

## Report for Trelystan Field Trip - April 15th 2019

Forty-seven members attended this, our first field trip of the year, many of them so keen that they arrived much earlier than I did, but Sue and Steve Southam were manning the gate to the grassy track which leads to the church. Thankfully the dry weather rendered the track and parking area manoeuvrable, and Reverend Bill Rowell was directing cars whilst Jane and Helen handed out maps of the paths they had discovered and made accessible, thanks to several reccies.

We were allowed into the wooden meeting room for our picnic since there was such a strong wind - the church being located in an isolated spot at about 285 m above sea-level, on the south end of Long Mountain.

It is the only early completely timber-built church in Wales, and Rev Rowell gave us a talk on its history and interesting features., such as the rood screen positioned upside-down (its design charmingly reflected in the carvings on the pulpit), the barrel organ which plays hymns, and the beautiful painted glass window.

We then headed off in various directions as suggested by the information sheet, some making for Beacon Ring hillfort, the majority of us taking a path from the churchyard, down a field towards a brook where both Opposite-leaved *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* and Alternate-leaved Golden Saxifrage *Chrysosplenium alternifolium* grew together - an excellent chance to compare the two. Crossing the wooden bridge, we headed up a farm track with gorse bushes in abundance and millions of bluebells waiting for a little more sunshine.

Hovering over the dog violets on the dry bankside was a bee-fly, one of the early indicators of spring and an important pollinator.

My intention was to follow the track through the farmyard, get onto the lane and walk up to Beacon Ring, but with Kate and John Thorne - our county recorder and her husband - enthusiastically botanising, I joined their group and became engrossed in their patient explanations, pointing out, for example, how Germander Speedwell *Veronica chamaedrys* has two opposite rows of white hairs on its stem while Wood Speedwell *Veronica montana* stems are hairy all around, and Greater Chickweed *Stellaria neglecta* has ten reddish stamens but otherwise is like a large version of Common Chickweed *Stellaria media* (which I pointed out makes an excellent ointment for any itch).

Common Mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum* bracts have silvery margins whereas Sticky Mouse-ear *Cerastium glomeratum* bracts are without silvery margins.

Then we eased our way through the farmyard and around the lane to the crossroads where my favourite, Shining Cranesbill *Geranium lucidum* was in abundance on the steep banks, and I was able to point out the two types of primrose, pin-eyed and thrum-eyed, before deciding that we had no time to walk to Beacon Ring, so headed downhill (crossing into Shropshire), across fields to the wood, back to the farmyard and then down the track, across the brook and back up the field to the churchyard.

Tea was taken at The Cock, Forden, where many observations were exchanged between the botanists and ornithologists. Rev. Bill had enjoyed his day out with us, reaching Beacon Ring, delighting in finding 'Town Hall Clock' *Adoxa moschatellina*, and despite being on a sponsored fast for Lent, joining us for a 'cuppa' and declaring that he would like to become a member of the MFS.