Renfrewshire Council
Department of Planning & Transport

CYCLE THERE

10 Cycles around Renfrewshire

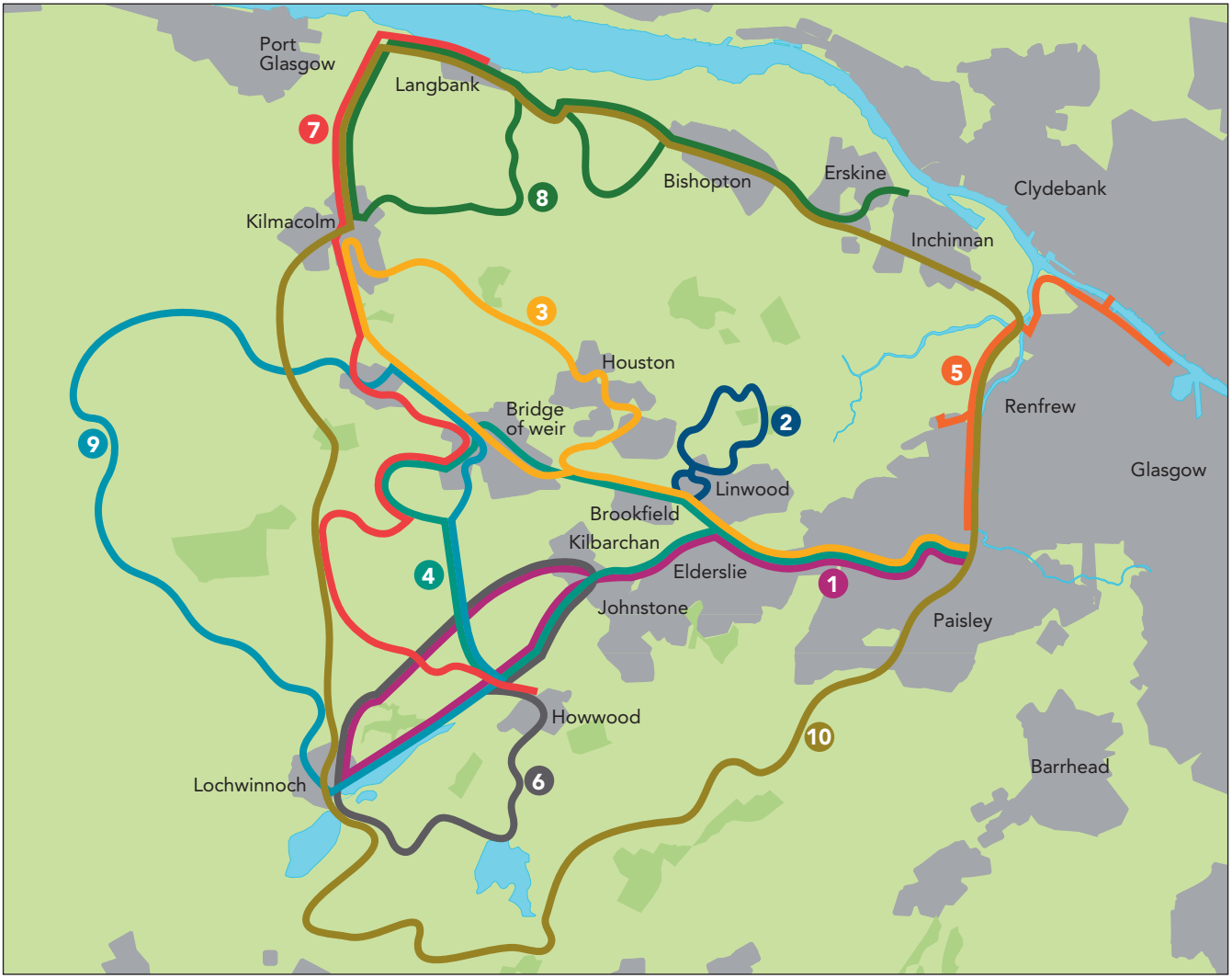
Cycling in Renfrewshire

The cycling in Renfrewshire is some of the best in Scotland: there are networks of well-surfaced traffic-free cycletracks, idyllic quiet country lanes, exciting mountain biking and stunning scenery. The aim of this booklet is to help you get out and explore what's on your doorstep.

The routes in this guide are specifically designed for non-expert cyclists. Many are suitable for families with children. The routes are mainly surfaced: only the Muirshiel route requires a mountain bike. We avoid busy roads wherever possible. There's also a variety of distances – but all of the routes should be within the ability of the average fit person.

Remember, this is only a selection of the cycling that Renfrewshire has to offer. When you've tried a couple of rides, we hope you'll be inspired to use your imagination to make up your own routes.

Enjoy your cycling!



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Contents

	Distance:	Allow:	Suitable for:
1 Boats, trains and bikes to Lochwinnoch	31km (19 miles)	1/2 or full day	Families with children
2 Tranquil Linwood Moss	8km (5 miles)	1/2 day	Families with older children
3 Exploring Strathgryfe	35km (22 miles)	1/2 or full day	Families with children
4 Back roads beyond Bridge of Weir	29km (18 miles)	1/2 or full day	Families with older children
5 Following the Cart and Clyde to Braehead	18km (11 miles)	1/2 day	Adults
6 Hills around Howwood	22km (13 miles)	1/2 day	Families with older children
7 From Howwood to the sea!	26km (16 miles)	1/2 or full day	Families with older children
8 Clyde panoramas	33km (20 miles)	1/2 or full day	Families with older children
9 Mountain bike across Muirshiel	36km (22 miles)	1/2 or full day	Mountain bikes
10 All around Renfrewshire	56km (35 miles)	1 or 2 days	Adults

Road safety

Many of these routes are mainly on roads. We have avoided busy sections of road wherever possible, but there are still some sections where you will need to take care. In the directions for each ride, we have indicated places where we believe you need to be particularly careful with a ⚠ sign.

Remember to follow the Highway Code. You can buy it from bookshops or read it for free at www.highwaycode.gov.uk. There is a special section for cyclists. As a cyclist, you must obey the rules of the road just like any other road user.

Route directions

Stop and give way to oncoming traffic.

Give way to oncoming traffic.

Hazard - take care.

Railway station.

Before you set out

Check:

- Your tyres are pumped up correctly.
- Your brakes are working efficiently and the brake pads are not worn out.
- Your chain is oiled.
- All bolts are tight. (You don't need to do this every time you ride your bike, but do check your bike every few weeks. If you're not confident to do this yourself, your local bike shop will do it for you.)
- Your lights are in working order, if you have any.

What to take with you

We suggest:

- Basic repair kit – always take a pump, a basic repair kit and a spanner if you need it to take your wheels off to fix a puncture. You might want to carry a spare inner tube.
- Lock – always take one unless you really won't be stopping anywhere. Otherwise you might have a long walk home.
- Waterproof jacket – the weather can change fast, and you can be quite exposed on a bike out in the countryside.
- When it's colder (say from November to April), gloves and a windproof top can be useful – otherwise the wind can make cycling very chilly !

- Food and drink – these aren't essential, as we've listed places where you can buy food and drink. But you might want to take a snack or a picnic.
- Lights – if riding during the winter months, remember days are short and lights are essential.

If your bike is well maintained and you have a basic repair kit, you should be able to fix most problems. If something goes wrong that you can't fix:

- Check the maps in this booklet and see if you're within walking distance of a railway station.
- Call a bike shop – they may be able to come and help you.

Local bike shops

If you haven't ridden your bike for a while, think something might need fixing, or are just unsure about how to maintain your bike – contact your local bike shop. They will be able to check your bike over and service it if necessary.

Bike shops in Renfrewshire:

- The Bicycle Chain, 3 Collier Street, Johnstone. Tel: 01505 335551
- Dooleys, 40 Moss Street, Paisley. Tel: 0141 889 6090
- Evans Cycles Braehead, Xscape, Kings Inch Road, Renfrew Tel: 0845 070 5402
- Express Cycle Repairs and cycle hire, based at Castle Semple Visitor Centre, Lochwinnoch. Tel: 0786 779 0889
- Halfords, Hamilton Street, Paisley. Tel: 0141 887 8889

Bike hire

Want to try cycling but don't have a bike? Contact Express Cycle Repairs and cycle hire, based at Castle Semple Visitor Centre, Lochwinnoch. Tel: 0786 779 0889.

Access in the countryside

Everyone has the right to be on most land and water providing they act responsibly. Your access rights and responsibilities are explained fully in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

When you're outdoors, the key things are to:

- Take responsibility for your own actions.
- Respect the interests of other people.
- Care for the environment.

Find out more by visiting www.outdooraccess-scotland.com or telephoning Scottish Natural Heritage on 0141 951 4488.

Further information

Renfrewshire Council's **walking guidebook** "Out There: 10 walks around Renfrewshire" explores in more depth many of the places visited by these cycle rides. Why not pick up a copy from your local library or Paisley Tourist Information Centre?

Paisley Tourist Information Centre is at 9a Gilmour Street, a few metres from Paisley Gilmour Street, where two of the rides in this booklet start. Tel: 0141 889 0711 Email: paisley@visitscotland.com Web: www.visitscotland.com

Local **libraries** are a mine of information about local history and things that are going on. They are mentioned under the relevant bike rides.

For **online** information about Renfrewshire, visit www.renfrewshire.gov.uk and www.happyhaggis.co.uk A number of individual villages also have their own websites – some of these are mentioned under the relevant bike rides.

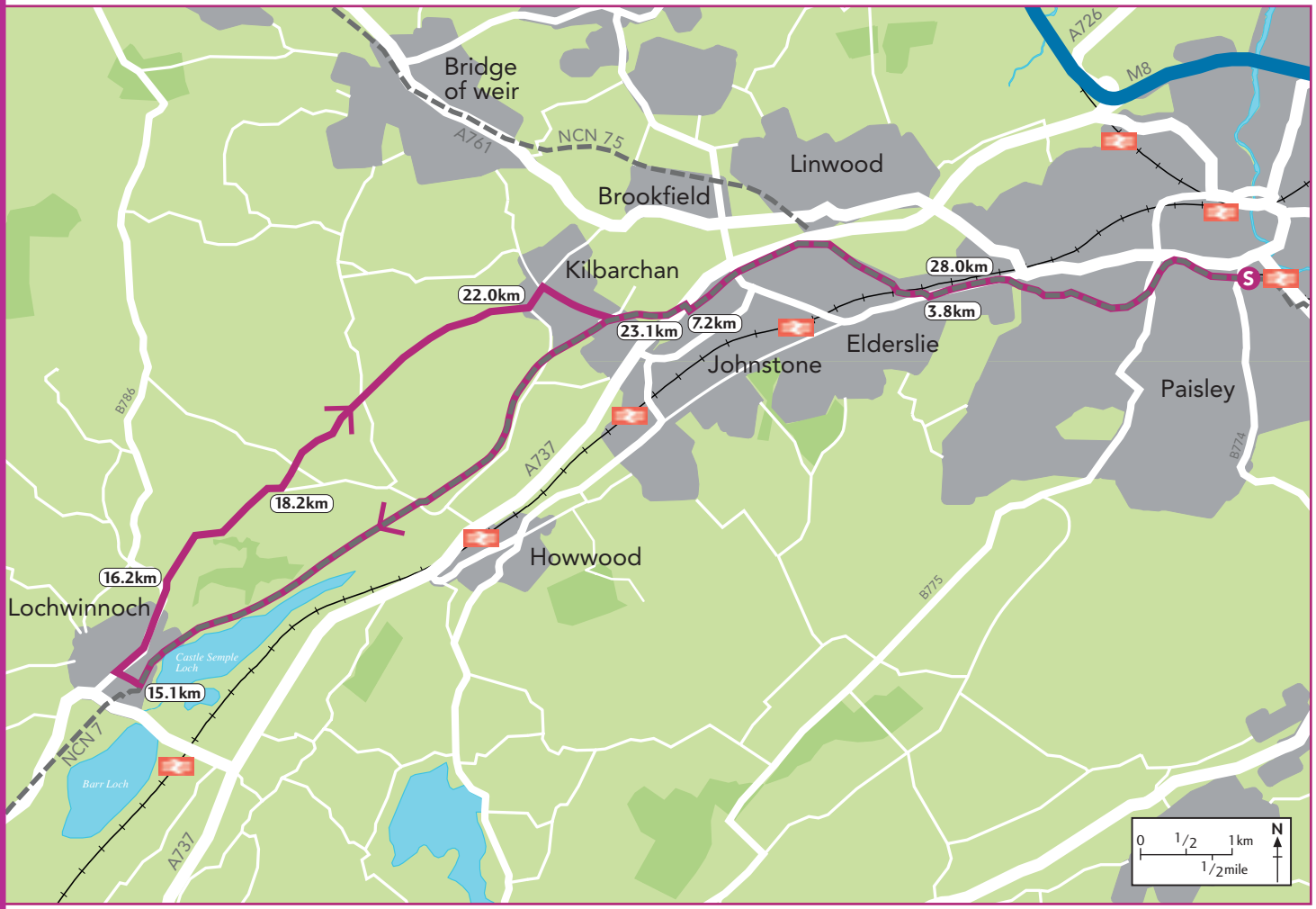
If you would like to find out more about cycling locally, there are a number of organisations who can provide more information:

Sustrans National organisation which owns and maintains local cycletracks and campaigns for cycling and more sustainable transport. There is an active local group of volunteers. The website has interactive mapping for cyclists.
Tel: 0131 539 8122 www.sustrans.org.uk

Johnstone Wheelers Local cycling group which organises weekly rides throughout the year, and can tell you more about cycling for exercise and sport. www.johnstone-wheelers.co.uk

CTC: Cyclists Touring Club Probably the oldest cycling organisation in the world. Campaigns on behalf of cyclists, has local groups which organise rides, and provides a huge amount of information about cycling. Tel: 0870 873 0060 www.ctc.org.uk (local group tel: 01698 827 976)

GoBike: Strathclyde Cycle Campaign Promotes cycling in Strathclyde, and is particularly active in Glasgow, East Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire. Holds meetings, events and easy-paced cycle rides throughout the year.
www.gobike.org 07932 460093



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1 Boats, trains and bikes to Lochwinnoch

This route uses part of Renfrewshire's greatest asset for cyclists – the National Cycle Network from John O'Groats to the English Channel. There's plenty of scope for variation: if you're with children or haven't ridden a bike before, you can come back the same way and almost completely avoid any roads. Or if you think the full distance is too far, you can catch the train back from Lochwinnoch.

If you're feeling energetic, why not do the whole trip and explore some of the country lanes via Kilbarchan? There are some hills – but they don't go on forever, and there are stunning views at the top. The roads are generally quiet, but you will meet some traffic: so returning this way is not recommended for young children.

Getting to the start

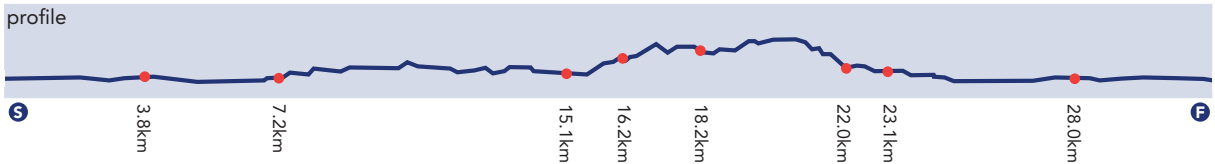
The route starts at Paisley Canal, just off Causeyside Street near the centre of Paisley (Ordnance Survey grid reference NS 483 634).

Rail – half-hourly trains Monday to Saturday from Glasgow Central. No Sunday service. You can also catch trains to Paisley Gilmour Street station from Ayrshire and Inverclyde, and then walk/cycle the 800 metres ($^1/_2$ mile) through the town centre to Paisley Canal station. ⚠ If you're coming from Gilmour Street station, take care as the roads are busy.

Cycle – if you're coming from the east end of Paisley, Glasgow's south side or Glasgow city centre, you could use the Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 7 to get to the start of the route. ⚠ If you're cycling to the start of the route from elsewhere, take care as the roads around Causeyside Street are busy.

Car – Paisley town centre has a number of long stay car parks. The nearest is on Stow Street, across Causeyside Street from Paisley Canal station (£1 per day Monday to Friday, free at weekends).

Alternatively, the route passes through or close to western



Paisley, Elderslie, Johnstone, Linwood, Kilbarchan and Howwood – so you could join it on the way.

Glasgow, Paisley and Johnstone Canal You might not realise it, but between Paisley and Johnstone you're cycling along a canal! Little now remains of the canal, which was designed to link Glasgow and Ardrossan on the Ayrshire coast in the early 19th century. Only 11 miles were built – from Glasgow to Johnstone – before funds ran out. Even so, the canal carried passengers and freight for over 50 years until it closed in 1881. A railway was then built on the disused canal, but this in turn closed in 1983. The section between Glasgow Central and Paisley Canal re-opened to trains in 1990, whilst the Paisley to Johnstone section now enjoys yet another lease of life – first canal boats, then trains, and now bicycles!

