

# ANTUR

The news source for the outdoor sector in North West Wales

Issue No. 01

November 2008



**Snowdonia-Active**  
Eryri-Bywiol

## Welcome to Antur

Antur is the new outdoor information resource for North West Wales. We are planning three issues a year, with a focus on environmental, social and economic topics affecting the outdoor sector.

Those working in the outdoors share a common appreciation of landscape, environment and habitat. Antur seeks to highlight ideas and features illustrating the connectivity between the outdoor sector and organisations involved with managing

this shared resource.

£140 million is spent each year in the region through the 'active economy', which employs over 8000 people. From both a philosophical and economic perspective it is vitally important to protect and enhance the fantastic environment in which we work. The outdoor sector has always sought to inspire an appreciation of this through education.

The sector is also playing a growing part in promoting an active, healthy and

socially inclusive Wales by encouraging more local youngsters to get involved with outdoor activities. Twenty-three community adventure clubs have been set up with support from the Outdoor Partnership in the last three years.

If you think there is something the wider outdoor community should know about, then send it in. Antur is your chance to have a voice. Comments, contributions and ideas to [antur@snowdonia-active.com](mailto:antur@snowdonia-active.com)

## ENVIRONMENT

### Enjoying the countryside

## i-Spy Outdoors

Wales has a diverse range of habitats from damp and humid gorges containing rare mosses and lichens, mountains with northern montane species at the extreme edge of their UK range and marine areas with nationally scarce plants and animals. However, threatened habitats and changing climate patterns bring new challenges to conservation.

The Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) is keen to hear of any unusual species seen by the outdoor fraternity. You can tell CCW about the most interesting, fascinating, beautiful or funny things you've seen while out and about in the Welsh countryside at [tinyurl.com/3cdnfp](http://tinyurl.com/3cdnfp)



Sea Panther (E1 5b), Craig Ddu, Llanberis Pass

## Hafod Eryri - A Room with a View

### Ready for spring opening

Following a two-year battle against some of the worst weather on record, Snowdon's new summit building and station was physically completed in September and will be opening to the public this Spring.

The newly named Hafod Eryri replaces the decaying 1936 Clough Williams-Ellis summit building, which was demolished in 2006.

The project cost around £8.3m, with £4.3m coming from the European Regional Development Fund.

The National Park say that the new building provides visitors of all ages and physical abilities with an opportunity to learn more about the mountain's significance as a unique recreational, environmental and cultural resource. It will also provide weather information, advice on descent routes, washrooms and toilets as well as refreshments and shelter. The Park has taken

the opportunity to reorganise the paths around the summit providing easier access for train passengers to the summit cairn.

Construction work at the highest point in Wales forced the contractors, Carillion, to face unusual logistical challenges and extreme mountain weather conditions.

All the workforce, materials and machinery were carried to the summit by train, whilst the railway continued to provide the standard passenger service as far as Clogwyn Station.

Although scheduled for completion in May 2008, progress at the summit was hampered by two exceptionally wet summers, late winter snow and high winds. The train can only operate when the wind speed is less than 42 mph.

For an extensive photo blog of the summit development see [tinyurl.com/3vjhn8](http://tinyurl.com/3vjhn8)



Photo: Gareth Pritchard

## Red Squirrels Ahead

Road signs are being put up on the Isle of Anglesey in an effort to prevent red squirrels being killed on the highway. Red Squirrel expert, Dr Craig Shuttleworth of Menter Môn, said: "The signs will help raise public awareness of this endangered species and should be in place before Christmas. For the moment there are no plans to put rope-bridge crossings over roads for them!"

The road signs will be in and around the forests where the squirrels live. Ten years ago there were as few as forty red squirrels left on the island and were in danger of being totally wiped out by the larger and more aggressive non-native grey species. The greys are carriers of a virus to which they are immune but is harmful to reds.

In 1998 Dr Shuttleworth, was funded by rural regeneration company, Menter Môn, to implement an on-going programme to reverse the declining red squirrel population, including culling the greys.

