

**Trip Report: North Wales****Date:** 16th January 2010**Group:** : Jim G (leader), Jim W, Jean, Mike A, Lesley, Tony, Colin, Lynda, Chris, Ian, Neil, Tilly, Molly**Route:** Pontcysyllte to World's End, Llangollen**Total Distance:** 16.5 miles**Total Ascent:** 1181 ft**Weather:** Unknown

Bunbury 7.30am start, in the dark, wet and wind. The squad was reduced to 11, Lynn had a date with the log man (or did she want to see Liverpool play (?) Stoke and other various excuses). Elena, wimping due to weather (unable to persuade her to get dressed)

It stopped raining as soon as we crossed into Wales (unheard of) and the short drive to the car park next to the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. We set off at 8.30 and join Offa's Dyke at this point heading for World's End. The route initially follows the Llangollen Canal where we were treated to some great skating on ice techniques, in walking boots. The route leaves the canal and then crosses the A539 heading towards the small village of Garth. The path then leaves the road and we continue west through Trevor Hall Wood and along Panorama Wall. The weather is cold but dry with the sun appearing from time to time.

We emerge onto a minor road which is mostly sheet ice, requiring care to avoid falling over! We follow this until just near Rock Farm where the path leaves the road heading north towards World's End. Colin requires constant badgering to use his new camera for the Blog photos (rumour is that he was worried about the cost of the film!)

The route planning is perfection as the Leader provides a bench for the Ladies at the official Coffee Break at 10.30am. The route now contours under a series of steep cliffs and the track is covered in snow that varies in depth from a couple of inches to a couple of feet. This makes for fairly tough going and we arrive at World's End in clear sunny weather but sweating a lot!

This is the official Lunch Break, 12.30, and the Leader has organised another bench for the Ladies to sit on. There is a ford across the road that has a lot of water pouring across it; Lesley refuses to test the flow at this point!

Lunch taken we head west up the river gully between Craig y Forwyn and Craig y Cythraul, the absence of any tracks should have been a clue but we plough (literally)

onward and upward until we emerge from the woods and onto the side of Eglwseg Mountain. Despite the trackless snow we manage to find a footpath sign and we check map and bearings as the plan was to head for Newtown Mountain. After 20 yards of flogging through snow that is anything from 1-3 feet deep a conference is called to discuss the merits of continuing in the conditions. After a lot of milling about, (Mister la-de-da Gunner Graham wallowing about, Tony falling down and Tilly poking him in the eye, the Iron Man turning into the horizontal snow man and Lynda claiming that cutting across the heather would be fine and then disappearing up to her waist in snow) the Leader gets a grip and decides that continuing on would probably not be sensible (not that that's ever been a consideration in the past) and we should retreat back to World's End and find another route back to the cars.

Decision made we beat a retreat down the gully and back to the road, Neil is looking particularly fetching in his 1960's red cagoule (old English) that reminds the Leader of a Lollipop man's coat. We continue back along the minor roads, admiring the views (and kicking the camera man to record them on film) heading back towards Trevor. The weather is now very pleasant, walking into the bright sunshine and a certain amount of de-layering is required, The route back turns into a bit of a road slog but after a piece of outstanding navigation, the Leader finds paths that lead us back to the Llangollen canal at the Bryn Howel Hotel. It is then a gentle stroll along the towpath and back to Pontcysyllte and the car park. Despite the tired legs we still take time out to walk across the fantastic World Heritage Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and admire the River Dee in full flood from the melting snow.

It was a relatively short drive back to the Club headquarters, The Dysart Arms, for the mandatory re-hydration therapy.

Jim G