



Welcome to this Autumn edition of the Tir Coed newsletter.

The winter months are now upon us with Xmas around the corner.

This time of year is always busy for Tir Coed as it is our VINE end of year which means we write reports and collate statistics whilst planning and preparing for the next year ahead.

Last year we were amazed to discover the overwhelming outreach statistics of the first year of the project, and this year has been no exception with a staggering 1051 individuals engaged in their local woodlands undertaking a total 9,767.5 of volunteer hours.

We have managed to secure all match-funding for year three and are now busy developing the next major project post VINE. More information on this can found on page13.

In September, Andy Bakewell, manager of WiseWoods Wales sadly left the organisation to pursue his environmental skills training. A summary of WWW achievements and a fond farewell from him can be found on page 14.

Tir Coed received some exciting news in October, having been successful in a five year partnership project bid at the Elan Valley. This will enable Tir Coed to continue its successful model and will also enable us to outreach further afield to disadvantaged groups in Birmingham, as well as continuing to train and engage with local people.

The director has also been working closely with Coed Cymru and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, developing a business and project plan, to enable a community asset transfer of a large woodland centre in North Pembrokeshire. If feasible, this will play a significant part in the next major project. See page 12 for more details.

A great networking and consultation day for Tir Coed tutors and activity leaders was held at the end of November, see page 11. Twenty six people attended and it was a great opportunity for everyone to input into the development of Tir Coed, and even better to get everyone together for a good catch up!

We are thrilled to be able to welcome Eva Jones back from her travels and she has been busy working on a brand new website which we are hoping to launch in March 2016. Angie, our accreditation manager continues to research opportunities for a Tir Coed qualification and has enjoyed meeting professionals in the forestry training spheres over the past three months.

So you can see from this introduction that the Autumn 2015 edition is really jam-packed. Enjoy reading and please do get in contact if there is anything you would like more information on.

Ffion Farnell,

Tir Coed Executive Director



STOP PRESS  
VINE  
Year Two  
Statistics  
reach new  
heights,  
engaging  
staggering  
numbers of  
volunteers

For more details  
See page 11

STOP PRESS  
Elan Valley  
Funding  
Success  
provides  
5-year  
Partnership  
project for  
Tir Coed



For more details  
See page 12

Inside this  
newsletter...

- VINE Updates:
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  - Llanidloes
- News
- WiseWoods Wales



## Llanidloes VINE - Special Activity Days

### Understanding Rivers and Ecosystems - 9 Sept 2015

Leader: Lisa Barlow  
Sessions: 1  
Volunteers: 3  
Vol hours: 18



Volunteers were treated to a day out to a local river near Tylwch where the Severn Rivers Trust were working with local landowners to support the health of local rivers. The volunteers donned their wellies and actively engaged in a spot survey and identification of river life, and were amazed to discover how many different life-forms existed within the river. Some local willow was cut and weaved into an impressive protective wall along the river bank to prevent further erosion.



Volunteers then learned of the vital connection between healthy woodlands and

healthy rivers.

#### Feedback:

*"The volunteers thoroughly enjoyed the day and also the sharing that occurred over lunch"*

*"Lisa was a very good role model for the participants"*



### Allt Goch Botany Survey - 16 September 2015

Leader: Chloe Griffiths  
Sessions: 1  
Volunteers: 5  
Vol hours: 30



The volunteers first learned about the various forms of flora and the theory of surveying. There were many questions answered before embarking on two circular identification walks within the woods. It is early days for the re-establishment of native plants within the woods. However, there were exciting early indicators that parts of the woodland used to be heath, including the re-establishment of 'Heath Speedwell' in the newly coppiced area, which had not



been observed to be present during all previous surveys.

The day was considered to be very informative and extremely enjoyable and volunteers experienced the excitement of making new discoveries.



#### Feedback:

*"Thank you Chloe, this has been a highly informative day and so enjoyable"*

*"That was a great day and I am looking forward to the possibility of bat, dragonfly, botany and even reptile surveys in July next year" Chloe*

## Lampeter VINE - Special Activity Days

### Cerdd yn y Coed/Music in the Woods - 16 Sept '15

Leader: Peni Ediker  
 Support: Stef Balesi  
 Sessions: 1  
 Volunteers: 20  
 Vol hours: 100



Lampeter Home Education Group provides mutual support, and a sharing of information and resources between members. The Group provides regular social and educational opportunities and activities during their weekly gatherings.

This session was planned as part of their programme to encourage families to enjoy the wonderful surroundings of Coedwig Gymunedol Long Wood Community Woodland. The activities provided the skills and knowledge needed to make whistles and other musical instruments. All ages enjoyed the session and a range of musical instruments were created under the superb guidance of Peni and Stef.

