

Trip Report: Llantysilio Mountains**Date:** Feb 13th, 2016**Group:** Steve (leader), Sarah, Lynda, Debbie, Mike H (+ Nicky, Elie and Spot)**Route:** A circuit over Moel Morfydd and Moel y Gamelin also using sections of the Dee Valley Way**Total Distance:** 9 miles**Total Ascent:** 2900 ft**Weather:** Cloudy, dull and chilly in the easterly wind but without rain!

It was off to the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB for this walk. A drive of just under an hour took us to the start point of The Sun Inn at Rhewl, the group comprising 5 human BUMS and 3 dogs. The initial part of the route, heading west at low level, involved using paths through farm land and woods. Unsurprisingly, there were quite a few stiles and so entertainment was provided by the challenge of man-handling our canine friends over these obstacles! Lovely views of the river Dee were also a feature of this section.

The Dee Valley Way runs for 15 miles between Corwen and Llangollen, and our route followed it for about a mile here, as well as picking it up again later in the day. And another thing that runs between these two places is of course the Llangollen railway - the only standard gauge heritage railway in North Wales (so says its website!). We were first reminded of the railway's existence by the whistle of the steam locomotive and our thoughts immediately turned to Tony. Surely there's an idea for a future walk under Tony's leadership - out on the train and back along the Dee Valley Way? It might need a long summer day!

As we gained in height the easterly wind became more noticeable but we managed to find a bit of shelter for a short coffee stop before joining the track that runs along the ridgeline of the Llantysilio mountains with heather moorland to each side. The first peak to climb was Moel Morfydd and we paused on top for the compulsory trig point photos. Next was the smaller peak of Moel y Gaer - site of an iron age hill fort - and finally the steep haul to the highest point of the day which was Moel y Gamelin. As well as being the highest point it was probably also the coldest and, after exchanging pleasantries with a man erecting a "ham radio" aerial, we didn't hang about but left the main track to descend towards an old quarry surrounded by spoil. With all the hard work done it seemed that everyone's thoughts turned to lunch and so, when we reached the level of the quarry, we found another sheltered spot amongst the heather to get some sustenance.

Having seen only a few other people up to this point we briefly seemed to be surrounded by other dog walkers as we continued east and then picked up a clear path heading south over a slight ridge. Straight ahead was a good view of Llangollen and Castell Dinas Bran on the hill above the town. The path descended and then passed from open grassland into woodland, where we found that we were again on the Dee Valley Way. A final mile across fields and then along the road brought us back to the Sun Inn. If we had been 14th century sheep drovers I'm sure that the inn would have been a very welcome sight but with the Yew Tree only an hour away we opted to do our drinking there!