

## Easter Trip Report

### Glyndyfdwy - Moel Fferna Loop

The walkers were: Richard and Della Calder, Neil and Ann Bodfish, then the blokes; Jim Grant, Colin Christy, Dave Barker and Mike Hiscock. (Humans)

The runner was: Jasper (canine)

The Vale of Llangollen offers many opportunities for walks but most people focus on the Worlds End area or Horseshoe Pass and neglect the hills to the south. I therefore decided it was time to rectify this situation and nearly three years ago discovered this route while looking at old slate tramways in the area. The pestilence put paid to leading a walk here during the lost years of Covid until now.

Mike Hiscock said to me before we started "we can only go two ways from here, north or south, which way are we going?" "South" said I which Mike approved of as he'd done everything to the north! I like to look for the less well known places people perhaps overlook.

Once we were all sorted off we went up the lane leading away from the lay by, bearing right at the first junction and plodding up to a smallholding where our path began. With no sign post or arrow to confirm our choice we enquired of three locals who were chatting in the farm yard and sensing a business opportunity they confirmed we were going the right way but requested 50p per person for the privilege! So much for rights of way and the right to roam! We had a laugh with them.

The path leads gently through some woods and down to a lane which took us to the edge of the Nant y Pandy valley before descending to the river. Following the river upstream past the odd isolated house here and there we passed the ruined buildings of the slate splitting works and eventually emerged onto a gravel lane following the course of the old tramway. As the valley opened out we found our own Hard Rock café and enjoyed a short stop for a drink and a nibble sitting on the aforementioned hard rocks. At this point the leader (me) decided it was time to introduce a special Easter treat to improve moral.....mini chocolate easter eggs. Winner.

The next part of our route following the tramway gently swept us up through fields full of ewes and their freshly made lambs. This bit was not a right of way but I think we would all have paid 50p if asked! The Deeside Slab Quarry at the top of the fields welcomed us into the world of a dead industry and signaled the end of the gentle gradient and the start of a steep incline which took us up to the next section of easy tramway. Once at the top we could see our route contouring round to the foot of the huge piles of slate waste left by the Moel Fferna Slate Mine and another incline.

The incline lead us to the main working area of the slate mine on level one. There were two more levels above this but no one had the inclination to explore them when lunch was suggested. All the slate won from here was mined out of huge caverns until 1960 when the mine closed. Look here if you are interested:

[http://ucet.org.uk/~ucet9504/index.php?option=com\\_kunena&view=topic&Itemid=191&catid=21&id=879ery](http://ucet.org.uk/~ucet9504/index.php?option=com_kunena&view=topic&Itemid=191&catid=21&id=879ery)

Lunch was taken in the shelter of the old buildings, not that we needed any shelter as there was very little wind and no rain to bother us. Time for another infusion of mini easter eggs. Get in!

After a leisurely lunch break, we set off across the hillside following the North Berwyn Way for a while before turning sharp left and trudging up the northeast ridge of Moel Fferna the only summit we would visit on our walk at 628m. The top greeted us with a small wind shelter and quite a bit of wind which helped keep us cool. Having surveyed the length of the Clwydians from east to west as

far as Prestatyn, then the Denbigh Moors, the distant hazy peaks of Snowdonia and finally the two Berwyns it was time to leave.

So far, our route had been pretty dry but we were soon faced with some pretty boggy sections which required careful route finding to avoid disappearing forever into the bottomless black quagmires. It wasn't long before terra ferma reappeared and we could stroll along the ridge on dry tracks enjoying the views.

After a mile or so it was time to turn downhill and head back to the Vale of Llangollen. A comfortable, sketchy old bridleway gradually took us downhill. The weather and location convinced the leader it was time to risk introducing a new concept to a BUMS walk, an afternoon coffee break! Shock, horror, dismay, disbelief, disapproval, falling standards; these are all the things I thought would be going through Jim's mind when I suggested it but the masses won through and we all sat down on a nice mossy bank for a coffee even though most had none! Jim joined us.

Break over off we went again through woodland, meadows and lanes passing the sad sight of a pair of dead newborn lambs less fortunate than the tail wagging charmers we had seen earlier. Life is precious and too short for some.

We soon arrived back at our cars. A lovely walk with lovely friends in a lovely place gilded by lovely weather. Well, I enjoyed it, thanks for your company.

Richard Calder