

# BIKEPACKING WALES

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18 MULTI-DAY  
OFF-ROAD CYCLING  
ADVENTURES



Emma Kingston

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**Front cover:** *Riding past Tryfan, Ogwen Valley* © RK (route 13).

**Back cover (L–R):** *Rhossili Bay* (route 01); *sunset over the Mawddach Estuary* © RK (route 14); *Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon) seen from Llyn y Gader* © RK (route 13); *the Green Bridge of Wales* (route 02); *descending off Cadair Idris on Ffordd Ddu* © RK (route 14).

**Opposite:** *Singletrack above the Afon Dysynni* © RK (route 14).

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PLEASE GIVE WAY TO HORSES AND PEDESTRIANS.

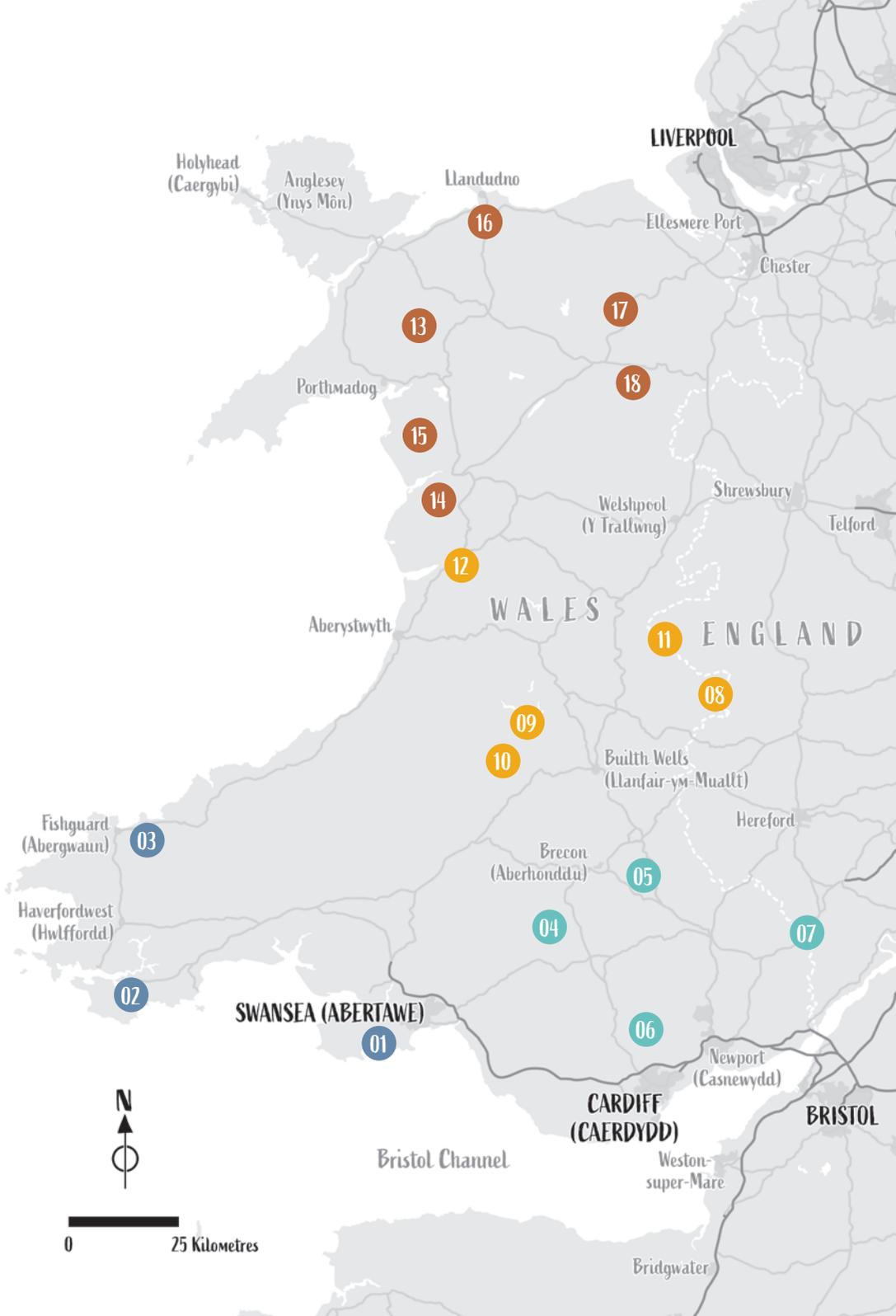
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EASY	MEDIUM	HARD
▲	▲	▲



L-R: Ty Canol National Nature Reserve © RK (route 03); Rhossili Down (route 01); Maen Madoc standing stone © RK (route 04); limestone pavements above Ystradfellte © RK (route 04); Claerwen Reservoir © RK (route 08); Conwy Mountain (route 16).

## INTRODUCTION

**'It is like that, this country; it takes you over as soon as you set foot in it.'**

**Raymond Williams, *Border Country* (1960)**

Despite growing up in Bristol, I spent most of my childhood weekends and holidays across the border in Wales. We could be on the edge of the Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons) National Park in an hour for a walk in the mountains around Abergavenny, mountain biking above Crickhowell, or a day of swimming and waterfall hunting near Ystradfellte. I still recall that sense of excitement as we crossed over the Severn Estuary, passing under the huge mint green towers of what was then called the Second Severn Crossing and pausing at the old toll booths before entering Wales. I love that I still get that same little thrill as an adult.

