



The Wildlife Centre of Wales Canolfan Byd Natur Cymru

www.rhayader.co.uk

Stunning scenery, rare and beautiful wildlife

The boulder strewn River Wye tumbles and cuts its way through the Cambrian Mountains in the heart of Wales. 18 miles south from its source where the valley narrows and then meets the waters of the River Elan, lies the small market town of Rhayader, nestling amid beautiful rugged scenery.



To the west of the town the mountain top plateaux is draped in a mosaic of heather and grass moorland. Gnarled woodlands of oak hang on the valley sides and high rocky outcrops and cliffs overlook small patchwork farms.

This is the area known as Kite Country. Here the British red kite survived against all the odds. Eliminated from the rest of the UK through persecution a mere handful of birds hung on here in these secluded valleys. Now saved, they have become one of the greatest bird protection stories of our time. The kite is not the only one to have found sanctuary in the hills, polecats and otters, buzzards and ravens, ancient oak and man himself found safety here. The landscape is full of history waiting to be read - 400 million year old fossils from a prehistoric sea, burial mounds of the Bronze Age, Roman forts, castles and mediaeval settlements.

The area is well recognized for its natural history interest. Designated a Special Protection Area under the EEC Bird Directive it is among the most important areas for birds in Europe. Of particular interest are the breeding birds of prey, grouse, waders, river birds and the assemblages of breeding migrants from Africa such as redstarts, pied flycatchers, wood warblers, whinchats, wheatears and ring ouzels.

Extensive tracts of countryside are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) for the richness, diversity and rarity of the wildlife. Particularly important are the habitats of the moorlands, bogs, ancient woodlands, hay meadows and river systems.



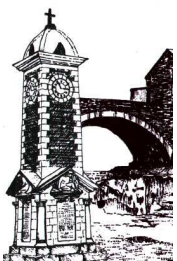
The heart of Wales is also designated an Environmentally Sensitive Area, with the Tir Gofal scheme available to help safeguard the countryside by supporting the traditional farming practices that have created the exceptionally attractive landscape.



In this folder you will find details of many local wildlife sites to visit – do ask if you would like a copy of any of the sheets or a copy of the Rhayader Town guide to take away with you.

Over the next few months we will be producing more information and plan to set up more nature trails and wildlife viewing points.

We hope you enjoy your visit.



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