Collegiate Church and Castle Semple Estate 12.8km The historic Collegiate Church sits close to the cycletrack. The Church was founded as a place for worship and learning in 1504, about the same time as the original Castle Semple which used to sit on the other side of the cycletrack (see below). The Church remained in use until the 1680s. Why not have a look inside? You can see the ornate carved tomb of the Church's founder, John, First Lord Sempill. The ruins are free to visit

Distances in bold are also shown on the profile and plan. Not every junction is described: carry straight on unless stated otherwise.		
0.0 km	0.0 miles	From station platform, follow cycletrack under bridge, signposted Johnstone 5, Kilbirnie 14.
0.5 km	0.3 miles	At T junction, turn right down road for 10 metres, then left onto cycletrack signposted Johnstone 4, Kilbirnie 13.
3.0 km	1.8 miles	Immediately before bridge over road, fork left down ramp signposted Johnstone 2.5 & Kilbirnie 12. Turn left using cycle lane along B789 Main Road.
3.8 km	2.3 miles	Cross Elderslie Main Road at traffic lights, and go down Canal Street signposted Irvine. At the bottom, continue along cycletrack.
4.3 km	2.6 miles	At unmarked cycletrack junction, follow cycletrack to right under railway bridge.
5.5 km	3.4 miles	At cycletrack junction, continue straight on signposted Johnstone $^{1}/_{2}$, Irvine 22.
6.5 km	4.0 miles	Cross road at traffic lights, continue on cycletrack signposted Kilbarchan 1, Lochwinnoch 5, Kilbirnie 9, Irvine 21.
7.2 km	4.4 miles	At cycletrack junction, turn right signposted Kilbarchan $^{1}/_{2}$, Kilbirnie 8, Irvine 21 and then immediately right again at T junction.
11.5 km	7.1 miles	At cycletrack junction, bear right signposted Lochwinnoch 2, Kilbirnie 6.

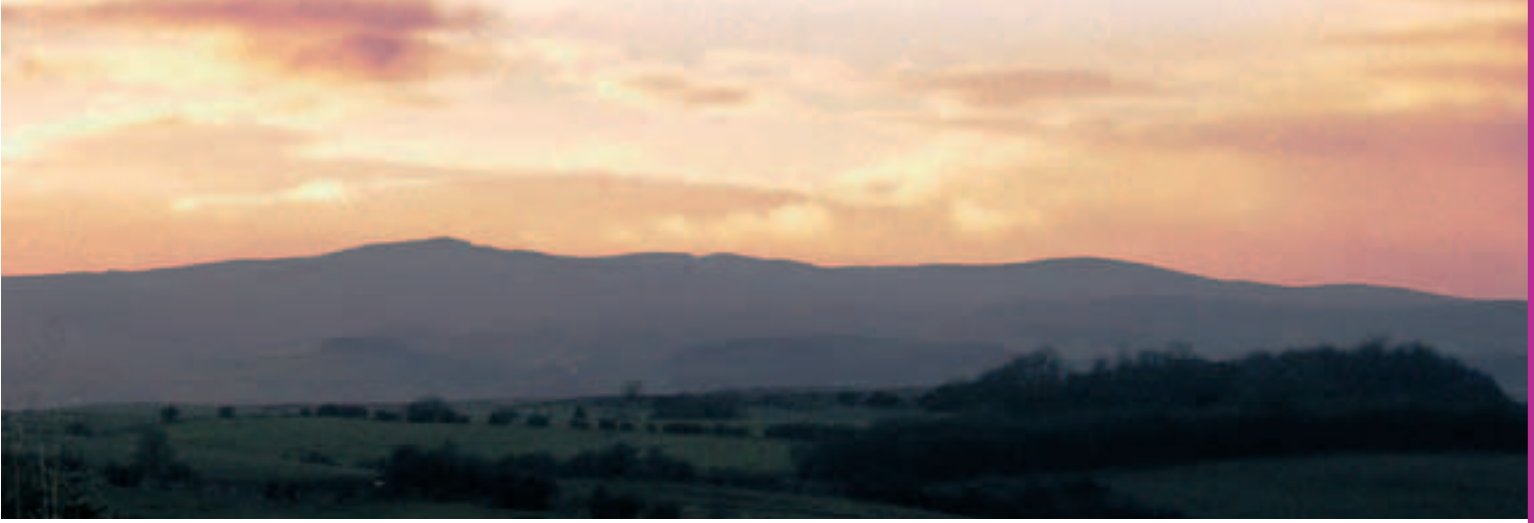
15.1 km	9.3 miles	At cycletrack junction, fork left down ramp signposted Lochwinnoch, Castle Semple Visitor Centre.
15.2 km	9.4 miles	At bottom of ramp, turn right under bridge into St Winnocs Road. To visit Castle Semple Visitor Centre and its facilities (see below), turn left here.
15.3 km	9.5 miles	At T junction, turn right uphill into Johnshill. (To visit shops, pubs, café and library, turn left into High Street first.)
16.2 km	10.0 miles	100 metres beyond edge of village, turn right onto minor road signposted Howwood. Take care – bad bend.
18.2 km	11.3 miles	After the top of the second hill, turn left onto a narrow minor road (no sign). The junction is easy to miss – look for an old rusty pole.
18.5 km	11.5 miles	Give way at unmarked crossroads. Carry straight on, past the Clochodrick Stone on your right (to find out more, see text overleaf).
19.6 km	12.1 miles	At unmarked junction, follow road to right then immediately left.
22.0 km	13.6 miles	Turn left into Church Street and into Kilbarchan.
22.3 km	13.8 miles	At crossroads, turn right into Steeple Street and then left into Steeple Street.
22.7 km	14.1 miles	Turn left onto main road.

– just follow the signs from the cycletrack. You can't get here by car, so make the most of your visit!

The Collegiate Church was part of Castle Semple Estate, a large country estate which extended from Howwood to Lochwinnoch for hundreds of years from mediaeval times, and was important to Lochwinnoch in particular. Across the cycletrack from the Collegiate Church you can see two stone-built houses, facing out over the loch: these are all that is left of Castle Semple House, the mansion which replaced the Castle and was the focus of the estate. It burnt down in the 1930s. Although the house has gone, you can still walk around parts of the Estate and see how its wealth influenced the layout of Lochwinnoch (for more information see route 6).

Lochwinnoch

The village of Lochwinnoch grew up around the kirk, the remains of whose eighteenth century incarnation still sit in the



23.1 km	14.3 miles	Just before bridge over road, turn left up hill.
23.1 km	14.3 miles	After 50 metres turn right onto cycletrack, then left along cycletrack signposted Johnstone 1, Glasgow 14. You are now retracing your outward route from earlier in the day.
24.2 km	15.0 miles	50 metres after crossing bridge over dual carriageway, turn left at cycletrack junction signposted Johnstone $^{1}/_{2}$, Glasgow 14.
24.9 km	15.4 miles	Cross road at traffic lights, continue on cycletrack signposted Paisley, Glasgow.
25.9 km	16.0 miles	At cycletrack junction, continue straight on signposted Elderslie 1, Glasgow 12.
27.4 km	17.0 miles	Go up Canal Street to traffic lights. Continue in same direction using cycle lane along B789 Main Road.
28.0 km	17.4 miles	At top of hill, turn left onto cycletrack, signposted Glasgow.
30.9 km	18.6 miles	At T junction, turn right up road for 10 metres, then left onto cycletrack signposted Paisley $^{1}/_{2}$, Glasgow 9.
31.4 km	19.5 miles	Arrive back at Paisley Canal station.

Castle Semple grotto, Parkhill Woods

Collegiate Church

old churchyard at the bottom of Johnshill. The village retains its 18th century layout and many of the workers' cottages date from the time when spinning, weaving and furniture- making turned a kirktoun into a 'modern' village. Good pubs and restaurants make for a pleasant stop on your tour.

Clochoderick Stone 18.5km A boulder the size of a house sitting in the corner of a field… what's it doing there ? See route 6 to find out more.

Kilbarchan Signposted off cycletrack at 8.3km, or you pass through it on your way back at 22.3km. A charming and historic village whose origins go back well over a thousand years to St Barchan, and which bustled with weavers in the 18th and 19th centuries. Find out more under route 4.

Facilities and information

Please note that the only public toilets are at Castle Semple Visitor Centre in Lochwinnoch.

Paisley start/finish

Plenty of pubs and cafes in the town centre for meals and snacks.

Contact Paisley Tourist Information for further information. Tel: 0141 889 0711. Email: paisley@visitscotland.com www.visitscotland.com

Lochwinnoch 15 km

Castle Semple Visitor Centre Open daily. Information, café, toilets, bike hire and repairs, shop, ranger service, walks leaflets, watersports, bike hire, archery, fishing permits. Tel: 01505 842803 www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk

Lochwinnoch Community Library High Street. Historical photos and information. Restricted opening hours. Tel: 01505 842305

Brown Bull Pub and Restaurant 33 Main Street. Open daily. Tel: 01505 843250

Garthland Arms Bar and Restaurant 5 Church Street. Tel: 01505 842047

La Dolce Vita Takeaway 9-13 High Street. Tel: 01505 843372

The Gable End Restaurant 45 High Street. Tel: 01505 852775

The Junction Café and bistro 2-4 High Street. Tel: 01505 842225

Shops on High Street and Main Street.

Visit www.lochwinnoch.info for more information.

Kilbarchan 22 km

The Weaver's Cottage 22.3km 18th century weaver's cottage preserved by the National Trust for Scotland. Open Good Friday to 30 September, Friday to Tuesday 1-5pm. Tel: 01505 705588 during opening times, otherwise 0131 243 9300.

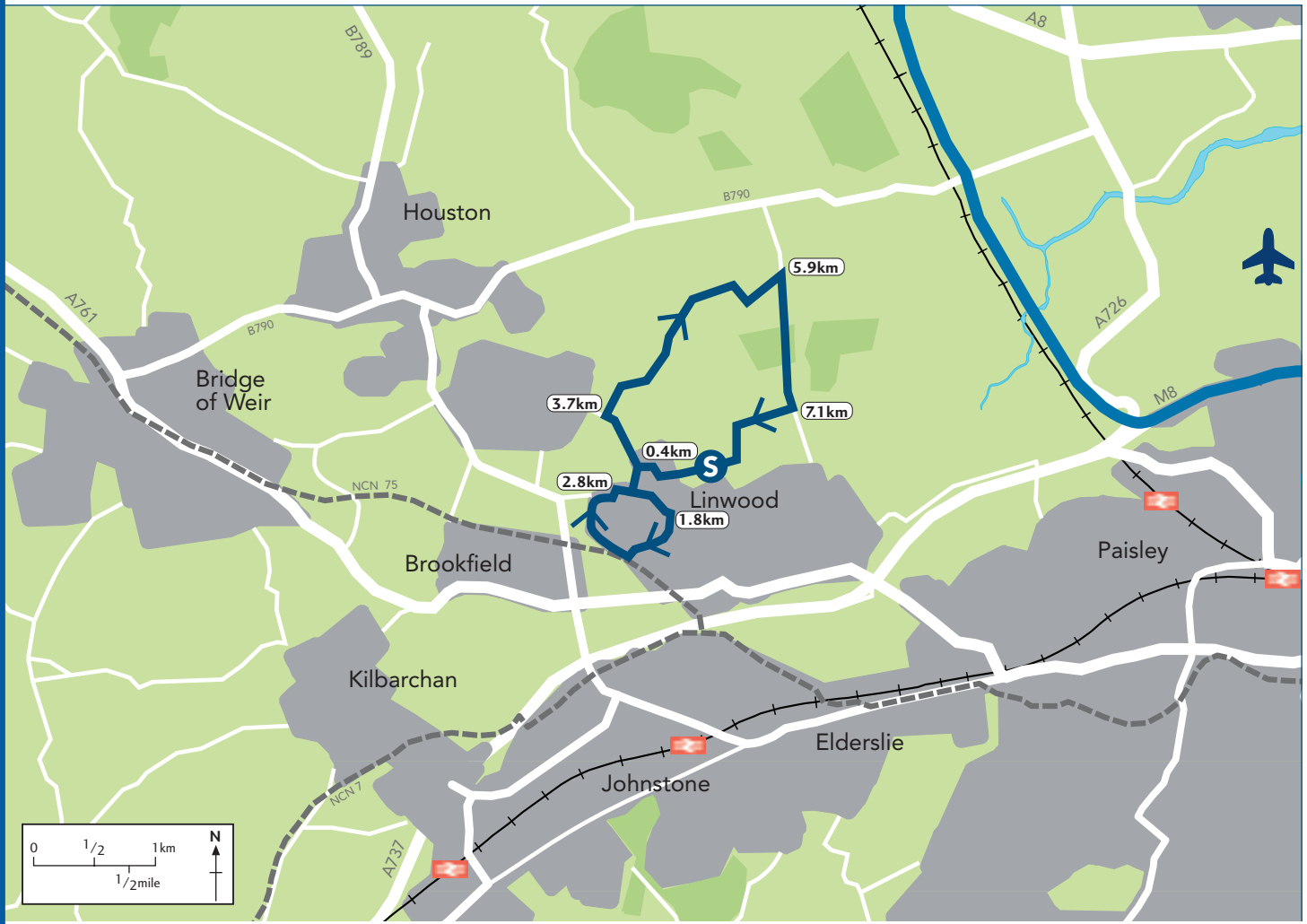
Bobbins tea room & craft shop 22.4km 25 Steeple St. Open Monday to Saturday. Tel: 01505 705509

Glenleven Inn At junction at 22.3 km, continue straight on along New Street for 100 metres. 25 New Street. Meals 7 days a week. Tel: 01505 702481 Booking required at weekends.

Trust Inn 23.0km Low Barholm. Bar meals 7 days a week. Tel: 01505 702401

Shops 22.3km-23.0km New St, Steeple Street and High Barholm.

Visit www.kilbarchan.org for more information.



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2 Tranquil Linwood Moss

This gem of a route gets you out amongst tranquil woodland and beautiful riverbanks in no time at all. It's ideal for a sunny summer's evening or a crisp autumn morning, when Linwood Moss and the River Gryfe are at their most atmospheric.

Although much of the route is on roads, there is little traffic – particularly on the rural sections. It's ideal if you're new to cycling and want to venture beyond the cycletracks.

The route is easily accessible from Linwood, Johnstone, Houston and Paisley via the cycletrack, and you can extend it by joining up with routes 1 and 3.

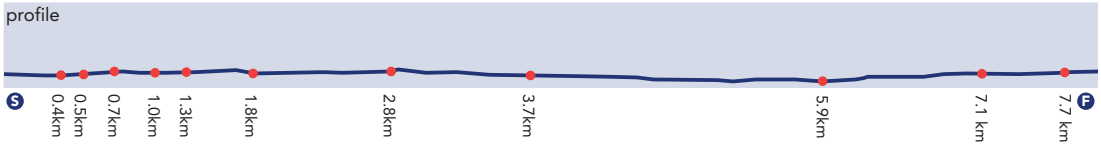
Getting to the start

The route starts at Linwood Sports Centre, off Brediland Road in Linwood (Ordnance Survey grid reference NS 435 651).

Cycle – this route is easily accessible by bike from Paisley, Johnstone, Kilbarchan, Brookfield and Bridge of Weir using the National Cycle Network cycletracks (described in routes 1 and 3 in this guidebook). Follow the cycletrack to the 6.4 km point on route 3 or 4 to join this route at the 1.9 km point.

The route is also very close to Craigends and Houston. From Fulton Drive in Craigends, follow Craigends Road and then Clippens Road to join the ride at the 3.7 km point.

Car – follow the M8 to junction 29, then take the A737



towards Irvine. Leave at the first exit, and follow signs into Linwood, and then to Linwood Sports Centre. Free parking.

Rail – the nearest station is 3km away at Johnstone, served by trains every 15 minutes between Glasgow, Paisley and the Ayrshire coast. From the main station entrance, cross the main road and go down Ellerslie Street. Take the second right into John Lang Street, then the second left into Miller Street. At the end of the road, continue along the tarmac path, then turn right before bridge (signposted National Cycle Network). After 200 metres, you will join the National Cycle Network cycletrack 5.1 km into route 3. Turn left and follow route 3 to its 6.4 km point, to join this route at the 1.9 km point.

River Gryfe 5.2km The River Gryfe may only be 16 miles long, but it's full of character from where it rises in the hills south of Greenock, through Kilmacolm, Bridge of Weir and Craigends, down to where it joins the Clyde near Renfrew.

The section of the river you'll cycle alongside in this route flows sleepily through fields and trees, but other routes in this guide will show you other aspects of its character. On route 9, you'll splash though some of its upper tributaries as you cross the moorland on your mountain bike. Routes 3 and 7 take you through Houston, Bridge of Weir and Kilmacolm, each of which harnessed the power of the river in the 18th and 19th centuries for mills and weaving. And on route 5, you'll cycle alongside the lower tidal reaches where water from the Gryfe mingles with the Clyde.

