

Gors Lydan barrows and medieval huts



Walk Information:

Maps: OS Explorer 214

Distance: 5.5 miles / 9 kilometres

Duration: 4.5 to 5 hours

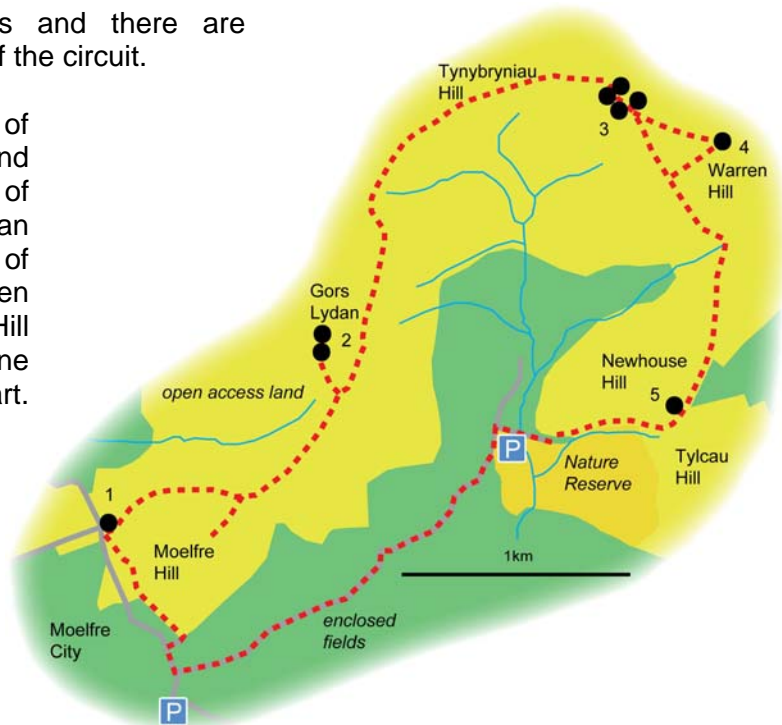
Difficulty: Easy. Good paths and no steep gradients

Start and finish: SO 11977545

Walk summary

The walk takes advantage of public footpaths and open access land, visiting a number of prehistoric burial mounds, as well as deserted medieval huts and enclosures. There are a number of local summits and there are extensive views for much of the circuit.

The route follows a series of tracks across open moorland visiting the summits of Moelfre Hill and Gors Lydan before traversing the head of Cwm Coch and over Warren Hill and Newhouse Hill before descending to a lane to return to the start.



Introduction

This remote part of Radnorshire has extensive areas of unenclosed moorland on an upland plateau which is cut by numerous small valleys. The area is sparsely populated with scattered farms in the shelter of the valleys.

The area has a wealth of archaeological sites, the earliest of which are numerous burial monuments dating from the Bronze Age (2,300 – 1,200 BC) which are scattered across the upland plateau. These earth and stone mounds are typical landscape features of the Welsh uplands and would have been erected over inhumations, and sometimes cremations.



Some of the cottages at Moelfre City with their small, irregular fields.

There is also evidence for medieval settlement and farming such as the earthwork remains of longhouses and building platforms, some of which lie within banked enclosures. The area around Moelfre City is particularly interesting as this is a good example of a small squatter settlement which developed on a piecemeal basis, encroaching onto the unenclosed commons during the 17th and 18th centuries. In the 1840s there were twelve cottages here, of which seven still remain, each with its own small fields.

The Walk

There is parking on the roadside on the bend S of the phonebox at City Shop (SO 11977545), and it is also possible to start the walk from the carpark for the Tylcau Hill Nature Reserve (SO 13397652). The easiest access is from the west, either from Llanbister or Llanbararn Ffynydd.

The walk starts at the phone box and follows the road N for a short distance before taking the first turning on the right for Little Moelfre farm. Go through the gate on the left before the farm and onto open access land, turning immediately left to follow a track alongside a fence. At the end of the fence continue ahead, passing a fenced quarry and continuing to where the track joins the road (SO 11667606). Instead of going through the gate, follow the fence north for 20m and then bear right, downslope to an obvious series of embankments. This is the site of a deserted **medieval longhut (1)** (SO 11687612), set within a banked enclosure.



medieval longhut and enclosure (1)

Return to the gate and take a grassy track heading E and then NE, contouring around the northern side of Moelfre Hill.

On reaching a short length of fence on a col (SO 12257620) with a disused quarry below it is worth the short detour back to the right to the summit of Moelfre Hill (475m) which gives extensive views in all directions. To the S are the cottages and fields of Moelfre City, while it is also a good vantage point to view the day's route. Gors Lydan lies ahead to the NE with its braided trackways and Newhouse Hill over its shoulder to the E.



The view SW between Gors Lydan and Moelfre Hill

Return to the col and take the left-hand of the obvious tracks ascending Gors Lydan. At the head of the valley (SO 1266976630) take a grassy track bearing to the left which leads to two large and prominent **Bronze Age burial mounds (2)** on the summit of the hill. From here there are panoramic views: the more prominent landmarks are Warren Hill to the ENE and Black Mixen to the SSE.

Return to the main track and turn left, following the track along a ridge with good views before it turns eastwards over Tynybryniau Hill. Fork right at SO 1329077980, heading for a row of trees. From here the round barrow on Warren Hill is clearly visible on the skyline.

As the track reaches the trees turn right and continue alongside the trees, past two natural mounds on the right, each of which is crowned by a small **Bronze Age burial mound (3)**.



Looking towards one of the burial cairns below Warren Hill

Continue along the track to the SSE and at the end of the trees there is the option of a short detour to the ESE to Warren Hill via a sheeptrack through the heather. On the summit is another large and prominent **Bronze Age burial mound (4)** and once again there are wonderful views in all directions. To the SW is Gors Lydan, with Beacon Hill to the ESE and Black Mixen to the SSE. Return to the track via a broad grassy stripe through the heather, heading WSW.

On descending to a col with a junction of tracks branch right (S) to cross the eastern shoulder of Newhouse Hill. At the col on the southern side of the hill there is a small pond. Around 25m to the N of the pond are the earthworks of another **medieval longhut 5** (SO 1418076625) which in summer may be difficult to find in the bracken.



The small pond between Newhouse Hill and Tyclau Hill

Continuing past the pond the route follows a track on the right which descends along the right (N) side of the valley leading to Newhouse Farm. At the end of the track go through the gate and descend to follow the access track W to the lane. Turning left you pass the carpark for [Tyclau Hill Nature Reserve](#),

which is managed by the Radnorshire Wildlife Trust. The Reserve has nearly 70 acres of diverse flower-rich farmland that has been spared from intensive improvements and visitors are welcome to wander the fields and woodland.

To return to the start, follow the lane back to the phonebox.



