



From the Wood

Issue 2

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from the track just above the woodland that runs from the place where the stream emerges from the ground round to just below the quarry. Also the recent larch thinning has left us with a lot of larch not good enough for sale. Then David Parsons' ingenious mind put the two together and came up with the idea of creating a stockade style fence from the lengths of larch left over to help prevent further break ins. The Torfaen Countryside Team, a group which finds employment for adults with learning disabilities or mental health issues, was engaged to do the work and the end result is a fence which looks like a remnant from the Old West and was promptly christened the Alamo by John Williams who oversaw its building. "It does look like something out of a John Wayne film," he remarked. "Just as long as no one thinks I'm Davy Crockett."

REMEMBER THE ALAMO!

What do you do when you are suffering from vandalism on a lengthy piece of fence and have a lot of surplus wood that is not good enough for sale? Well, if you are David Parsons, forest manager of BBCW, you use one problem to solve the other. We have suffered a number of motor bike incursions



The Countryside Team and supervisors proudly standing in front of the Alamo just after completion. You will notice no Mexicans, outlaws, native Americans or motor bikes can be seen.

Growing litter problem

Take a look almost anywhere in the countryside and the first thing that strikes you is the disgusting amount of litter strewn everywhere. Unfortunately this applies to Blaen Brân just as much. Despite litter picking activities from members and Scouts, a walk through the woods demonstrates people still just leave their rubbish wherever they feel like it. Short of mounting a 24 hour patrol, there is little we can do except remind people to take litter home with them, provide any campers with black plastic bags and have occasional collections. Until there is a national change of attitude towards litter, we will always have a problem but in the meantime, please take litter home and encourage others to do the same.

Local MP helps celebrate 4 years of the woodland



Pictured are, from left to right, Roger Stevenson, chairman, Right Honourable Paul Murphy MP, Mary Barnett, Torfaen councillor, John Cunningham, Torfaen councillor, Barbara Anglezarke, David Parsons and his wife, Tricia

Last year saw the end of the original grant which enabled the buying of Blaen Brân as well as paying for the fencing, gates and a lot of necessary maintenance and planting. When this grant came to an end, it was decided it would be appropriate to celebrate and thank the various people involved. So the Queen Inn kindly allowed us to take over their lounge, a buffet was organised and a powerpoint slide show of various parts of the forest was mounted. All who had been involved in any way were invited to attend and, of course, members of BBCW were invited. There was a good turnout and all who had helped were thanked for their time and effort. Lifetime memberships were given to Barbara Anglezarke of Cydcoed, the charity which gave us the money and to David Parsons, the project manager, who oversaw it all. Flowers were presented to Tricia, David Parsons' long suffering wife, who has had to put up with us monopolising his time.



The Newsletter of Blaen Brân
Community Woodland

ARBORETUM HOPE FOR BLAEN BRÂN

In an exciting new venture, the directors of Blaen Brân Community Woodland have applied for a grant in order to plant an arboretum of native British trees in the woodland. Director and forest manager David Parsons, whose brainchild it is, said "It would be the only arboretum in Wales and possibly the only one in Britain to feature only British native trees. It can be used as an educational resource as well as giving much pleasure for years to come" It is expected that preliminary work will begin this month.

OUT OF THE ASHES

We may have lost an acre of newly planted and established trees to fire last year but some good did come from it. Thanks to trees from the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and a grant from Environment Wales, nearly 500 trees have now been planted to replace all that we lost. Naturally, it will take a number of years for these to become established but, instead of the despair and gloom a lot of us felt when we first saw the damage, now great hopes from little acorns grow.



New planting in the section of the woodland recently ravaged by fire

FIRE RISK

One of the biggest problems faced by us, especially now the summer is approaching, is fire. Last year we lost an acre of newly planted and established trees. It would be impossible for the woods to be policed at all times but vigilant members of the public are the best form of ensuring the woods stay healthy and green instead of black and charred. We are offering a reward of £300 to anyone whose information leads to the successful prosecution of arsonists in Blaen Brân woods.

So please **STAY ALERT AND WATCH OUT FOR FIRES!**



This section of the wood was totally destroyed by fire last year.

Members and visitors are requested to be very vigilant and report any signs of fire or suspicious activity to any Director, as well as dialing 999 of course.

Phone numbers are:-

Chris.....860858

David.....875704

Debbie.....860821

John.....866287

Members only

This edition of the newsletter has gone out not only to members of Blaen Brân Community Woodland but also to all residents of Upper Cwmbran. However, due to financial constraints, it will only be distributed to our members from now on. So please come and join us and help keep our local woodland a safe and friendly place to visit. Visit the website or contact Chris Harris, membership secretary. For details, phone 01633 860858 or email: chris@uppercwmbran.co.uk.

If you visit the area by car please park in the bus terminus, below the Siloam Chapel, and not in The Square.



Blaen Brân Community Woodland is a registered charity, no. 1120995

What's On

Every Sunday and Wednesday a working party doing two hours maintenance in the woods. Meet by Ebenezer Chapel at 10 a.m. Contact John 01633 866287 for more details.

Stonewall building 1st Sunday in the month. Contact Rob on 01633 860741 for details.

Woodland Boundary Walk Sunday 19th April. Approx. 2.5 miles. Meet by Ebenezer Chapel at 10 a.m. Contact Chris on 01633 860858 for details

Tree planting Sunday 26th April. Meet by Ebenezer Chapel at 10 a.m.

History Walk Sunday May 10th (TBC) Approx. 2 miles. Meet by Ebenezer Chapel at 10 a.m. Contact Roy on 01633 for details

Barbecue Saturday 20th June. 4pm.

AGM Saturday 16th May 2pm Ebenezer Chapel. **Please come along and tell us what you**

For all details of events

Come visit our
website

www.blaenbran.org.uk