Love the Countryside
Work for the Countryside

A guide to job opportunities in the Environment and Heritage sectors
If you love the countryside, why not consider working in the countryside?

Too many members of ethnic minorities do not know about the exciting opportunities and lifestyles that come with jobs in the countryside. Many families are broken up when young people leave for the cities. You will notice that most of the people featured are not from ethnic minorities. Do not wait for role models - be the first!

The work within the heritage and environmental sectors is very satisfying because it is all about taking care of wonderful landscapes, our wildlife, and buildings and places full of history. Many jobs depend on experience and it is volunteering and placements that get you there. The jobs featured are:

1. Bird Reserve Site Manager. RSPB Conwy
2. Project Co-ordinator, Snowdonia Wildlife Gardening Project
3. Chief Archaeologist and Director, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
4. Marine Ecologist, Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)
5. Stained Glass and Architectural Antiques Business. Drew Pritchard Limited
6. Education Officer, National Slate Museum, Llanberis
7. Outdoor Pursuits Trainer and Climb8 Proprietor
8. Curator for Buildings, National Trust
9. Senior Archivist. Gwynedd County Council
10. Environmental Officer. The Environment Agency
11. Resources Manager, North Wales Wildlife Trust
12. Countryside Warden, Loggerheads Country Park
13. Senior Custodian, Caernarfon Castle

These are specialist jobs but there are other jobs which you can do in any organisation - be an office manager, an accountant, a receptionist, IT adviser. Or aim higher and aspire to be the director or chief executive - many people with business backgrounds have gone into such positions. The CD tells you how to get more information. It is time we become part of all of this. Let's work together to learn about and open out job opportunities for ethnic minorities. The support of parents and grandparents is important too!

Judy Ling Wong FRSA. CBE
Director Black Environment Network
**Enthusing ethnic minorities to work in the countryside**

The natural environment of Wales is incredibly diverse.

We are only a small country yet, within our 2million hectares, we range from the gentle landscape of the Gwent Levels through to the rugged yet majestic mountains of Snowdonia. Our coastline, with magnificent bays and rocky shores, rolling dunes and towering cliffs, is truly inspiring……and all of this natural wonder is available to everyone.

We know from research how important getting out into the natural environment is for our health and well-being. After only a few minutes our minds begin to relax and our internal batteries, run-down by the constant demands of our daily lives, begin to recharge.

But as well as a place for relaxation with our friends and families, the natural environment is an important and growing source of employment, providing more than 10% of the jobs in Wales today.

We not only welcome people from all our communities to experience this rich natural heritage – we also need you to think about taking up the job opportunities that arise there. We are keen, as an organisation, to help you consider what may be on offer. That is why our Race Equality Action Plan includes placements and shadowing as options.

We are proud to be working with BEN in linking our working environment – the natural heritage of Wales – with all our communities in Wales.

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Roger Thomas  
Chief Executive  
Countryside Council for Wales
I often get in to the reserve 7.30am so I can watch birds before work starts at 9.00am. It’s a lifestyle, not a job. This sort of work is more about dedication and enthusiasm than money. After leaving school, I started short contract jobs in nature conservation. The low pay and difficult hours was too much for me so I decided to become a printer. The job was interesting and the pay better, but as a keen birdwatcher since the age of 5 or 6, I just wanted to get back into conservation. Six years ago the break came and I now manage the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds' Gateway Reserve at Conwy, near to my home.

Managing a site that aims to involve the public means I have a demanding schedule to run - two guided walks a month; family events once a month; and a regular farmers' market promoting local produce, often with 850 visitors.

Hard work and dedication pays off. I do not have a degree but I now manage 13 staff and about 40 volunteers. Sometimes there is so much administration that I feel like I just have an interesting office job in a beautiful place but I still have time to get out and about on the site. I do site surveying in spring, manage visitors in summer, and then all the practical physical tasks in the winter. I also get away to various bird related events and workshops about 10 days a year in all kinds of places. I am totally committed to birds and I enjoy getting people to understand what birds and the environment need as a whole.

