

Walk: NOC 07
Location: **Track leading off Heol Senni Road –over mountain to Castle via Caving Club & Penwyllt**

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 half a mile and a few hundred yards after the first cattle grid, there is a turning on to dirt tracks on the right, where you can park just before a barrier gate. Be careful about the uneven road as you pull off the lane to park as you can bottom out if you cross onto the dirt track in the wrong place.

If you end up crossing a second cattle grid with a house on your right, you have gone too far.

Distance (miles): About 9-10
 Time (hours): 15 minutes
 Length of Walk: 3 hours
 Dates Walked: 21/04/2008 (whole walk), 28/02/2010 (part only)

Parking: Free

Pop in to: Caving Club?

Description: Very scenic walk across bleak mountain. You will need to arrange a collection for your car afterwards. The walk is probably 10 miles or so, similar to the driving distance.

You start off heading up hill on a stony farm track heading towards a very large looking mountain. Eventually you come to a field gate after about an hour or so, after a period during which the path has levelled out.

Looking ahead over this field gate you will see into a completely deserted valley. There are walks going straight ahead but you do not continue on through the gate. Instead, a little before the field gate, there is a clear path leading off to the right. It curves around behind the big mountain, going up hill on a manageable gradient.

Follow this path taking no turnings right or left, through a couple more field gates, and eventually down a steep section which is quite stoney, a new valley opening up before you with views to the left.

Eventually you will observe a large wood to your left, with a field gate. You can either go through the field gate, down through the woodland, and turn left on to the disused railway tracks at the bottom and continue walking for a couple of miles until you reach Penwyllt (then follow directions from Penwyllt station below).

Or, for a more scenic route with some more excellent views, turn left, leaving the woodland behind you on your right, as you head south parallel to the railway track level ridge which you may observe below you on your right. The path bends round to the left, but another path curves round to the right. You want to go round to the right, continuing round the side of another mountain, following an old railway track (disused but some of the timbers are still visible under the soil) and eventually you

come to another field gate, with signs referring to this area being a nature reserve or some such.

Through this gate on the left there is a quarried area dug into the mountain, and a pile of stones which used to be a winching house to haul the trains laden with stone etc.

Descend down a very steep straight path, following the line of the old railway track, until you get to the bottom.

Take the first right path before you reach another field gate (or if you get to the field gate – turn right immediately afterwards following the marked path), walking towards the caving club, which will eventually become visible as a row of terraced houses in the middle of nowhere.

Pass through a pedestrian gate to the right of the caving club, and continue along the dirt track road, until you reach Penwyllt Quarry and the old railway station at Penwyllt.

Head down the single lane, taking the first footpath marked off to your right after a few hundred yards going down the steep lane. This footpath is also stony and steep. At the lane at the end, turn right, walking past a farm house and a modern bungalow on your right, heading through a metal field gate onto a narrow woodland track which takes you behind the Craig y Nos Country Park.

Enter the Country Park at the single gate on your left (after about half a mile or so trudging along a bridle path track which is muddy in parts where churned up by horses), and at the river turn left towards the castle, entering the castle grounds through the lower gardens, and taking the path up to the castle.

This walk will take you three hours, but is mostly down hill aside from the initial section, as you are parking up much higher than the castle and then walking back down again. As long as you arrange for someone from the castle to drive you back to your car to collect it, this is an excellent and exhilarating walk through remote mountains with some lovely desolate views.

It would be suitable for mountain biking if you don't mind carrying the bike over a few gates. Also the path down to (returning from a clockwise circular walk) or up from (going anti-clockwise at the start of a circular walk) the caving club is rather steep so you have to dismount and walk this section.

Pictures taken on 21/04/2008:

