



live 

Llŷn Iweragh Ecomuseums

Final Newsletter 2023





Welcome to this final newsletter from the LIVE Project, which contains updates from the project's activities in 2023, showcases some of the more tangible outputs of the project, and reflects on what we have done since the project started in 2020.

As we are now at the end of our time on the LIVE project, which included a 3 month no-cost extension to mitigate some of the impacts of Covid 19, it is worth reflecting on what the goals of the project were and how we have achieved or tried to achieve them.

A reflection on our achievements

The overall goal of the project was 'to enable coastal communities to promote their natural and cultural assets, creating opportunities for sustainable tourism, especially outside of the traditional peak tourist seasons.' This is quite a general goal, but we feel that we have certainly developed tools, resources, and offered examples of how this could be done. With a particular focus on collaborative working, sharing knowledge, and giving equal importance to community and environment, we hope that we have gone some way to increasing the momentum towards a different way of encouraging tourism in our regions.

More specifically, the aims of the project that were included in our original project documentation were:

1. To develop ecotourism within the two regions through developing a community-led approach and therefore offering these coastal communities consequential socio-economic benefits and extending the tourism period.
2. To develop a distinct Ecomuseum brand across both regions and to build a blueprint for similar developments in either Wales or Ireland.
3. To create a cross border network of cooperation between the two project regions. This will build on the expertise already in place within the Llŷn Peninsula and Welsh partners and share this knowledge and expertise with the community in Iveragh. As well as expertise on natural heritage within the Irish community being shared with the Welsh region.
4. To develop tourist products (both digital and in hard copy) which will be sustainable past the life of this project, thus creating a sustainable solution for both regions.



In spite of having to reinterpret some of these aims slightly to accommodate the global context within which we have worked during the project, I think the project team can be proud of our achievements. Let's take a look at each one in turn:

1. When the project was being designed, we could not have predicted how much the context for tourism would be changed. This completely erased any hope of making a measurable impact on tourism. The three tourism seasons for 2020-2022 inclusive were almost entirely shaped by the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic. 2023 is perhaps our first 'normal' tourism season since the start of the project, and unfortunately we are already in the closure period for the project. In running events during the off-seasons and engaging regularly with our surrounding communities, we have certainly tried to build momentum for a more community-led approach to tourism. While we can't claim that we have made a significant contribution to economic growth in the regions, we have attracted off-season visitors through initiatives such as the Llŷn Archaeological Festival and the Skellig Coast Dark Sky Festival. It has been heartening throughout our activities to hear about the connections made locally as well. We have had people at our events who had never met or had time to chat together but who have made contact through our project activities, which is one of the nicest outcomes of the project. By strengthening these community networks, working with local groups, and creating a space for people with similar interests and concerns but different backgrounds to come together, we hope that the community-led approach to developing tourism will continue into the future.

2. Those of you who have been following our project for some time will be very familiar with our striking and beautiful branding. The development of this brand was inspired by the landscapes of our coastal regions and has been further developed from the 'LIVE' brand into distinct brands for the two regions that are still linked in their designs and include many of the same elements and colour schemes. The 'Ecoamgueddfa' brand already existed on Pen Llŷn, but it was redesigned within the LIVE project and the Ecoamgueddfa.org website has been updated to mirror the LIVE website. LIVE gave the Ecoamgueddfa partners the opportunity to deepen their network and develop new resources and connections within their ecomuseum model. The 'Discover Iveragh' brand is new, but follows the LIVE branding, which had received very positive feedback locally and at trade shows, so it seemed sensible to change very little. We have not developed an ecomuseum on Iveragh... yet. However, there is certainly a model that we can follow. During the project, we also worked closely with the Skye Ecomuseum and a visit from the Skye Ecomuseum Officer and other members of their network provided inspiration to many of the people they met. These things take time and although there is strong support from many members of the community for much of the work of LIVE to continue and to keep working towards an ecomuseum model, other ways of making this happen in the future will now need to be explored.
3. Cross-border working has been one clear success of the project. Our cross-border team met virtually in various different groupings at least once a week. We have shared so many lessons and it has been a real joy to get to know each other's peninsula and each other. Visits in both directions were obviously very much curtailed during the project but we have managed to introduce our partners to the various communities. Although this will not continue in a structured way through the continuation of the Ireland-Wales programme, personal connections have been made, and an awareness now exists, that will certainly not be lost quickly. We will also continue to promote each other's regions on our online platforms.
4. The range of resources that we have developed is covered elsewhere in this newsletter. Creating resources is certainly something that we have done with enormous enthusiasm! From pocket guides to help visitors practice Welsh in the pub, to colouring in sheets for kids, videos, itineraries, digital guides, there is so much to explore and it will all be available for many years to come.



Iveragh Ambassador Programme

Over the winter of 2022/23, we streamlined all of our events and engagement into an 'Ambassador Programme'. With a focus on delivering experiences for off-season visitors, we held talks and walks with a number of themes and invited local experts to share their knowledge and expertise when it comes to using the natural heritage as a tourism asset.

Some of the themes covered over the course of the programme included dark sky tourism, historical figures and storytelling, spring wildlife and wildflowers, nature-based tourism and experiential tourism. We were delighted to meet a wide range of people at the various events and learned a lot ourselves about the vast depth of knowledge we have within our local communities.

We are very grateful to all of those local businesses and experts who contributed their time and knowledge and we hope that participants found the programme as interesting and enjoyable as we did!



Llyn Ambassador Programme



During the winter and spring LIVE staff and partners have attended online webinars, and face to face workshops, looking at responsible tourism models that bring wider benefits to our areas.

There was an interesting talk by Venessa Glindmeier, Responsible Tourism Coordinator of Heritage Environment Scotland, who spoke about the new Responsible Tourism Framework that has been developed by the body which is transforming the way they manage their estate. The HES now consider the impact of their activity on the environment, the communities and the people who live in them when working with partners, stakeholders, and communities all over Scotland.

During the same session there was a presentation by Angus Murray, Druim nan Linntean work program manager, skyeecomuseum.com on the Isle of Skye in Scotland. Over a period of 15 years the Ecomuseum which was established through a local community company to celebrate heritage, culture and language has now evolved to implement several economic projects which are being developed hand in hand with the local community in the Staffin area. The officers have been improving walking paths in the area and have been developing plans for a new commercial harbour which will protect and create jobs within the community, recognising the need for a variety of economic opportunities to support the local population, alongside tourism. The Ecomuseum now collaborates with communities across the Island to promote responsible tourism, sharing their experience and expertise with their neighbours.



Both presentations encouraged discussion among partners and made us consider what is possible when communities come together, and work together.

Site leads and the LIVE staff attended a workshop at Oriel Plas Glyn y Weddw which was facilitated by Angharad Wynne, an expert on heritage and regenerative tourism. The workshop was an opportunity to look back at the time of the pandemic and see how the tourism industry has changed and look forward and try to identify trends within tourism and how the Ecoamgueddfa can respond to them. During the day we looked at good practice from other parts of the world and discussed the opportunities and challenges facing the area as a four-season tourist destination in the future. The consultant noted the importance of collaboration and joint marketing to ensure that the visitor has the best possible experience, and that a model that has been established in Llyn continues to develop to ensure that there are benefits for the visitor and the community.

Throughout the life of the LIVE project, regular discussion between officials and staff at the main attractions has ensured that high quality resources and different activities have been organised on the Ecoamgueddfa sites, bringing them closer together. Discussing and learning from other people's experiences, from near and far, has improved the experience provided for a local audience and for people visiting Llyn, and reinforced the importance of the sites as community hubs in challenging times when facilities and resources in peripheral communities have been under great pressure to remain viable. Our hope is that the Ecoamgueddfa will continue to evolve, and the legacy of the LIVE project will stay with us as we confidently step forward into the future.



Outputs & Educational Resources

As well as digital outputs, the LIVE team have been very busy creating all sorts of other resources for visitors, educators, families, and natural heritage enthusiasts. Of course, all of these are underpinned by the knowledge of locals and experts.

For visitors to Iveragh, we have created place-based and seasonal itineraries. Local businesses can also use these, along with our graphical maps, to promote the peninsula. They can be viewed online or in printouts and they are available bilingually.

There are numerous fact sheets on wildlife, including nocturnal wildlife, whales and dolphins, sea birds, and specific species. These can be downloaded and could be used to accompany educational events, to stick up in businesses, or to hand out to visitors so that they can get a flavour of what to look out for in the area.

Also available to view online or to download are some small guides to stargazing, birdwatching, and a beautiful 'Know Before You Go' poster to highlight the principles of regenerative tourism to visitors in a really attractive way. Again, these could be made available in holiday accommodation or displayed in business premises – they are certainly good enough to be stuck up on the wall!

An Introduction to Bird Identification

Bird identification is like detective work - you need to put all the clues together to solve the mystery.



1. **The first tip is to relax and take your time.**
Remember to enjoy being outside listening to birds, seeing their colours and their flight, even if you can't identify them.



