

Trip Report

Llanemynech Offa's Dyke, industrial heritage, golf course Ramble

27th May 2022

Attendees: Mike Arrowsmith, Colin Christy, Gerry O'Neil, Iain McNeil, Pippa the dog McNeil, Chrissie Latter, Janet Murray, Carol Wallace, Andrea Percival, Cate Gregory, Sue Lancaster, Jeff Ewing, Richard (Leader) and Della Calder.

Distance: 7.63 miles. Ascent: 1350ft (according to Strava)

Changing the venue of this walk from a challenging walk in Snowdonia to a gently amble in Shropshire certainly increased its popularity with a health turnout of members reporting for duty on Friday morning at the Pavilion. Twelve walkers made a tidy three cars for the one hour journey there and Jeff met us at the carpark in Pant which was soon full of BUMS!

There was a slight delay in the arrival of one car due to a comfort break at Tesco but soon everyone was toggled up and ready to roll. We began by walking back to the main road and then downhill to the old dried up canal and making a sharp left turn onto the towpath heading towards the centre of Llanemynech. Wasn't long before we met the main road again and crossed back over the canal to head into the heritage area where the presence of a number of picnic tables warranted a coffee break. Thirsts quenched we set off again and soon came to the main attraction of the area a Hoffman lime kiln complete with its original chimney. The Hoffman kiln was greeted by some with unbridled enthusiasm and by others with unbridled boredom, you can't please 'em all! Moving on we followed the old tramway and guess what we were soon crossing the main road again this time going under it to emerge at the foot of the English Incline to the English quarries. A path to our left soon took us to the foot of the Welsh Incline which we followed uphill to the Welsh quarries. Back in the day the two quarries were bitter rivals and were fiercely independent not sharing any of their facilities.

Continuing upwards we arrived in the Welsh quarry and after a brief look around made our way up a narrow rocky path to the top of the English quarry. The views from here were extensive and we could see The Wrekin, the Breidden Hills, the Long Mynd and down towards Welshpool. Moving on we were soon alongside Llanemynech golf course and it wasn't long before we crossing a couple of its fairways which brought us to the mouth of Llanemynech Cave, reputedly mined by the Romans for copper ore. The cave has a large entrance but quickly drops down to crawling height which was not very enticing for the group who stood at the entrance yawning.

Having failed to generate any interest in caving we continued on through pleasant woodland to emerge on the 16th Tee of the golf course. More woodland paths then lead us eventually to a signpost proclaiming Offa's Dyke path which ascended to this point from the west then turned to head south. We would leave this for later and turned to head north along the top of the ridge which is Offa's Dyke proper according to the map. Walking along the top of the ridge we were occasionally treated to breaks in the trees and views of the distant Welsh hills over to the west. At the end of the ridge we dropped down some steps and began to look for a lunch spot which soon appeared in the form of some recently felled trees with comfortable looking trunks.

Relaxing in the sun lunch passed all too quickly and Carol was on the starting blocks ready for the off. Our route took us along Offa's Dyke which was clearly visible in places and gradually descended until we met a lane leading south back towards the actual Offa's Dyke path. After a mile or so on tarmac

and gravel we met the path and began a steep climb back up to the top of the ridge and the signpost we had seen earlier, now we could follow the Offa's Dyke path southwards along the side of the golf course to the end of the ridge. Time to descend again and head for the nettly path!

A short tarmac lane lead us to an improbable looking bridleway on the right with no sign and shoulder high vegetation which we had to bushwack through. It wasn't long before it was blocked by a fallen tree which generated some interesting methods of getting over it but everyone succeeded one way or another. The end of the nettly bridleway brought us to a lovely open field with a track leading down to the canal. A very pleasant walk along the canal took us past lovely irises, moorhens and a pair of swans with six sygnets. At this point the male swan which was on the towpath took exception to Pippa and with wings spread proceeded to have a good go at her until Iain intervened and called a truce by removing Pippa from the danger zone.

By now people were thinking we were almost back at the cars, we weren't! A second visit to the heritage area brought us back to the bottom of the English Incline up which we had to go to allow us access back to the carpark. A final treat as we passed the English quarry was to see a couple of climbers high up on the almost vertical rockface, none of us volunteered to join them but we admired their skill.

Great day out with like minded friends in a beautiful area in perfect weather, what's not to like?

Thank you all for your company

Richard Calder