Today, there are 200 adult red squirrels and approx 100 young across the island. The ideal habitat of Newborough Forest now attracts visitors hoping to catch a glimpse of these shy creatures. This wildlife tourism brings with it a range of socio-economic benefits

For more info: [www.redsquirrels.info](http://www.redsquirrels.info)

## CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS

Antur is a joint communication project between Snowdonia-Active, the Countryside Council for Wales and The Snowdonia National Park Authority. If your organisation would like the opportunity to contribute to future issues please contact us at [antur@snowdonia-active.com](mailto:antur@snowdonia-active.com)



**Snowdonia-Active**  
Eryri-Bywiol



Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru  
Countryside Council for Wales



SNOWDONIA  
NATIONAL PARK

# BLAENAU BIKING HUB

£2.5 million community project to bring employment and economic boost



Along with roofing the world, Blaeanau Ffestiniog is set to become synonymous with mountain biking. Once, winding drums and water wheels turned on the hillsides above the town, but it could soon be bicycle wheels. Antur 'Stiniog's £2.5 million plan develops a series of cycle projects, with Blaeanau at its heart.

Antur 'Stiniog, is an outdoor focussed social enterprise. (For a definition of social enterprise see [tinyurl.com/44cmkr](http://tinyurl.com/44cmkr)) Antur 'Stiniog hope that work on the ground will be underway by summer 2009. The four key projects comprise of: a world-class downhill biking facility at Llechwedd with vehicular uplift, a 10km cross-country trail with free-ride theme in Hendre Gwenllian woodland, an 8.5km family loop around Llyn Tanygrisiau and making use of existing tramways for an epic cross-country course in the Moelwynion.

Chair of Antur 'Stiniog, Ceri Cunningham, said: "We have local support pretty much across the board. But it is important to give local people the skills to get involved. So far we've had fifteen people undertake their Mountain Leader Award Training and secured funding for four to qualify as Mountain Bike Leaders. As well as this we have helped set up a hugely popular paddlesport club (Padlo Blaenau) as well as run first aid courses and other outdoor activity based events"

He continued; "This summer we ran a successful community bike hire scheme, On Your Bike, where residents could borrow a bike for free. We would like to see the Ffestiniog valley develop as a focus for outdoor activities."



Antur 'Stiniog is keen to maximise use of existing infrastructure such as the parking already available at Llechwedd Slate Caverns and the Stwlan Dam visitor centre. Trail design consultant, Simon Williams, hopes to build "something special" at Llechwedd, stressing "how the course has to be sustainable without constantly needing repairs, yet still be attractive to the committed downhill mountain biker and as a venue for international races."

The Moelwynion trail involves upgrading derelict tracks and tramways from the heyday of the slate industry and the industrial archaeology will be an important part of the route's character. To access the Hendre Gwenllian site, Ffestiniog Railway has expressed an interest in taking bikes and riders between Blaeanau and Maentwrog.

Ceri explained: "Blaeanau could be at the hub of the North Wales mountain biking scene. Riders staying in the town would not only have the choice of these developments but also the Penmachno and Marin mountain bike trails close-by to the north & the world-famous Coedy-Brenin trails on its doorstep to the south."

Ultimately, he envisages a series of biking trails in and around the town and even a velorail ([tinyurl.com/3vumlq](http://tinyurl.com/3vumlq)) link between Blaeanau and Trawsfynydd: the first of its kind in Britain. For more info about Antur 'Stiniog contact [ceri.c@gwynedd.gov.uk](mailto:ceri.c@gwynedd.gov.uk)

**TOURISM**  
The active  
economy



## iTry Activity Pilot

This summer, Visit Wales commissioned Snowdonia-Active to run a six-week pilot project, iTry, to look into the demand for easily purchasable activity 'taster' sessions for tourists visiting Snowdonia.

Unlike most other major tourism destinations around the world, there is little tradition within Wales for activity tourism providers packaging their products into half or full-day taster sessions for novices or dabblers.

Instead, activity providers have worked on an individual basis with their clients, tailoring packages to the specific needs/desires of the customer. As Wales increasingly focuses on outdoor recreation as one of the country's biggest assets, this gap in provision has become more apparent.

