

Why cycle the Lôn Las route?

Some feedback from cyclists who took part in the 2007 Challenge...

"I love cycling and love Wales so when I saw the challenge advertised I thought what better way to experience the beauty of our country, than by getting on my bike!"
Seb, Penarth South Wales



"I've always wanted to cycle the Lôn Las Cymru cycle route but had never got around to organising a trip. By signing up to the challenge, all the organisation was taken care of, I felt safe and in great company. I've satisfied a personal challenge and supported a great cause in the process"
Brian, Cardiff

"What can say? The scenery, the cycling, the company, the food—all superb! This is the first time I've taken part in a charity challenge and I couldn't have found a better one! The route is spectacular, it captures the richness and diversity of Wales. There are definitely some tough sections but the rewards are more than worth it. Well done & thank you Bobath for organising such a successful and enjoyable event!"
Chris, Llanelli South Wales

"I joined the group for an exhilarating day of cycling from Rhayader to Brecon. It had been years since I had been on a bike and although a little tough on my thighs at times it was such a wonderful day. It was fantastic way to appreciate the stunning countryside. If you want to experience Wales then take part in The Lôn Las Cycle Challenge 2008!"
Iolo Williams, TV Presenter & Nature Expert



"I've always loved cycling but when I turned 60 I decided to set myself some 'real cycle challenges' whilst raising money for good causes. I've taken part in a number of cycle events but I must say, this was by far the most highly organised and enjoyable. There were certainly some tough hills to test me but the scenery you cycle through is breathtaking. You get to see how the landscape changes as you pedal diagonally from North to South Wales. The support crew and other cyclists also made this an experience I will never forget".
Nan, Denbighshire North Wales





Itinerary



Day 1—Tuesday 15 April 2008

Travel to Holyhead, North Wales with See Wales luxury mini coach. All cyclists will be picked up at designated points on route from Cardiff to Anglesey, departing Cardiff around 10.00am. Arrive in Holyhead by early evening for a relaxing night at a 3-star, environmentally-friendly bunkhouse situated in an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Day 2—Wednesday 16 April 2008

Holyhead to Tremadog, via Caernarfon. 67 miles

The challenge begins with a bright and breezy early start! Although we cover a lot of mileage today, the cycling route is moderate, following a mainly flat and gently undulating trail.



Set off at 8.30am from Holyhead's Tourist Information Centre – the official start of Lôn Las Cymru. Soon after cycling through the streets of Holyhead, there are fine sea views out across Holyhead Bay. A traffic-free track leads the way through bluebell-filled woodland. The ride across Anglesey winds through countryside of stone walls and yellow gorse with stunning Snowdonia as a backdrop. For 20 miles the route carries very little traffic and has a few minor climbs. At the southern coast of the island of Anglesey we stop at one of Wales' most famous attractions – the longest place name in Great Britain:



Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch
Known to most locals as Llanfair PG! Have your cameras ready to take a snap of you under this famous sign!

From here, the next section until Y Felinheli is one of the busiest sections of the whole route but relief comes from the spectacular views of Menai Bridge and the Menai Straits and before long we join the long traffic-free path – Lôn Las Menai. We ride directly into the heart of the walled town of Caernarfon, which is a good spot to rest for some well-earned lunch! Caernarfon is dominated by the towers and battlements of the mighty castle, built for Edward I in the 13th Century to command the entrance to the Menai Strait. In 1969 the castle gained worldwide fame as the setting for the investiture of Prince Charles as the Prince of Wales.



From here, we cycle the Lôn Eifion railway path which begins just a few yards from the castle and climbs gently through woodland then runs alongside the course of the new A487 with its amazing drystone walls and past the Indigo Jones slate works. We finish our day of cycling in Tremadog and enjoy the comfort of a lovely 4-star lodge nestled between the sea and mountains of Snowdonia in the birthplace of Lawrence of Arabia!