Morning mist at Linwood Moss

Distances in bold are also shown on the profile and plan. Not every junction is described: carry straight on unless stated otherwise.		
0.0 km	0.0 miles	From car park, go right (facing Sports Centre) towards all-weather pitches. Just before the entrance to the pitches, turn left along red path. After 50 metres, this joins tarmac path going in same direction. Continue on tarmac path across playing fields.
0.4 km	0.2 miles	Where tarmac path forks, go right and follow path between houses.
0.5 km	0.3 miles	Where path joins road, carry on along road in same direction. At T junction after 20 metres, turn right. At T junction after 20 metres, turn left into Craig Road.
0.7 km	0.4 miles	At T junction, turn left.
1.0 km	0.6 miles	At T junction, turn left onto Darluith Road.
1.3 km	0.8 miles	Turn right immediately after zebra crossing into Stirling Drive.
1.8 km	1.1 miles	Turn first right into Gilmartin Road.
1.9 km	1.1 miles	Access to the cycletrack is on your left opposite the entrance to East Fulton Primary School. This takes you onto the cycletrack at the 6.4 km point on routes 3 or 4.

2.8 km	1.7 miles	Take the second road on the left (no signpost). At T junction after a few metres, turn right. Then turn first left into Craig Road.
3.7 km	2.3 miles	Once you're out into the fields, take the first road on the right (unmarked junction underneath electricity transmission line).
5.9 km	3.6 miles	Turn right, marked Road Ahead Closed. Immediately go past gate across road, and then past another similar gate after 700 metres ($^1/_2$mile).
7.1 km	4.4 miles	A stone wall appears next to the road on your right. At the second gate in the wall, go through gap by sign Linwood Community Woodland. Follow wide gravel track, ignoring smaller paths to left and right.
7.7 km	4.7 miles	At information sign on stone plinth, turn left on path through fence. After 50m, turn left again on red path. This leads back to the Sports Centre.
7.9 km	4.9 miles	Arrive back at Linwood Sports Centre.

If you're interested in seeing more of the Gryfe, "Out There: 10 walks in Renfrewshire" has a walk along the river between Houston and Bridge of Weir which takes in some of the old mill sites.

Linwood Moss 5.9km Linwood Moss is believed to have been created by the Romans, who felled the woods to prevent them being used as hiding places by locals. In the last few centuries, trees have reappeared across much of the Moss, and offer a rich habitat for wildlife. If you're lucky, you might catch sight of deer running across the fields around the woods. The road across the Moss has also been there a long time too – since at least 1820. The section of the moss nearest to Linwood was planted as a new woodland in the 1990s – Linwood Community Woodland, which you'll cycle through. It's difficult to believe that this area of thriving trees and wildlife was once a rubbish tip.

Linwood start/finish Linwood is thought to date back to the 14th century, when the settlement consisted of a small collection of farms and dwellings on the banks of the River Black Cart. The settlement grew through the 19th century with the arrival of industry - a cotton mill, coal and ironstone mining, oil shale and brick-making. Then the real boom came with the

arrival of Pressed Steel and Rootes' car plant in the 1950s and 1960s, making the Hillman Imp. At its peak the car factory employed almost 5,000 people. Unfortunately, the boom turned to bust: in 1981, just 20 years after it opened, the car factory closed. Linwood was hit hard, and unemployment soared.

Now, times have changed again. The Phoenix Retail Park and Linwood Industrial Estate have been built on the site of the car plant. Ironically, there are more car showrooms than anything else.

Facilities and information

Linwood Sports Centre start/finish Brediland Road, Linwood, PA3 3RA. Toilets, showers and vending area. One of Renfrewshire's biggest sports centres, offering 62 activities - from badminton and football to athletics and basketball. Open every day from 9.30am to 10.30pm. Tel: 01505 329461 www.renfrewshireleisure.com

Linwood Library Ardlamont Square, off Bridge Street, Linwood town centre, PA3 3DE. Local information. Open daily except Wednesday and Sunday. Tel: 01505 325283 www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/libraries

Guelder Rose

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3 Exploring Strathgryfe

Like route 1, this uses the National Cycle Network. And also like route 1, there's plenty of scope for variation: if you're with children or haven't ridden a bike before, you can come back the same way and almost completely avoid any roads. You could also combine this ride with others in this guide to make your own route.

As you head out towards Kilmacolm, you get deeper and deeper into the beautiful Renfrewshire countryside. You'll finish up in the idyllic Strathgryfe, with its green fields against a backdrop of rough moorland in Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park. The return route via Kilallan explores some little known back roads with historic ruins and wonderful vistas over Paisley and Glasgow. Although the roads are very quiet, this route back is not recommended for young children because you'll probably meet some traffic and the roads are narrow. Better to return on the cycletrack, the way you came.

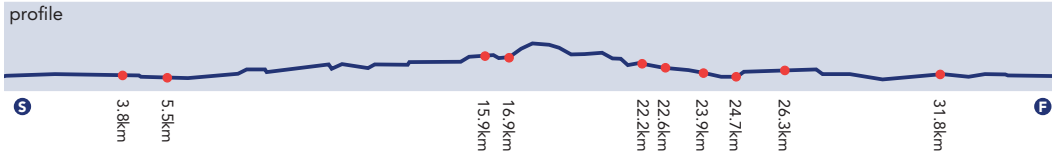
Getting to the start

The route starts at Paisley Canal, just off Causeyside Street near the centre of Paisley (Ordnance Survey grid reference NS 483 634).

Rail – half-hourly trains Monday to Saturday from Glasgow Central. No Sunday service. You can also catch trains to Paisley Gilmour Street station from Ayrshire and Inverclyde, and then walk/cycle the 800 metres ($^1/_2$mile) through the town centre to Paisley Canal station. If you're coming from Gilmour Street station, take care as the roads are busy.

Cycle – if you're coming from the east end of Paisley, Glasgow's south side or Glasgow city centre, you could use the Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 7 to get to the start of the route. If you're cycling to the start of the route from elsewhere, take care as the roads around Causeyside Street are busy.

Car – Paisley town centre has a number of long stay car parks.



The nearest is on Stow Street, across Causeyside Street from Paisley Canal station (£1 per day Monday to Friday, free at weekends).

Alternatively, the route passes through or close to western Paisley, Elderslie, Johnstone, Linwood and Bridge of Weir – so you could join it on the way.

Bridge of Weir 10.5 km Bridge of Weir has a history of castles, leather tanning, cotton weaving and more recently as a leafy commuter village for Glaswegians – based on the rail connection to Glasgow, which closed to passengers in 1983 and became the cycletrack that you're cycling on. There are also a teashop and a few pubs on the Main Street, so why not stop? Find out more in route 4.

Kilmacolm 15.9 km The village of Kilmacolm has a long history, going back to the Irish missionary St Columba in the sixth century AD. It sits in beautiful green Strathgryfe, with

St Fillan's Church, Kilallan

Distances in bold are also shown on the profile and plan. Not every junction is described: carry straight on unless stated otherwise.		
0.0 km	0.0 miles	From station platform, follow cycletrack under bridge, signposted Johnstone 5, Kilbirnie 14.
0.5 km	0.3 miles	At T junction, turn right down road for 10 metres, then left onto cycletrack signposted Johnstone 4, Kilbirnie 13.
3.0 km	1.8 miles	Immediately before bridge over road, fork left down ramp signposted Johnstone 2.5 & Kilbirnie 12.
		Turn left using cycle lane along B789 Main Road.
3.8 km	2.3 miles	Cross Elderslie Main Road at traffic lights, and go down Canal Street signposted Irvine. At the bottom, continue along cycletrack.
4.3 km	2.6 miles	At unmarked cycletrack junction, follow cycletrack to right under railway bridge.
5.5 km	3.4 miles	At cycletrack junction, turn right signposted Bridge of Weir 3, Gourock 17.
6.4 km	3.9 miles	Connection to route 2 (Linwood) at cycletrack junction in dip.
10.5 km	6.5 miles	Signpost to Bridge of Weir facilities on the right – turn off here for shops, café and pubs along the Main Street.

Ben Lomond and the Highlands

the Renfrewshire hills as a backdrop. And there are interesting shops, teashops and a pub too! Find out more in route 8.

St Fillan's Church, Kilallan 19.4 km Until the 18th century, Kilallan was a separate parish from Houston with its own church – although there was never a village here, just a mill, a smithy and farms. The name Kilallan means 'the chapel of Fillan', an Irish monk who came to the area in the early years of Christianity in Scotland (around 740 AD). St Fillan's Church, now a ruin, dates back to the 1630s and there are many gravestones from those times. The churchyard is delightful, full of colourful flowers in the spring. Access is free at any time. To get there, turn left at the unmarked junction at 19.2 km. After 200 metres, leave your bike at a gate on the left with a sign "Please close the gate". Walk down the grassy track for 100 metres, the church is on the right.

Houston 22.2 km The sister parish to Kilallan, Houston is mentioned in records as far back as 1200. The Mercat Cross on South Street (22.7 km) dates from the 14th century, and marks the centre of the village where proclamations were made and criminals punished.

15.9 km	9.9 miles	At the Pullman Tavern in Kilmacolm, turn right up ramp to Lochwinnoch Road. (Shops and cafés opposite and to the left.)
16.0 km	9.9 miles	Turn right into Lochwinnoch Road, then left immediately before going over bridge (road is called Gryfe Road, no sign).
16.9 km	10.5 km	Turn up the 3rd road on the left, Houston Road.
17.0 km	10.6 miles	Give way at crossroads, straight on up Houston Road. Steep hill leading out of Kilmacolm.
19.4 km	12.0 miles	At unmarked junction, carry straight on.
22.2 km	13.8 miles	At crossroads, turn right into Houston (no sign).
22.6 km	14.0 miles	Take 2nd left into South Street.
22.8 km	14.1 miles	At T junction, turn left into Bogstonhill Road.
22.9 km	14.2 miles	At T junction, turn right (North Street, no sign). This becomes Kirk Road.
23.6 km	14.7 miles	At crossroads, carry straight on along Quarry Brae (to right of white house).

By 1760, Houston had a population of around 300. Rapid expansion followed in 1780s, when the present centre of Houston – around North and South Street – was laid out as a new settlement, effectively a miniature Erskine or East Kilbride of its time.

The houses and communal drying green were laid out in a regular pattern, with North and South Street both running parallel on either side of the Houston Burn (which you cross at the bridge on Bogstonhill Road). This layout was deliberate. The purpose was to ensure access to water for all householders – crucial for the home-based weaving industry, which was the mainstay of the village economy through the nineteenth century.

By the end of the 19th century, hand-weaving was declining in the face of competition from machines. Coupled with the fact that the railways missed the village, Houston reverted back to its quiet agricultural origins by the early 20th century.

Kilmacolm, Inverclyde

23.9 km	14.9 miles	At sharp bend, turn right down zigzag ramp to main road. Dismount and cross main road, continue along tarmac path and after 20 metres turn right down lane by stone wall.
24.1 km	15.0 miles	Where lane/path joins main road, turn left along road through Crosslee. Busy for 600 metres.
24.7 km	15.3 miles	At bus layby on your left, turn right into Crosslee Road. Safer to pull into bus layby and check both directions are clear before turning.
26.3 km	16.3 miles	Immediately before bridge over road, turn left up cycletrack ramp (blue signpost). At top of ramp, turn left along cycletrack signposted Johnstone $2^1/_2$, Glasgow 14.
29.8 km	18.5 miles	At cycletrack junction, turn left signposted Elderslie 1, Glasgow 12.
31.4 km	19.5 miles	Go up Canal Street to traffic lights. Continue in same direction using cycle lane along B789 Main Road.
31.8 km	19.8 miles	At top of hill, turn left onto cycletrack, signposted Glasgow.
34.7 km	21.6 miles	At T junction, turn right up road for 10 metres, then left onto cycletrack signposted Paisley $^1/_2$, Glasgow 9.
35.3 km	21.9 miles	Arrive back at Paisley Canal station.

Facilities and information

Paisley start/finish
Plenty of pubs and cafes in the town centre for meals and snacks.
Contact Paisley Tourist Information for further information. Tel: 0141 889 0711. Email: paisley@visitscotland.com www.visitscotland.com

Bridge of Weir 10 km
The following facilities are all on or near the Main Street:
Aulds Coffee Shop, Livery Walk (off Main Street) Snacks, teas and coffees all day. Closed Sundays. Tel: 01505 614858.
Lochnagar Coffee Room and Restaurant, Main Street. Meals, snacks, teas and coffees. Mondays to Fridays 10am-4.30pm, Saturdays 10am-3.30pm, closed Sundays. Tel: 01505 613410.
The Four Elements, Main Street Lunchtime and evening meals and snacks, tea and coffees all day. Closed Mondays. Tel: 01505 610610.
The Gryffe Inn, Main Street Lunchtime meals and snacks. Tel: 01505 613023.

Shops There are a number of newsagents and a small supermarket.

Bridge of Weir Library, Main Street Local and historical information. Restricted opening hours. Tel: 01505 612220.
Visit www.bridgeofweir.org.uk for more information.

Kilmacolm 16 km
Cafes, shops, pub and library for information on Lochwinnoch Road.

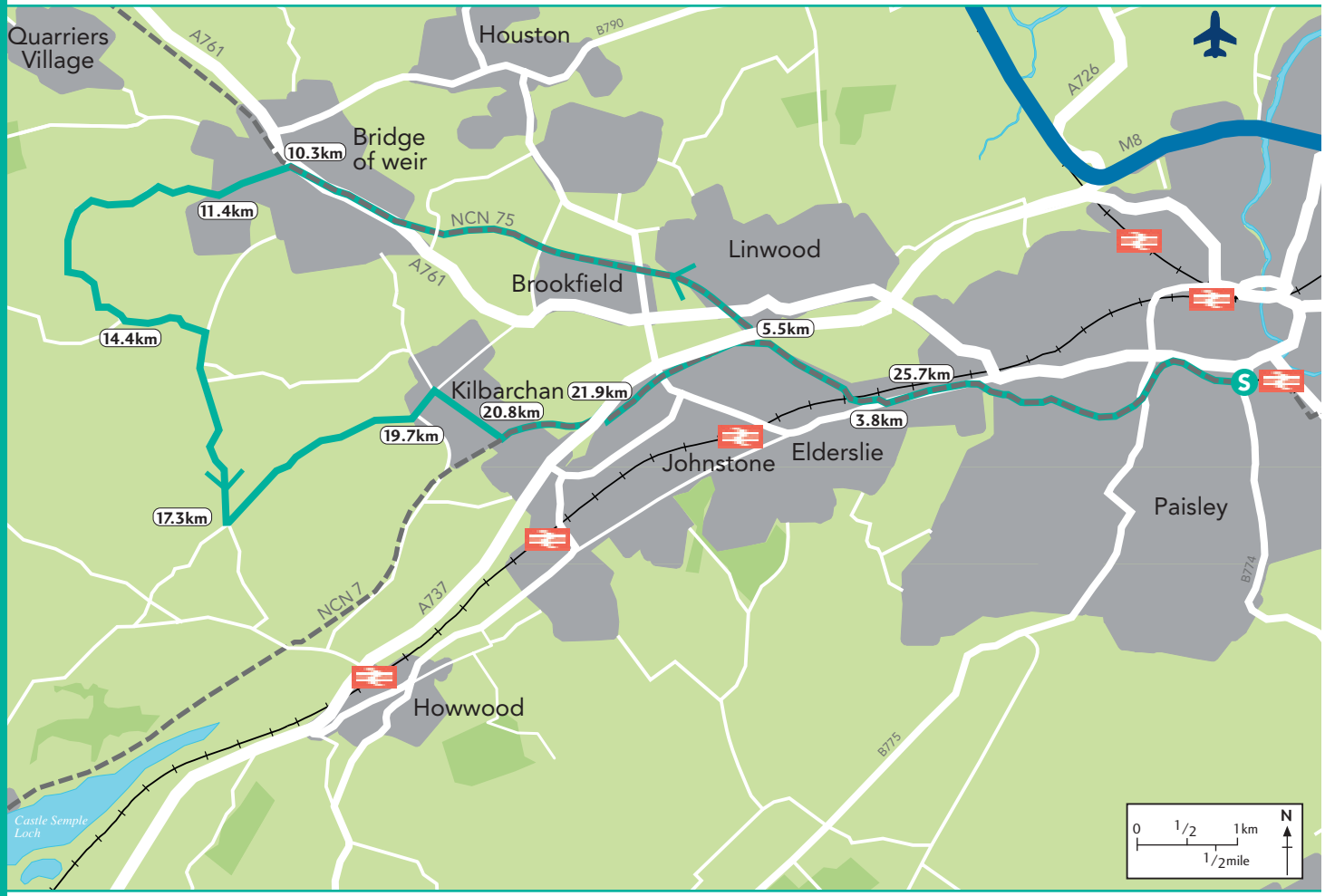
Houston 22 km
Carrick Coffee Shop, The Carrick Centre, Main Street 22.6km – carry straight on for 100 metres, café is on the right Meals, snacks teas and coffees. Open Mondays to Saturdays 10am-4pm. Tel: 07961 333826.
Houston Inn, North Street 22.5 km on left Bar meals daily. Tel: 01505 614315.
Cross Keys Inn, Main Street 22.5 km on right Bar meals daily. Tel: 01505 612209.
The Fox and Hounds, South Street 22.6 km Bar meals daily and award-winning beer brewed on the premises. Tel: 01505 612448.

