

# CIRCULAR - LAURIESTON ROAD OFF-ROAD VIA GATEHOUSE STATION

**Start: Centre of Gatehouse DG7 2HS**

**Distance: 19.5 miles**

**Duration: 3-5 hours**

After 4 miles of mostly uphill along the road towards Laurieston, you follow Forestry tracks which require a mountain/gravel bike. The views are spectacular moors and forests all the way to the Gatehouse Viaduct. From Gatehouse Station it's a lovely downhill all the way back to Gatehouse.

Miles	Route
0.0	Cycle up the High Street. Continue past the clock tower and turn left at the war memorial. Pass the Tennis court and Golf Club on your right.
0.9	Stay on this road, continuing uphill towards Laurieston. At the top pass Knocktinkle Viewpoint, the road dips downhill and then up again.
4.0	At the crest of the hill there is a metal signpost to Castramont Cleugh. Turn left here on the rocky Forestry track. Stay on the forest track (don't take the footpath) through the Galloway Forest Park.
8.5	The dismantled railway line arrives on the right with large boulders stopping vehicular traffic and is an alternative cycling route to Mossdale. Continue straight (forking left).
8.7	Continue straight (Left), cycling along a beautiful, straight dismantled railway track
10.6	Fork right (where a track goes into a dead end to the left)
10.9	Fork right
11	Left turn along the national route 7 off road route
11.3	Turn left at the T-junction towards the Big Water of Fleet viaduct
11.7	Fork right before you reach the viaduct, up the hill to return onto the railway track which you follow West to Gatehouse Station. If you go straight ahead under the viaduct there is the SNH Cairnsmore of Fleet Nature Reserve visitor centre with toilets (open 24 hours).
13.3	Where the track joins the road, go straight ahead down the B796 signed to Gatehouse.
16.7	Continue straight ahead for a free wheel (you could turn left, see the Roon the Watter route)
19.4	In Gatehouse at the T junction, turn left to cross the bridge returning to the High Street

**Knocktinkle Viewpoint.** Pause at the viewpoint and admire the views of Cairnsmore to the west and the Fleet estuary to the south.

**Galloway Forest Park** covers a large area of forest interspersed with rugged hills, lochs and woodlands. There are many miles of waymarked cycle routes of varying difficulty. There are visitor centres at Glentool, Clatteringshaws and Glentool.

**Dry stone dykes.** Marvel at the dry stone dykes, some dating back to the Eighteenth century, built to control livestock.

**Dismantled railway line.** The railway that ran from Dumfries to Stranraer was closed in 1965. It was a lifeline in the two wars, particularly for bringing in American personnel and equipment, for which the Big Water of Fleet viaduct was strengthened. It is now a listed building. The railway features in John Buchan's 'Thirty Nine Steps' and Dorothy L Sayers 'Five Red Herrings'.

**Cairnsmore National Nature Reserve.** There is a car park and visitor centre with information about the reserve, activities for all the family, and recent wildlife sightings. There is also a waymarked circular walk. Look out for the granite sculptures in the landscape.

