

# WICKED Branching Out / Egin

Autumn 2011

August - October

## A Route to a True Vocation!

Rob Smith, Tir Coed Trainee - a Case Study

After volunteering on a reef conservation scheme in Mexico Rob was awarded a 2 year internship to stay on as the project youth worker. Following this experience, a move to West Wales left Rob unable to secure full time work in a field that interested him. However, 12 months later Rob discovered Tir Coed and as he had always enjoyed "mucking about in the woods and making things" he decided to volunteer on the Branching Out/Egin project and found his true vocation.



Whilst on the course Rob gained experience in low impact woodland management, greenwood craft skills, traditional timber construction techniques and conducting wildlife surveys; all under the expert tuition of local woodsman, Bob Shaw.

Rob registered as self employed and has since had great success at markets and shows where he not only sells beautiful, hand-crafted furniture but also gives practical demonstrations using a pole lathe. His first show and demonstration was a request from Tir Coed and not something that Rob would have initially volunteered to do but, not wanting to disappoint, he agreed to give it a go. It was a huge success and Rob now incorporates this approach into his business strategy as a way to generate sales whilst reducing the cost of pitches. He recently won a contract for 14 garden benches and is considering the possibilities of subcontracting a fellow Tir Coed trainee to share the workload.

Since September, alongside woodcraft contracts, Rob has been working as a Tir Coed Support Tutor, has gained his chainsaw license and is managing a woodland for a private woodland owner. Recently Rob was also appointed as a part time Warden for the Longwood Community Woodland group near Lampeter, where local volunteers benefit from his passion for the environment and his experience in woodland skills.

Rob hopes to build his business into a sustainable, enjoyable career but still intends to give time to mentor other volunteers.

## Success for Tir Coed Trainee

"I feel I have found my true vocation"

Rob Smith

## VISIT TIR COED ON FACEBOOK!



Take a look at what's going on using the Tir Coed Facebook page.

Keep up to date, share your ideas or make suggestions.

Just log on to:

[www.facebook.com/pages/Tir-Coed/142013625847428](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Tir-Coed/142013625847428)

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**Poor Man's Wood, Llandoverly**  
**April to November 2011**

Lead:	Jamie Miller
Support:	Ray Miller
Tasters:	4
Sessions:	25
No. volunteer days:	90
No. volunteer hours:	540
Total no. volunteers	6
No. current volunteers:	4



This Llandoverly based group, made up of 3 local boys and 1 girl (who travels over 10 miles each session by push bike to

Lampeter for a lift to site), have been working hard and have nearly finished the roundhouse-style wildlife hide at the Reserve.

Oak, harvested from the Reserve, was cleaved into shingles for the roof. The group have also completed 3 benches within the hide, a picnic table and several bird boxes. There are still 3 display boards to create and install as well as some finishing touches to the wildlife hide.

All 4 volunteers are well on their way to completing their OCN workbooks and are set to achieve level 2 accreditation for their work in constructing the wildlife hide.

The Project Manager is preparing a celebration to mark achievements at the final session, as well as working on progression for the volunteers, which will be reported on in the Winter edition.



**Volunteer Feedback:**

*"I've learnt skills to help me in the future."*

*"I didn't think that I could work so well with wood."*

*This project helped me "to get more skills, a qualification ... I've met new people and it has given me confidence."*

**Accreditation:**

Agored Cymru (OCN) Unit	Level	Total Achieved
Construction of a basic Wooden Shelter	2	4

**Teifi Marshes, Cilgerran  
July 2011 to March 2012**

Lead:	Jamie Miller
Support:	Steve Parkin
Tasters:	4
Sessions:	11
No. volunteer days:	80
No. volunteer hours:	480
Total no. volunteers	8
No. current volunteers:	4



The Teifi Marshes group have reduced from 8 to 4 since September; 1 started on a carpentry course at college, 1 has had to re-engage with school on Tuesdays and the other 2 have dropped out for personal reasons. The Project Manager is currently looking for new recruits.



The remaining 4 young people are all very keen and have been working hard on the timber-framed deer hide.

The framework has been constructed in the school house that the group use as their base. It is bolted, rather than pegged together, to give the site Warden the option to move the hide in the future if necessary.