Shops 22.9 km Small shops on Bogstonhill Road and North Street.

Visit www.houstonscotland.org.uk for more information.

Crosslee 24 km
River Inn, Houston Rd 24.5 km Meals, teas and coffees daily. Tel: 01505 613288.

Shop 24.1 km On your right just before you join the main road.



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4 Back roads beyond Bridge of Weir

This route links Paisley, the two cycletracks, and some unspoilt Renfrewshire countryside tucked away above the Gryfe and the Black Cart rivers. There's also the chance to savour Kilbarchan, one of Renfrewshire's most historic villages.

This ride is shorter than the other routes based on the cycletracks. Don't underestimate it – there are some short, sharp hills on the back lanes. But with a choice of pubs and cafes, there's plenty of opportunity to replace your lost calories!

Although the roads are very quiet, this ride is not recommended for young children because you'll probably meet some traffic and the roads are narrow.

Getting to the start

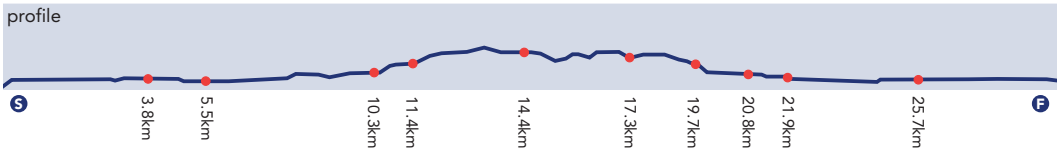
The route starts at Paisley Canal, just off Causeyside Street near the centre of Paisley (Ordnance Survey grid reference NS 483 634).

Rail – half-hourly trains Monday to Saturday from Glasgow Central. No Sunday service. You can also catch trains to Paisley Gilmour Street station from Ayrshire and Inverclyde, and then walk/cycle the 800 metres ($^1/_2$ mile) through the town centre to Paisley Canal station. ⚠ If you're coming from Gilmour Street station, take care as the roads are busy.

Cycle – if you're coming from the east end of Paisley, Glasgow's south side or Glasgow city centre, you could use the Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 7 to get to the start of the route. ⚠ If you're cycling to the start of the route from elsewhere, take care as the roads around Causeyside Street are busy.

Car – Paisley town centre has a number of long stay car parks. The nearest is on Stow Street, across Causeyside Street from Paisley Canal station (£1 per day Monday to Friday, free at weekends).

Alternatively, the route passes through or close to western Paisley, Elderslie, Johnstone, Linwood, Bridge of Weir, Kilbarchan and Howwood – so you could join it on the way.



River Gryfe

Bridge of Weir 10.3 km Bridge of Weir lies at a point where the power of the River Gryfe cuts a gorge through an area of harder rock. The potential of the water's power was recognised centuries ago when the Mill O'Gryfe was built – although there was little else there apart from a few houses until the late eighteenth century.

In the 1770s, the tanning industry arrived. Its need for abundant supplies of water made Bridge of Weir a natural location. Tanning continues to this day at the Bridge of Weir Leather Company, now located just outside the village. Tanning was followed by cotton – four mills appeared in the 1790s. The last mill closed down in 1876, but by then the village's future was assured. The railway had arrived from Glasgow – then only 22 minutes away by express train. The railway has since closed and become the cycletrack that you'll follow out from Paisley, but the village remains ever popular with commuters.

Kilbarchan 19.7 km A charming historic village whose origins go back well over a thousand years to St Barchan. In the eighteenth century, weaving began to displace agriculture as the main source of jobs in the village. The number of weavers grew rapidly through the century: in 1695 there were 30 or

Distances in bold are also shown on the profile and plan. Not every junction is described: carry straight on unless stated otherwise.		
0.0 km	0.0 miles	From station platform, follow cycletrack under bridge, signposted Johnstone 5, Kilbirnie 14.
0.5 km	0.3 miles	At T junction, turn right down road for 10 metres, then left onto cycletrack signposted Johnstone 4, Kilbirnie 13.
3.0 km	1.8 miles	Immediately before bridge over road, fork left down ramp signposted Johnstone 2.5 & Kilbirnie 12.
		Turn left using cycle lane along B789 Main Road.
3.8 km	2.3 miles	Cross Elderslie Main Road at traffic lights, and go down Canal Street signposted Irvine. At the bottom, continue along cycletrack.
4.3 km	2.6 miles	At unmarked cycletrack junction, follow cycletrack to right under railway bridge.
5.5 km	3.4 miles	At cycletrack junction, turn right signposted Bridge of Weir 3, Gourock 17.

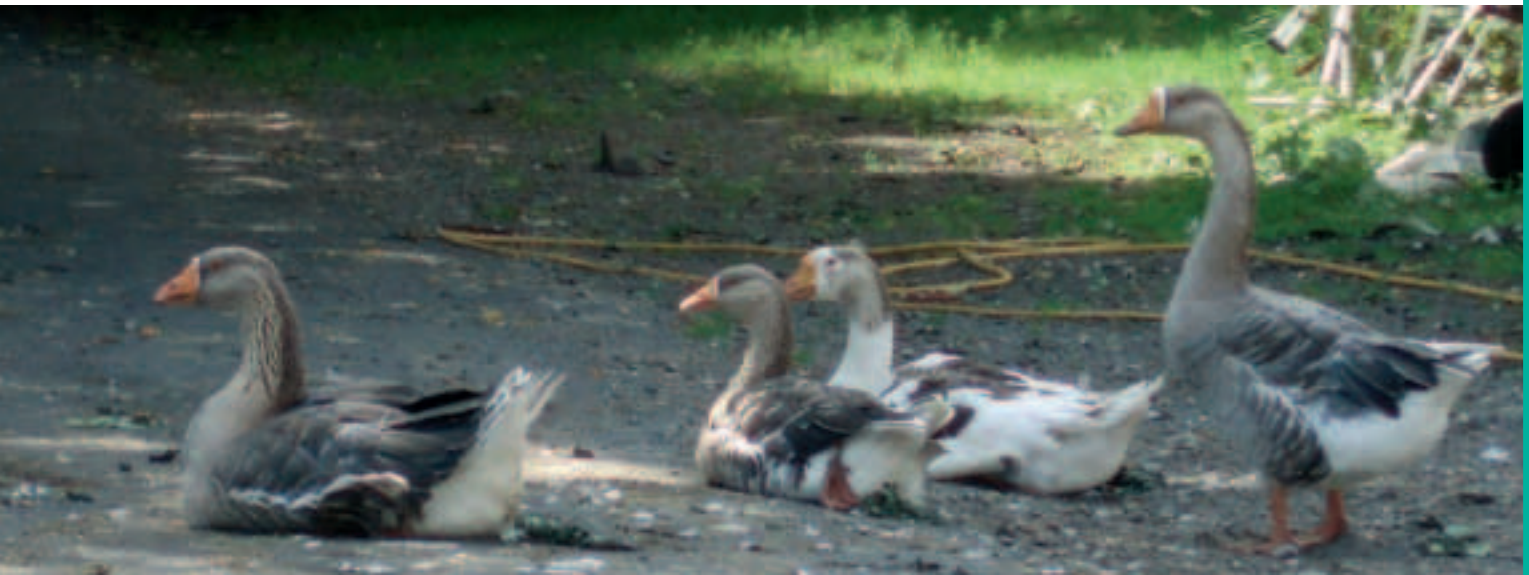
40 weavers in the village, but in the early 19th century there were nearly 1,000 looms, mainly in people's homes. They brought good income to the weavers, and made Kilbarchan a prosperous place. Although the weavers were clever at spotting new markets to keep business flowing in, the coming of the power-loom in the 1880s saw the start of a terminal decline of the village's traditional cottage-based weaving industry.
The legacy of weaving can still be seen today. The Weaver's Cottage, at the crossroads of Steeple Street, Shuttle Street and Church Street, was a combined house and weaving workshop for two hundred years. It is now owned by the National Trust for Scotland and is open to the public to give a fascinating evocation of the weavers' alternate success and depression.

Wallace Monument, Elderslie

6.4 km	3.9 miles	Connection to route 2 (Linwood) at cycletrack junction in dip.
10.3 km	6.4 miles	After passing under large stone bridge with metal support in cycletrack, turn sharp left up ramp (no sign). At top of ramp turn right onto busy main road and then immediately right again uphill into Prieston Road. (You may prefer to push your bike round on the pavement to avoid these busy right turns.)
11.4 km	7.0 miles	At fork in road, turn right into Clevans Road, continue up hill out of village.
12.2 km	7.5 miles	View indicator on right – why not stop for a breather ?
14.4 km	8.9 miles	Turn left at unmarked junction.
15.3 km	9.5 miles	Turn right at unmarked junction by bridge over stream.
15.7 km	9.7 miles	Straight on at unmarked crossroads, up short but very steep hill.
15.8 km	9.8 miles	Straight on at unmarked crossroads, take care down steep descent beyond.
17.3 km	10.7 miles	Turn left at unmarked junction by electricity pylon in field, then immediately left again at second unmarked junction.

19.7 km	12.2 miles	Turn left into Church Street and into Kilbarchan.
20.0 km	12.4 miles	At crossroads, turn right into Steeple Street and then left into Steeple Street.
20.3 km	12.6 miles	Turn left onto main road.
20.8 km	12.9 miles	Just before bridge over road, turn left up hill.
20.8 km	12.9 miles	After 50 metres turn right onto cycletrack, then left along cycletrack signposted Johnstone 1, Glasgow 14.
21.9 km	13.6 miles	50 metres after crossing bridge over dual carriageway, turn left at cycletrack junction signposted Johnstone $^{1}/_{2}$, Glasgow 14.
22.6 km	14.0 miles	Cross road at traffic lights, continue on cycletrack signposted Paisley, Glasgow.
23.6 km	14.6 miles	At cycletrack junction, continue straight on signposted Elderslie 1, Glasgow 12. You are now retracing your outward route from earlier in the day.

Hazards on the road!



25.1 km	15.5 miles	Go up Canal Street to traffic lights. Continue in same direction using cycle lane along B789 Main Road.
25.7 km	15.9 miles	At top of hill, turn left onto cycletrack, signposted Glasgow.
28.6 km	17.7 miles	At T junction, turn right up road for 10 metres, then left onto cycletrack signposted Paisley $^{1}/_{2}$, Glasgow 9.
29.1 km	18.0 miles	Arrive back at Paisley Canal station.

Barnbeth near Bridge of Weir

Facilities and information

Paisley start/finish

Plenty of pubs and cafes in the town centre for meals and snacks.

Contact Paisley Tourist Information for further information. Tel: 0141 889 0711. Email: paisley@visitscotland.com Web: www.visitscotland.com

Bridge of Weir 10 km

To visit the main village facilities, continue along the cycletrack for another 200 metres to an exit signposted Bridge of Weir. This takes you down to the Main Street, where you can find the following facilities:

Aulds Coffee Shop, Livery Walk (off Main Street) Snacks, teas and coffees all day. Closed Sundays. Tel: 01505 614858.
The Four Elements, Main Street Lunchtime and evening meals and snacks, tea and coffees all day. Closed Mondays. Tel: 01505 610610.
The Gryffe Inn, Main Street Lunchtime meals and snacks. Tel: 01505 613023.
Lochnagar Coffee Room and Restaurant, Main Street. Meals, snacks, teas and coffees. Monday to Fridays 10am-4.30pm, Saturdays 10am-3.30pm, closed Sundays. Tel: 01505 613410.

Shops There are a number of newsagents and a small supermarket.

Bridge of Weir Library, Main Street Local and historical information. Restricted opening hours. Tel: 01505 612220.

Visit www.bridgeofweir.org.uk for more information.

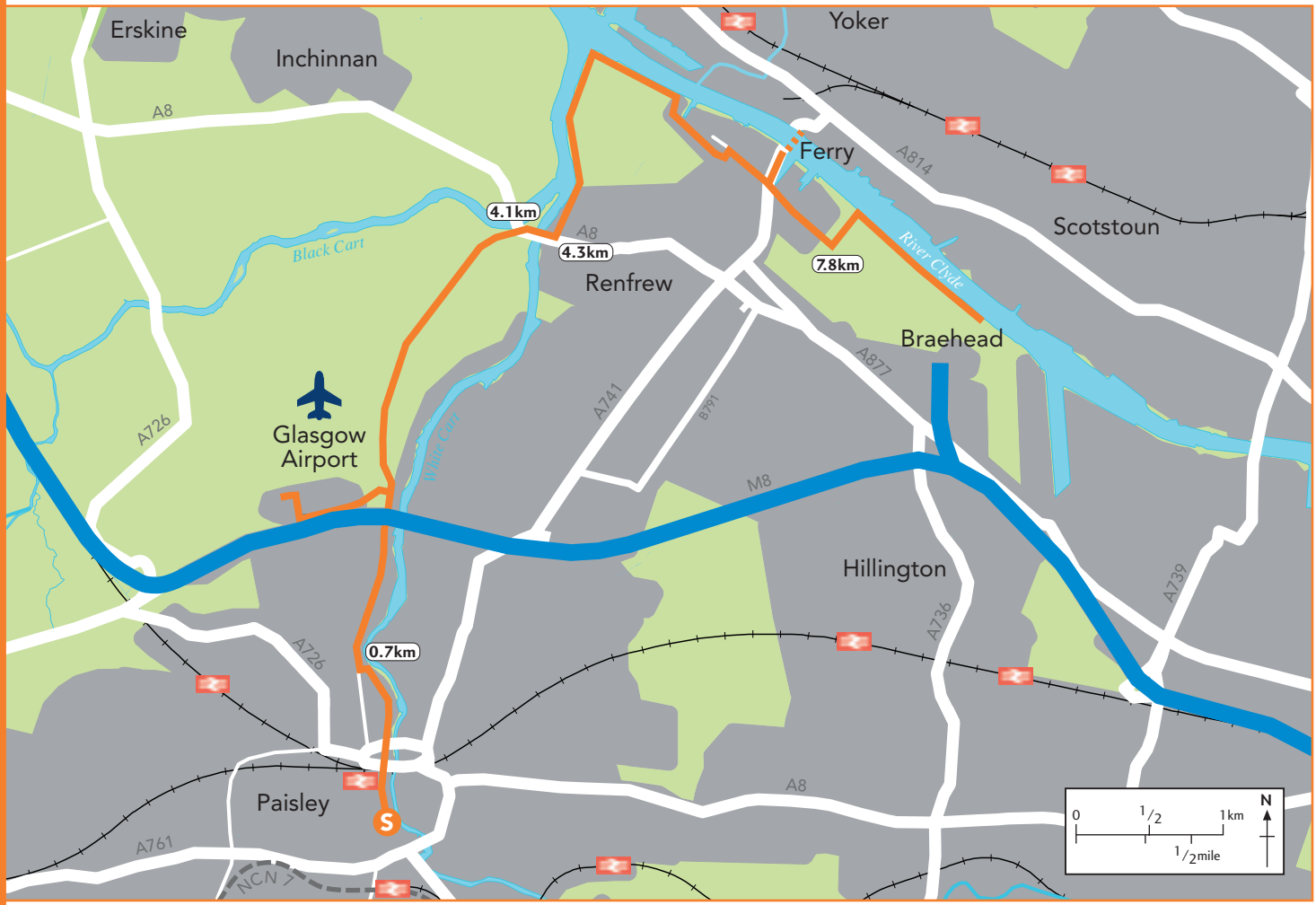
Kilbarchan 20 km

The Weaver's Cottage 20.0km 18th century weaver's cottage preserved by the National Trust for Scotland. Open Good Friday to 30 September, Friday to Tuesday 1-5pm. Tel: 01505 705588 during opening times, otherwise 0131 243 9300.

Bobbins tea room & craft shop 20.1km 25 Steeple St. Open Monday to Saturday. Tel: 01505 705509
Glenleven Inn At junction at 20.0 km, continue straight on along New Street for 100 metres. 25 New Street. Bar meals 7 days a week. Tel: 01505 702481. Booking necessary for weekends
Trust Inn 20.6km Low Barholm. Bar meals 7 days a week. Tel: 01505 702401

Shops 20.0km-20.5km New St, Steeple Street and High Barholm.

Visit www.kilbarchan.org for more information.



