



COME CYCLING



Discovery Rides : Spring and Early Summer 2012

Calling all locals and visitors – Come join us on our rides of

Discovery around Dumfries & Galloway

These lead circular rides are suitable for all ages and abilities and usually take about 3 - 5 hours at an easy pace. Most are free and there is usually no need to book; just turn up at the Meeting Point with a serviceable safe bike, suitable clothing, snacks and drinks, and your camera.

Riders are recommended to check with the ride leader if the weather conditions are in doubt, or if they wish to join a ride at an intermediate point.

Saturday 4th February: By 3 Lochs and Challoch

There's some great scenery north of and around Kirkcowan, and we explore this by way of the lovely 3-Lochs road. After the initial climb from Kirkcowan we drop to visit the impressive Challoch Church, and then into Newtown Stewart for lunch. We leave NS on the riverside path towards Wigtown, but continue along the A714 for a short distance before taking a right and swooping under the old railway bridge, heading for Spittal. Here another right takes us back into Kirkcowan.

Grade and length: Sustained climb up to the 3-loch's road but we get it over with early. About 25 miles, all on road.

Meet: Kirkcowan at **10:15 for 10:30**

Leader: Jim Cowan (01776 830315)

Saturday 18th February: Castle Douglas

A pottering route, firstly in the Urr Valley, visiting, in particular the largest intact remaining Motte in Scotland, a more recent ruin (an abandoned WW2 munitions factory), what was Castle Douglas's port, and some magnificent Douglas Fir. Lunch at 'The Little Treat' in Dalbeattie.

Grade: Fairly Easy, approx. 23 miles.

Meet: Castle Douglas Market Hill main car park/TIC at **10.15 for 10:30**

Leader: Phil Howard (01556 610998)

Sunday 26th February: Caerlaverock WWT Centre – Lunch and Tour

This is a ride in our Nature Rides tradition, in this case accompanied by WWT's Brian Morrell, the Learning Manager at Caerlaverock. We head off along the Nith down to Kingholm Quay and Glencaple with opportunities for bird watching, likely starting with Goosanders at the Whitesands Caul. Lunch will be at the WWT cafe followed by a free tour, with Brian, of some of the hides and features at Caerlaverock. Return is via Bankend and drop down to Dock Park through the Crichton grounds.

Grade: Mostly easy with one long gradual climb on the return leg. About 22 miles - all on road or cycle path.

Meet: Dumfries Whitesands, Devorgilla Br, at **10:15 for 10:30**

Leader: Mike Gray (01387 270995 or 07751 978563)

Saturday 10th March: Ardwell, Sandhead and Port Logan

Another go at this ride, cancelled late last year because of poor weather. Route is of scenic and of historic interest. We head inland from Ardwell to Clachanmore and the inscribed stones at Kirkmadrine Church, where the (ex)owners of the Ardwell estate are traditionally buried. Then hit the coast again and into Sandhead for lunch at the Woodlea tea room. A simple coastal run takes us back down to Ardwell, and then we'll take a jaunt down to Port Logan and a look at the Bay (and the only safe harbour in the Rhins).

Grade and length: Moderate, with a couple of sharp hills. 17 miles approx, all on tarmac.

Meet: Ardwell car park at **10.15 for 10.30**

Leader: Jim Cowan (01776 830315)

Saturday 24th March: Twixt Esk and Annan (and Bruce's Cave)

Our route out of Canonbie crosses the A7 and then climbs to the high road via Solwaybank (though nothing too steep). As we cross between the valleys of the Esk and the Annan there is great moorland scenery and views over the Solway. Return is directly via Chapelknowe (B6357). On the way we'll call by the 15th C way-marker, the Merkland Cross, carved from a single piece of stone. There's a small entrance fee to Bruce's Cave. Lunch will be in Kirkpatrick Fleming.

Grade and length: About 25 miles. One long gradual climb, but we'll take it easy. All cycling is on road or hard surface, but there is a short walk (~ ¼ mile) to the Merkland Cross.