#### Feedback:

*"Bestest bit - making musical instruments"*

*"Brilliant to see the children make whistles, run off and play, toast marshmallows and it is great that Home Ed.ers are included – would like to stay a week"*

*"I can't remember making musical instruments before - it was fun!"*

*"I'd like to say thank you, my children enjoyed today - great place and great woods, I enjoyed the energy of the tutor working with a large group"*

*"I enjoyed making reed whistles and seeing everyone, it was really fun playing in the woods with people my age"*

*"I really like this, it was so nice I really liked all of it"*

*"Really liked making the whistle... I'm inspired to make one with holes, at home, to make different noises"*

*"It was all fun, loved it all, no idea how to explain it – the place was amazing and everything is amazing merged into one, really all good!"*

*"I enjoyed making something out of wood and watching others making something out of wood"*

*"I learnt from watching others make things and was impressed with the teaching and how safety was made a priority. Brilliant day. Great Day, Great Place - Thank you"*



## Lampeter VINE - Open Day

### Celebration of Farming and Rural Life - 19 Sept '15

Leader: Rob Smith  
 Support: Eifion Wakefield  
 Sessions: 1  
 Participants: 50  
 Vol hours: 150



**Dathlu Ffermio a Bywyd Cefn Gwlad:** arranged by Ceredigion Young Farmers Clubs as a Celebration of Farming and Rural Life, the event was hosted at the Llanerchaeron National Trust Estate, near Aberaeron. It was held over two days, with local primary aged pupils from Lampeter and Tregaron visiting on the first day, to discover more about farming and rural life.

On Saturday, 19 September the estate was home to farm animals, stalls and demonstrations, talks and walks, food and craft fair. Tir Coed provided demonstrations and tuition on a traditional pole lathe. Rob Smith and Eifion Wakefield were kept busy, sharing green wood craft skills with the many visitors. It was wonderful to see people having-a-go at working the pole lathe for their very first time. Expert guidance meant that many were able to master the basic techniques quite quickly.

The event also provided an opportunity to share the wide range of activities and courses offered by Tir Coed and this certainly sparked an interest for several visitors. The green wood craft sessions complimented the other sessions on offer at the event and made people aware of the traditional ways of turning and carving wood.

#### Feedback:

What did you learn?

*"Learning to use the tools for turning"*

*"Hands on experience and the enthusiasm of demonstrators"*

*"How to cut a spindle"*

What did you enjoy?

*"The joy of manually working with wood"*



## Llanidloes VINE - Special Activity Days

Into the Dark - 24 September 2015

Leader: Cath Rigler  
Polly Williams  
Sessions: 1  
Volunteers: 14  
Vol hours: 28



Fourteen Scouts and their leaders had great fun in an evening session in the autumnal woods, building natural shelters, firestriking, whittling and tracking whilst wearing blindfolds.



As the sun went down the torches came out and the woods gleamed with shadowy forms.

The volunteers thoroughly enjoyed themselves and asked to do every activity again.

### Feedback:

*"That was great, can we do the blindfolds again?"*

*"I want to do the shelters again"*

*"I want to do it all again!"*

*"Thank you that was a great evening"*



## Lampeter VINE - Special Activity Days

Green Wood Craft - 26 September 2015

Leader: Benjamin Grey  
Support: Eifion Wakefield  
Sean Francois  
Sessions: 1  
Volunteers: 20  
Vol hours: 100



Sustainable Futures 4 Youth Programme is a project run by Outdoor Learning Wales, Carmarthenshire and Dr Mz Youth Project, working with young people to discover alternative career paths while having fun and gaining skills in the outdoors. They joined up with the Tir Coed VINE initiative for a day of Green Wood Craft skills as part of their six week project, which is an accredited part of the John Muir Discovery Award. During the session they made spoons and spatulas to sell during their share day on Saturday 10 October. The proceeds, from the sale of all items created during their project, have been donated to the *Size of Wales* charity who are planting trees in Uganda.

The session started with identifying trees, then the process of coppicing was explained along with what wood should be selected for green wood working.



Safe working practices were demonstrated for the creation of spatulas and spoons and the young people then had-a-go at making for themselves. All participants thoroughly enjoyed the session.

