

Training firm nets Investors in People award

A Mid Wales company which trains people in work has received a top accolade.

Cambrian Training Company, in Welshpool, was named in the top one per cent of Investors in People companies in the UK after achieving the silver award. Only 45 Welsh companies have achieved the silver award, of which 18 are involved in the training and education sector.

The award is granted to companies that invest and identify ways of raising their

organisation's performance to the highest level. It recognises excellence in management, the involvement and empowerment of employees and the support of their personal and professional development.

To achieve the base standard, a company must meet 39 criteria in the improvement of employee management. To get silver accreditation the company achieved an additional 85 criteria.

Cambrian Training Company, which has

36 employees, has won a string of national awards for its learning programmes, including the National Training Award for Wales.

The company works in the hospitality, food manufacturing, environmental conservation, customer service, retail, business administration, team leading and health and social care sectors.

Managing director Arwyn Watkins said: "As a company, we committed at the beginning of the year to achieving the silver

award as one of our major goals for 2012 to provide a further benchmark of the high standards that we set within the business.

"We are delighted to have achieved this goal, despite a significant reduction in our work-based learning contracts. Our next target is the gold award in 2015."

IIP assessor Neil Huxtable said the company was effective at business planning, learning and development, staff involvement, empowerment and recognition.

Scheme a threat to tourism in beauty spot, say campaigners

Wood chipping plant plans spark concern

By James Fisher

Concerns have been raised over plans to build a wood chipping plant in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in Shropshire.

The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership said it was alarmed by part of a retrospective planning application at Lea Quarry on Wenlock Edge. The site will be changed from quarrying limestone to renewable energy processes. The quarry will also be extended, with two office blocks being built on the land.

George Chancellor, chairman of Shropshire Hills AONB, said the development, by Edge Renewables, had come as a surprise.

He said: "The AONB Partnership has worked with the National Trust over several years consulting with the local community on an integrated vision for after-use of the quarries.

Commercial

"Many residents of Much Wenlock and the surrounding area were involved in the consultations and supported a vision of restoration, primarily for conservation and quiet recreation, appropriate to this sensitive and iconic location in the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

"This vision could have accommodated some appropriate commercial activity within the large former quarry site, but an industrial-scale woodchip operation as now proposed could seriously hamper sensitive development of tourism in the area and associated job opportunities."

Mr Chancellor said the quarry operators were fully aware of the vision 'painstakingly developed' by the National Trust with the local community over an extended period but appeared to have turned their back on it.

Simon Lloyd-Jones, managing director of Edge Renewables, which is working on behalf of applicants Aggregate Industries, said the firm was aware of the quarry's significance and had full intentions of managing it responsibly.

He said: "We are ensuring the future conservation and will be working with the relevant authorities in regard to future public access."

Heart-start plan

Cheswardine Parish Council, based near Market Drayton, will meet on Tuesday in the parish hall, from 7.30pm. Items on the agenda include plans to buy a defibrillator for the parish.

A grandmother from Shropshire whose life was saved by Midlands Air Ambulance staff is holding a fundraising event to raise money for the charity. Janet Crossley is holding a coffee morning.

It takes place in Highley on September 8 and will include a collection for Community First Responders and Help for Heroes.

Grandmother brewing funds for air medics

Mrs Crossley began the event seven years ago after a neighbour's life was saved by the first responders.

She then had to call on Midlands Air Ambulance three years ago after falling down the stairs.

Mrs Crossley was airlifted to Selly Oak Hospital for emergency treatment and eventually had her leg, which was severely broken, amputated. But after seeing soldiers being flown in from Afghanistan while on her ward she decided to raise money for the armed forces charity as well.

She said: "Three years ago I fell stairs and a first responder sent for an ambulance, who eventually sent the air ambulance, which took me to Selly Oak. "I was on a ward next to the military ward helping soldiers who had been injured in Afghanistan. "I had my leg amputated but some of the soldiers were having three limbs taken, so we decided to do something for them as well."

The event is from 10am to 1pm at Dowsley Cottage, Bridgnorth Road, Highley. Admission is £2, free for children. There will also be bric-a-brac, cakes, games, bring and buy, a raffle and tombola stalls. Details on (01746) 861284.

Legion will hold auction at Bell Inn

An annual auction of harvest produce and other goods is being held in south Shropshire next month.

The Cleobury Mortimer branch of the Royal British Legion hosts the event in The Bell Inn, Lower Street, on September 14.

Branch chairman Jim Hulme said: "Goods of all types are welcomed, not just seasonal produce. Even if you can't donate anything do come along and bid.

"If past years are anything to go by there will be an excellent range of fruit, vegetables, cakes, flowers, wine and many other bargains."

The auction starts at 8pm. For more details call Mr Hulme on (01299) 270261 or Roger Gittins at The Bell on (01299) 270305. The next branch event will be a visit to SS Great Britain in Bristol on October 3. For a membership form call (01299) 270110.

Guild's tea party

Newport Townswomen's Guild is holding a summer tea party later this month. The event is at Newport Cricket Club at Audley Avenue at 2.30pm on August 29 and costs £3.50.