**Qualifications lead to your job:** Not necessary

**Experience and Skills:** Practical experience and knowledge about wildlife, gained through volunteering

**Pay range:** £20,000 – £25,000

**Related jobs:** Assistant warden, Reserve Manager
It's a lifestyle, not a job.
I was born and bred in Sweden, then I married a Welshman, completed a degree in forestry at Bangor and learnt to speak Welsh! Wildlife gardening is about bringing the countryside into urban areas. I give lots of talks to schools, businesses and community groups to try to get people to think about the green spaces around them. I advise them about which plants encourage wildlife and encourage them to stop using toxic chemicals. I often get interviewed on radio and I write a regular column in the local newspaper.

Many people are interested, especially kids, but very often they don’t know where to begin. We can all do something and completely transform areas. The most effective thing has been wildlife garden competitions: lots of people take part even though the prizes are modest. All the schools that enter receive a certificate and posters but the real reward comes from having more wildlife. More birds and a greater variety of species are now common but also bats, snakes in compost bins and sightings of the hummingbird hawk moth!

I help schools to use their gardens in teaching the national curriculum, we give them a box of resources to use. I enjoy my work because of the contact with people, enthusing them and seeing the response. Wildlife is an easy subject to sell to kids.

Part of the job involves dealing with funders, writing funding proposals and project reports which takes up time. It can be stressful but that’s a small price to pay for the pleasure of seeing more and more wildlife coming back.

Qualifications lead to your job: None essential but a degree with an environmental focus is useful.

Experience and Skills: Good communicator

Pay range: £20,000 - £22,000

Related positions: Project co-ordinator for different projects
I love seeing more and more wildlife coming back.
3 Chief Archaeologist and Director
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

Being an archaeologist is a really varied job. You can expect to be excavating digs just like in Tony Robinson’s Time Team, but may also have to be a photographer, construct maps with computers, undertake geophysical surveys, analyse data and write reports. There are times when I work a lot on my own and at others when I am part of a team and have to deal with different people and organisations.

The work is interesting and enthralling - it is about unwrapping secrets and contributing to history. For example, at the moment we are working on a project researching the Menai ferries that stopped in 1820 when the bridge to Anglesey was built.

Brought up in North Wales, I discovered archaeology accidentally. You do not need to have a degree to be an archaeologist although it helps; experience is what matters most. One way in is through volunteering. Passion can soon turn into paid work, for example on short commercial contracts where surveys are needed before roads or industrial parks are built. We go through all the records, analyse aerial photographs and make site visits. We assess the risk whether a road or a new factory might damage important historical remains, and make recommendations to the planners.

The Trust has a team of 10 archaeologists and administrators. Recently we surveyed ancient monuments such as standing stones, burial chambers and cairns across North Wales, classifying them according to importance. That requires not just recording and analytical skills but also lots of common sense which is the most important characteristic of an archaeologist.

**Qualifications:** None essential. An arts or science degree an advantage

**Experience and skills:** Experience of archaeological digs, interest in history, common sense

**Pay range:** £18,000 - £40,000

**Related positions:** Archaeologist for local authorities, civil engineering companies and architects.
Archaeology is about unwrapping secrets.
Born and bred in Bethesda, a quarrying village just outside Snowdonia National Park, I have always been interested in nature. With mountains outside my back door and the coast just 15 minutes away, you can understand why.

After University in Aberystwyth studying marine biology, temporary jobs and a few months travelling, I signed up for a Masters course in Countryside Management at Bangor University. My second year included work experience with CCW. I joined their Marine team studying a colony of grey seals on the Skerries, a group of rocks and small islands off the north coast of Anglesey. My work experience turned into an eight-month assignment that involved living on an uninhabited island for 10 days. I spent many of my days on the water in the team’s 20 metre orange and black boat. The occasional seasickness was more than made up for by regularly seeing dolphins and porpoise swimming alongside the boat. One of the things we did was transect surveys, dragging a video camera along the sea floor to see what is there. We also tried to assess the impact human activity is having on seals.

I enjoy being out of the office and learning practical fieldwork skills – I even had the chance to learn to scuba-dive. It is also rewarding to be making a contribution to conservation. I would recommend this sort of work if you don’t mind getting cold and wet and being away from home at times. It’s exciting!

