

Trip Report: Anglesey

Date: 17th November 2012

Group: Tony (Leader), Lynn, Selina, Jeff, Ian and Molly

Route: North West Coast of Anglesey

Total Distance: 11 miles

Total Ascent: 1223 ft

Weather: Bright with a few showers

Time: 6 hours

Just the five of us could make the walk today, which did give us the advantage that we could all fit into one car, but with the disadvantage that any planned linear coastal walk made the logistics a bit more difficult. Step forward the No 61 from Holyhead to Almwich. The plan was to leave the car near the end of the walk at Llanfaethlu and catch the 10:08 bus to take us to the start at Cemaes Bay and then walk the *nine* miles back to the car.

We arrived at Llanfaethlu one hour too early (stupid Google maps) for a bus that ran twice a day, and to small village with nothing but a Post Office and a Reading Room. Never mind, at least the weather had matched what Selina had promised and not the BBC earlier in the week, and it was sunny if it bit cold.

Wouldn't it be great if that 19th Century Llanfaethlu Reading Room also doubled-up as a coffee shop at week-ends we asked ourselves? Selina went in to find out, only to be told by a nice lady in the shop, that it wasn't a coffee shop, but she could make a pot of coffee for her, to which Selina replied "Great, how about coffee for five and a well-behaved dog?"

Paying just £1 each for coffee, and with a twirl or two of a Welsh flag, we ran out to catch the No 61. The bus-driver seemed to have a bit of difficulty working out the 5 x £2.40 fare, but we were soon off racing along the country lanes to the little harbour town of Caemas Bay on the north coast.

Cemaes Bay had a lovely small harbour and we followed its promenade and over some small cliffs towards Wylfa Magnox Nuclear Power Station. This enormous building was set to remain in view for much of the morning's walk. Still, it didn't smell or glow too much and we reached the lovely cove of Porth-y-pistyll for a coffee stop and photo-shots by Jeff, who with his obvious expertise with a camera and a long lens must surely be promoted to the role of BUMs Official Photographer (if we had one).

Heading west our next high-spot was Cemlyn Bay with its narrow curving shingle beach holding back a lagoon full of different types of sea-birds. I

certainly saw a Liver Bird fly past. Lynn and Ian started showing off their stone-skimming skills, didn't they know the sea-birds here are a protected species?

Walking along the beach was easy, crossing the river at the end of the beach with an incoming tide was not. With uneasy collective memories of Morecambe Bay, Jeff was the first to get his feet submerged, followed by the rest of us, and it was too deep for Molly who had to be carried by Ian. We squelched on along the cliff-tops toward Carmel Head, and I declared there was half-pint in it for the first person to spot a seal or porpoise. I spotted one first, so I win the half-pint prize, off me. Past the Skerries light-house, we able to spot the distant coast of Ireland, so good was the weather between the squalls and rainbows. We made time for a just quick lunch as we still had a fair bit to do and the days are short this time of year.

The coast-line was becoming more rugged towards the Head and we passed two strange-looking stone structures which with a third structure on a small outlying island of West Mouse are known locally as the Three White Ladies. They were built in the 1860s as navigation aids for shipping - lining up the three columns marks the position of a dangerous shallow reef.

The coastal cliffs were wild and dramatic and it wasn't until we rounded the head and after a run-in with some bullocks and a bit of bush-whacking by a forest that we met the only other person we'd seen on the day, a lady runner, who then upset the crew by advising us we were two and a half kilometres from our destination, Church Bay. I'd been telling everyone it was one kilometre. Well it is a bit difficult measuring distances on a map with a piece of cotton. The agreed total distance was then allowed to extend from nine to eleven miles.

At last our final coastal destination, Church Bay came into view, and with the sun setting over South Stack we walked the last couple of miles along road and path back to the car. Just a couple of hours later we were drying our feet off by the Dysart fire - well until Selina put it out.

Tony