

Trip Report: Snowdonia**Date:** 3rd December 2016**Group:** Lesley (leader), Mike A, Tony, Jim G, Sarah and Steve, Jeff, Sue Lancaster, Debbie with dogs**Route:** Tal Y Fan from Rowen**Total Distance:** 8.3 miles**Total Ascent:** 2516 ft**Weather:** Cold and windy on the tops**Time:** 4 hours 45 mins

It's been many years since the BUMs walked on Tal Y Fan and we have, to my knowledge never started from the remote village of Rowen to the west of the Conwy Valley. It certainly is a lovely spot, easier to access than we thought and well worth the trip there to see the lovely cottages and chapels as well as an outstanding pub, the Ty Gwyn (from the outside of course). This is the last remaining pub in a now smaller Rowen, famed for its woollen mills, powered by the Afon Roe river. Plenty more history to follow.

We set out (always the hardest bit for the leader, getting out of the car park) and found the way easily. A tarmac road took us through the lovely village and we turned right, following the signs for a Youth Hostel. The road got steeper and steeper until we reached the YH which was very small and very full.

Just past here we saw a fully intact ancient burial chamber, presumably from Celtic times. This area is littered with standing stones, burial mounds, forts and roman roads—where was Bomber when we needed him? According to the route book an ancient Celtic tribe, the Ordovices, farmed this area until the Romans, under Julius Agricola drove them out somewhere between AD75 and 77 (how do they know that???)

We followed this roman road until finally taking a ladder stile onto the flanks of Tal Y Fan and climbed up to the col where we added on another hill-Foel Lwyd. The path followed a wall on its northern face and there was plenty of snow covering the peaty ground. The wind was pretty fierce on the top of this, less than impressive, mound. However there were beautiful views of the coast -Anglesey and Llandudno and even Penmaen Mawr quarries looked fine, illuminated by the sun.

Retracing our steps we returned to the Col and clambered up to the summit of Tal Y Fan, this time a worthy little climb with a proper trig point. More lovely views but too chilly to hang around we followed a magnificent stone wall down towards Caer Bach Fort. This was clearly a

fort surrounded by ditches and the remains of buildings evident (to a trained eye of course). But the best was yet to come.

Continuing our descent we hit a proper track and round the next bend, you'll never believe it, in the middle of nowhere, a beautifully restored 15th century church at Llangelynin, actually dating right back to the 12th century. Complete with graveyard, ancient and modern, and its own holy well with life preserving properties. Sue had a quick dip in this—well her hand anyway- and we carried on down to Rowen, all of us amazed at this impressive place.

Through ancient woodland managed by the Woodland Trust we emerged on the last bit of tarmac to retrace our way back to Rowen.

Back in time for mulled wine and beer at the usual.

This fairly easy walk lacked nothing at all. Mountains, woodland, ancient monuments and a tranquil, picturesque welsh village. Oh and a few wild ponies too. Highly recommended.

Thanks to all the sat mappers for keeping me on the straight and narrow.

Lesley