

**Trip Report:** The Ceiriog Valley from Chirk Castle

**Date:** Sept 27th, 2019

**Group:** Steve (leader), Sarah, Mike & Selina, Tony and Lynn, Mike & Les, Debbie & Jeff, Mike H, Jim, Dave C, Ray, Andrea, John F, Rob

**Route:** A loop from Chirk Castle exploring both sides of the Ceiriog Valley

**Total Distance:** 10.1 miles

**Total Ascent:** 2100ft

Well, what a pleasant surprise - a total of 17 BUMs, and 4 dogs, signed up for this Friday walk! I think some of the attraction might have been the relatively short drive and consequent late start. Anyway, everyone was very punctual gathering in Bunbury such that, with people jumping into cars as a shower arrived and then some cars heading off, the leader wasn't totally sure that all 17 were accounted for. So it was something of a relief to find that 50 minutes later the whole party had turned up at the car park in the grounds of Chirk Castle!

Unfortunately, something else had "turned up" that was to remain a feature of the day - rain! So it was waterproofs on and then a downhill start through the castle grounds to the River Ceiriog and the road that follows it along the valley floor. Here we joined Offa's Dyke Path to begin climbing the other side of the valley and then joined the Llwybr Ceiriog Trail where it crosses the ancient dyke. A couple of kilometres of steady ascent took us to a junction of lanes where we stopped for refreshments in the shelter of trees. As the weather remained rather unpleasant we didn't stop for long.

Now heading north we began to descend along a lane, with a good view of Glyn Ceiriog, which soon became a rough track through dense woodland. The dogs seemed to particularly enjoy this section, especially Riley who never likes to miss an opportunity for exploring.

We soon made it back down to the river, near to the village of Pontfadog, and picked up a track on the north side which is another part of the Llwybr Ceiriog Trail. A short, sharp climb up a lane to a farm was followed by a bridleway which continued up but rather more gently. As we reached some felled trees the continuous showers seemed to have stopped and we took the opportunity to sit and enjoy lunch. But within 15 minutes the sky darkened and another shower arrived so walking again seemed like the best option.

In another mile or so we were at a high point with good views over the Dee Valley and Llangollen, enhanced by the fact that the sun was trying hard to break through. As we descended down a track the group was well spread out as the photographers present took advantage of the brighter conditions to capture a few shots (before the next shower arrived!). We re-grouped at a junction of tracks for the final climb of the day and towards the top found that the cloud had cleared sufficiently in the east for us to be able to see the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge and the distinctive lump of Beeston Castle. A couple of miles downhill on tarmac followed by a footpath into Chirk Castle estate brought us back to the cars. Thankfully, as there were no further showers in about the last hour of the walk, we had all managed to dry out a bit but were happy to shed the damp boots, jackets and overtrousers.

Further drying out, and rehydration, followed in front of the welcoming fire at The Dysart where we were joined by Caryle, Amanda and Barry.