



Gwynedd Project Summary



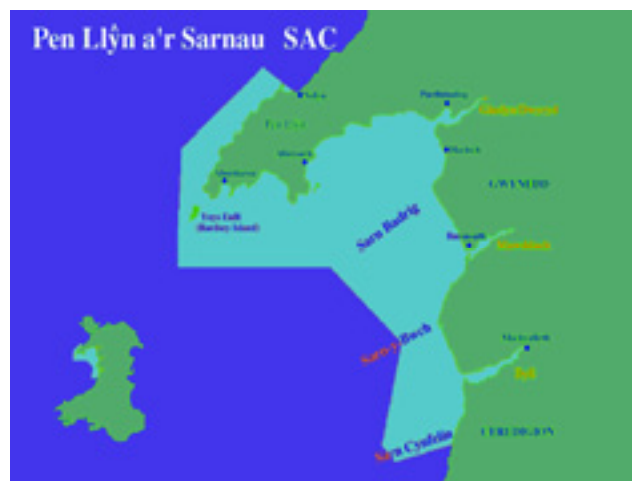
August 2008



A project to raise awareness of Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau Special Area of Conservation

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are strictly protected sites designated under the EC Habitats Directive. This requires the establishment of a European network of important high-quality conservation sites. This network of sites will make a significant contribution to conserving certain habitats and species of European conservation importance.

Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau is one of the largest of the marine SACs in the UK. It was designated due to the occurrence of a variety of special marine habitats, such as reefs and sea caves; as well as the important marine mammals - Bottlenose dolphins, Grey seals and Otters.



As an Interreg funded project, the Living Coasts – Living Seas project is a partnership between Gwynedd Council and Fingal County Council in Ireland. Both partners will be interpreting their local marine environment through various sub-projects.

The following is a summary of the projects undertaken by Gwynedd Council using community driven, innovative approaches to interpretation.

Art Projects

A Drop in the Ocean

A project to produce a piece of art to depict the exciting underwater life of the area, through working with children to encourage their interest in the sea

Themes:

- Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau is really special for its sea life
- The marine environment is as rich and diverse as anywhere else in the world

Objectives

- Get people surprised and excited about local marine wildlife.
- Help people to visualise what's happening under the sea.
- Encourage people to appreciate and feel proud of the local marine environment because it is as exciting as 'foreign/exotic' environments.

Three children's workshops were held at Plas Glyn y Weddw in Llanbedrog in July – August 2007. Children were encouraged to come along and draw pictures of sea animals, and create 'under the sea boxes' with clay, textiles and lots of other materials.

A willow structure was then created, with sea animals created by the children, to develop the design for the sculpture.



This led to the idea of a 'drop of water' shape for the design, with the idea of being able to peep in to a structure to reveal the under sea scene within. Ceramic and blown glass creatures can be seen inside a galvanised steel structure, with a fused glass lid to let light in. Peep-holes allow people to peer into this underwater scene.



Some of the ceramic models
inside the sculpture

With the help of the Barmouth Resort Improvement Group (BRIG), we found an ideal location for the sculpture on the seafront in Barmouth. The sculpture was officially opened by Elfyn Llwyd MP in May, and has already brought the sea life of Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau a bit closer to many people.



Elfyn Llwyd MP, Ceri Morris and Cllr Rob Williams Mayor of Barmouth at the opening of the sculpture

Photography Project

A project to enthuse schoolchildren about their local beach, through making a photography collage with an marine theme

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Primary schools Ysgol Nefyn and Ysgol Friog, near Fairbourne took part in the project.

The children were given a presentation on the special sea life of the area to show them just how colourful and interesting it is. The children were given disposable cameras and showed how to use them.



A session was held at the local beach, where the children were encouraged to photograph anything that they found interesting. We went rockpooling and looked for interesting seashore animals. The children also made 'beach sculptures' of sand, shells and any other things that they found on the beach.



