

Mynydd Waun Fawr, Llanerfyl 12/7/2023

Organisers: Liz Wilson, Judy Abbey, Helen Siddons, Jane Phillips

July's visit was to the area above Llanerfyl - Mynydd Waun Fawr - with its spectacular views of the surrounding district and its three natural spring fed lakes - Llyn Hir (which is a Local Wildlife Site) and Llyn Newydd and Llyn y Grinwydden (both of which have recently been designated as Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC)). Llyn Newydd (New Lake) is so named as it was created by the farmer damming a stream.

An excellent turnout of 37 members met in the village hall car park at Llanerfyl where people decanted into fewer cars for the journey up a narrow, steep track to the designated parking area for the day - a little short of Llyn y Grinwydden. Best laid plans of enjoying a picnic lunch on the shores of the lake were derailed by a heavy, squally shower passing through. Everyone opted for the more sensible option of enjoying their picnic in the cars! Shortly after parking we all enjoyed a good giggle at the site of a tractor towing a trailer full of hay bales on which were a large group of foreign schoolchildren - it didn't look too comfy a ride!

Once the shower passed people spilt into various groups and set out exploring the area as they wished, the local farmer had kindly said that people could roam freely as long as any gates we passed through were closed.

The botanists headed out for Llyn Hir hoping to find Lesser Bladderwort which had previously been recorded in the area; there were also hopes of Mountain Pansy on the way. Unfortunately there was no sign of the pansy - it is a little late in the year - and they didn't actually get to the area where the Bladderwort had previously been recorded! As a bonus, though, the group did find Quillwort and Six-Stamened Waterwort which were new records for the area and a highlight of the day. Other records included Shoreweed, Bog Asphodel, Cranberry and Lesser Skullcap. Ruth Dawes found Sundew at Llyn Newydd.

Meanwhile, another group headed south-west to Llyn Newydd with Michael Backhouse and Simon Boyes, looking primarily for bird life. They came across family parties of Meadow Pipits and Stonechats busy with food for fledged young. Buzzards, Ravens and Swifts battled against the fresh breeze. Last year the lake hosted a pair of Gadwall that probably nested, but now Teal was the only duck present. They had time to re-trace steps and take a quick look at Llyn Hir, where two roosting Greater Black-backed Gulls stood among the numerous Lesser Black-backs. Sand Martins were plentiful, flying low over the lake. A young Wheatear chased insects on the way back. A pair of Linnets soon disappeared; Lottie Glover had a fly-past from a Redstart. Although not part of this group Sue Southam saw a Reed Bunting and Steve Southam watched a 'ring-tail' Hen Harrier: a female or young male with a white rump.

A couple of showers passed through early on in the afternoon but the sun did finally break through and it became quite warm and pleasant. It remained very windy though so insect sightings were limited but a Blue Damselfly was seen sheltering amongst the tussocks of Purple Moor Grass and one group saw a single Ringlet. There was one sighting of a lizard, presumed to be a common but unfortunately no photograph was taken to be absolutely sure. Even when the showers were passing through the cloud cover was quite high so the fabulous wide-ranging views could be enjoyed.

All repaired, feeling quite windswept, to Cwpan Pinc, Llangadfan, where a delicious afternoon tea served in china cups and on a tiered stand was enjoyed by all.