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This is a "bumper" 2 page edition because a year has passed since I last issued a Newsletter. Many things have happened in the Parc since then. I have tried to mention the more important events below.

Bill Jones former PNP Support Group treasurer

On a sad note I report that Reginald (Bill) Jones died on 30 March 2013. Bill served on the PNP Committee and was Treasurer of the Support Group for a number of years, until ill health forced his retirement. We have lost 2 other members of the Group under rather happier circumstances:-

Retirement of Peter Walters Davies MBE

Peter was one of the "four founding fathers" who persuaded Ceredigion County Council to set up the Parc and gave advice on its organisation and management. He drew on his experience from past gainful employment as one time Nature Conservancy Regional Officer for South Wales with the job of establishing nature reserves and identifying SSSIs. Peter was chair of the PNP Support Group for its first 7 years and a member for 21 years. As Peter had served the Parc for so long, we had no option but to accept his resignation with regret.

Fourteen past and present members of the committee and their partners took Peter to a lunch at the Tynllidiart Arms in early April to celebrate his contribution.

Peter is the County Moth Recorder and an active member of the Greener Aberystwyth Group so we know he won't be idle. He received his MBE for work on Red Kite conservation.

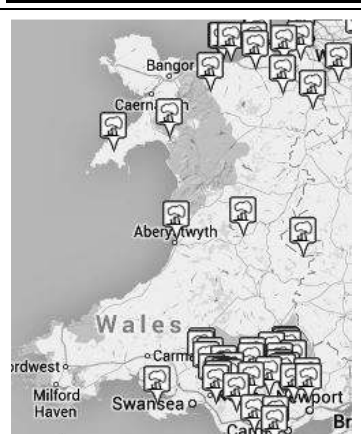


Peter WD flanked by Liz Allen
and the editor's wife

New secretary Judy Johnston replaces Nelis Drost

Our secretary, Nelis Drost, resigned as he had completed his PhD studies and moved out of Aberystwyth. We thank Nelis for his contribution to the Parc not only as a committee member but, before that, as a member of the Conservation Volunteers. We welcome Judy Johnston as general secretary. Margaret Bateman has agreed to continue as Minutes Secretary.

Third Green Flag Community Award



Few Green Flags in mid-Wales

Len Kersley has overseen our successful third application for a Green Flag Community Award. This prestigious award is the national benchmark standard for parks and green spaces, run by Keep Wales Tidy and gives recognition to the best green spaces in the country (see www.greenflagaward.org). While Green Flag Awards are clearly highly regarded in both South and North Wales, the map shows that Parc Natur Penglais is one of the very few holders in mid-Wales. The award certificate was presented to the PNP Support Group in early October at a ceremony in the once-grand surroundings of the Margam Park Orangery by John Griffiths, Welsh Assembly Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development and copies are now on display on the PNP Noticeboards. There is no secure place in the Parc to fly the flags that come with the award. However, the Tourist Information Office displayed the previous flags and certificates in their window for a few weeks in November 2012.

Funding raised by the Support Group

Len continues to lead our liaison with Environment Wales over grant funding. A further £1970 has been obtained for projects in the Parc this autumn, details of which are given below. A condition of the funding is that we provide a contribution in the form of volunteer time. In 2012, we had some 75 volunteers involved, working an estimated 380 hours, which was well above our commitment. Thanks are due to all who helped, with a special mention of the Aberystwyth University Conservation Volunteers, whose contribution was invaluable, indeed without the students much of the work that is done in the Parc would not be possible.

Conservation Skills Training Days

An aspect of the Environment Wales support has been to fund training days in the Parc on particular practical environmental conservation skills, supervised by Peter Drake, a local environmental contractor. These sessions are greatly appreciated by the students, some of whom plan to follow careers in conservation management and related topics. Two years ago, it was dry-stone walling, and as we went to press last year, a number of volunteers were being taught how to construct stone intervention drainage channels across the Bryn Road path. This year wooden steps are being constructed in the path running up from the top of Danycoed to the Beech Glade. The steps use recycled timber from old railway sleepers of Jarrah wood [*Eucalyptus marginata*], which is stronger and more durable than oak. Concerns were expressed at the AGM last year about the slippery state of this path and we were delighted when Environment Wales agreed to fund step-building training days this autumn to solve the problem.