Meet (Rides): Canonbie Village Hall car park at **10:15 for 10:30**

Leader: Mike Gray (01387 270995 or 07751 978563)

Saturday 7th April: Dunscore and Penpont

We set off down the hill and immediately take the 'Dunscore By-pass' to the Wallaceton road and Kirkland. Here we'll take a quick tour of the Cairn Valley graveyard (interesting old headstones) and then take the road to Penpont for refreshments. Leaving Penpont for Keir Mill we pass the birthplace of the world's first pedal bicycle, invented by Kirkpatrick Macmillan. Then it's up a big hill for a great panoramic view over the Nith valley before plunging down into Glenmidge and a roll along the delightful glen. Finally the modest climb back up the hill to Dunscore Church.

Grade: Easy to moderate, but with a big hill in the middle. 18 miles (all on tarmac).

Meet: Church car park in Dunscore at **13:15 for 13:30**.

Leader: Mike Gray (01387 270995 or 07751 978563)

Saturday 21st April: St Ninian's Loop

A ride with a feast of early Christian history and connections. We start out of the historic port of Garlieston and head west to Sorbie Tower before cutting down to Whithorn and refreshments. After taking a look at the Visitor Centre we'll continue south to St. Ninian's Cave (the last part usually walking, with the bikes if the path not too muddy). After regaining the road we swing east to Isle of Whithorn and St. Ninian's Church (that man again). Finally back north along the 'coastal' road to Garlieston.

Grade and length: Moderate. 23 miles (incl the walk down to St Ninian's Cave)

Meet: Garlieston, car park (near the quay): **13.15 for 13.30**

Leader: Jim Cowan (01776 830315)

Sunday 6th May: Portrack Gardens Open Day

We haven't run this one the last year or so, and it's time to visit again Charles Jencks' Garden of Cosmic Speculation (and other delights), open this one day of the year under the Scottish Gardens Scheme (www.scotlandsgardens.org). An easy short ride via Hollywood. On the return we'll take a look at the ruins

of Lincluden College. There's a £6 entrance fee (donated to charities, mainly Maggie's Cancer Caring Centres) and teas are available. There's also a pipe band promised.

Grade and length: Easy gradients. About 12 miles, all on cycle-path or minor roads.

Meet: Dumfries Whitesands, Devorgilla Br at **12:45 for 13:00 (note start time)**

Leader: Mike Gray (01387 270995 or 07751 978563)

Saturday 19th May: Down the Nith Valley

This is by way of a bit of an experiment – we're going to try a combined train/bike ride to maximise the route through the lovely scenery of the Nith Valley in spring. The bike ride itself will start at the station in Sanquhar and proceed across the town to the delightful minor road running south beside the Nith for a few miles before swinging west and over the hill to Drumlanrig Castle. Here we can stop for refreshments and a look into the superb bicycle museum. Thence we pedal into Thornhill and down to Dumfries (station) by Auldgirth, Dalswinton and the Caledonian Cycleway. Somewhat longer than our usual DRs, but a really nice ride, and we will take our time admiring the scenery. **Trains!** Limited accommodation for bikes and they are not bookable on this line, so we'll need to limit Dumfries start riders to a max of 6 – **so pre-booking with the ride Leader is essential.** If we are oversubscribed the 'overspill' option is to make your own way to the start in Sanquhar and get the train back up (there's one at about 18:30 from Dumfries).

Grade and length: Moderate with a few heavy climbs. 32 miles, all on tarmac.

Meet: Dumfries railway Station at 11:45 latest (for 11:54 train to Glasgow – buy your own ticket) **OR**

Sanquhar Station at 12:20 (assuming train on time)

Leader: Mike Gray (01387 270995 or 07751978563)

Spring Fling Rides – 2012. The extended Spring Fling Event this year is being held a little later than normal to take advantage of the Queen's Jubilee holiday long weekend. And in previous years we have had requests from visiting riders to offer rides on more than the one day. In response we are offering 3 rides, two shorter ones on the Saturday and Monday, and a longer club type ride on the Sunday – details below. **Please note that these start a little earlier than normal to allow time for visiting the various studios & workshops.** There's more information about the itinerary on our website (www.dandgcycling.org), and about the Event on the Spring Fling website (www.spring-fling.co.uk).