With this in mind, it is perhaps not surprising that I decided to head to Wales for my first bikepacking trip. I remember spending the evenings leading up to that trip poring over OS maps to concoct a solo adventure around the Elan Valley in Mid Wales, all the while adding to a haphazard pile of cycling kit and old camping gear in the corner of my tiny flat. Despite wrestling with my usual amount of self-doubt, any worries were soon replaced with a growing excitement once I started pedalling. For three wonderful days everything was blissfully simple. I didn't have to think beyond my immediate needs, everything I needed to be self-reliant was strapped to my bike and nothing was more pressing than the present. My feet were constantly wet, the ground still had lingering patches of snow and I spent both nights shivering in a lightweight summer sleeping bag, but I came home utterly elated!

Wales is full of world-class trails and breathtaking scenery, yet it's been the unexpected moments, the half-hidden trails

and the surprising encounters that have stood out the most while researching the routes in this book: spending New Year's Eve in front of a bothy fire with a group of mountain biking unicyclists; passing field after field of newborn lambs on the Trans Cambrian Way; and waking in my bivvy bag above a cloud inversion on the Gower Peninsula, with Worm's Head rearing up out of a pure white ocean. Wales can be a challenging place to ride at times, but it has its own indisputable magic.

More than anything, bikepacking in Wales has taught me to read maps like stories, to look for the narrative behind the contours, symbols and place names. In writing this book, I wanted to put together a collection of 18 accessible routes that showcase the Wales that I know and love. Each one reflects both the diversity of Wales's off-road riding and the country's rich culture, history and language. The result is a selection of bikepacking trips which all offer up something slightly different, and I believe that there is a route in this book for everyone who enjoys riding their bike off the beaten track. You'll certainly get to know Wales better as a result.

Croeso i Gymru!

Welcome to Wales!

**Emma Kingston**

Bristol, March 2023

## FEEDBACK AND UPDATES

If you have any feedback, please do contact me: [emmakingstonoutdoors@gmail.com](mailto:emmakingstonoutdoors@gmail.com) or [@emma.outdoors](https://www.instagram.com/emma.outdoors)

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# WEST WALES

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# 01 THE GOWER PENINSULA

## INTRODUCTION

The Gower Peninsula (Penrhyn Gŵyr) was the first place in Britain to be designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in 1956. Often described as 'Wales in miniature', Gower boasts some of the finest beaches and unspoilt coastal scenery in the UK, including the four-kilometre sweep of golden sand below Rhossili Down, the iconic Three Cliffs Bay and the earliest known human burial site in Western Europe at Paviland Cave. The most dramatic sight, however, is Worm's Head (Pen Pyrod) – a long, rocky tidal island that snakes out into Rhossili Bay. Gower has become increasingly well known for its prized local produce, and a bikepacking trip here wouldn't be complete without sampling Gower's famous salt marsh lamb, cockles, laverbread (Welshman's caviar) or a refreshing pint of Gower Gold.

## ROUTE OVERVIEW

Gower has a fast-growing reputation for being one of the best bikepacking destinations in Wales, and justifiably so. For such a compact area, it offers up a huge variety of trails which are made all the more spectacular by their unique coastal location. Highlights along this route include the sandy singletrack by Pennard Castle, ridgeline cruising along heather-clad Cefn Bryn, some surprisingly good purpose-built trails in Clyne Valley Country Park, and the jewel in Gower's crown: Rhossili Down. Climb steeply to enjoy the high-level bridleway running along its entire length or stay low to ride one of the most scenic stretches of singletrack in Wales along the edge of Rhossili Bay. This fairly short route is ideal for a weekend adventure of riding, swimming, camping and exploring, and provides one of the best backdrops for watching the sunset in the UK.

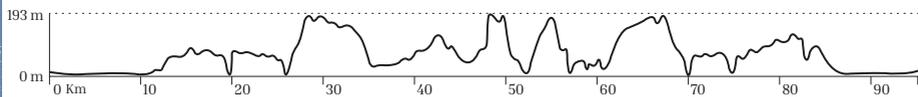


## NAVIGATION

The route follows some of the waymarked mountain biking trails in Clyne Valley Country Park. It also makes use of recent changes to the paths across Pennard Golf Club – some have been upgraded to bridleways and others have been diverted: [www.swansea.gov.uk/rightsofwaymap](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/rightsofwaymap)

Previous page: *The South Pembrokeshire Coast* © Will Kingston-Budge (route 02).  
*Bridleway above Rhossili Bay* © RK.

**GRADE** ▲ **DISTANCE** 95.1km/59.1 miles **ASCENT** 1,250m/4,101ft **TERRAIN** 75% off-road with a mix of sandy trails, grassy bridleways and ridgeline riding; some rocky sections around the coves and wooded valleys  
**START/FINISH** Swansea railway station **START/FINISH GRID REFERENCE** SS 657936 **BIKE-FRIENDLY PUBLIC TRANSPORT**  
**At the start/finish** **SATNAV** SAI INU **MAP** OS Explorer 164, Gower (1:25,000) **RECOMMENDED BIKE** Gravel bike









## THE ROUTE

‘One afternoon, in a particularly bright and glowing August ... George Hooping, whom we called Little Cough, Sidney Evans, Dan Davies, and I sat on the roof of a lorry travelling to the end of the Peninsula ... Inside the lorry were two tents, a box of food, a packing-case of kettles and saucepans and knives and forks, an oil lamp, a primus stove, ground sheets and blankets, a gramophone with three records, and a table-cloth from George Hooping’s mother.’ *Dylan Thomas, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog* (1940)

The Gower Peninsula has long been associated with the famous writer and poet Dylan Thomas. Growing up in nearby Swansea (Abertawe), Thomas regularly referred to himself as a ‘townee’ rather than a country man, living for ‘the provincial drive, the morning café, the evening pub’. But even he was moved by the Gower Peninsula’s extraordinary landscape and felt that it was one of the loveliest stretches of coast in the whole of Britain. In one of his semi-autobiographical short stories, Thomas recounts a fortnight-long camping trip on the peninsula where he and his friends travelled along narrow lanes perched on top of a tall lorry, set up their tents in a field overlooking Rhossili Bay and danced around campfires until midnight.