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5 Following the Cart & Clyde to Braehead

This ride picks its way from Paisley towards Renfrew. Signposted cycle routes and paths for much of the journey make for a surprisingly quiet route, with long scenic stretches along the White Cart Water and then the River Clyde.

The route ends up at Xscape, Braehead and Clydebuilt, a fascinating museum about shipbuilding on the Clyde which is part of the Scottish Maritime Museum. So, next time you're heading down to Braehead, why not go on your bike?

The ride is not suitable for families with young children, as there are some short sections on busy roads.

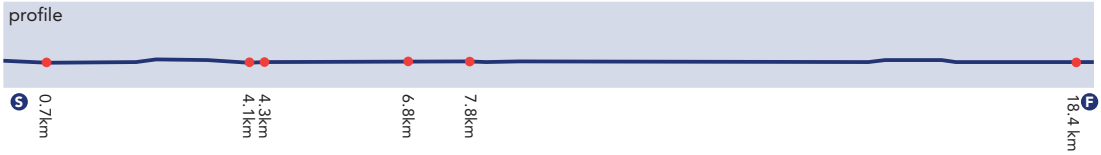
Getting to the start

The route starts outside Paisley Gilmour Street station on County Square in Paisley town centre (Ordnance Survey grid reference NS 483 641).

Rail – trains every few minutes from Glasgow Central, the Ayrshire coast and Inverclyde, 7 days a week.

Cycle – Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 7 passes through Paisley (see routes 1 and 3). Leave the cycletrack at Paisley Canal station and follow Causeyside Street downhill into the town centre, continuing along Gilmour Street to arrive at Paisley Gilmour Street in 800 metres ($^1/_2$mile). Take care – the roads are busy in the town centre.

Car – Paisley town centre has a number of car parks. The nearest is the Piazza multi-storey car park (fee), which is accessed by a ramp from County Square (NB no headroom for bike racks).



Distances in bold are also shown on the profile and plan. Not every junction is described: carry straight on unless stated otherwise.		
0.0 km	0.0 miles	Go out of the main station entrance onto County Square, and under the railway bridge next to the station entrance (sign on bridge 'Paisley Gilmour Street'). At the crossroads and traffic lights immediately after the bridge, cross Old Sneddon Street and then join the red-surfaced cycle lane on the right hand side of New Sneddon Street.
0.2 km	0.1 miles	Where red cycle lane runs out, cross road in front of you at traffic light and continue in same direction along New Sneddon Street, signposted Airport Route.
0.7 km	0.4 miles	Follow road around sharp left bend. 100 metres further on at T junction, turn right onto main road, using cycle lane where possible. Take care – busy road.
1.7 km	1.0 miles	At roundabout take second exit, signposted Glasgow, Renfrew 2 $^{1}/_{4}$, and continue under motorway viaduct.
2.4 km	1.4 miles	At next roundabout, carry straight on, using shared cycle lane/pavement on left.
4.1 km	2.5 miles	At traffic lights, turn right into Inchinnan Road signposted Renfrew, Glasgow. Go over bridges.
4.3 km	2.6 miles	Immediately after 2nd bridge (the red "bascule bridge"), turn left onto tarmac path signposted Meadowside Road via River Clyde. After 50 metres, turn left at path junction and follow path along the banks of the River Cart and then the Clyde.

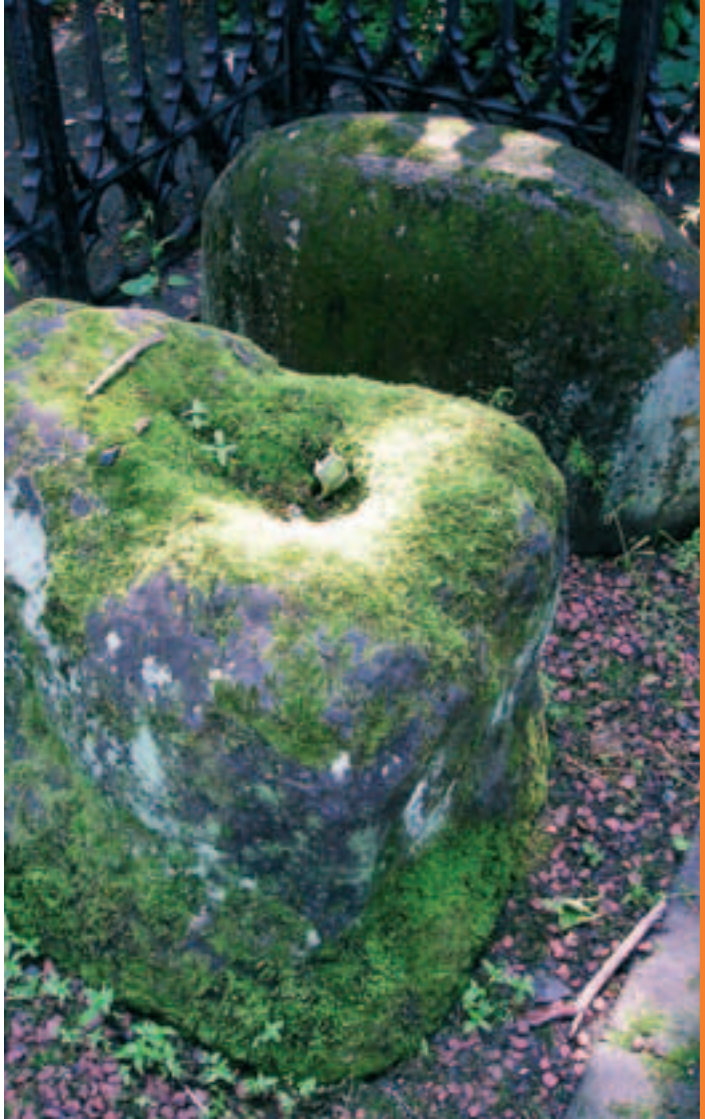
Bascule Bridge

White Cart Water 4.3 km to 5.7 km You might not realise it, but the White Cart is still navigable by seagoing vessels all the way up to Paisley. The red bascule bridge at 4.3 km still lifts to allow tall boats through. But you're more likely to see herons, cormorants or even otters on the water than you are ships, now that Paisley's docks are a thing of the past. Wildlife makes the most of the river's undisturbed banks and the little tidal islands

near the confluence with the Clyde. This is a very tranquil part of the route.

St Conval and Argyll Stones 4.3 km These ancient stones lie to the right of the path junction 50 metres after the 4.3 km point, behind a railing. According to tradition, one of these weighty stones floated out to sea from Ireland in the sixth century AD when St Conval was resting on it, having decided to found a new church. He and the stone floated up the Firth of Clyde and came to a stop at Renfrew. St Conval then went on to found his church just across the river Cart at Inchinnan. Such was the power of the legend that the stone became a shrine for pilgrims and sick people - rainwater in the hollow on top of the stone was believed to have healing powers. More recently, but still over 300 years ago, somebody else took a rest at the stones - with even more fateful consequences. The 9th Earl of Argyll, part of the failed rebellion against the new King James VII and II in 1685, had fled the battleground and was making his way in disguise to Renfrew. Like St Conval a thousand years earlier, he stopped for a rest on the stone. The stone didn't float away this time. Even worse, the Earl was snatched, taken to Edinburgh and beheaded. Tradition says the stone was disfigured with the red stains of the Earl's blood for decades.

You have been warned. Don't rest here too long!



Argyll Stones

6.8 km	4.2 miles	Immediately beyond red gate across path, turn left along road then right at T junction after 50 metres.
7.3 km	4.5 miles	At crossroads, continue straight on (signposted Braehead). Join shared cycletrack/pavement on left of road. (To get to Renfrew town centre, turn right here – see Facilities and Information below.)
7.8 km	4.8 miles	Turn left into Clyde View Park, and follow straight tarmac path through park.
8.1 km	5.0 miles	Turn right onto tarmac path along Clyde riverfront.
8.7 km	5.4 miles	Arrive at Xscape. Braehead Shopping Centre and Clydebuilt Museum are 300 and 500 metres further respectively. To return, simply go back the way you came. Take care not to miss the left turns after the bridges over the White Cart Water (4.1 km on the map) and from the main road onto Cartvale Lane and New Sneddon Street (0.7 km on the map).
18.4 km	11.4 miles	Arrive back at Paisley Gilmour Street.

NB – from the crossroads at 7.3 km you will eventually be able to follow a riverfront path along the Clyde all the way. This path had not been finished at the time of writing.

Renfrew and the Clyde 5.7 km to 8.7 km Renfrew has always been closely tied to the river Clyde, which you ride alongside once you turn upstream past the green shipping light at 5.7 km. The town's importance as a trading post meant that it was made a burgh by King David I in the twelfth century, and then promoted to a royal burgh by Robert III two hundred years later. The Clyde provided food, fish and access up and downstream for trade, and the position of the town on the river's flood plain meant that local soil was fertile and good for agriculture. The town was the principal port on the Clyde, outshining even Glasgow, by 1600.

Clyde View Park, Renfrew

In Victorian times, the town witnessed the rise of great shipbuilding and engineering enterprises. Industrial giants like Babcock & Wilcox and Simons & Lobnitz employed thousands of workers, sustaining a huge boom in the town's fortunes into the twentieth century. Heavy industry has declined since the Second World War. The scrapyard you pass at 6.4 km is the last surviving link between Renfrew's industrial heritage and the River Clyde: scrap is sorted here and then shipped abroad from the wharf on the river.

The town, however, is turning to face the Clyde once more. Big changes are underway for the area between the Renfrew ferry and Braehead. A new park, flats, houses and business parks are being built, and the Clyde riverfront will be opened up to Renfrew's residents as never before in its history.

Shipbuilding on the Clyde

Facilities and information

Here you can find details of where to buy snacks and meals or get tourist information. You may wish to telephone ahead to confirm opening times.

Paisley start/finish

Plenty of pubs and cafes in the town centre for meals and snacks.

Contact Paisley Tourist Information for further information. Tel: 0141 889 0711. Email: paisley@visitscotland.com Web: www.visitscotland.com

Glasgow Airport 2 km

Glasgow Airport Terminal Building is 0.7 km from the route, and has public toilets, cafes, bars, shops and tourist information. More information from www.glasgowairport.com

To get to the Terminal Building, follow cycletrack to left immediately after passing under motorway viaduct at 1.9 km.

Renfrew 8 km

Renfrew town centre has cafes, pubs, shops and Renfrew Community Museum. It lies approximately 600 metres off the route. To get there, turn right at the crossroads at 7.3 km on the way out (if visiting on the way back, turn left at this point).

Refreshments also available at the Normandy Hotel at 4.3 km. Tel: 0141 886 4100.

Visit www.myrenfrew.com for more information on Renfrew.

Braehead 9 km

Xscape www.xscape.co.uk and Braehead Shopping Centre www.braehead.co.uk have cafes, shops and toilets. Xscape has a bicycle shop.

Clydebuilt, part of the Scottish Maritime Museum (fee). Open every day. Tel: 0141 886 1013 www.scottishmaritimemuseum.org

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6 Hills around Howwood

There's some beautiful countryside tucked away amongst the hills on either side of the valley of the Black Cart Water between Johnstone and Lochwinnoch. This ride explores a few hidden corners, using a combination of quiet country roads and the national cycletrack.

Although it's relatively short, be prepared for a few hills… you have been warned!

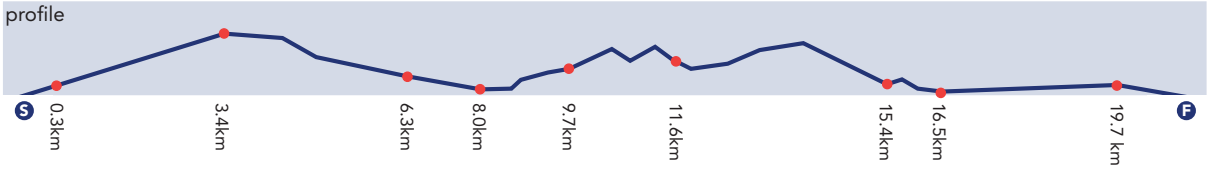
Getting to the start

The route starts at Howwood, just off Station Road (Ordnance Survey grid reference NS 395 694). Some sections of the route can be busy - best avoided at peak hours.

Rail – hourly trains every day between Glasgow Central, Paisley, Johnstone and Ardrossan.

Cycle – the start is 1 km from Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 7 linking Glasgow, Paisley and Irvine (see route 1). Why not cycle to the start of the route? Leave Route 7 at the signpost for Howwood, and turn left along the road. ⚠ Take care - fast moving traffic. Howwood station is signposted on your right as you enter Howwood.

Car – Howwood is signposted from the A737 between Johnstone and Beith. Follow signs to the station, where there is a car park.



Distances in bold are also shown on the profile and plan. Not every junction is described: carry straight on unless stated otherwise.		
0.0 km	0.0 miles	Up to Station Road.
0.1 km	0.6 miles	Turn right into Howwood.
0.3 km	0.2 miles	Turn left at T junction. Then immediately turn right uphill signposted Caldwell B776.
0.5 km	0.3 miles	Continue round sharp bend uphill to right, signposted Bowfield Hotel & Country Club.
3.4 km	2.1 miles	Turn right into Glenhead Road, signposted Lochwinnoch. Single track road – beware oncoming traffic.
4.0 km	2.5 miles	Follow road round to right at unmarked junction.
4.1 km	2.5 miles	Fork left at unmarked junction (ignore sign to Lorabar).
5.1 km	3.2 miles	Turn left at T junction into Newton of Belltrees hamlet. Follow road round to left at junction after 200 metres. Single track road – beware oncoming traffic.
6.3 km	3.9 miles	At junction, turn right down Auchengrange Hill. Take care – steep hill, sharp bends & narrow bridge.
6.7 km	4.2 miles	Busy junction - straight on signposted A760 Largs Kilbirnie Lochwinnoch.
7.5 km	4.7 miles	Use traffic lights at RSPB Nature Reserve to cross road, continue on cycle track on other side of road.

Calder Bridge, Lochwinnoch

RSPB Nature Reserve 7.5km The Lochwinnoch Nature Reserve is one of the few remaining wetlands in western Scotland. The visitor centre, with its observation tower and telescopes, offers excellent views over the marshland and loch, where in the winter you may see a variety of wildfowl and waders including whooper swans, geese, goosanders and goldeneyes. In the spring, great crested grebes and lapwings can be seen displaying and the summer comes alive with flower meadows and colourful dragonflies. More information at www.rspb.org.uk/reserves

Lochwinnoch 8.5km Although the origins of the village go back a long way, much of Lochwinnoch dates from the eighteenth century, when the village expanded hugely with the growth of textile mills and furniture manufacturing. The streets in the centre of the village were planned at this time, and form the grid system of the village Conservation Area.

Local landed estates were also important to the village – particularly the Castle Semple, which had been a wealthy estate since mediaeval times. So important was Castle Semple that the village was in part designed around it: the Parish Church on Harvey Square was built at the end of the grand western avenue from the huge Castle Semple House. The house burned down in the 1930s, but the drive remains as Harvey Terrace and Gates Road.

Castle Semple Estate 8.6km Well worth exploring on foot – see route 1 for more information.

8.0 km	5.0 miles	Turn right over 1st bridge over river. Continue along cycletrack to Castle Semple Visitor Centre in Lochwinnoch
8.6 km	5.3 miles	Arrive at car park entrance for Castle Semple Visitor Centre (tourist information, toilets, café). From car park entrance, turn right under bridge into St Winnoc Road.
8.8 km	5.5 miles	At T junction, turn right uphill into Johnshill. (To visit shops, pubs, café and library, turn left into High Street first.)
9.7 km	6.0 miles	Turn right onto minor road signposted Howwood. Take care – bad bend.
11.6 km	7.2 miles	After the top of the second hill, turn left onto a narrow minor road (no sign). The junction is easy to miss – look for an old rusty pole.

11.9 km	7.4 miles	Give way at unmarked crossroads. Carry straight on, past the Clochodrick Stone on your right (to find out more, see next page).
13.1 km	8.1 miles	At unmarked junction, follow road to right then immediately left.
15.4 km	9.6 miles	Turn left into Church Street and into Kilbarchan.
15.7 km	9.8 miles	At crossroads, turn right into Steeple Street and then left into Steeple Street.
16.1 km	10.0 miles	Turn left onto main road.
16.5 km	10.3 miles	Just before bridge over road, turn left up hill.
16.5 km	10.3 miles	50 metres up hill, turn right onto cycletrack, then right along cycletrack signposted Lochwinnoch Kilbirnie Irvine.
19.7 km	12.2 miles	Turn left up ramp signposted Howwood, and turn left along the road. Take care - fast moving traffic.
21.9 km	13.6 miles	Turn right to Howwood as you enter the village.