### Feedback:

**What was learnt and enjoyed?** *"How to whittle wood"*

*"How to carve a spatula"*

*"I learnt how to carve a spoon"*

*"I learned about how and why and when to coppice"*

*"Using a hand axe"*

*"I enjoyed everything but the bus journey"*

**What would make it better?** *"More time carving spoons"*

*"More variety of objects you can make"*

*"If we were allowed to climb trees"*

*"Longer Session"*

*"A great day at long wood today, lots of green wood working skill"*

Peni Ediker



## Lampeter VINE - Special Activity Days

### Foraging Walk and Feast - 28 September 2015

Leader: Jade Mellor  
Sessions: 2/2  
Volunteers: 6  
Vol hours: 30



This second session (which is part of a series to reward the regular volunteers at Long Wood Community Woodland for their continuous dedication to improving the woodland throughout the year), focused on new edible wild plants, best methods for cooking, plants to avoid and foraging in a considerate way. Volunteers were able to taste different plants (even the not so nice ones) and were then treated to a delicious lunch of sweet potato fritters with various foraged plants added for taste/goodness, followed by a magnificent blueberry and apple crumble for pud!

#### Feedback:

*"We learnt about so many plants you could eat, I'd never realised there were so many!"*  
*"There are many, many types and varieties of edible things growing in the woodland. Some are plants and some are fungi - (plants are easier to tell and less dangerous to make a mistake than the fungi)"*

*"Enjoyed talks given and questions answered by a professional forager"*

*"Enjoyed being greeted with a cup of 'coffee' made from dandelion roots (yes I thought it was coffee) walking along the woodland footpaths on a beautiful Autumn Day sampling and collecting edible plants on the way"*

*"I enjoyed walking & foraging in the woods, the food (very, very enjoyable), the group dynamic - it was really good fun"*

*"It was lovely to find and taste plants that you had no idea you could eat, and wonderful to be made a beautiful alfresco lunch – Jade is a culinary genius"*

*"Learning about how to make use of the food sustainably provided by nature for free"*

## Llanfarian VINE - Special Activity Days

### Sign making and bug painting - 6 October 2015

Leader: Jamie Miller  
Anna Thomas  
Sessions: 1  
Volunteers: 15  
Vol hours: 75



The participants from Ysgol Llanfarian constructed and painted a timber frame "Slow Down" sign for the track along the bottom of the woods with Jamie, and made bugs and beetles from pole lathe turned blanks, provided by Anna.



The session was a great success: the variety of activities meant that all the children were able to use a variety of tools and create a bug to take home. A roughly equal mix of boys and girls (the girls being less confident with woodworking but in many cases more competent), it was great to introduce a number of children to woodworking for the first time.

They left with lots of big smiles, great feedback and pride in their work.

#### Feedback:

*"It was all fun"*

*"Enjoyed eating popcorn, painting and using the drawknives"*

*"Learnt how to make popcorn over a fire and how to use tools"*



## Llanfarian VINE - Special Activity Days

### Biodiversity Monitoring Day - 8 October 2015

Leader: Chloe Griffiths  
Support: Michael Ruse  
Sessions: 1  
Volunteers: 2  
Vol hours: 16

Chloe Griffiths led a biodiversity monitoring walk through Coed Tyllwyd. Participants used keys and guides to identify the plants, and examined areas

that have been managed to improve biodiversity and promote native species. Over the course of the day a species list was collated that was then submitted to the local records office, to assist in the wider monitoring of species in the county.

The session went well, though attendance was low despite the event being widely advertised. The participants were able to identify thirty eight plant species as well as fifteen insect species and four species of birds. Interestingly, the platform area above the workshop was where several species of plant and insects of note were recorded – likely due to the niches created by the landscaping carried out here, showing disturbance isn't always a bad thing!

#### Feedback:

*"What a great day! Chloe has so much knowledge and her passion for plants is infectious!"* - Rachel

### Spoons & Woodland Instruments - 23 October '15

Leader: Rob Smith  
Support: Dave Hughes  
Sessions: 1  
Volunteers: 6  
Vol hours: 44

Volunteers from all three VINE sites converged at Coed Tyllwyd to spruce up the site before the winter sets in. Timber was re-

stacked, rubbish was cleared, and order was restored. Over a hearty lunch the group discussed their vision for the future activities of the charity and provided their input as volunteers and activity leaders working with the project. Volunteers were then led in spoon carving by Rob Smith and traditional instrument making by David Hughes.

The day was very worth while – the workshop and roundhouse areas look much improved for a little sprucing up, and invaluable feedback was given over lunch. It was wonderful to integrate people from all three sites and to see ideas and connections flying back and forth. Dave's demonstration on the "Txalaparta", a traditional Basque xylophone, was well received, and soon everyone joined in filling the woods with sound.

## Llanfarian VINE - Special Activity Days

### Den Building Day - 13 October 2015

Leader: Andrew Dugmore  
Support: Adam Rees  
Sessions: 1  
Volunteers: 33  
Vol hours: 165



Year 1 and 2

pupils at Ysgol St Padarns had a day of den building, learning about animal habitats, shelters and survival skills.

