

Trip Report: Clwydian Hills Loop

Date: June 12th, 2021

Group: Steve (leader) & Sarah, Mike W, Tony and Lynn (+ Riley), Mike H, Dave C, Ian, Ann & Neil, Colin, Jane, Gerry, Mark

Route: A loop around Moel Arthur and over Penycloddiau

Total Distance: 12.3 miles

Total Ascent: 2400ft

What a wonderful day for walking in the hills! Conditions don't get much better than this - dry underfoot and overhead, with intermittent sunshine and a cooling breeze.

An expected group of 17 was slightly reduced by a range of factors: Ali choosing to be cautious ahead of Dave's upcoming hip surgery, Selina suffering a foot injury and Lindsey misjudging the travel time to get to the start at Cilcain. But it was still a good turnout of 14 + Riley.

We began by heading south-west on a track that soon changes from tarmac to a dirt surface and which climbs gently up to meet Offa's Dyke Path (ODP) at the boundary of Moel Famau Country Park. We followed ODP to the north for a mile or so before it descended quite steeply to a road at the base of Moel Arthur. A short distance westwards down the road we left it to follow a bridleway and soon made a coffee stop, where the sun was doing its best to shine through the trees. The bridleway emerged at another road and we again descended a short distance to pick up a byway which climbs gently for a couple of miles and provides excellent views towards Denbigh moors and beyond to Snowdonia.

Arriving at a junction of several paths and tracks - our most northerly point - we again joined the ODP and followed it up to the summit of Penycloddiau where the remains of an Iron Age hillfort are evident. After a brief pause for a few photos we continued following ODP and soon found an ideal place for lunch, sheltered from the breeze and in the sun. Unsurprisingly, there was some reluctance to get going again! At least it was downhill to reach the bwch between Penycloddiau and Moel Arthur. But then we had to climb, up and over the shoulder of Moel Arthur, with Beeston Castle visible in the distance. Reaching the road close to where we had been earlier we left ODP and followed a track leading directly back to the cars.

On return to Bunbury there followed a rehydration session at The Dysart garden with the walkers being joined by partners and other BUMS members.

It seemed to me that the walk was remarkably lacking in incidents - unless I missed anything - which makes the leader's job easy but also means the trip report is rather boring! So sorry about that but I think that at least everyone enjoyed the walk.