Qualifications: A first degree in Natural Sciences is best
Experience and skills: Be fit and healthy, volunteering experience
Pay range: £18,000 - £30,000 +
Related positions: Wardening, conservation officer, marine policy officer
It is fantastic to spend time on the water.
I am passionate about beautiful objects and restoring them to their original splendour. Attention to detail is everything although the actual process of making stained glass is straightforward and hasn’t changed for hundreds of years.

I provide a service, saving important architectural items. The whole process of finding something period, untouched and using our expertise to recreate the original is so interesting. I have worked on most of the historic buildings in Wales including Conway and Caernarfon castles, many churches and National Trust properties. Next week I fly to California to oversee a new stained glass window for an ‘A’ list movie star!

I left school at 16 with few qualifications. I gained an insight into form, design, colour and balance from my artist father. I went through an eight-year apprentice with a stained glass restorer.

A typical day starts at 7.00 am with a visit to a prospective client’s property. A detailed quote is then written for the client. In the afternoon, various delivery jobs are checked before knocking off at around 3.30pm. This is a business and one needs to be shrewd. I have diversified into architectural supplies and use my web site to generate new business. I employ 12 people including three glass restorers and two other craftsmen, a sales manager and deputy, drivers and administrative staff. It’s often hard to find the right people. Working glass is a trade, like a plumber but you end up with something beautiful. We want people who like fixing things or putting things together...people who enjoy mending their own bike and probably enjoy Lego. You need to be a perfectionist.

Qualifications: None.

Experience and skills: An eye for design. Good with your hands

Pay range: £8,000 - £30,000

Related positions: All kinds of skilled arts and crafts - stone mason, furniture restorer, etc.
It's wonderful to restore beautiful things
I was brought up on Anglesey and after University in Aberystwyth I went back there to teach at a secondary school. I have a strong interest in education, language and Welsh heritage but I decided that I wanted to spend more time outside of the classroom. I love Wales and its rich heritage. The museum employs 24 people and gives visitors a unique experience into what life was like working in the quarry that closed in 1969. This includes slate splitting demonstrations, quarrymen’s houses furnished in different eras, and lots of amazing engineering and machinery that was once way ahead of its time.

My role is to make sure that all our visitors have an enriching experience, I am constantly thinking about how to make the museum more appealing. I enjoy working with school children from all over the UK, especially as I do not have to do any marking afterwards!

There is a real need to pro-actively attract ethnic minority groups, especially from North Wales. I am talking to Black Environment Network about how we can work together to encourage the different communities in the Bangor area to get more involved.

I like the varied and interesting nature of my work. At present, I am planning a new guided walk and art workshops. We are also participating in the national initiative ‘Read a Million Words’. It is important for me to be part of a team in Llanberis and to link up with education professional colleagues across Wales. There is so much potential and so much to do.

**Qualifications:** First degree + qualification in Museum Education or Education.

**Experience and skills:** Work experience. Bi-lingual in Welsh and English

**Pay range:** £24,000 - £35,000

**Related positions:** Education officers in natural and heritage sites
Visitors get to see what life was like in a slate quarry.
‘If I’m not here I’m on the beach’ is a sign that often hangs on the door of my shop in Barmouth. But that’s not to say that I am not working. I run an outdoor gear shop selling kiting, climbing and cycling gear alongside some great adrenaline toys. I am also an outdoor pursuits trainer.

My work involves taking groups of youngsters from all over the UK on activities, exploring the fantastic outdoors of North Wales safely. Some are doing Duke of Edinburgh or the John Muir Environment Award. Most are disadvantaged kids who have no concept of the rural environment. I am a trained teacher but I prefer to integrate teaching basic skills with outdoor learning. I also work with adults from Coleg Harlech WEA(N) including ethnic minority students.

Although I grew up in Derbyshire, my family regularly came on holiday to Wales. I jumped at the chance to study here after narrowly avoiding signing up for the army. I believe that the outdoors should be accessible to everybody and that we must create opportunities for people from all backgrounds. In fact, we have local ethnic minorities and an increasing number of visitors from all over the world.

My job can be tough; you definitely won’t get rich and it can be quiet in the winter. It’s a lifestyle choice. For me, it’s just nice to be outside in the elements, enjoying the scenery and the wind blowing about; it’s different each time. Life feels like a holiday here. It’s also hard work, but that’s not a problem when you live somewhere like Barmouth. Even on my days off, you will find me take my three daughters and a son up on the hills!

