

The

"Progress of Earth & Air"

from

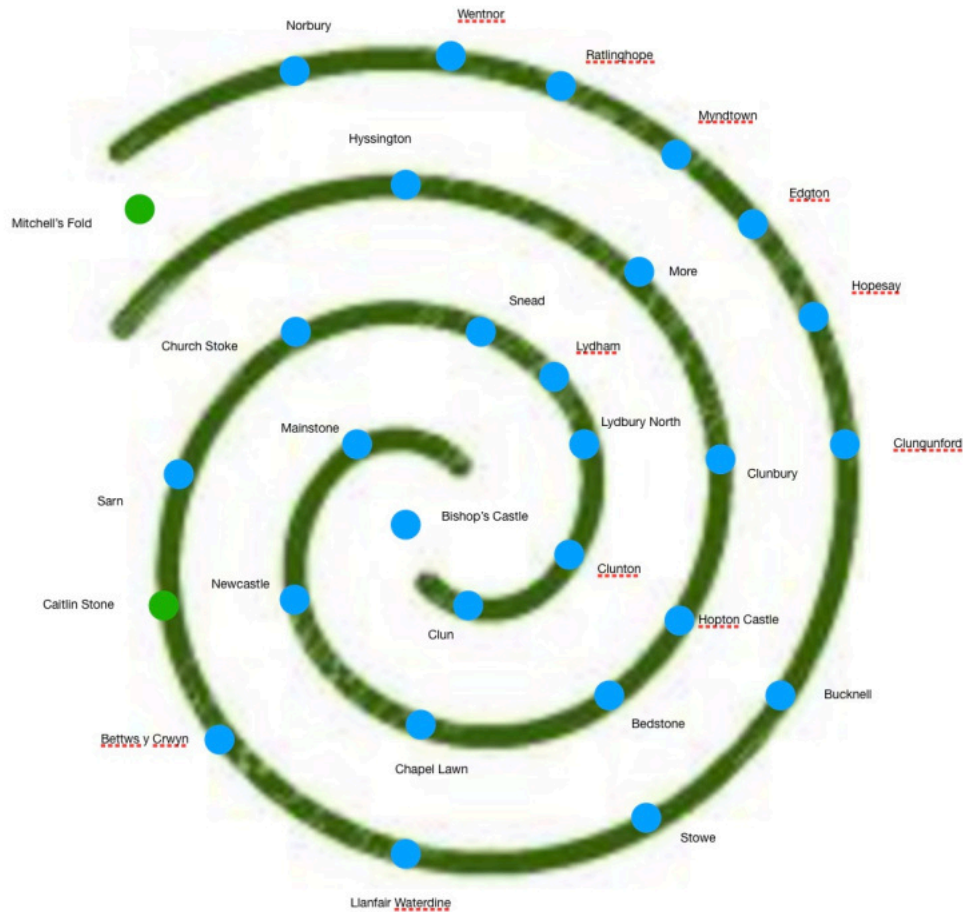
March 2020

The 'Progress' was intended to create groups walking & communities
engaging,

with development of

'field-research' & celebratory activities.

**A gradual gathering of people and their places into a form of
peregrinatory movement.**



The Pandemical Reality

All plans, all actions, were suspended.

Initially, the hope was for a resumption during the summer of 2020 with that hope then transferred to the autumn.

As the reality of a lengthy impact of the pandemic impressed itself, plans were created in September for an activity using part of the intended trail and to link into local community tradition:

The Harvest Festival:



Celebrating the food harvest is a worldwide phenomena. In the UK churches created a specific form of celebration during the C19th - a special act of worship (a 'service') known popularly as the Harvest Festival.

In the rural areas of the UK, where farming is still a major social and economic activity, the Harvest festival service is still a significant community activity. They usually occur at the end of September & beginning of October & communities will vigorously defend 'their' established 'harvest weekend' from any attempts at rescheduling.

October 9th - 11th 2020

Two Community Events & a walk:

Bettws y Crwyn Parish - A 16 km walk - Sarn Parish

Two neighbouring parishes: Bettws y Crwyn & Sarn - both connected by the route of The Progress but separated by a national boundary - had their local service on the same weekend.



