

Cymdeithas
Mynyddoedd
Cambria

Llwydd: Iolo Williams

Cambrian
Mountains
Society

President: Iolo Williams

Press Release

13/2/06

Dismay at proposed closure of Elenydd Youth Hostels

The Cambrian Mountains Society expressed dismay this week at the proposed closure of three Youth Hostels in Mid Wales. The Youth Hostels Association recently announced the closure of the hostels at Blaencaron, Dolgoch and Tyncornel, all situated in the Elenydd region of the Cambrian Mountains, on the grounds that they are not financially viable. The closures will mean that there will be no remaining youth hostels in the Cambrian Mountains – a region that was once well served by the Y.H.A.

The Society's Chairman, David Bateman, has written to the Y.H.A. expressing widely felt concerns over the organisation's decision, which he argues is premature. "Although visitor numbers at the hostels have been low in recent years, the future could be quite different", he stated. "Sustainable tourism, of the type encouraged by the provision of simple accommodation like the hostels under threat, could play an ever more important role in the future of the Cambrian Mountains. The removal of the Elenydd hostels can only serve to undermine opportunities to expand this important economic activity".

There is indeed evidence of growing interest in the untapped potential of the Elenydd's wild hills for sustainable tourism. County Councils in the region recently held a public meeting on ways of co-operating in the management of the hills, and footpath initiatives such as the Tywi Valley Trail and the Cambrian Way have the potential to attract more visitors to the area in the future. The Society's own activities and rapidly growing membership are also, in Professor Bateman's words, "indicative of the strong feelings that the area evokes".

To many people the simple and remote, but comfortable accommodation offered by the Elenydd hostels represents the spirit of youth hostelling. The presence of the hostels adds a welcome dimension to the exploration of Southern Britain's largest open uplands, and all who have used them will be saddened by their demise.

The Society's concern is shared by a range of organisations and individuals, including Ceredigion's M.P., Mark Williams, who has also written to the Y.H.A. expressing

dismay.

It is hoped that the Y.H.A. will reconsider its decision, if at least to postpone the closures in the hope that a way forward might be found.