

Hiking Routes from Bryn Hafod

Introduction:

The Aran range is immediately behind the hut and the Cadair massive is just a short drive away. Hikes on these two ranges are included in this guide for you to use. Feel free to take out with you but please replace afterwards. A gps mapping app' on your phone is a good tool but don't rely on it solely so please take a map with you also. The weather can change in an instant so be prepared and take the appropriate equipment etc. None of these routes I would say are easy and conditions can make them much more difficult.

Below is a list of recommended routes:

From Hut

Route Name	Distance	Time
Aran Fawddwy	13km	6-7 hours
Glasgwm	7.3kn	3-4
Glasgym & Pen y Brynfforchog	11km	5-6
The Arans Loop	23km	8-10

Using Car

Route Name	Distance	Time
Llanuwchllyn (Pandy) to Bryn Hafod	15km	7-8
Cadair Idris, Craig Cau, Cwyfry	11km	5-6
Cadair Idris Mynydd Moel, Gau Graig Loop	18km	7-9

Here are the useful OS Maps for the area

Explorer 1:25000

OL23 Cadair Idris & Llyn Tegid

OL18 Harlech, Porthmadog & Bala

Landranger 1:50000

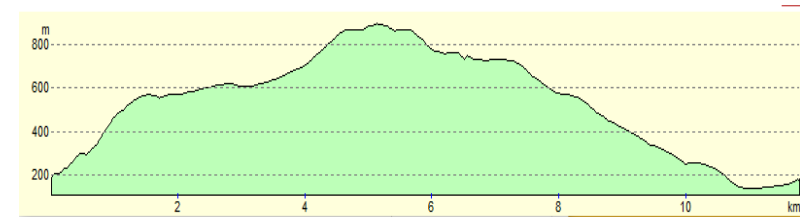
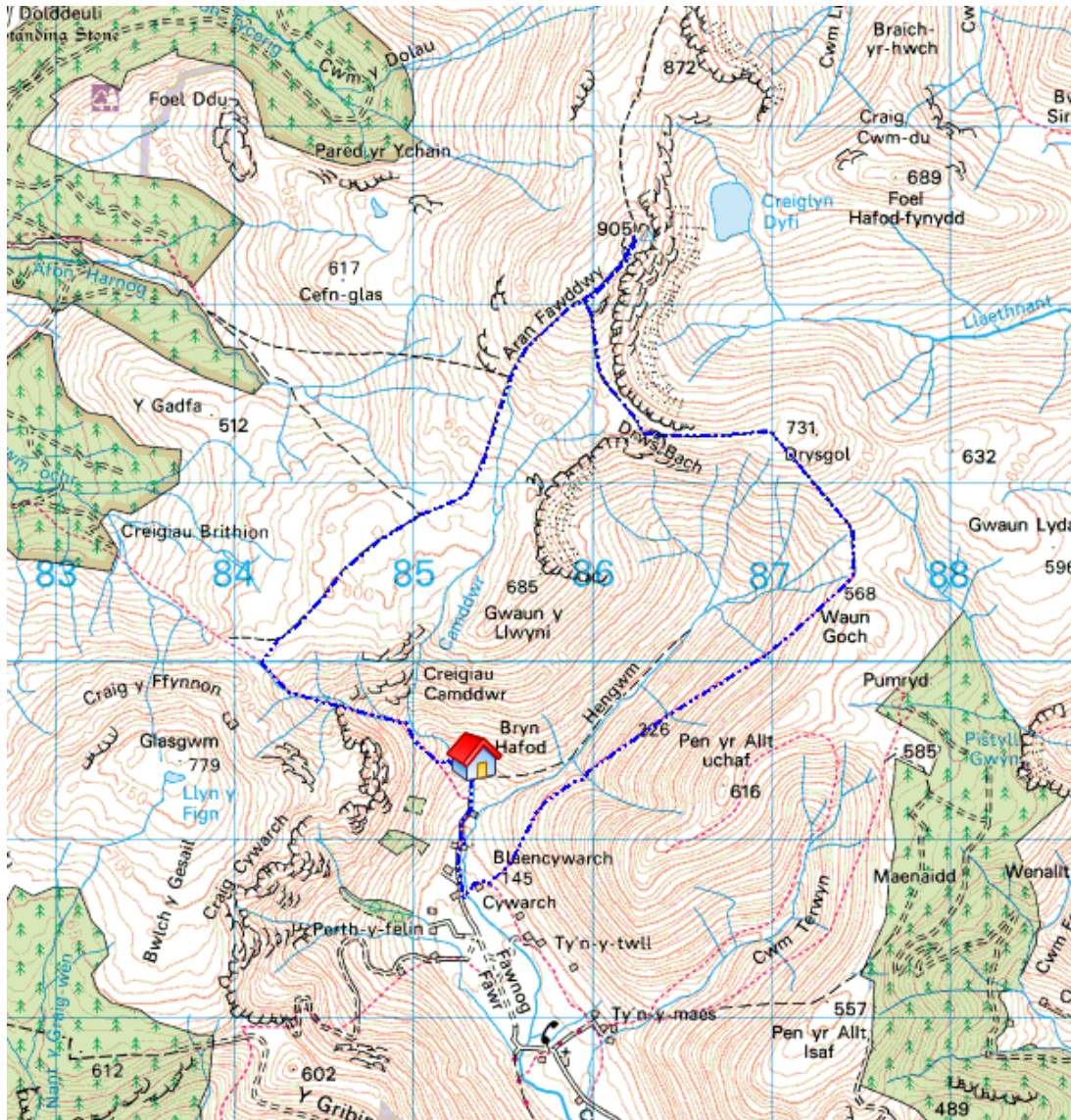
125 Bala & Lake Vyrnwy