In the woods they were able to see the reality of the ideas they had learnt in the classroom. They made small prototype den structures and then scaled these up

until they had constructed a den that the whole class could fit into!



The pupils also learnt how to safely make a camp fire and roast marshmallows.



The day was greatly appreciated by both staff and pupils.

#### Feedback:

*"I liked looking for badger sets"*

*"We Learnt about the stone age"*

*"We liked working as a team to make the dens"*



Staff also mentioned that a number of pupils who were

otherwise quite quiet in the classroom and not normally engaged in activities, had really excelled in the woodland environment, and in some cases they even took on team leading roles!

This perfectly demonstrates that woodlands can be much more than just an 'outdoor experience'; they offer great opportunities for kinaesthetic learning.

## Llanidloes VINE - Special Activity Days

### Autumnal Woodland Creativity - 14 October 2015

Leader: Cath Rigler  
Polly Williams  
Sessions: 1  
Volunteers: 20  
Vol hours: 120



The home education group thoroughly enjoyed a day in the autumnal woods creating

land art, playing games, exploring the site, fire craft and making popcorn.

Beautiful artistic formations were created with the woods as a glorious backdrop to the creativity.



#### Feedback:

"Wicked!"

"Thanks Cath and Polly I've had such a great day"

"I could stay here for days!"

The group had a great time and so did we. It was such pleasure – a day in the autumnal woods with the home ed. group: bliss! Cath & Polly



## Lampeter VINE - Special Activity Days

### Forest School - 22 October '15

Leader: Anna Thomas  
Support: Meinir Evans,  
Miss Hayley, Miss Elen  
Sessions: 1  
Volunteers: 9  
Vol hours: 40.5

The Life Skills department at Ysgol Bro Pedr was created to support pupils who are unable to access all mainstream subjects. It caters for pupils aged 11 to

19 and prepares individuals for Independent Living by offering lessons in Cooking, Social Skills, Gardening, Sewing & Laundry, as well as encouraging a healthy lifestyle through Swimming, Dance and Gym sessions. Timetables are designed to cater for individual needs and the department also provides a base to other pupils who need a friendly ear or support.



This was the first in a series of Forest School sessions offered to Year 12 & 13 pupils. Led by Anna Thomas it started with a guided walk through the woods. The pupils were given tree identification sheets to help identify and discover as many varieties as they could. On arriving at the Forest School site the pupils were shown safe tool practices and encouraged to develop bushcraft skills. Pupils whittled and sawed wood, made shelters and started a fire. Later they popped corn and toasted marshmallows over an open fire and had a thoroughly enjoyable time.

"Pupils learnt how to make a fire and that they don't need a microwave for cooking! They learnt leaf names and survival skills and safe skills for sawing wood"

"Toasting marshmallows"

#### Enjoyed?

"Preparing Tea on an open fire"

"Building a Den"

"Making Fire with Fire Strikers and Fire Watching"

"Super Day. Our group have just returned from their day out with you and have thoroughly enjoyed, coming back excited to tell me of their activities. Hopefully we will be able to return for another session some time soon"



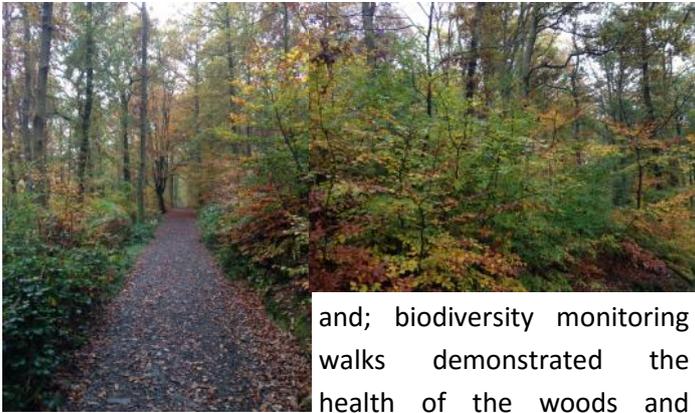
## Llanidloes VINE - Special Activity Day

Yearly Round Up - 28 & 30 Oct, 4 Nov 2015

Leader: Adam Thorogood  
Sessions: 3  
Volunteers: 5  
Vol hours: 67



These sessions allowed the round up and completion of all work and activities at Allt Goch over the last year. Where training work books needed completion, this was incorporated; a safety fence was erected around the risk area of the pond using traditional techniques of shave horse and draw knives utilising some of the previously coppiced sweet chestnut



and; biodiversity monitoring walks demonstrated the health of the woods and

helped direct further interventions into the coming year. Adam's knowledge of both woodland systems and management is unparalleled, and the volunteers learned new things about the woodland environment and were provided with consolidation of previous learning. These sessions were thoroughly enjoyable and provided all participants with a sense of completion and development.

