



Come rain or shine: all-weather classic.

in a supervisory role. If it comes off, it could kickstart other projects involving volunteer trail groups across England.

Stainburn's primary downfall is that it's a five-mile oasis amid a rights-of-way desert. Jump in a car and within 15 minutes you can be surrounded by great natural trails, but if you pedal out of the forest there's only one possible loop. And frankly it's no classic. Huge sections of road link bridleways that hug the edges of farmer's fields, before a climb that never ends and a vague descent that never dries. Around 10 miles up the B6451 lies Nidderdale and a classic all-weather 20-miler with superb views and well-defined trails that are typical of the Yorkshire Dales — much better.

Locals' promise

When we returned a couple of weeks later to ride it, rain was blowing in horizontally on the back of a howling gale, but underwheel the conditions were as the locals had promised — rocky and hard-packed. But by the time we'd pedalled up to Woodale Scar a patchwork of blue sky had opened up.

A tough climb brought us onto North Moor, but with the wind beating down on our backs, we chipped along the Nidderdale Way's stony doubletrack at road bike speeds. Approaching Lofthouse

there are a couple of options. If you've got the legs, there's a steep singletrack descent into Thrope Farm that brings a welcome technical element to the route. For your smiles however, expect a hefty payback by way of a steep 200-metre road climb onto Backstone Gill. Alternatively, keep your elevation safely in the bank and stay on the ridge. The route finishes off with a whoop-pukered old road and a boulder-strewn tumble into Bouthwaite. And the best bit is, thanks to a couple of water splashes towards the end, you'll finish the ride with a cleaner machine than when you started.

But whether or not you bolt on a loop around Scar House, you owe it to the boys from SingletrackAction to take a look at their work. Enjoy the natural stuff, challenge yourself on the Boulder Trail, then put down your bike and pick up a shovel. Just a couple of hours' work on one of their winter trail-building days will make a difference. If Yorkshire's too far, join one of the many other trail-building crews at work across the country; IMBA UK, Chase Trails, Hamsterley Trailblazers, Redlands, Chopwell, Stirling Bike Club and Singletrack Mind, to name but a few. They are the unsung heroes of the UK scene, and they deserve your support. Think of this as your call to arms. Your country needs you. **mbr**



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