

**Trip Report: The Aran Ridge****Date:** 18th February 2007**Group:** Jim Grant (Leader), Jim Walker, Mike & Lesley Arrowsmith, Colin Christie, Lynne Quinn and George Robey, Roxy (the Mutt)**Route:** Drysgol (731m) Aran Fawddwy (905m)

Erw y Ddafad-ddu (872m) Aran Benllyn (885m)

**Total Distance:** 11.5 miles**Total Ascent:** 3400 ft**Weather:** Unknwon**Time:** 5 hours 55 mins

Transport supplied by Colin and Mike with an early start at 7.15am from The Nags Head car park. Colin's car is equipped with the latest Tom-Tom satnav but we chose to override its advice and drove to Cwm Cywarch via Bala and Dinas Mawddwy. Arriving in Dinas Mawddwy Mike's Scottish navigator (cheap satnav) got lost and missed the sign posted turnoff to Cwm Cywarch!

We saw some very suspicious activity, with a local farmer having a sheep upside down on some bales of hay on the back of his quad bike! He drove down the road and having seen us promptly stopped, picked up the sheep and dumped it into a field, having rolled it across the top of a barbed wire fence. Much speculation about what he was up to!

Parked near the head of the Cwm and set off up the flanks of Pen yr Allt Uchaf with a ground frost underfoot in the shade but bright sunshine on the other side of the valley. A steady plod, with some de-layering, brought us to the head of the valley and we emerged into the sunshine with fantastic views down to Cwm Cywarch. Another steady, but Howgills type grassy flog, brought us to the top of Drysgol and then onto the Memorial cairn. This is dedicated to a member of the RAF Mountain rescue team who was killed here by a lightening strike in June 1960! An official coffee stop was taken here to admire the extensive views over Mid Wales and Cader Idris.

A steady climb then saw us emerge at a big cairn on the eastern end of the Aran Fawddwy ridge in swirling mist and sunny spells. A straightforward walk leads to the summit trig point on the top of Aran Fawddwy (905m). Fantastic views across North Wales to the Rhinogs and Snowdon and down to the depths of Creiglyn Dyfi. The Chairperson instructs the sun to come out, which it does; the new regime makes its mark early in the year.

A rocky descent off Aran Fawddwy and a half-mile to the east we reach the summit of Erw y Ddafad-ddu (872m). A few mutterings about lunch

and hunger pangs, but the leader presses on to the final summit of the day, Arran Benllyn (885m), George enquires as to why a mountain in Wales is named after a cough medicine, nobody has an answer. The Chairperson orders the sun to come out, which it eventually does! We sit down for a well-earned lunch with fantastic views north to Snowdonia, down to Bala Lake and east to Cader Idris, Barmouth and the sea.

The weather has now turned colder and cloudier and we start the descent route, which takes us back along the Aran Ridge by a very feint (disappearing) path to the right of the high ground. This is followed by a long boggy flog down the partially planked permissive path southwards to the col. A steep rocky descent is made down to Cwm Cywarch to arrive back at the cars. We admire Bryn Hafod a Mountaineering Club Hut and representation is made that the Chairperson should she direct hers efforts to delivering a similar facility for the BUM's instead of controlling the weather!

Unfortunately I now have to report two serious infractions of the club rules.

It has come to the attention of the Health and Safety Officer that certain Members are using illegal substances not covered in his guidelines. Both Colin and George are using this substance, alleged to be "Moisturiser". He is to conduct a formal enquiry and I would remind Members that if found guilty, this could result in both having to buy substantial fines in Beer vouchers.

Certain Members did not return to the Dysart for rehydration therapy, they have been warned as to their future conduct.

We were back in the Dysart around 5.30pm for the normal post-trip rehydration therapy.

Jim G