

Leventon's Line 2008

This route was devised by Mercia FR clubmate Charlie Leventon and completed as a 2-day backpack with Rick Robson in May 1990. Conceptually it is a beeline across Wales between Llangollen and Barmouth visiting 8 trig pillars en route. It was repeated by Yiannis Tridimas and Ray Baines on 2 May 2005 in 18h 17mins (as a warm-up for their respective BGRs – Yiannis's being his 60 at 60 – FR Oct 2005). This latter crossing extended the Line to cover the whole Cadair Idris range and include a ninth trig, Pen y Garn, before rejoining the original route to cross the Barmouth bridge, finishing at Barmouth station. **Alan Duncan and Lawrie**

Jones repeated this extended version in 2006, and in the same year John Smallwood and Hugh Balfour completed a crossing of the same hills, west-east, from Llwyngwrl beach to the English border near Chirk in 20.5 hours (FR Oct 2006).

I completed the route (56 miles with 14500 ft of ascent) on 26 April 2008, in 15h 23mins, with roadside support by Yiannis and Lawrie, and navigational assistance by Alan on the first section, and on the final descent by Yiannis. The weather was dry and clear throughout, but with a fairly strong headwind.

Sat 26 April: I've talked Alan into repeating his 2006 run, and we start at 4:30 a.m. at the River Dee bridge in the centre of Llangollen. Crossing the A5 we initially take the Glyn Ceiriog road, cross a bridge then turn right onto a minor road which soon becomes a rough steep track before reverting to tarmac just before Finger Farm. It's first light as we approach **Y Foel**, Alan unerringly finding the little path which leads straight to the trig. Descending through deep heather Alan soon finds the overgrown path which leads the way to Vivod Mountain – by now light enough for a proper view. From here a well defined, sometimes boggy path follows the Berwyn crest (popular with motorbikes, and in places it has the scars to prove it).

The second trig – **Moel Fferna** – has been gone some years: there are hints of a concrete base on the stone shelter. The Line is defined by the trigs, but passes over or close to many other listed summits: Alan neatly bypasses a 621m summit, then it's steeply up Cadair Bronwen, the first of the high Berwyns.

The **Cadair Berwyn** trig has a big view including the distinctive Rhinogs in silhouette, and the rest of the day's hills stretching into the far distance. On the long descent from Moel Sych, Alan begins to fall behind, suffering

stomach cramps. Yiannis and Lawrie are waiting in the quarry car park at the summit of Milltir Cerrig pass, with coffee, soup and pizza.

The next short section hosts the **Foel Cwm-Sian Llwyd** trig and some tough heather and tussocks. The other summits on this section are less interesting than they sound: Y Groes Fagl, Feol Cedig and Pen y Boncyn Trefeilw. I take a split time at the Groes, mainly to celebrate arrival at a decent track. Then being a bagger of summits, I make a minor diversion to the latter which is a listed 2000er. At the minor road crossing I grab a coffee and some food. Alan arrives a few minutes later, and calls it a day shortly afterwards (he's done the route before - without a dodgy stomach). After some route-finding tips from Yiannis, I make the short ascent to the **Foel y Geifr** trig, then follow a tough beeline route to Moel y Cerrig Duon – deep heather and tussocks almost throughout. An easier descent leads over a minor summit to Bwylch y Groes car park – the halfway point in terms of distance but with the big climbs still to come.

After this heather-bashing, the much more impressive Arans beckon. The tussocky Llechwedd Ddu is available, but I contour through its northern slopes, mostly on decent grass, through a col, then across an attractive cwm and steeply up **Foel Hafod-fynydd** which has a quartzite cairn and a stunning view of Fawddwy's impressive crags. I exploit the one obvious weakness: a grassy ramp leads to broken ground affording an easy passage to the ridge. There are a few folk near the summit – the first I've seen all day.

The **Aran Fawddwy** trig is built on an ancient cairn and is looking precarious. Views are increasingly dominated by the bulk of Cadair Idris. The path beyond descends for 2km, initially steep then boggy, mostly boarded and good running. I visit the little rocky 621m summit Waun Camddwr lying just off the path, which found its way onto the 2000er list a few years ago. Beyond a boggy col is the sharp pull up onto Glasgwm. An easy grassy descent leads to a complex boggy col, then a good path leads to the compact grassy summit of Pen y Brynnfforchog then more easy grass leads to the attractive conical 564m "Dewey" summit. Here Yiannis and Lawrie are waiting. The steep grassy descent is at the limit of adhesion of the trail shoes which I forgot to change out of at the start of the section. After a short break at the A470 pass I stagger off, feeling I may have eaten a little too much rice pudding, and tackle the steep Craig y Bwlch climb, with its stunning view of **Cwm Cerist**.

