

Hafren Forest August 8th 2016

The threat of a road closure notwithstanding and blessed with a fine warm day 37 members of the society met at the Hafren picnic site. This is an ideal meeting place for such a large gathering with ample parking space, clean toilets and plenty of picnic tables.

There were several options of how to spend the afternoon. Peter Foulkes had kindly offered to lead a group up to Nant yr Eira copper/lead mines. These remote mine workings with the wheel-pit still largely intact are slowly being colonised by the few plants that can take hold in the such a harsh environment Peter is an excellent guide and a large number (14 I think) set off at a brisk pace to look for the more unusual plants such as Green spleenwort, Black spleenwort and Hard Shield fern. Ruth Dawes found an Emperor moth caterpillar here.

The rest of the group divided up with some going upstream at a gentler pace to take their lunch by the cascades. This stretch of river offered the chance of seeing Devil's bit scabious (in flower) as well as several dragonflies.

Those heading down stream took their time identifying (and in my case trying to learn) the different grasses along the forest path. Gill Foulkes and Kate Thorne were kept busy answering all our questions with their usual patience. There was an abundance of Wild Angelica-Angelica sylvestris. I hadn't realised what a strong sweet smell it has.

Near Severn- break-its-neck waterfall on a high damp mossy bank we saw a spread of Common Butterwort-Pinguicula vulgaris which still had a few purple/blue flowers on the very delicate stems

At the end of the walk a few members drove towards Staylitle to view the Clywedog ospreys. This year three chicks have fledged and appear to be doing well. the adults, I'm told, sometimes fly as far as 20 miles to the coast to catch fish even though there is a plentiful supply of trout in Clywedog reservoir.

At 4-15 pm we all met up again in the Unicorn Hotel Llanidloes for a splendid and very welcome tea. Sheila Turner with many thanks to Peter and Gill Foulkes for their help