Even as an adult, a bikepacking trip on the Gower Peninsula seems to conjure a similar feeling of childish delight and freedom. Ride crank-deep down through sand dunes, hop over stepping stones and swim across the bays before crawling, exhausted, into a bivvy bag at the end of the day.

Starting at Swansea railway station, the route heads along the Swansea Bike Path and follows the line of the old Mumbles tramway. Swansea was Dylan Thomas’s home for more than half his short life – ‘this sea-town was my world’ – and you can still visit the beautifully restored Georgian house (£) that he grew up in, as well as the Dylan Thomas Centre (free) nearby. Cycling along the smart seafront, it is a world away from the noise and pollution that was generated here during the Industrial Revolution, when the Lower Swansea Valley was for a time the biggest copper processing area in the world. By 1850, 11 major copperworks had been built on the banks of the River

## WHEN TO RIDE

Rhossili Down, Llanmadoc Hill and Cefn Bryn are criss-crossed with grassy singletrack which is far more enjoyable when dry, while the woodland trails between the Mumbles and Penmaen can get muddy and churned up after wet weather. Save this trip for a warm spring or summer weekend to make the most of the many ice cream parlours and swimming spots.

## WARNINGS

The route joins the B4436 for a short stretch and crosses two golf courses. The trails around Bishopston Valley, Pwlldu Bay and Brandy Cove are wonderfully scenic, but also much steeper and rockier than the rest of the route – you can easily follow the road to Southgate to miss them out if needed. There can be strong tidal rips at Three Cliffs Bay; it is recommended that you swim elsewhere on the peninsula. Worm’s Head is only accessible for two and a half hours either side of low tide – check tide times before crossing and only attempt if there is sufficient time to return to the mainland. Visit the National Coastwatch Institution lookout station nearby (grid reference: SS 403874) for further advice.

L–R: Pennard Castle © RK; Arthur’s Stone (Maen Ceti) © RK; stepping stones at Three Cliffs Bay © RK; Pennard Burrows © RK; Oxwich Bay.

## WATER

The route is a lot less remote than it feels at times, with village shops, cafes and pubs at regular intervals along the way. There is an outside tap available at the front of the National Trust shop and visitor centre at Worm's Head, next to the car park and toilet block.

## FOOD AND DRINK

- Pennard Stores and Post Office, Pennard. T: 01792 233 230
- Little Valley Bakery, Gower Heritage Centre. T: 01792 371 346
- King Arthur Hotel, Reynoldston. T: 01792 390 775
- The Lookout, Rhossili. T: 01792 391 696
- The Bay Bistro, Rhossili. T: 01792 390 519
- Eddy's Cafe Bar, Hillend (seasonal). T: 01792 386 606
- Kings Head Inn, Llangennith. T: 01792 386 212
- Britannia Inn, Llanmadoc. T: 01792 386 624
- Penmaen and Nicholaston Village Hall (SS 525884) runs a coffee and cake morning on the first Saturday of the month (10.30–12.30) – access is through the gate in front of the row of houses by Tor Bay car park.

## ACCOMMODATION

- Nicholaston Farm Camping and Caravan Site, Penmaen. T: 01792 371 209
- Three Cliffs Bay Holiday Park, Penmaen. T: 01792 371 218
- Eastern Slade Camp Site, Slade. T: 07970 969 814
- Greenways of Gower, Oxwich. T: 01792 391 203
- YHA Port Eynon. T: 0345 371 9135
- Hillend Caravan & Camping Park, Llangennith. T: 01792 386 204
- Kennexstone Camping and Touring Park, Llangennith. T: 01792 386 790

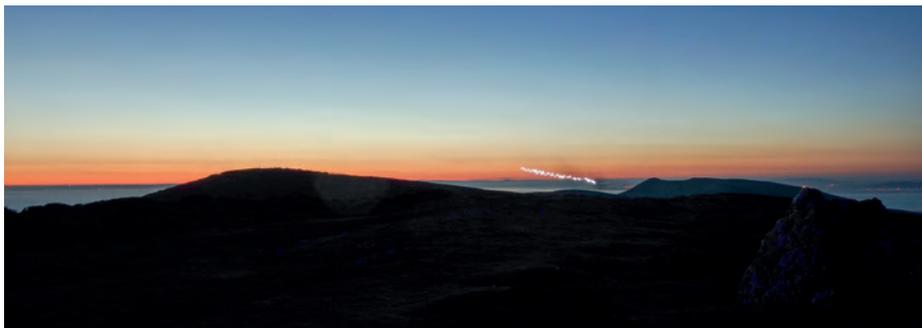


Tawe, and Swansea quickly became known as 'Copperopolis'. When the copper factories finally closed, they left a wasteland of slag heaps, polluted soil, and foul-smelling smoke laced with sulphur and arsenic, but a huge regeneration project in the 1960s helped reclaim the land and transform the area.

Past Mumbles Head, the route becomes increasingly tranquil, rural and remote as it edges west towards the golf course at Pennard Burrows. Playful, sandy singletrack hugs the edge of the fairway, staying high above a steep wooded valley and passing right under the crumbling walls of Pennard Castle. Down below, the stepping stones across Pennard Pill are just visible as the river meanders across the valley floor in a series of wide, unhurried bends. Past the castle, the bridleway descends down through the sand dunes to reach Three Cliffs Bay; it's more surfing than riding as you fight to stay on your bike in the deep sand.