**Qualifications:** Mountain Leader Instructor Award Summer (MLTE)
Canoeing Instructor Level 2 (British Canoe Union)
Single Pitch Award (SPA – rock-climbing)
Teacher Training or Environmental Planning degree helpful.

**Experience and skills:** Be fit and healthy.

**Pay range:** £15,000 - £22,000
I train people to explore the fantastic outdoors.
The thought of carefully examining and cataloguing two thousand items from an old farmhouse in West Wales is not most people’s ideas of fun but for me, unlocking the secrets of Egryn near Barmouth, close to where I grew up, was sheer pleasure.

When I was appointed curator of buildings in North Wales for the National Trust I couldn’t believe it. It’s brilliant to run projects to rescue dilapidated places to keep them going. One such project is at Penrhyn Castle, a stunning 19th century fantasy building in North Wales. A two-year project aims to restore a private family sitting room to its early 20th century state. Every small detail must be considered and the right piece of furniture or ornament sourced. An old photograph is the main source of information so it’s a bit like being a detective.

You need to have a strong sense of responsibility in this job, looking after so many places and objects. I absolutely love my job. I also get involved in putting together occasional exhibitions. There is no such thing as a typical day!

But you don’t need a degree to begin to be get close to historic properties. Many NT properties are only open to the public in the summer. We welcome people from all backgrounds to take up seasonal paid and volunteer posts. These include stewarding in the historic buildings, running gift shops or helping with the many tasks to protect buildings – what we call putting them ‘to sleep’ at the end of the season. There can’t be many better ways to spend your time!

**Qualifications:** Degree in architecture, art history or museum management.

**Experience and skills:** Practical experience

**Pay range:** £27,000 to £41,000

**Related positions:** Conservator, buildings and rural surveyors, farm and garden advisors
I rescue and look after amazing buildings.
I think I got into doing this sort of work because I am a bit nosey. I get opportunities to see people’s family valuables and heirlooms, drawing out stories from the past. Caernarfon is my area and love it. The past makes us understand what the present means. Many of the documents are in Welsh so linguistic knowledge is important, but it does not matter whether you are from the local area.

I collect documents, support educational trips, produce pamphlets and run exhibitions and help people find things and understand them. Christmas and the New Year can often be particularly busy as people clear out their lofts and cupboards! Sometimes, when large estates sell buildings off, I have to trawl through reams of papers and decide what will be of value to the archive. Then I catalogue and record it all.

Every so often I am inspired by a story. Once, I heard about a Second World War diary of a primary school child given to a visiting education officer. I was told that the diary talked about how the child’s grandfather was parachuted into France and when he missed the landing spot, the French resistance helped him to escape. I failed to track it down. But 10 years later someone brought it to the archive!

I get a lot out of my job, from the trust people place in me about their intimate family past to the documents I find and the past it reveals. Despite the shortage of staff and the high workload, I wouldn’t swap it for anything else.

Qualifications: First degree in History and Welsh History followed by a two year correspondence Diploma Archivist course.

Experience and skills: Bi-lingual in Welsh and English

Pay range: £20,000 - £25,000

Related jobs: Archivist in libraries, museums and other organisations
I help people find out what they want about the past.
I have a very multi-cultural background. I was brought up in the East German part of Berlin then moved to Bangladesh followed by living in Birmingham before I moved to Wales for my MSc. I stayed because I love the mountains and climbing.

I have a fascinating job in environmental protection. I manage spills from lorries, monitor industrial effluent, go to a farm to sort out problems with a leaky oil tank, locate the source of pollution into a river and deal with the people who did it. I am a little like a police detective. I have a little black notebook in which I record everything I find and see as well as any relevant conversations. These details will support any resulting prosecutions.

In my job, I use my knowledge of chemistry and the environment as well as draw on my communication skills. It can be stressful but it is certainly not boring. But it’s not all policing. I organise litter picks and beach clean ups that involve the local community. A recent clean up of the Maesgeirchen estate with residents and also covering the adjoining woods and river resulted in 40 skips of rubbish. We used up the annual budget for the local authority in one day! But what a success - the area is now cleared of years of rubbish and the fly tipping problem has reduced.

