

Hidden Valley Caravan Park, nr Guilsfield 14 April 2015

Organizer Maureen Preen

In 1997 Don Jones led a walk in Hidden Valley Caravan Park, so, inspired by his report, I volunteered to lead a well-overdue return visit. Chris Cooke helped with the initial 'recce' in which Mr Philip Jones kindly drove us around in his Landrover pointing out places of interest on the park which he developed over 40 years ago and which is part of a 400 acre working farm. It has won numerous 'Wales in Bloom' and 'Best Park in Britain' competitions, culminating in 'Best of the Best Parks for the Millennium'. There are some 18 different species of wildfowl on the 5 acre trout lake, both indigenous and introduced.

About 40 of us attended the meeting and, it being a quiet Tuesday, we had the place to ourselves: those less mobile enjoying the flat pathways and seating areas, whilst a group of us climbed the steep fields to experience the clear 360° views. Botanists took to Glyndwr's Way through woods and lanes, past the wood pellet tower which heats the house and indoor swimming pool. Kate Thorne and company compiled a good list and it was gratifying to have introduced so many MFS members to this gem of a place - indeed a Hidden Valley, but one to which the Jones family welcome all who are interested in sharing their love of Nature.

A few member travelled on to explore The Woodland Trust's Gaer Fawr woods, where dogs may run free, and whilst I had pointed out that Granllyn Pool is easily accessible too, no-one was in a hurry to leave Hidden Valley until it was time for our superb tea at The King's Head, Guilsfield.