2. **Tools and equipment**
If you really want to know who's who, a good **bird ID book** is essential. **Binoculars** or a **scope** will help you to see birds without disturbing them. A **camera** is useful to zoom in on traits to help you identify a bird or to capture their beauty and movements.



3. **Listen carefully for bird calls and songs.**
Record them to listen back later.

4. **To identify a bird, break it down into sections, starting at the top.**
What colour is the head? What shape is the bill? Is the neck long or short? What colour are the legs?



5. **Big or small? Near or far?**
What to gauge what size a bird is if you have no reference nearby.



Iveragh education packs

In a previous newsletter, we introduced the Llŷn education packs. This time around, we are delighted to add our Iveragh education packs to our suite of project outputs. Very early on in the project, we made contact with various schools and teachers around the peninsula. It was clear that many teachers are enthusiastic about bringing natural heritage into their classrooms, but it can be difficult to find resources and information that is high quality and focusses on local flora, fauna, landscapes and heritage. It has been a long process, but we finally have 2 school packs that any educator in south Kerry can use – one focussing on the Geology of Iveragh and one on the Habitats of Iveragh. These packs

include very visual, accessible information for the teacher, a range of suggested activities, curriculum links, and activity sheets that are easy to print out. The packs will be made available online and a certain number will be distributed to local national schools.

We really hope that all of the resources that have been created within the project are widely used. It has been great to start sharing them with people at events locally and elsewhere. In many cases, we have been able to update the resources based on feedback or requests, so thanks to everyone who has offered input at various stages throughout the project.



Discover Iveragh

Digital resources have always been a key focus of the LIVE project and our stakeholders will be familiar with the very attractive design of the project website www.ecomuseumlive.eu. However, this was always a project-focussed rather than place-based website. As such, we have launched a new website with a specific focus on the Iveragh peninsula: www.discoveriveragh.ie.

The website will remain live long after the project itself has ended. It is packed full of information and resources on the natural heritage of the peninsula including articles, digital walking guides, themed routes and itineraries, marketing tools, and resources for families and educators. We hope that the website will be used by visitors and residents alike, and that it will form a part of future projects to ensure that the content remains correct, informative, attractive, and up-to-date with any new research.

A key output of the project, the website is not intended to offer information on specific businesses or logistics. Instead, it gives an overview of the landscapes, wildlife, and heritage of Iveragh.

Throughout the project, we have tried to follow the ecomuseum principle of co-promotion and creating a sense of place, rather than promoting individual locations or businesses, which other groups and platforms already do very well. We hope that it gives a very broad sense of the peninsula and what makes it such a unique place to live and visit.

We would encourage anyone to visit and explore the website. There are companion guides to some of the many marked walking trails and additional thematic guides that include itineraries for whalewatching, birdwatching and geology. There are local itineraries for the various villages, which are also accompanied by beautiful place-based videos. Seasonal guides focus on reasons to visit in spring and autumn. There is a wide range of resources for download, from colouring in sheets, to stargazing guides, and articles on themes as diverse as the geological origins of Iveragh, the legacy of Maude Delap, and farmland pollinators! The website is adorned with beautiful imagery and videos, some of which is available for download by local businesses looking for ways to promote the region.

Welsh Language pocket guides

To coincide with this year's St David's Day celebrations, a series of five Welsh language pocket guides were published to encourage people to learn Welsh. The guides were created in partnership between the LIVE project and Nant Gwrtheyrn after Ceri Williams, the Nant's former marketing officer visited Cornwall and saw similar leaflets for learning Cornish.

The series includes Welsh for beginners, Welsh at home, Welsh in the café, Welsh on your holidays, and the most popular one, Welsh in the pub! The guides were distributed to the Ecomuseum sites in Pen Llŷn and to local businesses. The response has been incredible, not only in Wales but all over the world! We received a request to send copies to Welsh learning groups in Swansea and the state of Victoria in Australia!



Ecoamgueddfa Leaflet and Rhiw Archaeology Guide

Three information leaflets were published in March this year, two leaflets to promote the Ecoamgueddfa (a Welsh and English leaflet) and the Rhiw Archeology Guide leaflet.

The Ecoamgueddfa leaflet gives general information about all the sites, the concept behind the Ecomuseum, how to get to Pen Llŷn, and an illustrated map of Pen Llŷn which includes references to special sites and local history.

The Rhiw Archeology guide leaflet is a short paper version of the digital tour which can be seen on our website. The leaflet contains information on the archaeological sites in the area as well as a simple map of the route. The leaflets are available for free from the Ecomuseum sites and have been distributed to local businesses in Pen Llŷn.



Pen Llŷn coastal vlogs and the Mariner's Trail with Aled Hughes

Over the past few months, Aled Hughes, one of BBC Radio Cymru's main presenters, walked 110 miles/180km along the Llŷn Coastal Path from Trefor to Porthmadog, and the Mariner's Trail from Abersoch to Nefyn. Aled recorded his journey in a series of vlogs, there are 15 in total, all about 9 minutes long. They are in Welsh with English subtitles and can be seen on our [website](#). Along the way Aled shares interesting stories, historical facts and some of the special place names we have along the coast path. The vlogs were commissioned in partnership between the LIVE project and the Wales Coast Path marketing team.

To accompany the vlogs, 3 digital walking guides were published; North Llŷn Coastal Path, South

Llŷn Coastal Path and the Mariner's Trail. The guides were produced by Ben Porter, former Knowledge Gatherer of the LIVE project. The guides include historical facts as well as information about wildlife. Head over to our [website](#) to have a look.



Dwdls Cymraeg

This is a lovely little book recording Bangor University's Prof Oliver Turnbull's journey as he learns Welsh. Dr Einir Young was fascinated with the doodles at an event in Pontio, Bangor University on St David's Day this year and offered to finance the publication of the book for three reasons:

1. that they are such a great way to show that there is no 'correct' way of learning Welsh and that there is freedom for all speakers just found unique ways to remember words and constructions;
2. that promoting the Welsh language is one of the main aims of the Ecomuseum;
3. and finally, that Nant Gwrtheyrn is one of the partners, where anyone can come and learn Welsh. It might be possible to learn Welsh anywhere in the world but in Pen Llŷn you can use Welsh naturally all day every day if you want.