124 Porthmadog & Dolgellau

Aran Fawddwy

Distance: 12km (7miles). Time: 6-7hours

Ascent: 790m (2650ft) Clockwise route.



From the hut walk back down the track and join the route at the stile. The path immediately begins to climb crossing the stream at the new bridge and re-crossing it higher up. It's worth a few stops to admire the view back down the valley before reaching the col beneath Glasgwm at SH841201.

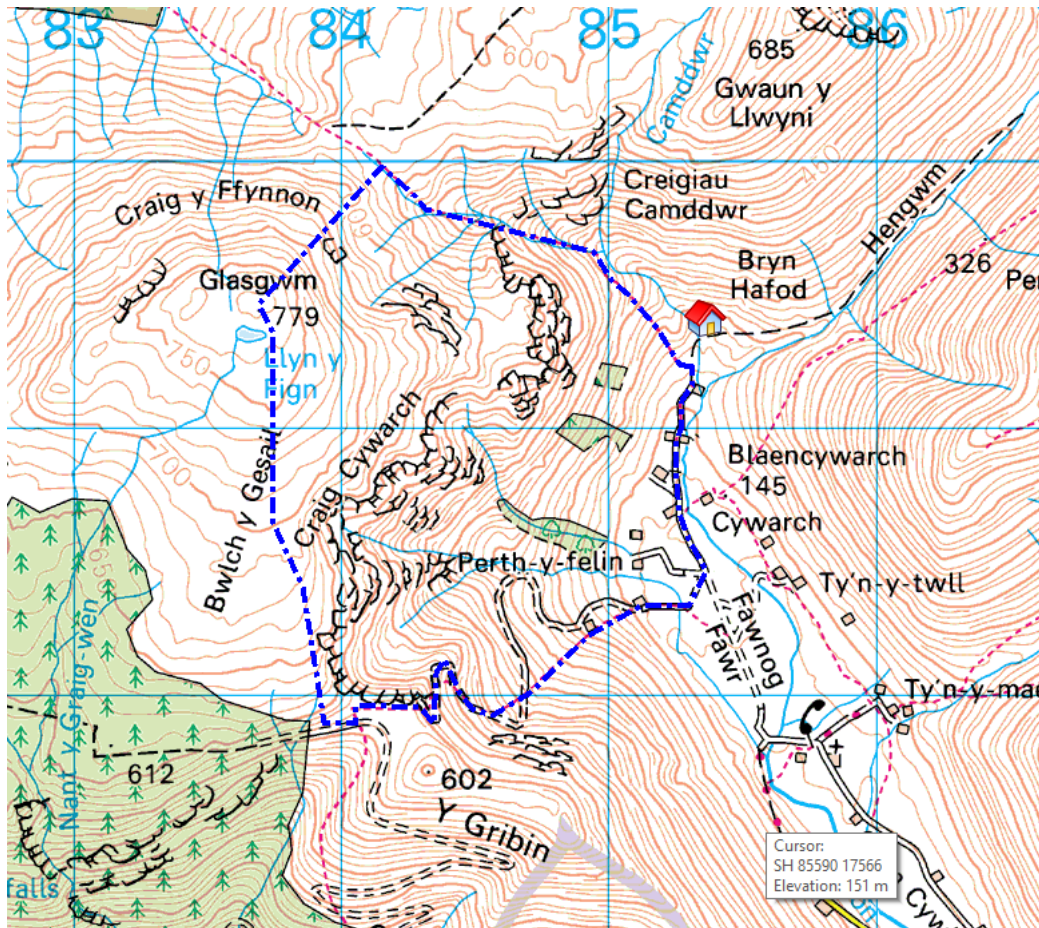
Turn right here across the open moorland following the ridge fence as it heads roughly northeast to the summit of Aran Fawddwy, which is now in view. For most of the way there is a path on either side of the fence with little to choose between the two options. About half a kilometre short of the summit a fence comes in from the right, take note as this is your return route after visiting the summit.

