

DROSI BIKES

Cycle the Dee Valley westwards, returning via Horseshoe Pass

This circuit is quite strenuous but rewards the effort with great variety, beautiful countryside, spectacular views and a pub and/or a café to stop at for refreshments en-route.

You start and finish along the Llangollen canal tow path (cycling is allowed, but please respect other users). Thereafter the route is almost completely on minor country lanes (watch out for potholes and loose gravel!). As well as the busyness of Llangollen at the beginning and end, the route crosses or briefly follows busy main roads on three occasions, so extra care is needed.

If you want a less challenging ride, you can return from Carrog the way you came.

Grade: challenging (quite long and very hilly with steep descent from Horseshoe Pass).

Distance (miles/km): 23miles / 37km

Ascent (feet/metres): 2210ft / 670m

Typical cycling time (without stops): approx. 3hrs

Highlights: Llangollen canal, the picturesque Dee valley, the wilder Bryneglwys valley, the Horseshoe Pass, the Eglwyseg limestone escarpment, and views of Dinas Bran castle.

Facilities en-route: the Grouse Inn at Carog and the Ponderosa café on the summit of Horseshoe Pass.

Route description:

Section 1. Drosi Bikes to Carrog (9 miles)

From Drosi Bikes, turn left along Parade Street then left again, on Castle Street, to cross the river bridge. Go right on the main road and turn almost immediately left and steeply up to the canal. Just before the right bend, where the road crosses over the canal, turn left through the café seating area, pass the café and stables, and set off along the tow path.

After 1½ miles leave the tow path to cross the canal by means of bridge 48AW. This will take you up to the B5103 where you turn left. This is the minor road you follow all the way (7½ miles) to the hamlet of Carrog.

If you opt for the easier version of this ride, return to Llangollen the way you came.

Section 2. Carrog to summit of Horseshoe Pass (7.8 miles)

Shortly after passing the Grouse Inn, fork right just before the church in Carrog. This quiet lane takes you round the end of Llantysilio Mountain all the way to the village of Bryneglwys, where there is a community-run shop if you need supplies. On the way (2.6 miles from Carrog) keep straight on at a junction rather than turning left.

As you get to the end of the village, you pass the shop on your right, then turn right into a narrow lane. Follow this for just under ½ mile, turn right, then left at a T-junction. This leads to a busy main road (the A5104) where you turn right and go along it for just ¼ mile, then turn right onto another narrow lane.

This bumpy little lane takes you steeply up to the A542 which you cross, just behind the Ponderosa Café, which is more-or-less at the top of the Horseshoe Pass.