Turning inland, the route climbs up above Penmaen on to Cefn Bryn Common – the backbone of the peninsula – to join a superb high-level bridleway along the entire ridge. It's so good, it features twice. Riding past prehistoric hut circles, cairns and burial chambers, there are panoramic views north across the open salt marshes of the Loughor Estuary and south over the golden sands of Oxwich Bay. Arthur's Stone (Maen Ceti), one of Wales's most famous prehistoric monuments, lies just off the ridgeline track and is well worth the short detour.

The jewel in Gower's crown, though, comes right at the very end of the peninsula. Criss-crossed with a number of excellent bridleways, Rhossili Down rises above the surrounding landscape like the keel of an upturned boat, looking down over the four-kilometre sweep of Rhossili Bay below. There is a superb natural plunge pool to jump in at low tide at the far end of the beach, in the middle is a shipwreck (the *Helvetia*) to explore, and at its southern end lies iconic Worm's Head, a long, thin, rocky promontory that snakes far out into Rhossili Bay. The name comes from the Norse word *wyrm* meaning 'snake',



which is what its unusual profile must have looked like to Viking sailors. For two and a half hours either side of low tide, you can cross the natural causeway and walk out on to Low Neck and Outer Head, which are connected by the spectacular Devil's Bridge. But note that even locals get caught out; Dylan Thomas once got marooned on Worm's Head as an adult after falling asleep while reading his book.

Looking out across Rhossili Bay, a spectacular stretch of coastal singletrack contours above the beach past a lone white house. This former rectory was used as a base for radar workers during World War II and was almost bought by Thomas for his family until he found out there was no pub in the village. The bridleway along the top of Rhossili Down is even better, although it's a steep push up to reach it; spend the evening watching the sunset over Worm's Head with the ponies, before tucking into a fry-up at Eddy's Cafe Bar the next morning.

The return leg back east to Swansea celebrates both Gower's great riding and the area's long history of good food and drink. Just past the dreamy singletrack on Llanmadoc Hill, 14th-century Weobley Castle is home to famous Gower salt marsh lamb, where the animals graze the marshes on a diet of wild samphire, sorrel, sea lavender and thrift. The Britannia Inn in Llanmadoc and the King Arthur Hotel in nearby Reynoldston have recently been singled out as two of the best pubs in Britain. After a fast descent to Parkmill through dense banks of wild garlic, you pass close to Gower Heritage Centre (£), which is well worth a visit. Based in a restored 12th-century watermill, you can take a self-guided tour around the blacksmith's forge and the woollen mill and watch the last intact and working water wheel on Gower making light work of the local grain. Finally, treat yourself to a pint of Gower Gold in one of the local pubs – the beer is produced by Gower Brewery in Crofty. This is a bikepacking trip that will linger in the memory, long after the last bubbles of foam have burst.

Camping pitches will need to be booked well in advance in the summer, as well as during school holidays and bank holidays. Most sites on the peninsula are seasonal, and there are very few campsites west of Oxwich Bay.

#### OTHER ROUTES NEARBY

Rather than returning to Swansea, there is the option to follow Sustrans Route 4 westwards instead. It joins the Millennium Coastal Path past Burry Port towards Pembrey Country Park, which hosts the annual Battle on the Beach, a unique cycling event that includes a mass beach start.

#### BIKE SHOPS AND HIRE

- The Bike Hub, Swansea.  
T: 01792 466 944
- Essential Cycles Gower, Parkmill.  
T: 07968 705 282

#### SUPPORT

The Clyne Riders help develop and maintain the waymarked mountain bike trails in Clyne Valley Country Park: [www.facebook.com/groups/clyneriders](http://www.facebook.com/groups/clyneriders)

L-R: Worm's Head; bivvy view from Rhossili Down.



# 13 TOUR OF YR WYDDFA (SNOWDON)

## INTRODUCTION

Eryri (Snowdonia) became Wales's first national park when it was created back in 1951. It is also the largest, providing a stunning backdrop of glacial valleys, forests, lakes, waterfalls, estuaries and beaches, but its nine mountain ranges are arguably what make it one of the most distinctive and spectacular landscapes in Britain. The biggest draw for many visitors is Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon), the highest peak in Wales at 1,085 metres. Just to the north, the rugged peaks of Glyder Fawr and Glyder Fach tower above the Ogwen Valley and offer views across to the Carneddau. The area is a stronghold of Welsh culture, language and identity – Carnedd Dafydd and Carnedd Llywelyn even bear the names of the princes of Welsh independence. Eryri is also renowned for its slate production which transformed the landscape here on a monumental scale; in 2021 The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

