

The Outdoor Partnership NEWSLETTER



Club Focus – Clwb Mynydda Cymru

The club was established over 40 years ago, with the aim of promoting and enabling mountaineering and mountain walking through the medium of Welsh, for anyone who enjoys mountaineering in a fun, safe and supportive environment. Having enjoyed great success; hundreds of members and thousands of fantastic days out, alongside trips in the UK and abroad on both adventurous and more leisurely treks, the club had in recent years started having concerns about the future of the club. As happens with many clubs, they recognised the need to attract new members and protect the longevity of the club.

The committee came together, and alongside suggestions from the members, introduced some changes in the provision of the club; a wider variety of walks (distance/severity), graded walk descriptions, well publicised taster sessions for general public to come along on walks, and developing a new club App.

The club has been successful in gaining lots of new members who have breathed new life into the club. This included a number of younger members and members wanting to learn more and develop skills in order to volunteer and lead club walks.

The Outdoor Partnership has worked with the club with this task. Identifying several members that were suitably experienced and keen to embark on the Mountain Leader Training course, we went about working with the club to organise a Welsh language course especially for members. The aim is that by upskilling these members, the whole membership gains better knowledge, and the newly trained leaders will go on to become regular club walk leaders. This will hopefully secure the longevity of the club for many years to come, ensuring another generation of local, Welsh-speaking mountaineers are able to enjoy the mountains safely.

www.clwbmynyddacymru.com



News from our Regions

Gwent

It was a summer filled with adventure in the Gwent region. We had a variety of opportunities for local people to access the great outdoors for their wellbeing and for skills development across the summer months.

We worked with AMSER, with Adventures for Young Carers, throughout the summer, working with Caerphilly Adventures to facilitate adventure days for young carers across the region. We've had surfing trips, gorge walking and caving days, with many more still to come. If you're working with young carers in the Gwent area, please contact the Outdoor Activities Development Officer to see how we can support you.



The highlight of the summer months has been the successful pilot of our Pathways to Coaching programme. Thanks to funding from the Millennium Stadium Charitable Trust and The Outdoor Partnership, and by working with Crosfield Outdoors and Manzoku Climbing and Mountaineering, we have delivered a secondary tier coaching course to upskill the next generation of coaches and instructors.

The course gave participants a variety of quality outdoor skills days in caving, canoeing, climbing, and an overnight expedition, all whilst completing the National Navigation Award Scheme, the Indoor Climbing Assistant and Outdoor First Aid qualifications. The parent of one of the participants said: "I wanted you to know that **** has just signed up for a 3 month Prince's Trust course and this morning she had to catch the train to **** (on her own) and meet them (on her own)! Before your course there is no way she would have done this, it sounds small I know but the independence she is starting to build is wonderful and your course has given her that courage so please pass on my thanks to all of the instructors."

The second run of this course begins in mid-September. Referrals can be made by contacting the Outdoor Activities Development Officer.

Finally, thanks to funding from the Gwent High Sheriff's Community Fund, we were able to continue working with Caerphilly Adventures to run an Adventure Therapy programme for young people in Gwent. The week consisted of E-MTBing, paddleboarding, caving, bushcraft, gorge walking, and finished off with a trip to the beach for some surfing and ice cream... Nice!



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Central South Wales

It's been an epic summer of surfing at Coney Beach, Bridgend, in partnership with Karma Seas, whose aim is to help children and adults of all abilities, from diverse backgrounds, to access the fun and therapeutic benefits of surf. Check out Karma Seas' Instagram to see the great reels. The groups from Rewild Replay, APCymru and also the Single Mums' Wellbeing Group attended. The programme offered the families the opportunity to engage in a sport together and to allow those with ASD to connect with the ocean, in addition to a focus on water safety and meeting the RNLI lifeguards! So much fun, whilst at the same time addressing the issue that those with ASD are at much higher risk of water related incidents.

In Rhondda Cynon Taff, there are two local authority Inclusive Cycling Providers that offer fun and friendly cycling for all in the park. They have struggled to widen their engagement in the past, so we partnered up to offer a summer of FREE inclusive bike hire, 8 days where families, individuals and groups can turn up and get on a bike, take a picnic and enjoy getting outdoors. Sadly the weather caused the cancellation of a few of these sessions, but it's okay, as they have offered to use these spaces for groups to attend in the future. It's proof of how amazing these people are, really caring about what they do! Both Cwm Cycling venues are run by volunteers and are an affordable, fun and inclusive activity for all!