Appeal to animal-lovers



Lucy Blumberg, who is on work experience, looking after Pedro the cat

RSPCA launches bid to re-home 63 cats

Shropshire's RSPCA centre is full of felines waiting for new homes after an influx of abandoned and injured cats and kittens across the county.

The centre at Gonsal Farm, near Conover, is looking after 63 cats - including 23 kittens.

And Judith Haw from RSPCA Shropshire said inspectors were collecting more cats every day, largely because owners were unprepared for the arrival of kittens.

"We have so many cats at the moment and nobody is showing any interest in the kittens," she said.

"We've got quite a few long-term cats as well who have been here for months.

"Our inspectors are collecting cats all the time - injured cats, abandoned cats with kittens. We would encourage people to consider

By Pam Griffin
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a rescue pet before going to a pet shop or buying a pet online, because there are so many animals waiting for a new home.

"And please ensure cats are neutered. People seem to be taking on pets too easily, treating them as disposable items."

She added: "Looking after a cat is hugely rewarding.

"As long as they have a good diet, proper care and an interesting and comfy environment, a cat will quite happily play, snooze or while away the hours until their owner arrives back from work."

To find out about rehoming a cat contact 0300 123 0753 or e-mail GonsalFarm@rspca.org.uk

Bands will play for free in craft centre concert

Jackfield Band's annual free concert later this month will feature two special guests performing alongside the Telford-based band.

The concert is on August 25 at Maws Craft Centre, Jackfield, starting at 7pm. The guests are Melligen Stadtmusik Band from Switzerland and UK bass trombone impresario Jonathan Warburton.

"This year is the 20-year anniversary of the twinning of the Jackfield and Melligen Stadtmusik bands and we are extremely delighted to once again welcome them back."

Peppa Pig's whistle-stop tour of area

A very special guest will be visiting Mid Wales next week to say hello to all her fans.

Children's favourite Peppa Pig will be making a whistle-stop tour of Newtown and Welshpool on Monday and Tuesday.

Peppa's tour is aiming to help raise money for the Wales Air Ambulance charity.

She will be at the Wales Air Ambulance shop in Newtown all day Monday,

and will then be visiting Coed-y-Dinas in Welshpool on Tuesday between noon and 5pm.

Ann Lewis, Newtown shop manager, said she was hoping all Peppa's fans would come out and see her.

She said: "She would love to see her fans and looks forward to two very busy days in the area."

She added: "Her visit coincides with the Walk On event for Wales Air Ambulance, when Welsh opera singer Rhys

Meirion and Welshpool Air Ambulance pilot Capt Martin Darlington walk across Wales to raise funds for the charity.

"Peppa Pig has been a great friend of the charity for a long time now, and we just can't wait to see her when she visits our shop on Monday.

"We really want to make her feel as welcome as possible and urge as many people as possible to come down to the shop and to Coed-y-Dinas to say hello."

Farming Talk with

MARTIN JONES



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Silviculture is the answer for your woodland

How can silviculture benefit your woodland asset? Silviculture is defined as the 'practice of controlling the establishment, growth, composition, health, and quality of forests to meet diverse needs and values.'

This practice is to woodland management what agriculture is to farming.

Just imagine how much farm productivity would suffer if agricultural science were not applied. Many woodlands in the UK, if they are managed at all (and many are not) are not being managed using 'best' silvicultural practice.

Many people think that a forester is someone who just 'cuts down trees'. A forester is a trained professional who is skilled in applying silvicultural practice to benefit owners of woodland property.

What does this practice entail? From a purely commercial point of view, owning a woodland can now be financially rewarding if the timber resource is wisely managed. Silvicultural practice is a science involving a common sense approach, which looks to increase the annual growth (yield) and volume of the stand as well as the overall value of the standing timber.

The skill of the forester lies in his/her ability to shorten the rotation age of a given species (each species grow at differing rates) to its financial maturity, taking into account the demands of local markets.

Increasing the value of a stand is achieved firstly by harvesting the right trees via a thinning intervention to grow quality timber. Because many woodlands are not currently being managed, many stands are overstocked to the point where trees don't have enough space to grow to their full potential.

To keep timber growing it is necessary to remove a proportion of the stand (70 per cent of the Maximum Mean Annual Increment) every 5 to 10 years to achieve the optimum stocking density. Thinning of the poorer quality trees, for example for a woodfuel sale, will shift the annual growth increment onto the better quality trees for sawlog production and ultimately, a higher return to the owner.

Secondly, you need to keep some quality timber in the stand to continue to grow quality timber and ensure you don't liquidate your principal as well as the interest (increment) from your woodland asset. Keeping an adequately stocked residual stand comprising better quality trees ensures a more productive and more valuable woodland property in the future.

Applying the right silvicultural principles shifts according to the species and other environmental factors such as soils, elevation, windthrow risk and so on and can also result in enhancing non-commercial benefits and objectives such as conservation/wildlife habitat, forest health and carbon sequestration and so on.

Martin B. Jones is a forestry consultant for Heartwoods and Managing Director of The Woodland Stewardship Company based in Shrewsbury

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