



Hosteli Unigeddau'r Elenydd

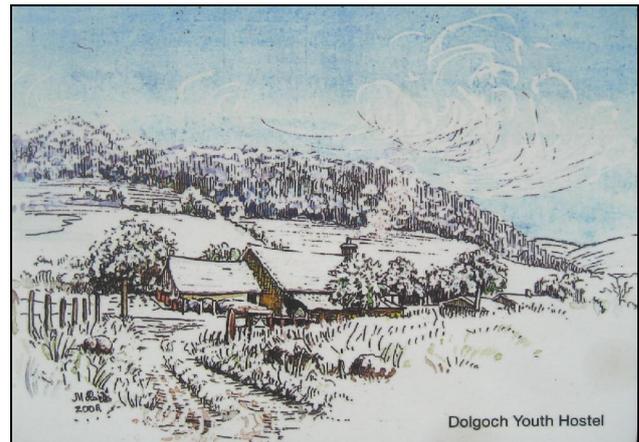
Elenydd Wilderness Hostels

Rhif Cofrestru Comisiwn Elusennau / Charity Commission Registration number: 1115946
www.elenydd-hostels.co.uk Swyddfa Gofrestredig / Registered Office: 7 Azalea Close Cyncoed Cardiff CF23 7HR Llywydd / President: Trevor Fishlock

NEWSLETTER 32 – AUTUMN 2018

HOSTEL CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR SALE

Your chance to buy some attractive cards for Christmas and support the Trust. The wording inside is 'With Best Wishes for Christmas and New Year'



Our winter design scenic Christmas cards featuring Dolgoch and Ty'n Cornel hostels are now available to purchase:

Pack of 5 cards – chose Dolgoch OR Ty'n Cornel	= £4
Pack of 10 cards – chose Dolgoch OR Ty'n Cornel	= £7.50
Pack of 10 cards (mixed) - 5x Dolgoch AND 5x Ty'n Cornel	= £7.50

Post order to: Nicky Price, 31 Thompson Street, Ynysybwl, Pontypridd, R.C.T CF37 3EN.

Email order to: price.nicky48@yahoo.co.uk

Phone order to: Nicky Price on 07791838168.

(Please include your delivery address and exact requirements with your order)

If paying by cheque please make cheque payable to: EWH

If paying by Bank Transfer make payment to: Sort Code: 404643 Account No: 51253182 and include reference 'Xmas & Surname' as appropriate.

The Christmas cards will also be for sale in the two hostels from the end of October.

AGM

Another interesting and successful AGM was held on 7th July at the Talbot Inn in Tregaron. Our thanks to Mick and Nia at the Talbot for supporting us again, by providing the excellent room and refreshments.

Two of our long-standing officers retired at the AGM and the Trust would like to thank them for their hard work over many years.

Mark Willcock has stepped down from his post as Membership Secretary after 11 years. Mark has been Membership Secretary since the inception of the Trust and was present at the first inaugural meeting in Tregaron in 2006. He has been tireless during these years maintaining the membership base, processing new membership applications, issuing membership cards and contacting existing members to encourage them to renew their membership. It was Mark who was responsible for negotiating discounts for members at several High St. outdoor retailers. But we are not losing Mark completely – he and Bronwen will continue to act as volunteer wardens and Mark has offered to carry on making the Gift Aid claim for the Trust.

Geoff Williams has stepped down as publicity officer, the role he has filled since 2011. In addition to his post as publicity officer it was Geoff who was responsible for gaining Dark Sky status for the 2 hostels and he has been an extremely active member of the Trust in many other ways including being a volunteer warden on a regular basis. We are not losing him completely in the realm of publicity - Geoff has agreed to carry on publicising the Trust through presentations in Ceredigion.

Marilyn also thanked **John Cooper**. John has never had an official title in the Trust but the work he has done at Dolgoch has been phenomenal. He has worked tirelessly on the unreliable hot water system, spending many hours, days and weeks of effort over the course of several years. His efforts finally paid off in 2015 when he solved the problems, and since then Dolgoch has enjoyed more or less constant hot water, apart from the winter months, when the water is drained down.

