



Crossing the old Severn Bridge



## North Wales Wild Wales Challenge

*Snowdonia's roads make for a spectacular day out, as **Jim Wright** discovered*

**THE WILD WALES** Challenge was named after the book 'Wild Wales: Its People, Language and Scenery', by Victorian rambler George Borrow. Each August bank holiday for the last 39 years, riders have followed a choice of hilly routes through Snowdonia: long (95 miles this year) or 'short' (65). Both have lots of climbing.

Last year I rode the shorter version with my son and daughter. The start was Bala Rugby Club. We meandered down the east shore of Bala Lake (Llyn Tegid), tracking the narrow-gauge steam railway. Turning left just before Llanuwchllyn, we started the tough climb up Bwlch y Groes.

The descent into Dinas Mawddwy is long and steep, as the 11 arrows on the OS map confirm. It was a lovely late summer day as we descended into Dinas and then climbed over Ochr y Bwlch to arrive at the first feed station at Brithdir. The route then took us via Coed y Brenin forest among a myriad of quiet lanes, eventually following the Afon Wen towards Pont Aber.

Avoiding Llan Ffestiniog, we stopped to admire the Rhaeadr y Cwm waterfall. Shadows lengthened as we neared Llyn Celyn reservoir, and the sudden drop in air temperature reminded us that autumn was approaching. Back at Bala we collected our commemorative Welsh slate plaques.

For those wishing to try the 2024 version, visit [merseysidectc.co.uk/wwc](http://merseysidectc.co.uk/wwc).

## South-west England

# Half-term staycation

*Exotic destinations aren't required for cycling holidays. **Mark Siddall** had a great family trip near home*

**W**e love getting away on long-haul holidays but it is extra special to take a break locally, reducing our carbon footprint, costs and stress levels all at the same time. Bike touring with children and a dog might not sound easy or fun but with the bike paths in our region it's easily achievable. Home-to-home touring makes life much simpler.

The four of us left from home on the Saturday of February half term on our two Circe Helios tandems, with Biddy our border terrier on the back. One of the tandems has Shimano STEPS electric assist, making it easier to carry spare clothes and wet weather gear. Our route took us through Over to Highnam, all on bike paths. We then took the lanes through Tibberton and Birdwood, where we enjoyed a cracking full English.

After Flaxley and Little Dean, we went on through the Forest of Dean to Park End, where we stayed overnight. The Fountain Inn looked after our bikes and us very well. From Park End we rode on the next day to St Briavels before enjoying Chepstow Castle and a lovely pizza for dinner. The Beaufort Inn kept our bikes nice and safe in the ballroom.

Day three took us over the old Severn Bridge, which has a bike path

along both sides. It was a special experience to be suspended 100 metres in the air above the estuary.

From the Bristol side of the Severn Estuary, we rode back through lovely, wide and empty lanes through Berkeley, where we stopped at a tea room. Our final overnight stay was at the Tudor Inn in Slimbridge. The old skittle alley had no one using it and so we had a really fun evening enjoying pub skittles.

Our last day was on familiar territory, along the canal to Frampton and then back along the lanes through Saul and, finally, home to Quedgeley outside Gloucester. It was a very special time. We always had something to do and experience together. The trip gave us memories to last a lifetime – and with a very low carbon footprint.



One of the two Circe Helios bikes



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