

Trip Report: Dinas Bran, Eglwyseg and the Dee Valley**Date:** Dec 3rd, 2022**Group:** Steve (leader), Sarah, Ann, Neil, Selina, Mike W, Lesley, Mike H**Route:** A circuit from Wenffrwd Nature Reserve near Llangollen, up and over hills to the north, down Offa's Dyke Path and back along the Shropshire Union Canal**Total Distance:** 9.8 miles**Total Ascent:** 1800 ft**Photo's:** link to Lesley's <https://photos.app.goo.gl/W1DDfFeXttKgCvRb6>

After a week of dull and damp weather it was a relief to set out for Llangollen in encouraging, though chilly, conditions. En route, Neil experienced a timely reminder of the low temperature outside when a car in front of him skidded on some black ice and spun through 180 degrees, fortunately without leaving the tarmac or hitting anything!

Wenffrwd Nature Reserve is a recently established site just off the Trevor to Llangollen road. Until the 1980s it was a landfill site but it has since been reclaimed by nature and made accessible with trails. It also has a rather convenient car park that was ideal for our planned route!

The first target was Castell Dinas Bran and, judging from the chat as we climbed towards it, I think that most of the group had been here on previous walks. Nonetheless it seemed like a good place to pause for coffee, take in the view and ponder a bit of history. Wikipedia tells us: "The presently visible stone castle was probably built in the 1260s by Gruffydd Maelor II, a prince of Powys Fadog, on the site of several earlier structures, including an Iron Age hillfort".

We descended the steep other side of the hill without any problem, apparently unlike Dave Franklin who was remembered as a casualty of the slippery slope here some years ago! Emerging on to a narrow road we covered a short stretch on tarmac to reach a footpath heading up a gully in the impressive limestone formation of Eglwyseg. Hands on rock were needed in one spotand you could almost believe we were in the Dolomites! As the terrain levelled out we reached the highest point of the day and started down on a nice wide bridleway/path. A few stiles later and we reached a road and found a lovely spot for lunch, sheltered from the NE breeze, facing the sun and looking down into the Dee Valley.

At this point we joined Offa's Dyke Path and continued down, now in pleasant woodland. After the woods we continued to follow the Path and soon reached the Shropshire Union Canal, not far from where the canal crosses the Pont-Cysyllte Aqueduct. It was then a straightforward hike along the towpath for a couple of miles towards Llangollen, leaving the canal just a stone's throw from the Nature Reserve.

Thanks to the group for your company and for making it a grand day out!