The summit of Aran Fawddwy is dramatic and rocky with a thousand foot drop to the small lake of Creiglyn Dyfi way below. The view north along the ridge to Aran Benllyn is superb with Lake Bala providing a fitting backdrop. Elsewhere the panorama includes the Berwyns, some of lesser mountains in the Arans, the Arenigs plus much of northern Snowdonia and mid-Wales. Turning back regain the fence noted on the ascent and head south alongside it. You soon reach a cairn built in memory of a member of a mountain rescue team killed by lightning, which is perched high above the valley of Hengwm. The path turns east to the summit of Drysgol where there is a fine retrospective of Aran Fawddwy. Turn south once more to the rather boggy col just short of Waun Goch. Here turn south-west on the clear and easy path descending back to the valley floor.

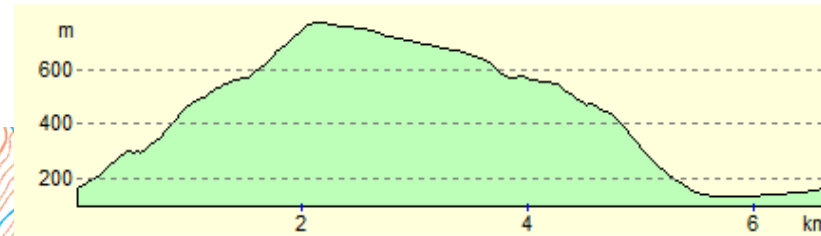
Glasgwm

Distance: 7km (4miles). Time: 3-4 hours

Ascent: 600m (2200ft)



Keeping the fence on your right continue across open moorland. The path then descends quite steeply over grass to reach a col. Note - to your left are steep crags so care is needed on this section. Ahead you will see a stone track descending steeply down to the left. Join this track and head down into Cwm Cywarch. The going is steep in places although well constructed zigzags mean an easy and fast descent into the valley and the start of the walk.



Join the trail at the stile down the track from the hut. Follow the path crossing the footbridge where the climbing now begins in earnest and you gain height quickly with the crags closing in around you. During the ascent you cross the stream twice and can enjoy some small waterfalls and the immediate surroundings, which are superb.

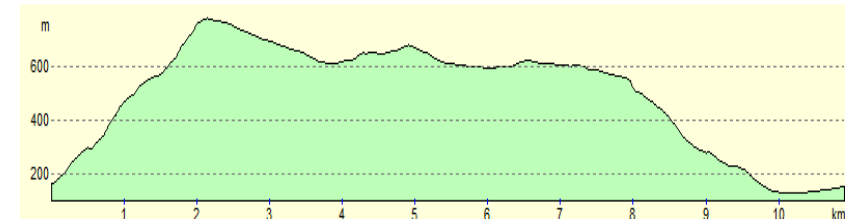
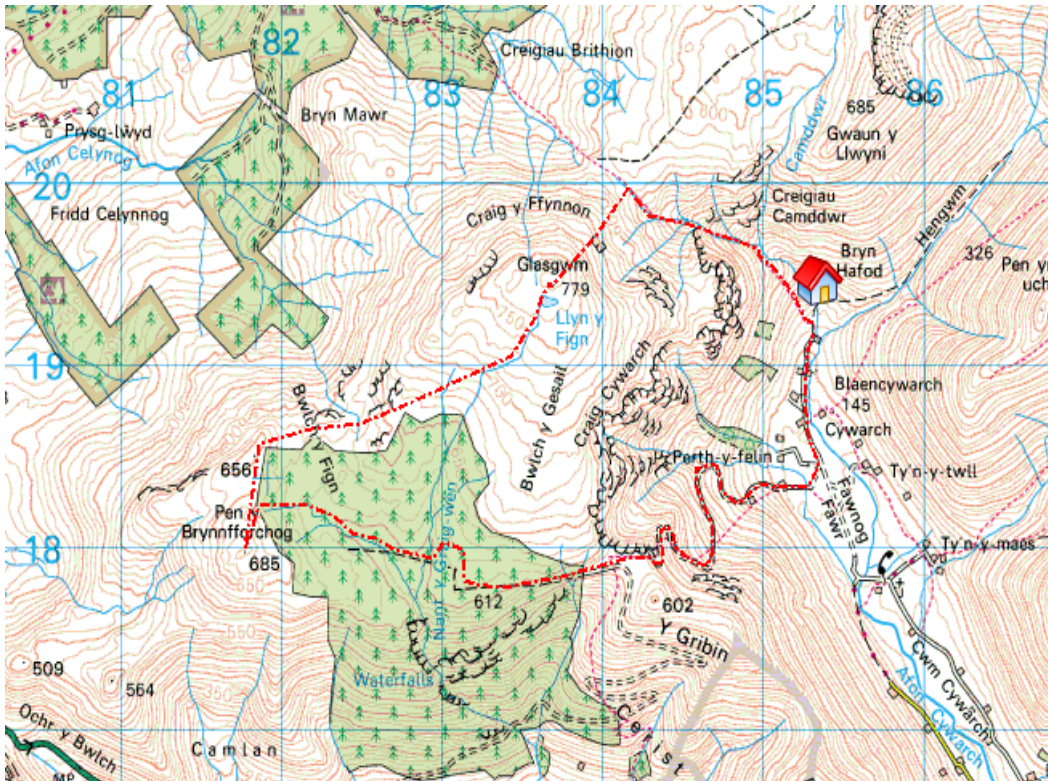
As height is gained the retrospective view improves and the col beneath Glasgwm is soon reached (grid ref. 841201). Here the path levels and you reach a small tarn. Ahead there are excellent views north to the Rhinog mountains with Aran Fawddwy rising to almost 3000 feet on your right. Ignore the path to the latter summit and, keeping the tarn on your right, follow the fence on your left to reach a stile. Cross this and turn left to follow the fence uphill. Height is gained quickly and the summit of Glasgwm is soon reached with the fence acting as a guide all the way to the top. The highest point is marked by a large beehive cairn with the large tarn just below the summit on the southern flank coming as a surprise. This spot provides a superb place to enjoy the excellent view and take a rest.

