

Nearly Dawn Chorus walk, Moel y Golfa 29/04/2025

Organisers: Simon Boyes and Sue Southam

It was a fine place to be on a calm and cloudless early morning in April.

Thirteen of us met Simon Boyes at 6am, at the saddle between Middletown Hill and Moel y Golfa. We were greeted by the music of birds and the rising sun, which painted the already blue sky a delicate shade of peach. Under Simon's expert leadership we made our way in the footsteps of the gypsies who, some sixty years earlier had transported three enormous Cornish boulders up the steep and hazardous terrain and perched them atop Moel y Golfa as a monument to their Chell, or Chief. It took them two days to reach the summit from the start of the track.

Simon hoped to introduce us to a range of avian summer visitors, and to help us to identify them by their song. It wasn't long before we'd heard three different warblers, Willow Warbler, Garden Warbler and Chiffchaff. They were soon followed by the song of an elusive redstart, also identified by song but confirmed later by excellent views as it perched in the sunshine at the top of a larch.

We had wonderful views of a Tree Pipit, typically displaying its characteristic lilting song-flight as it parachuted down onto a small tree. A pair of linnets and a smart male Stonechat were pleasing additions to our growing list.

We left the gypsy track briefly in the hopes of seeing or hearing Pied Flycatchers in the adjacent woodland. It was rather a challenge, but finally a handsome male flew into view.

We paused to rest by the gypsy monument, eating and drinking the provisions we'd taken. Speckled Wood and Wall butterflies were spotted, and binoculars were trained on the panorama beneath us as several people struggled to see how their houses were positioned in Montgomeryshire's rolling landscape.

We gave huge thanks to Simon, for a very special morning, and made our way back to the car parking area.

On our descent we were blessed with the call of a cuckoo, from the Breidden across the valley. As our happy band began to disperse, the day had hardly begun.....

Report by Sue Southam

Full bird list

Willow Warbler
Woodpigeon
Stock Dove
Wren
Song Thrush
Garden Warbler
Pheasant
Carrion Crow
Chiffchaff
Blue Tit
Great Tit
Chaffinch
Redstart
Linnet
Tree Pipit
Red Kite
Stonechat
Great Spotted Woodpecker
Blackbird
Pied Flycatcher
Green Woodpecker
Nuthatch
Cuckoo

Butterflies

Speckled Wood
Wall