# Base of the Black Mountains (Attempt)

# (Nick Kaye Special No. 3)

## Date: 31st January 1986

## Distance/Ascent: 28.2 miles, 3200 feet

## Leader: Nick Kaye

## Route Description:

* Start from Capel y Ffin Youth Hostel (at 11:00pm), up road to summit of Gospel Pass.
* Down road to road junction at (SO 240 373), devious route in darkness, mist and deepish snow across lower northern slopes of Hay Bluff eventually copping out and dropping down to the road near the birches at (SO 254 382).
* Road south-east to pub at Craswall (SO 278 360)
* Bridle track from (SO 279 360) up hill for short way to second bridle track at (SO 278 358)
* Bridle track southwards to road under Little Black Hill at (SO 287 326).
* Road south then south-east to Longtown and on to Clodock.
* Continue on road southwards past Glandwr to crossroads at (SO 332 230).
* Road south-westwards uphill across col at (SO 321 224).
* Road west then north-west past Cwmyoy to B4423 at (SO 294 232).
* North up B4423 to junction with path at (SO 290 247).
* Footbridge across Afon Honddu and path via Weild and Maes-y-beran to join B4423 at (SO 290 275). Road north past Llanthony Priory to junction with track at (SO 285 279).
* Track up valley via Garn Farm and across Afon Honddu to rejoin road at (SO 257 311).
* Road north through Capel-y-ffin village to Capel Y Ffin Youth Hostel.

## Weather: Vicious conditions (overnight especially) - snow, mist, high wind - all clothing covered in ice - snow about calf deep but drifting up to waist height - very cold - had to descend to road after leaving Gospel Pass road due to Mr X being knackered - ended up having to keep below deep-snow line at approx 1,200 ft to keep Mr X going.

**Comment:** Mr X screwed this walk up for us. Unknown to everybody before the walk he turned out to be somebody who suffered from fits and had not done our sort of walking before - a real wally - just what you need on an overnight winter walk. The snow had blocked the road just after the Youth Hostel and Mr X's torch had failed within the first few miles - he was buggered after 5 or 6 miles and we had to head for the road and stick to the roads for much of the rest of the walk - which had to be radically shortened from its original 56 miles round the base of the Black Mountains. One of the lasting memories of the walk was sheltering in a road-side barn somewhere near Longtown for some food - an open barn with some hay bales and a freezing wind whistling in - one of the few times that I've thought that we are really mad.

## Participants: Nick Kaye, Andrew Clabon, Peter Lewis, Mike Evans, Chris Coy, Mr X