Fortunately at Bettws Parish Church there was a Friday night tradition whilst in Sarn Parish events occur on Sunday. Thus it was possible for two events, one on Friday, the other on Sunday, to be linked by a walk on Saturday.

The development of the pandemic had not, at that point in autumn 2020, prevented gatherings in Churches - provided everyone was socially distanced, wore a face mask & there were no 'communal' activities - such as singing.

Holy Trinity Parish Church Sarn
Sunday 11th October
09.30

All Good Gifts

**Harvest Thanksgiving & Celebration
of**

A Creative & Caring Community Spirit

A service of readings & music by members of the local
community
& specially composed for a time of necessary social distance

On the theme of caring and supporting

Ourselves, Others & All Creation

Giving & Supporting

Members of the congregation are requested to bring gifts of sealed &
packaged food or money to be given to the Newtown Food-Bank

The service will follow the required guidelines for church services.
All attending are to be wearing face masks, social distancing will be required within the church.
Please present any donations of money to Church or Food-bank in an envelope.

Erasmus+

Pathways has several members who are closely linked into these communities and were thus able to develop the events with a 'Green Bridges' emphasis.



Though there were restrictions, it was possible for appropriately distanced singers to perform.....



.....Therefore the project engaged the assistance of the professional folk musician John Kirkpatrick who performed at both Church events & was joined in Sarn two sisters, Nerys & Catrin whose singing skills are being professionally developed.



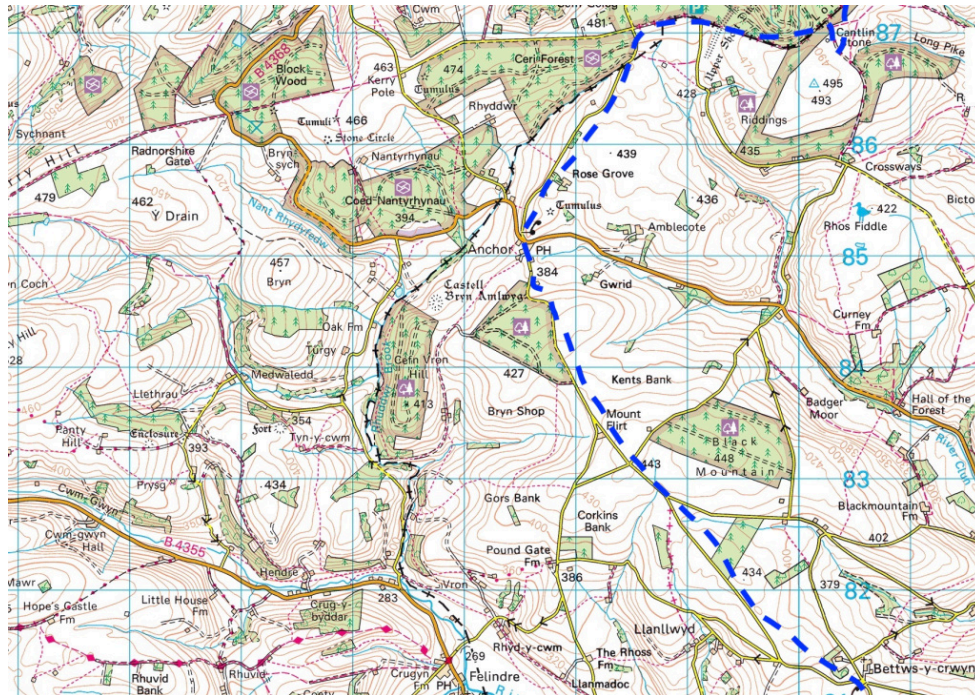
Catrin & Nerys sang 3 traditional Welsh hymns and John played & sang traditional music related to farming.



