

AREA WALK 2010

Sunday 19 September 2010 saw the Lower Wye Group host the Greater Gwent Area walk for all six groups within the Area. Ninety-four members and guests met at the Narth Village Hall and our aim was to provide two varied walks which would 'show off' the Wye Valley, now in its early autumn colours, to our visitors.

The shorter walk followed the delightful path down through the woods alongside Manor Brook where we were treated to the first signs of approaching autumn where the beech trees were turning to their yellows and golds. A steady climb took them up through Manor Wood to Pen y Fan Green to enjoy the fine view down to the Wye river valley and the lovely Bigsweir Bridge, the gateway to the Lower Wye Valley and surely the best of all the ninety bridges across the river, but sadly neglected by its owners, Gloucestershire County Council. A short stop for refreshment on the river bank was followed by an easy stretch along the riverside to Whitebrook and then a steady rise up to the stepping stones crossing over the stream and into Lady Margaret's Reserve. Finally the return to The Narth followed a little used and steep path up through mixed woodland. With the men perspiring and the ladies glowing, their arrival on the more level paths into the village and the waiting tea and refreshments in the Village Hall were greeted with some relief.

The longer walk took the group across open heathland to the Beacon Hill viewpoint. In spite of the overcast morning, the Bloreng, Sugarloaf and Skirrid Fawr could (just about!) be distinguished. The party then continued along forest racks to Cleddon village and over open grassland to Catbrook. This stretch provides good views of the forest below. A short walk down to the Bargain Wood picnic-site followed, where a welcome lunch break was taken. From this point, the nature of the walk changed entirely being mainly on narrow forest paths above Llandogo. There were brief glimpses of the Wye far below as the route led between boulder-strewn tracks and over small streams. A long steep climb up through Cuckoo Wood brought the party first to Manorside then along the Manor Brook to journey's end at the Narth Village Hall.

If you would like to join the Lower Wye Group on a walk please ring 02920 750167 or visit www.lowerwyeramblers.org.uk.