Saturday 2nd June: Spring Fling Ride – Thornhill to Moniaive

A welcome return to the Moniaive area (SF ride from Shawhead in 2008), though this time coming in from the east and taking in studios on the way. Starting in Thornhill we call by Drumlanrig and Tynron before arriving in the snug village of Moniaive. We expect to visit around 6 studios in total. Lunch will be in Moniaive, where there is a good selection of eating places, and a shop.

Grade: Moderate mostly, but with a big hill between Tynron and Moniaive, which we can walk. The drop into Moniaive is very steep – check your brakes! 18 miles (all on tarmac).

Meet: Thornhill opposite the Co-op, **09:45 for 10:00.** We plan to be back at Thornhill by about 17:00

Leader: Mike Gray (01387 270995 or 07751 978563)

Sunday 3rd June: Spring Fling Ride - Portwilliam, Newtown Stewart and Minnigaff

At 55 miles this ride is outside our Discovery Ride norm but information is included here for completeness.

Grade and length: Moderate to difficult, with one long climb. About 55 miles.

Meet: Wigtown, at the town hall, at **08:45 for 09:00**

Leader: Ted Norfolk (01988 700432)

Monday 4th June: Spring Fling Ride – Kippford and Dalbeattie

An unusual Spring Fling ride in that a good deal of it will be through Dalbeattie Forest (though on the easy paths – nothing too strenuous!). We'll call at Barnbarroch, Dalbeattie (incl Phil Howard's wood turning workshop) and Rockcliffe, and finally along the path from there back into Kippford. Depending on conditions and how busy it is we may walk this final stretch – about a mile.

Grade and length: Moderate. About 17 miles, 8 off road. Wide tyre bikes recommended.

Meet: Kippford, at the car park. **09:45 for 10.00.**

Leader: Mike Gray, 01387 270995 or 07751 987563

Saturday 9th June: Gatehouse and Kirkcudbright

This route takes in part of NCR7, through the grounds of the Cally Palace and rolling countryside before pedalling into Kirkcudbright alongside the Dee estuary. Lunch will be in the Solway Tide. Return is via Telford's bridge at Tongland and Twynholm before looping over Gategill Hill and dropping (steeply) back into Gatehouse.

Grade and length: Moderate but with a few sharp hills. 25 miles, about 2 off road.

Meet: Gatehouse car park (opp. The Mill on the Fleet entrance), at **13:15 for 13:30**

Leader: Ted Norfolk 01988 700432

Saturday 16th June: Borgue

A great favourite, this, as it encompasses such a wide spectrum of our heritage in such a short distance and in such easy terrain! Archaeology, history, a poet, curiosity and a coastal experience!

Grade: Easy. 14 miles (2 off-tarmac).

Meet: Centre of Borgue village at **13.15 for 13.30.**

Leader: Phil Howard (01556 610998)

Saturday 30th June: Red Kite Trail Ride

This ride is deservedly turning into an annual favourite, though this year we are moving the ride to early summer to better take advantage of bird watching opportunities from the general hides! Join us and RSPB's Calum Murray in a route through the woods past Woodhall Loch and down the west side of Loch Ken to the Red Kite Feeding Station at Bellymack Farm, where the kites put on a spectacular display of wheeling and diving. This must be one of the most enthralling readily accessible sights for birdwatchers in Scotland. Note that there is a charge at Bellymack (£2.50), and light refreshments can be purchased there.

Grade: Moderate and one hill. About 12 miles, mostly off road – wide tyres recommended.

Meet: Laurieston village hall at **10:15 for 10:30**

Leader: Mike Gray (01387 270995 or 07751 978563)

For general information on CTC activities and rides in D&G contact Mike Gray (01387 270995) or email [grayjohnmichael -at- aol.com](mailto:grayjohnmichael-at-aol.com). Or see our website www.dandgcycling.org.uk. Please note that adults are responsible for themselves on rides and for children in their charge.

Children 17 and under must be accompanied by a responsible parent or guardian.