

The Special Features of Snowdonia

Talk and slideshow by Dewi Davies Senior Warden - North

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The presentation started with some stunning photos of parts of the Snowdon National Park depicting its grandeur in all weathers and gave us a taste of the vastness of the area in the care of the National Trust and its Wardens who aim to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, the wildlife and the cultural heritage of the Park. They promote opportunities for understanding and enjoying it and they seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the Park.

We were shown raptors; buzzard, peregrine, merlin, kestrel and water birds; great crested grebe, dipper, heron and the rare ring ouzel and chough who all make the park their home using its variety of habitats for breeding, hunting, soaring, fishing or just hanging out in the crags, lakes and valleys.

Goats have become feral here and are able to endure the harsh winters browsing what they can find. The delicate Snowdon lily and moss campion survive in hard-to-reach spots, bog asphodel, common butterwort and sundews thrive in the boggy areas. The Snowdonian hawkweed is another specialist.

In order to understand the unique geology of Snowdon Dewi took us back to the Early Ordovician period ~490 million years ago and explained how what became Europe used to be near the South Pole under the sea and over the ages had gradually moved north. Snowdonia was finally formed by the Ice Age glacial activity. Charles Darwin during his visits in the late 19th century was one of the first to record the glacial phenomenon that is Cwm Idwal.

In order to preserve the special features of Snowdonia wardens and many volunteers have innumerable tasks to perform, ranging from major large-scale projects to counteract erosion caused by natural events involving hundreds of tons of rocks brought in by helicopter to constant litter-picking. Hundreds of thousands of visitors each year leave their mark, requiring repair to gates, stiles, signs and footpaths. Major events like the 3 Peaks run have to be managed to balance the enjoyment of the public and the preservation of the Park. Wardens also patrol the park to be able to offer advice on routes, weather and safety. A most interesting talk with wonderful images.