

Arenig Fawr Trip Report

Date: Friday 19th Jan 2024

Distance: Just under 7 miles

Ascent: 1,800 ft

Weather: Cold and crisp with snow covering and clear as a bell

Mountaineers: Bob (leader), Colin (organiser), Carol, Mark, Dave B, Iain, Ray (and Flora)

The trip had already been delayed a week and unfortunately the weather looked bleak to make the ascent on Saturday 20th as planned. The leader and organiser therefore decided to bring it forward a day. It proved a brilliant decision as the weather was perfect and we also had a better turnout than expected with many of the regulars being on holiday.

It was the first Classic of the year in our year of classics to commemorate 20 years of the BUMS. I'd chosen Arenig Fawr as one of my favourites as I had scaled it a few times but I was pleased when Bob offered to lead as this is a mountain he has climbed many times in an area he knows like the back of his hand. Given the conditions I'm glad he did lead!

I was still happy to do the organising but my organisational skills were lacking on a couple of fronts as it turned out. Firstly, I managed to leave my poles at home which wasn't ideal given the conditions and my dodgy knee, but more importantly I hadn't checked the traffic properly on my Waze sat nav. There is a BUMS adage that "in Waze we trust" and I blindly set off from the car park to follow the suggested route.... but it wanted me to go towards Chester! Now we all know that's a bit odd as Arenig is close to Bala and the obvious route is round the Wrexham bypass, so the leader and I quickly decided that Waze was having an off day (or I'd put the wrong address in) so overruled it to travel the usual way. We didn't think any more of it until approaching the roundabout that takes you left on to the A483 to Llangollen and Waze again suggested we turn right towards Chester. We overruled it againto head up the approach road to the A483 (with Ray behind) and ran straight into stationary traffic!! Carol was in my car and tried hard, albeit not too convincingly, not to give us too tough a time. All we could do was limp along to the next junction swearing allegiance to all further Waze suggestions and fortunately a neat escape route opened up for us. However, we lost Ray in the chaos. The net result was we arrived at least 45 mins later than scheduled and Ray arrived at our starting point about 20 mins after us after adding a tour of Wrexham.

Heho.... that was never going to spoil our day and we set off in perfect winter conditions. However we stalled as Carol was having a pole malfunction with one pole not locking so she was operating with one pole longer than the other. Coming up to Burns night this was apt, as we all know the Haggis has one leg longer than the other to allow them to run round mountains..so how were we going to get her going upwards! It was resolved by having two shorter poles 😊

We made the short trip to an early coffee stop which was taken in “Bob’s bothy”. Bob likes to head to this bothy for the night and yes, he is clearly a bit mad, but don’t knock it if you’ve not tried it. In fairness, it’s in a great location by the reservoir (Lyn Arenig Fawr) which surprisingly given the amount of rain we’d had was at quite a low level.



Over the style that is next to bothy and round the lake we were on our way and made our way up the first climb up to Y Castell.



The views were spectacular and as we made our way up the summit we could see Snowdon, the Carnedd range, Tryfan and Cnicht to name but a few.

As we were mesmerised by the scenery, we blindly followed some other climbers steps for a bit until our reliable leader quickly realised they were not heading up the best route, so we left their tracks for a bit of the snow equivalent of bush whacking to quickly get back to where we wanted. When you have Bob leading you don't need paths to be visible.

Actually it hadn't been nearly as cold as we had expected going up although it was fairly gusty at times and we made it to the top for lunch to enjoy the panoramic views. There is a very welcome windbreak at the top but very quickly it got pretty chilly!

As an aside, there is a memorial plaque to 8 American airmen crashed into the mountain whilst on a training flight during the second world war which is maintained really well with some relatives (or volunteers?) laying flowers every year.

After the traditional BUMS pic was taken by Iain at the top (which Carol took somewhat literally!)



We decided that rather than descend as planned to make it a circular route, we would retrace our steps. Given we had lost time in the traffic this proved a smart move as otherwise we'd have been back fairly late.

It took some time to warm up after our lunch stop and Mark commented his hands were chilled to the bone, so I gallantly gave him one of my Little Hotties hand warmers! (Only added that bit to make sure Jim G is reading as he may feel the need to comment!)

We made the descent with minimal alarms but it was pretty slippery and pretty steep and a few of us lost our footing and finished up on our backsides. Mine was a fairly minor slip but my new Apple watch was very concerned for me and claimed I'd had a heavy fall and asked if I needed to call emergency help! I reassured her/him/it I was fine. Back at Bob's both a group of about 4 or 5? appeared to be planning to stay over. That must surely be a bit of a challenge as it surely sleeps a max of 3.

Fortunately the return journey was much quicker than the outward one and we were back in the Dysart before 5 after a highly enjoyable day.

Thanks to all who came and special mention for Carol as the only gallant lady to make the trip although I know many other gallant ladies were unable to make it. It's not an easy climb particularly in winter conditions but everyone proved there was still an M in the BUMS!

The first Classic was truly a classic day out (and as a bonus my dodgy knee seems not to be so dodgy after my op!)