

Trip Report

Penmaenmawr Quarry Expedition.

24th November 2021

Attendees: Mike Hiscock, Jim Grant, Colin Christy, Mark Hallett, Mike and Selina Willis, Neil and Ann Bodfish, Steve and Sarah Hammond, Richard (Leader) and Della Calder.

A commendably prompt departure was made from the Pavilion carpark in Bunbury well before the recommended 08:30hrs and three vehicles began the transit to Penmaenmawr railway station (built by the Chester and Holyhead Railway in 1849, 49 ¼ miles from Chester Central Station) car park. The journey was uneventful.

After the customary faffing walking commenced at 09:49hrs and the party headed off through the subway under the railway and A55 road before emerging on the promenade. There followed one of the big disappointments of the day, the toilets were locked! Cross legged we headed west along cycle route No. 5 at sea level before climbing the zig zags up to the point where the A55 vanished into a tunnel but we continued to climb over the road and then head up above the tunnels and around the Pen y Clip headland.

Llanfairfechan marked our departure from the cycle way as we traversed behind a row of houses along a narrow path leading to Tyddyn Drycin wood where coffee was taken and comfort was sought by the needy. Coffee drunk, the climbing began and it didn't stop until we got to the top 1,000ft from sea level. Along the way were pleasant walled paths, upland meadows and an old quarrymen's trod which took us along the Wales Coastal path.

Once at the top Selina decided the walk through the old quarries sounded too vertiginous (edgy) and opted to take an alternative route suggested by the leader to avoid the difficulties. Suitably equipped with the car keys and map Selina headed off never to be seen again until we got back to the cars.

At this point we began the contour path which leads via one or two slightly exposed sections to the top quarry and the wheelhouse at the edge of the world, well that's what it feels like! The team took photos and marveled at the uninterrupted views of Anglesey, Bangor, Penrhyn Castle, Beaumaris, the Menai Straits, The Great Orme, Puffin Island and the A55 900ft below us, all of which were to disappear after lunch, never to be seen again.

A short walk around the lip of the quarry brought us to our lunch spot inside an old building with no windows but a substantial roof to protect us from the rain which was on its way to greet us. Lunch was consumed quite quickly mainly due to the lack of windows and the cold westerly wind and after further comfort breaks, we were on our way.

Contouring across steep ground took us across the hillside through heather and scree to the top of our first incline which descended steeply to the top of the second incline. By this time the rain had arrived and adjustments or additions to clothing were made before the descent continued. Most found the gradient and moisture a challenging combination and it wasn't long before Mike Hiscock discovered his boots were not as grippy as he thought! Undeterred he continued onwards and downwards. Two more inclines found us on level ground at the edge of the working quarry stockpiles and a short trespass brought us to the public footpath where we became legitimate visitors again.

The path at this point heads down into Penmaenmawr or up into the clagg and there was some disquiet among the team when the leader headed up! A pleasant climb wound its way ever upwards into thicker and thicker clagg to the top of the hill 900ft above the start of the footpath. After crossing the quarry haul road, a short trudge across a gorsy moor brought us to a high wall with a substantial steel stile over it. From the stile it was a short yomp to pick up the Wales Coast path.

Ignoring the beautiful views which we couldn't see for clagg we soon arrived at the path leading back to the seaside and began the descent. The rain had done a superb job and the path was in similar condition to a world cup ski run in the Alps. Fallers included Mike Hiscock (again!) Jim Grant, Della Calder with most others experiencing near misses at one point or another. Eventually Terra Firma was reached with no serious injuries to report. They thought it was all over but Sarah managed to demonstrate at the next kissing gate that it wasn't and a seemingly benign rock step brought her to ground. Those following were suitably enlightened and avoided the same fate.

Civilization at last and the cars hove into view after 4 hours 55 minutes and 33 seconds. Selina was back and doing her best to flatten Mikes car battery, I mean who reads the paper with the headlights on full beam in broad daylight!!!!

I had a good time; I hope all my fellow walkers did as well. Thanks for your company.