

Trip Report: Snowdonia

Date: 25th November 2016

Group: Steve (leader), Sarah, Heather, Dave C, Mike A, Les, Jim G, Jeff, Mike W, Selina, Jim W (yes that's Jim Walker!)

Route: Aber Falls via Wales Coastal Path

Total Distance: 11.5 miles

Total Ascent: 1300 ft

Weather: Unknown

As we left the cars at Abergwyngregyn to start this walk it was still frosty underfoot and the sun had yet to creep up over the Welsh hills. Fortunately after walking under the A55 towards the coast we soon emerged into the sunshine as we reached the coastal path and headed west. Conditions were very pleasant with the tide receding and numerous birds enjoying the exposed mudflats. After a couple of miles we stopped for coffee at a point where the River Ogwen flows into the Menai Straits and forces the coastal path to turn inland along a quiet lane. However, the tarmac didn't last long and we soon had to leave the road to follow a path through a farmyard, where conditions underfoot soon turned nasty! With boot-deep cow slurry obstructing the correct route we decided to divert across a field, only to find that in places the mud was just as bad. Retreating from the field back onto the supposed path provided little immediate improvement but by this time everyone had filthy footwear and had stopped caring.

Fifteen minutes later we reached another lane which crossed the A55 and then ascended steeply through woodland, so that about half of the day's climbing was achieved in one short stretch (and Dave's recovering Achilles tendon was given a severe test!). At the top of the hill we joined the North Wales Path and soon left the road to follow an undulating track through fields of sheep. The benefit of the climbing was that we now had a great view across the Menai Straits to Anglesey and Puffin Island. A lunch spot was chosen to ensure that we could enjoy both the view and the winter sunshine.

The North Wales Path contours around Moel Wnion and we paused to take stock at a point where it's possible to descend back to the cars to complete a loop of about 8 miles. But another option is to continue on the path around to Aber Falls and add another hour or so to the walk, which is what the group chose to do. We stopped at the Falls to take photos and then followed the "tourist" path down the valley back to Abergwyngregyn, with a final half mile on road to reach the cars.

So ended a slightly unusual Snowdonia walk, in that it lacked a mountain top "objective", but I think it made for a good day out and I hope that everyone enjoyed it.

Steve