



# Route & Brânch

Issue 9

Issued right on time

Spring 2013

## Woodland Workshops Open Day April 20th

Following on from the AGM of Llais Y Goedwig (see below), the next day, Saturday 20th April, is devoted to demonstrations of woodland activities. Not all are confirmed as yet but we are hopeful of displays of horse logging, tree felling, wood milling, wood carving, forest school demonstrations, an environment game in the woods for children to enjoy, firewood processing, chain saw sculpture, lathe work, log splitting and musical instruments from wood. Some of these will be demonstrated by our own volunteers in Blaen Brân woodland.

There will also be pony trekking, a biodiversity walk led by Roger James of Gwent Wildlife Trust, Roy Dixon's ever popular history walk and walks showing what we have been doing in the woodland led by our own David Parsons and David Williams.

The day starts at 10.00 am and ends at

5.00 pm but there will be events going on all day. There will a tent where refreshments are on sale and we shall open the car park just inside the gates by Ebenezer Chapel in the Square so you don't have too far to walk. We can make arrangements for people with mobility problems.



*The site cleared for the marquee. It will have stopped snowing then, won't it?*



*A chainsaw sculpture in progress. Hopefully we will be left with a memento of the weekend that isn't a mushroom - although we do like the mushrooms!*

All in all, it sounds like a really good day for all the family and we're hoping for a really good crowd. The only thing that could cause problems is the weather but that never lets us down, does it?

## Gathering in the woods April 19th

Blaen Brân woodland has been asked by Llais Y Goedwig, the Welsh community woodland association, to host their AGM for 2013 on Friday 19th April. The whole weekend will be called the Llais Y Goedwig Gathering - a celebration of Welsh community woodland work. A marquee will be erected for the event as over 50 people are expected to attend.

The day will also consist of talks by such as Rob Penn, star of the recent and highly entertaining "Tales from the wild wood" on BBC4 about his struggles to tame Strawberry Cottage Wood in Cwmyoy near Abergavenny and Dr. Emyr Roberts, CEO of the newly formed Natural Resources Wales, whose brief

includes the countryside, forestry and environmental concerns of Wales.

There will also be discussion groups of people involved in woodlands in Wales about the problems facing us all at the moment - biosecurity and funding being near the top of the list.

So, if you happen to be walking in the woods that Friday, don't be too surprised



*Hopefully, the marquee will look like this*



*Rob Penn horse logging in Strawberry Cottage Wood*

to see people in suits with laptops, trying to look important.

It will be interesting to see what both Emyr Roberts and Rob Penn have to say. We'll be reporting on that and on the ensuing woodland activities open day in the next issue.

# The Excalibur tree



The Newsletter of  
Blaen Brân Community  
Woodland

## Updating the website

You have probably noticed the website has been through a few changes just lately. This is because we decided it needed updating. The person responsible for the original website is Chris Harris who is now too busy, running his own business as well as being the landlord of the Bush Inn. So some of us amateurs have stepped in to see what can be done and are gradually sorting it out to make a newer, more interactive website. Bear with us and we'll let you know when it is finished.

## What's On

### Volunteer work

Contact Dave 07787525875 or email [blaenbran@gmail.com](mailto:blaenbran@gmail.com) for more details. Easier work takes place on weekends. Technical stuff happens during the week.

**Llais Y Goedwig Gathering  
Friday 19th and Saturday 20th  
April.**

Come to the open day on the  
Saturday 10.00 am to 5.00 pm.

### Woodland walks

The fourth in a series of 'managing the woodland' walks - Saturday 11th May  
10.30 am - lower car park. Contact  
David Williams on 0793 9003131  
**A.G.M.**

Some time in May, possibly  
Saturday May 18th (TBC)

## For all details of events

Come visit our website

[www.blaenbran.org.uk](http://www.blaenbran.org.uk)

Or join us on

facebook

If you walk along the middle track from the reservoir back towards the arboretum, there is a small track runs off to the right which leads eventually to the bottom track just before the ford.

On this track is the most extraordinary tree. At some time in the past, what looks like a



*You can see the piece of old track sticking out of the trunk..*

piece of old dram track, either just lying there or utilised by a farmer as a fence post, has somehow or other been caught in the trunk of a tree. As the tree has grown, the piece of metal has become firmly embedded in the trunk and lifted right off the ground.

Now it sits proudly like King Arthur's sword

waiting to be plucked out, presumably by the rightful heir to the woodland. Several of us have tried, so far unsuccessfully.

It's safe enough where it is but caution is necessary when approaching it or touching it. And please don't make a concerted effort to remove it. It looks really good as it is.



*The Excalibur tree. Where is King Arthur when you need him?*

## Council works?

Torfaen Council have undertaken a series of works on their land adjacent to the woodland. We were promised a tidying up of the old fan house site together with information boards, an upgrading of the track by the entrance next to Ebenezer Chapel, a new fence put in by that gate, a new track from by the fan house down to next to the chapel, an orientation board by the new car park showing paths through the whole area and a dog litter bin. It appears the money has run out before the work has been done so we may well be left with some half finished work. Hopefully, they will soon find the money to complete these jobs which will really enhance the area.



*The entrance by Ebenezer Chapel now has a new fence and a better surface. You can just see workers in the background making a new track.*