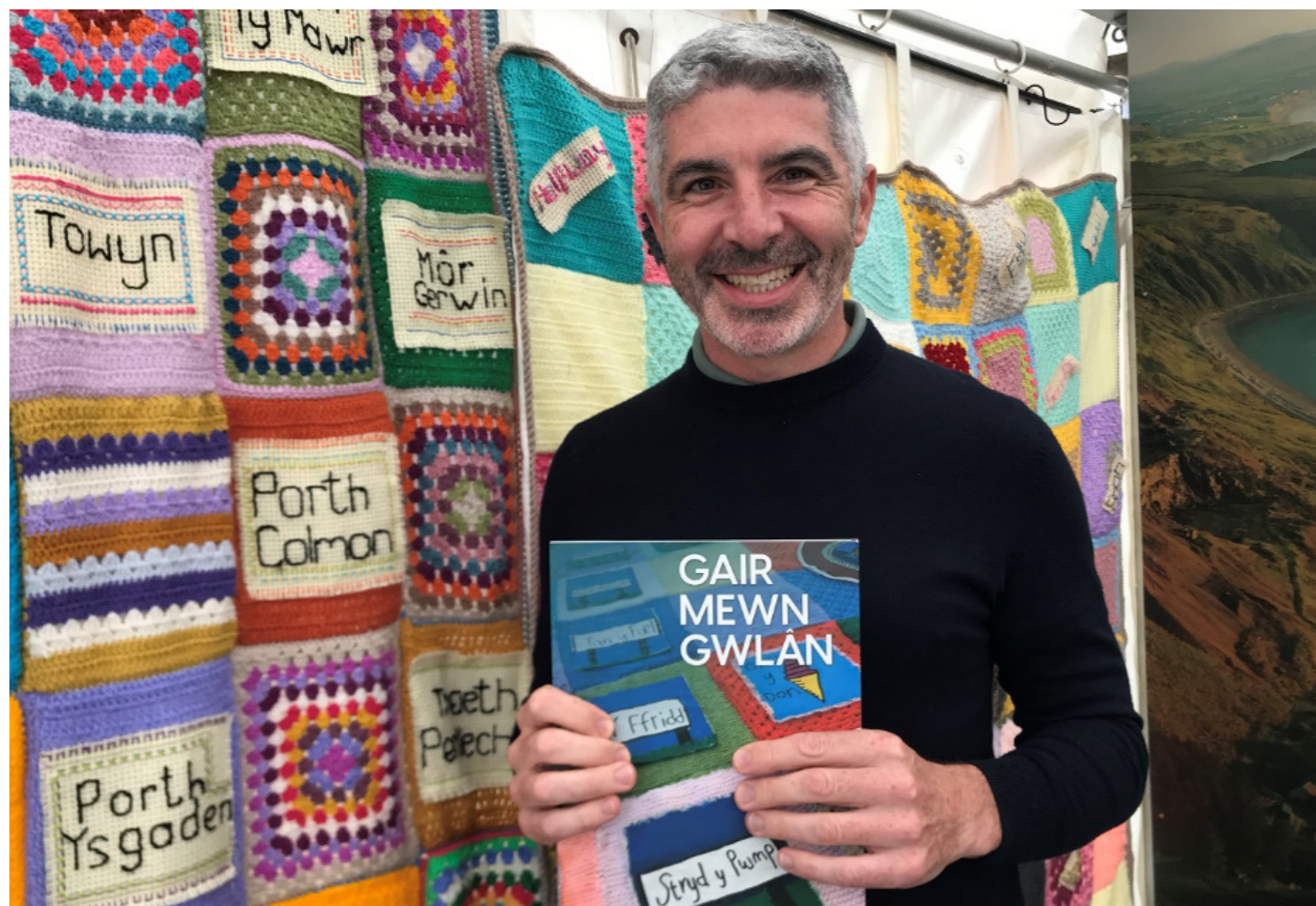
Ciplŷn

Ciplŷn is a volume that achieves two goals, namely presenting the Llŷn Ecoamgueddfa to the nation and giving 14 women from Pen Llŷn the opportunity to share their experiences and feelings about their own square mile through words and pictures. It contains a record of their feelings towards the place of their birth, towards the community and about their desires and concerns about the future, giving us a glimpse of their life from day to day. The response to the book has been very enthusiastic locally and from beyond Wales. This is what Dr Jamie Davies from AHRC press had to say:



Ciplŷn is available to buy from the Llŷn Maritime Museum in Nefyn, and Oriel Plas Glyn y Weddw in Llanbedrog.





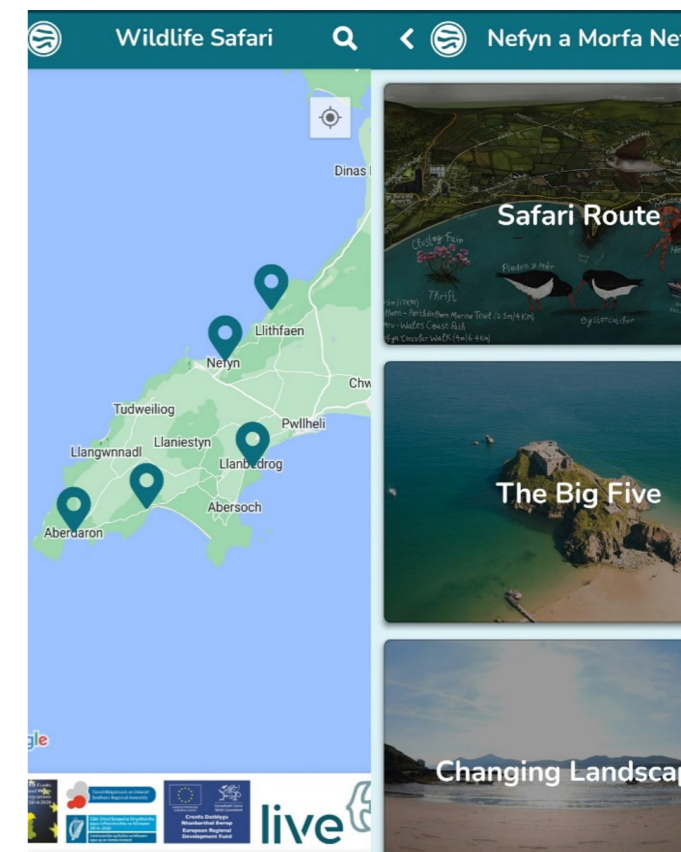
Gair mewn Gwlân

'Project' is too vague a word to convey the true power of the work which was led by Award-winning poet Eysyllt Maelor and which was recorded in this book through the funding of the LIVE project. 37 Gwynedd primary schools were able to put words and names on backdrops of squares that were knitted by people from around the world, but mainly from Gwynedd.

Eysyllt comments: "You will find the names of gates and pools, caves and rocks, farms and wells, fields, rivers, heaps and quarry points. Pupils from the schools taking part in the project selected the names and then, with the help of friends from the community, were able to embroider, sew and

place them on the blankets. The finished blankets represent hours of labour of love. And I haven't mentioned the poems yet! You can find them between the pages waiting for you to turn to them."

The blankets produced by the schools of Pen Llŷn will be exhibited locally with information on the collaboration and the place names available on the Ecoamgueddfa website as a valuable legacy for local people and visitors. A digital version of the book will be available on-line with an English translation. Our hope is that this will inspire others accross Wales to celebrate and preserve names that speak to us from the past about the history and heritage of our localities.



Welsh Coast Explorer App

The Wales Coast Explorer app allows you to explore the whole of the Welsh coastline and learn more about the wildlife that inhabits this area and how to protect them. This app is the perfect tool to have if you're out exploring parts of the Welsh coast, especially Llŷn. With hundreds of plants and animals along with colour photos or illustrations you can identify and record anything that you might find.

Working alongside Pembrokeshire Coastal forum, LIVE developed a section of the app to include the Big 5 wildlife safari. You can record the big 5 species, with the records being sent on to Cofnod (North Wales environmental recording service) and keep a track of which ones you've found. There's also the changing landscapes section which is a new

feature of the app. This allows you to see how some of our landscapes on Llŷn might be transformed as a result of climate change. Rises in sea levels, increased coastal erosion or wildfires, more diseases effecting trees and tropical species thriving are just some of the potential impacts which are shown in the panoramas. The app allows you to flick between the current landscape and potential future landscape and see just how dramatic some of the changes could be. Will Porthdinllaen still be a thriving tourist destination? What might the important coastal heathland habitat around Uwchmynydd look like in 100 years? And will Llanbedrog still have the famous huts on its beach?





Llyn Wildlife Safari

The Llyn Wildlife Safari project continued with 3 new maps being created with the help of local primary schools and some of the many talented artists we have on Llyn. With each school group we went out to explore the three sites, searching for the 5 species and any of the other interesting and fascinating things that we could find.

On the north coast of Llyn sits the village of Nant Gwrtheyrn, and old quarrying village which is now a Welsh language and heritage centre, and excellent place to view wildlife. We didn't have to walk far with the group before finding the first of the 'Big 5' with a great spotted woodpecker making frequent trips in and out of one of the large trees in the carpark. We smelt the next creature on the list before seeing it! Some of the feral goats were warming themselves up on the steep winding gravel track on the way down to the beach. These goats have inhabited the area from Pistyll across to Trefor for generations and are genetically unique. They have an important role to play in shaping the vegetation cover in the surrounding area and are one of the easiest species to spot (or smell) at Nant Gwrtheyrn. All of our Big 5 projects have combined nature and art, whether sketching the shapes of leaves, landscapes and creatures or searching for different colours and textures on our walks. Local artist Elin Huws set up an outdoor classroom on the lawn at Nant Gwrtheyrn, looking at the different shapes, patterns and textures that we found, giving the group an opportunity to draw out ideas that could be incorporated into the final piece of art.



One of the difficulties we've had is narrowing down all the potential species into a streamlined list of just 5. This was the case as we walked back up the hill from the beach, when one of the pupils cried 'dolffiniaid!' pointing back down to the sea. A pod of dolphins had glided into the bay to look for food, giving us a perfect vantage point to watch them move along the coastline in the direction of Porthdinllaen.

The Llyn Wildlife Safaris are available on the LIVE website and 'Welsh Coast Explorer' app, we have also printed paper copies and interpretation boards on each safari site.

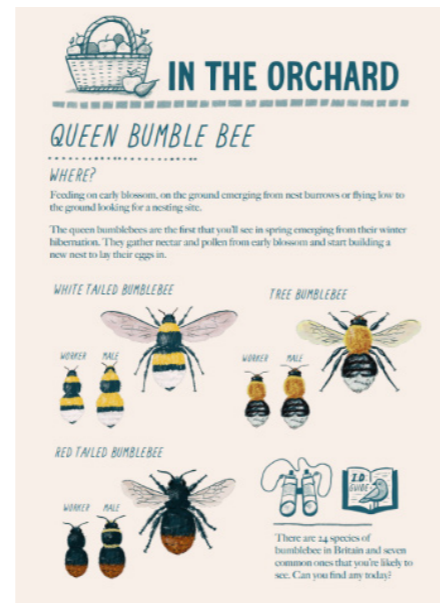


Plas yn Rhiw Nature Spotter Sheets

Have you ever tried looking really closely at some of the flowers, leaves, lichens and insects we have around us? That's what the nature spotter encourages people to do, taking a closer look with hand lenses, or observing from a distance with binoculars. The Plas yn Rhiw nature spotter takes visitors through the gardens, woodland and orchard with information and clues about where to find queen bumble bees in spring, wildflowers in summer or fungi in autumn amongst many other things. The folder changes with the seasons and along with the hand lenses and binoculars the I.D. guides provide people with all that they need to explore and discover.

These spotter sheets will be a valuable addition to the resources available to visitors. It will give families, individuals and school groups the opportunity to learn more generally about some of the plants, animals and fungi, but also more specifically what we have at Plas yn Rhiw.

