

# Mountain Biking *in Snowdonia*



Singletrack at Coed y Garnedd (Photo: Bikefar ©)



[www.snowdonia-active.com](http://www.snowdonia-active.com)

“*This little corner of Wales has just about everything that any fat (or thin) tyre enthusiast would want in abundance, and then some!*”

## Introduction

Mountain biking in Snowdonia; where to start? This little corner of Wales has just about everything that any fat (or thin) tyre enthusiast would want in abundance, and then some!

For a relatively small area with modestly sized hills, Snowdonia contains an astonishing wealth of trails and cycling routes; from open grassy mountain top epics, fast forest roads and disused railway lines, through to some of the very finest singletrack in the world. Trails vary from easy, wide dirt or gravel road climbs and descents, smooth grassy singletrack with the odd rock thrown in, right through to rough and tumble rocky doubletrack and singletrack. Well-mapped bridleways and byways can take the explorer deep into wild, high country, with far reaching views, whilst the area also boasts two Forestry Commission mountain biking centres. At these centres a network of clearly waymarked trails of differing lengths and difficulty weave along gradual forest road climbs leading to breathtaking descents on purpose built singletrack. The riding in Snowdonia, almost inevitably, tends to be hilly, but it is possible to tailor rides to suit fitness, inclination and technical ability. There are huge 50km epics or 1 hour thrashes, all easily accessible to the visiting mountain biker.

Alongside the famous mountain bike trails, there is a growing network of 'Recreational Routes', which are often more comfortably ridden on mountain bikes and enable the cyclist to move around the area with less dependence on the narrow roads. There is no doubt that Snowdonia has firmly established itself as a great venue, both for mountain bikers and cyclists.

So, if your thing is cruising along looking at the view, having an adventure in a wild and remote place, or flying down twisty, technical singletrack, then Snowdonia has something for you.

## History

People have been riding bikes off road in Snowdonia almost since bikes were invented. Climbers and other adventurers used heavy steel bikes to explore the high passes and tracks from the 1920's with some riding all the way from Merseyside and Manchester first! A loose organisation called 'The Rough Stuff Fellowship' formed during the 1930's, which fostered riding bikes off road with a distinct focus upon adventure. Enthusiastic members of the Rough Stuff Fellowship would ride for miles over the high hills of Snowdonia on bikes with drop handlebars and narrow tyres. The first true mountain bikes appeared in Snowdonia in the mid 1980's in the hands of mountain sports enthusiasts looking for something a bit different. The bikes were horrendously heavy and low-tech by today's high standards and very few in numbers. The name 'mountain bike' suggested to the early enthusiasts that these bikes should indeed be used in the mountains and consequently locals could be seen struggling and sweating their way up the highest peaks with the bike on their shoulders. People soon realised that this was not the way to get the best out of the new machines and started to explore the network of tracks and trails found throughout the area.

Unfortunately little was known about the access law governing bicycles in the countryside at that time and serious conflicts and access problems began to develop, in particular on Snowdon, which had ▶



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Clegir, above Llanberis (Photo: Bikefax ©)



“*Snowdonia contains an astonishing wealth of trails and cycling routes; from open grassy mountain top epics, fast forest roads and disused railway lines, through to some of the very finest singletrack in the world.*”

developed into something of a honey pot for mountain bikers in Snowdonia. As mountain biking grew in popularity through the mid 1990's, so did knowledge of access law and visiting mountain bikers began to confine their activities to trails where they had legal access i.e. bridleways and byways. At the same time local riders began exploring the huge areas of forest and woodland to be found all over Snowdonia.

Areas like Gwydyr Forest around Betws y Coed became popular with those who were 'in the know', as did Coed y Brenin near Dolgellau and Beddgelert Forest. Locals would use the networks of forest roads to link together routes through firebreaks and any bit of interesting trail they could find. Many of these routes had no legal status and land managers simply turned a blind eye to what was then a small number of locals having fun in the woods.

The North Wales Mountain Bike Association (NWMBBA) was formed, both a reflection of the strength of the local scene and a reaction to the burgeoning international mountain bike racing scene evident throughout the UK and across the world. NWMBBA started to organise races throughout North Wales and in 1989 the final round of the UK championship series was held at Beddgelert. The course and the event proved a success and North Wales began to get noticed by the wider mountain bike community.