Clochoderick Stone

Lochwinnoch

Clochoderick Stone 11.9km This strange boulder, the size of a house, sits in the corner of a field next to the road. There are a number of stories about how it got there. Some say that a giant called Clochoderick had a stone in his boot, took it out and threw it on the ground - where it remains today. Others say that it was deposited here 18,000 years ago by a melting glacier flowing from where Loch Lomond is now. Which story do you prefer?

Kilbarchan 15.4km See route 1 for more information about this historic village.

Facilities and information

Please note that the only public toilets are at the RSPB Nature Reserve and Castle Semple Visitor Centre in Lochwinnoch.

Howwood start / finish

Howwood Inn Beith Road. Drinks and bar meals. Tel: 01505 703119

Shops on Station Road and Beith Road.

Lochwinnoch 8.0-8.8 km

Castle Semple Visitor Centre 8.6 km Open daily. Information, café, toilets, bike hire and repairs, shop, ranger service, walks leaflets, watersports, bike hire, archery, fishing permits. Tel: 01505 842803 www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk

RSPB Nature Reserve 7.5 km Open daily. Visitor centre, toilets, refreshments, shop, bird hide (fee) and nature trails (fee). Tel: 01505 842663 www.rspb.org.uk

Lochwinnoch Community Library 8.8 km High Street. Historical photos and information. Restricted opening hours. Tel: 01505 842305

The Hungry Monk 7.0 km Restaurant and bar. 1km before Lochwinnoch on A760, near rail station. Tel: 01505 843848

The Junction 8.8 km Café and bistro. 2-4 High Street. Tel: 01505 842225

Brown Bull Pub and Restaurant 8.8 km 33 Main Street. Open daily. Tel: 01505 843250

Garthland Arms Bar and Restaurant 8.8 km 5 Church Street. Tel: 01505 842047

La Dolce Vita 8.8 km Takeaway. 9-13 High Street. Tel: 01505 843372

The Gable End 8.8 km Restaurant. 45 High Street. Tel: 01505 852775

Shops on High Street and Main Street.

Kilbarchan **15.4 km**

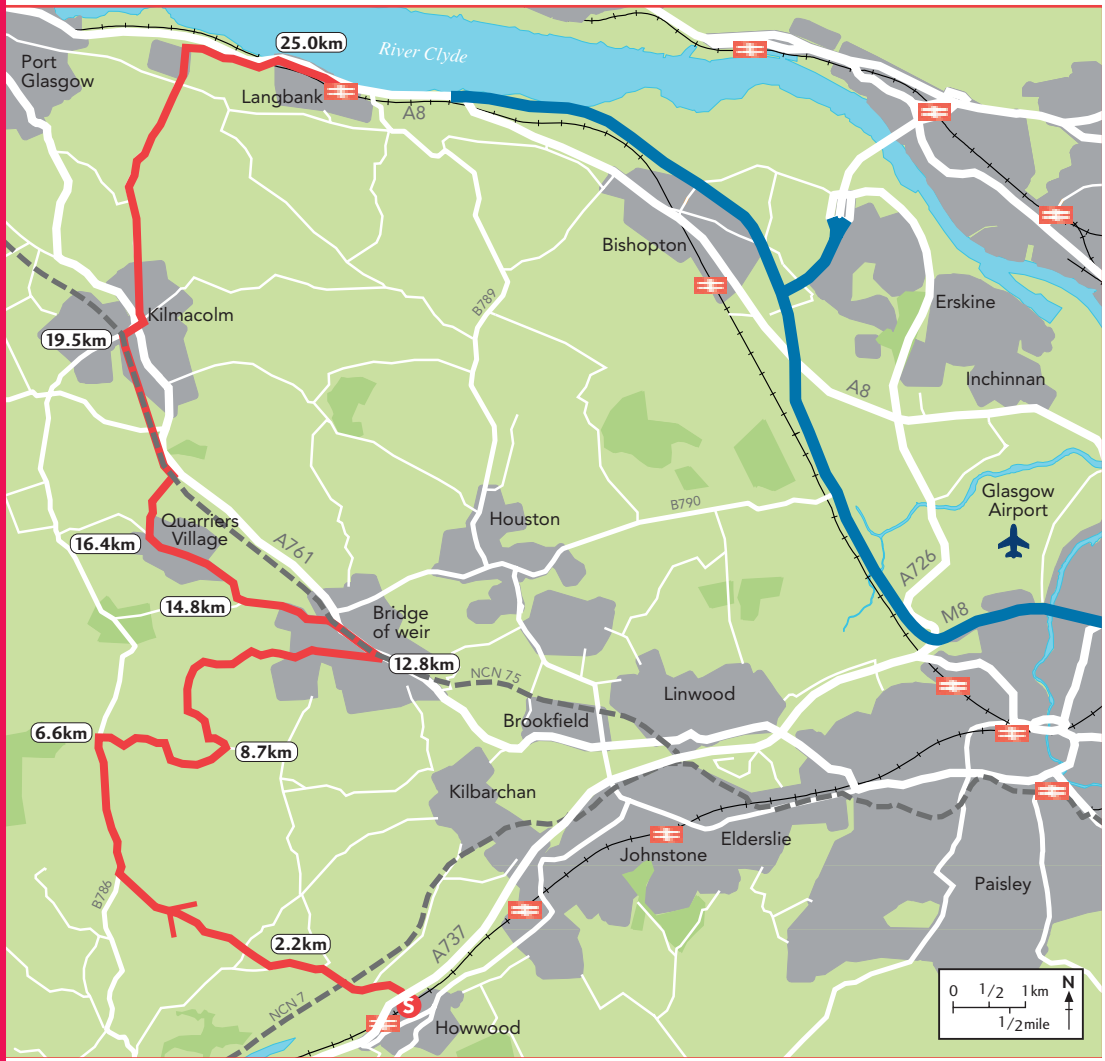
The Weaver's Cottage 15.7 km 18th century weaver's cottage preserved by the National Trust for Scotland. Open Good Friday to 30 September, Friday to Tuesday 1-5pm. Tel: 01505 705588 during opening times, otherwise 0131 243 9300.

Glenleven Inn At junction at 15.7 km, continue straight on along New Street for 100 metres. 25 New Street. Bar meals 7 days a week. Tel: 01505 702481

Bobbins tea room & craft shop 15.8 km 25 Steeple St. Open Monday to Saturday. Tel: 01505 705509

Trust Inn 16.4 km Low Barholm. Bar meals 7 days a week. Tel: 01505 702401

Shops 15.7-16.4km New St, Steeple Street and High Barholm.



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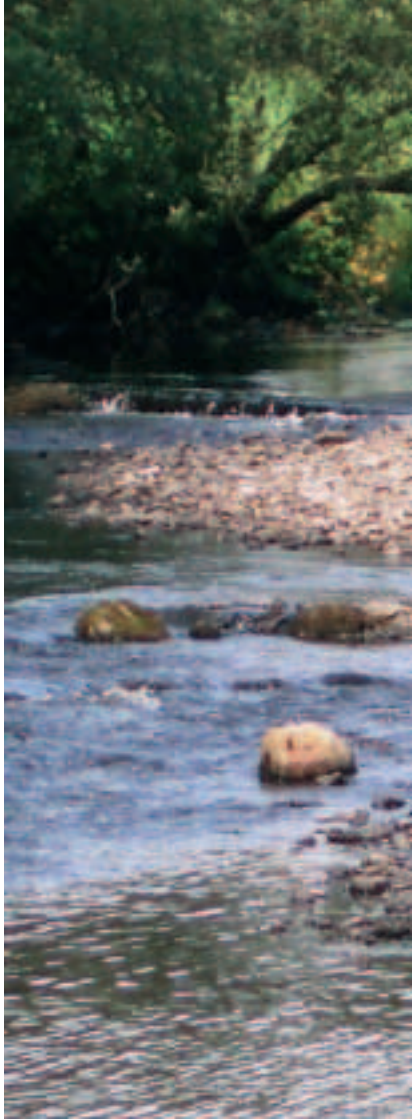


7 From Howwood to the sea!

Cutting right across Renfrewshire, you'll explore the great variety that we have to offer: wide valleys, wooded hills, pleasant villages, lochs and rivers. The ride finishes at Finlaystone Country Park with its tremendous setting above the Clyde.

As the route links two railway stations with good services, it's easily accessible from Paisley, Johnstone and Glasgow.

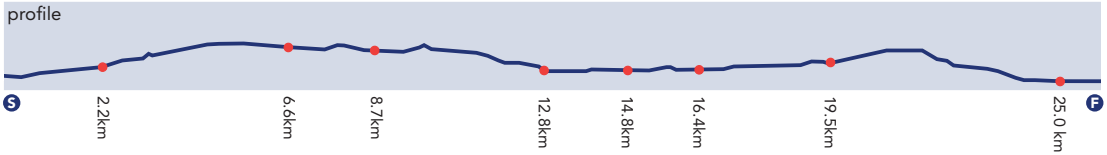
Getting to the start

The route starts at Howwood, just off Station Road (Ordnance Survey grid reference NS 395 694).

Rail – hourly trains every day between Glasgow Central, Paisley, Johnstone and Ardrossan.

Cycle – the start is 1 km from Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 7 linking Glasgow, Paisley and Irvine (see route 1). Why not cycle to the start. Follow route 1 to the signpost for Howwood, and turn left along the road. ⚠ Take care - fast moving traffic. Howwood station is signposted on your right as you enter Howwood.

Car – Howwood is signposted from the A737 between Johnstone and Beith. Follow signs to the station, where there is a car park. Bear in mind you'll need to get back to your car again from Langbank. The easiest way is by rail, changing at Paisley Gilmour Street – or you could cycle back from Paisley St James or Paisley Gilmour Street stations by joining route 1.



Distances in bold are also shown on the profile and plan. Not every junction is described: carry straight on unless stated otherwise.		
0.0 km	0.0 miles	Up to Station Road. Turn left over the railway and out of Howwood.
2.2 km	1.3 miles	Where road starts to steepen uphill in front of you, turn right (no sign), following road alongside stream.
4.7 km	2.9 miles	At T junction, turn right. Take care for the next 2 km – the road is usually quiet, but traffic can be fast.
6.6 km	4.1 miles	100m past Locherwood Community Woodland (on your left), turn right signposted Barnbrock Park HQ. Take care turning right.
8.7 km	5.4 miles	Turn left at unmarked junction by woodland, onto very narrow road. There is a telegraph pole right at the junction.
11.7 km	7.2 miles	Turn left onto Donaldfield Road (becomes Prieston Road).
12.8 km	7.9 miles	At busy T junction at bottom of hill, turn left. Immediately beyond bus shelter, turn left along track through white metal gateposts, and then immediately right through bollards down cycletrack ramp (no signpost). Bear left at bottom of ramp along cycletrack (no signpost).

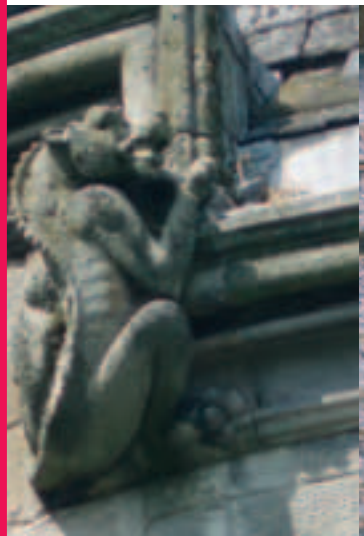
River Gryfe

Clochoderick Stone 2.4 km This strange boulder, the size of a house, sits in the corner of a field next to the road. There are a number of stories about how it got there. Some say that a giant called Clochoderick had a stone in his boot, took it out and threw it on the ground - where it remains today. Others say that it was deposited here 18,000 years ago by a melting glacier flowing from where Loch Lomond is now. Which story do you prefer?

Locherwood Community Woodland 6.3 km This woodland was planted in the mid 1990s as a woodland with free access for local people and a haven for nature. The trees are still very young, so it feels very open compared to older woodlands. All of the trees are native to Scotland – species like oak, birch, ash and rowan. Because these trees are indigenous, they support a whole range of other local flora and fauna, including lichens, wild flowers, insects, birds and small mammals. The forest beyond, Ladymuir, has bird hides from where you can catch glimpses of deer, owls and buzzards.

If you'd like to explore the woods and find out more, Renfrewshire Council's walking guidebook "Out There: 10 walks around Renfrewshire" contains a walk around the woods.

13.5 km	8.3 miles	Turn right off cycletrack signposted Bridge of Weir, and down to road. Turn left along road, under bridge and out of village. (For shops, café and pubs, turn right and go up to Main Street.)
14.8 km	9.1 miles	Fork right, signposted Quarrier's Village. (Take care, poor visibility).
16.4 km	10.1 miles	Just after passing Marcus Humphrey House on your right, turn right downhill (no sign) and out of Quarrier's Village.
17.3 km	10.7 miles	Turn left at blue cycletrack sign, and go down ramp onto cycletrack. Turn left along cycletrack, signposted Kilmacolm 1 $^{1}/_{2}$.
19.5 km	12.1 miles	At the Pullman Tavern in Kilmacolm, turn right up ramp. At top of ramp, turn left along Lochwinnoch Road (shops and cafés) to reach crossroads after 100 metres. Straight on into Market Place, which bends left and becomes the High Street. Follow this out of Kilmacolm.
21.7 km	13.4 miles	Steep narrow descent with blind bends.
23.3 km	14.4 miles	Straight on into Finlaystone Country Estate (road is open to cyclists). Follow tarmac road down through the Estate.



Viewpoint 10.7 km Look out for the viewpoint built into the stone wall on your left as you cycle through the golf course. Ben Lomond – Scotland's most southerly Munro (mountain over 914 metres / 3000 feet) – stands prominently due north. If it's clear, you can glimpse Ben Cruachan shimmering away near Oban, 70 km / 44 miles away.

Bridge of Weir 13 km Bridge of Weir has a history of castles, leather tanning, cotton weaving and more recently as a leafy commuter village for Glaswegians – based on the rail connection to Glasgow, which closed to passengers in 1983 and became the cycletrack that you're cycling on. There are also a teashop and a few pubs on the Main Street, so why not stop? Find out more in route 4.

Quarrier's Village 15 km Quarrier's Village is a marvellous example of Victorian charity – built for disadvantaged children by William Quarrier from Greenock, himself an orphan made good. Find out more about its history in route 9.

Kilmacolm 19 km Kilmacolm lies in an idyllic setting in the valley of Strathgryfe. Find out more about this village in route 8.

Quarriers Village

24.5 km	15.2 miles	At T junction with A8 dual carriageway, turn right along tarmac path alongside dual carriageway.
25.0 km	15.5 miles	Immediately after passing under railway bridge, turn right away from dual carriageway on short tarmac path. After 50 metres, continue in same direction along road into Langbank.
26.0 km	16.1 miles	Arrive at Langbank on your right.

Finlaystone

Finlaystone 23 km Time for tea? Finlaystone has a café and toilets, just the ticket near the end of the ride! It's also worth spending some time here exploring the Country Estate. From the information centre, there are delightful formal gardens with views over the Clyde to the Highlands, and an extensive woodland with waymarked walks, lakes and waterfalls.

Finlaystone House itself was built by the famous Glaswegian architect Sir John Burnet for a shipping family in around 1900, although there has been a house or castle on the site for hundreds of years – records go back to the 13th century. The house is now home to the chief of Clan MacMillan and the Clan Centre.

Langbank 25 km See route 8 to discover more about Langbank.

Facilities and information

Here you can find details of where to buy snacks and meals or get tourist information. You may wish to telephone ahead to confirm opening times.

Howwood start
Howwood Inn Beith Road. Drinks and bar meals. Tel: 01505 703119

Shops on Station Road and Beith Road.

Visit www.howwood.com for more information.

Bridge of Weir 13 km
The following facilities are all on or near the Main Street:

The Gryffe Inn, Main Street Lunchtime meals and snacks. Tel: 01505 613023.
The Four Elements, Main Street Lunchtime and evening meals and snacks, tea and coffees all day. Closed Mondays. Tel: 01505 610610.
Aulds Coffee Shop, Livery Walk (off Main Street) Snacks, teas and coffees all day. Closed Sundays. Tel: 01505 614858.
Lochnagar Coffee Room and Restaurant, Main Street. Meals, snacks, teas and coffees. Mondays to Fridays 10am-4.30pm, Saturdays 10am-3.30pm, closed Sundays. Tel: 01505 613410.

Shops There are a number of newsagents and a small supermarket.

Bridge of Weir Library, Main Street Local and historical information. Restricted opening hours. Tel: 01505 612220.

Visit www.bridgeofweir.org.uk for more information.

Kilmacolm 19 km
Cafes, shops, pub and library for information on Lochwinnoch Road.

Finlaystone Country Estate 23 km
Café, toilets and visitor information. (NB – entry fee for gardens) Tel: 01475 540505 www.finlaystone.com

Langbank 25 km
On Main Road, the Hungry Monk serves food and snacks from 10am to 10pm (closed 4pm-5pm at weekends, tel: 01475 541254) and Langbank Village Store sells drinks and snacks.