On the second day, the children produced drawings and poetry about their experiences at the beach. These were combined with the photographs that they had taken at the beach to produce a colourful collage mounted on a curtain to make a 'Beach photograph curtain'. Two curtains per school were made, so that we could take one with us, and the school could keep one for display.



Tywyn Wall Mural

A project to produce a public art work with strong community involvement. The aim is to raise awareness amongst the people involved in the work, and create a piece that will raise awareness amongst the general public

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Creu-ad, an interpretive arts company held workshops with art students at Tywyn Secondary School, as well as Tywyn Art Group to explore design ideas for the mural. The Age-Concern office at Tywyn Train Station was opened up for members of the public to come along and take part in the mosaic making.



Tywyn Train Station before the work was installed



Students at Tywyn School working on the design



Volunteers making the mosaics

The mosaic murals were installed over bricked up windows at the station, each with a theme interpreting the habitats of Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC.



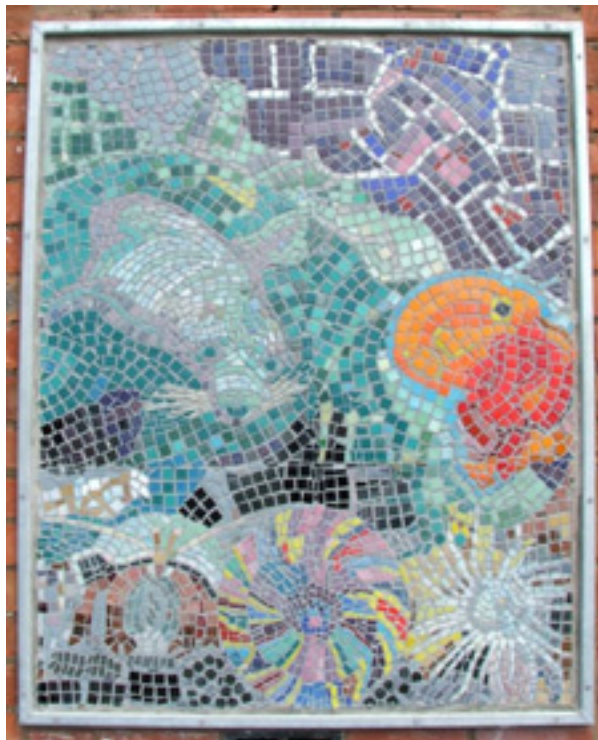
Reefs & Sarnau Mosaic



Estuaries Mosaic



Mudflats & Sandflats Mosaic



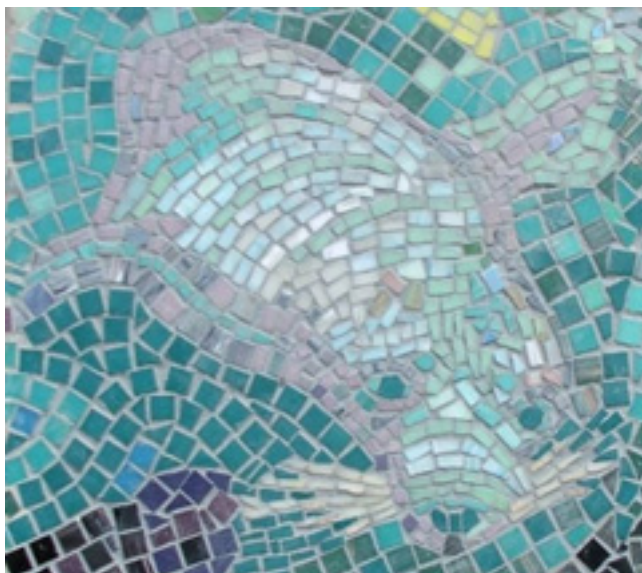
Sea Caves Mosaic



Bays & Inlets Mosaic

Some of the mosaic details





Audience Survey

A market research company carried out three focus group sessions with local people. The people were told about Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC and asked their opinions on it.

