ELAN ESTATE

The Elan Estate provides a magnificent combination of Cambrian Mountains hill and valley at their majestic best with six reservoirs and dams whose construction in the 1890's provided Birmingham with a gravity fed clean water supply.

The area provides a haven of peace and quiet with much natural life including Red Kite, Buzzard, Merlin and Peregrine together with ancient trails and more exacting pursuits.

Start at the Elan Valley Visitor Centre for light refreshments then find out more about the wildlife and active recreational pursuits; view the exhibition and the video, and meet the Rangers, take a look at the Events leaflet and join in our activities. Take a stroll around the “Arts and Crafts” Elan Village or to the site of the dam that was used as a practice target in World War 11, or walk or bike the Elan Valley Trail in the footsteps of the navvies of yesteryear. In season visit our spectacular meadows, or our ancient woodlands, or venture further afield along our river valleys to a Roman camp! Better still make yourself at home in one of our Holiday Cottages. Whatever you do, you will be assured of a warm welcome and friendly service.

Directions: The Elan Valley is signposted from Rhayader and the Visitor Centre is just off the B4518 approximately 3 miles from the town. For more information visit www.elanvalley.org.uk
Fish and Fishing

Rhayader, or Rhaeadr Gwy to give its Welsh name, means Waterfall on the Wye, and indeed it is a town surrounded by fantastic upland rivers, streams and reservoirs. It was also renowned in years past for its wily salmon poachers!

The best places to try and see fish are from the river bridges that can be found just off the A470 at Marteg and Llanwrthwl, off the B4518 to Elan Valley at Dolfallen and in the town itself in the Gro Park, Waun Capel Park and Cwmdauddwr Bridge. The Radnorshire Wildlife Trust also arrange special events to watch the leaping salmon at Gilfach Nature Reserve in the autumn – for details telephone: 01597 823298.

ELAN VALLEY RESERVOIRS - Situated in the heart of the Cambrian Mountains, 3 miles west of Rhayader, lies a series of four wonderful Reservoirs and Dams: Caban Coch, Garreg Ddu, Pen-y-Garreg and Craig Goch that together create a total of 850 acres of wilderness water. Each of these reservoirs support an abundance of wild brown trout and are also stocked with brown trout from the local angling association’s own hatchery. Fly fishing only is permitted on the Elan Valley Reservoirs.

LLYNGWYN - Llyngwyn is a 16 acre spring fed natural lake situated in a secluded area 3 miles east of Rhayader, accessible off the A44 and the A470. As long ago as the 12th century this lake was stocked with Carp by the Cistercian Monks from nearby Abbey-Cwm-Hir. The lake was fished by the Monks on their travels from the Abbey at Strata Florida. The same strain of Carp still exists in the lake today. Fishing for these Carp is allowed in the bay of the lake (from the landing stage to the island). Llyngwyn is mainly a Rainbow water but there are also some Brown Trout. The lake is stocked regularly with Rainbow Trout. Fly fishing only for Trout. Access is for anglers only.

RIVER WYE - Excellent Brown Trout and Grayling fishing is available. Apart from the natural head of Brown Trout the river is also stocked with brown trout from the local angling association’s own hatchery. The Wye is also renowned for its Salmon fishing with the Salmon reaching the upper parts of the Wye towards the end of the Season.

RIVER ELAN - This river is one of the main tributaries of the Upper Wye running from the Elan Valley Reservoirs and joining the Wye 1½ miles south of Rhayader. The Elan provides excellent opportunity for catching Pike, Grayling and Brown Trout and is also stocked with Brown Trout. When the water in the Wye is too high for fishing, the Elan provides a good alternative as the level of water in this river is regulated by the Elan Valley Dams.

RIVER MARTEG - The River Marteg is a small stream and runs into the River Wye 3 miles north of Rhayader. This supports a good stock of small wild Brown Trout and is famous for its run of spawning Salmon in the autumn.

RHAYADER & ELAN VALLEY ANGLING ASSOCIATION

www.rhayaderangling.co.uk

Produced with funding assistance from Rhayader Town Council and the Elan Valley Trust and Sponsored by Destination Rhayader.
Wild red kites are fed at Gigrin Farm every day of the year, together with buzzards and ravens and other species of birds. The Red Kite feeding station at Gigrin Farm attracts as many as 500 of these beautiful birds of prey.

Mid Wales was the last stronghold of the native Red Kites, which had disappeared from nearly all of their original habitats.

Now, thanks to Gigrin Farm and the work of the Welsh Kite Trust, the kites are rebuilding their populations.

Red kites, being hungry when they awake, will hunt for food during the morning and early afternoon, so Gigrin is here as a top up or emergency ration.

Gigrin, in conjunction with The Welsh Kite Trust, is also the Red Kite Rehabilitation Centre. This unit allows kites, that have fallen ill or been injured, to recuperate after having veterinary care elsewhere. We had our first patient on 1st January 2003.

Five purpose made hides are made available from where to watch the spectacle, 3 are wheelchair friendly with ramps and internal access.

