

MOUNTAIN BIKING IN HAWKSHEAD

by Liz Flavell



Cat on Black Route by Steve McDonald

On a sunny weekend in May, AAC(UK) mountain bike leaders, Dan Humphreys and Damian Tow introduced ten intrepid mountain bikers to some fantastic trails in Grizedale Forest, Hawkshead. From the Classic Three Witches descent to gnarly climbs round Coniston water, the weekend had it all!



After meeting fellow adventurers on Friday evening, we had a leisurely start on Saturday. This rapidly sped up as we left Hawkshead, riding out of town up on to Hawkshead Moor where we started with an easy trail. Things quickly got steep, sharp and rocky both up and down. My tubeless tyre goo failed, leaving Tim and I with three punctures between us! The others amused themselves on something steep above Grizedale whilst, with Dan's help, we battled with tyre levers. Down a steep trail we met the team at the Forest Centre, where Tim spent his life savings on new inner tubes and Ed reduced my scar count by removing some pedal studs.

Damian showing drop off skills in Grizedale Forest! by Steve McDonald

Up past Breasty Haws on a very technical trail, we had to walk - some more than others! We all cycled more steep rocky trails, before taking some well earned respite in a lakeside café for tea and cake near Sawrey. We then crossed the base of Esthwaite Water onto the Claife Heights for the final push, before heading back to the Hostel, concluding 18 miles of fantastic trail riding!



Welcome café stop on Esthwaite Water by Steve McDonald

After a superb meal at the Sun Inn and a good night's rest, we got away quickly on Sunday. Up into Grizedale Forest, speedily heading south to the bottom of Coniston Water, again via Breasty Haws, where Mike cleverly found a route up the technical bit. We stopped for some awesome views up towards the Coniston and Helvellyn ranges. More long rocky descents followed, before we stopped at a drop off while Dan and Damian demonstrated how to do it. While most avoided it, Tim boldly tried but, with one nose plant later, we retreated to Esthwaite whilst the others went for Lakeside tea. An amazing weekend thanks to Dan and Damian for getting us lost and found, Bex for being awesome to follow, and Steve for the fabulous photos.

The next mountain bike rides will take place the AGM weekend, on November 2-3, around Matlock in the Peak District. If you have the skills to become a mountain bike leader, AAC(UK) training grants are available to help you achieve this: see <https://aacuk.org.uk/x-mountain-biking> The MTB Übungsleiter course is also running for those who would like to lead mountain bike tours in Austria. The Club has members completing the course this year, so look out for Austrian MTB tours soon!