to look after Coed Nercwys, Moel Famau and Llangwyfan. Every day is different. One of the things I like best is coordinating the voluntary work programme which helps us so much and gives people the chance to positively contribute to what we do. There's also our Young Rangers programme for the 11 to 18 year age group which is another thing I love doing, together with our work with local schools on environmental projects. Maintaining good relations with the local community and with our partner agencies is also a vital part of the job.

*What are the difficult parts of the role?* I suppose like most jobs it's juggling with competing priorities and we can't be everywhere at once. Sometimes, like when we get invaded by hundreds of people wanting to sledge, it can get a bit hectic ! The pressure on the most popular AONB destinations can be a worry but it's great to see so many people wanting to share this wonderful landscape.



## Welcome Sarah.....

Sarah Jeffrey has been appointed the Landscape Partnership Scheme Development Officer for the Our Picturesque Project. This landscape scale project centres on the Dee Valley and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site. It takes as its themes the inspirational journeys that have and continue to be a feature of the area which is cut by the canal, Telford's A5 and the River Dee. Visitors have drawn inspiration from this beautiful valley in art and poetry since the 18th century and it continues to draw tourists in search of the sublime.

Sarah has recently been working on a Heritage Lottery Fund at Wepre Park which has resulted in creating a new meeting room area, transforming the garden and access improvements. Her work over the next year will be to pull together a Landscape Conservation Plan for submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund which will then lead to a 5 year project focusing on conservation, access and the local community. Friends are a partner in the project and will keep members updated about its progress.



## Additional Membership Ideas

The Friends Committee has been thinking about additional membership categories which will make our charity more inclusive. In particular, we have been considering a way in which not for profit organisations which share our love of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley can join us and make a contribution. We have decided to offer such groups the chance to become a “*Community Partner*” for an annual fee of £25. They will receive the newsletter and information about all Friends activities and, more importantly, will be able to demonstrate their interest in and commitment to the AONB. We would, of course, still expect their members to join as individuals if they want to participate in the full range of our events. If you know of a group, society or community council you think would be interested, please encourage them to get in touch.

We have also noticed that there are some unsung heroes about, who contribute in a quiet way to the work of the AONB through voluntary activities. We think it would be a good idea to occasionally offer *Honorary Membership* to those who make an outstanding contribution in this way. We hope members will agree that this is a good idea. If you have anyone in mind you think we should consider we’d be pleased to hear from you.





## Past Events

Our previous newsletter, the 1<sup>st</sup>, gave some indication of past events. Here is a flavour of one of our most recent events along part of the Llangollen Canal World Heritage site at its eastern end, close to the English border near Chirk. We walked up the Ceiriog Valley under the Chirk aqueduct, built before the more famous and taller Froncysyllte one, in 1801 (Thomas Telford) and then the railway viaduct built in 1845 (Henry Robertson). The gates of Chirk Castle made around 1719 by the Davies Brothers of Bersham were next admired before circumnavigating the castle noting the abundance of snowdrops in the wooded grounds. It was then a return to the canal to traverse the ¼ mile Chirk tunnel and then onto the towpath of the Chirk Aqueduct to set foot briefly in England on the other side.



**Cyfeillion  
Bryniau Clwyd a  
Dyffryn Dyfrdwy**



Registered Charity Number 1163812

Recommend a friend to join Friends to Discover, Enjoy, and Protect the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley

[www.friends.cymru](http://www.friends.cymru)



**Bryniau Clwyd a Dyffryn Dyfrdwy**  
Clwydian Range and Dee Valley

**Ardal o Harddwch Naturiol Eithriadol**  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Friends would like to thank the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural beauty Sustainable Development Fund for their support.

**Our mailing address is:**

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