

Walk: NOC 09

**Location:** **Track leading off Heol Senni Road –over mountain in an odd circular route involving some off-track routes.**

Directions: Turn right out of castle and head up the A4069 towards Crai Reservoir. With the Reservoir on your left, take a sharp right hand turn just before some houses, on the narrow single track lane sign posted to Heol Senni.

Drive along this road for about a mile. After a few hundred yards after the first cattle grid, there is a turning on to dirt tracks on the right. (This is NOC 07 walk where you can park up, walk back to the castle, and collect your car later - assuming someone gives you a lift). However for this separate circular walk, drive on a little further and you will come to a *second* cattle grid with a house on your right. Park up just after the second cattle grid on the right.

There is a path leading up promisingly into the mountains. It dead ends, which is where you have to come off track briefly.

Distance (miles): About 9-10  
 Time (hours): 17 minutes  
 Length of Walk: Just under 3 hours  
 Dates Walked: 06/07/2008

Parking: Free

Pop in to: Nowhere here

Description: I wasn't going to include this walk on the list, as you do have to come off track and climb a bit of mountainside at one point, so it certainly isn't for the unfit. There are probably more sensible routes – this is just the one I discovered. It does give you a circular walk of sorts provided you are good at following your nose and logic.

This walk joins on to NOC 07 at the gate overlooking the valley, so doing half of NOC 07 first – even if you simply walk up the track for an hour and then back again – will serve you well as you will recognise where you are assuming you successfully do the circle on this walk.

Proceed up the path for about 25 minutes. There are some nice views over the valley on the left and some derelict quarry style stone buildings on the right, which are not attractive.

At the end of the track, the path terminates, which is unexpected and disappointing. Undeterred, I reasoned there must be something somewhere up the mountain.

At the end of the ugly stone buildings there is a section quarried out of the mountain on your right. You need to walk up the mountain (very steep bit) parallel to a barbed wire fence, a little to the left of this quarried area. You may need to hold on to the fence as you pull yourself up the steep incline. It is only 100 yards or so to the next path.

Eventually you will come out on top of the mountain that was on your right as you walked up the original farm track. Carry along the side of the mountain, almost walking back on yourself, following the line of the wire fence on your right. There is a track of sorts here – probably sheep tracks.

Eventually you will see another fence (wire fence next to a half falling down dry stone wall – quite a lot of this sort of mix up here) to your left and the option of crossing over the field you are in to the other side. Head across to the fence on your left, turn left on the path running alongside the fence, and cross right over the fence at the first walking style you come to.

The path you now need is not very clear here, but you must follow it to the top of the mountain. There is a path going along the fence to the left after you cross the stile. It is possibly this will eventually curve around to where you want to be but I have opted to walk straight to the high point and down the other side. It is not a steep climb, indeed it is pretty flat from here on. So take the track straight ahead of you towards the top of the mountain.

You will eventually reach one of those square stone blocks that tells you that you are at the high point of that particular hill. Carry on in a straight line from this stone high point, and after a while you head down hill towards another barbed wire fence.

There is now a reassuringly recognisable track alongside this fence. Turn right at the fence, and carry on for a couple of miles or so, keeping the barbed wire fence you have now joined, on your left. The path undulates a bit, there are some wet areas, and you seem to be going on for some time. Eventually though you will recognise the field gate overlooking the valley from NOC 07 walk. The field gate is on your left and looks over a deep deserted valley, very remote.

There is now a well defined farm track on your right which heads down hill. Follow this track, turning right, and continuing down hill. Eventually you will see the Crai Reservoir on your left as you descend. The track then curves left, down to a gate you are now on the Heol Senni Lane you drove along. Turn right on the road and walk the few hundred yards to the second cattle grid and your car.

You could in theory do this walk the other way around, but I never have tried it. Not suitable for mountain biking unless you are prepared to carry the bike in places! However there are alternative tracks and paths up here that are suitable for mountain biking.

Pictures taken on 06/07/2008:

Ugly derelict buildings on right of track



Looking down the track you have just come up



View to left of the track as you come up the hill (pic on left). The track ends soon after these buildings on the right, (right pic), so you will need to head straight up the hill on the right to join the upper tracks.



View from the top once you have gone up the steep mountain side for a few hundred yards; now you are on a new track walking back almost parallel to the original farm track – but you will soon turn off to the left.



Having turned off left, you come to this stone walled / wire fence combination. Pic on right is looking back down the mountain, pic on left is looking ahead. Go left along this wall and cross over at the style.



Here we have just crossed over the style leaving the fence and stone wall behind us to head across open mountain.



After some walking over open mountain we came across a boggy area with these interesting plants – like sheep wool. Pic on far right shows the fence and stone wall combination you will now be walking along, keeping the wire fence to your left, having crossed over the hill and past the high point.



Follow this wall and fence – pic on right is looking back along the way you've just come.



Descending into the next valley, far ahead we will eventually join with the tracks from NOC 07 walk.



Now you join the main reddish farm track back down to the lane you parked on. See the water in picture on left – this is the Crai Reservoir.



From here on it is a simple case of following the farm track for about an hour, admiring the views on the left over the Crai Reservoir and valley – assuming it is not too cloudy.

