



President: Iolo Williams

Acting Chairperson: Peter Foulkes

Website: www.cambrian-mountains.co.uk but brief details of the Society can be found at the bottom of this 'letter.'

Address for correspondence: Mr. P. Foulkes, Swyn yr Afon, Abercegir, Machynlleth, Powys, SY20 8NR.

Email:- peter.foulkes249@btinternet.com

A Landscape Anniversary

To: The First Minister.

28th November 2019

Welsh Government,
Fifth Floor,
Ty Hywel,
Cardiff Bay,
CF99 1NA.

CC.

- Howard Davies, Chief Executive NAAONB,
- Peter Heard, contact person AFWDL,
- Carys Matthews, Operations Manager CPRW,
- Corinne Pluchino, Chief Executive Campaign for National Parks.
- Editors of a collection of national and local Newspapers.

Dear Mr. Drakeford

The 16th of December marks an important anniversary, on this day 70 years ago Her Majesty the Queen gave Royal assent to the **National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949**. This set up the framework for creating the thirteen National Parks in England and Wales with Snowdonia NP amongst the first to be designated in 1951. The Pembrokeshire Coast NP followed in 1952 and the Brecon Beacons joined the family of Welsh National Parks in 1957. In 1959 Gower became the very first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty/AONB in Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

But much preliminary work preceded the 1949 Act notably the post-World War 2 Dower and Hobhouse reports. Both of these reports mapped areas throughout England and Wales judged as of outstanding landscape quality and as such suitable for Protected Landscape designation either as National Parks, or Conservation Areas (the later to become known as AONBs). By the 1960's the majority of these areas had been designated but with some notable exceptions. One of these was the Cambrian Mountains, although both Dower and Hobhouse sub-divided this rolling landscape at the heart of Wales into two – "Plynlimon"^(sic) and "Elenith"^(sic) Mountains." Throughout the 60's and 70's the National Parks Commission and the Countryside Commission campaigned for the Cambrians to become part of the family of Designated Landscapes this culminating, in the **Cambrian Mountains National Park (Designation) Order 1972**.

Disappointingly the Right Honorable Peter Thomas, the then Secretary of State for Wales, took the decision not to confirm the Order. But the issue has not gone away and since 2005 the Cambrian Mountains Society (CMS) has campaigned for greater recognition of the Cambrian Mountains - for these hills to join the National Landscapes of Wales. Also in Government circles the case for the

Cambrians has continued to be reviewed periodically such as with;

- CCW's report of 2009 - "Pathfinder – Testing the Appropriateness of Designation" whilst focusing on the Clwydian Hills AONB extension does cover concern over the Cambrian Mountains.
- The Marsden report of 2015 – "The Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales" in which the authors refer to "unfinished business" (Sections 4.6.4 & 4.6.5).

Also several 'outdoor' activity magazines over the last few years have highlighted the lack of landscape designation for the Cambrian Mountains for example in;

- "Country Walking" magazine July 2016 edition with the article - "The National Park that never was." covering the whole of the Cambrians.
- "Trail" magazine November 2017 edition includes the article – "Beyond the Boundaries" based around Pumlumon, the highest peak in the Cambrians.

Part of the reasoning for the Secretary of State for Wales' decision not to confirm the Cambrian Mountains designation was that the area did not provide recreational facilities, judging from the articles above this is certainly not the case in 2019!

Finally, amongst the proposals of the recently published Glover Review "National Landscapes in England" (2019) is one for extension of the English protected landscapes family such as a "Sandstone Ridge" designation in Cheshire. Surely Wales should be seen, especially in the light of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015), as ahead of the field in caring for both its incredible landscapes, as well as those who live, work, and play in them.

The Trustees of CMS look forward to hearing your, and other Minister's, views on an early designation of the Cambrian Mountains – a National Landscape. Equally the Trustees would be happy to organise a tour of the Cambrian Mountains prospective National Landscape for both you and any other interested Ministers/Deputy Ministers.



Mr. P. Foulkes, on behalf of the Trustees of CMS.

A few details on the Cambrian Mountains Society (CMS)

CMS was formed in 2005 with the following objects:

- *To promote, for the benefit of local communities, and of the wider public, measures which will sustain or enhance the landscape, natural beauty, biodiversity, archaeology, scientific interest, and cultural heritage of the Cambrian Mountains.*
- *To advance the education of the public in the landscape, natural beauty, biodiversity, archaeology, scientific nature, cultural heritage and geodiversity of the Cambrian Mountains.*

CMS is a registered charity (number 1113037) and at present has a membership of around 280. At the heart of the Society's work is that the glorious landscape of Cambrian Mountains might be better protected probably by joining the Welsh family of Designated Landscapes. This could be either as Wales' 4th National Park (NP) or 5/6th Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Further details of the Society's strategy for a sustainable future for the Cambrian Mountains can be found at. <http://cambrian-mountains.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/cambrian-mountains-sustainable-future.pdf>