Leave the summit in a southerly direction crossing a ladder stile before heading for an obvious rocky outcrop. A clear path leads you onward with a fence coming in from your right.

Glasgwm- Pen y Brynfforchog

Distance: 11 Km (6.5 miles) Time: 4-5 hours

Ascent: 650m (2350 ft)



Join the trail at the stile down the track from the hut. Follow the path crossing the footbridge where the climbing now begins in earnest and you gain height quickly with the crags closing in around you. At the col beneath Glasgwm (grid ref. 841201) the path levels and you reach a small tarn. Ahead there are excellent views north to the Rhinog mountains with Aran Fawddwy on your right, keeping the tarn on your right, follow the fence on your left to reach a stile. Cross this and follow the fence uphill to the summit of Glasgwm. It's marked by a large beehive cairn with the large tarn just below on the south side. This spot provides a superb place to enjoy the excellent views and take a rest.

(The bit from Glasgwm to Pen y Brynfforchog then back to the top of the zig zags needs doing.) Note: most of the forested area has recently been felled, it might be just a follow your nose job!

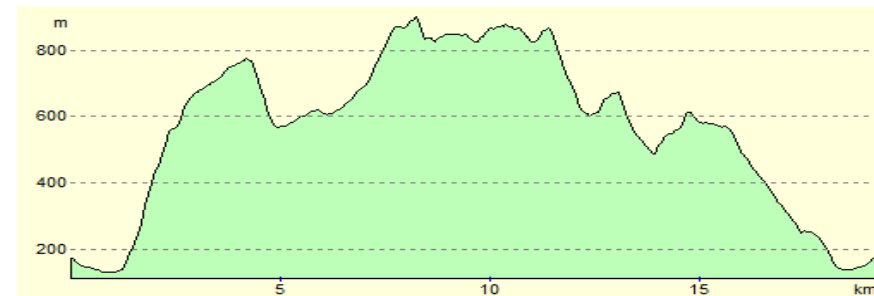
Ahead you will see a stone track descending steeply down. Join this track and head down into Cwm Cywarch. The going is steep in places although well constructed zigzags mean an easy and fast descent into

the valley and the start of the walk.

The Arans Ridge Loop

Distance: 20 Km (12 miles) Time: 8-10 hours

Ascent: 1400m (4600ft)



This route is a big full day outing, but it is worth it for the extra sense that one gets for the massiveness of the Aran Ridge. Walking along the top of it is pleasant enough, but to really appreciate its height, length, steepness and craginess, you really need to view it from the top of Foel Hafod Fynydd. From here the whole thing can be taken in a single panoramic sweep. Given the nature of the ridge and to avoid an out & back route there is a cost to be paid. It comes in the form of a rather steep ascent rising 170m up the grassy slope of Drysgol. Coming close to the end of a long hike, this needs to be taken gently. You will be rewarded with the very gently-graded descent back to your car. The walk could be abbreviated a little by omitting Glasgwm and taking the path that joins Cwm Cywarch to Rhydymain, but then you won't be able to claim that you've done the whole ridge!

Park in Cwm Cywarch using the recently constructed car park (grid ref. SH852188) walk back down the road to the open grass area bear right and join the another path at (grid ref. SH853183) heading West. This leads all the way to the top of Craig Cywarch (grid ref. SH840179). Follow the fence until it turns off to the NW (grid ref. SH837188), and then head due north to the top of Glasgwm, which is enlivened by a delightful little lake.

The path to Aran Fawddwy descends Glasgwm to the left of another fence, heading NE. Cross the pass at the bottom, and follow the obvious path, still roughly NE until you arrive (some considerable time later) at the top of Aran Fawddwy. Another mile or so will see you at the top of Aran Benllyn, from where you can admire the placid waters of Llyn Tegid (Lake Bala), if you wish. Actually, to do this circular walk, you do not need to go all the way

to Aran Benllyn, but since you are up here, you might as well.

