

**Ride:** Lôn Las Cymru

**Start:** Swansea (Blackpill)

**Finish:** Bangor

**Distance:** 192 miles (5 days)

**Terraine:** Major hills in the middle; flat on the last day.

**Maps:** OS 1:250,000 Road Atlas of Britain and Sustrans 1:100,000 Lôn Las Cymru (North).\*

This tour crosses Wales from south to north, the northern part of which follows National Cycle Route 8 (aka Lôn Las Cymru). It takes you through some of the loveliest – albeit hilly – parts of Wales. Of course what goes up goes down and there are some great freewheels. The route I have chosen takes you directly to Rhayader where you join NCR 8 for the rest of the journey north.

Assuming you are not a hardened cyclist I am suggesting you take five days with overnight stops at Llandovery, Rhayader, Machynlleth (Corris), and Porthmadoc. The respective daily distances are approximately 40, 33, 37(43), 45(39), 37 miles. The bracketed distances apply if on day three you carry on to the Youth Hostel in Corris.

From Blackpill follow NCR 4 to Gowerton and then to Pontardulais using the cycle path between Kingsbridge and Grovesend. From Pontardulais take the road via Garnswllt to Ammanford, the A483 to Ffairfach and then minor roads through Bethlehem to Llangadog and the A4069 to Llandovery. The climbs between Pontardulais and Garnswllt and up to Bethlehem will prepare you for longer hills ahead!



View north from near Harlech

From Llandovery it's the A483 with a big pull up to the Sugar Loaf. Stop at the picnic area here and climb up to the summit from where there's a great view. From Beulah take the lumpy B4358 to Newbridge. You could join NCR 8 here, but to avoid a rough off-road section I would follow the A470 as far as Llanwrthwl, there turning left to get to Rhayader via the Elan Valley.

For the remaining three days follow the signed NCR 8. It is mostly on minor roads, but there are pleasant off road sections on the south side of the Mawddach Estuary and for most of the last 20 miles to Bangor. There's a major climb between Llanidloes and Machynlleth and another between Machynlleth and Dolgellau. NCR 8 again takes you into the hills NE from Harlech but you can avoid this section by taking the B4573. Just before you get to Porthmadoc the famed village of Portmeiron is a mile off the route to the south.

To return to Swansea there's an hourly train service from Bangor. It takes 5½ hours.

\* Can be purchased from <http://shop.sustrans.org.uk>.

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