Pont Scethin

This is a 13 mile mountain bike route follows the old winter and summer pack-horse routes in the mountains behind Barmouth, in Southern Snowdonia. The 'Pont Scethin' loop is a classic mountain bike route in the area, with some big climbs, stunning views and technical rocky descending. Although the shortest of the Pont Scethin routes it’s still not an easy undertaking and at highest point you will be very exposed to the elements.

1. Start from the car park with the public toilets by the main road [(GR589217)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=258971&y=321774&z=120&sv=258971,321774&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=544&ax=258971&ay=321774&lm=0). Turn right out of the car park then immediately go past the entrance to the pub on the right to the next junction with a lane on the right [(GR591219)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=259134&y=321894&z=120&sv=259134,321894&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=544&ax=259134&ay=321894&lm=0). Bear right and climb the lane with the houses on the left and trees on the right to a gate straight ahead by the last house. Go through the gate and climb the double track through the trees for some time to a three way junction [(GR597222)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=259757&y=322264&z=120&sv=259757,322264&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=544&ax=259757&ay=322264&lm=0).

2. Turn left and follow between the low stone walls to a junction near the camp site at the edge of the trees. Turn right and climb gently back into the woods on a wide dirt track. At the next junction turn left over the stream and go straight on through the gate. This leads on to another gate at a junction with a lane [(GR597228)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=259720&y=322819&z=120&sv=259720,322819&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=524&ax=259720&ay=322819&lm=0).

3. After the gate turn right on the lane for a gentle climb. At the entrance to the Hall follow the lane right and left then left and right to climb to the previously visited junction [(GR602230)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=260250&y=323074&z=120&sv=260250,323074&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=524&ax=260250&ay=323074&lm=0). Go through the gate on the right to follow the lane above the woods again. Descend past the cottage this time and go straight on through a gate then over the stone bridge. Once over the bridge follow the lane left and climb straight on to the gate at the top [(GR609225)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=260960&y=322489&z=120&sv=260960,322489&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=524&ax=260960&ay=322489&lm=0).

4. After the gate turn right up the dirt track then go straight on, past a track on the left, to climb a steep grassy and rocky track straight on, following the wall on the right. Continue straight on when the incline reduces soon after and climb the grassy track studded with boulders. The trail then becomes muddy, rutted and rocky, following close to the drystone wall on the right. After a while it descends over a section of uneven boulders to a gate at the bottom of the final steep section of the climb [(GR622206)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=262235&y=320639&z=120&sv=262235,320639&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=524&ax=262235&ay=320639&lm=0). Go through the gate and into a field. Follow the trail as it heads gradually away from the drystone wall on the left. Climb through a couple of loose rocky sections before coming to a gate in a wall on the far side of the field. After the gate the trail becomes steeper and covered in loose rocks, following a gully on the left. It climb gets harder as further up, with a few impossible sections near the top, but it's mostly rideable. The trail eventually levels off and comes to a gate in the drystone wall at the top [(GR627200)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=262710&y=320039&z=120&sv=262710,320039&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=524&ax=262710&ay=320039&lm=0).

5. After the gate descend the rocky singletrack ahead that bears left, the trail on the right is a footpath. This trail starts fast and rocky then drops through a couple of loose hairpins. Go through a gate on the way down, to where the trail ends at a junction with a wide grassy track and drystone wall straight ahead. Turn right and ride a short way to a junction with the rocky double track [(GR636200)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=263655&y=320014&z=120&sv=263655,320014&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=524&ax=263655&ay=320014&lm=0).

6. Turn left through the gate and follow the rocky track as it descends to cross a stream. Go past the boulders and the wide grassy track on the right and climb to a gate. After the gate continue straight on for a muddy, rocky singletrack descent. Go through the gate at the bottom and follow the trail right, keeping to the drystone wall on the right, and climb across the face of the hill. Eventually the trail kicks up to the left and comes to a gate halfway up. After the gate climb to the top and go through the left hand gate in the wall on the right. The trail then bears left and drops through a couple of bends to a junction at a drystone wall, marked by a large stone carved with ‘4M Tal-y-Bont’ [(GR655202)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=265535&y=320232&z=120&sv=265535,320232&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=524&ax=265535&ay=320232&lm=0).

