

Trip Report: The Three Breidden Peaks

Date: March 11th, 2017

Group: Steve (leader), Sarah, Jim G, Ian, Sue, Tony, Lynn, Ann, Neil, Debbie, Jeff (+ Spot and Jess)

Route: A circuit over three large volcanic lumps that make up the Breidden Hills in Powys (a slight variation of the route described at [Breidden Hills](#))

Total Distance: 7.2 miles

Total Ascent: 2200 ft

After 11 years of existence of the BUMS it was nice to learn that the planned walk represented new ground for the club. Sarah and I were the only ones in the group who had visited the area previously even though it is barely more than an hour away and just over the border into Wales. On this occasion we were pleased to be joined by 9 human and 2 canine BUMS!

After a couple of hundred metres alongside the A458 the walk soon got serious as it followed a steeply ascending path through woodland covering the flank of Moel y Golfa. Just about everyone was soon de-layering as we realised how warm and still it was amongst the trees. But it didn't take long to complete the zig-zags up to the large stone pillar on the summit which celebrates the Romany Chell, or leader, Uriah Burton ('Big Hughie') with a plaque reading – *'a fighter for the weak, good to the poor, never beaten in fisty cuffs, a man who led his people into the twentieth century'*.

The descent from Moel y Golfa (403 ft) was a bit rocky and steep before reaching woodland and an easier gradient. We came out of the woods onto a lane and stopped for refreshments, then followed the lane for about a mile, mostly uphill. A bridleway then led us back into woodland on the other side of the road, part of the Criggion Estate, and gently up towards our second summit of the day. We passed an unusual large, old wooden table and benches but decided it was a bit early to stop for lunch and just used it instead as a photo opportunity! About 20 minutes later everyone was happy to take a break when we reached "Rodney's Pillar", the substantial landmark *'erected by subscription of the Gentlemen of Montgomeryshire and Salop'* in 1787 to honour Sir George Brydges Rodney, Admiral of the White. We honoured the Admiral ourselves by sitting on the base of his pillar for lunch! It was just a pity that the hazy skies limited visibility and any chance of identifying the numerous distant peaks that can be seen on a good day.

Throughout the walk we were entertained by Spot and Jess, with Spot seemingly delighted to have a female "friend" to relentlessly pursue! When we had to cross a small stream Jess wasn't happy about getting wet but Ian managed to carry her across without mishap.

A couple of soggy, flat fields followed the stream crossing and then we were at the base of Bulthy Hill which led to our final peak, Middletown Hill. Without any woodland on its slopes this hill had commanding views of the surrounding area and it was easy to see why it was the site of a fort in the Iron Age. A fifteen minute descent took us back to the cars.

And we were back at the Yew Tree in plenty of time to get the best seats for the big rugby match!