

Llandanwg, near Harlech - September 11th Coach Trip.

Twenty plus members arrived late morning after a beautiful drive from Welshpool, courtesy of Celtic Travel coaches. Sue Southam said that she felt the warmth of the sun on her back as soon as we arrived which was a welcome relief following our rain sodden visit to the Will Woodlands the previous month.

Rhodri Wigley who has been with the National Trust for 19 years is the ranger for the area and was there to greet us. He told a little of the history of the National Trust holding at Llandanwg, called 'Y Maes' which came to Trust hands in 1982. It's a 20.52 (7.1ha) acres site, and is split into sections of sand dunes, herb rich grassland and saltmarsh. He told us of some interesting species to look out for including Sharp rush, Sea Holly, Portland Spurge and Parsley Water-Dropwort. He thought an area of rocky shore nearby would interest some of us as would another nearby reserve Allt y Mor, reached by going back up to the main road and walking a few yards towards Harlech. At only around half a hectare in size he had only recently mechanically cut the bracken so he wasn't sure it would be that good for us botanically.

We were disappointed not to be able to visit Saint Tanwg's Church as expected but works had started just that day on renovations and the builders were not allowing any access at all so in true MFS style members thanked Rhodri for his information and scattered to the various places he'd mentioned. Many followed the path through Y Maes and on to the dunes. This isn't generally encouraged as the dunes are vulnerable and there is protection work going on, but for our purposes Rhodri had given his consent. The trust had removed and were still trying to get on top of *Rosa rugosa* which had encouraged rabbits to burrow, undermining the dunes and grazing the salt marsh too much.

Other members explored Y Maes, finding unfamiliar plants such as Sharp Rush, *Juncus acutus* a nationally rare coastal species and as Sue Southam said, "almost as tall as Lizzie". They also found the strange Glasswort, *Salicornia sp.* with its tiny flowers like dots in groups of three, the pretty Sea Rocket, *Cakile maritima* covered in hoverflies and bees. Another unfamiliar plant was the strange looking Prickly Saltwort - *Salsola kali* and most definitely prickly. Sheila Turner listed other plants found - Houndstongue - *Cynoglossom officinale*, Bittersweet - *Solanum dulcamara*, Sea bindweed - *Calestegia soldanella*, Smooth Sow Thistle - *Sonchus oleraceus*, Sea bindweed - *Calestegia soldanella*, Sea aster - *Aster tripolium* and the familiar Thrift - *Armeria maritimum*.

I sat with Mary Oliver for a while overlooking the saltmarsh and identifying in the grass many plants that we don't see in Montgomeryshire. Sea mayweed - *Tripleurospermum maritimum*, Marram grass - *Ammophila arenaria*, Sea holly - *Eryngium maritimum*, Lesser sea spurry - *Sperularia marina*, Sand spurry - *Spergularia rubra*, Sand cat's tail - *Phleum arenarium*, and Sea sandwort - *Honckenya peploides*. Checking the spelling of these I have discovered that arenarium means sand. Greek or Roman arenas were of sand for a gruesome reason. Views inland from here were to the Rhinogs and around to the Snowdon range.

After a short walk over the grassy areas we decided to venture to the beach, climbing over a gap in the dunes and were joined by Jeny Heard. I had brought a folding chair for Mary and so she was able to sit near the rocks and watch the waves coming over them. (pic12) The rocks were a good home to various seaweeds and barnacles, and we found some lovely red seaweed which we couldn't identify although we guessed at Coral weed. (pic18)

Helen Siddons, Jane Phillips, Maureen Preen, Pam Blair and Kathryn Davies explored the northern beach towards Harlech and little Allt y Mor nature reserve. Only at very low tide can this beach be reached from the other side so they had had to climb the many steps twice. They do, however, make access easier. They reported finding knapweed, devil's bit scabious, red campion, herb robert, meadow sweet, creeping buttercup, heart's tongue fern, ribwort plantain, navelwort, barren strawberry, wild strawberry, tormentil, sloe, foxglove, woodsage, ground elder, St John's wort, violet, sea rocket, orache sp., rock samphire, hemp agrimony, Portland spurge, colt's foot, mayweed sp, sea holly, buddleia, and rosebay willowherb. Butterflies seen were tortoiseshell, red admiral, painted lady and birds seen by the group were buzzards and pied wagtails.

Sue Southam reported a group of Common Scoters bobbing in and out of view on the sea, just beyond the breakers and a flock of 100 plus Ringed Plovers skimming low over the estuary, piping as they flew. There was also a group of nine swans on the estuary. Sue also reported Curlew feeding amongst the weedy rocks at the sea edge and seeing two shiny white Sandwich Terns on long angled wings flying overhead and out to sea.

Gathering all together at the end of the afternoon we boarded the coach for tea at the community café at Dyffryn Adudwy. Do visit this place but try it out of season. There is a dune side café and toilets.