7. Turn left for a loose, rocky and steep singletrack climb. After a short distance go through the small gate and continue up the climb on a less rutted, grassy track that keeps to the wall on the left. After the next gate, where the ground kicks up straight ahead, bear right and follow the wall on the right. At the end of the wall go straight on and climb a few rocky sections to a drystone wall that appears ahead. Bear right and continue climbing the trail to keep the wall on the left. After the next gate the trail bears away from the wall and goes through a section of boulders before coming to gap in a drystone wall ahead (or gate if it’s been fixed). Go straight on through the wall then just before the main trail kicks up take a grassy singletrack on the left. Follow the singletrack to a gate in the wall on the left [(GR646220)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=264595&y=322054&z=120&sv=264595,322054&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=524&ax=264595&ay=322054&lm=0). Go through the gate then turn right for a steep grassy and muddy climb that follows the drystone wall, now on the right. Fortunately this doesn’t last for long before it turns left and flattens off for a traverse across the top of the bowl in the mountainside. If the weather is nice there's a fantastic view of the Mawddach estuary. Near the end of the climb the trail steepens before coming to a gate in the drystone wall at the top [(GR638223)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=263775&y=322404&z=120&sv=263775,322404&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=524&ax=263775&ay=322404&lm=0).

8. After the gate go straight on, past the cairn on the right, to start the descent off the mountain. Initially the track bears right for a fast grassy blast but the lower it gets the more it becomes loose, rocky and rutted. The trail eventually turns left through a hairpin where the boulders soon disappear to be replaced by large uneven slabs. Bear right on these slabs all the way down to Pont Scethin to cross the stream, by the waterfall on the right [(GR634235)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=263455&y=323554&z=120&sv=263455,323554&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=524&ax=263455&ay=323554&lm=0).

9. After crossing the bridge continue straight on for a muddy, rutted and rocky climb. Negotiate the small but rideable bogs on the way to a junction with a wide gravel track [(GR627237)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=262770&y=323704&z=120&sv=262770,323704&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=524&ax=262770&ay=323704&lm=0). Turn left on the track and descend through a few gates. The track then goes through a section of bends, with drystone walls on both sides, that ends with a left hand bend leading on to along straight. Descend through some more gates to a gated junction with a lane [(GR602230)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=260265&y=323064&z=120&sv=260265,323064&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=524&ax=260265&ay=323064&lm=0).

10. After the gate turn left through the next gate to follow the lane along the flat above the woods on the right. The lane soon descends to a house on the left [(GR606226)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=260645&y=322599&z=120&sv=260645,322599&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=524&ax=260645&ay=322599&lm=0). At this point turn right down the marked bridleway for a sweet bit of rocky and rooty singletrack that follows a stream through the woods. On the way down go through a gate, then turn left at the following junction and drop towards the stream. At the next junction stay left to keep by the stream. The trail then bears away from the stream and comes to a junction just after a bench on the right [(GR598223)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=259760&y=322269&z=120&sv=259760,322269&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=524&ax=259760&ay=322269&lm=0).

11. Take the wide track on the right and climb a short way to a junction [(GR597222)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=259757&y=322264&z=120&sv=259757,322264&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=544&ax=259757&ay=322264&lm=0). Turn left and descend the previously climbed double track all the way to the gate at the houses. Go through the gate and descend the lane to the junction [(GR591219)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=259134&y=321894&z=120&sv=259134,321894&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=544&ax=259134&ay=321894&lm=0). Turn left and descend the road back to the car park at the bottom, on the left, to complete the ride.