Nefyn Maritime Museum also has a nature spotter activity folder as part of LIVE/ Ecoamgueddffa and the template is available for all Ecoamgueddffa sites to use and create their own in the future.



Closing Conference

The LIVE closing event took place in Tech Amergin, Waterville, Co. Kerry on 12th of May 2023. The foyer in Tech Amergin buzzed with conversation as attendees viewed the beautifully designed project outputs on display and our communities from Llŷn and Iveragh got to meet and mingle.

Radio Kerry presenter and local business owner, Joe McGill, was the capable MC and echoed the sentiments of many of the speakers by stressing the importance of community collaboration in creating a future for all of us in rural places like Iveragh. LIVE project leaders, Dr Pat Meere and Dr Fidelma Butler from UCC and Dr Einir Young of Bangor University gave overviews of the background to the project and its ethos of knowledge gathering, knowledge sharing, and the LIVE 'ways of working', which are closely linked to the Wales for Future Generations Act.

We frequently heard the phrase 'regenerative tourism' mentioned, and one speaker offered the following definition: 'Whereas sustainable tourism encourages us to do no harm, regenerative tourism

asks visitors to leave a destination better than they found it and to make a positive contribution to the communities and environments that they visit.' The event featured a launch of the new www.discoveriveragh.ie website along with a whole host of other resources for schools, businesses, visitors, and residents who wish to engage with the rich natural and cultural heritage of both regions. There was an emphasis on how these resources have been developed in response to and through community engagement. Various speakers also emphasised that all of these resources are now available to be used by the community and will remain so after the project has ended.





Invited speakers included Vincent Hyland of Wild Derrynane, who spoke very creatively about how to communicate a sense of place. Dr Sophie Price of Munster Technological University in Tralee told the audience about the new work that they are doing on Regenerative Tourism and the Circular Economy and Caroline Boland gave a showcase of successful community tourism initiatives from around Ireland. Wyn Roberts of Nant Gwrtheyrn, the Welsh National Language Centre gave a presentation on how the LIVE project has enhanced their work.

One of the highlights of the programme was a panel discussion with some of the team of Knowledge Gatherers who have worked on the LIVE project. While we unfortunately didn't have all of the team present, the discussion offered engaging reflections on the work of the project. The passion of the

team was evident. Fiach Byrne noted that our communities already have much of the knowledge that they need to care for their natural and cultural heritage, but added that having an expert on hand to offer support can give them the boost of confidence that they need to start a new initiative.

Of course, as with any conference, it's what happens in the break times that is really important. The warm spring sunshine and the delicious refreshments from Bari Café helped the conversations to flow around Tech Amergin. The day was closed by Mel and Elaine with their Fuinneamh Drum for us all to beat once the talks had ended.



Closing Conference – Reflections by Llyr Titus

It's an old belief that our Irish 'family' is similar to us, based on the old myths of Celtic brotherhood. But sometimes one does start to think that there's something in that idea. I was struck by the similarities and differences when I travelled to the Iveragh peninsula as a small part of a Project LIVE delegation from Llŷn.

That makes the whole thing sound very formal but the experience was a friendly one with a warm welcome and a light hearted group of people from various businesses and organizations from Wales that had been part of the project. They made the long journey and even the twisty roads of rural Kerry much more bearable. After arriving in Waterville and wandering about the area for two days visiting museums, gardens, unique habitats and visitor centres (and a few pubs) it became obvious to me why Llŷn and Iveragh suited each other so well for the LIVE project.

There are many things that are similar between us, challenges for one thing. The lack of sustainable tourism is something that threatened both peninsulas. As I watched busses passing in fleets through Waterville with people barely pausing, much less contributing to the local economy, I got

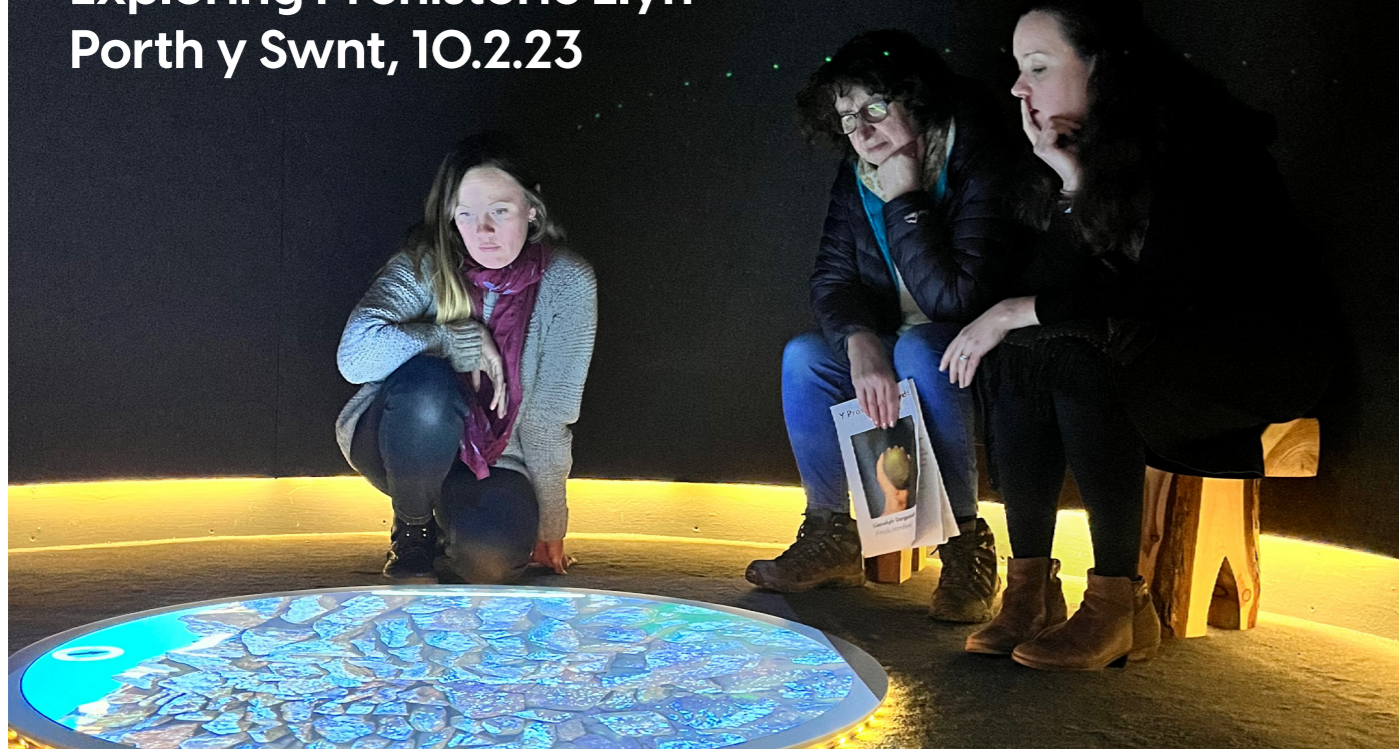
an idea of the challenges the area faces. We in Llŷn also know that you can't keep a village, culture or community alive for the price of an ice cream or a loaf of bread.

The landscape is similar as well, not only because of the closeness of the sea but because of the varied and fragile ecosystems on both peninsulas. It's fitting then that one of the aims of the project was to protect and record those habitats. There was also a feeling that the people were similar but with enough difference to discuss things from different angles. It was great to attend the conference at the end of the period not only to meet the many people involved in the project but also to hear about what they've achieved. In the midst of the innovation there was so much variety but more importantly perhaps an idea that there a solid base has been created over the years and a hope that something more can come of the project even beyond the current funding.

Currently we seem to be in an era of closing doors on the rest of the world and in my opinion projects that encourage sharing connections, ideas and experiences with each other are even more important. LIVE has certainly proved that to be true.

Events

Exploring Prehistoric Llŷn Porth y Swnt, 10.2.23



This event at the LIVE Ecomuseum's Porth y Swnt explored the archaeology of Pen Llŷn, with a specific focus on the Iron Age hillforts of Tre'r Ceiri and Meillionydd (LIVE project), as well as recent research on the peninsula's coastal archaeology (via the CHERISH project, which is funded through the Ireland-Wales Co-operation programme). The event was part-funded by a grant from the Being Human Festival and it attracted 87 visitors throughout the day.

The day put a spotlight on recent research by Bangor University archaeologists working on the LIVE project. The main focus was a launch of our new 360-degree virtual tour of Tre'r Ceiri, where visitors of all ages can immerse themselves in the spectacular archaeology and surrounding landscapes through projected images and interactive tablets. The event also included a pop-up exhibition of the prehistoric object assemblages from Bangor University's Meillionydd excavations – a small Iron Age hillfort near Rhiw. This included the projection

of new 3D virtual models of some of the best objects, which were created in public workshops in the Autumn of 2022 at the Ecomuseum's Plas Glyn y Weddw. The CHERISH stand show-cased some of the exciting discoveries made at Abersoch beach on the Llŷn Peninsula, which include the study of an ancient submerged forest and preserved animal footprints 1000s of years old.