In the early 90's Pete Bursnall's guide to mountain biking in mid Wales (which included rides in Snowdonia) again highlighted interest in the area and many rides began to take on 'classic' status. Around the same time Beics Betws opened in Betws y Coed. This cool little bike shop, run by local mountain bike stars Sian and Dafydd Roberts & their partner Sion Parry, became a focus for local and visiting riders.

Nonetheless, Snowdonia was still overshadowed by other parts of the UK as a mountain biking destination. It didn't have the bridleway network of the Lake District or parts of the Pennines and many riders seemed to be put off by the idea of very big hills. The situation changed dramatically in 1995 when the Forestry Commission (FC) began to develop 'proper' mountain bike trails at Coed y Brenin.

FC had provided way marked routes for mountain bikers in Gwydyr Forest and Coed y Brenin for some time, but these were exclusively on wide forest roads. These routes were of little interest to mountain bikers and were much too hilly for families or novices, so they were not very popular, but they did draw in riders looking for more interesting trails.

In an attempt to increase visitor numbers and rejuvenate the flagging fortunes of the Coed y Brenin visitor centre, FC began to replace forest roads with singletrack. Four waymarked trails, including a rake of challenging singletrack, were developed and very quickly Coed y Brenin became a Mecca for mountain bikers from all over the UK and beyond. Riders had for some time been using the bridleways up Snowdon, but in relatively small numbers. As numbers crept up so did the number of complaints from walkers. The Snowdonia National Park Authority was on the verge of legally banning bikes from Snowdon when local riders managed to negotiate an access agreement to minimise conflicts (for details see below). This has been in place for over ten years now and is constantly being monitored by the Park Authorities. For the sake of future access, please stick to the agreement.

As well as raising the profile of Snowdonia as a mountain biking destination, the development of Coed y Brenin brought with it considerable economic benefits to the local community (up to £5million per year) and demonstrated that mountain biking is after all a legitimate way for people to enjoy the countryside. Subsequently the FC developed the superb Marin Trail in the Gwydyr Forest, and more recently a network of epic trails has been developed in Penmachno and Dyfi Forests by local community groups. So, from a few hardcore fanatics carrying their bikes up big hills, Snowdonia has developed into one of the best places in the world to ride a mountain bike.





Descent from Cadair Idris (Photo: Bikefar ©)



[www.snowdonia-active.com](http://www.snowdonia-active.com)

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## Advice for Beginners

Anyone can walk into a shop, buy a bike and take off into the countryside. That is what makes mountain biking so popular; most people can ride a bike. However, the skills needed to successfully pilot a mountain bike around some of the remote and/or challenging routes mentioned in this text should not be underestimated. Mountain biking can be dangerous!

It is worth working on your skills at a reasonable pace, practicing them in relatively safe environments prior to heading out into the back of beyond. There are a number of businesses who provide skills training (braking, reading the ground ahead, slow speed ability) and guiding services.

If you want to break yourself in gently then the easier forest routes and some of the routes given ‘easy’ in the guidebooks are a great way to start. Build up to the longer, harder and more technical routes as you develop skill and confidence.

The great thing about mountain biking is that you don’t really need a lot of fancy stuff to have a great time; all you really need is a bike and a helmet. But if you want to get the most out of a trip to the area, it is worth giving your bike and equipment a bit of thought.

Full suspension bikes definitely come into their own in Snowdonia, especially on very long or technical rides. Hard tail bikes are lighter but harder on the body, but the uphill are a lot easier. For the majority of the big epic rides found in Snowdonia a hard tail will be fine, but for the classics and some of the short blasts a full suspension bike would be more fun.

Coedy Brenin is full suspension heaven, but hard tails are fine too, just make sure you watch out for those rocks. Disc breaks are a definite advantage in Snowdonia since many of the trails can be quite muddy and cantilever break pads wear down quickly, as do wheel rims; disc breaks give you more confidence in the wet and need less maintenance.

Your clothing needs to reflect the nature of the ride and the weather conditions. For instance, if you intend to do a big epic ride make sure you have some spare warm clothing, waterproofs and shoes you can easily walk in. Always make sure that the layer next to your skin is a ‘wicking’ fabric, which moves moisture away from the skin and prevents you from getting too cold. This is also important in warm weather.

Always wear a good helmet, which fits properly and a pair of gloves. Finally, good quality eye protection to keep out the sun, rain, mud, stones and flies is a very worthwhile addition.

