

Aberystwyth Weekend

Unfortunately Andy Gilbert couldn't make the tour in the end, so it ended up as just me and Nick Holloway.

Day 1

Nick picked me up and we left Coventry and drove to Bwlch Nant yr Arian Forestry Centre near Aberystwyth where we set off on the 22 mile Syfydrin Black trail. It rained heavily all day and judging by the amount of water on the trail it must have been raining for days before. Despite waterproof jackets, shorts, socks etc nothing kept the rain out and even Nick's fall, body length, into one of the large puddles (see pic) didn't really result in him being any wetter than before.



Nic also suffered a broken chain which resulted in a damaged rear derailleur. He managed to do a temporary fix using a spare chain link and a bit of force on the derailleur, which resulted in all the gears but the largest one being usable.

At the end of the ride we changed into clean clothes in the cafe toilet, where half a cup of water must have come out of each of my so-called waterproof socks. We couldn't help but leave mud and water all over the floor, so we left quickly.

That night Nic did a bit more bike maintenance in his room and managed to straighten the derailleur to a point where he could successfully use all the gears.

Day 2

Today's originally planned ride "Mach 3" in Machynlleth looked like it would be wet according to the weather forecast so we decided to cycle from the Aberystwyth Premier Inn down the 21 mile Ystwyth Trail to Tregaron and back. It proved to be a good decision as the weather was pretty much dry all day. This trail is based on a disused railway line, although there are some steep road sections linking bits of the track together. We stopped for a sunny lunch at Tregaron and had a drink in the Talbot Hotel before heading back to Aberystwyth on the same route.



Day 3

We checked out of the Premier Inn and traveled to Coed y Brenin near Dolgellau, where we set off on the 19 mile Dragon's Back Red route. Somehow the route is actually more technical than Syfydrin Black trail on day 1. About halfway around we stopped for lunch, when a teenager came racing down the fireroad and stopped next to us. He asked if we had a phone he could use but we had not had a mobile signal all day. It transpired that it was his first mountain bike ride and was with his family on a Blue route but got separated and for some reason thought he'd follow the Red route. He had no water, food or any extra equipment at all and was visibly cold in his lightweight shorts and tee shirt. So me and Nick gave him water, something to eat, a spare top and we escorted him on the shortest way back to the visitor centre, where his anxious family was waiting.

