

**Trip Report: North Wales**

**Date:** 26th February 2010

**Group:** Jean (Leader) and Jim, Mike and Lesley, Jim G, Lynn, Chris and Chrissie, Della

**Route:** From just outside Conwy over the northern part of the Carneddau range to top of Tal y Fan and return via Maen Penddu

**Total Distance:** 10 miles

**Total Ascent:** 2001 ft

**Weather:** Unknown

Girl power rules!!

Three cars set out from Bunbury at 7.45 en route to Abergele to collect Della. By the time we got to Tiverton the leader was in panic mode as she thought she had already lost some of her party and could only see 2 cars! Couldn't find Mike's mobile number but was assured by other occupants that Mike knew where we were going.

After collecting Della from McDonald's in Abergele (no one was tempted to an all day breakfast although Lesley did put in a telephone order for a portion of fries but request was denied) we found the car park about 2 miles north of Conwy town square. Lesley now disappointed there were no fries!

We were now ready to set off but the leader then had dogs abuse for the fact she had her map round her neck and had to have her photo taken. It was at this point she realised it was in the map case upside down so perhaps the abuse was justified!!

The weather in Bunbury had been a bit wet but as we started the walk it brightened up and we were served with superb views for the duration of the walk.

Part of this walk is covered by Bob (Bomber) Harris' book of Walks in Ancient Wales and we were on the lookout for any standing stones he had mentioned. Our first example of this was Caer Bach fort on the right and evidence of settlement houses on the left. The fort was not actually a fort according to Bob, but a type of henge probably from the Bronze Age and was only a ring of stones. There is much evidence of settlements in this area right up the Conwy valley.

Coffee time was called and a sheltered spot was found at the bottom of Tal y Fan. This was a welcome break before the steep ascent to the summit.

This was particularly difficult with snowdrifts up to thigh level in places. It was well worth the effort as the views from the trig point were fabulous. You could see right over the Menai Straits to Anglesey, Conwy

Bay, The Great Orme and right up the Conwy Valley with the higher peaks of the Carneddau range in the distance.

It was at this point the walk was hijacked by some of the testosteronees in the group who decided there was another peak to bag so the descent route was altered to allow them to do this. I now delegated the leadership to Jim W and Jim G as it was no longer my route. The males of the group apart from Gentleman Jim went off to climb Foel Lwyd and the rest of us followed the path down. We regrouped for lunch which was taken at a sheepfold with half the members inside and half sheltering outside. We did not tally long as it was freezing cold in the wind at this point. Jim W announced from inside the fold to the members outside that we were all now getting dressed, meaning we were getting ready to leave, but the hilarity and comments that followed his remark must be left to the imagination!!

On setting off on the path we soon came across a shelter which according to Bob's book was a peat house used for drying peat. Not much farther along the path we came to a large stone named Maen Penddu which marked the meeting of two ancient trackways from the Conwy valley which merge before continuing over the moors towards a Neolithic axe factory in the north.

We now found ourselves back on the path we had followed from the car park but came across some buildings we hadn't noticed on the way up and thought we had gone wrong so took a left turn but in fact should have carried on. This resulted in an amount of male faffing with the maps and a trudge across some heather until eventually we could see the car park. This was a lovely area and should be considered again especially as it is not too far to travel.

Jean