

Legend.

R	=	Turn Right.	PH	=	Pub.
L	=	Turn Left.	C	=	Café.
LHS	=	Left hand side.	Imm	=	Immediately
RHS	=	Right hand side.	RBT	=	Roundabout.
T	=	T-junction.	Sp	=	Signposted.
X	=	Cross roads.	Thro	=	Through.
SO	=	Straight on.	Opp	=	Opposite.
Y	=	Y-junction.	Red	=	A more than usually dangerous hazard.
TL	=	Traffic lights.			

Conwy Valley.

Start/Finish:	Car park adjacent to and outside the Town Walls on the B 5106.
Start map ref:	OS Landranger Sheet 115-783 774.
OS maps:	Landranger 115 & 116.
Distance:	45 miles.
Total Ascent:	5600ft.
Grade:	Severe.
Suitable for:	Strong, fit and experienced riders only.

A few words of warning about this ride are in order. Firstly, despite its title, most of the route spends its time among the hills either side of the river valley, and these hills are steep; you need low gears and efficient, well-adjusted brakes. Secondly, although the views of the mountains are stunning, unless you are a masochist and enjoy self-inflicted pain, it is pointless to do this ride unless the weather, especially the visibility, is good. There are plenty of places to eat in Llanrwst, Betwys and Conwy, with other useful stops between these last two places. If you fancy a picnic, I have indicated on the route where you can best enjoy the views of the mountains, but whatever you choose to do in this matter, it is essential that you carry some snacks and plenty of drink with you. I have put in some notes about some places of interest in case you have the time or inclination to visit them.

00.0 R out of the car park. No Sp.

00.4 L uphill, SP Trefriw.

02.4 L by Groes Inn car park. No Sp.

04.1 L @ T and cross over the River Conwy.

04.3 Straight on at staggered X. Follow the CW signpost. This is the start of a long and very hard climb, with a maximum gradient of 1 in 3.

04.7 R. No Sp.

06.1 L and follow CW sign passing a lake.

- 07.2 Keep R imm after going under 2nd lot of power lines.
- 07.4 L SP CW.
- 07.7 R @ T. There is signpost, but the CW sign is missing.
- 09.4 SO, SP Llanrwst.
- 09.5 R, SP Llanrwst.
- 09.9 Bear L, SP Llanrwst.
- 11.9 R @ X, SP Town Centre.
- 12.0 L into Watling Street.
- 12.2 L @ T with A 470, SP Betwys-y-coed.

To see Inigo Jones' famous bridge turn right at this junction, and then left over it. Inigo Jones, 1573-1652, was born in London, the son of a Welsh Catholic cloth worker. He was probably the first Englishman to study architecture in Italy, and along with his better-known contemporary, Sir Christopher Wren, was responsible for many famous buildings in the capital. Amongst other buildings, he designed the Queen's House at Greenwich and the Banqueting Hall at Whitehall Palace. He was also prominent in the design of theatre stages. The Bridge Tearoom next to it is an attractive place for 11ses, providing the river is not in flood! Retrace your steps to the T-junction at 12.2 miles and continue.

- 12.4 L and imm R SP Nebo. This is the start of the second long climb, 3 1/2 miles of it. It gets steeper the longer it goes on.
- 15.9 R, no SP. The field on the right of the junction is a good place for a picnic, as there are superb views of the mountains. Continue following the CW signs.
- 17.8 L @ T SP A5.
- 19.0 **SO @ X with the A5**, unless you have had enough of steep hills.
- I**f this is the case, R onto the A5 into Betwys-y-coed, and pick up the route at the Pont-y-Pair Bridge.
- 19.1 R. Follow CW sign.
- 20.6 L @ X opp the site of the old Penmachno woollen mills.
- 22.4 R by the Eagles Hotel, SP Ty Mawr.
- 22.8 Bear R up the third of the long and steep hills, SP Ty Mawr.

Once you have reached the top, the road surface is poor in places, especially lower down the hill, as well as being very steep and twisty. There are some gates to be negotiated, as well as the possibility of suicidal livestock of one sort or another.

- 24.6 Pass Ty Mawr on your LHS.
- This is the birthplace of Bishop William Morgan, who was the first person to translate the Bible into Welsh. It is owned by The National Trust and is open from 2nd April to 29th*

September on Thursdays to Sundays from 1200hrs to 1700hrs, and in October and November on Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays only.

27.1 L @ T, no SP.

27.3 R @ T, SP Betwys-y-coed/A470.

27.7 Keep L imm before big bridge over the river on a Z bend.

28.7 L @ T in the town.

If you are interested in a bit of history, turn right and go to see the Waterloo Bridge, designed by that incomparable civil engineer, Thomas Telford, as part of his upgrade to the Holyhead Road.

The re-graded route for the Holyhead road through Betwys-y-Coed meant that the River Conwy had to be re-bridged, and this was done with one of the very few structures that Telford designed with decorative ironwork. Known as the Waterloo Bridge, it is made of five cast iron beams with a span of 105 ft, and was only the 7th of its type made. The spandrels are decorated with impressions of the Rose, Thistle, Shamrock and Leek in honour of the home countries, and the arches carry the sentence "This arch was constructed in the same year the battle of Waterloo was fought". That is not strictly true, as although these items were made in 1815, it was not until the following year that the contractor, William Suttle, put them in place and built the bridge. In 1923 the three inner beams were encased in concrete and the road deck was strengthened. This was added to in 1978 by the addition of a 10-inch reinforced concrete deck to give a wider road and footpath. Remember, the original cast iron girders that are nearly 200 years old carry all this extra weight!

Due to the local topography it is not easy to see all this decoration, but if you get over the fence and go down the steep bank a little way, with care, (it was only the mercy of providence that saved me from an involuntary bath in the river when I scrambled down the bank some years ago), it can be seen in all its glory. William Hazeldine produced the ironwork at his Plas Kynaston foundry at Trevor, where he also made the troughs for the Chirk and Pont Cysyllte aqueducts, as well as the ironwork for the railways, locks and swing bridges of the western end of the Caledonian Canal. The site of this foundry is now occupied by Flexsys, and there is a plaque on the premises commemorating its origins as the birthplace of the aqueducts' ironwork.

29.1 R across the Pont y Pair Bridge, SP Trefriw/Llanrwst. It is narrow and usually infested with pedestrians.

32.2 L @ T, SP Trefriw.

35.3 The Trefriw Spa Tearooms are on the left.

37.0 Note the memorial on a boulder to the Dam disaster. It is near the "Road Narrows" sign.

37.8 L by the Y Bedol Inn, SP Llandedr-y-cennin. Uphill again.

38.3 R by The Bull public house, no SP.

38.4 Bear R, following CW sign.

39.4 L @ T, no sp. Continue to follow CW signs.

- 39.6 Cross bridge and bear R. No sp.
- 40.2 R @ T. No sp.
- 41.2 L, SP Henryd.
- 41.3 Keep R and follow CW sign.
- 42.1 R @ T, SP Henryd and continue into the village.
- 42.4 L by the school, and follow the CW sign.
- 43.0 L and follow the CW sign.
- 43.3 R @ X, no SP.
- 44.1 L @ T, no SP.
- 44.4 R @ T and go through town wall.
- 44.5 L @ X, go through town wall and imm R into Town Ditch Road. The town wall is on your RHS.
- 44.7 L into Lower Gate Street, pass through the Town Wall and onto the quay, where you can treat yourself to an ice cream, before continuing along the quay to the road in front of the castle. Dismount, cross over to the castle and, keeping it on LHS, turn L, to go under the wall again, continue to the
- 45.2 car park and the end of the ride.