It was John who was responsible in 2013 for replacing the condemned gas lights with LED lights, running off a battery powered by the solar panels. The way he fitted them, in the existing gas mantles, means that the soft ambience of the old atmospheric lighting is preserved. We also have a rechargeable battery unit fitted by John at Dolgoch, so that we can use rechargeable batteries in the portable showers which are used in the winter months.

John now feels it's time to put his vast expertise to different uses, he will be missed in the Trust.

NEW OFFICERS AND TRUSTEE

The Trust is pleased to welcome **Aidan Yorath** as a new trustee. Aidan writes:

'I first stayed at the Elenydd hostels 31 years ago while holidaying with my parents. I had always been keen on the outdoors and Wales in particular, perhaps because of our family's Welsh heritage, and when I discovered the Elenydd, I couldn't believe how many great hostels there were in lovely remote locations in this part of Wales. Will Lewis was the warden of Ty'n Cornel at that time and on my first visit he arrived just after us, to greet us and collect the money. I was intrigued that this valley had a hostel in it and not much else at all, and that the hostel was welcoming and cosy and seemed like the perfect place to come and be immersed in nature. In 1989 my father and I began volunteering as wardens at Ty'n Cornel to help the YHA. We'd wardened a few other hostels by that time, but we both found the experience here an extra special one. In the years that followed, we made many visits and became friends with some local people. In fact we each went on to live in the nearby area at different times in our lives, and I am well aware that were it not for the hostels we might not have discovered the beauty and timelessness of the Elenydd at all.

The Trust's hostels are some of the last in the UK which are still run along traditional lines and values, and I am grateful to everyone who has helped maintain and improve them to be the comfortable, successful places they are today. I still enjoy wardening each year at either Dolgoch or Ty'n Cornel and by becoming a

trustee I intend to do my bit to support the development of our hostels, so that they move gently with the times but do not lose their character or focus along the way.'

The Trust's new membership secretary is **Allan Henson**.

Allan first visited the hostels about 10 years ago having read an article about the Trust in the Rough Stuff Fellowship Journal (the Off Road Cycling Club), which was written by Steve Griffith, one of the Trust's founder members. He had until then, never heard of the Elenydd area of Wales; previous visits to Wales being mainly to Snowdonia. His interest was aroused however, by the article and the lovely picture it painted of, what was to Allan, an unknown area.

After visiting the hostels and finding that the Elenydd lived up to its description in the RSF journal, he decided to become a volunteer warden for the Trust and now volunteers on a regular basis. He loves the peace and tranquillity of the hostels but needless to say, not the midges! His first experience as a volunteer warden was not however quite what he had expected. He was somewhat alarmed on his first night when a party of leather clad motor cyclists throbbed up the track to the hostel. Stifling his misgivings he welcomed the visitors and then enjoyed a very convivial evening indeed with the group with whom he found he had much in common. As Allan said. 'A nicer bunch you couldn't wish to meet'. Appearances can sometimes be deceptive!

Having spent much of his working life in telecommunications, Allan is now retired so, having more time, he was happy to take on the post of membership secretary and is proving to be extremely organised and proactive in this role.

It was fortunate indeed for the Trust that he happened to read that article in the RSF journal.

Sara Hook is our new publicity officer. She has been coming to the hostels for 6 years and is keen on social media. She has lots of ideas about how to promote the hostels.

HOSTEL NEWS

Dolgoch

Splitting the 10 bed dormitory

The Trustees agreed to a plan to split the 10 bed dormitory at Dolgoch into two rooms, one of 6 beds and the other of 4. We have found that private rooms are increasingly popular at both hostels and this seemed to be a good way to spend some of the generous legacy that the Trust was left two years ago. The project will involve making a new walk-way through the glass window at the top of the stairs which will access a new doorway in the wall opposite the showers. The current entrance to the 10 bed dormitory will be blocked up. A new skylight will be made in the roof to provide light and ventilation in the new 4 bed room. We are currently in the process of getting planning permission. It is likely that the actual work will be done in 2019.