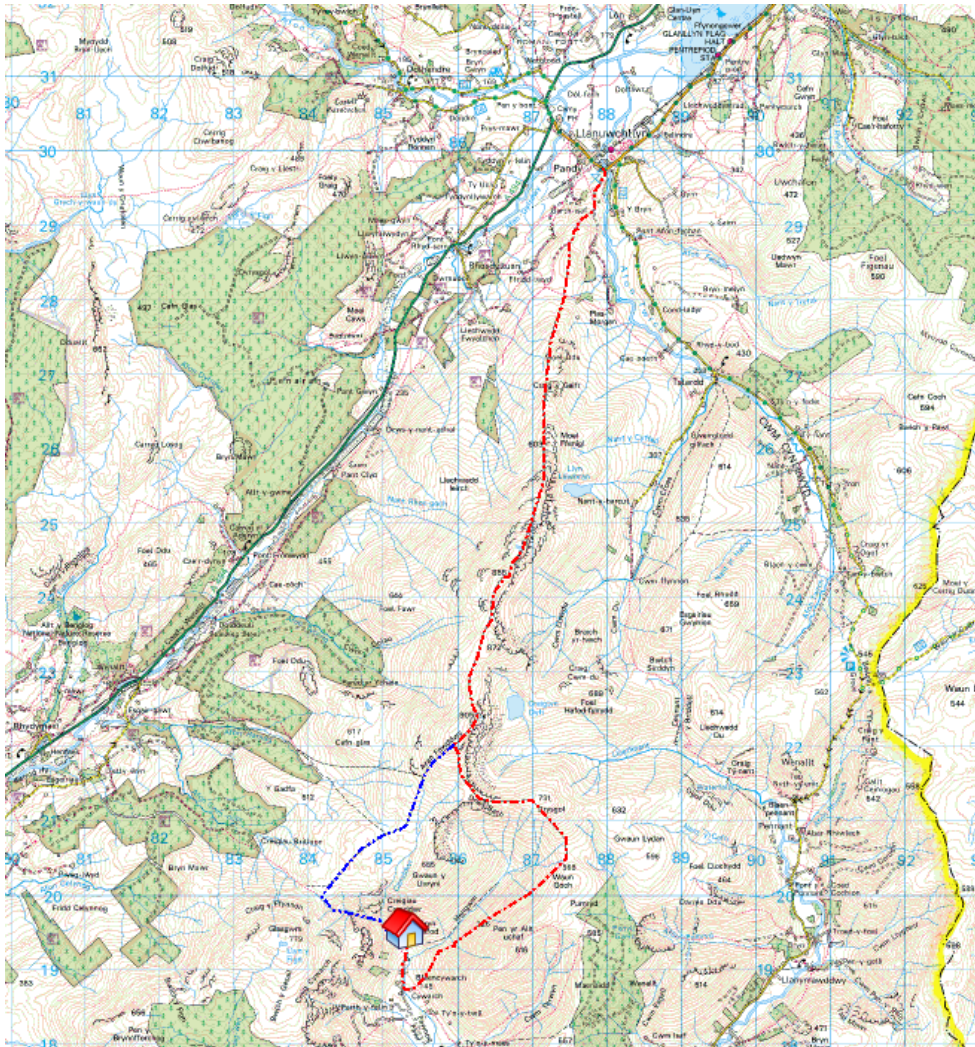
Once you've had enough of admiring the view turn around from Aran Bennllyn and after less than half a mile (grid ref. SH863235), descend from the ridge by the steep grassy slope. It is best to stick to the edge of the crag to the north of this slope, since the angle of the slope is a bit less on this side than elsewhere. Head off to the east of the lake at the foot of Aran Fawddwy, then up the ridge, heading east, to the top of Foel Hafod Fynydd (grid ref. SH876227). From here you can marvel at where you have just been.

Turn right, heading straight across the valley in a southerly direction towards the saddle (grid ref. SH877211) to the east of the top of Drysgol. The river at the bottom is easily crossed in a number of places. You will probably be a bit puffed by the time you get to the top of the saddle, but the rest of the way is very relaxing. Head south to find the path that leads down the flank of Pen yr Allt Uchaf directly towards where you parked your car. The head of the path is easily spotted when visibility is good by a kink in the fence. If visibility is not good, you are looking for the low point of the saddle between Drysgol and Waun Goch. Its height is given as 571m at grid ref. SH874205. From here, the path heads off SW and is a delightful muscle-easing gradual grassy descent down the side of a beautiful little valley, with Glasgwm in sight ahead of you. At the bottom you will arrive at a junction of paths. Ignore the waymarked stile on the left, turn right here along a section with walls on both sides. The path soon turns left again to arrive at the road. Turn right, and a short step brings you back to your parking place.

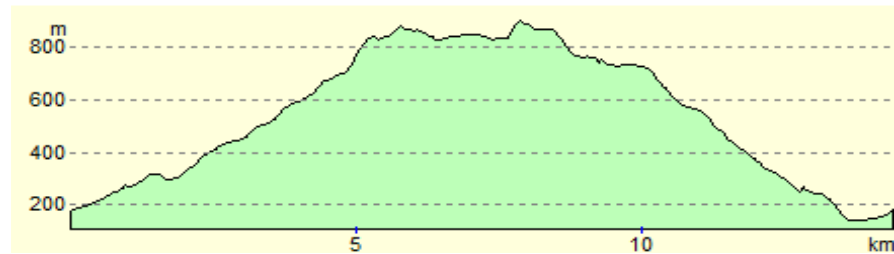
Llanuwchllyn (Pandy) to Bryn Hafod

Distance: 15km (9.3miles). Time: 7-8 hours

Ascent: 1000m (3280ft)



Bryn Hafod.