The purpose of the study was to gauge the level of awareness, find out about people's attitudes to the designation and use that to guide our work

Summary of findings

- Only one respondent correctly identified Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau.
- There was very little awareness of the SAC designation generally.
- People did regard the area as being special in a conservation sense. The main features considered to be special were the area's beauty and wildlife. A few felt that the special qualities of the area imposed too many restrictions on development.
- There were mixed opinions on whether knowing about the designation would make any difference. It did reinforce a sense of pride in the area and highlight the amount and breadth of habitats and species it hosts. People were pleased it was protected but did not think it would make any real difference to themselves since they would continue to use the area with the same amount of respect as they previously did.
- The fact that the SAC is a European Union designation made no difference to respondents, but they felt pleased that the area was receiving recognition outside of Great Britain.
- The majority of respondents were very interested in the local marine environment of Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau. There was more affinity with the area in the two coastal groups than in Dolgellau. Those who lived further in-land felt less engaged with the coastal area.

Mobile Roadshow

A mobile exhibition with information about the SAC, colourful displays and interactive games was produced. It has been on display at various events over the summer and will continue to be on display at various venues next year

- As a major part of the SAC Officer job is raising awareness at public events, there was a need for an eye catching, informative exhibition.
- The exhibition was created by Conwy graphic design company Blah d Blah
- Interactive games have been developed to draw children and adults to the display, and to encourage them to learn whilst playing.

- The flat screen display shows images of marine life, but will also display the underwater video when completed



Poster Competition

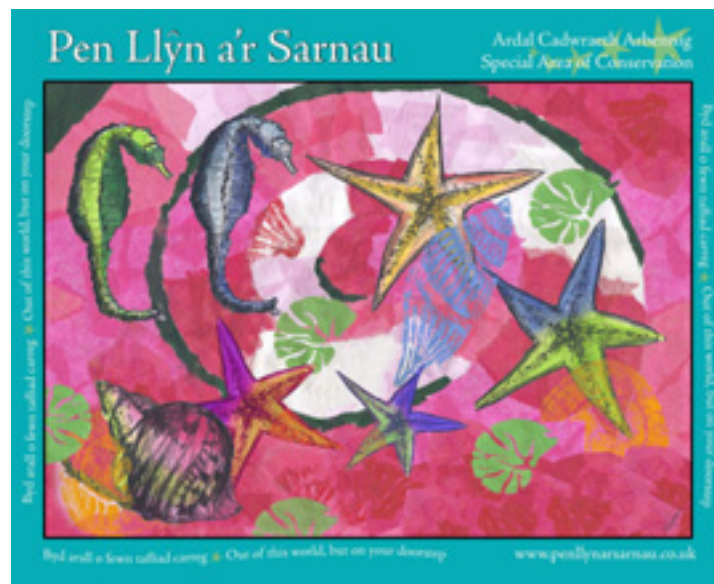
A competition for artwork, photography or poetry describing what's special about Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC.

The winning entry may be made into a poster to promote the SAC

- The competition was advertised through flyers, at local art and photography groups, local secondary schools and through the media.
- People were asked to send their photographs, artwork or poetry to show us what they felt was special about Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau Special Area of Conservation.
- The winner will be judged today with a prize of a boat trip for two to see the wildlife of Pen Llŷn at close hand.
- The winning entry will be made into a poster to promote Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC.