Parking for up to four vehicles (including a mini-bus) is possible outside the hides for those not able to walk the 130metres from the car park.

If you have particular requirements please contact us (telephone 01597-810243) beforehand and we'll see what we can do.

We also have specialised hides for photographers and film-makers.

We also have a nature trail of 1.5 – 2 miles, which takes you through many different habitats around the 200-acre farm, and a wetland hide can give views of otherwise elusive creatures.

Gigrin Farm is open from 1pm. Feeding takes place at 2pm in winter and 3pm in summer (kites don’t know that we change the clocks!). Booking is only required if you are coming as a group (12 or more) or organising a coach party.

Admissions: Contact 01597 810243

Dogs are welcome if kept on a lead. During summer months they must not be left in cars.

Visiting the Red Kite Centre: Gigrin is just ¼ mile south of Rhayader on the A470.
Gigrin Farm became the Official Red Kite Feeding Station in the winter 1992/93 following a request from the RSPB who had witnessed the late Mr. Powell feeding the kites as and when food (rabbit) was available. The RSPB had noted this spectacle and came to the farm with a proposal - that we should open to the public as the red kite feeding station, as it would have an impact on the young kites that were being lost over the winter and would also draw people away from nesting sites where losses occurred due to disturbance.

We open from 1pm every day but for Christmas Day.

At the feeding station, the crows are first to turn up in trees around the feeding area and make it quite a noisy affair with the calls of jackdaws and carrion crows and the deep 'cronking' of ravens.

Buzzards and red kites circle overhead; buzzards are far more vocal than kites, their powerful 'mewing' carrying a long way.

As soon as the meat has been put out the crow family start emerging from the surrounding trees.

As the first crows land amongst the meat the kites go on the offensive.

Kites watch and wait their chance to furl their wings and dive in, skimming the ground to snatch a scrap before rising suddenly to escape the beaks of the angry crows.

Many kites appear to miss their target by a wide margin but are actually intent on flushing meat-laden crows into the air from where they can be mugged by the very best in the business!

The meat we feed to the kites is beef - anything up to, and beyond, 800kg/week. This is fit for human consumption and can actually be too lean for beef burgers!

There is a rolling population of red kites during the week. And, on any day, there is a pecking order within the age groups the adults taking precedence over younger birds.

The Red Kite Feeding & Rehabilitation Centre www.gigrin.co.uk 01597 810243
Abergwesyn Commons

Acquired by the National Trust in 1984, Abergwesyn Commons is 6,667 Ha (16,500 acres) of open access upland habitat situated between the village of Llanwrthwl to the East and the Irfon Valley in the West. In all there are seven contiguous Commons, the boundaries of which are marked by nothing more than features in the landscape such as streams or ancient cairns. This seamlessly flowing area of rolling hills has “wilderness” qualities that seldom occur elsewhere in England and Wales.

Wildlife

Much of this upland is rich in upland flora. Swards of heather and bilberry cover much of the dry heath and parts of the blanket bog. On the wetter peat bog areas sphagnum thrives along with cotton grass, wild cranberry, bog asphodel, the beautiful modest sundew and various other plants that can survive the harsh conditions of the acid soils.

There are many invertebrates thriving in the undergrowth including caterpillars, moths and butterflies as well as the water beetles and dragonflies that hover around the occasional bog pools that are scattered across the Commons.

This site is also important because of the birds that are present. The Red List kestrel, red grouse, curlew and golden plover all frequent Abergwesyn Commons. Red Kites, buzzards and ravens can often be seen soaring across the skies above - and not forgetting the intrepid skylark, the greatest disturber of the peace with it’s excited song.

Visiting

All of the Commons are Open Access land. Watershed markers mark the boundary with the Elan Valley to the North, an area that is also open access. Access can be gained from a variety of rights of way. These include SN 931 633, SN 964 638, SN 958 613 and SN 988 623. These points are accessible by foot and/or car from Llanwrthwl, 3 miles (5 km) south of Rhayader on the A470. Please park cars so they are not blocking access to any tracks. Dogs should be kept on leads at all times. Due to the remoteness of this site please ensure you are properly equipped for any walking you may undertake on this site.
RSPB Carngafallt nature reserve

Wildlife
This RSPB reserve covers approximately 386 hectares of upland woodland, moorland and grassland. The woodland and moorland walks explore the site amidst exciting scenery. In spring, the oak woodlands are full of pied flycatchers, redstarts and wood warblers. There are also good numbers of whinchats, stonechats, skylarks and meadow pipits across the heathland of Carngafallt Common. You can see red kites, buzzards and ravens throughout the year.
The site is special because it has some internationally important examples of upland habitats and contains nationally and regionally scarce plant and invertebrate species. It is protected under UK and EC legislation. After near extinction in Britain, the polecat, along with the red kite, found sanctuary in the uplands of Wales from relentless persecution by humans. Today, due to more enlightened attitudes to wildlife, polecats, red kites, badgers and otters are among the once rare wildlife that is now a common sight on the reserve and in the surrounding countryside.