The event kicked off with a visit from the local primary school in Aberdaron – the children were split into groups and they all engaged with the three exhibits. The doors then opened to members of the public between 3-6pm, and the team had fascinating conversations with visitors, many of whom shared their knowledge of local archaeological finds in the area. The event ended with a bilingual talk by Dr Kate Waddington and Rhys Mwyn at 6pm, which explored the wider significance of some of the objects recovered in the excavations at Meillionydd.



Discover Derrynane

The annual Discover Derrynane weekend in June was the final event at which the Knowledge Gathering team was able to get together and meet with members of the local Iveragh community. This event is always a lovely family-friendly affair in the grounds of Derrynane House and Gardens, and always features visiting and local experts leading a varied selection of events, from children's insect workshops, to history lectures, photography workshops, and heritage walks. This year was no different and the team really enjoyed the opportunity to share some of the many resources they have worked on with the local community to gather feedback and spread the word about all of the material that the project has developed that is now available for the community to use.





SKELLIG COAST DARK SKY FESTIVAL

Following the success of the first Skellig Coast Dark Sky Festival in 2022, The LIVE Project team were keen to repeat the festival in 2023. This year, to secure the festival's legacy, we collaborated with the Comhchoiste Gaeltacht Uíbh Ráthaigh for the second iteration of the festival.

While we weren't as lucky with the clear skies in 2023 as we had been in 2022, the festival was still very well received according to the feedback that was given by attendees (95% gave the festival a 5-star rating). With a combination of indoor and outdoor events, daytime activities, and family events, the festival catered to a broad audience. The festival also seems to have achieved one of its aims, which was to bring people into the area off-season as about one third of attendees travelled from outside of county Kerry to attend.

This year, the events centred around Derrynane and Ballinskelligs on the Friday night, Waterville during Saturday, Dromid on Saturday night, and finished with an archaeological talk at Eightercua near Waterville on the Sunday.

As well as having local experts giving talks and walks and local suppliers such as Sea Synergy, Skellig Sauna, and Aquaterra offering activities as part of the weekend, we also had guest speakers from all over Ireland.



New for this year, members of the Astrophotography Club of Ireland delivered hands-on workshops and provided images for a photography trail around the peninsula. Broadcaster Seán mac an tSithigh delighted the audience with his fascinating new work on the Irish folklore surrounding the night sky.

We were joined again by some friends of the Kerry International Dark Sky Reserve. Caoimhín de Bhailís who gave talks for adults and children in English and as Gaeilge. Professor Paul Callanan spoke about the links between the Skellig monks and early astronomy. John Flannery of the Irish Astronomical Association visited us again to share his knowledge and love for the stars.

Of course, the festival would not be possible without the kind cooperation of landowners and without venues such as the community centres in Dromid and Ballinskelligs, the Blind Piper Pub, Tech Amergin in Waterville, Derrynane House, all the venues that participated in the photography trail, and the many people locally who helped out in so many different ways. The festival also received financial support and sponsorship from Kerry County Council and Skellig Sixt8 Distillery.

Although the LIVE project team will not be operational in 2024 to support the festival, there seems to be no shortage of ideas for events and a clear appetite for the festival to continue. We look forward to seeing this annual event grow and we wish the organisers clear skies in 2024!





Last year we held a Bioblitz at Llanbedrog, with Oriel Plas Glyn y Weddw as the base. This year it was the turn of Plas yn Rhiw, the second Ecoamgueddfa location to be thoroughly surveyed in 24 hours.

On the day we were joined by a number of experts from different organisations, leading walks, talks and surveys on some of the flora and fauna in the area. Plas yn Rhiw is surrounded by a variety of habitats, from the soft cliffs of Porth Neigwl up the steep slopes through mature woodland, sheep grazed pasture peaking with Mynydd Rhiw, a heathland habitat at just over 300m.

This variety of habitats offered plenty for the experts to survey, and it was an early start with the dawn chorus in the woodland and gardens. Llên Natur, Cymdeithas Edward Llwyd were out in force with Duncan Brown and his group of lepidopterists (people who study moths and butterflies) in attendance to look at and record the moths trapped the night before. One of the standouts was the elephant hawkmoth, a bright pink and green neon looking moth that attracted everyone's attention.

The bioblitz wasn't only constrained to the grounds around Plas yn Rhiw. Boat trips explored the rocky shores around towards Aberdaron, as well as deeper waters. An array of birds were recorded, from fulmars, cormorants and gannets, to choughs, buzzards and peregrine falcons, the fairly calm seas and sunshine made for good day to be out at sea.

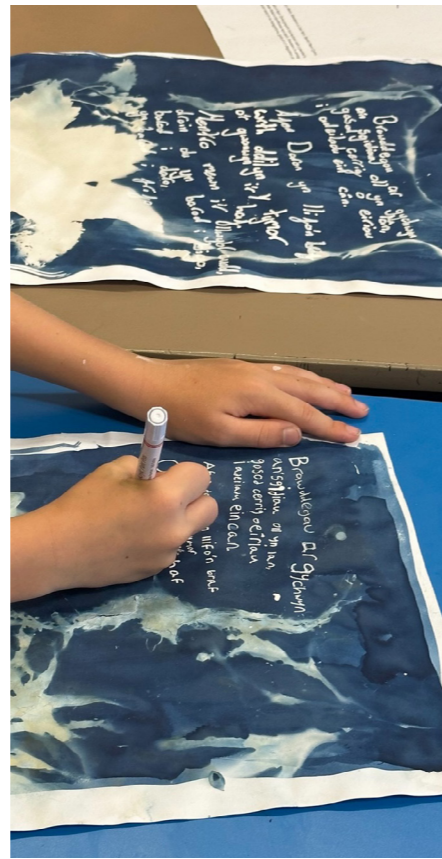
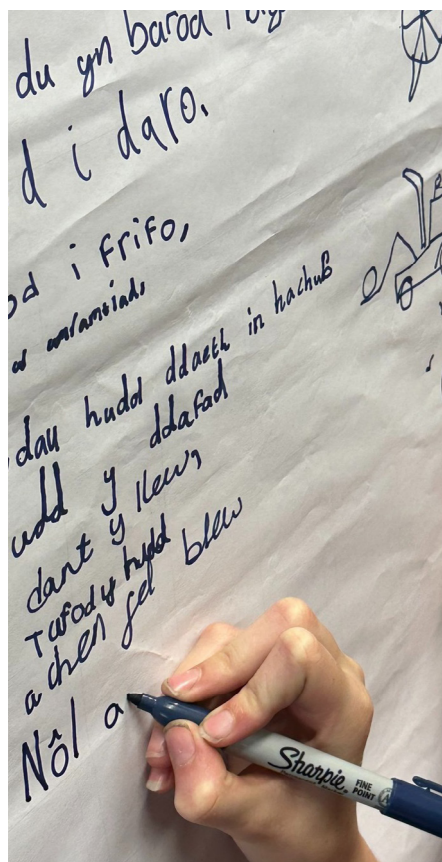


Because of the relatively clean and unpolluted air in the area, lichens are able to thrive. Plas yn Rhiw has its own lichen trail already which Plantlife and one of our volunteers were able to create together. Judith Hedges helped unveil this often overlooked world to the visitors. With the aid of hand lenses as they explored the lichen walk, people were able to find and record some of the common, and less common lichens that grow in the gardens and woodlands here. The orchard meadow at Plas yn Rhiw is one of its special features, and Jo Porter was able to introduce visitors to the importance of meadows, how much of this valuable habitat has been lost but also how Dolydd Llŷn is successfully creating new, and revitalising old meadows across the peninsula. Jo also conducted our annual orchid count with the help of some enthusiastic volunteers, counting over 800 common spotted orchids in the orchard alone!

The building around Plas yn Rhiw are managed in a way that provides habitat for wildlife where possible. This can be seen with the bat roosts that we have in more than one building, and the colonies of wild honeybees which nest under the main house roof too. Gwynedd Bat Group kindly attended the bioblitz to help identify some of the bats which live in and around Plas. They were able to provide important information about bats, the type of habitats they need and also what to do if you find an injured bat too. The day ended with a garden tour, with both gardeners taking people around and describing how the work that is done here benefits nature, and how it is a strong consideration with all the work and developments which are made.

Thank you to Cofnod again for attending and recording everything that was spotted





Llyn, natur a fi

Working in partnership with Literature Wales this project combined creative writing, exploration, art and nature. In Wales there's the saying, 'Fy milltir sgwar' which translates to my square mile. It is the connection people have (often established during their childhood) with their immediate surrounding. We wanted to give three different schools the opportunity to describe what their 'milltir sgwar' means to them, as well as finding the undiscovered and new on their doorsteps.

We explored footpaths, streams, beaches hills and woodlands with Ysgol Llanbedrog, Crud y Werin and Nefyn, finding hidden trails, hermit crabs and the tallest tree on Llyn!