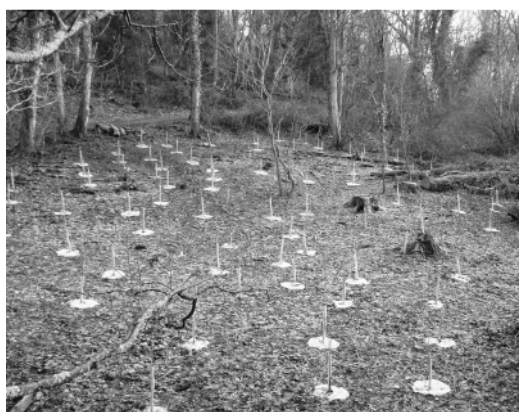


Training building steps

Tree Planting November 2012

An Environment Wales grant was used in November 2012 to increase the species diversity of the trees growing in the Parc, when over 50 volunteers helped clear an area lacking natural diverse tree regeneration and plant about 200 saplings of elder, hazel, oak and rowan. The funding paid for the saplings, tree guards and biodegradable wool mats to suppress competitive growth around the saplings. Only about 5 of the trees have died to date, so the exercise has been very successful.

The original intention to plant some ash saplings had to be abandoned, following the government ban due to the dieback scare. The Support Group then carried out an ash tree survey of a small area of the Parc. No signs of disease were seen and a significant number of naturally established saplings were



Newly planted saplings

recorded.

Gorse clearance Saturday 16 February 2013

A working party cleared gorse from part of the old quarry to create a firebreak and to allow other plant species to colonise, in a project coordinated and funded by Ben Sampson of Ceredigion County Council. Though we discourage fires in the Parc, the gorse was burnt to avoid leaving a pile that someone might set fire to later. We had a controlled burn during the day with plenty of water to hand to make sure the fire was extinguished before we left it and the fire brigade had been notified beforehand.

In other parts of the Parc cleared vegetation and felled trees are left as habitat piles for small creatures and fungal decomposition. Please don't leave garden waste at the edges of the Parc. This does not serve the same function and may introduce invading foreign plants.

The quarry is being managed as an open habitat to provide variety from the rest of the Parc, the majority of which is wooded. There are a fair number of small, slow-growing oaks in the quarry. In time, further tree removals will be necessary.



Burning gorse

Bramble bash Saturday, 12 October 2013

Environment Wales funding was gained this year to organise a bramble bash along the main path. Twenty nine volunteers signed in [including 17 Aberystwyth University Conservation Volunteers] and helped to removed some of the encroaching brambles alongside the path that detract from the springtime bluebell displays in the woodland. Access to the pond was improved and the area around the new saplings cleared. In addition, the laurel by the Principal's gate was coppiced back from the path thus opening out the entrance to PNP.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held on Wednesday November 20th 2013 at 7.30 pm in the Octagon room, St Paul's Methodist Centre, Queens Road. Business will be followed by a talk, when Dr Jenny Macpherson of the Vincent Wildlife Trust will speak on an aspect of mammalian wildlife. Please come and show your support for Parc Natur Penglais.

Notice boards and benches

Several wooden structures in the Parc had started to rot. We are very grateful to Ceredigion County Council for finding the finance to replace the three notice boards and the Derek Baylis memorial seat this year, since money for this sort of work is going to be increasingly difficult to find. We hope that you find the new boards more informative. They now carry a map of the Parc.

We were particularly pleased to cooperate with the university, in a project coordinated by Elaine Jensen of IBERS, who was able to find some money to pay for a 'Research in the Parc' panel on the board at the University gate on the main path. It includes information on research being done at the university to investigate the potential of red clover, rye grass, bluebells and fungi.



Rustic bench

Nameplates on the old boards were carved by Mario Subacci, now deceased and his family were pleased to see that the carvings had been transferred to the new boards. Thanks are due to the volunteers who assisted Ben Sampson and Peter Drake in the erection of these structures. Thanks are also due to Mrs Mathur who made a donation that enabled us to do some wood preservation work on the memorial bench to her late husband, Professor P N Mathur, and some other benches. Last winter your editor made a rustic bench from a recently felled holly in the Beech Glade [with approval from the committee], which has survived 9 months use in the Parc.



New signboard

Dyfi Biosphere Education Group Project

In April and May the Dyfi Biosphere Education Group used the Parc as a deciduous comparison to a conifer stand on the University campus as part of a project for Penglais school geography students looking at the role of woodlands in flood mitigation. Home-made rain gauges were set up on the woodland floor in the two areas to compare interception rates.