Together with my colleagues we keep our drinking water, beaches and our natural environment clean and safe. How’s about that for a service to the community?

**Qualifications:** Degree in Chemistry and MSc in Environmental Chemistry.

**Experience and skills:** Communication skills

**Pay range:** £16,000 - £18,000. Additional benefits up to £10,000

**Related jobs:** Scientist monitoring different environmental qualities
We keep our drinking water, beaches and the environment clean and safe.
11 Resources Manager. North Wales Wildlife Trust

Born in Italy near the Slovenian border, I came to Britain to study. To improve my English language skills, I joined a BTCV Volunteers’ 3 week residential working holiday in Scotland. Not only did I meet people and improve my English, I also discovered I was interested in nature conservation. After university, I moved to North Wales for a volunteer placement with BTCV and decided it was the place for me.

All my skills are put to the test in my job as Resources Manager for the Wildlife Trust as I co-ordinate all 200 of the volunteers. I am responsible for setting the agenda for volunteers in a wide range of tasks from surveys and wardening, office support and marine awareness raising. I am always out and about around the sites and reserves. No two days are the same. I often plan things out the night before, and then it all changes! I do thrive on challenges, and enjoy the excitement and variety of my job. One of the best things about my work is the friendly working environment created by staff and volunteers. I am a ‘people person’ and recognise the vital role I play in bringing people closer to the environment. We all have responsibility for wildlife and the environment and people are often not aware of this. Part of my job is to reach out and give them the skills to make a difference.

In this job, I am able to work in the field I love, in the place where I wish to live with people whose company I enjoy. Surely, it doesn’t come much better than that!

Qualifications: First degree in Biological Imaging (specialising in graphic design, desk top publishing and biological sciences).

Experience and skills: conservation volunteering, communication skills

Pay range: £15,000 to £18,000

Related jobs: Resource manager in various heritage and environmental organisations
I co-ordinate volunteers and give people skills to protect wildlife.
I started out as a volunteer and I am now a countryside warden. Some wardening posts are more scientifically focused, with little or no visitor work but I prefer a mix. My job ranges from working with volunteers, to surveying local wildlife, supporting events, and liaising with other organisations. I work with the local community and do practical work such as day to day maintenance and habitat management. Visitors have an important place in my work. The Country Park gets over 120,000 people a year. In addition to the work at Loggerheads, where I spend much of my time, I am part of a team employed by the Council working on 22 other reserves across the county.

I have always loved the outdoors. Knowing I wanted to do something physical, I did an interesting mix of economics, sport studies and biology at A-level. It was not in fact until I went to university in Norwich that I started to hear that jobs like mine even existed. Once I found out, I made a real effort to get involved in voluntary work, whilst researching the countryside organisations websites to learn more about what was on offer. I found the Countryside Job Service website (www.countryside-jobs.com) particularly helpful. My research made me realise just how much was on offer. I made the decision to get involved in wardening so I can enjoy the outdoors and scenery, whilst improving these wonderful places for wildlife and people.

I am very inquisitive, I ask an awful lot of questions and I am still studying. Often I use my evenings to look up a plant or learn about a habitat, to better understand the environment I manage.

**Qualifications:** Degree in Environmental Science

**Experience and skills:** Practical experience

**Pay range:** £11,000 - £16,000

**Related jobs:** Managing different habitats for a variety of organisations
Habitat management and taking care of visitors fill my days.
As a custodian for CADW, I am responsible for running one of the most splendid historic buildings in the UK. It is a World Heritage Site. I am a ‘people person’. That’s just as well because over 200,000 people a year visit us. Good communication skills are essential to deal with people at all levels and from all over Britain, in fact, from all over the world. We get lots of Americans and East Europeans as well as school and coach parties and it’s my job to make sure they go home happy. Some kids have never seen anything like the castle and leave overawed – it’s a great way to learn history.

I grew up in Leicestershire. After YTS, I worked in technical sales for a local engineering firm. Then I moved to Wales and joined CADW as an assistant custodian at Harlech castle. Since then I have worked my way up to Senior Custodian at Caernarfon. As well as supervising the castle team of 6-8 staff, I have other duties. I support colleagues at other CADW heritage sites in North Wales. I have to ensure compliance with administrative and audit procedures regulations. Although the castle doesn’t change, there is the challenge of modernising the interpretation information, especially for younger visitors.