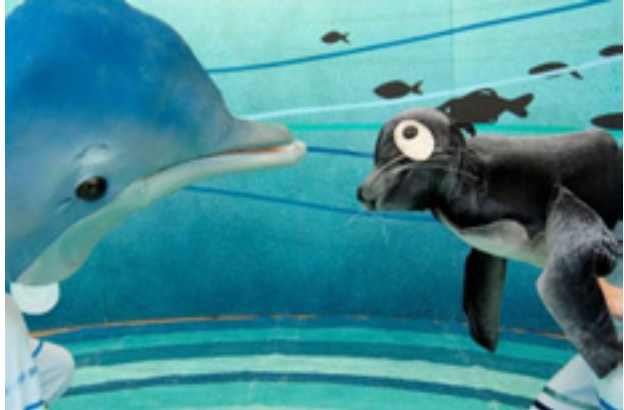
Some of the work entered into the Poster Competition



The poster with winning design by Rachel Lawrence, Ysgol Tywyn

Theatre Project

A theatre in education project was carried out in Gwynedd primary schools. The aim was familiarise and excite children about the local sea life, and to create a sense of pride in their area. We also aimed to highlight possible impacts on sea life.



Cwmni'r Frân Wen, a local theatre in education company produced the play. Angharad Tomos wrote the script which became 'Y Crwban Mwya'n y Byd' – 'The World's Greatest Turtle'.

The story followed a leatherback turtle's migration from the Caribbean to Cardigan Bay, highlighting the wonderful sea animals he might find in this area. A strong message of the dangers of plastic litter to marine life was also delivered through the story.



In 2007, the production toured for two weeks through Gwynedd, reaching over 600 children in 22 primary schools.

Question and answer sessions were held after each play, where the children could learn more about the local sea life, and about the issues that they face. They were told about the true story of the largest leatherback turtle ever found, which was discovered dead on Harlech beach in 1988. The turtle was found to have eaten plastic, which may have caused its death.

Children were each given a 'turtle bag', a string bag to remind them of the dangers of plastic bags. Workpacks were given to each school, with further marine-themed activities and information.



The production gained further funding from the Arts Council for Wales, which enabled the company to translate the play into English and extend the tour through Anglesey, Conwy and the special needs schools of the area. The company and Gwynedd County Council then took the play to Ireland, where with our Interreg project partners Fingal County Council we arranged two performances in local primary schools. This was a useful exercise in sharing our ideas with Fingal Co.Co, and also extending the message of the play.

The Arts Council for Wales are funding another tour in 2008 reaching a further 3,000 children in Wales, a successful spin off from the project.

Underwater Video

A 30 second film, showing exciting images from under the sea was produced. The film will be used as part of the mobile exhibition, and as a short 'advertisement' for the SAC at events and presentations.

Project Evaluation

Some of the more unusual projects were evaluated by a market research company to assess their effectiveness in raising awareness. The Theatre project and art project were evaluated using focus groups with children. The mobile exhibition was evaluated by observing visitor's behaviour and assessing their opinions during events over the summer.

The overall findings of the report indicated that the projects were very popular and successful in raising awareness of what the local marine life is like, and in some cases changing attitudes and encouraging action.

Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC Leaflet

A new leaflet has been produced to promote and provide information on the SAC. The leaflet has information about the designation and features of the SAC, as well as some interesting facts about marine life. It will be distributed through events, among interest groups and to the general public.



Interpretation Panels

Three interpretation panels, and a picnic table interpreting Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC were put in coastal locations around the SAC. The panels will raise awareness about the SAC while interpreting the local features.





Some early design drafts



O Dan y Môr a'i Donnau / Living Coasts Living Seas / An Costa Béo Seminar
Malahide, Ireland

A project seminar was held between the Welsh and Irish project partners in Malahide, Ireland in May 2008. The seminar was well attended by representatives from Gwynedd Council, CCW and some of the people who had worked on elements of the Welsh project. Similarly many delegates from Fingal County Council, neighbouring councils and environmental organisations in Ireland attended.

The Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC exhibition was on display, and several presentations were made on various aspects of the project. Our ideas and achievements were very well received. A workshop was held to generate ideas and gauge the level of enthusiasm for future projects.

It was a great opportunity to show our Irish partners what had been achieved, see the great work that they had done, and share ideas.