Most mountain bikers will carry a spare inner tube, puncture repair kit, pump and some tools such that they can deal with most common breakages en route. Learning how to set up and repair your bike can save a lot of unnecessary aggravation and walking!

The appropriate guide book or leaflet will make your day easier but don’t forget that if you do get lost then guides only have limited information. It is essential to carry the appropriate map if you are venturing into the back country, you also need to learn how to read the map.

Finally food and drink, some of these routes stray a long way from the shops and all require the use of large amounts of energy. Carry plenty of water either in bottles or in a camelback / platypus type backpack. Energy food such as bananas, energy bars etc are vital to maintaining good energy supply during the day.





Climachr Trail, Dyfi Forest (Photo: Bikefax ©)

“...very quickly Coed y Brenin became a Mecca for mountain bikers from all over the UK and beyond.

## Mountain Bike Riding

The mountain bike riding in Snowdonia can be broken down into a few categories:

- **Epics** – ‘Moses alone-in-the-wilderness’ style rides, where lots of food and a sense of humour are essential!
- **Classics** – rides you have just got to do if you come to Snowdonia. If you don’t, you should sell you bike to a proper rider!”
- **Waymarked routes** – mostly in FC forests but these can cross over into any of the categories above or below.
- **Blast** – short intense rides with lots of fun stuff (see waymarked routes).

### Epics

All you need is a good OS map, a sense of adventure, a bag of food, big legs and a sunny disposition and off you go to have an epic ride. The trouble is that it is often very difficult to tell what is going to be either worth the effort or actually rideable at all just from looking at a map. If you are happy to take the chance and willing to have an adventure then here are some of the best places to go and have a look:

A great place for epic rides is the Berwyn Mountains just East of Snowdonia where there is a huge network of legal trails. The riding tends to involve very long climbs (up to 650 metres in one go) and equally long descents. Riding here takes you up high and you should be prepared for any changes in the weather. The new Bikefax guide to NE Wales features some of these routes.

Another epic ride location is the massive Dyfi Forest on the Southern boundary of the National Park. This vast forest has an unbelievable network of trails including nearly 80 kms of old motorcycle enduro routes, but the OS map is not too accurate, so it is a good idea to get some advice on routes and trails from the excellent bike shops in Machynlleth. One thing is for sure: any ride in the Dyfi is an epic, with big climbs and some very technical singletrack and it is unlikely that you will see another rider.

The area around the Conwy Valley and the Carneddau mountains also has some scope for epic rides, with numerous bridleways penetrating the high hills, but be prepared for a bit of pushing and carrying, but the technical and often rocky descents make up for it. With a bit of careful planning, and some use of roads to link bridleways, some truly epic rides can be pieced together. Be warned though, the riding takes you into a very wild and remote area; make sure you are well prepared.

### Classics

A classic ride is one with everything any mountain biker would ever want. Great views, a feeling of adventure, varied trails, fun riding and great descents. True classics are few and far between, but Snowdonia has more than its fair share. You will need a map for most classic rides in Snowdonia but that just adds a bit of spice!

The classic ride in Snowdonia is Snowdon itself. It’s a great ride but please, please, please make sure you stick to the access agreement. If you don’t you could be the last person to get to ride it, and to be honest it is better to do it either very early in the morning or late in the evening (as per the agreement) to avoid the hoards of summit bound walkers. There are other classics, which are arguably better, such as the awesome Pont Scethin ride in the Southern Rhinog mountains, with its superb singletrack in wild surroundings and seemingly endless descents. The circuit of the Mawddach estuary from Dolgellau is another true classic with brilliant technical riding in beautiful surroundings and far reaching views out over Cardigan Bay. On the opposite side of the valley is one of the best epic days of all in the shape of the circuit of Cadair Idris, 50kms plus of pure enjoyment.

Two of FC’s waymarked routes have also gained classic status. The Karrimor Trail in Coed y Brenin takes riders on a magical mystery tour of forest road climbs and very





Marin Trail, Gwydyr Forest (Photo: Bike-Far ©)

“ For those in search of a challenge there are some great road routes around the mountains, particularly good are the routes around Snowdon, the Glyderau, Cadair Idris and Llyn Vyrnwy (via both Bala and Llanywchlyn) with their long climbs and speedy descents.

technical rocky singletrack in magnificent surroundings, lots of distance and lots of climbing, coupled with breathtaking views. The other is the Marin Trail in Gwydyr Forest. Long, but easy climbs lead to smooth flowing singletrack descents and great views of the surrounding mountains and lakes. All of these are classic rides that would not be out of place in any mountain bike destination in the world and provide riders with an unforgettable experience.