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8 Clyde panoramas

This ride explores the quiet countryside between the Clyde and the Gryfe. There's a great range of scenery, from magnificent vistas across the Clyde to Dumbarton Rock and Ben Lomond to the lush fields of Strathgryfe. You'll also visit Finlaystone and Formakin, two contrasting country estates which are open to the public.
The route is almost entirely on roads. Although they are mainly quiet, the ride is not suitable for young children.

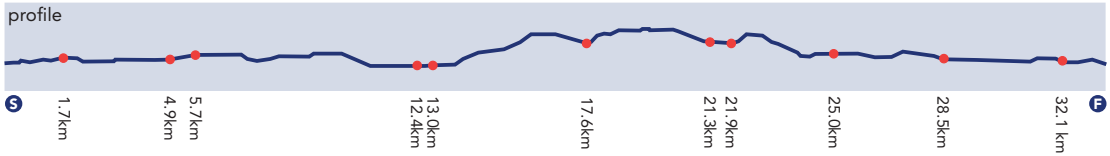
Getting to the start

The route starts outside Erskine Community Library and Swimming Pool at the Bridgewater Shopping Centre in Erskine town centre, PA8 7AA (Ordnance Survey grid reference NS 435 651).

Cycle – the start of the route is easy to reach by bike from within Erskine and Inchinnan, or Clydebank and Old Kilpatrick via the Erskine Bridge. To cycle to the route from Renfrew, Paisley, Johnstone, Linwood or other places in Renfrewshire involves cycling on busy roads, and is only recommended if you are a confident cyclist in these situations.

Car – follow the M8 to junction 30, then take the M898 signposted to Erskine Bridge. Take the first exit signposted Erskine, and follow signs for A726 to Erskine, town centre and swimming pool. The route starts at the main car park in Erskine town centre. Free parking.

Rail – If you come by train, we suggest you start and finish the route at Bishopton, the nearest station to Erskine. It is served by frequent trains between Glasgow Central, Paisley Gilmour Street and Greenock. If coming from Glasgow or Paisley, go down the pedestrian ramp from the platform near the back of the train, and turn right along the road. Take the first tarmac road on the right, immediately before the entrance to the BAE Systems site. Follow this road alongside the site fence, across an old level crossing, and up to a crossroads with traffic lights (the 4.6 km point on the route). Turn left to join the route.



Distances in bold are also shown on the profile and plan. Not every junction is described: carry straight on unless stated otherwise.		
0.0 km	0.0 miles	Facing out from the entrances to the Swimming Pool and Library, head diagonally right across the car park to arrive at a footbridge. Just over the footbridge at a path T junction, turn left signposted Park Mains. After 100 metres, turn right down towards Rashieholm roundabout (no sign).
0.3 km	0.2 miles	Take the 2nd exit from the roundabout towards Park Mains High School, but immediately on leaving the roundabout turn right onto tarmac footpath alongside right-hand side of playing fields.
0.7 km	0.4 miles	Where path meets stone wall, turn left along lane.
1.1 km	0.7 miles	At end of lane, turn right along Craigends Drive.
1.7 km	1.0 miles	At T junction, turn right along main road (no sign). Take care – fast moving traffic.
3.2 km	2.0 miles	Go over motorway and into Bishopton.
4.5 km	2.8 miles	Where you give way at crossroads, turn left (and go down to the traffic lights). Turn right at the traffic lights.
4.9 km	3.0 miles	Bear left, signposted Houston, Johnstone, Bishopton Cemetery.
5.7 km	3.5 miles	Take the first road on the left (signposted Unsuitable for heavy goods vehicles).
7.6 km	4.7 miles	Turn right at T junction (take care – poor visibility).
11.2 km	7.0 miles	Continue straight on into Langbank.

Erskine Harbour & Clyde

Formakin 7.3 km The Formakin Estate is a beautiful country estate set in rolling countryside. The buildings are a gem of Scottish architecture, with a bit of mischief thrown in. The Estate also has walks through peaceful woodlands and attractive meadows, brimming with colourful flowers in the summer and beautiful colours in the autumn. Why not use the picnic benches by the car park for a short break. For more information on the Estate and the walks, see the accompanying walks guidebook "Out There". NB: restricted opening hours for the Estate walks. May-Sept: Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-6pm. October-April: Wednesday-Saturday, 10am-4pm. Free entry. Car parking fee.

Langbank 11 km Until the mid nineteenth century, there was very little at "The Long Bank": a ferry across the Clyde at West Ferry, a mile or so upstream from the current village, and a couple of houses. Langbank really started life as a village after the opening of the Glasgow and Greenock Railway in 1841. It took a few years before the developers started to realise its potential as a place for commuters to live. During the second half of the nineteenth century, houses were built along the line parallel to the Clyde, and have since crept up the steep hill behind. A few of these were built by wealthy shipbuilders who added servants' cottages, stables and coach houses. For the architects amongst you, there is even a terrace of houses

Formakin

12.4 km	7.7 miles	Where Main Road curves downhill to right, bear left in same direction to end of road (150 metres), then follow tarmac path which continues alongside A8.
13.0 km	8.0 miles	Turn left into Finlaystone Country Estate (road is open to cyclists). Follow tarmac road up through the Estate.
14.3 km	8.9 miles	At exit from Finlaystone, go straight on at crossroads. Steep hill, single track road.
16.8 km	10.4 miles	Continue along road into Kilmacolm.
17.6 km	10.9 miles	Immediately after small public park on your left, turn left up West Glen Road. Steep hill, single track road after leaving Kilmacolm.
21.3 km	13.2 miles	A couple of miles after leaving Kilmacolm turn sharp left into Gallahill Road.
21.9 km	13.6 miles	Turn first right into Netherton Road and follow up hill – steep towards the top.
22.7 km	14.1 miles	Steep narrow descent with blind bends. Good view to Dumbarton Rock across the Clyde.
24.1 km	14.9 miles	Turn right, then at junction after 50 metres and continue in same direction signposted Johnstone 7.

Langbank

by the famous Glasgow architect Alexander "Greek" Thomson. They are on the left at 12.4 km, just where you leave the Main Road.

Directly across the water is Dumbarton Rock, the tough rump of an old volcano which has been a military stronghold since before the Romans came. It last saw action as recently as 1941, when the Castle on the rock was bombed by German aircraft during a raid on the Clyde. It is now in the care of Historic Scotland and open to visitors.

Finlaystone 13 km As well as beautiful gardens and a stunning setting, Finlaystone has a café and toilets – maybe just what you need ! See route 7 for more information.

25.0 km	15.5 miles	Turn left at first road junction (no sign, just beyond the top of a hill).
28.5 km	17.7 miles	Turn right at T junction as you enter Bishopton, then after 100 metres take the second road on the left Old Greenock Road.
28.8 km	17.9 miles	Straight on at crossroads. You are now retracing your ride back to the start.
31.5 km	19.5 miles	Take the second road on the left after entering Erskine.
32.1 km	19.9 miles	Just after a bus stop, turn left into Barhill Road.
32.5 km	20.1 miles	At end of stone wall on right, turn right down tarmac path alongside playing fields.
32.8 km	20.3 miles	At Rashieholm roundabout, take second exit signposted Erskine Parish Church. Turn left up footpath immediately after Church, then right over footbridge signposted Erskine town centre.
33.3 km	20.7 miles	Arrive back at the start.

Kilmacolm 18 km Today Kilmacolm is a quiet and largely affluent commuter village, with a beautiful outlook over Strathgryfe. But it has a long history: the name of the village (Kil-ma-colm) is Gaelic for Colm's church. Colm was St Columba – the Irish missionary from the sixth century AD who sailed across to Argyll, travelled the Isles, and founded the famous religious community on Iona. The first church was built in his memory in 570AD. Although that original church has long gone, a St Columba's Church does still stand on the site – its grey stone tower rises above the centre of the village. The current church dates from 1903: this was a time when the character of the village was changing rapidly from a rural hamlet to a commuter town, following the opening of the railway between Glasgow St Enoch and Greenock Princess Pier in 1869. Although the railway has now gone, the village is still a sought-after place to live.

Kilmacolm, Inverclyde

Facilities and information

Here you can find details of where to buy snacks and meals or get tourist information. You may wish to telephone ahead to confirm opening times.

Erskine start/finish
Erskine Swimming Pool Bridgewater Place, Erskine, PA8 7AA. Wide range of swimming activities. Vending machines. Open daily. Tel: 0141 812 0044
Web: www.renfrewshireleisure.com (Other sports available at Erskine Sports Centre to rear of Swimming Pool.)

Erskine Library Bridgewater Place, Erskine, PA8 7AA. Local information. Open daily except Wednesday and Sunday. Tel: 0141 812 5331
www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/libraries

Bishopton 4.6 km
And Relax Coffee Shop Turn left at traffic lights, 200 metres along on right hand side. Open Monday to Saturday. Tel: 01505 863900

Various shops along Greenock Road between 4.5 km and 4.9km and next to Coffee Shop.

Bishopton Library 11 Greenock Road, Bishopton, PA7 5JW. Local information. Open daily except Sunday, but opening hours vary. Tel: 01505 862136
www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/libraries

Visit www.inbishopton.org.uk for more information.

Langbank 11 km
On Main Road, the Hungry Monk serves food and snacks from 10am to 10pm (closed 4pm-5pm at weekends, tel: 01475 541254) and Langbank Village Store sells drinks and snacks.

Finlaystone Country Estate Café, toilets and visitor information. (NB – entry fee for access to gardens) Tel: 01475 540505 www.finlaystone.com

Kilmacolm 17.6 km
Kilmacolm village centre has cafes, shops, a pub and a library for local information. From where you turn left at 17.6 km, continue straight on to reach a crossroads after 150 metres. Go straight on along Lochwinnoch Road – facilities are along the first 200 metres of the road.

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9 Mountain biking across Muirshiel

If you want action and adrenalin, this is the ride for you! Heading high up into the Muirshiel hills, splashing across burns, rough climbs and exhilarating descents - you might be surprised at how much wild, exciting cycling you can find so close to Paisley and Glasgow. There are also tremendous views across the Central Belt and north to the Highlands.

There's more to the ride than simply the mountain biking: you'll also see some wonderful scenery, and the Victorian philanthropy of Quarriers Village.

A word of warning: this ride has some very rough sections. You will need a proper mountain bike in good working order. Be prepared for cold or wet weather on the moors. And make sure you know how to fix a puncture, just in case.

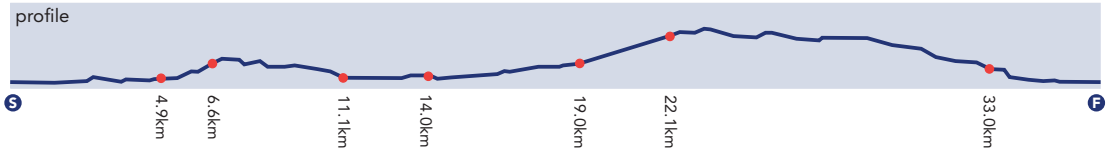
Getting to the start

The route starts at Lochwinnoch railway station, just outside Lochwinnoch (Ordnance Survey grid reference NS 360 579).

Rail – hourly trains every day between Glasgow Central, Paisley, Johnstone and Ardrossan.

Cycle – from Paisley, Johnstone and Linwood, follow route 1 to Castle Semple Visitor Centre in Lochwinnoch (the 15.2 km point) to join this route at the 1.2 km point.

Car – from Glasgow, Paisley and Johnstone, follow the A737 to roundabout junction signposted A760 Lochwinnoch to the right. Lochwinnoch station car park is 700 metres along this road on the left. Alternatively, continue for another 700 metres and follow signs to Castle Semple Visitor Centre, which has a bigger car park, toilets and a café. This is at the 1.2km point on the route.



Distances in bold are also shown on the profile and plan. Not every junction is described: carry straight on unless stated otherwise.		
0.2 km	0.1 miles	Turn left out of station entrance, and use traffic lights at RSPB Nature Reserve to cross road. Continue on cycle track on other side of road
0.7 km	0.4 miles	Turn right over 1st bridge over river. Continue along cycletrack into Lochwinnoch.
1.2 km	0.7 miles	Arrive at car park entrance for Castle Semple Visitor Centre (tourist information, toilets, café). Go up cycletrack ramp, signposted NCN 7 and Lochwinnoch Loop Line. At top of ramp, continue in same direction signposted Kilbarchan 4, Glasgow 19.
4.9 km	3.0 miles	Turn sharp right up cycletrack ramp signposted Howwood. At top of ramp, turn right (no sign).
5.5 km	3.4 miles	At first left hand bend, turn right into narrow road.
6.6 km	4.1 miles	At unsigned junctions, turn left then immediately right, continuing uphill.
7.6 km	4.7 miles	Take care – blind corner on steep narrow descent.
8.2 km	5.1 miles	Straight on at crossroads (no sign).

10.4 km	6.4 miles	Turn right into Prieston Road.
11.1 km	6.9 miles	At busy T junction at bottom of hill, turn left. Immediately beyond bus shelter, turn left along track through white metal gateposts, and then immediately right through bollards down cycletrack ramp (no signpost). Bear left at bottom of ramp along cycletrack (no signpost).
11.5 km	7.1 miles	Signpost to Bridge of Weir facilities on the right – turn off here for shops, café and pubs along the Main Street.
14.0 km	8.7 miles	Turn left at cycletrack junction signposted Quarriers $^{1}/_{4}$.
14.4 km	8.9 miles	After crossing bridge, turn right in front of two big stone buildings, then up steep tarmac ramp after the second building. Turn right at T junction at top, then first left past Somerville's restaurant along road.
14.8 km	9.2 miles	At T junction, turn right. Follow road out of Quarriers Village.
16.6 km	10.3 miles	At T junction, turn right, over bridge, then immediately left up narrow road to South Newton.
17.7 km	10.9 miles	At unmarked junction at South Newton farm, bear left. Over next kilometre, ignore farm accesses to right and then to left.

Bridge of Weir 11.5 km Bridge of Weir has a history of castles, leather tanning, cotton weaving and more recently as a leafy commuter village for Glaswegians – based on the rail connection to Glasgow, which closed to passengers in 1983 and became the cycletrack that you're cycling on. There are also a teashop and a few pubs on the Main Street, so why not stop? Find out more in route 4.

Quarriers Village

19.0 km	11.8 miles	100 metres after bridge over stream, at unmarked junction turn sharp left off road signposted Hardridge Farm. This road is tarmac at first, then becomes a stony track.
20.0 km	12.4 miles	⚠ Just past a cottage on the right, you will come to the first of 5 gates along the track. Continue along the track, uphill, through each of these gates. The next 7 km are rough off-road cycling. ⚠ Take care with livestock along the track.
20.8 km	12.9 miles	100 metres after the 3rd gate, and immediately beyond a shed on the left, the track divides. Bear right.
22.1 km	13.6 miles	At track junction, turn left through gate. ⚠ Cross stream immediately after gate and continue along the rough track.
24.0 km	14.9 miles	At gate, continue along rough track.
26.3 km	16.3 miles	At gate, continue along rough track, alongside stream.
26.9 km	16.7 miles	At track junction by bridge over river, continue straight on.
27.4 km	17.0 miles	At gate at edge of woodland, continue along track, which soon becomes a tarmac road. ⚠ Take care – narrow road with traffic. Muirshiel Country Park Visitor Centre is on your right after 100 metres.

Quarrier's Village 14.4 km William Quarrier came from a poor background in Greenock, but rose to become a successful businessman. One of the great Victorian philanthropists, he decided to give something back to society – to help other children who suffered in poverty as he had done. He began Quarrier's Village in 1878. In just 15 years, he had built a school, hospital, church, farms, workshops, a fire station – and the big houses you see in the village, each of which was home to up to 30 children. The architectural quality of the homes was outstanding, even for the time: just look at the stone carvings over the doorways.

The number of children in the village peaked at around 1,000 just after World War One. After the Second World War, numbers declined as the government started to take more responsibility for looking after orphans. By the 1980s, the number of children needing accommodation at Quarriers was so low that it was decided to sell some of the homes as private houses.

The charitable work of Quarriers continues: from their headquarters in the village, they provide support and

33.0 km	20.5 miles	At T junction after long downhill, turn right onto busy road. Then turn immediately right (beyond white cottage) onto narrow road – no sign. (The junction is difficult to see.)
33.3 km	20.7 miles	Steep, narrow descent into Lochwinnoch – beware oncoming traffic.
34.7 km	21.5 miles	At crossroads, turn left along High Street. Village facilities along here – see below.
35.0 km	21.7 miles	Turn first right into St Winnoc Road.
35.2 km	21.8 miles	At entrance to Castle Semple Visitor Centre after passing under bridge, join cycletrack signposted Lochwinnoch.
36.2 km	22.5 miles	Use traffic lights at RSPB Nature Reserve to cross road back to Lochwinnoch station entrance.

care across Scotland for young, homeless, disabled and disadvantaged people and their carers.

