

Ride: Gower Circuit

Start/finish: Blackpill

Distance: 44 miles (5 hours plus stops)

Terrain: Lots of Gower hills, some off-road and a bit on a beach

Map: OS 1:50,000 Sheet 159 *Swansea & Gower*

The highlight of this ride is the bit along the west coast from Rhossili to Llanmadoc where there is no through road. It is however cycleable on an ordinary bike, albeit pushing it on a road bike (pun intended!)

This ride is a *Gower Cycling Festival* classic. It goes clockwise right round Gower. I have chosen Blackpill for the start/finish but it could be anywhere on the circuit.

Starting from Blackpill follow the coast round Mumbles Head, then up Plunch Lane and wiggle your way through Langland, Newton, Manselfield and Murton to join the B4436 at Northway. Then through Kittle, turn right in front of Pennard Church onto Vennaway Lane and then left onto the A4118. Follow this for five miles to the Oxwich turn off. Enjoy the freewheel down to Parkmill and thole the stiff climb up to Penmaen.

Descend to Oxwich, climb on quiet roads up to Penrice and the high point at Hangman's Cross. Enjoy the view on the descent to the A4118 where you turn right and then left at Scurlage for Rhossili.

Just before the descent to Rhossili the road bends to the left and you will see a track leading down to the meadows above the beach. Take this track. You may need to lift your bikes over a gate to get onto it. It is loose gravel and you would be well advised to wheel your bike where it descends steeply.

Keep straight on across grass where the gravel track swings right. You will come to a gate which again you may have to lift your bike over. The path (pictured near its start) takes you to the Hillend campsite at the top end of which there is a café.

The next stage is to Llanmadoc, with the prospect of tea and cake at the Post Office café. This is the fun section. From Hillend ascend to a cross roads, turn left and descend to the campsite above Broughton Bay. Provided it is not high tide it's a quarter of a mile across the beach to where you can join the road up to Llanmadoc. Normally the sand is firm enough to allow you to ride most of the way, even on a road bike!

From Llanmadoc it's back to Blackpill via North Gower: Cheriton, Llanrhidian, Marsh Road to Crofty, Penclawdd and then cycle path through Gowerton, Dunvant and down the Clyne Valley.



Evening Post: 10 May 2014