

Walk from Cilcain Moel Famau Moel Arthur and back again

Fifteen of us set off from the starting point of our walk just north west of Cilcain. We headed down the lane and into the village where there is a shop and much welcomed toilet facilities. Cilcain is a small community



that has an industrial history but now consists of a post office, a public house, parish church and a village hall. Its Millennium Woods were planted in 2009 through the 'Woods On Your Doorstep' scheme of the Woodland Trust. Many of the trees were planted by students attending the local school

The place name Cilcain, which has also in the past been spelled as Kilken and Cilcen, has been suggested to derive from cil meaning 'retreat' and cain meaning 'fair' or 'pleasant' in the Welsh language.

In the early years of its existence Cilcain was noted as a place of retreat and famous for its regular village fairs, where notable amounts of alcohol were often consumed. It was also known locally for cockfighting, which took place on Sundays after the local church service.

St Mary's Church;

the first recorded mention of the church dates from 1291. Cilcain being one of the "ancient parishes" of Flintshire, it originally comprised the seven townships of Cefn, Llan (or Tre'r Llan), Llystynhunydd (or Glust), Llys y Coed, Maes y Groes, Mechlas (or Dolfechlas), and Trellyniau,



over the years these have been merged into the new parish of Rhes-y-Cae.

Heading down the lane alongside St Mary's Church we caught sight of our objective, a tiny pimple on the top of Moel Famau which is the Jubilee Tower. Dropping down to the lowest point of the walk, after 1

kmwe came to a junction of roads, foot path and bridle way to reach Pentre, then leaving the lanes behind we headed across fields in an easy climb passing through a stock gate and over a stile that is just above a small farm Cae Newydd. Looking up we can still see our destination high above us. Still climbing along a well established track, we pass by a fly fishing pond on the left and reach a point where a well used farm track joins us from the right, this being a good spot to stop for a water break and look back down across Cilcain to see the river Dee to the north, if



only it had been slightly less cloudy.

Moving on, the incline now steepened, this stretch has steps and hand rails alongside the path, which would be greatly appreciated in inclement weather, the path zig zags to help the climb until reaching the bridle way at the North Western corner

of the Millennium Woods. Stopping to catch our breath at the junction of these two paths we looked up at the peak noticing that the tower, looks a bit like a half finished Lego tower. Pressing on up towards Moel Famau with the forest to our left, this last section of the climb was only slightly less hard but the sight of the Jubilee Tower always just ahead kept us going.

Here at the top of Moel Famau at last, there is a trig point which might be missed as the plateau is dominated by the remains of the



Jubilee Tower. The tower, which was to be built to commemorate the golden jubilee of George III in 1810, was designed by Thomas Harrison of Chester and meant to resemble an Egyptian obelisk with three tiers.

Although the foundation stone was laid in 1810 by George Kenyon, 2nd Baron Kenyon, the tower was never completed due to lack of funds. In 1810 George III's popularity was at its height but as his insanity started to take hold he went to live in seclusion in Windsor. The Prince of Wales then acted as regent



until his death. In 1862 a major storm brought down the incomplete tower and the remaining upper part of the structure was demolished for safety reasons leaving just the base. Most of the rubble was removed from the site; smaller stonework was reused by local farmers for dry stone walling. Our visit this time was covered in cloud so as we had no view we quickly



moved on to get below the cloud layer. With our backs to the ruin we headed east south east and down towards Pwll-y-Rhos for 2 Km and we were gradually treated to the spectacular view of the Denbigh plain, an area of fertile farming land stretching to the North Wales coast. The walk continued for 2.7 Km with the occasional glance over our

shoulders to Moel Famau. This was the time when we felt lunch was called for, so settling against the dry stone wall to keep the light breeze off, we tucked in, while marvelling at the quietness of the place.

Feeling refreshed and re energised we pressed on for a further 2.8 Km along the Offas Dyke path / Clwydian way, yes they do share the path.

Looking to the north we could see the offshore windmills on the Prestatyn coast. Before starting our decent we were treated to the spectacular view looking down on Moel Arthur, the ancient hill fort. Moel



Arthur was believed to be built around 2,500 years ago. Although it is a small hill fort, it can boast some of the largest banks and ditches (ramparts) of all the hill forts in the area.

We descended 700 metres, grateful for the steps cut into the rocks, with only a few minor slips and falls the party re assembled at the car park area along side the base of Moel Arthur.



Leaving Moel Arthur for another time and future exploration we were aware that the afternoon was drawing on, though there were no further climbs to speak of at a couple of kilometres to go we wanted to be sure to be back at our transport before sunset so began the last stage of the walk. As

we continued the ground underfoot changed from a rough track until we were walking upon a mettled surface and after passing the small farm of Gronfoel to our left we walked the last easy downward path to the lay-by and our vehicles.

The walk concluded with a retreat to The White Horse Inn in Cilcain to enjoy well deserved refreshment!