

# Elenydd Wilderness Hostels

Charity Commission Registration number 1115946

[www.elenydd-hostels.co.uk](http://www.elenydd-hostels.co.uk)

## Hosteli Unigeddau'r Elenydd

### Newsletter 9

May 2008

Our second Annual General Meeting is now behind us. The number of members attending at Tregaron's Memorial Hall on the 19<sup>th</sup> April exceeded all expectation. The Trustees' fears that we might fail to attain a quorum proved groundless, though it has to be said a little canvassing in the weeks beforehand may have helped!

Steve Griffith delivered on behalf of our Chair Marilyn Barrack an upbeat account of the Trust's achievements over the past year with the substantial increase in bednights at Ty'n Cornel indicating a promising future for both hostels.

Colin Francis our retiring treasurer in presenting his report was equally positive about the Trust's future and, whilst stressing there are likely to be many calls for substantial expenditure particularly in the case of Dolgoch in the next two or three years, he was able to show that the Trust is on a sound financial footing. Colin pointed out that the Accounts had not been examined but we can report that Peter Wright the financial examiner has since issued his certificate giving the accounts a clean bill of health.

The Trustees Marilyn Barrack, Steve Griffith, Bill Hine, Arthur Osborne and Derek Edwards were re-elected. Steve is now Vice Chair. Following Colin's retirement as treasurer, David Bicker a retired bank manager from Halesowen has agreed to take over the reins and was elected treasurer. Our thanks to Colin and welcome, David. Janet Hollins has officially taken over as secretary from Bill Hine, a duty she has been ably performing for some time after Bill through personal circumstances was unable to continue in the role. It should not pass without mention that Bill, by seeking out and contacting major individual donors and assiduously following up promises made, was instrumental in obtaining the contributions so desperately needed at a crucial stage in the purchase of Dolgoch. He also produced the first five Newsletters. Thank you Bill - you did it all so quietly.

#### THE LAUNCH

Following the AGM and its necessary but not always lighthearted formalities we had a joyous opening of Dolgoch. The weather was thankfully dry but a trifle cold giving ample excuse to make full use of the old fireplace though the warmth generated by those attending made it hardly necessary. Huw Jones, born and brought up in Dolgoch and author of Bugail Olaf y Cwm (The last shepherd of the valley) was there as too was our supporter, County Councillor and Tregaron Postmistress Catherine Hughes. She translated for the uninitiated amongst us some of the exploits recounted in Huw's book with Huw making the occasional comment bringing the past vividly to life. He then cut the cake with its impressive picture in icing of Dolgoch - almost vandalism to destroy it.



Helen Maurice Jones, who in her Capacity of YHA trustee and supporter of our Trust has done so much to help attain our objective, spoke of her pleasure at being present and seeing what has been achieved. Another face familiar to some of our older members was Dave Matthews with wife Jo. Dave, for many years secretary of the South Wales Region of the YHA, was solely responsible for finding and setting up Dolgoch as a youth hostel and expressed his pleasure at knowing its use as a hostel will continue. It was a pleasant surprise to meet for the first time John Joyce and his wife. John is secretary of the Gatliff Trust which has donated generously and supported our cause.

Janet Hollins, following her effort on a similar occasion at Ty'n Cornel last year, again organised a fine repast for all. Hostel Manager David Davies ensured transportation of guests over our somewhat bumpy track as well as previously being responsible for an immense amount of work preparing the hostel for its special day. A fine job - well done Dave.

## **BACK TO NORMALITY**

### **TY'N CORNEL**

Pearl has secured further funding for specified work at the hostel. This time £1987 from the Communities First Trust Fund to pay for woodworm treatment, insulation of the loft and removal of a heating vent in the roof. Rendering and damp proofing of the gable end and chimney repairs have been completed. Professional attention has been given to the drainage system which otherwise might have meant temporary closure of the hostel.