The next jobs for the group to undertake before the Christmas break will be assembling the framework on site (jigsaw

style) and then adding flooring, roofing and cladding to the structure as well as completing their OCN workbooks.

**Volunteer Feedback:**

*"It gets me out of bed; I've learnt new skills that I didn't have before and met new people."*

*"I've achieved more than I expected to .. I wasn't expecting to get a 50 hours MV Certificate."*



**Accreditation:**

Agored Cymru (OCN) Unit	Level	Total Achieved
Construction of a basic Wooden Shelter	2	
All 4 participants have started completing their workbooks.		

**Progression:**

College Courses (Starting in September)	Level	Total
Intermediate Construction Award: NVQ Wood Occupations	2	1
GSCE'S	1	1

### Mynydd Mawr Woodland Park, Tumble - March to July 2011

Lead:	Tony Eames
Support:	Andy Roberts
Tasters:	4
Sessions:	13
No. volunteer days:	72
No. volunteer hours:	375
Total no. volunteers:	7
No. current volunteers:	N/A

A report on the activities delivered and resulting round-house and woodland glade was included in the previous Newsletter. Here is an update on the progression of trainees to date:



#### Accreditation:

	Level	Total
Construction of a Basic Wooden Shelter	1	2
Construction of a Basic Wooden Shelter	2	2

#### Progression:

Volunteering	Total
RSPCA	1
<b>Employment</b>	
Landscape Gardener	1
Catering	1
<b>Supported Employment</b>	
Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment	1
<b>Dropped out</b>	1
<b>Still working on progression</b>	2

### Stackpole Estate, Pembroke - April to August 2011

Lead:	Rob Young
Support:	Green Links
Tasters:	4
Sessions:	14
No. volunteer days:	34
No. volunteer hours:	227
Total no. volunteers:	6
No. current volunteers:	N/A

A report on the countryside management activities undertaken by this group was included in the previous Newsletter. Here is an update on the progression of trainees to date:



#### Accreditation:

	Level	Total
Introduction to Estate Maintenance & Countryside Skills	1	1
Practical Conservation Skills	2	1

#### Progression:

Further Learning	Total
Full-time college course	1
Motorsports Vehicle Engineering	
<b>Employment</b>	
Seasonal work with agricultural contractor	1
Full-time Kitchen assistant	1
<b>Dropped out</b>	2
<b>Still working on progression</b>	1

## Pen yr Allt Woods, South Ceredigion August to November 2011

Lead:	Benjamin Grey
Support:	Aaron Kinsella
Tasters:	4
Sessions:	14
No. volunteer days:	70
No. volunteer hours:	655
Total no. volunteers:	7
No. current volunteers:	5



This group has been very motivated from the start. This is largely due to the passion and enthusiasm of the Lead Tutor, this time supported by a former

Tir Coed trainee from a previous Engagement Gateway group; who has also played a key role in motivating the current trainees.



The group began the course by concentrating on green woodcraft. Each trainee made an item from wood that they were able to take home with them. Once basic skills had been mastered they were able to advance to making hurdles. From the beginning of October, the group have been learning how to coppice, as well as experiencing other woodland management methods.

At least one of the group is looking to a career in the woodland sector and is currently developing a Business Plan with a view to becoming self-employed. Another trainee was already self-employed, but could not find work; The Lead Tutor is currently employing him on a piece meal basis to make Carmarthenshire-style gates. Two of the



younger trainees will continue their training at Pen yr Allt Wood as part of a Skill Build course.

### Accreditation:

	Level	Total
Sustainable Woodland Management 2: Introduction to Woodland Management	1	5
Sustainable Woodland Management 3: Introduction to Wood Processing	1	5
Coppice crafts	2	5
Pole Lathe Turning	1	5

### Progression:

Other mainstream programme	Total
Skill Build	2
Want2Work	1
Self Employment	1
Dropped out	2
Still working on progression	1

**Coed Tyllwyd, North Ceredigion, September to November 2011**

Lead:	Bob Shaw
Support:	Rob Smith & Ffion Farnell
Tasters:	4
Sessions:	11
No. volunteer days:	67
No. volunteer hours:	492
Total no. volunteers:	6
No. current volunteers:	6

This group is learning new skills while helping to manage an area of Coed Tyllwyd, a Welsh Government-owned woodland near Aberystwyth. Tir Coed has a 12-month working permission with Forestry Commission Wales to manage an area of this woodland.