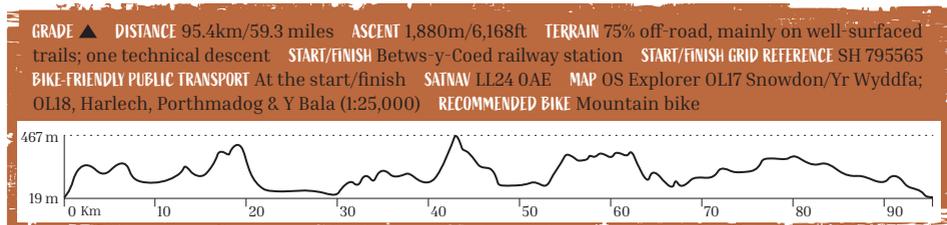
## ROUTE OVERVIEW

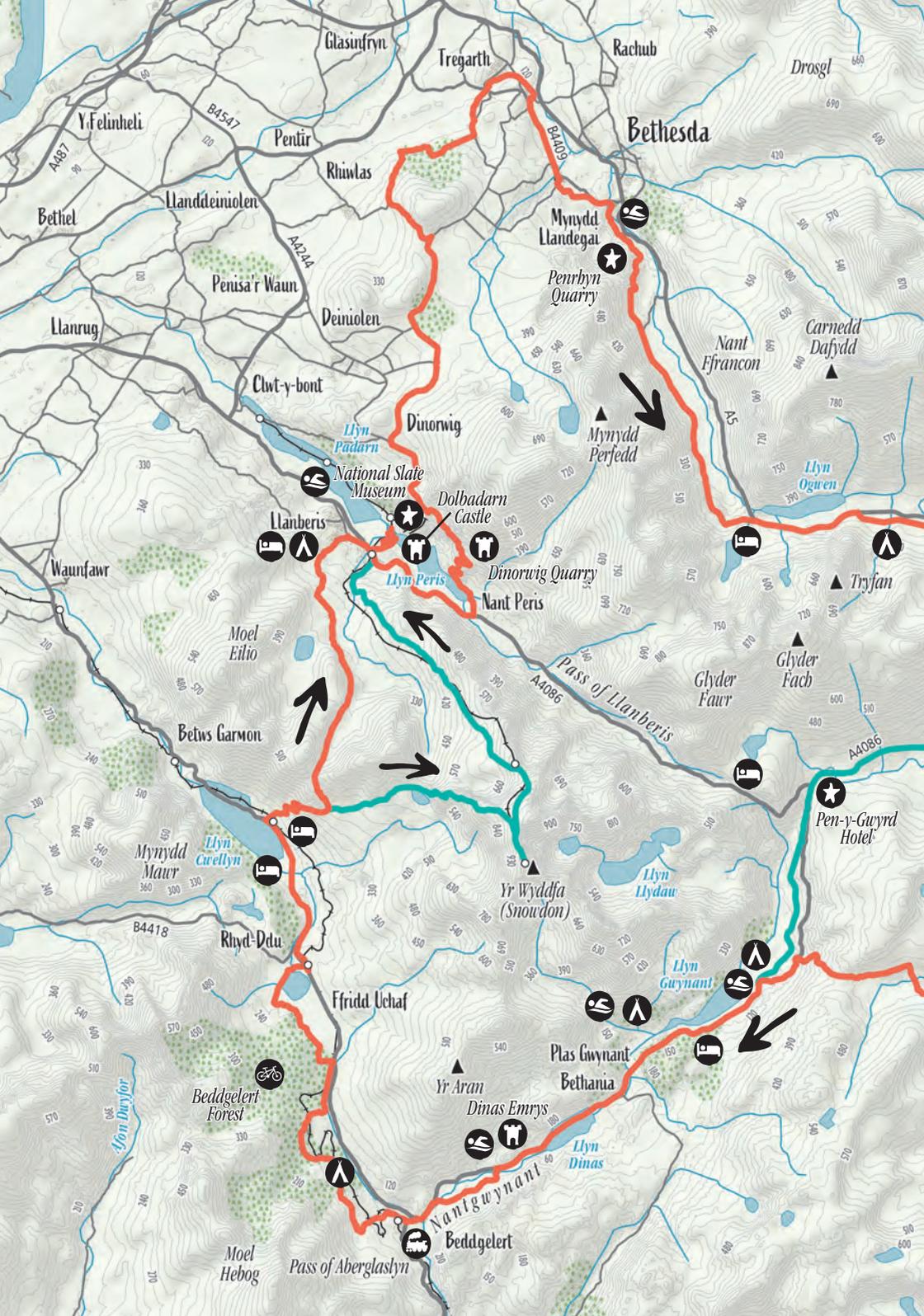
Riding up Yr Wyddfa has become a rite of passage for many mountain bikers. It's not every day that a bridleway goes all the way to a summit, let alone the summit of the highest mountain in the country. However, to get a sense of the true scale and grandeur of the mountain, this loop instead takes riders on a circumnavigation of the massif and the neighbouring Glyderau mountains. On the way, the route explores the area's industrial heritage at Dinorwig and Penrhyn quarries, passes two atmospheric castles built by Llywelyn the Great, cruises through the Ogwen Valley under the watchful gaze of Tryfan, and tackles the shoulder of Yr Wyddfa via its western slopes.

