

## Vaynor Farm, Llanidloes 24/7/24

**Organisers: Judy Abbey and Liz Wilson**

David and Daphne Margetts bought Vaynor Farm over 40 years ago and very kindly offered to open their land – around 23 Ha (57 Acres) - for members to explore. We all met at the farm for 11am and David gave us a short talk about the different areas that now make up the farm, having sold much of the original farmland on retirement.

Their ethos is to return the area into the habitat that would have been seen in the valley 200 years ago. As a steep sided valley with a stream running along its bottom it would have originally been oak woodland. This ethos will not only return the area to its former glory but hugely improve the habitats for all wildlife living in the valley. With this ideal in mind 18,000 trees have been planted in the last 3 years alone – all agreed a phenomenal number.

The land is made up of a number of regions – some of which have been planted from scratch whilst others have undergone restoration. The area boasts 2 badger setts. Foxes and Roe deer are seen increasingly regularly within the woods.

Most members enjoyed their picnic lunch around the house – enjoying the wonderful views to be had – before heading off in all directions. Others set straight off on their explorations.

One area – Coed Clydfannau—was bought from the Forestry commission around 1980. Partly planted with Douglas Fir in the mid 1950s this was clear felled in 2005 and replanted with a broad-leaf mixture including 50% Oak during 2006-2008. Another part was planted with Japanese Larch also in the mid 1950s, clear felled in 2021 and replanted with broad-leaf in 2023.

The area Coed Cefn Hafod was clear felled during WWII and left to regrow from stumps – mainly oak on its northern slope and birch on the steeper south slope.

David described the arboretum as an example of how to plant the wrong variety in the wrong place. Originally scrub with a few oaks, a pond was put in place along with a variety of trees of which only 25% have survived. This is an area for future development including the possibility of a wild flower meadow south of the pond.

The area labelled Flying field on our maps is at 315m the highest area within the farm boundaries, and was pasture until 2020. Some records show this being drained in the mid 1950s after it had been cleared most probably during the wartime. It has also been planted using a Glastir Woodland Creation (GWC) contract to the same broad leaf mixture specification as other fields. Although broad-leaved Helleborine is a botanical record of note for this area it was not unfortunately, given the growth of flora at this time of year, seen by members.

There were lots of options for members to enjoy. Some chose to stay around the house, others to walk up to the pond area. Many others followed the track up through the woods to the fabulous views from the flying field area. From here a circular walk continued along the lanes with some beautiful hedgerows to maintain interest. In the afternoon, the sun came out and it warmed up wonderfully. Members returning from the Flying field spotted a variety of insects, damsel flies and butterflies fluttering to and fro.

On returning to the farm house we set off for 'Jo's at The Lion' in Llandinam where a lovely tea awaited. There was much chatter about the fantastic number of plants seen and how beautiful the area and views had been. 31 birds were seen and heard during the visit, and many many many more plant (124) and bryophytes (82) species.

Report by Judy Abbey