You can get information on some of these rides from local bike shops or various web sites such as [www.mtbwales.com](http://www.mtbwales.com), [www.bikemagic.com](http://www.bikemagic.com), [www.singletrackworld.com](http://www.singletrackworld.com)

## Waymarked Routes

Since the mid 1990's waymarked mountain bike trails have become commonplace, particularly in forests. Snowdonia can boast some of the very best waymarked trails anywhere in the world and indeed some of those trails have attained classic status (see above) and attract riders from all over the UK, Europe and further afield. Whilst to some, navigating and the sense of discovery are all part of the adventure, others just want to get on with the riding. Waymarked trails let you enjoy the riding without the worry of getting lost. Coed y Brenin has a network of nearly 100km of waymarked trails with lots of very technical and rocky singletrack, which is split into five waymarked routes of different distances. There is something for everyone here, whether you want a big all day ride or a quick blast.

Gwydyr Forest boasts the already mentioned Marin Trail and the soon to be officially opened trails around Penmachno. The beauty of the Marin Trail is that it is possible to do it as one big loop or to shorten it by starting at different points. You can also ride some of the best bits of singletrack more than once by nipping up a forest road back to the top. The Penmachno trails have more of an epic feel about them even though they are waymarked and it is possible to link two shorter trails into one big epic loop with loads of great singletrack. A waymarked route is also being developed in the Dyfi forest to compliment the waymarked rides on bridleways that already exist to the south of Machynlleth. In addition there are two short, but fun routes in Coed Llyn y Garneidd in the Vale of Ffestiniog, which feature some pretty technical riding and short, but tough climbing. Lastly, there is a great family Trailquest (orienteering on a bike) facility at Beddgelert forest, with easy, predominantly flat riding on forest roads in stunning surroundings.

All of these routes are circular, are clearly waymarked and have parking and information at the trailhead. Information on all of the FC sites is available at [www.mbwales.com](http://www.mbwales.com) or from [www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk). For the other trails try local Tourist Information Centres or local bike shops.

## Blasts

Not everyone can manage to get away for a big all day ride, and for others a quick blast along some fun trails are what it's all about. There are endless opportunities for short intense rides in Snowdonia, particularly in the many forests and woodlands. However your best bet is to head for one of either Coed y Brenin or Gwydyr Forest. Here you can ride for an hour or two and hardly leave singletrack and get enough endorphins coursing through your veins to last a whole week. For a quick blast you can't do better than the Red Bull Trail in Coed y Brenin, which seems to have more downhill than uphill (!) and some really intense rocky, rough and tumble singletrack. The MBR at Coed y Brenin also provides a great blast for the fit, in a similar vein to the Red Bull but longer and slightly less technical. The Sport Trail at Coed y Brenin also offers a great short-ish ride and is a good introduction to the kind of riding the forest has to offer.

As already mentioned it is possible to tailor the Marin Trail at Gwydyr Forest to suit your ability, fitness or timescale and a quick blast on the best bits of singletrack is more than a possibility here. Once you get to know other areas such as the Vale of Ffestiniog, Beddgelert and Dyfi Forest, putting together a short ride of your own choosing ▶



Bwlch Maes Gwm (AKA Telegraph Valley)  
(Photo: Bikefax ©)

“ There is a longstanding agreement between the Snowdonia National Park Authority and the mountain biking community over access to Snowdon and its bridleways.

should be no problem at all; just make sure you only ride on trails that are both legal and appropriate. Finally, the beauty of many of the short blasts available is that they can be done of an evening and are more often than not very rideable in the worst of weathers, especially the trails at Coed y Brenin and Gwydyr. They also make great night rides with good lights, but do be CAREFUL!

## Cycling and Touring

The area has a developing reputation for tours, both of the ‘day out on a racer’ and cycle touring variety. This is fully justified given the good network and variety of roads that it is possible to encounter in the area.

For those in search of a challenge there are some great road routes around the mountains, particularly good are the routes around Snowdon, the Glydererau, Cadair Idris and Llyn Vyrnwy (via both Bala and Llanywchllyn) with their long climbs and speedy descents. If you fancy something a little easier, then Anglesey has an amazing network of quiet, flat (ish) country roads. These have exceptional views particularly near the west coast and it is possible to link into the stone-age monuments scattered all over the island. Another area with rolling hills, quiet roads and great views is the Llŷn Peninsula, the further west you go the quieter and more wonderful it gets.

