

NEWSLETTER 47 – SPRING 2023

Derek Edwards

A long standing member of the Trust, Derek Edwards, sadly passed away this month.



Derek became involved with the Trust right back at its inception in 2006 but he was visiting the Elenydd hostels for many years before that and indeed wardened for YHA; in 1954 he worked as a summer warden in Blaencaron. The Elenydd hostels were very close to his heart and he was a keen hill walker well into his eighties. The photo shows Derek on a sponsored walk in support of the Trust in 2009.

Derek made a huge contribution to the Trust, especially in the early days when we were finding our way. When the Trust was formed in 2006 Derek became a Trustee and served as such until 2015. He edited the Trust newsletter for many years from 2007 until 2016, writing with style and fluency and during this period he thanked donors with individual hand written letters. Together with his wife Janet he wardened at both hostels on a regular basis. As well as attending Trustee and Open meetings at the hostels, he and Janet hosted an annual Trustee meeting at their home in Tetbury, providing a superb lunch for fellow Trustees. At these meetings he would make his point in a very non confrontational way and had a good way of creating consensus.

Derek was a thoroughly likeable man, a gentleman in the true sense of the word, and he is sadly missed both as a friend and enthusiastic supporter of the Trust. The funeral is on Tuesday 28 March at Haycombe Cemetery and Crematorium, 209 Whiteway Rd, Bath BA2 2RQ at 11.30.

Ann Kinnaird

Ann Kinnaird, of Blaendoethie also passed away recently, almost exactly a year after the death of her husband Dennis. Several years ago she went to live in a care home in Tregaron but many wardens will remember calling on her and Dennis at the farm. She always made everyone feel extremely welcome and was quick to put the kettle on and get out the biscuit tin. She will be greatly missed. Several members of EWH attended her funeral last month at Aberystwyth Crematorium.



Dolgoch

Work party. We had a very successful work party at Dolgoch earlier this month. Although the weather was pretty cold we were blessed with very dry conditions which made our track maintenance a lot easier. It is incredible how many holes appear given that we repair the track potholes twice a year. I counted 243 holes filled in and “whacked” down.

The picture shows the cheerful group of track layers, Richard Gibson, Andrew Hoppit and Mike Teske. The track gang also checked and cleared the ditch culverts.



Work inside the hostel was equally successful, Lyn Rook painted the common room/kitchen skirting, Frances painted the back toilet, Owen Rook did numerous jobs including fixing the cleaning room door, and clearing the timber from the camping area. Frances brought two friends, Mike Teske and Peter Simpson, who, as well as helping to create a mountain of kindling on Sunday, did good work on the drainage at the end of the drive.

John Motley joined us from Ty'n Cornel on the Sunday. The hostel was also given its usual spring clean chiefly by Di Bell, Mary Howley and Frances.

As is customary, we shared an enjoyable communal meal on the Friday and Saturday nights plus a few drinks and chat around the fire. The only unfortunate note was that Richard Gibson had a cycling accident after leaving on Sunday. He managed to get back to the hostel and was taken to the hospital in Aberystwyth where a broken collar bone was diagnosed.

Many thanks to Lyn and Owen Rook, Di Bell, Mary Howley, Andrew Hoppit, Richard Gibson, Frances Passey, Mike Teske, Peter Simpson and John Motley.

New stove. Installation of the much needed new wood burning stove has been delayed due to the stove fitter having extensive trouble with his van. A new date has been arranged for just before the warden's training weekend in April. The old stove is using a vast amount of fuel and does not meet the latest eco standards for wood burning stoves. The new stove will be much cleaner and more efficient in its use of fuel.

Electricity upgrade. We are nearing the final stages of acquiring the paddock from NRW where we will site the PV panels for the electricity upgrade. Our preferred supplier has come back with revised costings and suggested configuration. We hope to give details in the next newsletter but we are hopeful that we will finally see the long awaited upgrade later this year.

Water supply. The annual chlorination of the water supply took place in very cold and wet conditions earlier this month. Our borehole water is far more secure and safe than the previous supply from the stream. However, as a private water supply, it is good practice to undertake the annual exercise. Many thanks to Richard for organising the process at both Dolgoch and Ty'n Cornel.

Ty'n Cornel

Shepherd's hut. Bookings are now coming in! The hut is open from 1 April, and it's already booked for that weekend. So far, the hut is booked on 12 nights, most of which are in April and May, so it's looking very promising. The hut is advertised at £85 per night, with a 30% discount on the third and subsequent nights mid-week. See the photos on our web site. There has been extra publicity from Independent Hostels and on social media. Shelves and other equipment have now been provided. We're hoping that the weather will dry up sufficiently that we can lay a "stepping stone" slab path across the camping ground to the hut, and sow grass seed to help the camping ground to recover from last year's excavations.



Electricity upgrade. The electricians connected electrical power to the shepherd's hut in February. We're still awaiting a new multi-phase electricity meter from our electricity provider British Gas (they've failed to turn up for several appointments now), so both the hostel and the shepherd's hut currently draw their power from just one of the two 100 Amp supplies that have been installed. These arrangements will tide us over until the new meter is fitted – currently scheduled for end of March. The new switchgear in the lower shed may look intimidating, but wardens won't need to use it - they only need to read the meter.

Cleaning/chlorination of water systems. The water systems at both hostels have been cleaned and chlorinated. Richard Innes and Dee Melia helped Richard and Janet to drain and clean the Ty'n Cornel water tank during fine weather in late February, and this work saved valuable time for the chlorination team during dreadful weather in mid-March.



Outdoor maintenance. Builders performed some much-needed maintenance at the front of the hostel in February. The front edge of the roof was repaired, and a fascia board was added so that the gutter could be fitted correctly. Some patches of mortar were also repaired. Plans for a new front porch are being discussed – the existing porch, built by volunteers during the 1990s, is nearing the end of its life.

Indoor re-decoration. The kitchen, the large dormitory, the warden's room, and the ladies' toilet have been repainted over the winter, so they're ready for the new season.

Warden's meeting

Just under 20 wardens attended a Zoom meeting earlier this month. A wide range of topics were discussed from making up beds in advance , to what to do with George's organ at Dolgoch. There was also a valuable update from Di Bell on recent changes to Safeguarding.

Warden's training weekend

The next warden's training weekend will be held over the weekend 21st-23rd April. Prospective wardens will get a chance to learn how to run the hostels as well as learning about important safeguarding and health and safety issues. To the outsider wardening may seem quite a daunting task but the course is designed to build confidence and there is always lots of help available at the end of a phone.

There may be some places available on the April course for those interested, please contact Frances Passey, frances.adelaidecottage@gmail.com

AGM

This year's AGM will be held on Saturday 2nd September. This will be our first "live" AGM since 2019 and our good friends at Y Talbot have once again allowed us to hold the event there. This year we will attempt a live Zoom "broadcast" of the AGM for those unable to attend. After the AGM there will be refreshments at Ty'n Cornel. For those wishing to attend and stay at one of the hostels please get in touch with Gill (Dolgoch) or Richard and Janet (Ty'n Cornel). It will not be possible to book online.

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