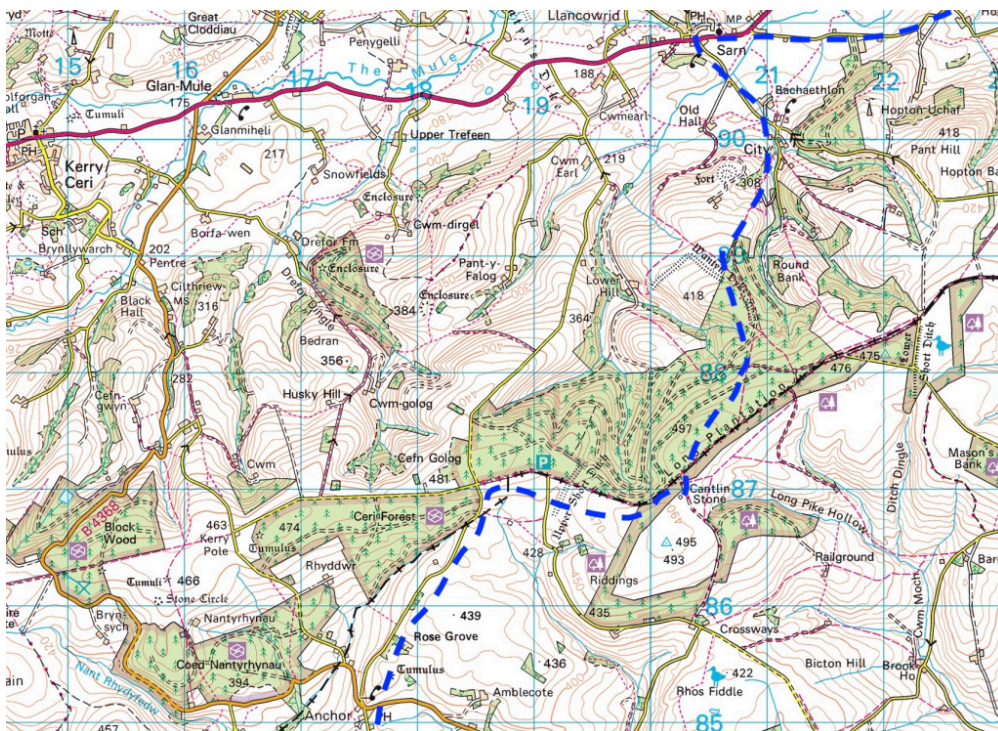
[Click to play](#)

The journey planned for the Saturday intervening between the two harvest celebrations was based on a section of 'The Progress'.

A route heading north-west from Bettws:.....

