

NEWSLETTER 44 – SUMMER 2022

Dolgoch update



More wildlife at Dolgoch. The picture above is of a nest in the eaves just above the barn door at Dolgoch. The intention was not to disturb the chicks but to take a photograph of the nest. However, the chicks must have detected a movement and associated this with a returning parent and food. We believe that the nest is of a house martin rather than a swallow. The chicks should leave the nest in another couple of weeks. The barn owls are also very active at the moment. Anyone going into the barn at Dolgoch during the day will hear vague movements and the occasional “snoring” coming from the nest box above. We also had a visit from two botanists at Aberystwyth University a couple of weeks ago. They had heard reports of a rare bramble (*rubus saxatilis*) in the area and wanted to explore the Nant Cwm Du valley. They were successful in their search.

Bookings looking good The new season has got off to a strong start. We had just under 400 overnights in April and May, this was the highest ever for the first two months. June also looks like being a record month. This is all the more surprising given that we are still not accepting shared dormitories so one person booking the 10 bed dormitory will have the room to themselves. Forward bookings are less buoyant but will hopefully pick up. Including forward bookings for the rest of the year we have 926 overnights. On a calendar year January-December basis we have close to 1,200 overnights.

Maintenance. There is always lots of work to in maintaining the Dolgoch building and grounds. Last week we took advantage of the nice weather to paint the long exterior wall which was last painted about 7 years ago. We also fitted a set of smart new curtains, supplied by Gill, in the dormitories . We hope to organise a work party in the Autumn, probably October, so if you are interested please contact Colin. Numbers may still be restricted due to not sharing dormitories but please let Colin know if you would like to help.

A good home for our sheet sleeping bags

Thanks to sterling work by Frances Passey we have now found a deserving home for the vast quantity of old version YHA sheet sleeping bags that we have stored at both hostels. Frances contacted the Gatliff Trust who run a number of small hostels in the Hebrides and they are very keen to use our redundant sheet sleeping bags. We have retained a few bags as they make very useful dust sheets when we are decorating.

Ty'n Cornel Update



Shepherd's hut. The site preparation is now almost complete, ready for the hut to be built on-site from July 11th. The garden photo shows early stages of the work– the opportunity has been taken to widen the camping ground and to level the contours. The site for the hut is being prepared at the far end, where the digger is working. Services (sewerage pipes, cables for electricity and data, and water pipes) have also been laid in trenches, including cables for the upgraded electricity supply. All the trench work on the hostel's own land has been completed, but the cable that will bring the upgraded supply across the farmer's field is subject to an unexpected delay. The farmer Dafydd Edwards has sold his land to a London-based company, before he signed all of the crucial Wayleave forms for our work, so that phase of the work must await permission from the new owner. We currently know little about the new owners and it's not yet clear how they plan to use the land, but we're probably entering a new era.

Bookings are buoyant at Ty'n Cornel, too. We've currently got over 560 bookings for 2022, including forward bookings. We're hoping to exceed the totals (600-800 overnights) that we achieved in the years before the pandemic, even though the hut installation team will be using the hostel during much of July. We've had many groups at weekends, and there's been a steady stream of Cambrian Way walkers. And that's all without the shepherd's hut!

Other work: Richard and Janet had to visit the hostel several times in winter and spring to meet candidate tradesmen for work related to the shepherd's hut, and those visits provided opportunities to keep up with other tasks. They saw six different companies! Redecoration, maintenance and improvement of the water system, servicing of the satellite communications, bedding upgrades and other work all took place, with help from many people. Potholes were filled and ditches were cleaned out. The lower floor of the shed was made ready to hold new cables and electrical switchgear. And many wardens have worked hard to keep the hostel clean and functional, dealing with innumerable unexpected incidents and problems. The existence of a phone at Ty'n Cornel makes it so much easier to manage!

Cambrian Mountains AONB petition

A petition to ask the Welsh Senedd to designate the Cambrian Mountains as an AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) is being organised. 10,000 signatures are needed to get the issue debated in the Senedd chamber. The organisers of the petition argue that AONB designation will help to protect the landscape from developments such as large scale windfarms and farmland being sold off for conifer plantations. The latter is an immediate concern to us given the reported sales of the farm land around Ty'n Cornel to a London based company. Please sign the petition at,

[Protect Mid-Wales' unique Cambrian Mountains: designate them an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - Petitions \(senedd.wales\)](https://www.senedd.wales/petitions)

Memorial boards

We have now received of two memorial boards for display at the hostels. We have benefitted enormously over the past few years from generous legacies. Indeed without them it is unlikely that the shepherd's hut project at Ty'n Cornel would have got off the ground. We thought that it would be a good idea to commemorate those who have given us legacies with boards at each hostel. The picture shows the Dolgoch board, an identical one will be put up at Ty'n Cornel in the near future.



AGM

We will be holding our AGM on Saturday 3rd September. As last year this will be a Zoom meeting. However, we hope that in future we will return to “live” AGMs in Tregaron followed by refreshments and overnight stays for attendees at the hostels. We are though conscious of the benefits of Zoom meetings so we intend to have a facility at future meetings which will allow people to attend remotely as well as in person. As usual we will be sending out an agenda for the meeting together with a set of reports.

Eisteddfod

Preparations for the Eisteddfod at Tregaron (29th July - 6th August) are underway. The site, just outside the town on the Aberystwyth road, is taking shape. We are also developing plans for our own presence at the Eisteddfod. As well as displays about the hostels we will have a competition to identify local landmarks which can be seen on walks from our hostels. The prize will be a two day stay at either hostel for 2 people.

Hostel Christmas cards for sale

Cards featuring our two hostels are for sale again this year. The wording inside is 'With Best Wishes for Christmas and New Year'



- Pack of 5 cards – chose Dolgoch OR Ty'n Cornel = £3
- Pack of 10 cards – chose Dolgoch OR Ty'n Cornel = £5
- Pack of 10 cards (mixed) - 5x Dolgoch AND 5x Ty'n Cornel = £5

Email order to: janet.hollins@btinternet.com, Phone order to :Janet Hollins 01980 629259

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

If paying by cheque please make cheque payable to: Elenydd Wilderness Hostels

If paying by Bank Transfer make payment to: Sort Code: 089299 Account No: 67244566 and include reference 'Xmas & Surname' as appropriate.

Colin Hughes (huwscol@hotmail.co.uk) (On behalf of the Trustees)