Plymouth

The Outdoor Partnership has supported an outdoor centre here in Plymouth to secure funding from the BBC's Children in Need to help young people from socially deprived backgrounds to be able to experience the outdoors and all it has to offer, and the Plymouth Sound area in particular. This was achieved by means of a partnership between The Outdoor Partnership, The Mount Batten Centre, and Connecting Youth CIC.

What followed was that we could enable Connecting Youth to take part in numerous activities arranged and led by the Mount Batten Centre and were also able to go on a residential course on a tall ship, thanks to a grant bid received by the Mount Batten Centre which The Outdoor Partnership helped to put together.

Swansea Bay Region

During the last week of the Summer Holidays, we kicked off our Young Carers' Adventure Programme here in the Swansea Bay Region. We headed to Wild Lakes Wales with 12 young carers from the Action for Children Team for an epic windsurfing session. The young people had a great time, with some managing to stand up for prolonged lengths of time, and there was lots of falling into the water too!

We have lots more planned over the next few months including paddleboarding, bushcraft and some Halloween and Christmas themed sessions, and we are looking forward to working with some fantastic providers including Windswept, Llandysul Paddlers, South Wales Adventure Company, and lots more, as well as the fantastic Young Carers Services; Action for Children, YMCA and Ceredu.

News from our Regions

Gwynedd

We'll start our news with this year's National Eisteddfod. As part of Byw'n Iach's sports provision at this year's National Eisteddfod Maes (field), there was an orienteering competition for children. There was a different course each day, with everyone who completed the course entering a daily raffle. We had over 130 entrants taking part throughout the week, with many of them new to the sport. The majority succeeded in completing the course each day.

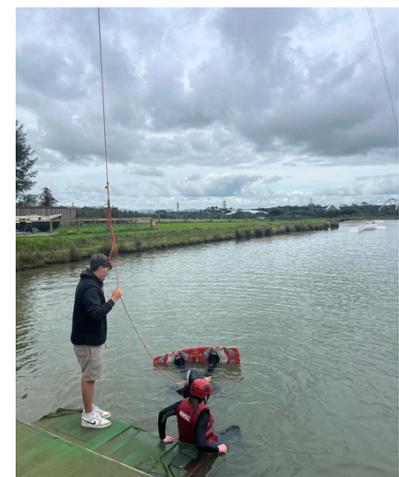
Congratulations to all the winners, who have now received their prizes through the post. Thank you to Ar y Trywydd for their work in creating the map of the Maes and to the staff from the Byw'n Iach Partnership unit for helping to lead the activity during the week.

We then had the summer sailing programme at Dyfi Yacht Club which was in full swing. Here are two reports from two days in August to give you a taste and to show the individuals' progress. It's fair to say the weather was far from ideal conditions for learning to sail, but hats off to all the youngsters for their positive attitude and perseverance.

Session 3 took place on Saturday, 5th August and the weather was better than it had been. For this session we were able to do far more on the water. After some revision land drills, most of the morning was undertaken practising beam reaches (from two toppers controlled single-handedly), and steering and capsizing which saw progressive improvements. This was the first time that most of the participants had been in a boat under own control. The eight sailors did really well. A highlight of the session was undoubtedly the presence of Jasper, a local sailor, who at 14 years old had just returned from The World Topper Championships in Cork where he finished 13th of 300. The respect they had for him as a role model was obvious and he was able to expertly demonstrate and instruct.

Session 4 took place on Saturday, 12th August. It was another wild and wet day with hazy rain on occasions. This was a morning to maximise our time afloat. Five boats and the five sailors were towed over to the other side of the estuary, to the River Leri where we based ourselves in the relative lee of the gusting south westerly. All five sailors showed great helm progression and resilience and agreed that they had made tremendous strides in their sailing skills for ones that had never sailed before. They were able to sail on beam reaches between two buoys, recover off a lee shore and right boats if they'd capsized. Jasper, supported by his dad, was on hand, fresh from finishing 5th out of 130 in the Topper Nationals the previous week.

