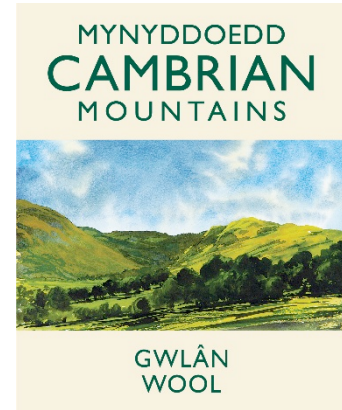


# PRESS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

9 April 2015



### **Cambrian Mountains Wool : a really Welsh wool challenge**

The Cambrian Mountains Wool Group is an exciting initiative to develop and promote one of our regional assets – the wool farmed in the Cambrian Mountains Region.

The Group is supported by the Cambrian Mountains Initiative, itself set up to encourage and support the development of sustainable, rural communities within the area of the Cambrian Mountains.

The team of four businesswomen - a knit designer, a fashion and textiles business advisor, a feltmaker, and a yarn shop proprietor – are united in their commitment to champion the value of Welsh wool and make it more commercially available, overcoming the obstacles of the global wool industry to bringing wool with genuine Welsh provenance to the wider market.

The Group's ambitions have challenged the wool industry to do things differently. Team member Sue James of Llynfi Textiles explains, "Wales produces thousands of tonnes of fleece every year but it's no mean feat buying wool from Wales. The huge scale and nature of the global market makes it extremely difficult for manufacturers and businesses to source Welsh wool in the volume and quality they need. There's a fantastic artisan sector of small producers and makers but, on a more commercial level, a disappointingly small amount of yarns and wool textiles that are made in Wales are actually made from Welsh-farmed wool, so we set out on a journey to see if we could make changes"

The women have been working to explore the possibilities of sourcing, buying, processing and marketing wool which not only has genuine regional provenance but is also of exceptional quality. As part of the study, and to showcase the versatility of wool from the Cambrian Mountains Region, the Design Challenge was launched and designer-makers from the UK and beyond were invited to submit ideas for using the wool fleece, yarn and fabric. 35 out of almost 130 entries were selected to form a showcase talking point, challenging designers, manufacturers and consumers to raise their expectations and think differently about Welsh wool. The exhibition will now go on tour and help determine the next phase of development for Cambrian Mountains Wool.

Textiles business advisor Suzi Park sums up the Wool Group's experience: "The market interest and demand for wool textiles with provenance, made in Wales from Welsh farmed wool, was always clear. Less certain was the quality of 'really Welsh wool' and its suitability to the range of purposes we want - from clothing to flooring. The end-results have exceeded all our expectations. The locally farmed Welsh mule fleece has produced beautifully soft combed tops, worsted yarn and fabric, and has been transformed into an inspirational collection of exquisitely made pieces. The Challenge Collection is a real tribute to one of Wales' most iconic and enduring treasures: its wool."

## **ENDS**

## **PRESS CONTACTS**

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

- Gwlân Mynyddoedd Cambrian Mountains Wool** exists to promote and market wool products from sheep farmed in the region and approve wool products for the Cambrian Mountains Wool Scheme. Applications to the Cambrian Mountains wool scheme are open to designers and makers making products from wool that is farmed in the region. Certified products meet the highest standards expected of those bearing the Mynyddoedd Cambrian Mountains logo.
  - <http://cambrianmountainswool.org/>
  - <https://www.facebook.com/cambrianwool>
- The **Cambrian Mountains Initiative (CMI)** was inspired by His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales in order to help sustain traditional upland farms and rural communities of Wales by promoting produce and craft from the area, and by protecting the environment in which they are produced. It oversees the quality standards of the Mynyddoedd Cambrian Mountains logo.
  - Aled Davies – 01970 639410 / 434
  - <http://cambrianmountains.co.uk/>
  - <https://www.facebook.com/CambrianMountainsInitiative>
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  - <http://cambrianmountains.co.uk/producers/cambrian-mountains-wool-products/>
- Interview and photograph opportunities.**
  - Copies of the official Gwlân Mynyddoedd Cambrian Mountains Wool logo, sheep and wool images accompany this press release.
  - Cambrian Mountains Wool Group members will be available for interview on the stand throughout Hay Festival