Mountain Biking
in Lancashire's Forest of Bowland and Pennine Hills.

Two-wheeled Adventures through some of the North West's Grandest Scenery
Introduction
Discover some of the finest mountain biking in the north. Ride Lancashire’s Bowland Fells and Pennine hills. Pedal across untamed moorland, grapple with forest trails or descend into unspoilt valleys. Enjoy hours of exciting trail riding. You will find everything to test your skills here. Looking for an easy route? Go to Gisburn Forest, with its progressively graded trails. As a step up try some of the easier sections of the Pennine Bridleway, such as the spectacular track across Rooley Moor. For a challenge ride the 47 mile long Mary Towneley Loop, part of the Pennine Bridleway. To escape, cross the rugged Bowland Fells on the Salters’ Way, said to be the finest moorland crossing in the country. For a technical challenge try the gritstone routes of Rossendale.

At the end of the day you will find many warm and welcoming pubs and B&Bs to relax in, where you can plan the next day’s ride.

A Note on Shorter Routes
For those just starting out or with younger or less experienced children a couple of locations provide a good starting point at which to introduce yourselves to mountain biking.

Beacon Fell Country Park ~ 01995 640557. You can use any of the tracks with a good, made-up surface within the park but there is a special mountain bike route, the Fellside Trail (2.5 miles, blue waymarkers) set out for you. Summit Fell at 226m (741 feet) gives you great views over the Bowland Fells and the Lancashire Plain. The Bowland Visitor Centre near Fell House Car Park has information (maps of the country park showing trails available), a small cafe, bike rack and toilets.

Leisure Lakes at Mere Brow ~ 01772 813446. 5 miles from Southport. The track itself is only a small part of a large leisure site including a caravan and camping Park, watersports centre, golf range and fishing lake. A charge of £2.50 per adult ( £2.00 per under 16) allows you access to the track for the whole day.
Follow in the tracks of the 2002 Commonwealth Games riders. Climb up from Rivington Country Park through superb scenery with views of beautiful reservoirs to the moors above. Route options go from beginner to expert. Two routes are suggested here but there are endless possibilities. The area is also popular with walkers and horseriders. Please slow down when passing them.

**SOUTHERN LOOP**
1. From Great House Barn head south by Rivington Reservoir to Liverpool Castle where there are a maze of tracks.
2. Use road to Ferndale Avenue south of Rivington & Blackrod High School.
3. Turn left into Green Lane, then follow a classic track which provides a steadily increasing climb to Wilderswood. There are dramatic views all the way.
4. A wide track soon heads across the hillside towards Rivington Pike.
5. At the distinctive Pigeon Tower cut back through the Terraced Gardens on a steep track. Descend into the woods and use some lovely forest tracks for much flatter riding to Rivington Hall Barn then onto pretty Rivington village by road. Return to start or continue on northern route.

**NORTHERN LOOP**
7. At Rivington Reservoir head north by the reservoir. You can also join the northern loop from Great House Barn by going down to the reservoir and turning north.
8. Undulating riding brings you to cross Rivington and Anglezarke Reservoirs by road.
9. Turn right at junction.
10. A nice long, uphill, stony track heralds a very rocky descent to the road.
11. Cross the end of Anglezarke.
12. Take the first bridleway on the left which descends through historic Lead Mines Clough.
13. Through Rivington descend to join the reservoir-side track and retrace your steps home.

**Highlights**

**Rivington Barns**— (Start) Great House Barn is a visitor centre, cafe and rangers centre. Incredible open timber construction inside, some parts of which are original (possibly Saxon).

**Rivington**— Attractive village with church, green and weavers’ cottages.

**The Castle**— Ruined castle - actually a replica of Liverpool Castle.

**Rivington Pike and Pigeon Tower**— Two striking landmarks on the edge of the moors with fantastic views - especially from the top of the Pike (an early 18th century viewing tower). Lord Leverhulme’s Pigeon Tower housed birds downstairs while his wife sewed upstairs!

**Rivington Country Park**— Acres of space to enjoy on the edge of the West Pennine Moors. A highlight is Lord Leverhulme’s terraced gardens.

