

Report of Hereford and Mid Wales Link Group weekend 20th to 22nd October 2006
Theme: Eco building and living

The autumn Link weekend was for the first time held in an alternative venue from a Meeting House. We were invited by Jeff and Carey Glyn-Jones to spend the weekend at The Bunkhouse, Woodhouse Farm, Almeley. Eighteen Young Friends attended the event including five from South Wales. Over the last three years Jeff and Carey have built two houses on their land which are entirely self sufficient with solar power, a water borehole and a compost toilet. They used recycled tyres for the roofs and sheepswool insulation. The theme of the weekend revolved around the issues of how they built the houses and how to live in this environment, which meant learning new rules vital to keep the delicate balance needed to make the project work.

There were discussions each day about the issues arising from the theme and Jeff and Carey gave the Linkers a nature trail to complete, which challenged their thinking about their ecological footprint and there were many questions to address. There is an area of land in the middle of the two houses which Jeff and Carey want to develop and they asked the Young Friends to design this area for flowers and vegetables, having already told them what resources were available. The results were stunning and really appreciated and will be of great help for the final design.

On Saturday morning Adam Lee from Young Friends General Meeting led a pottery session. He showed the teenagers how to make coiled finger pottery and had brought examples of local Iron Age patterns to show them the type of designs they could use to decorate their pots. They are being fired by a potter in Bleddfa, who was very impressed by the standard. In the afternoon the walk took us to Holywell Dingle, a small fragment of ancient woodland over 400 years old. This was enjoyable even though we got very muddy, rather wet and lost our way at one point. However the delicious meal and huge amounts of homemade chocolate and ginger cake and flapjacks from Almeley Friends were a great welcome home!

On Sunday morning several car loads got everyone up to Almeley MH where we had an all age Meeting for Worship. In a packed MH we shared our theme and wrote our "Thanks" on one side of a small coloured cardboard earth and "I will ..." with a promise for action, on the other. These were then hung in the MH as the meeting continued. There was moving ministry and at the centre were A&Q 1.02.41 and 1.02.42 which had also been used for our epilogues.

The success of this weekend was due to the help of so many. Thanks go to Anne Bull and Sarah Nightingale who bought and prepared much of the food and to other Almeley Friends who also contributed. Thanks to David Binney who organised the Meeting for Worship and to Adam Lee for the pottery. Special thanks go to Carey and Jeff for so much preparation and for constantly being on hand to make sure that things were going smoothly. It was a great experience for all of us which has left a lasting impression of how we CAN make a difference and are all responsible for preserving the earth's resources.

The next Link will be at The Pales from 25th to 27th May 2007. This will be the last Link that Linda and Kate will be organising. After six years it will be time to pass on the responsibility.

Kate Binney (on behalf of Link)
30.10.06