

# WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

## WALKING IN COED NANT GAIN

- \* **Observing the natural forest**  
as one interactive holistic community  
eg. trees & mycorrhizal fungi in the soil  
decaying wood- a myriad of creatures recycling nutrients  
food chains- eg. oak/caterpillars/ birds
- \* **Visualising the forest in 1,000 yrs**  
my life's work- reinvigorating the natural forest  
two more generations to restore its productivity  
thirty to reinstate features of the ancient forest  
eg. potential 'grand parent' trees identified for posterity
- \* **A forest culture of the 21st century**  
the intrinsic value recognised  
with which we connect & have responsibility  
productive of multiple benefits, especially  
pleasure, enjoyment & spiritual refreshment
- \* **Restoring the natural forest**  
creating richness & diversity  
eg. copious amounts of decaying wood  
dappled light & shade canopy to ground  
'wildlife hotels'- ivy, forks, deadwood, cavities
- \* **Giving nature a helping hand**  
accelerating natural processes of recovery  
light bramble cover protecting 'seedling trees'  
nest boxes compensating for lack of tree cavities  
assisting demise of weaker trees
- \* **Conserving & upgrading original genetic stock**  
closing the gate to all further introductions  
eg. retain best trees for seed  
old oak stumps provide original local stock  
transplanting selected seedlings within the valley
- \* **Taking only within an abundance**  
conserve & improve forest health  
eg. picking of flowers only in abundance eg. bluebell  
collecting honey fungus when it carpets the ground  
limited firewood to leave copious decaying wood
- \* **Control of non-native species**  
cull/ remove policy species by species  
eg. rhododendron, grey squirrel, pheasant, rabbit  
hybridization by garden archangel, Spanish bluebell, etc  
What to do about OURSELVES the most destructive of all?
- \* **Curtail use of chemicals**  
NO pesticides, herbicides, preservatives, lubricants, etc  
seek alternatives- squirrels- what?  
eg. stoats & weasels controlling rabbits  
except eg. eradicating hybridizing garden archangel
- \* **What future have our woodlands?**  
we have lost our forest culture, our woods are disappearing  
their wellbeing is not on the public or political agenda  
What can be done to generate interest?

A statement of the Principles & Practice  
of Natural Forest Practice is in preparation

## BRIEF HISTORY OF COED NANT GAIN

Continuously wooded since the ice age, forest development peaked around 5,000 years ago, when oak probably dominated CNG. Prehistoric man began clearing this forest, for a flint tool found at CNG indicates that he was active here at least 2,000 years ago. In the mediaeval period there must have been more managed woodland than exists today, supplying the mediaeval church roof, timber frame farm houses, etc, which could not be matched today. In 1801 Kilkyn common was enclosed & CNG was probably clear-cut for fuel to burn the lime required for the land. This is doubtless when CNG was acquired by the local estate & the woodland restock with imported oak & beech, the regeneration from which we see today. After the First World War CNG was sold to a local timber merchant who felled the big trees & for the first time the woodland was abandoned as waste. If mediaeval man had returned he would have been heartbroken by the devastation. Nothing was done to repair this until after the Second World War when my father was advised to plant blocks of conifers; for rabbits by the thousand prevented the trees naturally regenerating. I took over in the 60s when native woodlands were virtually ignored, for not until the 80s was their intrinsic value recognised. Even today ancient woodland remain grossly abused. CNG has never before looked like this & my duty is to restore it to health.  
(Ref.- *The Tree Book*, Ed. J.Edward Milner 1992 pub.ACACIA)

*" What Shakespeare dreamed of the night before he began writing 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' " - Visitor*



*Natural practice implemented by local people  
lunch break for the Brighton Conservation Volunteers*

# COED NANT GAIN

Demonstration of *Natural Forest Practice*  
Home of the *Woodland Interpretive Centre*

## The Woodland

20 acre (8.05 ha) steep sided *nant (glen)*; half mile long; mosaic of oak/ ash/ bluebell on drier slopes, ash/ alder in damp valley bottom. Exceptionally diverse ecosystem: complex layers canopy to ground, rock escarpments, wet stream banks, open areas, damp hay meadows, etc. Classified **Ancient Semi-natural Woodland** here since colonisation after glaciers retreated, 'semi-natural' recognising man's intervention over many centuries.

## Geography

Situated in the Nant Gain valley one mile from Kilkyn (Cilcain) village on sheltered eastern side of the Clwydian Hills at confluence with River Alun. Elevation 450 ft rising to approx. 550 ft. In Clwydian **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** (AONB), **Environmentally Sensitive Area** (ESA), **Site of Special Scientific Interest** (SSSI), **Special Area of Conservation** (SAC), etc, etc, none of which translate into positive action or support.

## Geology & Climate

Carboniferous limestone outcrops overlain by boulder clay with mudstone soils in valley bottom. Considerable evidence of glacial & post-glacial erosion, which continues to this day. Rainfall - typically 900-1100mm (40"-45") spread more or less evenly over the year (drier Jan-Aug, wetter Sep-Dec. wet & dry extremes coming at any time of year)

## Records & Recording

A database of almost 500 flora & 300 fauna species recorded at Coed Nant Gain is available to visitors. This has been established thanks to the contribution of numerous people with widely ranging interests- flowering plants, trees, birds, butterflies, moths, mosses, liverworts, lichens, fungi, mammals, etc. Your assistance in updating & extending this will be greatly appreciated. Write a note for me recording what you see.

*" Thank you for an inspiring visit. May all the powers of good & green advance your valuable work " - Visitor*