

Montgomeryshire Field Society
Visit to Pensychnant Conservation Centre
April 25th 2018 (by coach)
Organizer Sheila Turner

For our first outing of the year 34 members travelled to Pensychnant, two miles west of Conwy in North Wales. Three independent travellers arrived by car to join us. On arrival we were able to enjoy our packed lunch in surprisingly warm Spring sunshine while warden Julian Thompson gave us a brief history of the house at the centre of the reserve. Originally dating back to 1690 with later Victorian Arts and Crafts additions it became the country home of Abraham Henthorn Stott, a wealthy architect who designed many of the Lancashire cotton mills. In 1989 his great grandson set up the Pensychnant Foundation to protect Sychnant for posterity.

After welcome cups of tea and coffee and a brief look around the art gallery we were eager to explore the 150 acre estate. Some members chose to go on a guided walk through Home Wood with bluebells and wood sorrel just making an appearance. Others set off for the open heath and/or the bog lake. There were splendid views of Conwy mountain from above Sychnant pass with the burnished gold of the European gorse remarked on by Ruth Dawes as well as the bright orange fungus *Tremella mesenterica* on the dead stems. Several members were lucky enough to see and hear choughs among many other birds recorded.

Time passed very quickly but there was a chance before we left to view the moths trapped the previous evening. On our return journey we stopped for a splendid tea provided at Conwy Falls Cafe near Betws-y-Coed. Many thanks to Brayton Holt for suggesting this visit.