**Lead Mines Clough**— Cycle through old mineworkings.
Tough both in terms of gradients and surface - though there is excellent signing and mapping and many of the tracks have been upgraded. There are easier sections if you just want a quick, less demanding taster of the whole experience, such as the track over Rooley Moor and Limersgate, linking Hurstwood and Widdop Reservoirs. The Mary Towneley Loop is only a small part of the whole Pennine Bridleway which will stretch 350 miles from Derbyshire to Northumberland when finished. The loop’s scenery is a unique blend of centuries old packhorse trails and newer bridleways crossing wild, open moorland indented by steep sided cloughs and gullies. As a multi-user route expect to meet horseriders and walkers along the way and ride appropriately.

From Holme Chapel climb up to Long Causeway. Head north past reservoirs onto the fine moorland track to Widdop Reservoir. From Gorple Lower Reservoir to the Calder Valley you are on a real mixture of surfaces from tarmac to rough pasture. A steep climb then takes you onto the fantastic Klinshaw Lane / London Road section under Stoodley Pike and to picturesque Mankinholes. Well preserved cobbles lead to the valley bottom follows. After a stiff climb up to Reddish Scout head across to Wargrove Reservoir. Some rough pasture follows towards Broadley. Rooley Moor Road leads to the highest point on the route, Top of Leach. From Stacksteads minor roads lead over Deerplay Moor back to Holme Chapel.

**Highlights**

1. **Gorple Road**– Crossing of Pennines between Widdop and Hurstwood, with splendid views.
2. **Stoodley Pike**– Not directly on the route but a visible landmark from many places along it. Originally put up to mark the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1814 and replaced in 1854.
3. **Mankinholes**– A beautifully situated small village with many 18th century houses and youth hostel.
4. **Rooley Moor Road**– A significant stretch of this wonderful moorland track still has the original stone setts.
5. **Gambleside**– Just off the route by Clowbridge Reservoir is the site of Gambleside, an abandoned mining village.
6. **Cliviger Gorge**– Deep gorge in the Pennines between Burnley and Todmorden. Colo Clough Wind Farm is a promenent feature.

The Mary Towneley loop is named after Mary Townley, who campaigned for the creation of the Pennine Bridleway.
LOOPS 1
Brooding fells and characterful mill towns offer a dramatic change in Rossendale. From Rossendale Town Centre take Bacup Road. The Alan Fishwick Bridleway runs parallel to the road for part of the way. At Waterfoot follow the well-signed Pennine Bridleway. Climb steadily using some great tracks to Clough Bottom Reservoir. From here use another fine moorland crossing and south of Clowbridge Reservoir to the A682. Turn onto Goddshaw Lane, pass the historic Goodshaw Chapel and into Crawshawbooth you join the long, rough track climb to Cribden Hill. The going becomes even rougher through Cribden End Farm as you descend to a very well-made track that passes behind the ski slope. From here thread your way back along minor roads and back to your start point.

LOOPS 2
Follow loop one until Clough Bottom Reservoir but here stay on the Pennine Bridleway and descend to cross the Calder Valley and Cliviger Gorge at Holme Chapel and up a difficult and steep climb to the windfarm. Follow Long Causeway, to a very scenic bridleway through the start of the windfarm and over Black Scout back to the valley bottom. Ascend the south side of the valley by a minor road, which becomes Tower Causeway. Head onto the broad track known as Flower Scar Road and after the A681 join Todmorden Old Road track into Bacup centre. Briefly join the valley bottom by a mini roundabout before climbing out on Booth Road. At Waterfoot rejoin outward route.

Highlights
Rawtenstall— Characterful mill town boasting a steam railway, a herbal health bar and some lovely weavers’ cottages
Bacup— Recognised by English Heritage as the best preserved cotton town in Britain.
Cliviger Gorge— A highly unusual landscape feature. The sides of the upper Calder Valley hereabouts are lined by many tall sentinel-like rock formations formed by the action of meltwater during the last ice age.
Tackle this route as two small loops to get the best out of it. The first mini-loop takes you on quiet roads through the attractive village of Trawden, past Hollin Hall, onto a wide farm track. Meet the Pendle Way and head along a quality track to Coldwell Reservoirs. A scenic road descent, part of the Lancashire Cycleway, brings you back into Trawden, where you pick up the Hollin Hall road and track again.

