

# **Ras y Moelwyn (the Moelwyn Race) at Blaenau Ffestiniog, Snowdonia**

**by**  
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The Ras y Moelwyn is an arduous fell run over the three peaks of Moelwyn Mawr, Moelwyn Bach and Moel yr Hydd. It is a Category AM race of 10 miles with 2800 feet of ascent. However speaking to people who had done the race a few times it would seem that the distance is short of the advertised 10 miles, being more like 8.6 miles.

The main climb to the top of Moelwyn Mawr is the longest and toughest, starting with a steady run along tracks through old slate works before reaching the steeper slopes where a more sustained effort was required. The warm sunshine and clear sky accentuated the stunning views on the approach to the top. From here it was a steep drop through treacherous rocky crags of a half a mile or so before ascending Moelwyn Bach – and then a similar, perhaps steeper drop but less dangerous, to the softer ground heading towards the Llyn Stwlan Reservoir. With two of the three climbs out the way and the prospect of water and nourishment at the Reservoir Dam, I descended swiftly and confidently, passing the three guys who had accompanied me over the previous couple of miles.

Some water and a handful of jelly beans provided sufficient refuelling to enable me to accomplish the approach and climb to Moel yr Hydd. However two of my three companions (whom I thought I had got the better of) ascended slightly quicker than me, but only by a few yards. As with the previous descent I managed to reclaim my advantage over them as we descended Moel yr Hydd. This was over soft ground and the pace quickened significantly as we levelled out. This was expected as we were about to rejoin the track used on the out journey which meant only a couple of miles to the finish.

These final miles were tortuous as the efforts of the last descent proved to be my undoing. What I had been expecting was a fast, fluent run to the finish, but was in reality a painful shuffle. Needless to say I feared that I would be passed by a procession of runners but only one of my aforementioned companions took advantage of my plight! (and a lady runner from Clayton who I had not seen since the early stages). I dug deep and managed to regain some composure over the last half mile or so to finish in around 2 hours 17 minutes.