

Trip Report: Penybontfawr

Date: April 28th, 2017

Group: Steve (leader), Sarah, Lynn, Selina, Jeff, Bob, Dave C, Colin

Route: A combination of 2 walks described by Oswestry Ramblers to the west of the village of Penybontfawr in Powys.

Total Distance: 9.5 miles

Total Ascent: 2000 ft

After driving through quite widespread rain in Shropshire I think everyone was a bit relieved to arrive at the car park in Penybontfawr to find dry conditions both underfoot and overhead. The only source of concern for the group was probably an admission from me that I had not done this walk previously and so would be relying on the description provided by Oswestry Ramblers and of course a map. Always good to get your excuses in early!

We left the village on a quiet lane, following the tarmac for about a mile before heading through a farmyard and starting to climb on a track through fields. Given the time of year it wasn't a big surprise to find the fields full of ewes and their lambs - the sight and sound of lambs scampering around in search of mum soon became a feature of the day, leading Selina to accurately name it "The Lost Lamb Walk".

The path climbed gently up to a high point of about 400m at which there was a superb view northwards towards The Berwyns. We descended into a wooded area and took a coffee break when a short delay was needed to check on the route-finding. A slightly soggy bridleway led us downhill but we soon left the woodland and returned to a field track with more confused sheep.

A short section of road in the valley bottom took us over a bridge crossing Afon Hirnant and then on to another bridleway that climbed steadily up the other side of the valley. Flowering gorse bushes provided some attractive colour here, in contrast to the sky! Despite the very overcast conditions and one or two showers in the area we were lucky enough to get through the day with only a few spots of rain.



The route took us into another area of Forestry Commission woodland and fortunately some recent felling gave us a perfect lunch spot with a view of Penybontfawr and the Tanat Valley beyond. We then followed a forestry track through some towering conifers to emerge at our highest point of the day and more fields of sheep. After a little uncertainty about the precise route we found the required "metalled" road, although it barely qualified for that description and soon deteriorated into a rough track as it passed through another wood.

The sting in the tail of the day was two-fold: first a steep climb up an awkward path for 10 mins to get us over a ridge and then into a last bit of conifer forest where current felling had obliterated the route. But we were soon back into fields with the village in sight and thankfully reached the cars before the rain arrived!

And, as usual, it was good to celebrate the end of the week, at The Dysart, with various BUMS who had not been able to make the walk.