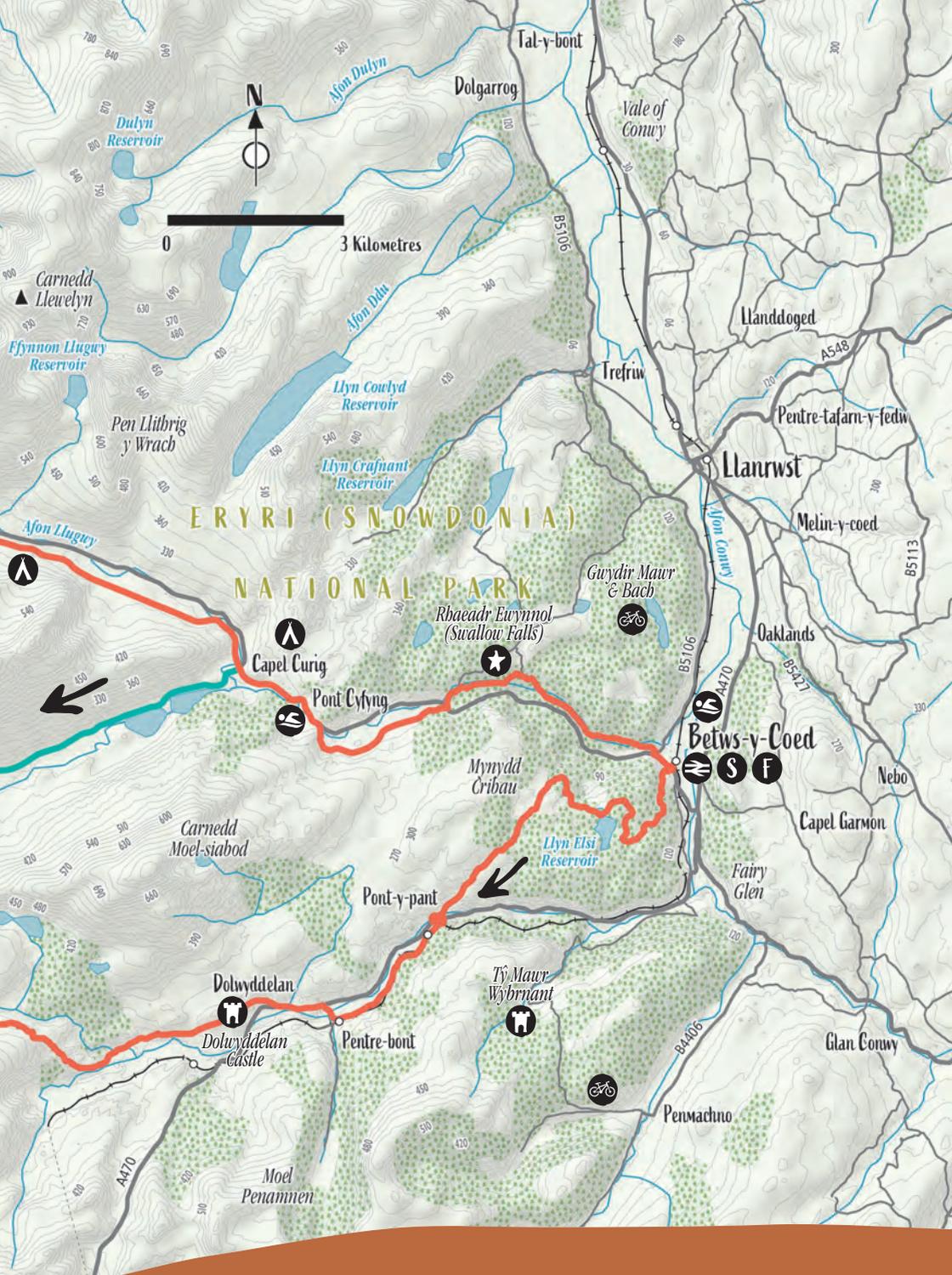


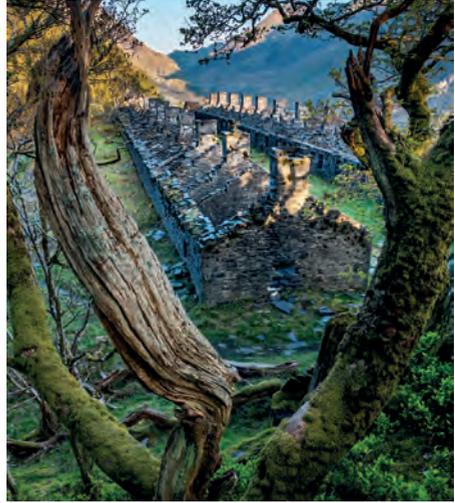
Previous page: *Ascending the Snowdon Ranger Path* © RK. (route 13).

*Descending Yr Wyddfa via Maesgwm (Telegraph Valley)* © RK.









Despite recent resurfacing on some of Yr Wyddfa's bridleways, the route is still a challenging undertaking and racks up some serious elevation over its four major passes. The route also includes an optional, strenuous hike-a-bike ascent of Yr Wyddfa for riders keen to reach the summit.

## THE ROUTE

Climbing steadily out of the Lledr Valley, the river and castle are quickly left behind. The few tourists wandering around its ruins have been shed too. Either side of the track, there is wool everywhere; white strands snagged on thick daubs of yellow lichen, soft wisps wrapped around fence wire and matted clumps blowing across the grass like tumbleweed. Crossing the high pass, Nant Gwynant suddenly opens up below and the overwhelming profile of the Yr Wyddfa massif rises out of the valley opposite, a wall of dark rock backlit in the afternoon sun.

Each of Eryri's nine mountain ranges are distinctive and unique. The Rhinogydd are renowned for their ruggedness, the Glyderau for their sea of sharp, angular rocks, and the Carneddau for their wild horses and stunning coastal location. To the south, the Moelwynion offer emptiness and solitude, while popular Cadair Idris provides a wealth of legends and unparalleled views out over the Mawddach Estuary. The jewel in Eryri's crown, though, is Yr Wyddfa. Standing 1,085 metres above sea level, the iconic peak rises higher than any other mountain in Wales; walkers, climbers and mountain bikers are drawn to it as if by some gigantic magnet, joining the many thousands of people that reach the summit each year. Despite this, the mountain still manages to maintain its aura of majesty and grandeur, even with its summit station and cafe perched on top.

Architecturally, Yr Wyddfa is undeniably magnificent. The late historian, author and travel writer Jan Morris called the peak a 'dream-view' in *The Matter of Wales* (1984), writing that it is 'exquisitely framed, its balance exact ... Cloud generally drifts obligingly around the crags of the mountain, and lies vaporously in its grey gulleys ... It is as though everything is refracted by the pale, moist quality of the air, so that we see the mountain through a lens, heightened or dramatized'.

L-R: Riding beneath Tryfan © RK;  
Lôn Gwyrfaï; Anglesey Barracks  
(Dre Newydd) © RK; Lôn Las Ogwen;  
Welsh Highland Railway © RK.

## NAVIGATION

Most of the trails are obvious on the ground, except for the grassy bridleway over Bwlch y Rhediad between Dolwyddelan and Llyn Gwynant which is wet, boggy and indistinct in places. The route also follows two clearly waymarked trails, Lôn Gwyrfaï and Lôn Las Ogwen (part of Sustrans Route 82).

## WHEN TO RIDE

The route passes through a mountainous environment which can be covered in snow throughout the winter and into spring. Check the mountain weather forecast before riding. Most of the route is on rocky tracks which hold up well in wet weather (Eryri is one of the wettest places in the UK) but there can be a risk of ice at higher altitudes.