Crossing the 659m summit, it's steeply down then very steeply up to the **Waun-Oer** trig - an unusual stylish circular affair. A good path follows the ridge over Mynydd Ceiswyn. The

Photo courtesy of Lawrie Jones



Photos courtesy of Rob Woodall





A470 and Cwm Cerist

descent to the A487 can be tricky, but today with the clouds high it is simple. I stay on the public footpath rather than taking the tussocky beeline (somehow missing Yiannis who has come up to meet me – probably on the tussocky beeline!), crossing boggy ground lower down, picking up the top of the grassy gully which carries the path down to the road, but instead I descend steep grass (again fun in trail shoes). Alan and Lawrie are waiting a short way up the **Gau Craig ascent**, with the second pot noodle of the day ready. Pleasingly, I've finally caught up with my rather vague 16:15 schedule – with luck I may beat 16h.

Again feeling I've eaten too much, I follow the fence then the scrambly path up to the Gau Craig plateau (but not detouring to its summit), then the Idris motorway leads over Mynydd Moel to the **Penygadair** trig. Although nearly 7 p.m. there are a couple of runners at the top and a group of walkers descending the west ridge. After some lovely grassy running, at **Craig-las** I am treated to gorgeous evening views back to Cadair, across the Mawddach estuary and forward to **Craig-y-llyn**. I realise I'm about half an hour up. Best phone Yiannis, as they are due



Waun-Oer

Photos courtesy of Rob Woodall



Cadair Idris from Craig-las



Rob and Lawrie at Barmouth Station

Photo courtesy of Lawrie Jones

to guide me off the last summit. "I'm just heading up Craig-y-llyn". "We'll see you in the next col." Descending, I scan the wide grassy col. No-one to be seen. I jog across the pasture. Still no-one. At the Trawsfynydd col I pick up the footpath which makes for an easy rapid descent. I reach the Pen y Garn col – no-one there either. Near the summit the phone rings. "I'm nearly at the last trig". "We'll see you at the tarmac road". The phone line is poor but I think I know where he means.

From **Pen y Garn** it's due north, a steep grassy slope, a flat boggy area, then a forest gate, and ... tarmac! As guessed, The Team are a bit further east, where the track leaves the wood. The path down to join the Morfa Mawddach road is very pretty, and a bit more complicated than it looks on the map, so Yiannis's guidance is very welcome. Once on the tarmac, a sub 15:30 finish seems feasible, so I don't object too much when Alan picks up the pace a bit. On the final approach to Barmouth bridge the novelty of the tarmac has worn off, I slow to a walk, the stunning backdrop comes into focus, and I notice the Sandwich Terns and Oystercatchers on the estuary. Lawrie and Yiannis catch up and we jog together across the bridge, then follow the A486 the last few hundred metres to **Barmouth station**. Job done. 15:23.

In summary, despite a few heather and tussock stretches which are fairly dire, the vast majority of the Leventon Line is good running, taking in several of Wales's finest mountains – and it's doable in daylight. Going west-east with the prevailing wind would be worth considering, but thereagain, an evening run along the length of the Cadair Idris range, with the sun sinking over Barmouth Bay, and the incomparable Mawddach Estuary spread out below, is hard to beat.

START: Llangollen: River Dee bridge	04:30
Δ Y Foel	05:16
Vivod Mountain (05:35); Cerrig Coediog, Cadair Bronwen	
Ex Δ Moel Fferna	06:17
Δ Cadair Berwyn	08:00
B4391 Milltir Cerrig (10 mins rest)	08:45
Δ Foel Cwm-Sian Llwyd	09:24
Y Groes Fagl (09:57); Pen y Boncyn Trefeilw	
Minor road (SH946273) (6 mins rest)	10:38
Δ Foel y Geifr	10:59
Moel y Cerrig Duon (11:45)	
Bwlch y Groes (12 mins rest)	11:55
Foel Hafod-fynydd (12:57)	
Δ Aran Fawddwy	13:33
Waun Camddwr; Glasgwm; Pen y Brynfforchog (14:43); Pen Ochr y Bwlch	
A470 Bwlch Oerddrws (9 mins rest)	14:57
Cribin Fawr (15:39)	
Δ Waun-Oer	15:52
Mynydd Ceiswyn (16:04)	
A487 (SH757139) (13 mins rest)	16:23
Mynydd Moel (17:26)	
Δ Penygadair	17:42
Craig-las (18:15); Craig-y-llyn (18:36)	
Δ Pen y Garn	19:10
FINISH: Barmouth railway station	19:54

Photos courtesy of Rob Woodall