The pilot project was developed in response to this need. It ran between 19th July and 31st August, where the iTry call centre, run by Loop Customer Management, assisted callers with booking enquiries and then either transferred them to their chosen activity provider to complete their booking or took bookings on the providers behalf.

With the marketing focused on attracting families, the activities offered by a limited number of high-quality providers included rock climbing, canoeing, coasteering, dry slope skiing, high ropes course, adventure day's and wildlife RIB rides.

Visit Wales will be considering the findings from the pilot project over the coming months and making decisions on whether it could be expanded to take in more activity providers and other activities across Wales.

## Visit Wales Activity Tourism Roadshows

Visit Wales will be holding four Activity Roadshows across Wales this November. The North Wales date is 26th November (10am - 3pm) at Plas y Brenin, Capel Curig. During the interactive sessions, Visit Wales hope to engage with private and voluntary outdoor sector organisations, to keep them up to date on their intended plans for activity tourism.

They will be discussing key issues and priorities to help Visit Wales and the activity sector jointly plan how to work together in the coming year and beyond. There will be lots of opportunities for businesses to get their views across.

Visit Wales aim to end the day with a thought-provoking speaker who will compare how Wales is performing against their experiences of activity tourism around the world. Hopefully, businesses will take away some useful ideas.

Register your interest by emailing [tourism.roadshows@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:tourism.roadshows@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

## SNOWDONIA GREEN KEY

### What is the Snowdonia Green Key?

The Snowdonia Green Key (SGK) is an initiative focusing on sustainable transport within the Snowdonia National Park. The key message is helping safeguard the future of the Park by reducing private motor vehicle usage and encouraging access to the countryside by bus, train, walking and cycling. In practical terms this means improving, integrating and creating more flexibility for how we all travel to and through this landscape. The initiative hopes to sustainably satisfy the growing demand that exists for people to enjoy the National Park.

### How does the SGK work?

From park-and-ride to taxi schemes, it is about reducing the impact that recreational users have on the National Park. SGK is responsible for the network of buses in northern Snowdonia, known as the Sherpa service. Buses start from gateway towns such as Llandudno, Porthmadog and Caernarfon.

### How do walkers and cyclists benefit?

The Sherpa network means walkers are better able to plan linear walks. Cycle routes can similarly be integrated with bus services making pedal power a realistic choice for exploring Snowdonia. The Sherpa Bus service, together with park and ride helps meet the demand for access to ever-popular recreational areas such as the Glyderau and Snowdon. SGK is also concerned with developing low-level cycle and walking trails, particularly where they link communities. This has the important added benefit of increasing the opportunities for exercise.

### Who runs the Snowdonia Green Key?

The initiative is run by a partnership of Conwy & Gwynedd Local Authorities, The Snowdonia National Park Authority, The Countryside Council for Wales, The Welsh Assembly Government Department of Enterprise, Innovation & Networks and Visit Wales.

### How is the SGK funded?

The main source of funding for projects is via Transport Grant from the Welsh Assembly Government. This grant is used to subsidise a minimum level of service for the Sherpa Bus network. As Transport Grant subsidies decrease then income from parking charges will provide a means of sustaining the service.

### What projects have the SGK recently been involved in?

An on-going project is developing a cycle route between Capel Curig and Betws y Coed. This will link into existing cycle routes and will enable cycling from Bangor to Betws y Coed virtually off-road the whole way. SGK helped fund a survey report on the Cylchdaith Yr Wyddfa - a proposed 60km low-level route around Snowdon. Over the summer SGK installed new ticket machines at Nant Peris, Pont Bethania, Llyn Cwellyn and Dolbadarn car parks. For £4 you get all day parking and one Sherpa network day ticket. The same machines will be going into Ogwen, Beddgelert and Rhyd Ddu Station. Other car parks are the normal pay and display type. SGK is also looking at formalising parking at Pen y Gwryd.