After our adventure, Casi Wyn, the Welsh Poet Laureate for children worked with the groups to create pieces of work depicting their experiences. Pennill y môr (Verse of the sea), Y llwybr cudd (the

hidden trail) and Ein cartref naturiol (Our natural home) were created.

We thought that the poems were too good to be left scribbled on the school's flip charts and decided that they should be presented in the most fitting way for as many people as possible to see. This is where Zoe Lewthwaite came in to help, using natural, recycled and sustainable materials where possible she was able to make construct the poems with the help of the children onto cotton sheets. Using ink, natural materials and sunshine, leaves, seaweed and shells were outlined by a bright blue colour on the white sheets, with the words of the poems flowing in between. So effective was this that Oriel Plas Glyn y Weddw, the oldest art gallery in Wales displayed the work in the second half of July, before moving it on to the Eisteddfod where thousands of visitors got a chance to see the work.



"Sustaining, knowing, and 'living' the Blue: Coastal communities as places to belong across generations." - Trondheim, Norway, June 2023



Two members of the LIVE team travelled to this conference in Norway to deliver a presentation, present project publicity materials, share knowledge, expand their community networks, and explore the museums and cultural heritage offering of coastal Trondheim.

The conference was an output of a research project entitled 'Valuing the past, sustaining the future: Education, local knowledge, and identities across generations in coastal communities', which was funded by Research Council Norway and ran from 2016-2023. The aim of the conference was to create a dialogue between various research areas and stakeholders connected to the marine environment.

The LIVE team presented as part of the session on 'Sustaining and living the blue'. The presentation focussed on the role of local knowledge in

regenerative tourism including co-production and community engagement. Across the conference, there were many lessons to be brought back to our communities, and many new and beneficial connections made. For example, the Maritime Museum in Nefyn, one of the Ecoamgueddfa sites, is now in contact with a maritime museum in Trondheim. There were also old friends on the programme, including numerous presentations from neighbours on Iveragh!

One message that was particularly relevant was from Prof Firouz Gaini. Speaking about his work on the Faroe Islands, he contradicted the idea that these rural places are tourist destinations; they are homes and living communities that tourists just happen to want to visit echoing Ecoamgueddfa Llyn's strapline - 'Our home, your destination'



Closing event of the Ireland-Wales Interreg programme Portmarnock, Dublin 23/06/2023

Arwel Jones the Pen Llŷn LIVE Local Co-ordinator, was over in Portmarnock, north of Dublin city, on behalf of the LIVE project for the closing event of the INTERREG Wales – Ireland 2014 – 2020 programme. The event was an opportunity to celebrate the success of the programme and discuss opportunities to continue working together between the two countries. Many environmental, scientific and tourism projects had attended the event, and there was an opportunity to display some of the materials that had been produced through the LIVE project, alongside all other projects, and networking opportunities with other project managers and the staff responsible for management of the programme.

During the day there was a digital address by Mark Drakeford from the Welsh Government and Paschal Donohoe from the Irish Government stating the benefits of collaboration across the Irish Sea, and three panel sessions, led by broadcaster Jonathan Healy, discussing –

- i. How the priorities of the program had been implemented,
- ii. Added value from working in partnership,
- iii. Opportunities to work together in the future.

It became clear during the day how many projects had been funded through the programme, and the working relationship that had developed and evolved between businesses, academic institutions, public bodies, community groups and individuals in Ireland and Wales. There was a clear desire to continue developing this working relationship, if funding sources can be secured to do so in the future, and a real concern that well-established networks and working relationships will be lost without a new funding mechanism to support the activities.

Let's hope that there will be opportunities and funding to build on the success of this special programme that has been running for over 30 years, that will continue to bring further environmental, economic and community benefits to Ireland and Wales for generations to come.



Trade Shows Stuttgart and Birmingham



This winter, we attended two of the biggest tourism trade fairs in Europe where we promoted the peninsulas as natural heritage destinations.

In January, we joined the Tourism Ireland stand at the CMT show in Stuttgart. Over the course of 9 days the team, with some local reinforcements from the Skellig Coast Tourism Network and Valentia Island Development Company, spoke to hundreds of visitors to the German show. Speaking to the majority of visitors, it became clear that these tourists were interested in getting off the beaten path and spending time in nature, enjoying the landscape and engaging with local people. During these conversations we showed potential visitors that there is more to the Iveragh Peninsula than the traditional 'Ring of Kerry' driving route.

The show in Birmingham had quite a different focus and the attendees were much more likely to be tour operators than independent travellers. Conversations at this show focused on alternative activities for tour groups and the themes we have been developing during the project.



Team Reflections

Calum Sweeney



Having studied plants all over the world, I couldn't turn down the opportunity to work for the LIVE project on the fascinating Iveragh peninsula. My work focused on the desire to promote interest in plants during the spring and autumn – often overlooked times of the year. I have worked on detailed articles and delivered printable products such as the annual wildlife calendar. My experience in photography and filmmaking was instrumental in the development of visual resources on the website. I am especially proud of the collaboration between LIVE and Met Éireann on a project to re-establish meadows at the Observatory in Cahersiveen – allowing spring flowers to bloom once again.

A highlight from my time on the LIVE project has been being able to promote blanket bogs and temperate rainforests. These two habitats are rare globally but occur on the west coast of Ireland in places like the Iveragh peninsula. It has been a pleasure to be able to write about, photograph, film, and show people around these inspiring landscapes. Be it the bright greens of spring growth, or the golden reds of autumn, they are always inspiring.

From specific things like the locations of rare plants, to enriching stories, my work has been shaped greatly by local knowledge. After reading old surveys and scrambling over heath with no success, it was through conversations with local people that I found some amazing examples of the Kerry lily – allowing me to photograph it and film it for an article, video, and a wildlife calendar. The story of the meadows at Valentia Observatory was really brought to life by anecdotes from local Met Éireann staff, and photos from their archives, showing meadows there from the mid-20th century. This story of natural and cultural heritage no doubt empowered the vision to bring meadows back to the locality and allowed us to hold events where we promoted biodiversity to the local community (becoming runner up in the National Heritage Week awards). The staff at Valentia Observatory are maintaining meadows again this year. Likewise, the work that we have done on an ancient Scots Pine forest at Bunaneer, Castlecove, wouldn't have happened without local knowledge of the site.

The reasons why Iveragh is so special to me now are much the same as they were before I joined the project - the rugged landscapes, the friendly people, the fresh Atlantic air, and of course the walking trails, which are so full of wildlife. But now, having spent so much time here experiencing all these things at a slower pace, and breathing in the seasons, and the stories that connect it all, my appreciation for them has grown.



Team Reflections

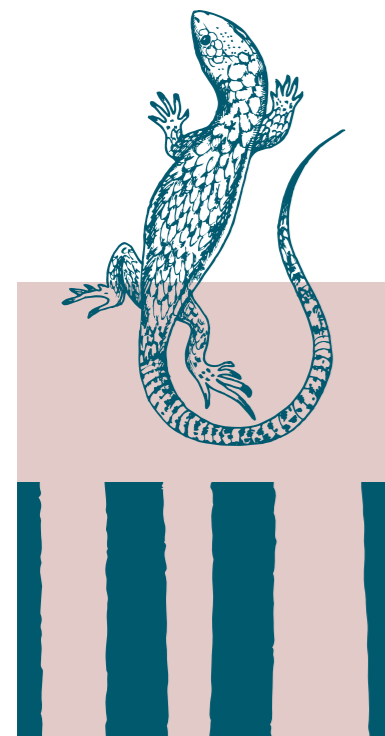
Linda Lyne



In my time on the LIVE project, I have met some wonderful local people, witnessed exciting wildlife activity, and learned so much about a peninsula that has been on my doorstep all my life. I've also absorbed a wealth of information from my knowledgeable colleagues whom it's been a pleasure to work alongside. Seeing the fruits of our labours on the Discover Iveragh website is great and I think the whole team can be very proud of what we've achieved. It's hard to believe that when I first started on the project in 2020, we only saw each other amongst a grid of faces on our computer screens. There were even times when we couldn't leave our '2km from home' to conduct fieldwork. But despite these restrictions, I hope we've managed to make a positive impact on the region just like it has left its mark on us.

On a personal level, I really enjoyed the time I spent working on the 'Iveragh Lizards' citizen science program. I had some fabulous chats with locals about these charismatic animals and even got to show some people their very first lizard. LIVE is now responsible for approximately 10% of the national records for the species in Ireland - a fantastic achievement that shows the power of citizen science at a community level. While researching and creating digital walking trail maps, I went on journeys across places and time. I learned about local figures and traditions and explored the ruins, landmarks, and other evidence of their lives on Iveragh. I also encountered a myriad of wildlife from curlews and kestrels to dolphins and hares. My camera was often my only companion on days out on Iveragh and I hope that some of the images and videos I captured on my travels are enjoyed by those who discover Iveragh (or perhaps re-discover Iveragh) via our website.

