

## 6 October 2013

The first Sunday October walk of 2013 by the Lower Wye Ramblers was blessed by the most perfect of days in sunny weather and temperatures normally to be expected in summer. The twelve members embarked on their 9-mile walk from Llansoy before the village had sprung to life.

The walk headed north across country. Everywhere there were signs of the most bountiful wild harvest to be seen for many years – oak trees heavy with acorns, hedgerows laden with blackberries and sloes and the mountain ash ablaze with red berries– enabling the ramblers to graze along the way. Mushrooms were picked and some eaten raw.

A stop under Far Hill to regain breath after the climb and to enjoy the distant views, then on through the cider apple orchards near Llangovan and then on through the Motte and Bailey at New Trecastle Farm and a welcome lunch stop in warm sunshine at the hilltop south of Pen y Clawdd. Here the superb panorama to the north-west afforded views to Garway Hill, The Skirrid, Sugar Loaf and The Bloreng, unusually clear for this time of year.

A bet was struck between two members as to whether the hill in view was, or was not, Garway Hill. The ante was raised when one even threw his car – a Porsche no less - into the wager. The winner of the wager? – still awaiting adjudication.

The afternoon return journey continued under balmy skies, the party stopping to pick the blackthorn of its heavy crop of sloes. Next years sloe gin will be the end product.

The path led through Court St Lawrence and on to a friendly canine greeting at Old LLanishen farm and a gentle descent back to Llansoy, where the sight of the largest of puff balls ever seen completed a rare and memorable early Autumn walk.