This is a linear route so will need car collecting afterwards. The shortest and scenic way to drive to Pandy is to take the left at Aber Cywarch and follow road upwards over Bwlch y Groes. Park at SH879297.

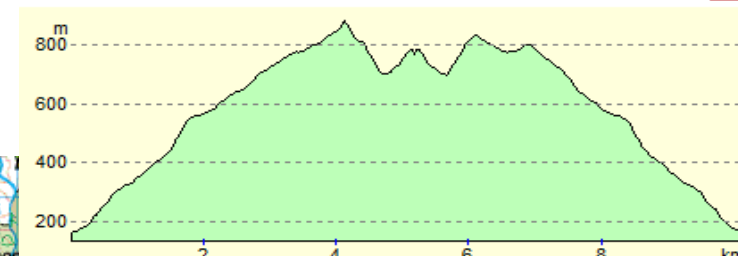
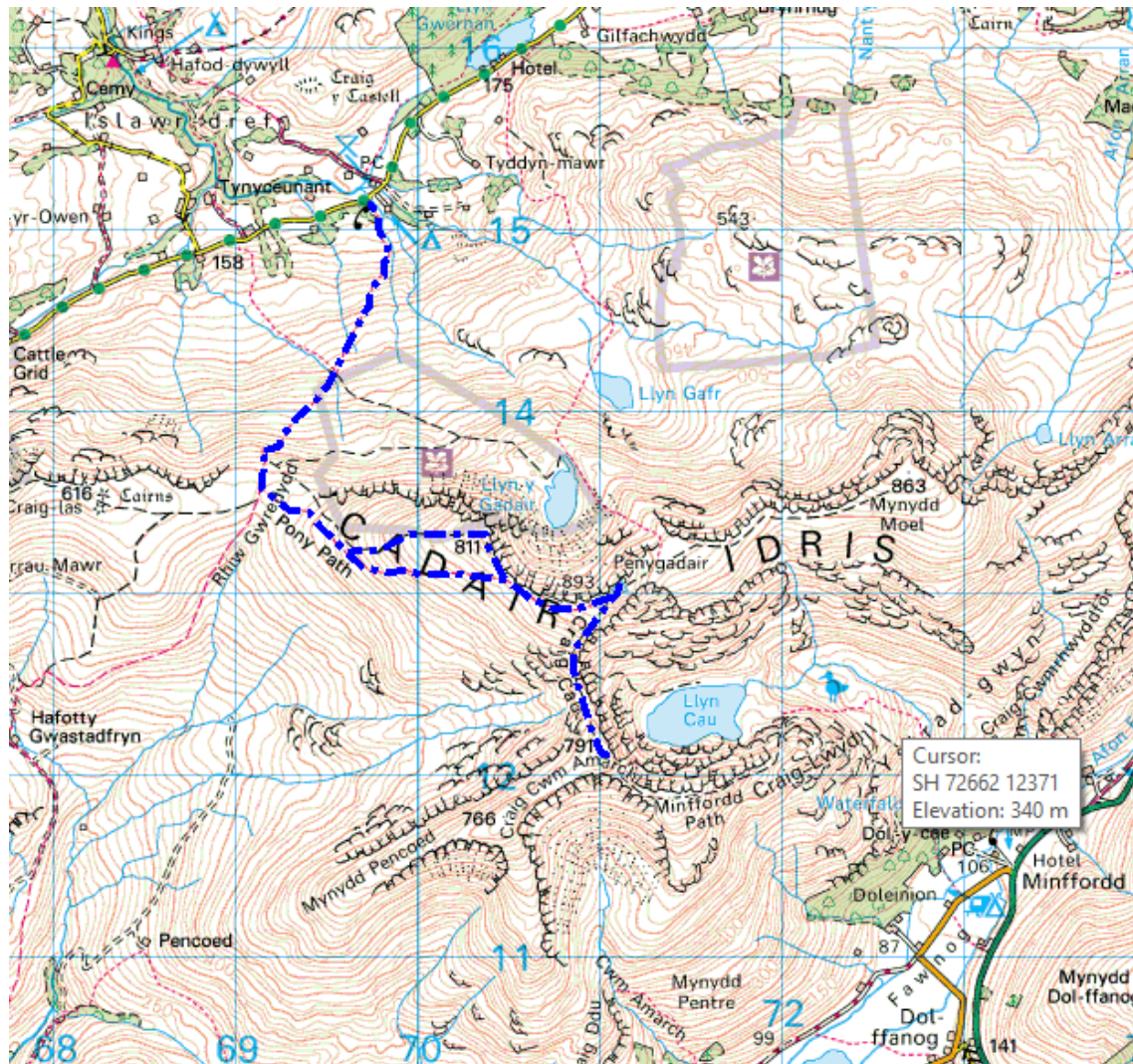
From the car park cross the stile right of the gate on the bend. After about 600m just after cattle grid, take the right fork on to open ground and after another 600m take the left fork at the signpost for the Aran Ridge. As you climb you get ever improving views to your right with Arenig Fawr clearly in view. Beyond you may be able to see many of the other great mountains of northern Snowdonia including Snowdon itself. Eventually the path follows the ridge after shadowing for some way and you will find yourself gaining height more quickly as you ascend a couple of rocky steps in the ridge. Away to your left and far below is Llyn Lliwbran with the rounded hills of the Arans spread out beyond. Eventually you will reach the summit of Aran Benllyn with its quartz speckled summit rocks adding a splash of colour to the scene. With one top 'ticked off' you can continue over Erw y Ddafad du, the lowest peak of the trio, to reach Aran Fawddwy. This is a super summit with a fine airy balcony on which to perch and enjoy the view. Leave the summit and after about 800m take the left. Follow vague path onto ridgeline, bearing East then South East. The path down the valley can be seen on the right. Follow this to the valley floor.