If you feel like a ‘roadie’ challenge then why not try the following route on a fine day:

From Bala follow the main A494 to Dolgellau and continue on the A493 along the coast towards Tywyn. A short way before you reach Tywyn however you need to turn left in the village of Brynryg to connect with the B4405 which leads up the Tal-y-Llyn valley before bearing left on the A487 towards the first of the big climbs up to the Tal-y-Llyn pass. Drop down the far side as far as the Cross Foxes Hotel where you bear right onto the A470 and the second big climb. Drop down the far side of the col to arrive a few kms later in the village of Dinas Mawddwy, from there take a minor road left, signposted Llanydawddwy.

This peaceful and undulating road keeps you working until you reach the mother of all climbs up towards Bwlch y Groes. This is a real tester. Just before the summit of the hill bear right on another minor road that leads over to Llyn Vyrnwy. Make the most of the long easy descent before turning anticlockwise around the lake, crossing the dam and heading back up to the lake head. At that point, turn right onto the minor road leading to Rhos-y-Gwaliau and Bala, via the fourth and final long climb. Another long easy descent leads into the village before a final short but sharp climb allows you to drift easily down into Bala. At 137km and 3300m of climbing it is a tough, but stunning day out.

In terms of touring with panniers etc. there is an almost limitless amount of choice. All of the mountain areas have good road networks, there are YHAs and B&B’s all over the place and the scenery is consistently stunning. Some choice areas are outside of the main mountain areas. Places like the Llŷn Peninsula, Mawddach and Dyfi Valleys, Bala and Llyn Vyrnwy, and the area south of Machynlleth will surprise those who have not yet taken the time to ride there.

## Recreational Routes

There are a number of off road recreational routes dotted around the place interspersed with road sections of the National Cycle Network routes including:

**The Mawddach Trail** - possibly the most beautiful route in the country following the estuary from Barmouth to Dolgellau via the railway bridge.

**Llyn Trawsfynydd** - a short section of off road passing the nuclear power station. This can be used as part of the National Cycle Network (NCN).

**Lon Eifion** - an excellent way of getting safely between Caernarfon and Brynccir, thereafter joining the National Cycle Network leading to Criccieth, Porthmadog and then Dolgellau. ▶



(Photo: Bike-Fax ©)



Biking above Betws (Photo: Bikefax ©)

**Lon Las Menai** - the safe way of getting from Caernarfon to Port Dinorwig or Felinheli. From here you can join the NCN leading on to Bangor, Holyhead and Llandudno.

**Lon Las Ogwen** - a great route leading from Bangor up into the Ogwen Valley, part off and part on road.

**Lon Las Ardudwy** - an on road route signposted from Porthmadog to Barmouth, using minor roads where possible, but not exclusively.

**Lon Peris** - a very short section of off road leading from Llanberis to Penllyn, great for a short trip with young kids to the remarkable viewpoint at the bottom of Llyn Padarn.

## Useful Websites

**www.mtbwales.com** - a riders' website with lots of information on routes and trails, including downloadable trail videos.

**www.mbwales.com** - the WTB sponsored mountain biking website, very comprehensive but a little hard to navigate. Route descriptions, some downloadable gps info and links to digital mapping sites.

**www.bike-fax.com** - this north Wales based company is the new kid on the mountain biking publishing block. Check their website for up to date trail information, downloadable routes, area guides and access updates.

**www.bikemagic.com** - online magazine covering events, gear, lively forum etc.

**www.singletrackworld.com** - online mountain bike magazine aimed primarily at hardcore trail riders, with lots of information on 'Epic' and 'Classic' rides.

**www.offroadadventures-online.com** - plenty of route descriptions from all over the UK. Machynlleth is well covered, but the rest of North Wales is sadly lacking.

**www.nwmba.demon.co.uk** - home site of the North Wales Mountain Bike Association, route descriptions, news, gear etc.

**www.ctc-wales.org.uk** - home of the Cyclists Touring Club in Wales, information on events, and links to the CTC homepage for those wishing to join.

**www.mach-off-road.org.uk** - basic information on the Mach 1,2,3 routes.

**www.mtbbritain.co.uk** - a number of useful descriptive route write ups giving a good flavour of what to expect on the ground.

**www.forestry.gov.uk** - Forestry Commission website with info on official FC mountain bike trails. A little hard to navigate.

