

Location: Dyserth, Denbighshire, Saturday 26th May 2018
Weather: Warm, still, a few spots of rain at lunchtime
Party: Jeff (Leader), Debbie (plus Ellie and Spot), Steve, Sarah, Chrissie
Distance: Distance: 11 miles
Ascent: 3200 feet (Satmap reading so could have been anything)

A select group set off from the waterfall car park in Dyserth, having suffered from late withdrawals and a change from Friday to Saturday to avoid a day of forecast heavy rain.

The route started past the remains of the old mill in Dyserth next to its 70 foot waterfall. We climbed around this and down to cross the river Ffyddion before crossing a species rich meadow owned by North Wales Wildlife Trust, called Maes Hiraddug. The group fanned out across this meadow in a rather ill-disciplined manner in search of orchids and rare ferns, before continuing on the old Prestatyn to Dyserth LNWR branchline, now a very smoothly surfaced bike path. This skirted around the base of Graig Fawr until a path allowed us to climb up to the trig point for a coffee stop overlooking the many delights of Prestatyn.

From here we joined Offa's Dyke for its last section along the most northerly escarpment of the Clwydian Hills, through the Prestatyn Hillside Nature Reserve. All agreed that the wild flowers on this section were especially interesting, particularly on the limestone section, and a follow up is expected from Chrissie on some of the species seen. One can only speculate on what we would have been able to identify had Jim been there with his app.

The route then headed east past various transmitter masts and other tech gadgetry before joining the Clwydian Way, and bearing to the south towards Trelawnyd. Before Trelawnyd we climbed Gop Hill for a lunch stop where we could admire the neolithic/bronze age mound on the top. This is said to be the second largest neolithic mound in the British Isles after Silbury Hill, and was suitably impressive, the view from the top was nice too. There were a few drops of rain during this part of the day but nothing too serious.

We descended through Trelawnyd and out towards the valley of the Ffyddian river, along a tree-lined bridleway leading eventually to the ruins of Marian Mill with its giant waterwheel hub still in place. Here we rejoined Offa's Dyke for a while heading south towards the hamlet of Cym with its remote chapel and Blue Lion pub. The path took us unerringly to the pub across a field from a wood, before returning up the other side of the field into the same wood. The route took us back to Dyserth along the western side of Y Foel, a hill which has largely gone missing through quarrying but which still bears a large hill fort on top, Moel Hiraddug.

During this latter part of the walk the number of stiles seemed never ending and only one or two had slides to allow the dogs through, requiring some ungainly dog-bundling to get Ellie and sometimes Spot over the top.

We returned to the waterfall car park where we had ice creams to cool us down before we returned to the Dysart for the obligatory rehydration.

Jeff