### Feedback:

*"That felt really good. My file is complete and we have finished off the jobs that needed doing. I am going to miss Tir Coed over Christmas."*

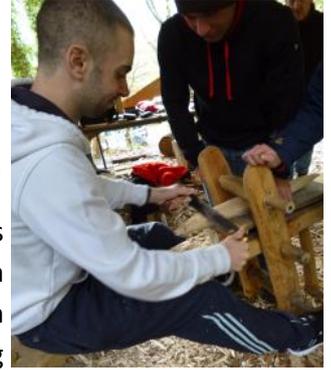
*So pleased to have completed the important work and I'm looking forward to next year's activities. Adam*



## Llanfarian VINE - Special Activity Days

Picture Post Woodworking - 3 November 2015

Leader: Gavin Doram  
Support: Jenny Dingle  
Sessions: 1  
Volunteers: 12  
Vol hours: 60



A group visited the woods through Canolfan Padarn, a drop in centre for adults with a wide range of learning difficulties from Aberyswyth.

The group developed woodworking skills to make a 'picture post' for the woods. This is a post that provides a platform pointing to each point of the compass for repeat panoramic photographs of the area, to monitor the seasons and effects of woodland management on the site. Visitors to the woodland will be able to upload their pictures to the Tir Coed website, giving an insight into the changes in the woods, and creating a 'citizen science resource'.

The activity day went well. A number of participants had used draw knives before and were soon engaged in stripping bark from the timber in preparation for construction. The support staff and activity leaders worked commendably to adapt and pitch the tasks to participants' strengths. By the end of the session participants were able to use a wide range of tools, safely instructed by Gavin, and the finished post is ready for installation. Support from Canolfan Padarn was much appreciated and the staff took to the activity as well.

### Feedback:

*"Liked woodworking - learnt how to use the pencil sharpener (rounding plane)"*

*"I liked learning new stuff, like the drawknife"*



Unfortunately 3 participants who otherwise would have joined in, could not due to lack of wheelchair access to toilets.



## Llanfarian VINE - Special Activity Days

### Outdoor Ed. Group Tree Trail - 12 November 2015

Leader: Jenny Dingle  
 Support: Cath Rigler  
 Sessions: 1  
 Volunteers: 10  
 Vol hours: 60



The group created a tree trail - a series of signs providing information about the trees in the woodland, including their characteristics and uses. The group identified the trees, and crafted signs using wood from the site. The Group also made clay faces on the trees.

The session went well - the activity was educational and has provided a useful learning resource in the woods. Feedback from the participants was highly positive, particularly in respect to the craft-based aspects of the activity.

#### Feedback:

#### Learnt:

*"the names of trees"*

*"to use a side axe, saw and brace & bit"*

#### Enjoyed:

*"making things with clay"*

*"just being in the woods"*

*"leaving things behind for other people to enjoy"*

*"using tools"*



*"A great group, unfortunately lower numbers than expected, so unable to make a very long trail, but there is potential for another group to create more signs to extend the trail at a later date"* Jenny & Cath



## Lampeter VINE - Special Activity Day

### Camfan - 2, 10 & 17 November 2015

Leader: Mark Folds  
 Support: Justine Allison  
 Sessions: 3  
 Volunteers: 6  
 Vol hours: 40

*Camfan, Gwalia Care and Support*, is a Drop-in, Resource Centre for adults and their families who are experiencing Mental Health Issues.



Based in Lampeter, the service is available to residents living within a 15 mile radius and aims to promote independence, by developing skills and confidence to enable service users to achieve greater stability within their homes and communities whilst creating new opportunities for themselves.

Sessions were arranged for *Camfan* clients to work with community artists to develop ideas for signage to be installed at Long Wood Community Woodland and at the *Camfan* centre. Many creative ideas were developed by the participants, who also learnt how to trace, carve out and paint the images and wording onto the wood, producing beautiful finished signs.

#### Feedback:

What was learnt?

