

## **Cambrian Mountains Society - Press Release:**

### **Cambrian Mountains Society to Celebrate Launch in the Autumn**

A new organisation that aims to secure greater recognition for the landscape, culture and heritage of the Cambrian Mountains is to celebrate its official launch this autumn. The Cambrian Mountains Society / Cymdeithas Mynyddoedd Cambria was formed in the Spring of 2005 in response to what its rapidly growing membership sees as a crisis in the uplands of Mid Wales.

The Cambrian Mountains, which are located between the National Parks of Snowdonia and the Brecon Beacons, form one of the largest areas of open land in Southern Britain. Comprised of the mountain and moorland ranges of Pumlumon and the Elenydd, they are probably one of the least known landscapes of rural Wales, but all who do know them agree on their unique value and quality. This was tacitly recognised in the 1970s, when the region was proposed for National Park designation. For political reasons the designation was never confirmed, and the Cambrians were left without the legislative protection that would safeguard their qualities for future generations.

The Society's president is celebrated naturalist and broadcaster Iolo Williams. "It is a crying shame", he commented, "that the Cambrian uplands have been denied the measure of protection to which they are justly entitled. In terms of landscape, habitat, cultural and spiritual value the hills of Pumlumon and the Elenydd are priceless. Yet they remain open to all types of inappropriate development. If we allow this to continue unchecked the Welsh Nation – and the wider world – will lose an integral piece of what we call, in Welsh, *etifeddiaeth* – our rich and rightful inheritance. The Cambrian Mountains Society exists to ensure that doesn't happen, and will work vigorously to safeguard the future of this special region".

The Cambrians provided a refuge for the celebrated Red Kite when the species was facing extinction, and Iolo hopes that the recent resurgence in the famous raptor's fortunes will be paralleled by an improvement in fortunes for the region that was its salvation. "The environment of the Cambrians has been damaged in the past," he observed, "for example by insensitive blanket forestry plantations, but now it faces an environmental crisis on several fronts. These include a severe decline in populations of ground-nesting birds, a huge increase in damage and disturbance caused by illegal use of off-road motor vehicles and the threat of inappropriately sited large wind-power stations. The natural beauty and ecological and cultural value of the region is, however, still immense, and the time has come to choose between environmental degradation and responsible stewardship".

The Cambrian Mountains Society is not, however, simply a conservation organisation. It aims to pursue a much wider agenda, that of celebrating, informing and raising consciousness about all aspects of land and life in the Cambrians. It will do this through a

range of activities and events, including exhibitions, talks, walks, publications and, of course, political campaigning and lobbying. Its first event, an exhibition of work by Ponterwyd photographer Martin Wright, was held at the Elan Valley Visitor Centre at the end of May. The next major event will be the Society's official launch, also to be held in the Elan Valley, on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October. The day will offer another opportunity to see the photographic exhibition, as well as a range of other activities. Iolo Williams will provide a special treat for members in the form of a "members only" talk, and the Society will elect officers for the forthcoming year.

If you are interested in the work of the Cambrian Mountains Society you can find out more by visiting [www.cambrian-mountains.co.uk](http://www.cambrian-mountains.co.uk). Membership is £10 per household, and is open to all who share the aims of the Society.