Alternative: Carry straight on then turn left at the small tarn before the path starts to rise to Glasgwm. Follow path downhill until reaching the stile below

Cadair Idris, Craig Cau and Cyfrwy

Distance: 11km (6.8miles). Time: 5-6 Hours

Ascent: 900m (3000ft)



Start at the car park at Ty Nant. Walk along the tarmac road to the right to pick up a footpath on the left which leads to the Pony Path. The crags and cliffs of Cyfrwy and Cadair Idris appear ahead. The path gains height to pass through a gate in a wall and here the route divides.

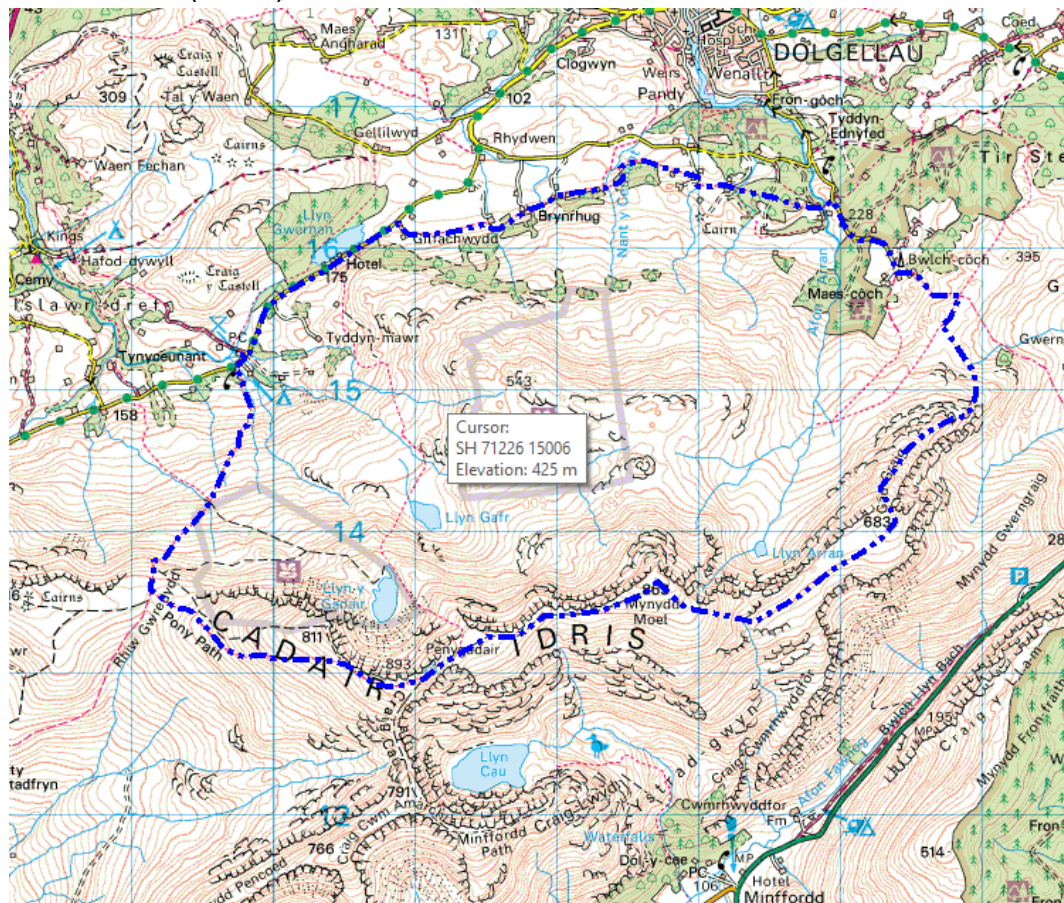
A clear, rocky path now leads up the ridge to the left with Cadair Idris peeping over the horizon ahead before the col between Cyfrwy and Cadair Idris is reached. At this point there is a plunging view down to the pretty mountain lake of Llyn y Gadair below on the left as the path passes close to the rim of the corrie. The water of the tarn is so clear you can see the bottom in places near to the shoreline even from the ridge above. Llyn Cau cannot be seen from the summit of Cadair Idris though the crater-like cwm that contains it can be seen. Especially in good weather, you can expect plenty of other walkers to be at the top of Cadair Idris which is marked by a triangulation pillar. Near the top there is a large man-made shelter complete with a roof which could easily accommodate a large group seeking shelter from adverse weather.