### **DOLGOCH**

The surface of the track to the hostel has never been good and the Trustees are well aware that it has now become a matter requiring urgent attention. The Grant applied for to carry out refurbishment work at the hostel includes a sum of £15000 allocated to track improvement. We are still waiting to hear whether our application has been successful and it now appears unlikely we shall know before the end of June. If successful, work would be put in hand as soon as practical. If not, serious repair work would still be undertaken and ways of raising funds for the purpose are being explored (ideas and suggestions welcomed). However, such is the necessity for action, payment out of our limited reserves cannot be discounted.

Enough of the downside. The hostel is looking decidedly chirpy as the numerous siskins, tits and chaffinches and the occasional greater spotted woodpecker flocking to the bird feeders outside the common room window (who needs television!) would undoubtedly agree.

Our own Corgi qualified volunteer, Ted Evans, has given considerable time to replacing the gas lighting on the ground floor and fitting new pipework for the gas rings. And what a difference it has made - the unique Dolgoch atmosphere has been preserved but one can now see to read in the evenings! By the time you read this there should be a hot water supply to the kitchen sinks. We have a gas oven and a small fridge is on its way.

It is interesting to find that cycling groups are making use of both hostels. Below, the Caerffili Adventure Group are about to set off from Dolgoch on a circular route suggested by the Cyclists Touring Club.



### **SPONSORED WALK**

Last year nearly £4000 was raised. This year's walk, which will be followed by a barbecue, ventures into the wild uplands north of Dolgoch and, given smiling weather gods, should prove a very enjoyable walk as well as being a lifeline to help maintain and improve the hostels. It need hardly be said that the Trust will gladly accept sponsorship from anyone wishing to support the event whether or not they have a connection with any of the walkers. It takes place on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June. There are still places available so do contact Jeffrey Matthews if you would like to take part (telephone 0117 9094748, mobile 07793964714) or download an entry form from the Trust's web site.

### **BOOKINGS**

Those who have not visited the hostels for some time will we are sure be pleasantly surprised by the changes that are taking place. That run down look which had crept in over latter years has given way to what we hope you will agree is a welcoming sparkle and freshness. Come and see for yourselves. Beds are available. Both hostels can be booked through the YHA Contact Centre on 0870 770 8868 (unfortunately the '01' number is no longer effective) or on line at [www.yha.org.uk](http://www.yha.org.uk)

## VOLUNTEER WARDENS

The wardens' training weekend organised by the Trust last February has borne fruit with four of those taking part already fulfilling warden's duties at the Trust's hostels. This would not have been possible without Russ Johnson's meticulous work in dealing with the Criminal Records (CRB) checks that all prospective wardens and persons accompanying them need. Anyone interested in becoming a warden - and we do need more wardens - should contact a Trust officer.

## PUBLICITY

All so important. Most outdoor groups publish a newsletter or magazine. Anyone having contact with such a group is urged to submit to it a short article about the Trust and what its two hostels have to offer. Most groups are usually pleased to receive copy for inclusion in their house mag. New publicity leaflets are now available thanks to Sue Brown's hard work, with Neil Buckland of 'Zodshop' being responsible for the eye-catching design and most of the photographs. Anyone who can distribute/ make use of a few leaflets please contact Marilyn Barrack.

## ROWAN SEEDLINGS FROM TY'N CORNEL

Anyone who would like a reminder of Ty'n Cornel in their garden or indeed elsewhere might wish to acquire one or more of the rowan seedlings grown from seed collected locally. These will be available in September. Please contact Bill Hine on 0117 9531698.

## MEETINGS

The next open meeting when all are welcome to attend will be at Ty'n Cornel on Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> June at 11am.

### **Chair:**

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### **S.O.S.**

Warden cover is required for Dolgoch for either the week commencing

Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> June or Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> July.

The June week will not in fact include the Friday night (28<sup>th</sup>) as the hostel has been booked by a private party.