

**Trip Report: Mynydd Hiraethog**

**Date:** 26th June 2015

**Group:** Steve (leader), Jim, Mike A, Les, Jeff, Selina, Lynda

**Route:** The three lakes trail - Llyn Aled, Llyn Alwen and Alwen Reservoir

**Total Distance:** 11.5 miles

**Total Ascent:** 1600 ft

**Weather:** Variable! - windy and drizzly at times but with some brighter spells

"Mynydd Hiraethog, where's that?" I can hear you saying! Well you might know it as Denbigh Moors, the large undulating upland plateau to the west of Denbigh. It's an area usually by-passed by walkers on their way to Snowdonia but is well covered by a slim guide called "Walks around Hiraethog - Moors and Lakes". So I picked the longest walk in the book and off we went.

On arrival at the start point beside Llyn Aled we were greeted with a strong breeze that was whipping up white horses on the water and giving a good sense of the wildness of the terrain. After only 10 minutes we were well acquainted with that wildness as we struggled through the knee-high tussocks of the open moorland. This particular variety of bush-wacking was soon christened "tussocking" and, as expected, there was considerable muttering about the likelihood of another 10 miles of similar country. Soon however, having got my bearings, I was able to offer reassurance that a track began at the next lake, Llyn Alwen, now visible and close.

So after a coffee stop at the peaceful lake side we picked up the appropriate track and started to make better progress. Walking in a south-westerly direction along the track we had views ahead of Snowdonia and as the clouds cleared off some the summits we could pick out various familiar peaks. We reached a junction with the waymarked Mynydd Hiraethog trail and turned to follow it, passing an information board, which told us that the area provides a good habitat for curlews, before reaching the A543. After crossing the road we skirted a farm and followed a clear track marked with the remains of dilapidated walls. The wall remains seemed like an ideal lunch spot and so we stopped to eat, drink and play spot the curlew.

Shortly after lunch we climbed a gate to return to the open moorland and picked up a well trodden path that followed the line of the old Denbigh-Pentrefoelas Road. This path climbed gently to Bwlch y Garnedd and then became less distinct for a short distance until Alwen Reservoir came into view - the third of the lakes on the three lakes trail. The 5km long

reservoir was built a century ago to supply Birkenhead and features an impressive footbridge which provided our route across to a bridleway ascending on the other side. Having already had a glimpse of the cars in the distance it seemed for a while as if we were heading away from them but a left turn and some tarmac shortly afterwards soon restored a sense that we might not have far to go. But it was far enough for another shower to arrive and make everyone reach for their waterproofs. Fortunately it was a brief shower and by the time we had re-crossed the A543 and covered the mile or so back to Llyn Aled we had all just about dried out.

Although we covered a bit more distance than expected from the guide book I hope the days efforts didn't stop any of the group dancing at the Friday Night Bash!

Steve