During the early part of the project, the group achieved much in the form of bramble clearance footpath improvements, and building of steps to assist with the gradients in this steep woodland.



From the beginning of October, the group has been concentrating mostly on managing an area of Western Hemlock, with a view to controlling the volume and opening up the canopy to allow the native hardwood to thrive. Alongside this most of the group are working towards a Level 3 OCN unit in sustainable woodland management.

**Accreditation:**

	Level
Sustainable Woodland Management 1: Intro to Woodlands for Wildlife & People	1
Sustainable Woodland Management 2: Intro to Woodland Management	1
Sustainable Woodland Management 3: Intro to Wood Processing	1
Sustainable Woodland Management	3

This Engagement Gateway group will come to an end at the end of November; however, the majority of trainees are planning to continue volunteering at Coed Tyllwyd on a weekly basis to develop their skills still further.



A report on this group's progression will be included in the next Newsletter.

**Bolbro Woods, Abermule, Newtown, August—November 2011**

Lead:	Colin Titley
Support:	Carol Thomas
Tasters:	4
Sessions:	16
No. volunteer days:	119
No. volunteer hours:	948
Total no. volunteers:	8
No. current volunteers:	7

All the trainees have been working well throughout and attendance has been excellent; with 1 trainee completing 200 hours of volunteering.

The group practiced green woodcraft skills during 4 taster sessions and have since moved on to build a compost toilet at the Forest School site in Bolbro Woods.

As part of this project, the trainees have been given a chance to see how the skills that they are learning fit into the world of work and enterprise with a visit to Welsh Oak Frame in Caersws. A big “thank you” to Welsh Oak Frame for hosting and supporting this opportunity.

All trainees have completed practical work for 2 OCN Units and workbooks now are being assessed.

At least 1 trainee is planning to continue volunteering to gain further woodland related skills on completion of the course. 3 other group members already have work placements arranged with Powys Training and with



**Accreditation:**

	Level	Total
Construction of a Basic Wooden Shelter	1	7
Construction of a Basic Wooden Shelter	2	1
Introduction to Green Woodwork	1	7



Siawns Teg; which will also include employability skills training.

A full report on progression will be included in the next Newsletter.

**Volunteer Feedback:**

*“People were helpful, lively and gave a good atmosphere.”*

*“Interesting, exciting and challenging people.”*

*“Meeting new people, learning new skills have all helped.”*

Monitoring Questionnaire

Feedback comments collected from the young people.

How do you feel this project has helped you?

*"Loads! New skills, met some pretty cool people... & I know I could come back if I wanted to, to hone skills"*

*"Learnt loads to do with wood. It's given me ideas of what I want to do... I just want to do something like this! & give something back"*

*"I've learned new skills, made new friends"*

*"Got me out, know more about wood, been noticing more things that are similar to things I've been doing E.g. benches, sheds, carving, I can guess how they are made"*

*"Learnt new skills & I've become a bit more sociable as well"*

*"Made me feel more positive about life as a whole. Got more idea about what I want to do"*

*"Yes, the more I learn, I feel there's more & more to learn!"*

*"It's been great learning the importance of sustainability. I've made some real life changes!"*

Do you think you have achieved more than you expected to?

*Yes, everything to do with woodlands. I understand more about woodlands as opposed to forestry"*

*"Too right, I expected to come home & quit on the 2nd day... but it was too much fun!"*

*"I didn't expect to complete my OCN Level 3!"*

*"Didn't expect to be able to do what I've been doing!"*

### Millennium Volunteers Achievements

Branching Out / Egin participants have had their volunteer hours recognised after giving enough time to their projects to achieve 50, 100 and 200 hour Awards

