



Rhif Cofrestru Comisiwn Elusennau / Charity Commission Registration number: 1115946

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NEWSLETTER 34 – WINTER 2019

Equine Visitors to Dolgoch – At Last!

Visitors to Dolgoch will have noticed the tethering posts in the camping area. These were erected in the early days of the Trust when a local horse riding group said that we could expect regular visits from them and other equine groups if we put in some facilities. As well as the tethering posts, we fixed some expensive saddle holders in the barn and persuaded Natural Resource Wales to let us use part of their land for a paddock which we had to fence ourselves. Following all of this effort we eagerly awaited a steady stream of horsey folk.

After a modest 10 year wait we finally welcomed our first equine visitors. Mike and Maria spent a night at Dolgoch with 2 pack ponies (Woody and Suzie) as part of a multi day hike. Mike and Maria help to run a small commercial trekking business and hope to use us again next year.



Exciting Plans For Our Hostels

Unlike a number of charities, the Trust is in the fortunate position of having built up a comfortable financial surplus. We have particularly benefited in recent years from a small number of generous legacies. The Trustees are committed to using some of this surplus to invest in improving our lovely hostels and there are some exciting plans which are being explored at Ty'n Cornel and Dolgoch.

Ty'n Cornel

New Accommodation

We've called in a new architect to develop the concept of a first-floor extension at the rear of the hostel. The current plan is to build out over the hostel's rear path to increase the width available for three new rooms. The extension would bring several valuable benefits:

- A spacious warden's room. Wardens would have a much-needed space of their own, to which they can escape when the common room is too busy. Wardens and large groups would both appreciate this feature.
- The existing two-bunk warden's room at the front would be freed up as bookable accommodation. The room would be very popular with couples, and would provide more flexibility for bookings than the existing two dormitories.
- An upstairs shower and toilet, in a small rear room accessible off the landing. The existing single shower is often considered inadequate for a 16-bed hostel.
- A further room at the rear. This room could provide additional bookable accommodation, or it could provide much-needed storage for items which can't go in the shed. Storage may be the better choice, since it's in very short supply in the hostel, and the common room is arguably too small to accommodate 22 hostellers in comfort.
- A slate roof would be fitted over the entire hostel. The existing roof (cheap asbestos-cement tiles fitted around 1980) has limited lifetime; it's not leaking yet but our builder has warned us that it won't last forever.

The extension would be built of timber-framed construction to reduce the weight and cost of the structure, and to make it easier to support the overhang on pillars. The back path would be maintained as an open thoroughfare and fire exit, though the covered space could provide some useful hanging space for wet clothes on one side. There would also be the additional opportunity for a first-floor fire exit.

Water supply

Ceredigion Council's recent tests of drinking water samples are very encouraging. The fact that the UV-purified water inside the hostel meets all current standards is perhaps not surprising. This year's real success has been that following recent improvements to the mountain spring, the quality of the non-purified water now almost meets the same exacting standards. Bill and Richard dug extra ditches during May to keep surface water further away from the spring, and the bacterial count has been reduced quite dramatically. We still need our UV filters to protect our water supply, but those filters don't have so big a job to do now that the incoming water is cleaner.

Telephone

Phone cables have been laid across the yard in readiness for phone points to be set up inside the hostel. The installation has two independent phone lines. A phone will be fitted in the warden's room, and there will also be a socket to enable a phone to be fitted in the common room when appropriate (for example, over winter when there's no warden). There will still be a phone in the shed accessible to all, with restricted dialling facilities.

Dolgoch

Extra accommodation

We had considered splitting the 10 bed dormitory at Dolgoch into two rooms of 6 and 4 beds respectively. However, after having had plans drawn up it became clear that such a major project would have a number of disadvantages. We have therefore decided to get the views of a professional architect on the best way to improve the accommodation at Dolgoch.

Water supply

Earlier this year we invested in a new pump for the borehole. This pump, manufactured by a German company, Lorentz, works directly off a set of PV panels rather than through a set of batteries and an inverter. These pumps are highly efficient and will cope with poorer light conditions than pumps requiring a 240v AC supply. The good news is that the pump appears to be working well. The panels are located near to the top car park.