The biggest buzz about my job is when we are extremely busy and there is lots of pressure. Managing it all gives a real sense of achievement. It’s a wonderful place to work.

Qualifications: None essential.

Experience and skills: Good with people – customer service background.

Well organised.

Bi-lingual in Welsh and English an advantage

Pay range: £15,000 to £18,500

Related jobs: Assistant custodian, Custodian
I run one of the most splendid buildings in the world.
Advice and information about jobs, training, and volunteering

Discovering the Environmental and Heritage sectors
Most of the organisations in the sectors are working with BEN. From the examples, you will see that people work with heritage and environment not only through environmental and heritage organisations. County Councils for example have departments dealing with environment and heritage. BEN will be continuing to organise visits and networking events to enable ethnic communities to get to know about what is on offer. Rome was not built in one day! Keep in touch. We look forward to continue working together with everyone.

Some Useful Websites
Once you are interested, it is important to begin to know what each organisation that you may consider working for really does and what it may be like. Their websites are very useful for this. Some of them have a job section, and give information about training, placements or volunteering. But, there is nothing like going to visit sites and talking to people if you are very new to all of this. Take your time and enjoy discovering things!

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers: www.btcv.org
Cadw: www.cadw.wales.gov.uk
Countryside Council for Wales: www.ccw.gov.uk
Conwy County Borough Council: www.conwy.gov.uk
Denbighshire County Council: www.denbighshire.gov.uk
Drew Pritchard Ltd: www.drewpritchard.co.uk
Environment Agency: www.environment-agency.gov.uk
Environment Wales: www.environment-wales.org
Flintshire County Council: www.flintshire.gov.uk
Forestry Commission: www.forestry.gov.uk
Friends of the Earth: www.foe.co.uk
Groundwork: www.groundwork.org.uk
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust: www.heneb.co.uk
Gwynedd Council: www.gwynedd.gov.uk
Isle of Anglesey County Council: www.anglesey.gov.uk
National Museum of Wales: www.museumwales.ac.uk
National Trust for England and Wales: www.nationaltrust.org.uk
North Wales Wildlife Trust: www.wildlifetrusts.org.uk
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds: www.rspb.org.uk
Snowdonia National Park Authority: www.snowdonia-npa.gov.uk
Snowdonia Society: www.snowdonia-society.org.uk
The Gateway Gardens Trust: www.gatewaygardenstrust.org
Wrexham County Borough Council: www.wrexham.gov.uk
Careers Wales: www.careerswales.com (Offices around Wales where you can meet face to face with an advisor)
Connexions Direct (for young people): www.connexions-direct.com
Countryside Jobs Service: www.countryside-jobs.com
Learn Direct: www.learndirect-advice.co.uk
The database on the CD gives a good indication of what courses are available. But courses at colleges and universities are changing all the time. All of them have careers advisors who are there to speak to you about your interests. BEN can also help if you have difficulties identifying who to speak to get the information that you want.
This booklet is produced for members of ethnic communities to show the interesting and exciting jobs available in the environmental and heritage sectors. There are few ethnic minority role models in terms of employees. We must start somewhere so we urge members of ethnic communities to courageously push the boat out and be the first!

The BEN GWLAD Project in North Wales was funded by the Countryside Council for Wales and the EQUAL programme of the European Union's Community Initiative under Theme E: Informal Learning.

We are most grateful to all our community and organisational partners, and to those individuals featured for sharing their stimulating and inspiring personal stories with us.

Cadw
Climb8
Conwy County Borough Council Countryside Services
Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)
Denbighshire County Council Countryside Services
Denbighshire County Council Heather and Hillforts Project
Denbighshire County Council Heritage Services
Drew Pritchard Ltd
Environment Agency Wales
Forestry Commission Wales
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
Gwynedd Archive Services
Gwynedd Museum and Art Gallery
National Museum Wales
National Trust for England and Wales
North Wales Wildlife Trust
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Snowdonia National Park Authority
Snowdonia Society
Snowdonia Wildlife Gardening Project

ISBN Number 978-1-874444-17-6