The route uses the lower section of the Snowdon Ranger Path via Maesgwm (Telegraph Valley) to Llanberis and is accessible all year round with no restrictions. However, if you are considering the optional ascent of Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon), there is a voluntary agreement in place for cyclists which restricts usage of the bridleways to the summit between 1 May and 30 September. During these busy peak months, please avoid riding on these bridleways between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. to minimise user conflict and help ensure that the trails remain open to cyclists in the future.

[www.mbwales.com/listings/snowdon](http://www.mbwales.com/listings/snowdon)

## WARNINGS

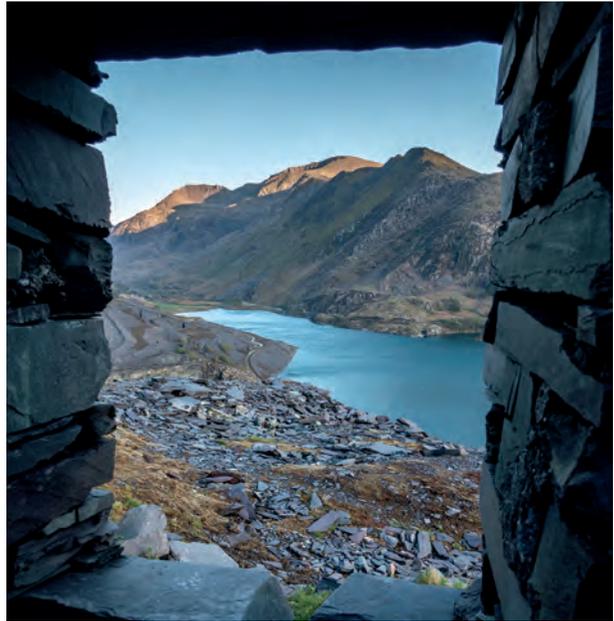
The route has a few unavoidable sections on main roads, including short stretches on the A5 around Llyn Ogwen and the A4085 between Rhyd-Ddu and the Snowdon Ranger Path, as well as a longer but downhill stretch on the A498 to Beddgelert. The bridleway descent from Bwlch y Rhediad is very steep and technical – you will likely be pushing or carrying your bike down most of it. The route also crosses the Welsh Highland Railway line a number of times. The heritage railway can take bikes but check availability with the booking office before travelling (T: 01766 516 024).

## OPTIONAL ROUTE

Yr Wyddfa (1,085 metres) is the highest peak in Wales and is a serious undertaking on foot or by bike. The Snowdon Ranger Path crosses challenging and exposed terrain on its way to the summit and is steep, loose and largely unrideable once past Bwlch Cwm Brwynog – be prepared for sections of sustained pushing and hike-a-bike. Carry a map and compass in case of low visibility as the bridleway passes close to sheer cliffs. Over 600,000 people hike up Yr Wyddfa every year and the summit can get very busy during the summer season. Please ride in control and at a speed that reflects your line of sight and abilities.

## WATER

There are plenty of places to fill up en route. The Ogwen Centre at the Nant Ffrancon Pass also has public toilets and showers which are free and accessible 24/7.



This route takes riders on a sweeping loop around the base of the Yr Wyddfa massif to get a true sense of its size and shape, each high pass and deep valley offering up a new angle from which to view the mountain.

The route starts in Betws-y-Coed to the east of Yr Wyddfa and climbs steeply over the shoulder of Mynydd Cribau to reach the Lledr Valley. There is an easy stretch of riding along the river and under the impressive ruins of Dolwyddelan Castle before the route tackles its first high-level pass over the Moelwynion mountains. A wonderfully remote bridleway works its way up to Bwlch y Rhediad on a mix of stone tracks, boggy grass and brief slivers of singletrack, and then passes through a small, ornate gate standing in the middle of nowhere, its metal rusty with age.

Cresting the pass, you are suddenly confronted with the rocky bulk of the Yr Wyddfa massif for the first time. Gallt y Wenallt rises out of the valley opposite in an immense, forested pyramid of rock and scree. Behind it, a number of narrow ridges radiate out from Yr Wyddfa's summit, including Bwlch y Saethau ('Pass of the Arrows'). The impressive view can't quite distract from the largely unrideable, hike-a-bike descent into Nant Gwynant, although you can avoid this by taking the optional route on the main road from Betws-y-Coed instead, passing the historic Pen-y-Gwryd Hotel near the top of the Pen-y-Pass. The inn was used as the training base for Edmund



Hillary and Tenzing Norgay to help them prepare for the first successful ascent of Mount Everest in 1953, and is now filled with vintage mountaineering memorabilia.

The route picks up speed along the valley floor as it descends to the pretty village of Beddgelert. On the way it passes Llyn Gwynant and Llyn Dinas, which both offer idyllic campsites and swimming spots right under Yr Wyddfa's huge southern flanks. Riding here, it is easy to see how the peak would have been the ideal place for the Everest team to hone their mountaineering skills, especially in winter with Yr Wyddfa's awkward, rugged crags and razor-thin ridges coated in snow and ice. The mountain's English name comes from the Saxon word *Snaudune* – meaning 'Snow Hill' – while the Welsh name is linked to a local legend. Yr Wyddfa means a 'burial chamber' or 'grave', and the story goes that the giant Rhita Gawr was buried under a cairn of stones on the summit of the mountain after a battle with King Arthur.