For more information please visit

<http://www.dyfibiosphere.org.uk/education> .

adapted from Tom Deacon

Bird Box Monitoring

There are some 27 bird boxes affixed to trees in the Parc.

Since 1992, Moira Convery and assistants have gathered information on the number of boxes occupied, bird species, eggs laid and chicks fledged. Annual returns have been published in past Newsletters and our results are reported to the British Trust for Ornithology[BTO] who receive sufficient reports for many species to permit statistical analysis [see www.bto.org].

This spring the Parc had some new recruits to help with recording. The weather was cold and wet at nesting time. Provisional figures from the BTO indicate that many early nesting birds, such as the Blue Tit and Great Tit, failed to breed this year. However breeding success for these species in the Parc was about average.16 boxes were occupied. We had a Nuthatch using a box for the first time in 21 years. Its breeding success was not determined. It was using a box with a side entrance. Box design can influence which species use them. Laurie Wright has adapted some previously unused open-fronted boxes and these have been occupied this year. The species was not determined for one bird which abandoned 5 eggs.



Rain gauges

	Clutches	Eggs	Fledged
Blue Tit 2013	10	72	39
<i>Blue Tit 20 year Parc average</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>40</i>
Great Tit 2013	4	20	16
<i>Great Tit 20 year Parc average</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>18</i>

The number of eggs laid can be determined by regular observation as incubation does not commence until the clutch is complete. Finding out how many have hatched may be more difficult as an adult may be sitting on the nest preventing observation of the chicks. Caterpillars are the preferred food for the chicks. These will be scarce in a cold spring. Coupled with a desire to keep the chicks warm, the adults were on the nest more frequently this year,

In 21 years 206 Blue tit nests
 102 Great Tit nests
 2 Pied Flycatcher and
 1 Nuthatch have been recorded.

We have complete figures for 200 PNP nests:-

	Clutches	Eggs/nest	Fledged/nest
Blue Tit	133	6.1	3.4
Great Tit	67	5.4	3.3

These are lower than the BTO figures. Nestboxes in gardens may be more productive than those in woods.

Orienteering – Nature trail

A trail for use by local schools to teach orienteering has been constructed in the Parc. There are about 25 marker posts which bear pictures of local animals and plants as well as a code number. The course thus doubles as a nature trail. Orienteering maps have been produced. To date we are only aware of one group of schoolchildren using it. A guide to the nature trail is not yet available.



Orienteering post

PNP archives

Roger Bray

I keep one drawer in an overloaded filing cabinet specially for storing PNP archive material. It is amazing how much has been gathered over the last 20 years or so and I'll summarise briefly what it consists of. One section is devoted to organisation papers such as the constitution, agendas and minutes of committee meetings and AGMs, and various bits of correspondence from the earliest days. There are a few Ordnance Survey maps dating from the late nineteenth century to the present day but it would be good to have a complete set at various scales. There are the Management Plans which were revised every 5 years or so and details of associated projects such as pond building, stone wall restoration and tree management. Many are illustrated with photographic prints showing work in progress. Wildlife survey reports are few – there are details of tree cover, lists of plants, birds (and nest box records), lichens and macromoths but almost nothing on other invertebrates.

Various publications include the newsletters, leaflets about the reserve and press cuttings, mainly from the Cambrian News but I'm sure not a complete collection. Photos taken from fixed points to record change over time were started by John Harvey and have been continued by other photographers every one or two years ever since. There are many one-off photos recording special events like the official opening.

The results from the people counters located at 3 entrances are not complete. Another file holds details of planning applications affecting PNP or its immediate surrounds.

The awards section continues to grow, the latest being the Green Flag awarded in 2012 and there are documents relating to the UNESCO Urban Biosphere Reserve and the Local Nature Reserve designations. An education pack for secondary schools was prepared in 1994 and there are activity sheets suitable for younger children.

Most of the stored material is on paper but all the newsletters and the more recent fixed point photographs are on CDs. Of course other material will be held in the Ceredigion County Council project officer's files.

I welcome any contributions to the archives such as old photos, maps and historical information. This brief review clearly shows how much more we need to learn about the wildlife of PNP and its past management.

In due course it would be appropriate to deposit all these records with the Ceredigion Archives, based in the Town Hall.

Newsletter Postmen

The editor thanks the volunteers who help distribute these Newsletters to houses in all the roads immediately surrounding the Parc.

Don't forget
PNP AGM
WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER 20 TH
ST.PAULS CENTRE
7.30 PM
MAMMALIAN
WILDLIFE



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