

Trip Report: Snowdonia

Date: 14th November 2010

Group: Mike (Leader & Driver), Lesley, Chrissie, Chris S (guest)

Route: Maesafallen - Foel Goch (613m) - Foel y Geifr (626m) - Pen y Boncyn Trefeilw (646m) - Maesafallen

Total Distance: 7.45 miles

Total Ascent: 2230 ft

Weather: Dry and cool

Time: 4 hours 30 mins

As substitute leader, the most difficult aspect of this walk was actually getting anybody to take part. I can see why Jim W. binned this weekend! Anyway, after much cajoling, I managed to make up a car load, even if one of the party was a coerced guest. The great advantage for me was the possibility to explore an area I didn't even know existed until I lifted it from a "Trail" mag. The Hirnant valley lies just south of Bala and is accessed by a minor road which links Bala with Lake Vyrnwy. Our start point was about 5km down this road.

We started off in cool clear conditions heading west from the farm of Maesafallen and followed a grassy track up onto a boggy plateau. (Bog was to become a major feature of this walk.) The route turned southwards between two areas of forest and descended into a boggy valley and then we climbed to our first summit, Foel Goch. En route we found an attractive peat hag out of the wind, which served as a coffee stop. However, it was a very disappointing coffee stop, as we discovered that the A's and S's flasks were full of luke warm coffee. The leader was forced to accept the blame. Possibly the kettle hadn't boiled? Anyway on to Foel Goch for a further disappointment! As summits go, this is one of the least impressive I have ever seen, consisting of about five slabs of rock.

In the distance we could see our next objective, the trig point of Foel y Geifr.

A short descent to a boggy col and then up to the trig point we incredibly came upon another walker. I was certain that we wouldn't see another living soul on this walk, but he was having his lunch at the trig point and obviously miffed at having his peace and quiet ruined. We left him in peace after the obligatory photo and the taking in the views of the Arans, the Rhinogs and Arenig Fawr which were excellent, although the highest points were clagged over.

From the summit we turned east and descended to the road, via the boggiest section of the walk. We crossed the road to take on the other

side of the valley and we ascended a stony path (bog free) to Pen y Carrig Duon which marked the start of our descent. However before that, we took in the outlying summit of Pen y Boncyn Trefeilw which, even for a Welsh mountain name, takes some pronouncing. Strictly speaking, the leader was the only member of the party that could be bothered, as the rest of the party remained happily with the stony track and could not face the short boggy excursion. It was the highest point of the day but as usual, the name was far more impressive than the summit itself. Back to the path junction and we started our return down to the valley road. A lunch spot was located, out of the cool wind, where Chrissie generously shared her hot coffee leftovers.

We were only a mile or so from the end and we picked our way down through sheep fields to another area of bog where we rejoined the road and the short walk back to the car.

At this point it is necessary to make a stunning admission. There was NO rehydration at the Dysart or anywhere else for that matter. The leader wishes to distance himself from the decision which was clearly made by women and children!

Mike A