This time on meeting the Pendle Way head roughly north-east for a superb bit of off-roading. You are soon alongside the ravine of Saucer Hill Clough on some great singletrack, some of it an ancient packhorse route. A new bridge has been built to ease the crossing of the steep Turnhole Clough. From here (at the time of writing at any rate) the riding was rougher and muddier but still with fantastic views. A very rough walled track (boggy in the wet) leads you to an easier track descent to join a tarmac track along the bottom of Smithy Clough and into beautiful Wycoller.

Note: Sections will become part of The Pennine Bridleway in 2005 and be subject to improvement.

**Highlights**

**Wycoller Country Park**~ Once a thriving handloom weaving village, it now has a ruined hall, visitor centre and some beautiful houses. Bridges include the ancient packhorse bridge and the smaller and simpler Clapper and Clam bridges. The cafe is worth mentioning again for its original and hearty menu making an ideal break.

**Boulsworth Hill**~ A dominating feature along much of the route; gritstone outcrops around its summit only add to its brooding presence.
Around Ribblesdale

East of Ribchester road links bring you to a lovely track to Hey Hurst Farm where field sections mean a carry over a narrow footbridge before more field sections to Trough House and a superb quality track to Hurst Green. Quality bridleway leads to Greengore Farm followed by a lovely section alongside woods; gradients are modest here but you’ll still need technical ability on the undulating track.

Meeting the road allows you great views back over Ribblesdale which only get better as you ascend the field bridleway into Longridge Woods before a fairly steep and technical descent on the northern side.

The minor road to Jeffrey Hill has stunning views. At Longridge a short bridleway (waterlogged in winter) and a very minor road lead to a lovely grassland and track section back to Ribchester.

**Highlights**

**Ribchester**– Packed with historic interest, it boasts a Roman Museum, Roman Bath remains and a lovely church.

**Hurst Green**– A quiet village with several nice pubs. Stonyhurst College is just off the route near here and is worth seeing.

**Greengore Farm**– Now a farm, this was once a royal hunting lodge where Henry VII is reputed to have stayed. Camping barn facilities make an excellent mountain bikers’ base.
Salters’ Way and Cross O’Greet

Rightly described as one of the finest moorland crossings in England, the track over Croasdale and Salter Fell is known as Hornby or Salter Fell Road. From Slaidburn a very minor road leads you to the moors where the tarmac surface becomes potholed and increasingly challenging at a bouldery climb onto Croasdale Fell. The track becomes more technical and the surface less firm and predictable as you head across ‘the tops’ before joining a well-made stony track. Eventually a nice, wide grassy section joins the tarmac at High Salter Farm for a great descent over the River Roeburn. Climb over Whit Moor for another great descent into Wray.

Although the return route is largely on tarmac it uses minor roads and a very fast descent just past the Cross of Greet on the Lancashire Cycleway to cross the River Hodder and return to Slaidburn.

Note: Much of this route is very isolated and you should make doubly sure your bike is in good working order and that you have a pump and spare tube as there are no cycle shops en-route.

**Highlights**

**Slaidburn**—Isolated and beautiful moorland village of stone houses. Boasts the historic Hark to Bounty pub where Forest Law was once dispensed in a courtroom. It does accommodation as does the Youth Hostel opposite. The Heritage Centre cum tearoom is worth a look.

**Three Peaks Views**—This very famous area of the Yorkshire Dales is visible on a clear day from Salter Fell.

**Wray**—Another lovely stone village with the George and Dragon Inn at its heart.
A great place to learn off-road skills. Ease yourself into mountain biking on the short loop or for a short step up try the medium loop. Both pass through gently rolling scenery amidst woodland, with views across Stocks Reservoir.

The longest route will take you past Martin’s Laithe Shelter - useful in wet weather - and near the highest pint of the route close to Whelpstone Crag. All routes are individually waymarked to help with navigation. There are no highlights as such directly on the route - just drink in the whole atmosphere of the forest air and great views.
**Mountain Biking**

**Chipping and Dunsop Bridge**

**LOOP 1**
The track to Hareden on the Trough of Bowland road across the shoulder of Mellor Knoll then through Lower Fencewood must rank of one of the most varied and technical in Lancashire. From Dunsop Bridge follow minor roads before taking the bridleway. There's some nice singletrack through the conifers which leads to a series of superb dips and climbs on a pretty rocky track with big views across the Hodder Valley. After spectacular vistas up the Trough of Bowland, there's a great descent to Hareden. A tricky section but almost entirely rideable in the dry.