*"How to carve wood"*

*"Woodcrafting and controlling tools"*

*"Using Tools"*

*"Skills and wood carving"*

*"Enjoyed it all very much"*

*"It was fantastic"*

*"Everything was perfect"*



*"Two participants, took to this activity like ducks to water... it was fantastic, all 'had a go'... and this was the first time many had carved wood. All did extremely well, with good levels of concentration, application and 'feel' for the materials..."*

*One participant said "I can't do that" to everything at the start, but by the end was the person who had contributed and involved themselves the most in every activity and process!! ...I love it when a 'CAN'T' turns into a 'CAN'."* Mark

*"The sign looks fantastic we are so pleased."* Louise Jenkins, Centre Manager

# Volunteering In the Natural Environment (VINE) - Llanidloes - Training Course

## Practical Conservation - June - September

Leader: Adam Thorogood  
Support: Sarah Thomas  
Sessions: 4 (24 total)  
Volunteers: 9  
Vol Days: 15 (99)  
Vol hours: 86 (632)

There has been a stunning amount of positive works completed by this training course. They have been focussed on an area of approximately five acres

and have included the following:

- biodiversity monitoring
- path renovation
- creation of steps
- Creation of wildlife pond
- erection of benches around the central table
- bracken clearance
- gate making and
- bird box construction

The completion of this course was marked as a real triumph for all that the volunteers have achieved. There was a sense of togetherness and camaraderie that had grown through the months. Volunteers held themselves with confidence, and rightly so, many of them overcoming personal and social barriers to attend, learn and achieve. They also now look so comfortable in the outdoor environment, which has served as their natural classroom and fostered their learning and development.

Adam and Sarah, the course tutors, have done a wonderful job of gently facilitating this growth. Not only have the volunteers grown and developed but also the woodland has benefited enormously from high standard paths and infrastructure, clearance of invasive species, removal of overgrown tree guards, construction of wildlife pond, erection of benches, completion of biodiversity surveys and the woodland protected and nurtured for the future.

This course along with the first earlier in the year, appeared to be extremely influential in developing learners' knowledge and skill. What was also significant was the learners' development process throughout the courses. Volunteers engaged in self-reflective discussions with tutors during activities. These discussions spanned: self-image, identity, personality, social and family issues, self-esteem and confidence and emotional barriers to learning. The tutors demonstrated the development of therapeutic containing relationships with volunteers and dedicated role models that enabled the woodland classroom to hold and help transform the barriers to engagement that all volunteers without exception brought with them into the woods, whilst providing significant and genuine meaning to the participants' lives.

This is the less obvious interpersonal and intrapersonal development impact that the Tir Coed model encourages and it was a beautiful and inspiring process to witness.



### Feedback:

*"The course was awesome. I have learned so much.  
Thank you everyone"*

*"I cannot thank Tir Coed enough.*

*When I think about how I used to be and now there is no comparison. I can leave the house now and although I am still anxious at times, I feel I can get out there and make a difference"*

*"We've worked really well as a core team. I've loved every minute"*

*"Its been a real joy to work with this group and to support the health of the woodland. Its quite sad now it's come to an end"* Adam & Sarah

### Progression

<b>Further Volunteering</b>	3
<b>Training /Further or Higher Education</b>	1
<b>Employment/ Self-Employment</b>	2

### Accreditation

Agored Cymru Unit	Level	Credits	Achieved
Practical Conservation	2	3	6



TIR COED

Supported by:



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Llanidloes Town Council

## News

### VINE - Fantastic Statistics

**1,051** individuals engaged with VINE year 2 undertaking a whopping **9,767.5** volunteering hours. 45 people were introduced to accredited training through VINE with **36** people achieving accreditation (level 1,2 or both), a staggering **80%** of trainees left the course accredited.

**516** individuals engaged with bespoke activities coordinated to help them get maximum benefit from the woodland environment and associated skills.

A further **490** individuals learnt about the project, how to get involved and tried their hand at woodland activities through the community outreach days.



*"Tir Coed in a word; awesome!! I've been on a training course and I thoroughly enjoyed it, it has helped me get my life back on track, with a good group of friendly volunteers and instructors I felt welcomed and valued, I learned many skills such as woodland conservation along with construction skills, it has helped me better understand the local woodland and the and the wildlife that lives in it, I recommended to anyone who loves being out doors and doing something worth while with it ☺ thank you"*

Facebook review 2015

#### Improvement works to the woodland include:

Coppicing, rejuvenation and creation of ancient heath, thinning of conifers; path and bench renovation, bridges built over boggy ground, beech thinning and brush piles.

Biodiversity monitoring, creation of steps, wildlife pond installed, erection of benches, bracken clearance, gate making and bird box construction. Installation of a circular walk leading through a mixed deciduous area of wood, carved signs installed throughout and beautifully crafted benches. Coppiced products made; axe handles, mallets, chairs, besom brooms and a gate. A bike rack and information board were made and installed. Construction of a 'picture post' so that repeat panoramic photographs by 'citizen scientists' can be used to monitor changes in the woodland over time. Creation and installation of a 'slow down' sign to ensure the safety of the bottom track.