Muirshiel 22.1 km Your route across the Muirshiel moors follows the line of a narrow gauge railway line, known locally as the "Grouse Railway". The line operated from the 1920s to the 1970s. You can see remnants of the rails here and there, particularly where it crosses the burn just to the right of our route at 22.1 km. The railway was built by the Lithgows, the wealthy Clyde shipping family whose family also built Finlaystone House (see route 7). The family and their friends used it to access the shooting butts scattered across the moors. The investment required to build the railway indicates how good the shooting was here. Even Edward VIII and Winston Churchill are reputed to have visited.

The "Grouse Railway"

Muirshiel also has other signs of industrialisation. From the mid eighteenth century, the moors were a rich source of barytes, a mineral with specialist uses in paint, paper and medicine. The mines finally closed in 1969, unable to compete with foreign mines. Although you won't see any of the mines on this ride, the gravel track heading off to your right at 26.9 km leads up to the main mine complex (8 km/5 miles there and back), where there are buildings and sealed shafts.

The moors are also full of wildlife: not just grouse, but other birds like peregrines, buzzards and hen-harriers, and dippers along the rivers. There's also a healthy population of mountain hares, grey in the summer and white in the winter. You'll know if you see one from their size and speed – they can run at up to 60 km/h (37 mph).

Why not come back to explore more? There is a variety of hill, woodland and waterfall walks from Muirshiel Visitor Centre.

Lochwinnoch start / finish Castle Semple Visitor Centre is your gateway to Lochwinnoch. Open daily, the centre has tourist information, café, toilets, bike hire and repairs, shop, ranger service, walks leaflets, watersports, bike hire, archery, fishing permits. Tel: 01505 842803 and www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk_Lochwinnoch itself has good pubs and teashops if you fancy some refreshment. Find out more about Lochwinnoch in route 6 and Castle Semple in route 1.

Facilities and information

Lochwinnoch start / finish

Castle Semple Visitor Centre 1.2 km & 35.2 km Open daily. Information, café, toilets, bike hire and repairs, shop, ranger service, walks leaflets, watersports, bike hire, archery, fishing permits. Tel: 01505 842803 www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk

RSPB Nature Reserve 0.2 km & 36.2 km Open daily. Visitor centre, toilets, refreshments, shop, bird hide (fee) and nature trails (fee). Tel: 01505 842663 www.rspb.org.uk

Lochwinnoch Community Library 34.8 km High Street. Historical photos and information. Restricted opening hours. Tel: 01505 842305

Brown Bull Pub and Restaurant 34.7 km (turn right for 100 metres) 33 Main Street. Open daily. Tel: 01505 843250

La Dolce Vita 34.7 km Takeaway. 9-13 High Street. Tel: 01505 843372

The Gable End 34.8 km Restaurant. 45 High Street. Tel: 01505 852775

Garthland Arms Bar and Restaurant 34.7 km (straight on for 50 metres) 5 Church Street. Tel: 01505 842047

The Hungry Monk On other side of railway line from start/finish point Restaurant and bar. Tel: 01505 8438

The Junction 34.7 km Café and bistro. 2-4 High Street. Tel: 01505 842225

Shops on High Street and Main Street.

Visit www.lochwinnoch.info for more information.

Bridge of Weir 11.5 km

The following facilities are all on or near the Main Street:

The Gryffe Inn, Main Street Lunchtime meals and snacks. Tel: 01505 613023.

The Four Elements, Main Street Lunchtime and evening meals and snacks, tea and coffees all day. Closed Mondays. Tel: 01505 610610.

Aulds Coffee Shop, Livery Walk (off Main Street) Snacks, teas and coffees all day. Closed Sundays. Tel: 01505 614858.

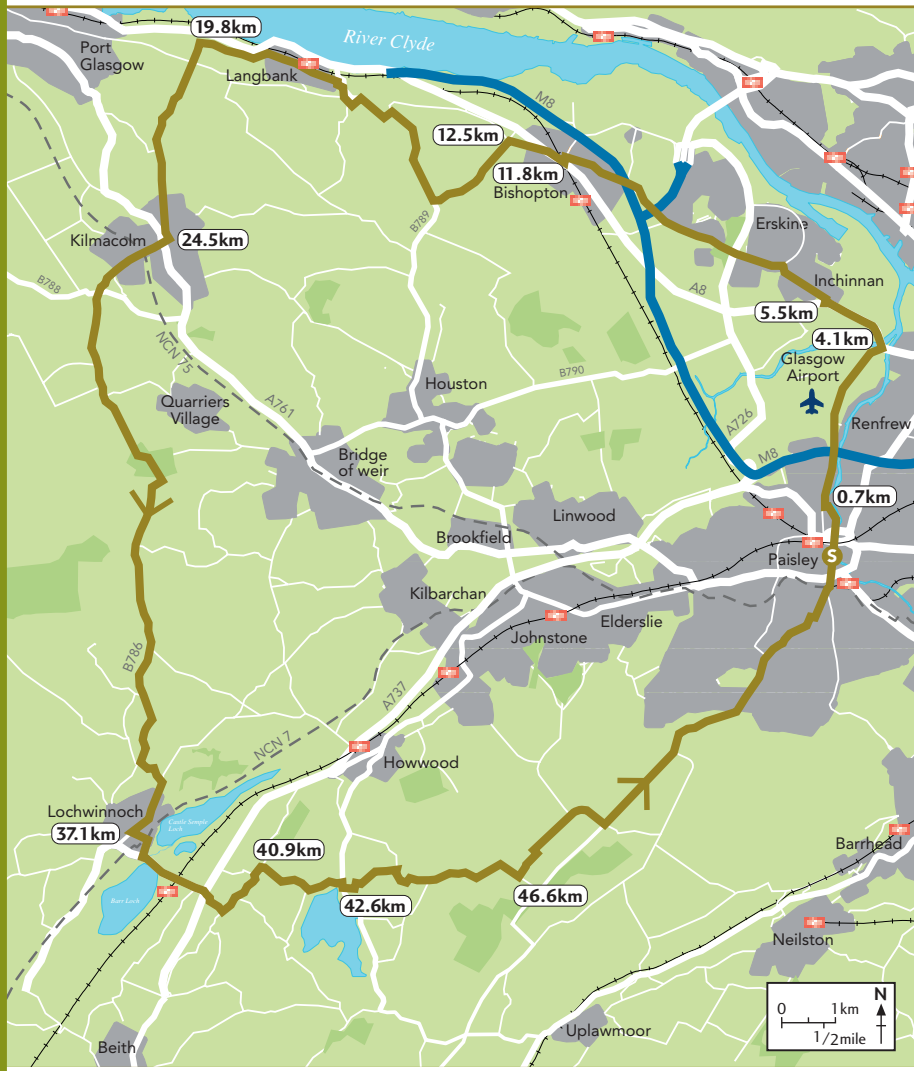
Lochnagar Coffee Room and Restaurant, Main Street. Meals, snacks, teas and coffees. Mondays to Fridays 10am-4.30pm, Saturdays 10am-3.30pm, closed Sundays. Tel: 01505 613410.

Shops There are a number of newsagents and a small supermarket.

Bridge of Weir Library, Main Street Local and historical information. Restricted opening hours. Tel: 01505 612220.
Visit www.bridgeofweir.org.uk for more information.

Muirshiel Visitor Centre 27.4 km

Toilets, refreshments and visitor information. Visit www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk for more information.



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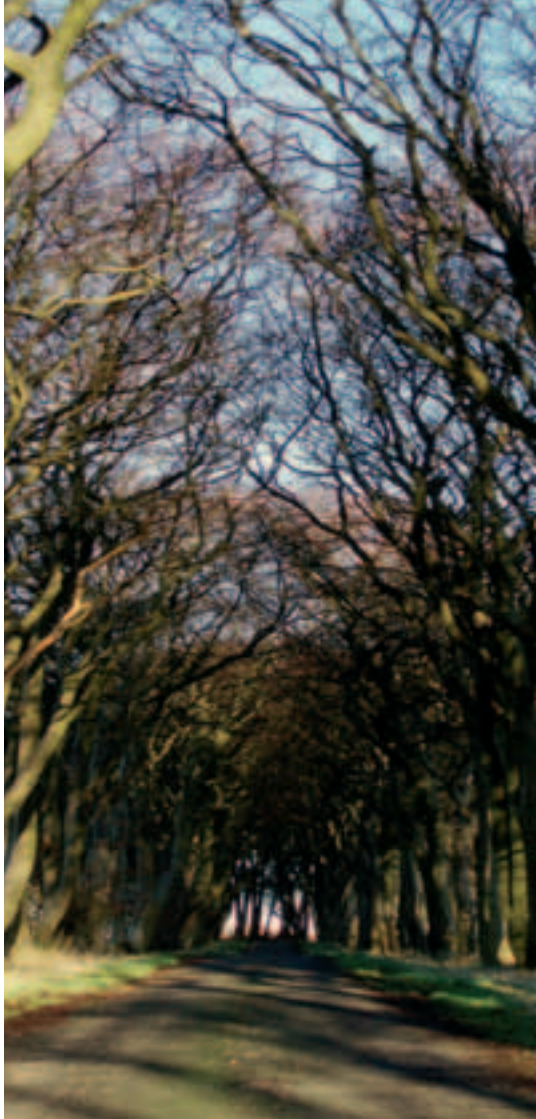


10 All around Renfrewshire

Do you fancy a bigger challenge without the adrenalin of mountain biking? Try this, the longest ride in the guide. You can either do it in a single day or split into 2 or 3 shorter trips using the railway stations at Bishopton, Langbank and Lochwinnoch.

The ride combines parts of other rides together with some extra sections that you won't have done otherwise. There is information on the places you pass through in other chapters. You'll get to enjoy the wonderful range of countryside that Renfrewshire has to offer, together with some truly spectacular views.

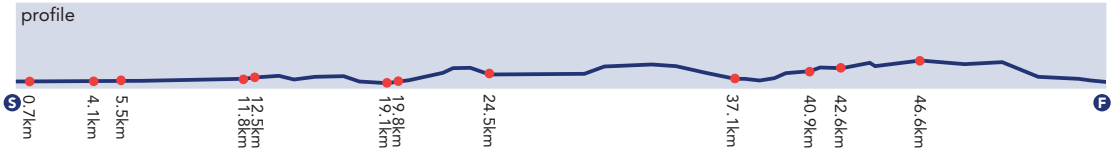
Don't forget that the biggest hills are in the last section. But you can look forward to that wonderful downhill swoosh back into Paisley!

Getting to the start

The route starts outside Paisley Gilmour Street railway station on County Square in Paisley town centre (Ordnance Survey grid reference NS 483 641).

Rail – trains every few minutes from Glasgow Central, the Ayrshire coast and Inverclyde, 7 days a week.
Cycle – Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 7 passes through Paisley (see routes 1 and 3). Leave the cycletrack at Paisley Canal station and follow Causeyside Street downhill into the town centre, continuing along Gilmour Street to arrive at Paisley Gilmour Street in 800 metres ($^1/_2$mile).
Take care – the roads are busy in the town centre.

Car – Paisley town centre has a number of car parks. The nearest is the Piazza multi-storey car park (fee), which is accessed by a ramp from County Square (NB no headroom for bike racks).



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0.0 km	0.0 miles	Go out of the main entrance onto County Square, and under the railway bridge next to the station entrance (sign on bridge Paisley Gilmour Street). At the crossroads and traffic lights immediately after the bridge, cross Old Sneddon Street and then join the red-surfaced cycle lane on the right hand side of New Sneddon Street.
0.2 km	0.1 miles	Where red cycle lane runs out, cross road in front of you at traffic light and continue in same direction along New Sneddon Street, signposted Airport Route.
0.7 km	0.4 miles	Follow road around sharp left bend. 100 metres further on at T junction, turn right onto main road, using cycle lane where possible. Take care – busy road.
1.7 km	1.0 miles	At roundabout take second exit, signposted Glasgow, Renfrew $2^1/_4$, and continue under motorway viaduct.
2.4 km	1.4 miles	At next roundabout, carry straight on, using shared cycle lane/pavement on left.
4.1 km	2.5 miles	At traffic lights, turn left signposted A8 Greenock. Take care – busy road.
5.5 km	3.4 miles	Turn right signposted Inchinnan (dead end) just after start of dual carriageway, onto Old Greenock Road. Take care turning right – pull in on the left to check the road is clear if you are unsure.
6.4 km	4.0 miles	At crossroads with Luckinsford Road, carry straight up dead end.

6.6 km	4.1 miles	At top of hill, push your bike through the No Entry sign, then turn left at T junction. Take care – busy road. Straight on at next 3 roundabouts.
10.2 km	6.3 miles	Go over 2 motorway bridges and into Bishopton.
11.4 km	7.0 miles	Turn left at crossroads and go down to the traffic lights. Turn right at the traffic lights.
11.8 km	7.3 miles	Bear left, signposted Houston, Johnstone, Bishopton Cemetery.
12.5 km	7.7 miles	Take the first road on the left (signposted Unsuitable for heavy goods vehicles).
14.4 km	8.9 miles	Turn right at T junction (take care – poor visibility).
18.0 km	11.1 miles	Continue straight on into Langbank.
19.1 km	11.8 miles	Where Main Road curves down to right, bear left in same direction to end of road (150 metres), then follow tarmac path which continues alongside A8.
19.8 km	12.3 miles	Turn left into Finlaystone Country Estate (road is open to cyclists). Follow tarmac road up through the Estate.
20.9 km	13.0 miles	At exit from Finlaystone, go straight on at crossroads. Steep hill, single track road.
24.5 km	15.2 miles	At crossroads in centre of Kilmacolm, go diagonally left along Lochwinnoch Road. Follow this out of Kilmacolm all the way to Lochwinnoch.

37.1 km	23.0 miles	After entering Lochwinnoch, at the bottom of downhill turn left signposted Castle Semple Visitor Centre (St Winnoc Rd). Go under bridge, and follow road round to right into Lochlip Road.
37.6 km	23.3 miles	After Give Way sign, continue in same direction along road and after a few metres join parallel tarmac path on left. After 150 metres, go over footbridge and turn left at path T junction signposted RSPB.
38.4 km	37.7 miles	At end of cycle route at RSPB Nature Reserve, continue uphill along road. Take care – the next 800 metres ($^1/_2$ mile) can be very busy.
39.2 km	24.3 miles	At junction with A737, turn right (take care – busy and fast-moving traffic) then immediately left up Auchengrange Hill. Steep uphill.
39.7 km	24.6 miles	At T junction at top of hill, turn left along Belltrees Road. Take care – narrow road with blind bends.
40.9 km	25.4 miles	At end of Newton of Belltrees hamlet, turn right up Glenhead Road.
42.0 km	26.1 miles	At unmarked T junction, follow road round to left.

42.6 km	26.4 miles	At T junction, turn right signposted Uplawmoor, then after 50 metres turn left up unmarked narrow road (easy to miss).
43.9 km	27.2 miles	Turn right at unmarked T junction.
46.6km	28.9 miles	Take the first road on the left, along avenue of beech trees (no sign).
49.0 km	30.4 miles	Turn left at crossroads. Take care – fast moving traffic.
51.0 km	31.7 miles	Start of long fast descent into Paisley – control your speed.
54.5 km	33.8 miles	Join Neilston Road and continue in same direction into centre of town through a number of traffic lights.
56.2 km	34.9 miles	At Paisley cross, continue in same direction along pedestrianised Gilmour Street for 50 metres to arrive back at Paisley Gilmour Street. Well done!

Looking north-west from Gleniffer Braes

Facilities and information

Paisley start/finish
Plenty of pubs and cafes in the town centre for meals and snacks.

Inchinnan 5 km
Braehead Tavern, Old Greenock Road for pub food (tel: 0141 561 0012).
Shop on Luckinsford Road (turn left at 6.4 km, shop is 50 metres along on right).

Bishopton 11 km
And Relax Coffee Shop Turn left at traffic lights, 200 metres along on right hand side. Open Monday to Saturday. Tel: 01505 863900

Various shops along Greenock Road between 4.5 km and 4.9km and next to Coffee Shop.

Bishopton Library 11 Greenock Road, Bishopton, PA7 5JW. Local information. Open daily except Sunday, but opening hours vary. Tel: 01505 862136
www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/libraries

Langbank 18 km
On Main Road, the Hungry Monk serves food and snacks from 12pm to 9pm (tel: 01475 540311) and Langbank Village Store sells drinks and snacks.

Finlaystone Country Estate Café, toilets and visitor information. (NB – entry fee for access to gardens) Tel: 01475 540505 www.finlaystone.com

Kilmacolm 24 km
Along Lochwinnoch Road in the village centre are cafes, shops, a pub and a library for local information.

Lochwinnoch 37 km
Pubs, cafes and shops for refreshments, and visitor information at Castle Semple Visitor Centre and RSPB Nature Reserve. See route 6 for details.