

## **Montgomeryshire Field Society**

### **Dolanog**

**April 24<sup>th</sup> 2014.**

Organiser Sue Southam

This, the first MFS outing of the season, was to the lovely village of Dolanog, and a fine day we had for it. Thirty-two of us explored several different and picturesque routes around the Vyrnwy valley.

The footpaths on Allt Dolanog gave the opportunity to enjoy splendid views in all directions, with an interesting boggy area just below the summit, where we found Cranberry, Marsh St John's Wort and Marsh Violet amongst other damp-loving plants. This hill was the last place in Montgomeryshire to yield records of High Brown Fritillary butterflies, as recently as 2003, and the common land here is managed to protect the violets on which the caterpillars of the Pearl-bordered Fritillary feed. To hear the curlew and skylarks singing was a real treat, and the eye-catching white rumps of wheatears were further reminders that Spring was well and truly with us.

A riverside walk to the north-west involved some woodland and pastures. Two further walks flanked the Vyrnwy towards Pont Robert – the Ann Griffiths Way to the North of the river and Glyndwr's Way to the South. A circular walk combining these was also possible for the keen walkers.

The walks along the river towards Pontrobert proved to be rich in bird life.

Redstarts were seen by several people as were stock doves, grey wagtail and teal. Another less common summer visitor, which was more often heard than seen, was the wood warbler, present in good numbers on both sides. A pair of hares was observed frolicking by the old fisherman's cottage – always a welcome sight.

Dolanog is renowned for its association with the Welsh hymn writer, Ann Griffiths, who spent most of her life here. Some members of our group enjoyed the chance to look around the chapel, which is not only a memorial to Ann, but also an interesting and unusual example of an Arts and Crafts architectural style applied to a Non-Conformist chapel.

As the very pleasant outing drew to a close, and we all compared notes on the day, the ladies of Dolanog welcomed us with a good spread of tea, sandwiches, cake and conversation in the Old School House. We were very happy to make donations to a Ukrainian orphanage, for which they fund-raise on a regular basis. Suitably refreshed, a few of us extended the day by following the wild daffodil-edged lanes to Tan-y-Rhyd chapel, where several old plant records include Adder's-tongue and Hound's-tongue. Although we didn't spot these, the carpet of cowslips, wood anemones and wild daffodils in the graveyard made it a particularly special place, and one to revisit on another occasion.