Myth and legend
The reserve has a number of archaeological features dating back 5,000 years. These include three Bronze Age burial cairns which are associated with one of the oldest Welsh folk tales from the ninth century. The legend is that while chasing a wild boar, the hunting hound named Cafallt left a paw print in a rock. Cafallt belonged to the legendary Celtic warrior, Arthur. This nature reserve is named after the main rocky hill here, called Carngafallt. Translated into English, Carngafallt means ‘the rock of Cafallt’ or the rock of Arthur’s dog, as some people call it.

Visiting
Admission is free and the reserve is open at all times. Access is via a variety of rights of way. Dogs should be on leads at all times. Please stay on the marked paths, as elsewhere on the reserve there are hazards including ravines, cliffs, bogs and rock terrain. Some routes are quite steep in parts and sturdy footwear is recommended.

How to get there
The main access point for the reserve is at Elan Village. There is an RSPB information sign at the eastern end of the village where the village road enters woodland at a cattle grid. Elan Village is just off the B4518 approximately 5 km east of the town of Rhayader, which straddles the A470 and A44, in central Wales.

We hope you enjoy your visit.

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds  Tel: 01654 700222  Web: www.rspb.org.uk/wales
Radnorshire Wildlife Trust  Gilfach Nature Reserve  
(SN965 717 – Nature Discovery Centre)

In the lovely Marteg valley with glorious views, Gilfach is a traditional hill farm, managed organically and for the benefit of wildlife. Many of its meadows are unimproved, peppered with anthills and rich in ancient grassland flora such as mountain pansy, eyebright, and adders-tongue fern. Butterflies and other invertebrates abound and 55 species of breeding bird have been recorded, including the summer visitors redstart and pied flycatcher. The rocky River Marteg bubbles down through the reserve, tumbling over the waterfall and down to its confluence with the River Wye. You may well see a dipper or perhaps the blue flash of a kingfisher and if you are very lucky indeed, a glimpse of an otter.

A way-marked nature trail guides people round the reserve, which takes a leisurely 1½ hours. The shorter Oakwood Trail takes a loop from the Nature Discovery Centre. There are picnic benches at Marteg Bridge and the Nature Discovery Centre, or just bring a blanket and sit by the river! The Wye Valley Walk and the Monk’s Trod also pass through the reserve.

Please keep your dog on a lead at all times to limit disturbance to wildlife and farm animals.

Directions:
Gilfach nature reserve is 3 miles north of Rhayader, just off the A470 to the right. Park here at Marteg Bridge and begin the trail, or carry on up the B road for ½ mile, turning right down the narrow lane signposted to the Nature Discovery Centre (just before the cattle grid). The Centre with its exhibitions and light refreshments is manned by volunteers and is generally open at weekends and school holidays from Easter to September.

Radnorshire Wildlife Trust  www.rwtwales.org  Tel: 01597 823298
Warwick House, High Street, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6AG

www.rhayader.co.uk
Produced with funding assistance from Rhayader Town Council and the Elan Valley Trust and Sponsored by Destination Rhayader.
The Woodland Trust - Coed Dolifor  
(SN 960 653 – Near Llanwrthwl)

A north facing woodland 11.54 ha (28.52 acres) on the hillside above the River Wye. Formerly boggy grazing land and open grazed oak, birch and alder pasture woodland, but fenced and planted in 1974 by the then private owner, with a wide range of non native species with the aim of creating an arboretum. The middle section of the wood is very wet with a line of springs feeding boggy ground dominated by purple moor grass, sphagnum, alder, birch and willow.

In 1970’s the planting included a large number of small blocks of conifers as well as a wide range of individual exotic trees. Many of the latter have failed to survive because of the relatively wet and cold conditions but those that survive add to the interest of the wood. The key features of the site are secondary woodland (which seems to be on an old pasture woodland site), trees of special interest and informal public access. There are also large mossy rocks and some ancient woodland ground flora species which add conservation interest. There are spectacular views from the site and the wide variety of tree species make the wood an attractive landscape feature especially in spring and autumn.

The wood is surrounded by small hedged fields, scattered mature trees and areas of scrub. Fields to the west are mostly improved pasture but to the north and east is wet and unimproved grassland. On higher land to the south is the extensive upland common land of Carngafallt, including moorland, upland grassland and woodland habitats.

Since acquisition by the Woodland Trust in 1982 Coed Dolifor has been allowed to develop towards predominantly oak and birch woodland. Those individual non native trees that have survived have been retained. Most conifer blocks have grown steadily and now dominate the upper southern part of the woodland. Most blocks were thinned to waste in 2002.

Please keep your dog on a lead at all times to limit disturbance to wildlife and farm animals.

Directions
A public footpath crosses the lower northern end of the wood, and a permissive path is maintained through the wood, linking the three entrances, and providing a detour for walkers on the Wye Valley Walk which runs just outside the eastern boundary of the wood.