The Cilcain Circuit

This is a mountain bike route of 19 miles in the [Clwydian Range](http://www.clwydianrangeaonb.org.uk/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), a chain of hills just inside the North Wales border near Chester. It crosses the eastern flank of [Moel Famau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moel_Famau%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), heading to the village of Cilcain and back. The riding is on a good mixture of trails with wide forest tracks, muddy and rocky singletrack, fast sweeping descents and technical rock sections. When it's wet there are sections of this ride that can become quite muddy, mainly on the tracks across the ridge of the Clwyds.

1. Start from the Moel Famau lower car park [(GR172611)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/newmap.srf?x=317190&y=361145&z=3&sv=317500,361500&st=4&ar=Y&mapp=newmap.srf&searchp=newsearch.srf). Follow the trail, signed as a cycle route, out the back of the car park almost opposite the entrance barrier. Follow it around to the right, past a junction with a footpath on the left, and straight up to where it meets a fire track on a bend. Climb straight up the fire track. Go straight on at the first junction to a second junction, at the crest [(GR178616)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=317865&y=361627&z=120&sv=317865,361627&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=843&ax=317865&ay=361627&lm=0).

2. Turn left up a short climb then bear left on the fire track to the next junction. Go straight on at the junction and follow the trail as it contours around the eastern slopes of Moel Famau. Keep to the main trail as it climbs and descends through a number of bends. The fire track finishes with a descent that turns into a thin rocky track with bushes on either side. After a short distance the track turns left through a dip before climbing to a gated junction [(GR169633)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=316945&y=363332&z=120&sv=316945,363332&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=843&ax=316945&ay=363332&lm=0).

3. After the gate turn left and climb the grassy trail by the drystone wall on the left. Go through the gate at the top then follow the rutted and boggy section of trail, with the trees on the left. The trail soon becomes firmer before it reaches a crossroad junction, with a steep trail on the left leading to the summit of Moel Famau [(GR163633)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/newmap.srf?x=316340&y=363305&z=3&sv=316500,363500&st=4&ar=Y&mapp=newmap.srf&searchp=newsearch.srf). Go straight ahead along the singletrack through the heather. This track soon bears left up a short, steep climb. At the top continue along the singletrack and descend to where the track jinks right through a drystone wall. Go right then left through the wall then along the grassy track that crosses the hillside, with some rocky sections a little further on. The track then comes to a forked junction. Bear left and cross the muddy and rocky section to a grassy junction directly after, with the choice of a steep climb straight on or a grassy turning to the right [(GR156630)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=315665&y=363041&z=120&sv=315665,363041&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=843&ax=315665&ay=363041&lm=0).

4. Turn right to follow the track just below the line of the ridge, on the left. The muddy and rocky track gently climbs before flattening off and coming to a junction with a track on the right that is accessed by going over a fallen section of stone wall [(GR153630)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=315335&y=363012&z=120&sv=315335,363012&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=843&ax=315335&ay=363012&lm=0). *If you bear left and come to a stile on the ridge you have missed the junction.* Turn right and go over the fallen section of wall, past a post with details of the trails concessional status. A short distance later at the next junction take the right hand track and go straight on to start a great descent into the gully ahead. If it is wet the top section can become a stream. After a few bends the trail bears right for a short, steep and often boggy section over some big rocks. After this the trail reduces in steepness and becomes fast and flowing grassy singletrack. After a while the track goes into a dip by a tree. Directly after the tree go left up the short rise over some rocks then follow the track by the wall on the right. At the end of the wall turn 90deg right and descend the rutted and grassy trail through some steep bends to junction by the stream crossing on the right [(GR154639)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=315505&y=364022&z=120&sv=315505,364022&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=843&ax=315505&ay=364022&lm=0).

5. Turn right and cross the stream using the ford or the plank. After the stream follow the muddy trail ahead and descend all the way to a small gate, just after some steeper bends in a gully. Turn right after the gate and descend the double track. Go straight on through the gates and descend all the way to where the double track ends at a junction with a lane [(GR172647)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=317195&y=364777&z=120&sv=317195,364777&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=526&ax=317195&ay=364777&lm=0). Turn left and follow the lane through a dip. Climb right then, a short while later, left to a junction by the church in Cilcain [(GR176652)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=317600&y=365177&z=120&sv=317600,365177&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=843&ax=317600&ay=365177&lm=0). Turn left then climb the lane through a right hand bend to a junction with a lane on the left, at the end of the houses on the right. Turn left and climb the lane to the houses where the lane gets steeper and climbs through a couple of bends. The lane soon flattens off and straightens out before going past a parking area on the right then, a while later, coming to a crossroad junction [(GR166653)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=316590&y=365357&z=120&sv=316590,365357&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=843&ax=316590&ay=365357&lm=0).

6. Go across the junction then climb the lane straight on. Go past a farm on the right where the lane becomes a dirt track. Bear right then left on the double track through the trees, then immediately after leaving the trees bear right then left again. This leads to a straight section of track that comes to a junction with a byway signposted through a gate with a white gatepost, on the right, just before the track ahead starts descending [(GR161661)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/newmap.srf?x=316165&y=366095&z=3&sv=316500,366500&st=4&ar=Y&mapp=newmap.srf&searchp=newsearch.srf).

