

Taming the dragon: CMAT does Snowdonia

27th July to 4th August, Felin Bach, Snowdonia (Eryri)

The jolly Team of CMAT volunteers had been building up to the summer expedition to Snowdonia all year. We'd been training and assessing Leaders so they could lead hillwalking groups, we'd been trained and assessed to provide rock climbing and abseiling, and we'd risked life and limb gaining our stand-up paddleboarding permits. It was just a tad unfortunate that Keith was unable to complete the 'stand-up' aspect of paddleboarding after he broke his foot jumping onto the board during his assessment! Sure enough, undeterred, and wearing a very fetching Arc'teryx-like aircast boot, Keith came along to Snowdonia regardless!

It was great to have Keith hobbling along to help. We had a packed programme of activities for the week and keeping on top of logistics and catering (thanks Tony and Helen) was sure to be challenging. So, we split into our walking groups for a spectacular introduction to the mountains of Wales. Our Explorers enjoyed a rocky ramble along the Nantlle Ridge and our Scouts enjoyed incredible views over to Snowdon from humble Moel Eilio.

After working up a sweat on the mountains it was time to cool off by showing Keith how to unbalance safely on paddleboards and canoes, all in the incredible surroundings of a sunny Llyn Padarn. Then we moved on to the strongly welded rhyolitic ash-flow Padarn Tuffs for a spell of climbing challenges with more views out to Snowdon and the lovely Llanberis Lake steam railway, helped along by the odd cheeky ice cream!

Fully fuelled, we ensured that the week went with a whoooosh by whizzing down the velocity zip wire, aiming to hit 100 m.p.h. Unfortunately, so Dave and Andy say, Ava's Velocity helmet-cam hadn't worked and so the three of them had to take one for the team and whizz down a second time!

We'd made it to mid-week and so we boarded the minibuses and nipped down to the National White Water Centre at Canolfan Tryweryn to implement an alternative Scout-washing strategy, which seemed to be extremely effective, even without the application of any shower gel.

Incredibly, the weather remained fantastic and so the next day we packed up our rucksacks and tootled up to the South Ridge of Snowdon for a spot of wild camping. The views were amazing, the tents were pitched and dinner gobbled, so we walked on and up to the summit to catch the last rays of the day. Roly put his years of training into action, helping an elderly lady to get back down from the summit. "Do they still say it takes up 2 hours a week?" she asked with a knowing Scouting nod of thanks. Summit bagged, we headed back down the ridge and enjoyed a gorgeous sunset over the Irish Sea from our high camping spot. Magic.

Sunrise saw a change in the weather to something more becoming of Wales, so we made our way back to Felin Bach and then into Caernarfon to check out the castle, sample the cafés, grab some chips and chill.

Our final day arrived, but there was still time for an adrenaline rush (and a final wash), so we drove over to Anglesey and donned wetsuits for a coasteering extravaganza. The wind had picked up and so the waves were particularly wavy, bouncing us along from one jumping spot to another as the seagulls laughed at our belly-flops!!



Rocky ramblings along the Nantlle Ridge





Showing Keith how unbalancing should be done on Llyn Padarn





Canoe leap frog anyone?



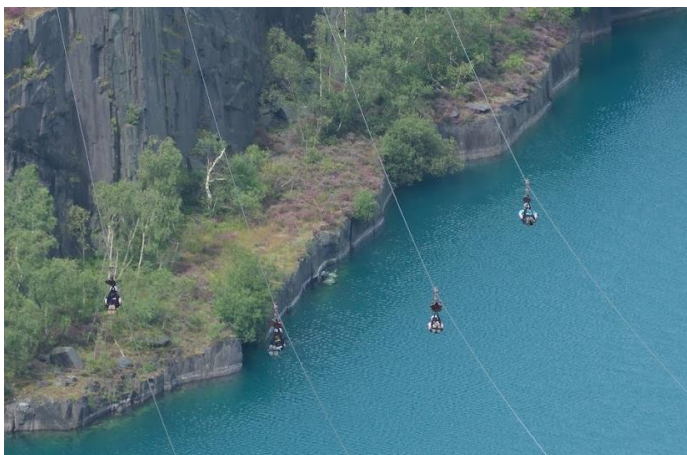
Climbing on the Padarn Tuffs





Ensuring the week went with a whoooosh!







An alternative Scout-washing strategy





Summitting Snowdon





Overnight magic





Chilling in Caernarfon



A final dip

