

**Trip Report:** The Cwm Penamnen Horseshoe

**Date:** Aug 20th, 2022

**Group:** Steve (leader) & Sarah, Lesley, Janet, Dave B (and Jasper), Dave F, Jim, Mike W, Tony

**Route:** A loop around Cwm Penamnen taking in Moel Penamnen

**Total Distance:** 9.6 miles

**Total Ascent:** 2165 ft

This is a walk that I first spotted a few years ago in a small book called "Hill Walks and Easy Summits - the finest walks on the lower hills of Snowdonia". Always keen to visit a new area, Sarah and I made the trip to check it out at that time and since then I have had it filed under "possible BUMS walks". So it was nice to finally get a good opportunity to share the route with a group of nine BUMS and Dave's dog Jasper.

Starting at the village of Dolwyddelan in the Conwy Valley the route is a simple circuit up on to and then around the grassy hills that enclose Cwm Penamnen. The walking was easy to begin with as we climbed gently up an established vehicle track for a mile or so and then turned in a south-westerly direction as the track got a little steeper. It soon became apparent that the wind was a lot stronger up in the hills than it was down in the village! So when we stopped for coffee in a stone shelter at Y Ro Wen there were a few clothing adjustments. This was also the point at which the firm track ended and was replaced by a grassy path with frequent boggy patches. But at least the views were impressive.....when not required to look exactly where to put your feet! Dave B had the additional issue of trying to keep Jasper in view and there were a few anxious moments when our canine friend didn't immediately respond to the whistle, but it wasn't a problem and he was clearly having a great time exploring the long grass.

There was low cloud obscuring the summit of Moel Siabod and the Snowdon range but despite being overcast all day there was no rain in our locality. Just wind and a lot of it. The trek in a westerly direction to get to our second, and final, summit of the day - Moel Penamnen - was a bit arduous and any thought of trying to have lunch at the top was soon dropped when we found that we could barely stand up! Fortunately the required direction off the summit meant that we had the wind on our backs for a while and lost some height before finding an old wall that provided a suitable lunch spot.

The path then crossed a stile into a previously forested area of the Cwm, now just covered with conifer brash, and descended steeply. A consequence of the steepness was that the group became fragmented and so when we reached a point where the path emerged onto a forestry track at a three-way junction each of the three sub-groups couldn't see the others and had to decide which way to go. Two of the three sub-groups managed to spot an overgrown footpath sign and continued straight down, through trees and then bracken, to the road at the bottom of the valley. But Sarah and Tony didn't spot the sign and instead descended by following forestry tracks which eventually brought them along the road where the other seven of us were waiting, very anxiously of course! A mile or so of further walking along the flat lane took us back to Dolwyddelan and over the railway to the station car park.

Thanks to all the group for an enjoyable day in the windy Welsh hills. Also, particular thanks to Jim and Dave B for driving. And good to see Dave Franklin helping out with beer consumption at The Dysart.