

My Favourite Ride 7

Ferryside loop via Llanddarog

A circular ride starting and finishing at Gowerton

Distance 50 miles. Total accent 1,835 feet. Max elevation 600 feet.

Terrain: Lanes, B Roads, some short sections of A Roads. Moderate.

This ride starts at the Station Park and Ride, Gorwydd Rd, Gowerton, SA4 3AJ

Google Plus Code JXX7+H4 Gowerton

From the start at Gorwydd Rd Gowerton, we go left and left again down Station Road and into the Train Station, we go up and over the railway and follow the cycle path through Gorseinon until we get to the end and meet the B4296 near Pontarddulais, we go right and continue to the traffic lights then right again through the village to the next traffic lights and mini roundabout, we bear right and continue up the hill toward Fforest. At the top of the hill, at the Post Office, we turn right onto Llanedi Road B4297, stop here for a re-group and a wine gum. The next few miles are undulating, mainly upwards, until we reach the A483. We turn right onto the A483 and after about a mile we turn left on Coopers Road toward Capel Hendre, when we reach the T junction, we go left up the hill and hope the traffic lights are in our favour otherwise a hill start is needed. Straight on through the lights until a sharp bend to the right, there is a left turn off this bend onto Black Lion Road which will take us all the way to the Five Road junction at Gorslas. We go straight across the junction through Cefneithin and Foelcastell and down into Porthyrhyd. At the junction we go right up the hill on the B4310 as far as the White Heart Inn at Llanddarog then we go left to Cwmisfael. Take care here, there is a very steep descent to a sharp right turn at the junction at the bottom followed by a steep climb up again, continue on this road as far as the next junction at Llangyndeyrn, a right here and then a left at the Church hall. Stop here to read the commemorative plaque, well if you can because it is in Welsh!

The Commemorative stone at Llangyndeyrn



The Protest march 1960



In 1960 the Swansea Water Corporation chose the section of the Gwendraeth Fach valley from Llangyndeyrn up to Porthyrhyd as their preferred (i.e. cheapest) of six possible sites to create a new reservoir. When the inhabitants read about this in the newspaper they immediately gathered together and swore to fight the project to the bitter end. A three-year legal battle - and a week-long

stand-off - ensued, which eventually proved successful and in 1963, faced by mounting public opinion, Swansea Corporation instead opted for an alternative site at nearby Llyn Brienne. While it required more engineering and has a smaller capacity, it meant the destruction of just one derelict farmhouse, as opposed to chapels, homes and 600 acres of fertile farmland in Llangydeyrn. In the grounds of the Church Hall at Llangydeyrn is a commemorative stone and at the centre is a plaque which bears the phrase "MEWN UNDOD MAE NERTH" which translates to "Strength in Unity".

This obviously had an impact for CTC Swansea because two of our favourite rides would not have existed had Swansea Water Corporation been successful with their proposals, there would not have been a Gwendraeth Fach valley and no Llyn Brienne loop for us to cycle in and around.

We follow the road from Llangydeyrn to a T junction at Pontantwn, we go right then we see the start of a big hill, don't panic, we take an immediate left here, no signposts, alongside the Afon Gwendraeth Fach and follow this delightful lane to Llandyfaelog, go past the Red Lion, up the hill by the church to a T junction with the A484, a good place for a wine gum stop here, we go left and immediate right toward Ferryside on an undulating road ending with a fast descent into Ferryside, we stop at the Station and select one of the establishments for refreshments.

Ferryside – some local history to absorb during refreshments.

Originating as a landing-place on the ferry route to Llansteffan, the ferry was first used in 1188. Much of the village developed after 1852, when it became linked to Carmarthen and Swansea by Isambard Kingdom Brunel's South Wales railway. The ferry service across the River Tywi to Llansteffan was discontinued in the 1950s and about 65 years later a new service was launched in 2018 by Carmarthen Bay Ferries using a customized Sealegs Amphibious craft offering 5-10 minute crossings to Llansteffan and 45 minute estuary and 1 hour sunset trips.

Cockles

Ferryside was once at the heart of the cockling industry in Carmarthen Bay, Cockle women from Llansaint could collect about 650 tons of cockles a year, and did so until around 1900. The cockle industry now experiences intermittent bursts of activity when the Ferryside cockle beds are opened to commercial pickers: intensive 'strip-cockling' occurs and several hundred cockle-pickers work the estuary beds with tractors. In 1993, Ferryside saw what are known locally as 'the cockle wars': fights between rival gangs on the beach, notably between gangs from the Gower, Liverpool and the Dee estuary and Glasgow. Because commercial quantities of cockles at Ferryside were rare, there were no licences required to harvest them.¹ In addition to gaining the village rare visibility on the front pages of national newspapers, the cockle wars led to a Parliamentary debate and calls for the beds to be licensed.

Analogue television switch off

On 30 March 2005, Ferryside and Llansteffan became the first areas in the United Kingdom to lose their analogue television signals. Residents of the Carmarthenshire villages - on either side of the River Tywi - voted to switch to digital after taking part in a pilot scheme. After three months, the households were asked if they wanted to keep the digital services or revert to analogue only. More than 85% of households responded and 98% voted to retain the digital services. Hence at the end of March 2005, the analogue channels, BBC One Wales, ITV1 and S4C, radiating from the Ferryside transmitter were switched off leaving BBC Two Wales as the only analogue channel remaining. Viewers wanted to keep this channel because it provided certain programmes that the digital equivalent, BBC 2W, did not show.

We follow the coastal road out of Ferryside to Kidwelly, a short sharp climb to start and we have the reward of some magnificent views over the estuary. On arrival at Kidwelly we go right and cycle through the town and pick up some small lanes taking us through Pinged and eventually joining the A484 at Pembrey. We go left and follow the A484 for a short distance before turning right down to Burry Port Harbour and the B4311, we stay on this road past the harbour until we pick up the wonderful Millennium coastal cycle path NCR4 as far as North Dock Llanelli. We pause here and discuss the options, depending on the weather and how the legs are feeling, we have the option of staying on the cycle path as far as Lougher bridge or taking the faster option of the B4304 which eventually joins the A484 just before Lougher bridge, shortly after crossing the bridge we take a right turn to cross over Pont Y Cob which takes us back to our start point at Gowerton.

The Sealegs Amphibious craft



The Fishing carving at Ferryside

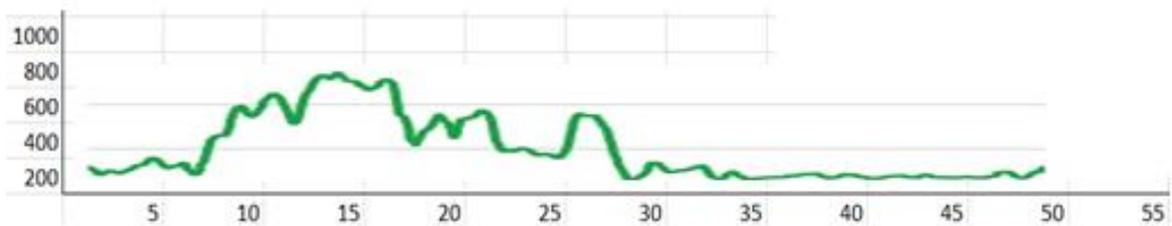


Ferryside beach.





Ferryside loop via Llanddarog
50 miles, 1,835' total accent



To download this route - <http://routes.swanseacycling.co.uk/events/event/gowerton-to-ferryside-via-llanddarog-from-station-carpark-gowerton>