**LOOP 2**
The track over Stanley Hill from Chipping to Lickhurst is less challenging but has great views and the challenge of a ford (stepping stone option). The remaining off-road section over Knot Hill is the easiest section but still involves a nice woodland ford (can be slippy) and some rocky sections. A route easily tackled from either Chipping or Dunsop Bridge.

**Highlights**

1. **Dunsop Bridge**—A real ‘honeypot’ village on summer weekends, with visitors attracted by the green, duck-filled banks of the River Dunsop. Look in the local phone box to see the village's claim to fame!

2. **Chipping**—A truly beautiful Bowland village. Three traditional pubs, and many ancient buildings line its narrow and very atmospheric streets.

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**Distance**

- Off-road: 5.5 miles/9 km.
- MEDIUM/HARD distance: 14 miles/22 km.

**Start**

- Dunsop Bridge or Chipping (free car parking at both).

**Grade**

- MEDIUM/HARD - Although there is a fair proportion of roads they are quiet and the tracks are real classics with some great technical riding. Height climbed: 563 metres.

**Duration**

- 3-4 hours.

**Map/Guide**

- OS Landranger 103, Blackburn & Burnley.
- OS Explorer OL41, Forest of Bowland/Ribblesdale.

**Information**

- Clitheroe TIC, 12-14 Market Place, Clitheroe. (01200) 425566.

**Getting there**

- Dunsop Bridge is on Bowland Transit routes B10 and B14. Chipping is on routes B11 and B12. All their buses are equipped with bike racks. Call (01200) 429832 for more details or see www.bowlandtransit.co.uk. The buses link to Preston and Clitheroe train stations.

**Refreshments**

- Cafés at Dunsop Bridge & Chipping. Chipping has three pubs.
An exciting new project, the first phase was launched in 2004, and aimed at mountain bikers, horseriders and ramblers. This 28 mile/45km route uses many of the tracks detailed in this booklet to make an epic ride or walk from the Lune Valley in the north, over the Bowland Fells, to picturesque Chipping. The whole route is specially waymarked and several miles of new, concessionary bridleway has been created specifically for it and many more parts improved with drainage works and signing made from local sustainable woodlands. A real day challenge, you can also split it for a more leisurely two or three day jaunt across some of the county’s most wildly beautiful countryside. An increasing number of farm B&Bs are springing up along the way and there is a Youth Hostel in Slaidburn. For a leaflet and more info contact Lancashire Countryside Service on (01772) 534709 or e-mail countrysideservices@env.lancsc.gov.uk.
Mountain Bikers’ Code of Conduct

Bridleways ~ open to cyclists but you must give way to walkers and horseriders.

Byways ~ usually unsurfaced tracks open to cyclists. As well as walkers and cyclists you may meet occasional vehicles which also have a right of access.

Footpaths ~ no right to cycle exists. Look out for posts from the highway or waymarking arrows (blue for bridleways, red for byways and yellow for footpaths).

Open land ~ on most upland, moorland and farmland cyclists normally have no right of access without the express permission of the landowner.

Pavements ~ cycling is not permitted on pavements.

Designated cycle paths ~ look out for designated cycle tracks and routes which may be found in urban areas, on Forestry Commission land, disused railway lines or other open spaces. Cyclists must adhere to the Highway Code.

Follow the Countryside Code.
This is an annotated version - for full details see www.countrysideaccess.go.uk

- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work
- Guard against all risk of fire
- Leave gates as you found them
- Keep dogs under control
- Keep to rights of way across farmland
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone
- Take your litter home - littering is a criminal offence
- Help to keep water clean
- Protect wildlife, plants & trees
- Drive with care on country roads
- Make no unnecessary noise
- Check weather forecasts

Safety

- Ensure that your bike is safe to ride and prepared for all emergencies
- You are required by law to display working lights after dark (front and rear)
- Always carry some form of identification
- Always tell someone where you are going
- Learn to apply the basic principles of first aid
- Reflective materials on your clothes or bike can save lives
- For safety on mountains refer to the British Mountaineering publication Safety on Mountains
- Ride under control going downhill as this when most serious accidents occur
- If you intend to ride fast off-road it is advisable to wear a helmet
- Particular care should be taken on unstable or wet surfaces
Lancashire
~ a Mountain Biker’s Paradise

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Rossendale~
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Gisburn Forest~
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Chipping to Dunsop Bridge~
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The North Lancashire Bridleway~
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