Heading north, the route joins the Lôn Gwyrfaï multi-user trail on an easy, scenic cruise through Beddgelert Forest under the watchful gaze of Moel Hebog ('Hill of the Falcon'). After emerging from the trees, the trail crosses over a wonderful, raised causeway along the edge of Llyn y Gader, before reaching the mining village of Rhyd-Ddu. Here, the route continues briefly on the main road running parallel with the Welsh Highland Railway – the UK's longest heritage railway – to reach

#### FOOD AND DRINK

- **Caffi Gwynant, Bethania** (seasonal).  
T: 01766 890 855
- **Glaslyn Artisan Ice Cream & Pizza, Beddgelert**. T: 01766 890 339
- **Tanronnen Inn, Beddgelert**.  
T: 01766 890 347
- **Cwellyn Arms, Rhyd-Ddu**.  
T: 01766 890 321
- **Hafod Eryri Summit Cafe, Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon)**. T: 01286 870 223
- **Pete's Eats, Llanberis**. T: 01286 870 117
- **Caban Cafe, Brynrefail**.  
T: 01286 685 500
- **Ogwen Snack Bar, Bethesda**.  
T: 01248 600 683
- **Moel Siabod Cafe, Capel Curig**.  
T: 01690 720 429
- **Pot Mèl Tearoom, Tŷ Hyll, Capel Curig**.  
T: 01492 642 322

L-R: Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon) © RK;  
Dinorwig Quarry © RK.

## ACCOMMODATION

- Llyn Gwynant Campsite, Nant Gwynant. T: 01766 890 302
- YHA Snowdon Bryn Gwynant. T: 0345 371 9108
- Hafod y Llan Campsite (National Trust), Nant Gwynant. T: 07929 662 770
- Beddgelert Campsite, Beddgelert. T: 01766 890 288
- Snowdon Base Camp Bunkhouse and Campsite, Rhyd-Ddu. T: 01766 890 321
- YHA Snowdon Ranger. T: 0345 371 9659
- Camping in Llanberis, Llanberis – [www.campinginllanberis.com](http://www.campinginllanberis.com)
- YHA Snowdon Llanberis. T: 0345 371 9645
- YHA Idwal Cottage. T: 0345 371 9744
- Gwern Gof Uchaf Campsite & Bunkhouse, Ogwen Valley. T: 01690 720 294
- Gwern Gof Isaf Campsite & Bunkhouse, Ogwen Valley.
- Bryn Tyrch Camping & Bunk Barn, Capel Curig. T: 01690 720 414
- YHA Snowdon Pen-y-Pass. T: 0345 371 9534

## OTHER ROUTES NEARBY

Lôn Las Peris is a short waymarked trail along the shore of Llyn Padarn. Beddgelert Forest has two waymarked cycling trails – Derwen and Bedwen – which explore the northern end of the forest on forestry tracks.



the Snowdon Ranger path (Llwybr Cwellyn). The bridleway is named after John Morton, known as the Snowdon Ranger, a local who guided clients to the top of the mountain in the 19th century.

Crossing the railway line, the route works its way up the shoulder of Yr Wyddfa's western slopes on a series of recently surfaced zigzags. What used to be narrow singletrack is now a gravel track – understandable perhaps due to the mountain's popularity and certainly easier on a gravel bike, but a shame nonetheless. This corner of Yr Wyddfa is much less intimidating with its grassy slopes and lack of scree and rocks, but it is still a sustained climb to reach Bwlch Maesgwm, which marks the start of Telegraph Valley. After passing through a gate, the trail cuts down through the valley on a gloriously long, flat-out bridleway into Llanberis. This path has also been heavily sanitised, but it has been kept fairly narrow and the awkward drainage ditches that used to catch out unwary riders have all but disappeared.

Llanberis and the area immediately around it reveal a different side to Yr Wyddfa. Slate has been quarried in these mountains since Roman times, but during the Industrial Revolution the area became the world leader in the production and export of slate. Its lasting impact on the local communities, the landscape and the area's cultural heritage has finally been recognised – in 2021 The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales became a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Once past the National



Slate Museum and Dolbadarn Castle (both free entry), the route climbs up through the magnificent Dinorwig Quarry and into an otherworldly landscape of steep inclines, huge, stepped galleries, deep pits and miles of cavernous underground workings. The entire mountainside has been consumed. Riding between the levels, though, the most compelling remains are those that offer a glimpse into the lives of the quarrymen that worked here. Just below the Dinorwig viewpoint, a steep path leads down to an old winding house with its rusted cables and drum still intact, while further down are the ruins of the Anglesey Barracks (Dre Newydd), built in the 1870s to house workers during the week.

Further north, the route joins Lôn Las Ogwen. The wonderfully scenic trail cuts right through Penrhyn Quarry on a narrow path that wiggles under vast spoil heaps of shattered slate, before climbing up to reach Nant Ffranon Pass and the start of the Ogwen Valley. From here, the route follows a trail gradually down the valley through a spectacular mountain landscape, with the towering Glyderau and iconic Tryfan on one side and the Carneddau on the other. It is a particularly memorable stretch to end on. Once past Capel Curig, the route follows the Afon Llugwy back east towards Betws-y-Coed, passing the hugely popular Rhaeadr Ewynnol (Swallow Falls) (£) and over Pont-y-Pair Bridge ('Bridge of the Cauldron') to reach the station.

#### BIKE SHOPS AND HIRE

- Alpkit, Betws-y-Coed. T: 01690 507 307
- Beics Betws, Betws-y-Coed.  
T: 01690 710 766
- 1085 Adventures, Beddgelert.  
T: 07572 336 578
- Beiciau Greens Bikeshop, near Caernarfon. T: 01286 871 125
- The Bike Shed, Tan-Y-Bwlch.  
T: 07771 356 229
- Ebeics Eryri Cyf, Tregarth.  
T: 07877 822 592

#### NOTES

Eryri is pronounced 'eh-ruh-ree', while Yr Wyddfa is pronounced 'err with-va'.

L-R: Nant Ffranon Pass © RK; mistranslation in Penrhyn Quarry ('Warning - Workers Exploding'); Dinorwig Quarry © RK; Welsh slate.