While my time on the project has come to an end, hopefully my time on Iveragh will continue. As a proud Kerry native, I doubt I'll end up too far away. Sure, where would you be going when you have a place like this to call home?



Team Reflections

Jane Sheehan



During my career as a marine biologist, I have been very inspired by the work and story of Maude Delap. As a woman from County Kerry who is interested in studying jellyfish, the LIVE knowledge gathering programme was a great avenue to learn more about Maude Delap and share her story with the wider community. The opportunity to work on a topic I was so passionate about in my home county was a major highlight for me. During the project, we visited various museums and institutions in hopes of filling the knowledge gaps surrounding Maude Delap's life and work. Travelling to these places and viewing original material belonging to someone that I admired so much was really special. From this work, we now have a definitive list of where all Maude's archive material is housed and what each collection contains.

This material has helped to answer many questions we had about Maude's work. We can now say with some confidence that she was the first person in the Western World to successfully rear jellyfish in captivity. Her correspondence showed us that Constance Delap, Maude's older sister, was also instrumental to this work. It's very exciting to think that south Kerry has two inspirational female scientists. The archive material is also a wonderful historical source to learn about life on Valentia Island in the early 20th century. It was very fulfilling to transcribe and read the material, some which had not been seen in decades.

Of course, the most rewarding part of the role was sharing this knowledge. Possibly my favourite part was the general chit chat with people who knew Maude's name but not why she was important. It was also fantastic to see Maude's name appear in the local and national media again. I hope that this current interest continues in the coming years as we continue to research, share and celebrate Maude and her contributions to emerging marine science. Being involved in helping commemorate Maude Delap through my position as a knowledge gatherer has been an extremely rewarding and enjoyable experience.



Team Reflections

Fiach Byrne



After nearly three years on Iveragh, what still strikes me about the peninsula is its stunning landscape, which is filled with such a wide range of habitats and wildlife, historical monuments and geological features. With beaches for swimming, trails for hiking and so many incredible pockets of the peninsula to explore, there is little else that someone could ask for from a place to live. I have spent my time on Iveragh exploring some very interesting aspects of the region's natural heritage. This has led to a lot of time outdoors surveying some remarkable species and habitats.

Iveragh's importance to Red-billed Choughs (Cág Cosdearg) provided an excellent opportunity to study these beautiful coastal crows in further detail, with the overall aim of identifying important locations and foraging habitats for them. And over the course of spring and summer 2022, I had the pleasure of carrying out surveys of the birds and insects that associate with Iveragh's farmland. Through these surveys, I encountered some of Iveragh's fascinating plants, animals, and habitats. I also met many landowners and farmers who kindly granted me access to their land and shared their knowledge of the local area with me.

Alongside this work, I have had the good fortune to work with many committed locals, community groups, organisations and environmental projects who share an interest in these topics and who work hard to care for their landscape and the wildlife that relies on it. It was a joy to help them on their way to managing patches of land to support our local wildlife, or to hold events to celebrate the wildlife on our doorstep. With the help of these people and groups, some wonderful grasslands are being managed to allow our native plants to flourish, further supporting our insects and birds. Clearly, Iveragh is a popular tourism destination for good reason. Whether your interest is in the peninsula's natural beauty, wildlife, history, geology, dark skies, the abundance of recreational opportunities or the vibrant communities – there is something for everyone here. After nearly three years with the LIVE Project, I still haven't run out of elements of Iveragh's natural heritage to celebrate.



Team Reflections

Lucy Taylor



Working as the project manager on LIVE for just over 3 years has probably been the most fulfilling role of my career to date. Having moved between research subjects for a number of years, the focus on both the natural environment and community brought together some key passions for me, and the fact that the project has allowed me to live in this wonderful part of the world was the best part.

Starting the role in the spring of 2020 meant that we worked through some major challenges. However, we managed to recruit an excellent team of people from whom I've learned an awful lot. While I wasn't able to get out to meet and chat in person nearly as much as I would have liked, working within the resilient, talented, and close-knit communities of Iveragh has been a real honour for me.

We have had many setbacks and delays, we've dropped ideas and picked up new ones, and we've constantly adapted to circumstances and external developments. As we frantically work to wrap up the project, it can be difficult to stand back and see our achievements, but in those moments when I do manage to zoom out and reflect, I am extremely proud of what the team has done, how we've worked, and what has come out of the project, imperfect as that may be.

When I started working on LIVE, my personal goal was to start something that would continue to be developed long after my contract ended. My hope was that I would be able to watch the outputs, impact, and results of the project continue to develop and be used by other people. The only real signs of our success will not be visible for some time, but my hope is still that people will be accessing our resources, watching our videos, handing out our activity sheets, referencing our research, passing on some interesting fact that they've learned, or connecting with someone they met at an ambassador event many years from now. That's the legacy that I hope we have created for the beautiful, vibrant, and enchanting place that we've been lucky enough to call home.





of local people's knowledge and experience, and their talent to share stories using a combination of traditional and modern methods blending naturally together. These resources can be shared with people who visit, from near or far, at different times of the year, enriching their experience and understanding of these special areas, and planning their holiday before they visit.

There were presentations and talks from a variety of people who had contributed towards the success of the project during the week, including several ecomuseum sites that promote regenerative tourism in Llŷn, projects that fostered relationships between young people and their area, and presentations on important events and individuals in the history of Llŷn, all promoted through our social media channels.

After the ebb came the flow of people from the towns and cities who couldn't go abroad on their annual holidays. As well as the regular visitors, there was a new audience in vans, caravans and cars filling our narrow lanes, stopping at every nook and cranny. The caravan and camping sites were full throughout the summer and the holiday cottages well into autumn and winter.

Welcoming the nation and our co-workers from Ireland to the Ecoamgueddfa Llŷn (Ecomuseum) 'living room' showed that it is possible through a project like LIVE to share our languages, heritage and culture with people from near and far, as long as they appreciate the opportunity and leave our areas as they were before they arrived.

As things stabilized at the end of the project, the Llŷn and Eifionydd Eisteddfod 2023 became an opportunity to show what had been achieved through the LIVE project. The project had fostered a closer working relationship between the partners in Wales and there were opportunities to learn important lessons about marketing and product quality by visiting our Celtic cousins across the Irish sea.

The move towards regenerative tourism demands that visitors leave a much lighter footprint than before, with an increasing emphasis on giving back instead of taking. The LIVE project has shown, through collaboration between organisations, and across seas, that this is possible. We hope that the thousands of people who visited us during the Eisteddfod will remember this when they arrange their holidays in the future.

The stall in the Eisteddfod provided an opportunity to highlight the valuable paper and digital resources that have been developed through the project, which have been branded in a powerful visual style. The stand was a platform for everyone to see how the visitor economy is able to adapt and take advantage



Eisteddfod Boduan

Better late than later they say. The LIVE project had thought that the Llŷn and Eifionydd 2021 Eisteddfod would be a great opportunity to raise awareness at the start of the project of the work of the Ecomuseum and to share the vision with the people of Llŷn, Gwynedd, Wales and beyond about the potential to develop a regenerative tourism industry on the Llŷn Peninsula in Wales and the Iveragh Peninsula in the southwest of Ireland. The two areas, brought together through the Wales - Ireland INTERREG scheme, have collaborated to develop a new tourism model with its roots deep in the communities, celebrating the heritage, culture, and special environment of both areas. The aim was to encourage a sustainable flow of visitors to both areas throughout the year which would create more stable employment opportunities within the tourism industry, and respect local communities and residents.

Just two months after the start of the project the shadow of the pandemic came over the Llŷn and Iveragh Peninsulas, all events, big and small, including the Eisteddfod, were postponed. The travel restrictions that were in place for quite some time stopped people from visiting Llŷn and Iveragh but allowed the people lucky enough to live in these communities to enjoy their areas in all their glory during most of 2020 and 2021. Not being able to travel got local people interested in their square mile and the lack of noise and the usual hustle and bustle highlighted the landscape and wildlife that surrounded us every day and offered a welcomed escape from our new home offices.





A final knowledge exchange visit to Pen Llŷn

With every village decked out in bunting, flags, dragons, and 'Croeso' signs, arriving on the Llŷn Peninsula during Eisteddfod week feels like landing into the middle of a peninsula-wide party! Having been warned that the peninsula could be fairly crowded in August, it seemed eerily quiet in some spots. Everyone was clearly gathered in one of the huge fields in Boduan, in the middle of the peninsula, where a village of tents, stalls, pavilions and outdoor stages had been set up for the week-long celebration of Welsh music and culture. While the Irish team were unable to fully appreciate the significance of the competitions in Welsh literature and music, we still enjoyed strolling in and out of tents hearing Welsh folk music and pop bands, poking around the various stalls and exhibitions, and, of course, seeing all of the hard work of the LIVE team in Wales displayed around the custom built 'sitting room' and event area in the Ecoamgueddffa tent.

As well as visiting the Eisteddfod and enjoying the displays of Welsh language and culture, we attended an informative walk around Porthdinllaen where a collaborative team of volunteers, staff from the Pen Llŷn Marine Special Area of Conservation, and other organisations led by Project Seagrass were gathering seagrass seed from beneath the ocean to grow on in their specialised nursery and replant in other areas of Wales where the seagrass beds aren't as healthy.