Itinerary



Day 3—Thursday 17 April 2008 Tremadog to Corris, via Dolgellau. 40 miles

A bright and early start for a tough day of cycling!



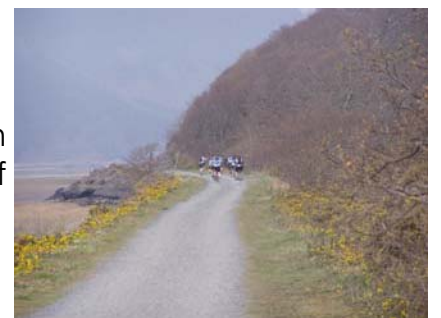
Enjoy the flat stretch at the beginning of this section because we are soon faced with the steepest road climb of the whole challenge leading to the historic town of Harlech. With sheer pedal power and determination we climb up over Harlech, with its imposing castle that rises up 200ft on a rocky outcrop above the dunes and is now a World Heritage Site. Following this strenuous uphill ride you are rewarded with a wonderful downhill descent – sit back and enjoy the fabulous views over Dyffryn Ardudwy and amazing beech woodland.



A quiet A road takes us to the little seaside town of Barmouth, flanked by Snowdon and Cadair Idris mountains. Barmouth, with its long sandy beach, is a perfect lunch stop! We cross the beautiful Barmouth wooden railway bridge and onto the stunning Mawddach Trail – a cyclist's heaven - that runs alongside the Mawddach Estuary. This is a totally traffic free trail and welcome flatness in a land of hills!



The superb views of the Mawddach Trail lead the way into the heart of premier cycling town, Dolgellau.



From Dolgellau we press on, cycling south to Corris. The initial climb up to Aberllefenni involves a punishing ascent but the views on the top alongside Cadair Idris are fantastic, and better still; the rest of the route to Corris is downhill – where we end our cycling for the day.





Itinerary



Day 4—Friday 18 April 2008 Corris to Rhayader. 44 miles



Set off from Corris at around 8.30am for what is probably the most strenuous day of the challenge.

Ahead of Machynlleth town is the most arduous section of the route, a climb from near sea-level to 1640ft over a distance of 8 miles. The ascent is really hard going but the view from the top makes it all worthwhile. A Millennium signpost marks

the highest point on the Lôn Las Cymru, at 510m, where we stop to admire the fine views north towards Snowdonia.

We stop at a beautiful designated picnic area to refuel and recharge our aching legs, before embarking on a rapid descent towards the B4518 with views of wind turbines on the hills to the east.



We leave the mountains of North and Mid Wales and swap the valley of the young River Severn for the Wye Valley. The route is peaceful and almost traffic-free until we reach the important farming town of Rhayader, with its fine clocktower.

We spend the evening here for a much needed rest after a tough day of cycling. Relax, put your feet up and enjoy an evening of good food and company with your fellow cyclists!

Day 5—Saturday 19 April 2008 Rhayader to Brecon via Builth Wells. 49 miles



With the hardest day behind us, we start off a little later today. After less than a mile on the A470 through Newbridge-on-Wye, quiet lanes lead the way through lush countryside and follow all the way to the lovely agricultural town of Builth Wells – renowned for hosting the annual Royal Welsh Show, which attracts thousands of visitors every year.



A traffic-free path through copper beech parkland takes us alongside the River Wye. From Builth Wells to Talgarth is one of the easiest stages of the route. There is a drop of 150ft over 16 miles to Glasbury on a gently undulating trail and then a slight climb on the way to Talgarth. We stop in Glasbury for lunch, where we see the last of the Wye Valley before heading west along the base of the Brecon Beacons through Felindre, Talgarth and Llanfilo on our way to Brecon.



We end Day 5, our last overnight stop of the challenge, in the important crafts town, Brecon.



Itinerary



Day 6—Sunday 20 April 2008 Brecon to Cardiff Bay, along the Taff Trail. 54 miles

One last push of pedal power for our final day of the challenge!

