

# GATEHOUSE - CASTLE DOUGLAS - LAURIESTON

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

**Distance: 33.7 miles.**

**Duration: 3.5-6 hours**

This ride takes in the best of Galloway scenery; rolling farmland, tidal reed beds, beautiful Laurieston Forest and spectacular views over the Fleet valley and coastal islands. The route is hilly in places with a total of 1,300ft (396m) of ascent. Refreshments available in Gatehouse of Fleet, Twynholm, Threave Gardens and Castle Douglas. Full range of shops in Castle Douglas. Toilets in Gatehouse, Threave Gardens and Castle Douglas.

24.2 In Laurieston, continue straight over the crossroads (signed Gatehouse of Fleet) and follow the road uphill through forest and moorland. At the end of a beautiful avenue of beeches stood Lochenbreck Spa and hotel. Follow the road across the moor, getting a fine view of the Isle of Man on a good day. Pass Knocktinkle viewpoint before you descend into the Fleet valley. Take extra care on descent at bridge with sharp bend. Continue straight on to Gatehouse, passing the Barlay Mill, tennis court and the former mill pond.

33.7 At the T-junction turn right, down High Street.

Miles	Route
0	Cycle up the High Street, passing the War Memorial and continue up the hill out of Gatehouse.
1.4	Turn left where it is signed 'No heavy goods vehicles', and follow a minor road up a steep hill, past Littleton Farm and continue down to A75.
4.1	At the A75, turn right and immediately left. Continue straight on to Twynholm, straight ahead at two crossroads, passing the village on the left. There is a potential diversion to the Cocoabeen Company. Descend, taking care on steep descent with bends, to the beautiful old Cumstoun bridge over the Tarff Water - watch out for otters!
6.5	After crossing the old bridge, turn right at T junction onto A762.
7.1	Turn left at T junction at Tongland Bridge onto A711 (signed Castle Douglas) and after 0.3 miles turn right into minor road signed JSF Fencing. Other sites in Tongland are the Hydro-electric Power station and dam, and the Galloway Engineering Company. Continue straight on to Rhonehouse.
12.7	Continue straight on through Rhonehouse and after 0.3 miles turn right onto minor road and continue to T junction adjacent to Threave Gardens (to visit Threave Gardens turn right and after 75 yards turn right again into Gardens).
14.0	Turn left at T junction and continue 0.2 miles to T junction with B736. Turn right and continue into Castle Douglas (cafes, shops and toilets).
15.0	Leave Castle Douglas and retrace your route to Rhonehouse (cycling with Carlingwark loch on your left, take the first left. After 0.2 miles turn right. After about 1 mile turn left).
17.2	At Rhonehouse take the right fork (signed to Bridge of Dee) and continue across River Dee to A75.
18.0	Turn right then immediately left across A75 at offset junction (signed to Glenlochar). After 2.0 miles turn right and continue to Glenlochar. The Glenlochar barrage across the Dee is part of the Galloway Hydro scheme.
20.9	In Glenlochar, turn left at crossroads (signed to Laurieston) and continue to Laurieston. Look out for red kites as you pass the Red Kite Feeding Station.

## Places of Interest

**Tongland.** Note Thomas Telford's 1805 Tongland bridge. Another interesting structure is the early modernist Tongland power station, part of the Galloway Hydro Scheme completed in 1935.

**Threave Gardens.** Managed by The National Trust for Scotland, Threave has something to offer visitors all year round. Enjoy splendid views of the Galloway Hills and the Ken/Dee valley. There is a café, shop and plants for sale. Threave Castle is also well worth a visit and there is a chance to see Ospreys, Kites and Peregrines.

**Glenlochar barrage** completed in 1934 is an important structure for controlling the flow of water in the Galloway Hydro scheme.

**Red Kite Feeding station** at Bellymackhill farm, where they feed these huge birds of prey every day at 2pm.

**Knocktinkle viewpoint.** The viewpoint offers fine views to Cairnsmore to the west and the Fleet estuary to the south. Note the many drystone walls, some up to 200 years old built to control the livestock.

