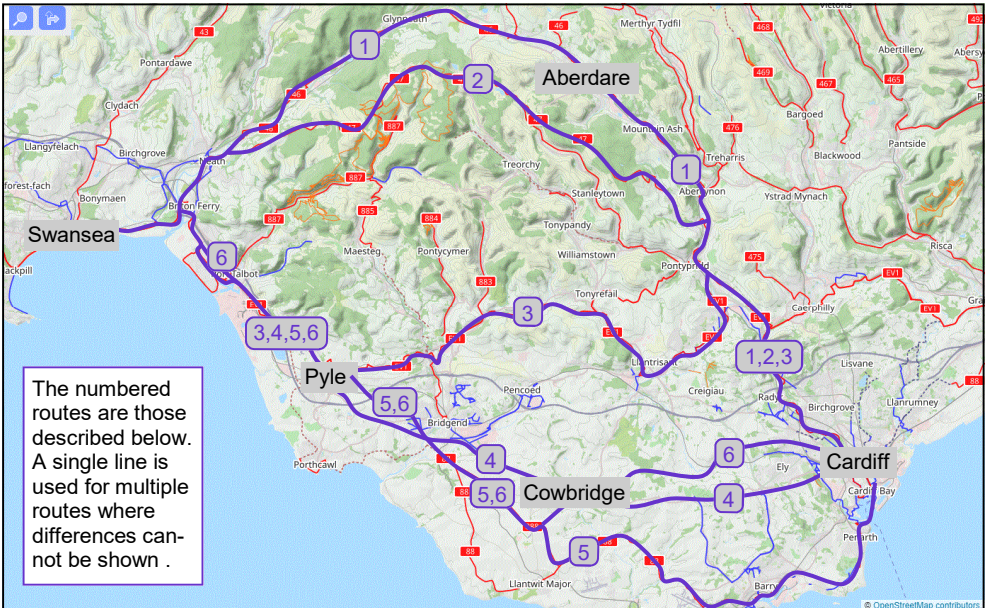


# Cycle routes from Swansea to Cardiff



As can be seen on the map, there are at least six options for cycling from Swansea to Cardiff. They are described going from Swansea to Cardiff:

1. Route 46 via Glynneath, then 478 via Aberdare, then 8 — the longest, but mostly on cycle paths or quiet lanes and a few sharp climbs. A little bit meandering through Aberdare but you also then can grab a train if needed for the last section.
2. Routes 47 and 881 then EV1 – over the top of the mountains, passing near the Bwlch. It's on nutty gravel for the middle third of the route. A challenging ride, particularly if you've got panniers, but great, remote scenery.
3. EV1, 8 – The second half is boggy and involves hiking your bike through farmers' fields. Part of it has been considerably improved: re-routed onto pavements alongside the new roads around Llantwit Fardre and Church Village, but that section is now a joyless ride alongside a 60mph road.
4. EV1 to Pyle, then A48 to Cardiff – This is part of the *Carten*, Cardiff to Tenby ride. It is a route for 'experts'. You have to be comfortable with cars bombing past you at 70 miles an hour on the A48 stretch, although it is quite wide. Coming from the Cardiff direction on the A48, just after Culverhouse Cross (between the Ely and Saint Nicholas) there is a considerable hill which does for a number of the *Carten* riders every time.
5. EV1, back roads Pyle to Laleston, Routes 88, 888, 88, 4 through Barry and Penarth, and then across the Cardiff Bay Barrage. There are reasonably flat mainly off road routes at both ends. The middle section is on country lanes but with fewer climbs and low traffic.

6. Tennant Canal, lanes, A48, 88, Vale back roads – From Port Tennant, the route follows the canal to Jersey Marine, thereby avoiding the traffic where NCR 4 runs alongside Fabian Way. After crossing the bridge, the route follows quiet lanes north of the A48 for about a mile. From there, it follows the A48 through Port Talbot, crossing the M4 at Junction 38 and goes past Margam Park. The A48 is lightly trafficked in this section. Before the railway near Pyle, the route turns left onto Pont George Road and then climbs into Pyle. The route continues along quiet lanes SE from Kenfig Hill, crossing the railway and M4 and, with an awkward crossing of the A48, to Ewenny. After a steep climb out of Ewenny it's downhill for four miles to a crossroads, then NE on the B4270 to Cowbridge. It goes through the village, then north under the A48 to Aberthin. Minor roads through Welsh St Donats and Peterston-super-Ely take you to Cardiff by Llandaff Cathedral. Here you can join the Taff Trail to continue south to the city centre.

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So there's an interesting range of options which depend on how experienced a cyclist you are and whether you're more focused on getting out in the country or getting from A to B. Route 2 is great remote hilly country, and routes 5 and 6 take you through some really nice villages in the Vale. All the routes have a nice last leg into Cardiff - scenic and reflective of the investment and effort that has been made to build good cycle routes there.

All the routes have their flaws. Route 2 is very challenging and more of an opportunist use of some of the nutty gravel tracks created to build wind farms in the hills between Neath and Treorchy. In general the National Cycling Network, through being something that has been created in many parts by volunteers for pennies, is a patchwork, and doesn't have the consistency and simple navigability of the Dutch cycle network, or the Danish one, or the Belgian one, all have which been built with greater government investment.

It would be great to see an investment in linking our two largest cities in Wales for easy walking and wheeling, along with all the connections that would open up in between. The health, leisure and practical commuting benefits of such a route would be huge.

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These descriptions are taken from an article by John Britton to be published in *Wheelrights'* quarterly Newsletter.