

Camping Weekend, Bwych-yn-uchaf, Bala 4th-6th June 2010

This camping weekend was not so well supported as past ones, possibly due to the timing (half term week) and (maybe) the perceived difficulty of the cycling in this area.



Only **Brian and Sylvia's motor home and Janet and Alan's tents** made it to the pre-arranged campsite at Llanuwchllyn near Lake Bala by Friday evening. Larry had beaten us all by arriving lunchtime.

SATURDAY

Despite a favourable weather forecast of dry, sunny and warm conditions, together with a proposed 38 mile, fairly flat ride up the Dee valley to Corwen and back, we were joined at the 10.30 am start point by just one day visitor – Peter.

Peter, Janet, Sylvia and Alan



Larry, who has only recently returned to the bike after a mild stroke, turned back relatively early in the ride.

11ses at Llandrillo

A very pleasant day ensued with 11ses taken “on spec” at a church in Llandrillo where we were plied with tea and Bara Brith. A whole plate load of it was demolished by five hungry cyclists for no specific charge, just an invitation to make a “contribution to church funds”. Thank you Peter for your generosity.

We then moved on to lunch at Corwen craft centre. We believe it says “café and craft centre that used to be the town’s workhouse” (unless you know different).



Stopping to admire the view

Peter



SUNDAY

The day dawned cloudier and cooler and our four stalwart campers were joined by two further day visitors, Brian and Alan to make a six strong group for a circular ride to Lake Vyrnwy and back - only 32 miles but with two major climbs.

Now we are six



Brian L



After the **obligatory group photo** we set off from the site, immediately climbing the five mile

ascent of the infamous “Bwylch y Groes” pass (although from the allegedly easier Bala side). The photo of Brian waving with Sylvia in the background captures something of the ascent. All six riders completed the climb and posed for a celebratory photo at the summit.



**Getting up to the
summit of the
Bwylch y Groes
Pass**

We all made it!



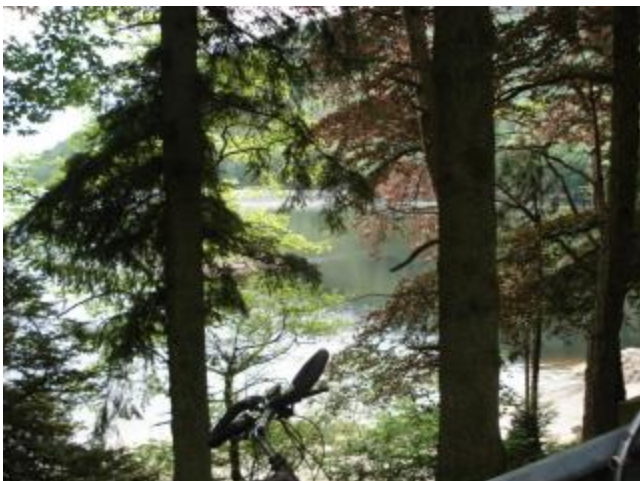
A speedy descent followed and lunch was taken at the “Barn” café by the Lake Vyrnwy Visitor Centre.



The Old Barn Cafe



We had a fast pull around the lake and a shorter steeper three mile ascent before a pleasant floating five mile descent of the Hirnant Pass back to Bala.



Well that was the plan! However, Brian J, after stopping at the summit to photograph the others descending in sequence into the distance managed to collide with

a stray rock at speed in the middle of the road, buckling his front wheel and simultaneously puncturing both tyres. With the others now fast receding dots in the distance and no mobile phone signal or pump (Sylvia had it), he was able to persuade a passing motorist to give chase and pass on the message that he was in trouble. Well, what would you have thought if you were descending a mountain pass with a motorist behind you sounding their horn? When the car finally drew level with her, Sylvia's less than friendly "What?" was possibly not as diplomatic as it could have been. When informed of the problem, her more considered response was along the lines of "if he thinks I'm going back up there..." What would you have done?

Brian J

Brian walked down the mountain, carrying his stricken steed to where the road flattened out and Sylvia reluctantly cycled back to him with a pump. Operational mobility was restored with both punctures repaired. The front wheel was only slightly out of true and the ride was duly completed. The bike is now in intensive care in K Cycles.



We must mention that both Alan and Janet were flagged down by the same motorist some distance on. Similar expletives but they turned around and cycled back - miles and miles, uphill to support their leader. The other Alan and Brian were almost in Bala before looking back - to no-one - and mobile calls were unanswered. Brian kindly returned in the car to find us whilst Alan - well, he was found later in a café in town checking out afternoon tea. Best to "let my bike go" downhill was his infamous remark.

To round off the weekend, the four campers took themselves off to the village pub for a slap up evening meal. "Chapeaux" to Janet who cycled out to Bala from home on Friday and back to Heswall on the Monday as well as completing both rides in style. It was a very enjoyable weekend which could easily become an annual event (!?).

Text and photos are mainly **Brian Joyce** with a little extra from **Janet Gregory** and **Brian Lowe**.