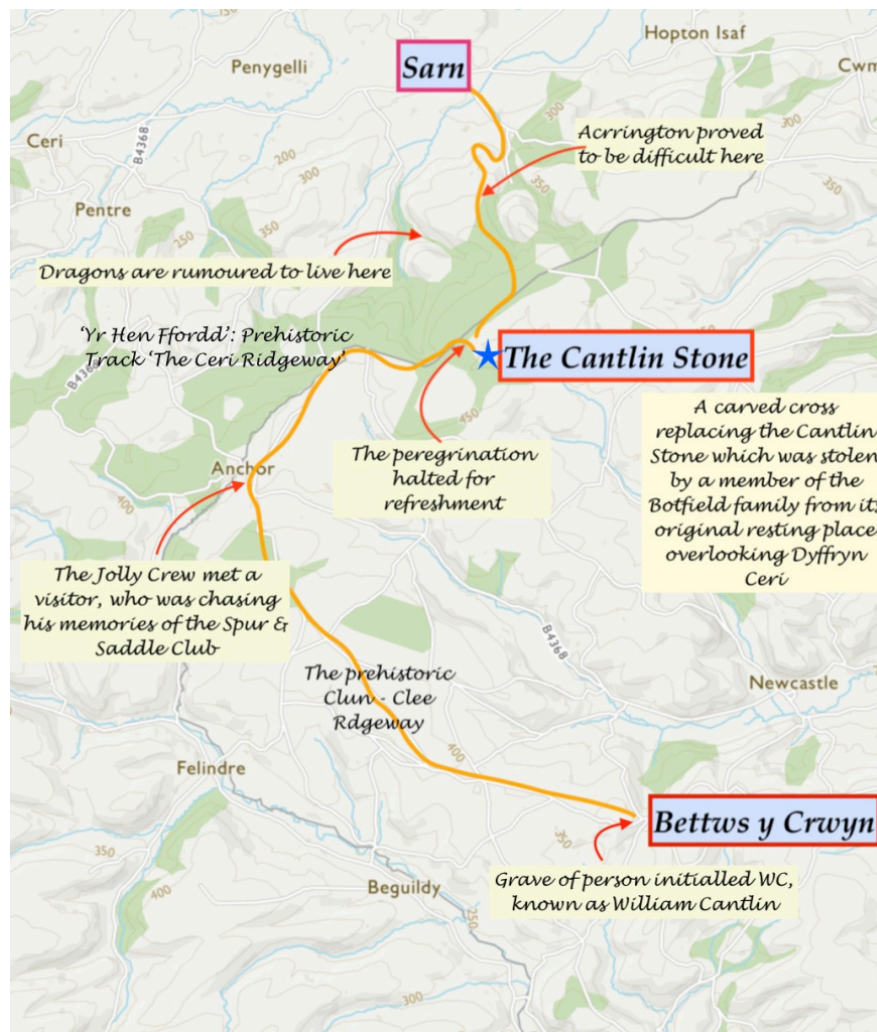


... then, after The Anchor, slightly more north-easterly (Bettws & Sarn parish churches are almost exactly equally positioned to the west.



The Bettws to Sarn Journey

10th October 2020





Bettws Church: Uncovering the Cantlin grave

The Anchor

(note: use of definite article; the normal usage locally).

A settlement in a hollow in the hills & at the source of the River Clun - with one of the highest pubs in England (and interestingly ignored in many guides of elevated public houses).

The term 'anchor' is appropriate as the settlement and pub provided refuge in the deceptively high border hills. The farm, pub and cottages are (with

Mount Flirt farm) the only habitations on the 16 kilometre journey between Bettws and Sarn.

The [Wikipedia article](#) is reasonably accurate - though no definite article & the Horse Fair (a term for a traditional sale) & once a major event in the calendar, no longer occurs.

At The Anchor an 'Explorer of Past Life' (his own) arrives and discusses his memories of the once famous 'Spur & Saddle Club' (Sunday evenings) which had provided the younger members of farming families, from far and near, with opportunities to meet one another. Many present local farming partnerships were the result of such meeting.



Until very recently The Anchor provided hospitality & excellent meals. It is still (technically) 'licensed premises'.

The Welsh border with England (and that between the Bettws and Sarn
parishes)

marked by the red line



Accrington (aka 'Stanley') was disinclined to follow protocol and wait for the formal crossing into Wales. Such is his nature.

Effective management of such natural, native impetuosity is a lesson to us.

All true partnership needs to recognise difference - and all partners should attempt to 'stand in the shoes of another' as one partner once stated.

The travellers tolerated his enthusiasms with a degree of humour (as is usual).

On the Ceri Ridgeway the party was joined by the Provisions Wagon & stopped for refreshments.



The walkers and vehicle are in Wales. The photographer was in England

The Cantlin Stone

Once positioned on the boundary between Ceri and Clun parishes (the ancient parishes in the area until divided in the C19th), the unremarkable stone (supposedly regarding the death of a pedlar in 1691) was removed by

the Botfield family (successful Shropshire industrialists) and a new carving was created. This decayed & was replaced at the Millennium. It presently marks the boundary between Newcastle & Bettws parishes (created out of Clun)





After the Cantlin Stone the walk passed into the forestry plantation and descended but not without difficulties created by an enthusiastic Bull Terrier determined to chase and capture pheasants.....



.....and causing difficulties in the process



After which the walk was completed with Ale, sausages & Good Cheer - & as the pandemic restrictions required, outside (but sheltered).



All the participants of the walk are involved in the planning and creative aspects of the Green Bridges project. One outcome of the activity was a realisation that this type of activity might be further developed during the Pandemic Times.

Restrictions are considerable and there are periods where all group activities are formally prevented. However the linking of environmental awareness, traditional festivals, walking, music and other creative activities may be achievable for small local groups.

This idea will be explored in November and December.