Heating in warden's room

We have looked at various options to make the Dolgoch warden's/disabled accommodation more comfortable. Even outside the winter months the room can be very cold and damp and since the prime use of this annexe is that of less able accommodation, something needed to be done. We therefore decided to install a small wood burning stove. The stove is located in the corner diagonally opposite the entrance door and was installed on 22nd August .

Water supply bore hole

A bore hole to supply water to the hostel was dug in the top car park in March. The system works well powered by a generator, but we are having problems powering the borehole pump with our existing PV panels and batteries. We are investigating whether to increase the PV capacity or opt for a different type of pump. In the meantime the hostel water is again being sourced from the stream on the other side of the valley. We hope to switch to the borehole supply before too long.

Overnights

Bed nights at Dolgoch are slightly down on previous years with 1120 bed nights from January to September and a further 320 booked until December. The January-March period this year was very low compared with last year - partly due to the bad weather.

We have put up our prices, so this may have had an impact. We don't need very many bookings to cover our fixed costs but it would be nice to know why bookings are down a bit on last year.

Ty'n Cornel

Satellite phone

After more than 50 years with no phone, Ty'n Cornel now has a satellite phone! The installation cost of a landline phone was prohibitive, but satellite communications are now becoming affordable and Aidan Yorath has installed a system. The phone is currently in the shed, but cables will be installed across the yard in the autumn and there will soon be a phone in the warden's room. The satellite dish is hidden discreetly beside the shed. A satellite link is still a relatively expensive channel, and to keep costs down we're on a tariff with a very limited data allowance (which equates to about 25 minutes of conversation per day) which limits usage to calls related to hostel business. The phone can only call a limited set of numbers, and incoming calls use up the data allocation just as much as outgoing calls. We'll keep the use of the phone under review.

Water

Ty'n Cornel's spring kept flowing throughout the long 2018 summer drought. Many of us remember shorter dry spells in previous years, during which the supply stopped flowing and water had to be brought up from the standpipe in Llanddewi Brefi. The improvement is undoubtedly due to the encapsulation work that we had done on the spring by professionals back in 2015 – the collection of water is now much more reliable. I've written previously about the improvements in water quality that were achieved, but the continuity of the supply has proved invaluable this summer.

The new drinking water tap, fed by a new type of UV water filter, has worked reliably for several months now and consumes far less electricity than using kettles to boil the water.

Maintenance etc

The hostel is looking quite smart after a lot of exterior decoration over the summer. The north gable end has been cleaned and re-sealed professionally, and the barge-boards have been covered with protective sheathing. Mark Wilcock and Bronwen Barber re-painted the picnic benches, Janet re-painted the rear of the hostel and the terrace wall, and Richard and Janet re-painted the front porch and windows. Geoff Williams re-varnished the Cambrian Way bench.

The grass-cutting team (Bill Hine, Richard Ward, Nicky Price, and others) spent a busy weekend keeping the hedges and verges in shape, and Bill also dug a drain which we hope will remove that annoying trickle of water around the lower door of the barn.

Overnights

At the time of writing (Sept 18) we've got about 680 overnights for calendar year 2018, including forward bookings. We're well on schedule to match or exceed last year's total (just over 700 overnights), and we've still got lots of beds free for the remainder of the year including the Christmas period. **We're now approaching our 10,000th Ty'n Cornel overnight under EWHT management – will you be our 10,000th overnight?**

Our overnights have been swelled by a German group who booked the whole hostel for 10 nights.

The science of a youth hostel

If you'd like to read more about the science of water purification and the other technical challenges that we've had to solve at the two hostels, Richard has submitted an article to *Physics World*, the monthly magazine of the Institute of Physics. We'll have to wait and see whether it's accepted for publication, but it certainly tells a good story.

STRATA FLORIDA-TREGARON CIRCUIT: a recommended cycle route

Steve Griffith has been out on his bike again and writes:

Up at Dolgoch in August for the first time this year, I was amazed how much tree felling there had been. All around Nant yr Hwrch was now treeless, completely changing the landscape. This can make navigation difficult off-road as even the most recent map is inaccurate.

