

Leventon's Line

An extended version of the original route completed by Yiannis Tridimas and Roy Baines in 18 hours and 17 minutes.

Yiannis Tridimas's article from the Fellrunner, June 2005

It was Charlie Leventon's idea to do a challenge along a high ground route between Llangollen and Barmouth, taking in as many summits with trig points as possible that were lying along a straight line. In 1990 he and Rick Robson completed the challenge with the first and last trig points being on Y Foel and Cadair Idris respectively.

Some time ago Rick had given me a detailed schedule of the challenge and a report written by Charlie in 2002. Up to recently I had not found the time to look at the challenge seriously. Two things changed that recently :

1. My clubmate Duncan Elliott had been talking about planning a high level route between Llangollen and Barmouth apparently not aware of Leventon's line.
2. Having reached the age of 60 and preparing to attempt a 60 peak Bob Graham Round I needed to test whether I was up to it.

As my good friend Ray Baines was also planning a BG round the decision was made to have a go together.

A few recon sessions and consultations resulted in an extended version of Leventon's line. Leventon had descended Cadair Idris along the Pony path but suggested in his report that a high level route could be followed as far as Craig-y-Llyn. Being very familiar with the area from my Meirionnydd round I not only took up his suggestion but extended the route as far as Pen y Garn so as to finish with a trig point. Another addition to the route was the inclusion of Foel Hafod-fynydd, an old favourite of mine, not a spectacular hill but a vantage point for a great view of the Arans.

The date was set as May 2nd, three weeks before Ray's BG and four weeks before mine. Wayne Percival was our driver and helper at road crossings.

Ray and I carried sacks with spare clothes, food and drink. We had decided to go at a steady pace and take our time at the service stops.

We set off from Llangollen early in the morning. I had drawn up a rough schedule of 15 hours and hoped to finish before midnight so as to get home afterwards, have a sleep and go to work in the morning. The weather was quite mild and visibility good. A southerly wind was blowing and we were to run against it most of the way to Barmouth.

We got through the heather around Y Foel without much problem and our spirits were good, enjoying a friendly conversation along the way. We arrived at our first road crossing behind my optimistic schedule but that did not bother me.

The next section over Foel Cwm-Sian Llwyd is the roughest with plenty of heather and other vegetation that makes running difficult. It also has an interminable track which, although fast, goes on forever. It was there that I took a rare tumble and grazed my knee.

At the road stops we enjoyed packet soup with extra salt. We replenished our food and drink supplies and departed with the statutory banana in the hand.

The following section also has plenty of thick heather. As we got to the trig on Foel y Geifr we were met by Alan Duncan, who had come out for a run on the Welsh hills. At that point the sky ahead was getting dark and soon we were in a middle of a horrendous thunderstorm. Rain mixed with hailstone was hitting our faces horizontally with great force. The rumble of thunder and flashes of lightning added to the gloom. We were lightly dressed and began to feel cold.

At our next stop at Bwlch y Groes we put on more clothes and expecting the bad weather to continue we took additional clothes in our sacks. On the way to the Arans the weather improved for a while but it remained changeable for the rest of the way with plenty of rain and quite low cloud from Dovey Forest to the finish.

Cadair Idris was shrouded in mist and was completely deserted in the twilight. The rest of the section was done with head torches. The descent to Mawddach from Pen y Garn through some intricate paths can be difficult if you are not well prepared.

Wayne met us on the way down and ran with us to Barmouth station. Neither of us had suffered any injury and we were satisfied to have completed this challenge successfully. We had met not a single soul on the hills all day although there were some people at the road crossings.

Conclusion: Leventon's line goes over wild and scenic Welsh hills. Despite the comparatively modest total ascent of 12,500 feet it is quite a tough undertaking due to the rough underfoot condition along many sections.

Leventon's Line Schedule

Completed by Yiannis Tridimas and Ray Baines on May 2nd 2005.
 Road support and transport: Wayne Percival
 Statistics : 91.5 km/3800m (57 miles/12.500')

	START: Llangollen Car Park at SJ 215418 at 06:40	Cumulative Distance	Split	Cumulative time
1	<i>Y Foel via Pen-Jan and Finger Farm</i>		00:51	00:51
2	Vivod Mountain via track at SJ 181394		00:18	01:09
3	Moel Fferna (No trig pillar)		00:47	01:56
4	Cadair Bronwen via Meml SJ 091366		01:17	03:13
5	<i>Cadair Berwyn</i>		00:22	03:35
6	<i>Moel Sych</i>		00:10	03:45
	Road at Milltir Gerrig SJ 017305	29.2km	00:45	04:30
	REST		00:08	04:38
7	<i>Foel Cwm-Sian Llwyd</i>		00:34	05:12
	Road at SH 946273 via Track at SH 987288	41.0km	01:28	06:40
	REST		00:05	06:45
8	<i>Foel y Geifr</i>		00:15	07:00
	Road at Bwlch y Groes via Valley SH 918246	47.3km	01:00	08:00
	REST		00:15	08:15
9	Foel Hafod-fynydd via valley at SH 884229		01:03	09:18
10	<i>Aran Fawddwy via SH 866231</i>		00:39	09:57
11	Glasgwm		00:55	10:52
	Road at Bwlch Oerddrws via SH 818183	62.4km	00:50	11:42
	REST		00:11	11:53
12	<i>Waun-oer</i>		00:52	12:45
	Road at SH 757139	69.1km	00:37	13:22
	REST		00:13	13:35
13	Mynydd Moel		01:09	14:44
14	<i>Penygadair</i>		00:21	15:05
15	Craig-las		00:44	15:49
16	Craig-y-llyn		00:29	16:18
17	<i>Pen y Garn via SH 635111</i>		00:56	17:14
	FINISH: Barmouth Railway Station SH 612158	91.5km	01:03	18:17

Notes:

Italic print: hills with trig pillar

A far more demanding challenge than its statistics imply, due to rough ground.

Weather: head wind, mild, dry initially, wet later, severe thunderstorm early afternoon.