

Bwlch Nant yr Arian NEWS



Exciting times ahead

Welcome to the first Bwlch Nant yr Arian newsletter.

We hope you find this an interesting source of information on what goes on behind the scenes at this popular Forestry Commission Wales destination.

A lot of hard work is done every day to ensure that everyone has a good time whenever they drop in, whether it be for a nice cup of tea and cake in the Visitor Centre or to enjoy one of the many trails that meander off into the woods.

There have been a few changes to the way things are run recently which we'd like to bring you up to speed on.

Forestry Commission Wales has taken the management of the Visitor Centre back "in-house" after Ceredig and Janet Morgan's lease expired.

We're extremely grateful for all their hard work over the years in helping to build Bwlch Nant yr Arian's reputation to what it is today, but we felt the time was right to bring the centre under our management.

The new centre is now five years old, and we're confident the plans we have

in mind will enable us to take Bwlch Nant yr Arian to the next level.

Inside the centre, there will be one or two structural alterations to cut waiting times and improve the service, and there'll be some changes behind the counter, too.

Visitor Centre manager Gareth Owen says, "We aim to introduce a new menu

and the emphasis will be very much on showcasing the best of local produce."

Outside, the toilet block will be upgraded to a new toilet and shower facility, which will benefit visitors outside of the centre's opening hours.

Don't forget: the Visitor Centre is open between 10am and 5pm throughout the summer.



Make a date to find out more

Want to know more about the birds and other wildlife that can be found at Bwlch Nant yr Arian?

RSPB Cymru staff and volunteers will be on site until 30 September as part of the RSPB's national 'A Date with Nature'.

The scheme aims to show people wildlife spectacles in different places across Wales, from choughs at Llechwedd Slate Caverns to ospreys near Porthmadog and peregrines in Cardiff city centre.

Joe Hawthorne, RSPB People Engagement Officer, says, "It's amazing to see so many red kites in one place, and to be so close to them as well. We try to show families close-up views through our binoculars and scopes – it's an event not to be missed!"

Details can be found on the RSPB's new-look website at www.rspb.org.uk/datewithnature

This Date with Nature is a partnership between the RSPB, Forestry Commission Wales and the Welsh Kite Trust.

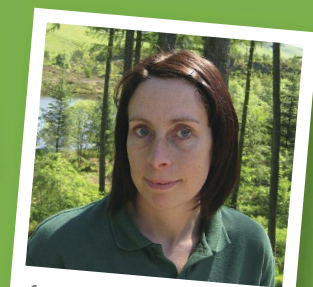
WHO'S WHO



Gareth Owen

GARETH OWEN has been appointed Visitor Centre manager. Gareth, who was formerly a Recreation Ranger at Nant-yr-Arian, is responsible for the smooth running of the centre.

SARAH COOKSON has just joined the team as a Visitor Centre Assistant. She may be familiar to you – she used to work here as a warden for the RSPB.



Sarah Cookson



Tom Roberts

TOM ROBERTS is the temporary catering supervisor and is responsible for organising a local and healthy menu at Bwlch Nant yr Arian, in addition to offering advice on enjoying any of the outdoor facilities.

Behind the counter, many of the staff who worked for CEREDIG and JANET will continue to be serving top quality food and service.



The cafe



Feeding time causes a flap

One of the biggest attractions at Bwlch Nant yr Arian is the daily display of aerial dexterity by the red kites.

These graceful birds of prey – recently voted Wales's favourite bird by the public – are fed down by the lake and draw crowds from far and wide, many armed with impressive-looking telephoto lenses!

The birds, which have a wing span up to 1.8 metres, are fed by Forestry Commission Wales in partnership with RSPB Cymru and the Welsh Kite Trust.

From being fortunate to see half-a-dozen birds circling above when the

feeding sessions began 11 years ago, you can now watch as anything up to 200 kites swoop down to grab their lunch.

They eat pretty well, too! The mouse-sized chunks of raw meat are delivered every week from a local butcher in Aberystwyth.

Gareth says, "Feeding time at Nant-yr-Arian can be quite a spectacle, but remember, we can't guarantee anything with the birds. This is nature, of course!"

Feeding takes place at 3pm in the summer and at 2pm in the winter.



The real issues over wind farm access



You may have heard or read a lot of speculation recently about how the prospective development of a wind farm at nearby Nant-y-Moch will affect Bwlch Nant-yr-Arian.

The position is that we're considering a request from the Option Holder and Developer, Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) / Airtricity, to bring the turbines through Bwlch Nant-yr-Arian.

We're hoping we can reach agreement by the end of July, but before then we want to ensure that the environmental, social and physical impacts on Nant-yr-Arian Visitor Centre can be kept to a minimum.

That's why we want a number of reassurances from the developer before agreeing to any change to the access route.

Among the things we're looking at are:

- primarily the safety of our visitors - this is paramount in our considerations
- issues such as the timing of any

construction of a new access to avoid the peak visitor season

- management of abnormal loads outside peak visitor centre hours – perhaps parking these up during the day and allowing them past the visitor centre during late evening and into the night
- a requirement to tarmac any new access to avoid dust
- landscaping of a new access to separate it from the existing car park
- provision of alternative parking space
- need for alternative or re-routed cycle trails, and
- management of walking and cycling crossing points
- ensuring that a commercial deal representing the full value of this access and taking account of all the foregoing requirements is finalised

We are determined to do all we can to keep the Visitor Centre open, but we'll want compensation for any disruption or temporary closure of the cafe.

What's on

- 11 June to 11 July: **World Cup wander**. Take a break from watching the footy and try matching the animal to the country it's from along our lakeside walk.
- Every Wednesday from 21 July to 25 August: **Forest skills and craft** days through the summer holidays. Booking required.
- 23 July to 25 August: **RSPB Funday Fridays**. Every Friday through the summer holidays.



Forest skills and craft

What's to do

At Bwlch Nant-yr-Arian

- Red kite feeding daily at 3pm
- All-ability lakeside trail
- Breath-taking views
- Children's play areas
- Animal puzzle trail
- Challenging mountain bike trails
- Orienteering course
- Ridgtop and woodland walks
- Picnic sites



Picnic sites



Funday Fridays



Mountain bike trails



Children's play area

In the area

Llywernog Silver Lead mine

One mile to the east. Explore a living reminder of the mining history of Ceredigion.

Devils Bridge

Thunderous waterfalls and the famous three bridges.

Hafod Estate

Discover the picturesque walks, ravines and views of this beautiful estate, www.hafod.org

Contact us

For all the latest information on Bwlch Nant yr Arian, visit our website on www.forestry.gov.uk/bwlchnantyrarian or call us on **01970 890453**



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