



## MOUNTAIN BOYS TACKLE IRON MAN CHALLENGE

They breed them tough at St. Ambrose College with 12 young mountain men introduced to the Hale Barns Catholic grammar school's hillwalking club on one of the United Kingdom's iron man ascents.



The St Ambrose SAS group led by 11 year old Daniel Barnes in the red cap and in the blue cap is 12 year old Malachi Al-Radhi.

During the winter the College's hillwalkers confine their challenges mainly to the Peak District but in the summer the adventurers test their skills in the Lakes and Snowdonia with extended trips in Scotland and overseas.

The latest test for 12 Year 7 and 8 pupils aged between just 11 and 13 was Snowdon, but not up the popular Pyg or Miners tracks but from the far more challenging route to the south east of the mountain from the idyllic village of Rhyd Ddu, a spectacularly scenic ascent with views of the Menai Straits and the Welsh lakes below but also with thigh sapping inclines.

Led by the College Head of Religious Education Matthew O'Neill, supported by the IT Manager Louise Haynes, the self styled SAS group 'Saint Ambrose Scramblers' first walked to Bwlch Cwm Llan before heading northwards along Allt Maenderyn. Five separate ridges converge on the summit of Snowdon, but Matthew chose this one because "it is quieter and offers stunning views into Cwm Tregalan, a dramatic glacial cwm and therefore more opportunity to appreciate the geography, geology, history, biology and botany of this wilderness."

He added: "We walked through and discussed the industrial architecture of remains of the slate quarries and there was a specific focus on the identification of skylarks, which are a constant companion in upland terrain in the early summer."

He continued: "The boys even listened to Vaughan Williams' 'The Lark Ascending' to compare the maestro's work with natural music of the landscape."

Matthew added: "It is a great thing for the boys because it awakens a love of the mountains which for many will become a life-long passion. They also learn to rise to a challenge and to develop a love of physical fitness with a handful of boys each year completing the Three Peaks: Scafell Pike, Snowdon and Ben Nevis, through the club."