Electricity



The electricity supply at Dolgoch is fairly limited but works well and provides enough power for the downstairs lighting. However, we had had increasing requests for more power to run a fridge and to provide the facility to charge equipment such as portable vacuum cleaners. We would also like to provide additional lighting, especially in the upstairs dormitories. Any improvements to the accommodation at Dolgoch in future will also place additional demands on the electricity supply. We have asked two companies who specialise in off grid systems to provide suggestions and cost estimates for consideration by the Trustees.

Hot water

The solar hot water system at Dolgoch has worked fairly well in recent years. Over the last 12 months however we have experienced a number of problems due to leaky pipework and joints. In September a plumber, specialising in solar water heating, fixed the leaks and the system is now working well. However, the system is obviously weather dependent. Visitors increasingly expect to have hot showers as a given. Gas boilers working from LPG have improved in recent years and we are in the early stages of investigating whether it would be feasible to have a gas boiler at Dolgoch.

The Eisteddfod Is Coming To Town!

Sleepy Tregaron will be transformed into a buzzing hub of Welsh culture at the beginning of August next year **and the Trust will be represented there!** We will have a stand at a National Eisteddfod for the first time!

Said to be Europe's largest cultural festival, Eisteddfod translates as eistedd = to sit, fod = to be / place so place to be sitting. The National Eisteddfod is an 8 day celebration of Welsh language and culture which attracts around 150,000 visitors and over 250 trade stands. Competition is fierce! Choirs, dance, recitals, art, singing, poetry and much more are judged and may win coveted first place but it's the Prifardd (top poet) who wins the illustrious Bardic Chair or crown. The ancient ceremony is worth seeing as it involves druidic white-robed attendants, a sword as well as the hand carved welsh oak chair. The seating of the jubilant Prifardd in the Bardic Chair is the origin of the Eisteddfod name.

The first Eisteddfod was held in 1176 at Cardigan Castle under the patronage of Lord Rhys but the modern Eisteddfod Genedlaethol (National Eisteddfod) was first held in Aberdare in 1861. The festival has grown and developed since then, being held annually alternately in North or South Wales.

The only years without an Eisteddfod were 1914 and 1940. The festival was held in Birkenhead in 1917 where the winning poet Elis Humphrey Evans could not be chaired as he had been killed in action at Pilkem Ridge. The chair was draped in black cloth and remains known as Y Gadair Ddu (the black chair).



So what will you see if you visit the Eisteddfod? Well, it all happens on the busy Maes (site / field) where a huge central pavilion will be erected and be visible for miles around. All of the main competitions and ceremonies are held in the Pafiliwn (Pavillion) and there's plenty of seating for the audiences too. The music or poetry is broadcast all over the Maes so you will hear the events even if you aren't inside the Pafiliwn.

Other big tents house displays of winning art in all sorts of media, the sciences also have their own tent. There are informal areas for young bands, singers or instrumentalists to perform. There are plenty of places to eat and drink, there are mobile banks and the Welsh media literally have a field day! Importantly, there is a welcoming tent for Welsh learners where there is encouragement, materials to help and support you alongside lots of opportunity to practice your Welsh language!

Book your stay at our Hostels and be sure to visit the EWT stand for a very warm welcome. Mwynhewch yr Eisteddfod (enjoy the Eisteddfod)....see you there!

Wardening in 2020

Frances is taking bookings now for wardening for both hostels so if you want to secure your chosen week contact Frances: frances.adelaidecottage@gmail.com

Key dates for your diary

Date	Meeting	Location
March 14 th - 15 th	Work party weekend	Dolgoch
April 18 th	Open meeting	Ty'n Cornel
July 4 th	AGM	Talbot and Ty'n Cornel
October 3 rd – 4 th	Wardens training weekend	Dolgoch
November 7 th	Open meeting	Dolgoch

Anyone interested in attending the March work party at Dolgoch should contact Colin Hughes huwscol@hotmail.co.uk

We very much welcome input from members at the AGM and at open meetings. If you want to attend please contact Marilyn barglam@yahoo.co.uk and either Gill or Richard and Janet if you plan to stay overnight.