We visited the Ecoamgueddffa site, Oriel Plas Glyn y Weddw, to enjoy their beautifully varied art exhibitions and see their newly built café, which was inspired by the 'test', or shell, of a sea urchin. We sampled various sections of the Welsh Coastal Path and, once again, marvelled at what a wonderful amenity it is for locals and visitors.

It was great to see the new virtual tour of the iron-age ring fort site, Tre'r Ceiri, at Porth y Swnt, another Ecoamgueddffa site. The tour was developed with resources from the LIVE project and allows visitors to experience the fascinating site without the need to climb the rugged hill, thereby extending the experience to less able people and ensuring that it's a draw for visitors even in bad weather.

One of the real highlights was a storytelling evening at Felin Uchaf, yet another beautiful Ecoamgueddffa site. Sitting in the atmospheric roundhouse with the fire lit in the centre as we were entertained with stories of kings and dragons was not just a lovely way to spend an evening, it also gave us some fascinating insights into Welsh history.

We also squeezed in a visit to the Maritime Museum in Nefyn, where we chatted with the volunteers and were reminded again of the similarities between our two peninsulas' heritage with evidence of underwater



communication cables, shipwrecks, smuggling, fishing, and the strength of these remote coastal communities.

During this, our last knowledge exchange visit to Pen Llŷn before the project ends, we noticed LIVE project logos on brochures, panels, books, and exhibits across the peninsula. It really was great to see how much of a local impact the project has had and to be able to really appreciate results of the hard work of our colleagues in Wales. There was an atmosphere of optimism at the Ecoamgueddffa sites. Even though it was sad to see the number of EU funding logos that will not be renewed, it's clear that this is a region with a strong sense of identity and the collective drive to define its own future.

With the heather in bloom along the hills, bees and butterflies in abundance along the Coastal Path, and evidence of a healthy cultural identity, this is a place worth visiting. I can only say that I hope I'll be back again soon to enjoy the warm croeso that our Welsh colleagues have always shown.



Ecoamgueddfa

...collaborating for the benefit of the people and communities of the Llŷn Peninsula today and in the future

The aim of the Ecoamgueddfa, through the partners is to support the communities of the Llŷn Peninsula to take advantage of the remarkable language and heritage that exist here, to preserve our resources and traditions in order to thrive economically. That's vital – no one can live on tourism alone. Members of the community, visitors and politicians alike must take into account the impact of leisure and travel activities on all aspects of life and recognise and respect the fact that the Llŷn Peninsula is a home as well as a destination.

It is often noted that out-migration from the area due to a shortage of quality work is a challenge facing north-west Wales and other similar places. Central to all the activities of the Ecoamgueddfa is the key principle of sustainable development, working together to ensure that we listen to the voice of the people and address the needs of our people and communities today in a way that will allow our children and grandchildren to live well too. That is the central theme of the aspirations of the women who shared their experiences, throughout this book.

A 'future generations assessment' has been conducted of each one of the sites, all of which actively promote the language and heritage and they are also committed to making environmental and social improvements.

Tackling the economy

It is not possible for #ecoamgueddfa to do everything, or try to be all things to all people. But by working together we can find sustainable and regenerative ways of extending the visitor season beyond the traditional 'busiest' weeks, and create seasonal offers aimed at visitors who want to take their time to enjoy the local area rather than an 'any beach anywhere' experience. This includes promoting local produce, local craft work and local cultural activities that benefit local people and visitors alike.

The environment

There is no doubt that the landscape is a major asset. There are a host of good land management practices being promoted through projects coordinated by members of the Llŷn Landscape Partnership. Sustainable transport options such as the Llŷn Coastal Bus and the Fflecsi bus service operated by O Ddrws i Ddrws are promoted to reduce car usage – a difficult challenge to resolve completely. The sites provide specific information on the ecology e.g. The Big Five, which improves local understanding (the maps were created by local school children and local artists led by Rob from the National Trust), and BioBlitz events are very popular – all emphasising the importance of protecting our environment for everyone's benefit.

Society

Anyone who reads this newsletter and our website cannot fail to recognise the importance of society – people are central to everything. As well as seeking to promote good jobs and maximise cultural benefits, Ecoamgueddfa's 'slow' approach to tourism and seeking to attract visitors who desire an experience that is different from their everyday lives – an opportunity to engage with the landscape, with communities, with culture – to 'connect' – is different from that of extractive tourism, where people flock to a location with little sense of place to corporately owned attractions. We want to foster community cohesion and provide a welcoming environment.

Culture

The Welsh language is strong here. Being able to ensure that work is available throughout the year and using the language and heritage as a Unique Selling Point to attract visitors will have a positive impact. It is vital that we increase awareness that human diversity and biodiversity are equally as important as each other. Saving the planet is important but must go hand in hand with respecting its unique people and their diversity. We have little patience for the mindset that views concern for language and culture as secondary to the major challenges such as climate change, important though they are – it is imperative for all of us to act together with urgency on all issues.

Five ways of working

Long-term vision

Our aim as partners is to improve the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of the area by promoting the principles of the Ecoamgueddfa, namely encouraging collaboration and co-development to reflect our area, and the aspirations of our people and our communities.

Prevention is better than cure

We seek to create conditions that mean that no-one has to leave the area unless they want to, by shifting the emphasis towards jobs that are available throughout the year to keep young people here and attract those who have moved away back. It would be nice to be able to reduce congestion on our narrow roads by promoting sustainable transport and reversing cultural decline by promoting language and heritage as valuable assets.

Collaboration

The Ecoamgueddfa locally is a collaboration between the University, the local authority, the National Trust and six heritage sites, businesses, individuals, a global eco museums network and other local and international networks. LIVE, European funding for the period 2020 – 2023, has enabled us to collaborate with similar Irish partners at Iveragh Peninsula. We belong to a number of local, national and international networks.

Integration

The Ecoamgueddfa addresses the aspirations of the Gwynedd Eryri Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2035, it integrates well into Gwynedd's local development plans and contributes to the national well-being goals of Wales and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Involvement

The Ecoamgueddfa was developed jointly between the partners – the sites, Cyngor Gwynedd, the National Trust and Bangor University. Not a quick, one-off event – we have been on a slow journey together to really establish the project, over a considerable period of time. Perseverance pays. Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all their aspects is central to our mission.



Well-being goals for Wales

Prosperous

We aim to encourage quality work that is available throughout the year, contributing to an innovative and productive society that respects the environment and its landscape. Initiatives that encourage the provision of sustainable accommodation and transport will contribute to the promotion of a low carbon economy.

Resilient

The environment and the world around us are crucial to the vision and work of #ecoamgueddfa. We need to raise awareness and discuss ways of adapting to the changes that will undoubtedly occur in the area due to climate change. Local people and visitors will be central in this endeavour. We are promoting the Glasgow 2020 Statement on Climate Action in Tourism.

Healthier

Health is linked to prosperity and well-being and there is no better prescription for keeping well than being outdoors. Each site offers opportunities to enjoy walks and discover the wildlife and biodiversity of the area.

Equality

Social, economic, environmental and cultural fairness is at the heart of this project. All sites are committed to the principles of the Equality Act (2010) and welcome everyone. Through our digital journeys we enable people who would otherwise be unable to visit remote places to enjoy our rich nature and heritage.

Viable and cohesive communities

As this volume shows, there is a patchwork of strong Welsh communities thriving on the Llŷn Peninsula, echoing the communities of the past but also looking forward confidently to the future. The Ecoamgueddfa is part of this rich pattern. We are here to support and promote the people and their communities and to remind visitors and policy makers that the Llŷn Peninsula is firstly a home and that in coming here visitors are invited to our home. It must be emphasised repeatedly that respecting the residents and their language, culture and heritage is vitally important.



Well-being goals for Wales

A thriving culture and language

In this newsletter and our website we see that the Welsh language, its culture and heritage are thriving – at present. But as is becoming increasingly obvious, we cannot assume that this will continue without a real commitment to all the above well-being goals.

Global responsibility

For people from outside, the Llŷn Peninsula may seem remote, marginalised. But in reality, the Llŷn Peninsula and its coastal people have always looked towards the sea, and the far flung corners of the globe have always featured in their conversation. The maritime tradition is to be seen around us – in Aberdaron there is a house called Pretoria, in Mynytho there is New York, Yr Aifft (Egypt), China and California and there are grand houses built by captains of ships which roamed the oceans with their cargo. Shipbuilding was of course a very important industry in the area in the past. Archaeological work has uncovered maritime links from the iron/bronze age with axes from Rhiw, for example, being traded far from their source. The Ecoamgueddfa, as mentioned above, is part of a global network sharing the importance of language, culture and heritage alongside a thriving environment and economy. Awareness of the risk of extinction of species is increasing – keeping diversity of languages and cultures is equally important to the future of the planet.



www.ecomuseumlive.eu