From the summit of Cadair Idris, rather than repeat the outgoing route in its entirety, descend to the dip between it and Craig Cau, then follow the fellside to the top of the latter to meet up with the Minffordd Path. Although this is not a main summit, it is worth the effort of climbing it for the dramatic view looking down on to Llyn Cau way below, especially when seen framed between rocky clefts. On the return route head for the top of Cyfrwy. This summit similarly offers a picturesque view looking down on another mountain lake, Llyn y Gadair. From here head West to rejoin the Pony Path and return to Ty nant.

Cadair Idris, Mynydd Mowl, Gau Graig loop

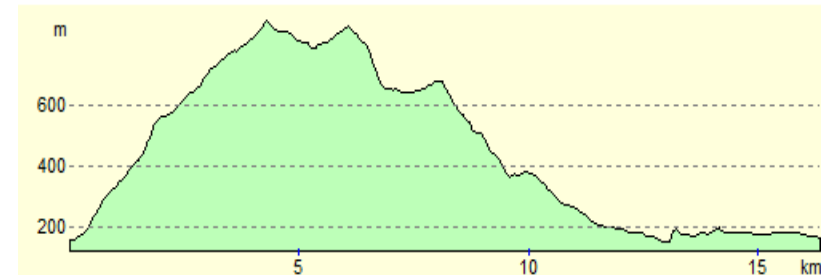
Distance: 18km (11miles). Time: 7-9 hours

Ascent: 900m (3000ft)



occasion the cloud only lifted for a few seconds at a time giving tantalising glimpses of the mountain and coastal scenery for which the summit is renowned. On the subject of weather it is worth remembering that Cadair Idris, because of its location, does see some rapid changes in conditions. In addition it can be clear and sunny elsewhere yet this summit keeps an annoying cap of cloud.

It is well worth spending some time on the summit as there is much of interest. A short walk south gives excellent views down to dramatic Llyn Cau, which is seen to better advantage when approaching from Minffordd. Quite rare on British mountains, the summit also has a substantial stone built hut which can offer



Starting from the small car park at Ty-nant (grid ref. SH697152) turn right onto the lane and follow this west for about 100 meters. Just before the telephone on your left take the track that leads onto the "pony path", which trends south-west across rising ground. Ahead are the northern cliffs of Cadair Idris with some sections looking particularly formidable? Over recent years this popular "tourist" route has seen many improvements and progress is quite straightforward. Even where the ground steepens, zig-zags make upward progress quite easy.

Emerging onto a wide col, the route for the summit heads east (to your left) with the main path fairly obvious even in cloud. Rising steadily across the flanks of the subsidiary summit of Cyfrwy, the path is often stony but never difficult. On this particular occasion the cloud base was around 600 metres (2,000 feet) and no difficulties were experienced finding the route. However one must be careful when the path nears the top of the cliffs. Turning right along the edge of the precipice you have fine views down to Llyn y Gadair below. The steady climb continues until some easy scrambling amongst rocks takes you to the summit trig point.

If you are used to mountain walking then this is an easy ascent for a mountain of such stature. The view is wide-ranging although on this

shelter in inclement weather. If you are short of time or energy then you should retrace your steps and follow the outward route back to the car park. However for the more adventurous the onward route along the ridge to Gau Craig is well worth the effort.

Leaving the summit on the path heading east, ignore the path descending steeply to Llyn y Gadair, instead following the rim of the northern cliffs towards the rounded summit of Mynydd Moel. Like most of this walk, the going is easy and you soon reach the top. Only 100 feet (30 metres) lower than Cadair Idris you are able to enjoy the view in peace as very few walkers bother to visit this summit. Views are good in both directions along the northern cliffs and further afield you can pick out many of the Welsh mountains.

Continuing east, the path follows the cliffs to descend quite steeply to reach an area of upland moorland. In theory the path follows the fence but sections of soft ground mean that easier going can be found away from the general line. The final summit of the walk is Gau Craig, the highest point of the impressive south facing crags marked on maps. A small cairn indicates the summit, which is a perfect place to linger with little chance of being disturbed.

The onward route of descent follows the ridge eastwards with the path twisting down through rocky outcrops. The path becomes less distinct as lower ground is reached but by tracking roughly north east you reach the bridle path marked on Ordnance Survey maps at grid reference 754153. This track is grassy and can easily be missed. Assuming you are on target, head north descending to the lane near Maes Coch farm.

Then use the lane as far as Pandy gader and then using the footpaths heading west to the Gwernan Lake Hotel just along the lane from where you started.