### How do I find out more about the Green Key including timetables?

Visit the Snowdonia Green Key website which has plenty of information and news on the latest developments: [www.snowdoniagreenkey.co.uk](http://www.snowdoniagreenkey.co.uk)



# THE OUTDOOR PARTNERSHIP

Achieving your potential through outdoor activities



The North West Wales Outdoor Partnership (NWWOP) was formed in 2005 to address the low levels of participation in outdoor activities amongst young local people. Opportunities for young people to develop important life-skills, healthier lifestyles and secure employment were being lost.

The outdoor sector currently supports at least 8,4000 jobs in the Partnership area, representing 6% of all employment. Partnership research in 2005 showed that only 7% of full-time instructors had received secondary education in the region compared to 67% of support staff (cook, admin workers etc). Only 4% of full-time instructors were found to speak fluent Welsh. Clearly there was an imbalance in the outdoor sector profile.

## The Outdoor Partnership's Vision

The Partnership was formed with investment from the Welsh Assembly Government through Sports Council Wales. Four key members of staff were appointed: the Senior Project Manager and three Development Officers - one located in each of the three local authorities. Since 2005, the Partnership has built momentum working towards their vision:

*"To achieve an active, healthy and inclusive Wales, where outdoor recreation provides a common platform for participation, fun, achievement and employment, binding local communities and creating sustainable use and understanding of the environment"*

## Their work has mainly focused on:

- Providing 'first-time' outdoor recreation experiences - working with local community groups, schools and youth service.
- Increased participation opportunities through helping establish sustainable outdoor clubs.
- Performance and excellence - opportunities for individuals to progress to competitions and leadership.
- Volunteer recruitment - retention, training and support.
- Increased levels of employment for local people - identify a system that allows local people to access the necessary skills, experience and qualifications.
- Outdoor Education - encouraging and supporting schools to provide a permanent provision for it within the curriculum.

## Water, Water, Everywhere ...

### Access to inland water: update

One group of recreational users making the most of biblical downpours this summer were canoeists and kayakers.

Public access to inland water remains contentious. This year there have been a number of initiatives seeking solutions.

In order to maximise access by all users, and to minimise conflict, the National Trust (NT), as a major landowner along the upper Glaslyn from Llyn Gwynant to just below Beddgelert has recently drawn up a new access arrangement to this stretch of water. This followed discussions with the Glaslyn Fishing Association, the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) and the Environment Agency (EA).

The arrangement on when paddlesport can take place is based on water level indicators. The arrangement does not extend to the Aberglaslyn Gorge as the local angling club feels that angling and paddlesport are incompatible in this location, during the fishing season.

National Trust Warden, Dave Smith, said: "Access is based on water level meters to prevent damage to breeding fish beds. The EA identified the safe level for canoeing on the river as 0.75m at the Beddgelert metering station. The water level meters were located close to the access points to make them easily referred to. We may have to fine tune the water level meters as our experience increases."

Although The Welsh Canoeing Association (WCA) was consulted during the formation

of the arrangement they have declined to endorse it as they argue: "The NT arrangement is based on the implication that canoe activity below a certain water level is 'access damaging', which we believe is not supported by evidence and such restriction is contrary to WCA access policy."

Further south in the Mawddach river catchment north of Dolgellau, an area already renowned for the Coed y Brenin mountain biking trails, Snowdonia-Active has been working with the Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) and the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) to develop and deliver pilot work on providing opportunities for water-based recreation throughout Wales.

The main aim of the project is to provide solutions for landowners and managers responsible for overseeing environmentally sensitive sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; making it easier for them to facilitate water-based recreation whilst protecting the important environmental assets for which the sites are designated. The final report will be submitted to FCW/CCW in October. The Mawddach has a wide ranging appeal to paddlesport enthusiasts, from those looking for technical white water rapids to gentle open canoe touring.

The Welsh Assembly Government and partners will be reviewing these Initiatives over the coming months to establish whether they work and if they can be transferred to other rivers in Wales.

• A website - resource library for teachers, youth leaders, clubs, community groups, young people and families.

## Sports Council for Wales funding confirmed

Throughout 2009 the Outdoor Partnership will continue to provide outdoor activity programmes for local people in Anglesey, Conwy and Gwynedd, including introductory courses in climbing, mountain biking, sailing, hillwalking, gorge walking and much more.