Setting off around 9.00am, this final section starts out with a strenuous and long 1,015ft climb from the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal at Llanfrynach up to Tal Fechan Forest but then it is relatively relaxing cycling for the rest of the way!



The Taff Trail encompasses both the stunning mountain scenery of the Brecon Beacons National Park and the rich industrial heritage of the Taff Valley.

We pedal up from Talybont alongside the reservoir on an old tramway with a steady gradient over 5 miles. Although tough on the thighs, the views are fantastic! A gentle descent following a traffic-free railway path leads the way into Merthyr Tydfil, at one time the heart of the Industrial Revolution in Wales.



We head south past Pontypridd and marvel at the magical fairytale castle, Castell Coch, meaning 'Red Castle' built in rose-coloured stone and set in a steep-sided wooded gorge.



The last miles follow the River Taff and pass the impressive Millennium Stadium before finishing in a spectacular grand finale at the Oval Basin in vibrant Cardiff Bay—the official end to the Lôn Las Cymru route in Cardiff.

To celebrate our achievement in completing the Lôn Las Challenge 2007, Bobath Children's Therapy Centre Wales will host a reception in Cardiff with drinks and nibbles—the venue to be confirmed nearer the date. This is the perfect way to end this wonderful challenge.





What does your £950 sponsorship money cover?



All cyclists are required to raise £950 sponsorship in order to take part in The Lôn Las Cycle Challenge 2008. This amount covers the cost of taking part, such as accommodation, food and refreshments and the remainder will go directly to Bobath Children's Therapy Centre, which amounts to £625 per cyclist. Every pound over and above the minimum sponsorship will purely benefit the Bobath Centre and the children that it treats.

Upon registering you will be required to pay a **£95 registration fee** which is **non-refundable**. This fee equates to 10% of the total sponsorship amount. When you have reached the target of £950 you can claim your initial registration fee back if you wish to do so.

IMPORTANT CLAUSE:

At least 80% of the minimum sponsorship amount (£760) must be paid to Bobath Children's Therapy Centre Wales 2 weeks prior to the challenge date. Bobath has the right to refuse participation if this amount has not been paid by the given date.

Everything that is included...

Transport:

For the second year running we are delighted that See Wales has kindly agreed to be the official sponsor of The Lôn Las Cycle Challenge 2008. See Wales is a sightseeing company, offering guided tours of Wales all-year-round from Cardiff. We will travel aboard See Wales' luxury mini coach to Holyhead and pick up cyclists at designated points on route to Holyhead, depending on where participants live. The See Wales coach will be used throughout the duration of the event as a support vehicle. See Wales will follow the group closely, carrying water and snacks, repair kits, medical supplies and cyclists luggage. Although this is a tough challenge it is not a race. If any cyclists feel they need a break, you and your bike can travel in the support vehicle and rejoin the group at any time.

The challenge ends in Cardiff Bay and Bobath would very much like all cyclists to join the rest of the group for a celebration reception evening hosted at a venue in Cardiff (confirmed nearer the event date). All cyclists will be responsible for their transport home at the end of the challenge. For those who live outside of South Wales, you may consider spending the evening at a hotel in Cardiff. If so, Bobath can provide you with some suggestions of possible accommodation. Advice will be given to all participants regarding transport home .

Support Crew:

Two main 'tour leaders', both experienced cyclists and medically trained, will be responsible for navigating the route. In addition to this, other volunteer 'rangers' will join sections of the route to guide cyclists. The Event Organiser and See Wales driver will travel in the support vehicle and be on hand at all times, meeting the group at rest stops, lunch breaks and joining the group in the evenings. A radio communications system will link the tour leaders and support vehicle throughout the challenge. A comprehensive medical kit will be kept on board and tour leaders will also carry a first aid kit but all cyclists are asked to bring their own simple medical bag (details of which can be found on the 'Kit List' information sheet).