

Another ride from Inverness to Glasgow, this time mostly off road, awesome!! It didn't require nearly half as much planning as TransScotland, the northern half is my playground and I managed to fit in a midsummer recce from Rannoch station to Bearsden with Chris and Tim.

Saturday morning was a rough start, I hadn't kept any food down that morning until Invermoriston, I didn't even try cycling some of the climbs on the GGW, but by the time I had left Fort Augustus I had eaten a double snickers, a couple of chipolatas (recent revelation for loads of fat, flavour and little space...), and pitta bread rammed with as much egg mayo as I could, all the energy needed to spin up the Corrieairack.

Picture 1: Summer's day at the top of the Corrieairack



The ride up was hot, I was prepared for midges and a cold night but not for blazing sun, on the final push for the top I imagined jumping in the Pattack before entering Ardverikie, that thought had worn off when I realised that the 3rd segment required a swim through a very swollen lochan Na H-earba!

Picture 2: lochan Na H-earba: The route goes through here!



Riding to Loch Ossian was stunning, the sun was setting behind the grey corries and a perfect half moon high over Loch Ossian, Scotland certainly delivered the perfect setting!

Picture 3, 4 & 5: To Loch Ossian YH - awesome backdrops!









At the youth hostel a bed had become free so I took it, I lasted an hour in the dorm room before going out to sleep outside under the stars - someone was snoring really loudly. I had overheard the warden warning John about choice of bivy spot to avoid being trampled by the pet stag 'Charlie' - not surprisingly I didn't really sleep. From my bivi I star gazed and kept an eye out for large red deer.

Tim, Chris, Robbie, Andy and I were up at 2am for a sharp get away. Before Kinloch Rannoch we entered a sea of freezing fog which chilled me to the bone, so I ate the first of my bacon, cheese and lettuce wraps for good vibes! The ride over BeMoreMike segment was pretty special, with light first appearing in the sky near the top of the climb. From the high point we descended into another sea of freezing fog tinged with pink from the rising sun. We spotted Derek's cold bivy behind the war memorial at the end of that segment.

Picture 6: Into the fog!



Picture 7: Preparing for the segment from Pubil to Killin:



We climbed out of Pubil into the sunshine only to descend into more fog on the other side. By the time I reached Killin I was covered in a layer of frozen fog, so it was time to put on all my layers and find somewhere warm for a 3rd breakfast (at 9am!).

Picture 8: Tarmac for miles!





There was a LOT of tarmac on Sunday - so I was pleased to see a muddy rocky single track stretching out on the last segment, that segment kept me buzzing till the tarmac after the pipeline track before Drymen. Perhaps controversial, but I would say the alternative XDS-5 was a major improvement on the dusty original XDS-5...

Picture 9: Done!



What a ride!