**www.cyclingnews.com** - online cycling magazine.

## Magazines

There is a plethora of bike magazines that all have associated websites and try to appeal to a different (but the same) audience, you decide!

Singletrack magazine

Mountain Biking UK (MBUK) magazine

Mountain Bike rider (MBR) magazine

What Mountain Bike (WMB) magazine

Cycling Weekly magazine

Cycling plus magazine

“ In Snowdonia mountain bikers have a huge variety of riding available to them, to which they have unequalled access.





(Photo: Bikefax ©)

## Guides

**The Best Mountain Bike Trails in Snowdonia / Y Llwybrau Beic Mynydd Gorau Yn Eryri** (Bikefax, Sue Savege, Dafydd Davis, Paul Barbier, 2005). This full colour bilingual guide contains over 20 rides ranging from big epics, some of the very best classics, and awesome blasts in the area, all with specially drawn maps, and heaps of information on bike-friendly local services.

**The Best Mountain Bike Trails in North East Wales / Y Llwybrau beic mynydd gorau Yng Ngogledd Ddwyrain Cymru** (Bikefax, Sue Savege and Tony Griffiths, 2005). Offers 24 routes throughout the Berwyn Mountains, including a 73 km circuit around Berwyn Fawr for expert riders and 'The Lawnt' a must for those who enjoy fast and technical descents. Additional features included on the CD-Rom for this guide include, GPS route files which can be downloaded as text files for use onto your GPS (any current make or model) and TrackLog files for those who like to plan their day out on an OS style-map.

**Mountain Bike Guide, Mid-Wales and the Marches** (Ernest Press, Jon Dixon, 1998). Lots of rides delivered in the classic style.

**Wales - Ride your Bike Series** (Haynes Books, Steve Thomas, 1996). 19 rides all over Wales in a small spiral bound format.

**Great Cycle Routes: Wales and the Borders** (Crowood Press, Jeremy Evans, 1996). 26 routes all over Wales; quite a lot of road sections, but a good read.

**North Wales Mountain Bike Guide** (The Ernest Press, Pete Bursnall, 1995). Adventure routes only, no coverage of the formalised forest rides.

## Leaflets

There are a number of good leaflets to the organised and forest areas including Coed y Brenin, Gwydyr and Mach 1/2/3 - details in the main text, available from Tourist Information Centres (TICs) local to the forest.

The WTB's Essential Guide to Mountain Biking in Wales is a useful pocket sized guide to the whole country giving broad information on places to ride. Available from the WTB on 08701 211 252 and [www.visitwales.com](http://www.visitwales.com) Gwynedd County Council has produced a leaflet to the Recreational Routes in Gwynedd. This is available from local Tourist Information Centres.

## Maps

The areas covered by the 'Explorer' series, 1:25,000 (4cm to 1 kilometre) OS maps in this corner of Wales are:

Snowdon - OL 17

Harlech and Bala - OL 18

Cadair Idris - OL 23

Llwyn Peninsula - 253 (West) and 254 (East)

Anglesey - 262 (West) and 263 (East)

## Access

In Snowdonia mountain bikers have a huge variety of riding available to them, to which they have unequalled access. Take care of the trails, be considerate to other who use them and they will continue to be available to generations of mountain bikers to come.

At one time mountain bikers were not at all sure of where they could and could not ride and this led to some quite severe problems between mountain bikers, landowners, countryside managers and other users of the countryside. Today the situation is clear and mountain bikers have access to certain types of rights of way, tracks and highways, but not to others. ▶



(Photo: Bikefax ©)



(Photo: Bikefax ©)



## Mountain bikers do have access to the following:

### Bridleways

Horses, pedestrians and bicycles have access to bridleways. The surface of a bridleway is the responsibility of the Rights of Way Department of the Local Authority. You can legally ride a bike on a bridleway, but you MUST give way to walkers and horses. Access to bridleways can be restricted by the Local Authority imposing a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).

### Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATS)

These are essentially roads of varying quality with legal access for motor vehicles, horses, pedestrians and bikes. They are the responsibility of the Highways Department of the Local Authority and the Highway Code applies. TRO's can also be applied to BOATS.

### Roads Used As Public Paths (RUPPS)

Essentially as above, but they may initially have been private roads. TRO's can also be applied to RUPPS.

### Unclassified Roads

As for RUPPS and BOATS these are part of the highways network; the Highway Code therefore applies and TRO's can also be implemented.