### Networking Event Success

Tir Coed has facilitated two events for our freelance contractors this year, and are planning to continue this level of engagement into the next major project. These events enable Tir Coed to collate ideas on how to improve and develop the charity, they also show people that they are part of a large network and a supportive environment.

The first event saw twenty five Tir Coed training course tutors attend a 'Standardisation' event, looking at why accreditation is important and how Tir Coed can provide more opportunities.

The second event held in November brought twenty six woodland professionals together to learn about the Tir Coed developments and to input into the next major project.

It was great to hear their ideas and get feedback on current plans and developments. It was great to see everyone chatting, mingling, enjoying the Xmas nibbles, and celebrating the supportive and engaged team which is continually growing and developing.



Developments



**Elan Valley Success!**

**Elan Links: People, Nature & Water: Our vision for a very special place**

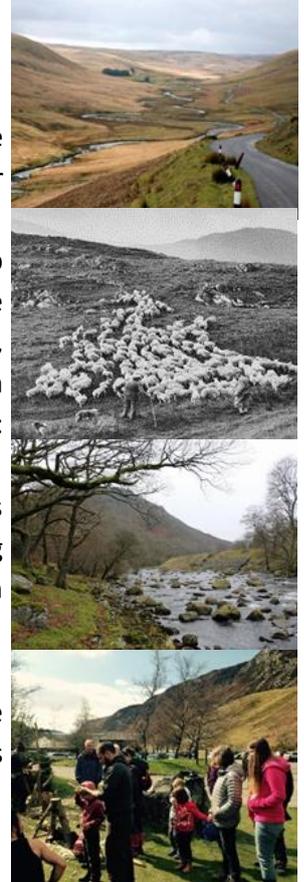
Tir Coed is thrilled to announce the successful outcome of the partnership bid to the *Heritage Lottery Landscape Fund*, developed by Tir Coed finance manager, Eluned Lewis in her development role with the Elan Valley Trust.

*Elan Links* is a multi-themed project funded by the Heritage Lottery Landscape Partnership Programme and will deliver a strategic programme of investment that will safeguard the unique and special heritage of the Elan Valley, whilst increasing enjoyment, education, training, and recreational opportunities for the benefit of all. It is a six year partnership with a one year development phase and a five year delivery phase. The partnership project between: Elan Valley Trust, Dwr Cymru, CARAD, and Tir Coed is a large scale, multi-faceted approach. Tir Coed will lead on the social outreach and engagement aspect of the project, and is bringing its successful model to a new area. This site offers further opportunities for training and progression, linking in to wider countryside management and work opportunities through the Elan Visitor Centre, rangers and wardens.

*ELAN FOR PEOPLE* (the Tir Coed strand)

The theme will deliver significantly better social outcomes through an innovative programme of training, skills and confidence-building in the natural environment and will explore issues associated with sustainable lifestyles using Elan as a model.

- 36 x Outreach activity days to local vulnerable groups per year
- 2 x Introductory training courses to local people in need of training per year
- 24x Residential weekends for disadvantaged groups in Birmingham
- 1x Research post to investigate what makes the Tir Coed model successful.



**Cilrhedyn feasibility Study**

An exciting opportunity for Tir Coed has arisen at Cilrhedyn Woodland centre.

Cilrhedyn is a fully equipped woodland centre and timber yard in North Pembrokeshire, which supplies countryside furniture and milling to the National Park. The centre has been mothballed for the past two years and is currently underused. Tir Coed is currently undertaking a feasibility study to determine whether a community asset transfer to Tir Coed in partnership with Coed Cymru would be desirable.

Using a partnership approach between Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, Coed Cymru and Tir Coed the aim would be to revive the Cilrhedyn Woodland Centre and develop its future to support the environment and people of the region. The partnership would build on the existing enterprise and develop the *'Woodland Hub'* principle, engaging local landowners and wider communities, providing local markets for timber from well managed woodlands and developing routes to employment for local people. At Cilrhedyn's core there will be self-financing commercial activity producing gates and countryside furniture for the National Park and other organisations. Added value would come from the partnership projects, with Tir Coed's model being brought to the centre and surrounding woodlands to engage local disadvantaged groups and run training provision for those furthest from the jobs market.



## Next Major Project

### LEAF - Learning to Enable Achievement and Fulfillment

With one year remaining of the popular VINE project Tir Coed staff are busy developing its next major project. Fundraising will be a primary focus over the next 6-12 months and we are very excited about this new project that advances the effective Tir Coed model.