7. Go right through the gate for a long, fast and straight descent with a lot of rocks and some mud, it can also be a bit wet. Follow the trail straight on all the way to the bottom where it gets really rocky, before finishing with some muddy double track ruts. Follow the ruts through a couple of bends to the next junction [(GR171671)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=317165&y=367149&z=120&sv=317165,367149&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=526&ax=317165&ay=367149&lm=0). Turn right and follow the double track to a gate ahead then turn left along the singletrack. Follow the muddy and rooty singletrack through some bends between the hedges before descending more steeply through the trees to a junction by a house on the right. Go straight on and descend the steep gravel double track to a junction with a road at the bottom [(GR177672)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=317765&y=367204&z=120&sv=317765,367204&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=526&ax=317765&ay=367204&lm=0).

8. Turn right and follow the road to an open junction with a road on the left. Go straight on and climb the road past the next lane on the right to a crossroad junction, with a house on the right that has a well-kept hedge [(GR177660)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=317675&y=366027&z=120&sv=317675,366027&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=843&ax=317675&ay=366027&lm=0). Turn right, following the brown sign for the viewpoint, and climb the lane to the next road junction, just after a right bend. Turn left and continue climbing. Go straight on at the next junction, for the steepest part of the climb, to the previously visited crossroad junction [(GR166653)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=316590&y=365357&z=120&sv=316590,365357&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=843&ax=316590&ay=365357&lm=0).

9. Go straight on and continue up the now gentle climb. Descend to a junction in a dip with some tracks on the right and bear left to stay on the tarmac. Climb to a farm on the left and continue straight on, where the lane changes to a rocky double track [(GR160651)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/newmap.srf?x=315995&y=365120&z=3&sv=315995,365120&st=4&ar=Y&mapp=newmap.srf&searchp=newsearch.srf). Follow the track ahead and climb for roughly 1mile, going through a gate on the way up. Eventually the track comes to a junction with the three trails on the left, at the end of a drystone wall on the left, just before reaching the ridge of the Clwydian Range [(GR146642)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=314665&y=364187&z=120&sv=314665,364187&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=843&ax=314665&ay=364187&lm=0).

10. Turn left then follow the right hand singletrack, a concessional bridleway, and climb into the heather. At the following vague junction bear right up a short, tricky climb over some rocks to the next junction. Turn left and keep to the trail that follows the direction of the ridge, on the right. After going through a couple of bends the trail goes through a dip then up an increasingly steep climb. At the top the trail generally bears right and goes through some undulations before finally descending and bearing left to a previously visited junction [(GR153630)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=315335&y=363017&z=120&sv=315335,363017&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=843&ax=315335&ay=363017&lm=0).

11. Turn right and retrace your wheel tracks to the junction at the fallen wall directly after [(GR156630)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=315670&y=363035&z=120&sv=315670,363035&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=526&ax=315670&ay=363035&lm=0).  Go over the rocks then turn left and follow the muddy and rocky track in the direction of the ridge, on the right, to the previously visited junction with a stone wall ahead and steep climb on the right [(GR156630)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=315665&y=363041&z=120&sv=315665,363041&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=843&ax=315665&ay=363041&lm=0). Turn left and cross the rocky and muddy area before following the track ahead up a gentle climb across the hillside. Continue retracing your wheel tracks and jink right then left up through the gap in the drystone wall then climb over the small rise before a steep, twisting descent through the heather. Continue along the trail all the way back to the crossroad junction below the summit of Moel Famau by the start of the trees on the right [(GR163633)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=316345&y=363312&z=120&sv=316345,363312&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=526&ax=316345&ay=363312&lm=0).

12. Go straight on across the junction and descend the track that soon becomes rutted and boggy, with the trees on the right. At the far side of the trees go through the gate ahead then descend the fast, grassy track all the way to the bottom, going past the gated track on the right halfway down that you previously came out of. After a while the descent goes through a left then right bend where it gets rutted and steeper. Go straight on through the gate at the trees then descend through the wood to a junction at the bottom [(GR177637)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=317705&y=363762&z=120&sv=317705,363762&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=843&ax=317705&ay=363762&lm=0).

13. Turn right and follow the muddy double track straight on through some gates, then past a farm on the left. Continue ahead along the track, which eventually passes a farm on the right before descending a broken concrete track that ends at a junction with a lane [(GR184634)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=318380&y=363467&z=120&sv=318380,363467&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=843&ax=318380&ay=363467&lm=0). Turn right and climb the lane to a junction by a house, below on the left [(GR179629)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=317960&y=362972&z=120&sv=317960,362972&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=526&ax=317960&ay=362972&lm=0). Take the rutted double track straight on and follow it to a gate. After the gate descend ahead to a ford then on the other side bear left up a short, loose climb. At the top descend gently down the double track to a gate. Go through the gate then descend the double track straight on to a junction with a track on the right. Go straight on down the grassy, rutted track that follows the line of trees on the left. At the bottom go straight on through the gate and across the ford then over the muddy grass to a gate leading into the forest [(GR174625)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=317460&y=362557&z=120&sv=317460,362557&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=843&ax=317460&ay=362557&lm=0).

14. After the gate follow the track left and climb through the trees of Clwyd Forest to a right hand bend at the top. Follow the track right and descend to a junction [(GR176621)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=317625&y=362172&z=120&sv=317625,362172&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=843&ax=317625&ay=362172&lm=0). Turn left and follow the track up the next climb. Bear right up this track and go past all the tracks on the left and one on the right, to the junction at the top [(GR178616)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=317870&y=361632&z=120&sv=317870,361632&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=843&ax=317870&ay=361632&lm=0). Go straight on for the last descent. At the junction halfway down take the track on the left and continue descending to the junction on the hairpin bend. Go straight on down the path, then at the junction with the footpath on the right, bear left and return to the car park to complete the ride.