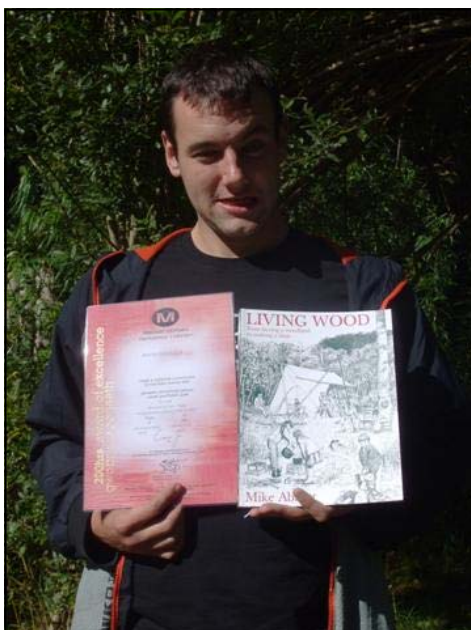
The volunteers are:

- 50 hours:** Gary Phillips  
Jack Bluett  
Jethro Shimidzu  
Robert Davies  
Teifion Simmons  
Tomas Knight



- 100 hours:** Rhys Mathews  
Jonathan Whittaker  
Jacob Marsh  
Ryan Morgan  
Darren Scott

- 200 hours:** Aaron Kinsella





## Tir Coed Standardisation & Networking Day

As an Agored Cymru approved centre Tir Coed has to fulfil a number of Quality requirements to retain it's Centre status. One of these is to hold standardisation events for tutors and staff involved in the delivery and internal verification of Agored Cymru & Open College Network (OCN) units. Tir Coed hosted its Annual Standardisation & Networking Day on October 24th for 11 tutors & support workers.



The event presented examples of reports from recent regional standardisation meetings which highlighted aspects of evidence collection, assessment and feedback that may need some improvement.

The group had the chance to follow a similar process with sample workbooks of Tir Coed units. This exercise aimed to focus attention on identifying specific details as well as giving opportunities for both new and more experienced tutors to share good practice and discuss issues that arise in the practical delivery of units.

The day was a great success with lots of positive comments and feedback and for many it was a pleasant social event too.

## Potential Partnership Agreements

We were joined at the standardisation event by 2 tutors who would like to work in Partnership with Tir Coed to run a new unit.

Agored Cymru had recommended Tir Coed as a centre with good quality systems who could possibly provide the administrative support and internal verification services they need.

Discussions are currently in progress to assess the potential for offering accreditation services to this group and potentially in future to other groups through the proposed social enterprise.

Cefnogwyd gan **YMDDIRIEDOLAETH MYNYDDOEDD CAMBRIAN**  
Supported by the **CAMBRIAN MOUNTAINS TRUST**

### Llanarchaeron Show

Tir Coed hosted a stand and tent at the Llanarchaeron Coast and Countryside Fair in September, organised by Natur Cymru. Despite being late in the month, the weather was outstanding and the sunshine brought many countryside professionals and trainees to the event. Former Tir Coed trainees, and now Support Workers, Rob Smith and Ray Miller led pole-lathing and gate-making activities for Tir Coed. Many visitors showed enthusiasm for Tir Coed Products, photos of which were displayed on the stand; we hope that this publicity will contribute to a developing interest in the proposed Tir Coed Social Enterprise.



**Rob Smith showing Countryside Management Student, Daegan Simpson, how to use the pole lathe.**

### Tir Coed Social Enterprise

With support from the Wales Co-operative Centre, Tir Coed has been working with Landsker Business Centre to prepare cash flow projections that will feed into a comprehensive Business Plan for the proposed Social Enterprise.

A final draft of the Business Plan will be prepared by the end of November and we hope to have the plan approved by the Tir Coed Trustees before the end of the year.

**Continue Watching this space!**

### The VINE Project (Volunteering In the Natural Environment)

Tir Coed are currently developing a new project for young people not in employment, education or training. The VINE (Volunteering In the Natural Environment) Project will take forward best practice from the *WICKED - Branching Out / Egin* model, and will offer new volunteering opportunities at new woodland sites in Mid and West Wales. Volunteers taking part in the VINE Project, who wish to progress on to work-based training, will be able to join the Tir Coed Social Enterprise and further enhance their skills.

**Please contact Tir Coed if you know of a woodland site that is in need of improvements and is accessible to a local community.**