

Fforest Fawr Geopark: Progress Report September 07 to April 08

Following the Coordination Committee Meeting of the EGN in September 2007 Fforest Fawr Geopark has experienced seven eventful and productive months. Progress within the Geopark since the last EGN business meeting is presented below.

Fforest Fawr Geopark Activities

1. Website. Considerable progress is being made in the development of the website. It now contains~ 190 pages dealing with a variety of topics. The geology section has been amended and expanded and 'Community' Pages are being given a new content and added functionality e.g. with links to local websites.

2. Waterfalls Centre (Pontneddfechan Geopark & Information Centre) Geopark Centre. The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA) has appointed Bright 3-D (website at <http://www.bright3d.com/>) to refurbish the centre following confirmation in September 2007 of a £100K grant from the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund for Wales. The work should be largely completed by May 2008.

3. Fforest Fawr Geopark Newsletter. The first issue, in 2008, of the biannual FFG Newsletter will be published in March/April 2008. The aims of the Newsletter are as stated in the July 06 – April 07 Progress Report.

4. Working with Tourist Providers. This has involved the following activities:

Establishing new links. The link established between the Geopark and the Carmarthenshire Tourist Association with the aim of developing geotourism in the Region continues to develop.

Training in Geotourism for Tourist Providers. The following fieldtrips were organised for tourist providers to introduce geotourism within the Geopark:

- 24 September 2007 'Black Mountain Circular' organized in in partnership with Carmarthenshire Tourism Association and Gallu.
- 27 Feb 2008 'Carry on up the Usk' organized by BBNPA in partnership with Medrwn and the Fforest Fawr Geopark .

Brecon Beacons Tourism Conference 20.2 08. Included a workshop for 20 delegates

5. Presentations and Fieldtrips. Fforest Fawr Geopark uses presentations and fieldtrips to raise the profile of the Geopark in South Wales. Presentations delivered since September 2007 are as follows:

Presentations: 2007

27 Sept. Brecon U3A University of the Third Age (U3A) group at Theatr Brycheiniog

1 Oct. Holiday Fellowship Walking Group

8 Oct. Holiday Fellowship Walking Group

15 Oct. Upper Tawe Ramblers at Abercraf Miners Welfare Hall

29 Nov. Gwent Mountaineering Club

3 Dec. Caldicot U3A

6 Dec. Brecknock Wildlife Trust

Presentations: 2008

25 Jan. Abergavenny U3A

12 Feb Abercraf Historical & Heritage Society

6. Educational Activities. The geopark is actively involved in education at all levels and is a member of the Earth Science Educational Forum in Wales. The geopark has also been adopted as a training area for fieldwork by the School of Earth Ocean and Planetary Sciences, Cardiff University. Educational activities since September 2007 include:

- 5 Oct 07. Leading a training day in the Upper Swansea Valley for Year 1 students, Geology Degree Scheme, School of Earth Ocean and Planetary Sciences, Cardiff University.
- 10 Oct. 07. Cardiff University and the Geopark initiated an MSc project to investigate alkaline drainage in the Black Mountain area.
- 20 Nov.07. Presentation to the Earth Science Education Forum in Wales on 'Groundwater resources in the Geopark'.

7. Partnership Projects. Projects in which partners in the Fforest Fawr Geopark,
i. e. Members of the Management Group, have taken the lead:

Direct Mail Project. This project, which was initiated by Mr. Richard Hills of the Association of Bunkhouse Operators (ABO) to advertise the Geopark as an educational resource, continues to progress. In 2008 the geopark worked

with the ABO to provide information on group accommodation within the Geopark.

The British Association for the Advancement of Science (BA) National Science and Engineering Week.

Each year in March, the BA organises a week to ten days of events devoted to the national celebration of science. Cardiff University in partnership with Spadel UK- Brecon Carreg Welsh Natural Mineral Water and Fforest Fawr Geopark contributed to the programme of events. In a presentation entitled 'Water from the Hills', young people (7- 11 years) were introduced to the processes of science and technology involved in understanding groundwater through experiments, a visit to the Brecon Carreg bottling plant and a visual presentation.

Water and Whisky: Fforest Fawr Geopark, Cardiff University and The Welsh Whisky Company, Penderyn initiated an educational project in 2008 concerned with water extraction used for the production of whisky at Penderyn.

European Geoparks Network Activities

1. European Geoparks Week: Fforest Fawr Geopark's contribution to this activity now involves sixteen days of events from Sat 24 May to Sun 8 June 2008 which are advertised as European Geoparks Fortnight. Currently there are 21 organized events and, in addition, the 'Beacons Bus Geopark Circular' tours is scheduled on Sundays and Bank Holiday Monday. Event details are posted at www.breconbeacons.org/content/geopark/whats-on - this webpage will be updated between now and the end of the Fortnight to incorporate changes to scheduled events and the inclusion of any additional events.

2. The EGN Magazine. Tony Ramsay is a member of the EGN Editorial Board. He edits and co-ordinates the submission of articles to the EGN Magazine and is involved with the production of the 'EGN Coffee Table Book'.

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