Swansea Bay Region



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Ayrshire

The Outdoor Partnership, Ayrshire has had a busy few summer months. We have worked in partnership with various Ayrshire organisations to fund, support and organise a range of health and wellbeing, skills development and water safety opportunities:

TOP's summer 'Splash' programme delivered a twice weekly programme at Barassie Beach in Troon during July and August. There were ten days of water safety, SUP paddling, kite flying, climbing, beachcombing and nature and environmental sessions and cycling sessions with ramps and jumps. It was a great multi-sport community programme incorporating the RNLI theme of "Respect the Water" talks and interactive games. Groups attending included Troon and Prestwick Youth Clubs, Scouts, Guides, Brownies, Girls' Brigade, Barnardo's, and East Ayrshire Family Link groups.



233 young people, including a family day with Troon and Ukrainian families, participated. We'd like to thank our delivery partners, Adventure Carrick, Above Adventure, Dolphin House, Kite Surf Scotland and Underskye. Thanks also to funding from Troon Water Sports Hub, Morrison Foundation, Darroch Bequest and South Ayrshire Council.

During the summer we have also been working with Gillian's Walks on a walks and immersion project offering adventure therapy guided walks across Ayrshire and combined walks and cold-water dips in local hill lochs and beaches. We've had 6 guided walk sessions with Gillian's Walks, 4 hike and dips with Open Water with Elaine and Gillian's Walks. What follows is a taste of one of these 'Hike and Dip' days:

"You know it's going to be a good day when even the drive down to the car park makes you say "WOW!" out loud to yourself. The buzz everyone felt from the day's Hike and Dip event was absolutely contagious. We'd like to thank all those involved for being amazing sports and for bringing all the energy. Conditions were picture perfect with possibly the clearest view we've ever seen of Ailsa Craig and Arran. We enjoyed a peaceful walk along our beautiful coastline towards Culzean Castle, perched on its cliff-top and illuminated by the sun all the way. After a very important loo stop at the visitor centre we made our way back via "secret" wild woodland tracks and trails.

"Open Water with Elaine then took over and led us through a fantastic dip. The water was a very pleasant (actually!!) 19 degrees. If you'd been on the beach you'd have heard many, many shrieks of laughter and cheers of support coming from us as members of the group attempted mermaid dives or handstands in the water.

News from our Regions

Coastal Cumbria

The Pathways to Employment project was funded through the Copeland Community fund and ran from September 2021 to September 2023.

Over that period there were two cohorts of participants who, over sixteen weeks, took part in a wide variety of outdoor activities. None of the participants were in employment, education, or training and none had considered seeking employment in the outdoor industry before finding out about this course.

The activities ranged from fell walking to stand up paddleboarding, canoeing and wild swimming. All the participants found being outside and taking part in a group activity to be hugely beneficial to their wellbeing.

Showing the participants the safety equipment for both water activities and for climbing, and explaining how this makes activities safe, allowed them to participate in activities they previously felt unable to partake in was part of the course itself.

Following on from the first course, two of the participants were able to gain employment and used their time on the P2E course as part of their application for those jobs. Others took up volunteering posts and found that the course had benefitted both their mental and physical health.

Thank you to the Copeland Community Foundation and Whitehaven Harbour Project for making the project a success. For further information on our Pathways to Employment programme, please head to our website.

Ayrshire (continued...)

"It was so much fun and, on days like this, Ayrshire really does deliver."

We also had a 5 day inclusion and leadership camp with North Ayrshire Active Schools, with an SUP paddling, canoeing, orienteering and rowing programme in the Irvine harbour area. We've also had 5 disability sailing sessions with Prestwick Sailing Club, which was a weekly programme with instruction by Prestwick Sailing Club instructors for local disabled residents, as well as 8 indoor climbing sessions at Above Adventure with Ayrshire Cancer Support Group, with an introduction to climbing for young people living with family cancer and trauma issues.

And, finally, we had a Nordic Walks development session. This pilot programme was an introduction to Nordic walking technique day with Gillian at Kilmaurs Walking Festival. This will be developed further during autumn and winter.