### Forest Roads

Unless otherwise stated, mountain bikers have open access on to FC forest roads, but FC bylaws apply.

### Permissive Routes

This is where a landowner has granted access on to a specific route or trail. The landowner has the right to close such trails at any time.

## Mountain bikers do not have access to the following:

### Public Footpaths

It is a criminal offence to ride a bike on a public footpath, unless permission has been granted by the landowner.

### Private Land

Mountain bikers do not have access to land in private ownership unless granted by the landowner.

### Other Access Land

This is land where de-facto access for walkers is permitted. Mountain bikers have no right of access on to this land

### National Trust Land

No access for bikes, unless specifically stated.

### Crown Common Land

It is a criminal offence to ride a bike on Crown Common Land, unless permission has been granted.

## Snowdon Access Agreement

There is a longstanding agreement between the Snowdonia National Park Authority and the mountain biking community over access to Snowdon and its bridleways.

All bridleways leading to the summit and the Cwm Llan bridleway are out of bounds to cyclists between the hours of 10am & 5pm from the 1st of May to the 30th of September. The Maesgwm or Telegraph Valley route is unaffected by the agreement.





*(Photo: Bikefaar ©)*

## When you come to Snowdonia to enjoy the trails please keep the following in mind:

- ALWAYS tell someone where you are going and what time you expect to get back.
- ALWAYS ride with consideration for other trail users, especially horses and walkers.
- Keep to roads/tracks and avoid riding on open hillside – this will help to prevent soil and vegetation erosion.
- Take your litter home.
- Close Gates and do not damage walls, fences or hedges.
- Ride with care – it might be a long way back to the car if you hurt yourself.
- Carry a small first aid kit and know how to use it.
- Make sure you are prepared for changes in the weather, especially if you are going up high (i.e. take a waterproof, a spare top and a space blanket or bivi bag).
- Carry some food and plenty to drink.
- Carry basic tools and spare parts such as inner tubes, pump, puncture repair kit, cables and a multi tool, a chain tool; some gaffer tape and a couple of zip ties are also useful.
- Make sure your bike is in good condition before you set off.
- Carry a map and compass and know how to use them.
- Most of all though, HAVE FUN!

## Countryside Code:

### Respect – Protect – Enjoy

- Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep your dog under close control
- Consider other people





(Photo: Bikefar ©)



[www.snowdonia-active.com](http://www.snowdonia-active.com)

## Snowdonia-Active website

[www.snowdonia-active.com](http://www.snowdonia-active.com) provides a whole host of information about local activity providers, instructors and guides, accommodation and campsites, outdoor shops and cafes. Check out the Directory, a geographically specific database covering outdoor orientated businesses in the North-West Wales area. The site is host to a whole range of downloadable activity and area guides written by field experts. It also has links to numerous weather forecasting websites.

## Public Transport

Although the Snowdonia area is well served with a modern road network there are many alternatives to travelling by private car. The Snowdonia National Park, the Llŷn Peninsula & Anglesey are criss-crossed with a network of local & regional buses, and rail links. In the northern part of the National Park the special Sherpa bus service connects the most popular walking & climbing areas to adjacent towns and villages.

## UK Public Transport Information

<http://www.traveline.org.uk> gives links to public transport providers. Click on the map for information about coach, bus, rail, air & ferry services for North Wales & beyond.

## Disclaimer

*The writer and publishers of this leaflet accept no responsibility for the way in which readers use the information contained therein. The descriptions and recommendations are for guidance only and must be subject to discriminating judgement by the reader. Advice and training should be sought before utilising any equipment or techniques mentioned within the text or depicted in illustrations.*

*Mountain biking and cycling are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of, and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.*

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## Author bio: Dafydd Davis

*Dafydd has mountain biked and climbed extensively in the UK, the Alps and North America, and has represented Wales in international fell running competitions. He is also a keen surfer. After many years working as an outdoor instructor, Dafydd joined the Forestry Commission in 1995. His work with FC focussed on the development of forests for active recreation, with a particular emphasis on mountain bike trails. Dafydd has been responsible for the development of five dedicated mountain bike centres in Welsh forests and the construction of nearly 300kms of new trails. He has also developed new trail design and construction techniques, which have been widely adopted throughout the UK and further afield. In October 2004 Dafydd left the Forestry Commission to become a freelance consultant specialising in strategic development of trail networks and other outdoor activities.*