However I notice that the forestry route across to Strata Florida is now waymarked with small black arrows, and as it's a much easier option than the road, I think is worth describing.

From the hostel go left up the steep hill and just after the apex you will see a forestry track with a cattle grid to your right. A long graded climb then a drop and a shorter climb. You turn right after a small quarry by some ponds and looking to the right you will get views of the Towy and the old Towy track (often waterlogged). Then it's three miles downhill to the Abbey which now has a small cafe. Heading south from Pontrhydfendigaid you either stick to the road or use the old railway line. My preference is to turn left after Old Abbey Farm and take the track that goes via a number of old ruins and several fords and takes you out on the Blaencaron road by the phone box (pause for a few moments to remember the hostel and the warden Cassie Jones who recently passed away).

A swift couple of miles into Tregaron with several lunch options. I always have tea and Welsh cakes at the Red Kite Centre, a good place to catch up on local news. Then it's time to head back to the hostel. I actually find the toughest hill the one just outside Tregaron when you climb up past a chapel. More forestry work means Llyn Berwyn can be seen from the road just before the cattle grid. Anyway you know the last bit is a swift descent back to the hostel track.

Only about 25 miles but a great day out and one that makes you appreciate the beauty of the Elenydd.

VOLUNTEER WARDENS

At our recent AGM Marilyn Barrack thanked our invaluable team of volunteer wardens.

'I cannot stress enough the importance of our volunteer wardens to the success of the Trust; without them the Trust could not exist let alone thrive and flourish. So I would like to take this opportunity to thank our wardens for the enormous contribution they make to the successful running of the Trust.'

If you are not already a warden and would be interested in wardening, our next training weekend will be on 6 - 7th April 2019. Contact Frances Passey frances.adelaidecottage@gmail.com if you would like to attend, Tel: 0118 9676129

TRUST PUBLICITY

We have display boards with information about the Trust that Geoff Williams has taken to various events and meetings to publicize the Trust. Places to date have included the Cambrian Mountains Society, Local Access Forums, Ramblers Cymru AGM.

We would like suggestions for more places where these boards could be used. Please send your ideas to Geoff at gdvaughan.will1@gmail.com or to Sara Hook at samayhook@hotmail.com

ROAD CLOSURE AT LLYN BRIANNE

Tree felling operations are planned to take place during the autumn of 2018 beside the public road that runs along the east side of Llyn Brianne. Operations will require closure of the road to ensure safety of the public.

Public road closure:

- Commencing Monday October 1st 2018.
- The closure order will state a period up to 18 months, however, operations are expected to be completed within 12 weeks.
- The road will be closed between 0700hrs and 1700hrs Monday to Friday.

The road will be open between 1700 hours and 0700hrs, and all day at weekends

ARTHUR OSBORNE

Pearl Chalk is looking for a photograph of Arthur Osborne, who was a founder member and a trustee of the EWHT. Does anyone have a photo of Arthur? Please send it either digitally or as a print (in which case it will be returned), to Chris Chalk at c_chalk@hotmail.com (note the _ underscore between 'c' and 'chalk').

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

27 / 28 October 2018 <i>(date had to be changed due to army booking)</i>	Dolgoch Working Party	Contact Colin Hughes: vicechair@elenydd-hostels.co.uk Tel: 01352 754112
Sat 3 November 2018 - Dolgoch	Open Meeting	All welcome
23 / 24 March 2019	Dolgoch Working Party	Contact Colin Hughes.
6 / 7th April 2019 - Dolgoch	Wardens Training Weekend	If interested contact Frances Passey: frances.adelaidecottage@gmail.com Tel: 01189676129
Sat 11 May - Ty'n Cornel	Open Meeting	All welcome
Sat 29 June - 11am Y Talbot, Tregaron	AGM	For Dolgoch bookings this weekend please contact Marilyn Barrack: chair@elenydd-hostels.co.uk Tel: 02920 732289

And most importantly, come and stay at the hostels! It's easy to book on the Trust's website at - <http://www.elenydd-hostels.co.uk/en/booking>