The Outdoor Partnership will maintain support for the 23 new outdoor activities clubs, as well as existing outdoor clubs in the region and provide mentoring and coach education support for volunteer leaders.

Now that outdoor and adventurous activities are a mandatory part of in Wales' national curriculum, the Outdoor Partnership will support this requirement and promote 'exit route' links to community clubs where activity participation can be embedded as a long-term activity.

If you would like to know more about outdoor activities in your area, volunteering, access to outdoor courses and qualifications, employment opportunities contact: the Senior Project Officer, Tracey Evans, on 01690 720106 or email tracey.evans@mountaintrainingtrust.org

Alternatively visit the NWWOP website [www.outdoorpartnership.co.uk](http://www.outdoorpartnership.co.uk) and subscribe to the Outdoor Partnership's monthly electronic newsletter for up to date news and events.

*The Outdoor Partnership is supported by: Welsh Assembly Government, Sports Council for Wales, Plas Menai, Plas y Brenin, Conway Centre, NE Wales Outdoor Education Service, Nant Bwlch yr Haearn, Mountain Leader Training Wales, Snowdonia-Active, University of Wales Bangor, Gwynedd Council, Anglesey County Council, Conwy County Borough Council, The Countryside Council for Wales, Urdd Gobaith Cymru.*

## WHAT'S ON

Here's a few outdoor related events coming up that might be of interest:

**Visit Wales Activity Tourism Roadshow** 26st November 2008, 10am-3pm, Plas y Brenin

**Eryri Harriers Xmas Fun Run/Walk** 21st December 2008, Royal Victoria Hotel, Llanberis.

**BMC AGM** 24-25 April 2009, Plas y Brenin

**Conwy River Festival** 11-12 August 2009

**WALKING FESTIVALS 2009**  
**Prestatyn:** 24-25 April 2009  
**Anglesey:** 23 May - 7 June 2009  
**Conwy:** 1-7 July 2009



CULTURE &  
HERITAGE  
A sense of place



## Working for the Environment and the Welsh Language

The Welsh Language Working Group for the Environmental Sector, established in 2007, has launched a website to promote and develop the use of Welsh in the environmental sector.

In Wales, language and culture are core aspects of our landscape and are key factors in people's sense of belonging to and identifying with their environment. It is important for environmental sector representatives to be able to communicate effectively with landowners and communities who are responsible for Wales's landscape and ecology.

The new site also has details of the grants available under the Cynllun AmNawdd Scheme: established by the CCW to increase the number of Welsh-speaking staff and specialists in the environmental sphere.

The scheme offers a £1500 grant and five weeks work placement to under-graduates, following relevant environmental subjects where a proportion of the course is through the medium of Welsh. Post-grads can apply for a £1000 and four weeks work placement. The only courses currently eligible are at Bangor University. By providing tailored work placements the scheme promotes environmental career opportunities for Welsh speakers. For more details go to [www.amgylchedd.com](http://www.amgylchedd.com)

## What's a Nuttall?

Mountaineering instructors are discovering a new type of client. Local mountaineering instructor, Garry Smith of [gethigh.co.uk](http://gethigh.co.uk), has been employed over the summer to help clients add to their list of *Nuttalls*.

"What's a Nuttall?" The name comes from John and Anne Nuttall who, in 1989, wrote 'The Mountains of England and Wales' ([tinyurl.com/3qsc6e](http://tinyurl.com/3qsc6e)) listing all peaks 2000ft and over. Describing the book, Anne said: "Although people refer to our 'list', this really took second place to having an enjoyable walk and sharing our love of the mountains."

Since the first edition, ten new tops have been added to the Welsh list and one deleted. It now details nearly 200 peaks. The most recent addition was widely reported. After survey work carried out in August, Mynydd Graig Goch at the end of the Nantlle Ridge was discovered to be 2000ft and six inches, - 609.75m as opposed to its previous 609m. Interestingly OS accuracy is generally within +/-0.3m for trig points and a whopping +/- 3m for other spot points in mountain and moorland areas. For more details and the latest on Nuttalls go to [www.nuttalls.com](http://www.nuttalls.com)