This project is building on the popular and successful three-year *Volunteering In the Natural Environment* project. As well as providing baseline outreach activities and introductory training courses for hard to reach and disadvantaged groups, this new project is expanding provision to include innovative progression routes into further client led training, business development and incubation, which will enhance employment opportunities in rural Mid Wales.

The funding will enable:

- Community outreach activities
- Training
- Focused progression opportunities
- Development of a nationally recognised qualification
- Work placements and mentoring
- Marketing & support for fledgling enterprises

Activities undertaken will improve the accessibility and facilities at sites whilst also enhancing the biodiversity and health of the natural environment now and into the future. Training opportunities will also address the skills shortages identified in the sector and boost employability and sustainability.

A partnership approach will increase opportunities and will bring added value to the project, extending the scope of the project and the outcomes associated.

The first round Big Lottery, People & Places Expression of Interest application has been submitted and we are moving ideas forward whilst awaiting the outcome. It's all very exciting. Watch this space!



## Welcome Back Eva

I am very pleased to be back working with Tir Coed for this short period, and on a project which I hope will help to get more people involved with the charity in a meaningful way.

For three months I will be coordinating the development of the new website alongside *Arts Factory Design*, a social enterprise in South Wales. The website will be a change from the current set up, with a big focus on how to get involved and more regular updates on events and activities. This will be great for those of you already involved and following our movements, but will make the organisation much more accessible to newcomers who want to be a part of what we do. There will be a blog page for the project officers to regularly update with the latest activities, training or open days, so you don't have to wait for the newsletter to get reports on what's been happening! And the 'what's on' section will be a calendar of upcoming events with how you can get involved in the future. On top of that we're hoping to streamline the way we portray ourselves and what we do, because we know the multifaceted nature of Tir Coed can be hard to explain in a nutshell.

If anybody has any questions, comments or ideas for the new website please feel free to get in touch with me on: [marketing@tircoed.org.uk](mailto:marketing@tircoed.org.uk)



## A Fond Farewell to Andy Bakewell

It is with sadness that we say our farewells to Andy Bakewell, WiseWoods Wales Manager, who left in September, following a difficult year for the social enterprise. During his time with Tir Coed he worked tirelessly to get WiseWoods Wales off the ground and developed some inspirational products.

Andy achieved an amazing amount in the three years he managed WiseWoods

Wales. In at the deep end and up against it from the start, Andy gave WiseWoods Wales direction, working hard to give the social enterprise firm foundations on which to build, persevering with dedication and commitment even when funding was difficult to source. Andy had big plans for WiseWoods and so focused on building a team who shared the vision of producing quality products from locally sourced timber. Andy was always happiest out in the woods, training the team and coordinating felling operations and preparing for the next big contract. A stickler for detail, an eye for design and master of quality control, he has developed a name for WiseWoods that is now recognised, particularly for bespoke, innovative and exciting play structures.

More recently Andy grasped the whole field of qualification development, supporting work and research on possible accreditation expansion, and moving the process forward with great gusto.

Andy will be missed as a member of the Tir Coed and WiseWoods Team, but we wish him all the very best in his future projects. Good luck with your next career steps Andy!

## My Time at WiseWoods Wales

I started as Manager of WiseWoods Wales in June 2012. The first three months were taken up with fundraising and planning, but once we were successful in gaining a large amount of support from the Ceredigion Social Enterprise Growth Fund, we were clear to begin.

What followed was a very busy two years. Initially there was a great rush to purchase the necessary forestry machinery so that we could start production as soon as possible. From the outset volunteers were involved and we hit the ground running with product development, site infrastructure improvements, woodland management and training all going on at the same time. Initially we were making products under a tarpaulin in the woods with borrowed tools, but WiseWoods became very successful in selling wooden products and adding value to the products of woodland management in Coed Tyllwyd.

I am very proud of what the WiseWoods team achieved in this period. We managed to sustain long periods of employment for Operations Manager Rob Smith and Product Designers and Foresters Tony Vallance and Mark Atkinson. We also had some fantastic high calibre loyal volunteers and apprentices who gave up months of their time and gained valuable vocational skills and qualifications.

WiseWoods sold over 20 chunky benches throughout Ceredigion (which will be in evidence in Ceredigion's public spaces for many years to come) and also designed and installed many natural playgrounds in conjunction with play charity *RAY Ceredigion* and *Ceredigion County Council*. WiseWoods also designed and built several significant wooden shelters, as well as selling a steady stream of milled timber to local people.

At the end of August 2015, I decided it was time for me to move on to develop some exciting business ideas of my own. I am grateful to all at WiseWoods and Tir Coed for the experience of running WiseWoods for three years and of meeting and working alongside some amazing people. I wish both organisations the very best for what looks to be a very bright future.

*Andy Bakewell*

