

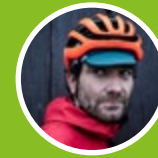


FROM DEEP TIME TO OUR TIME

Cycling across the Cateran Ecomuseum

cateran
ECC©
museum

A MUSEUM WITHOUT WALLS



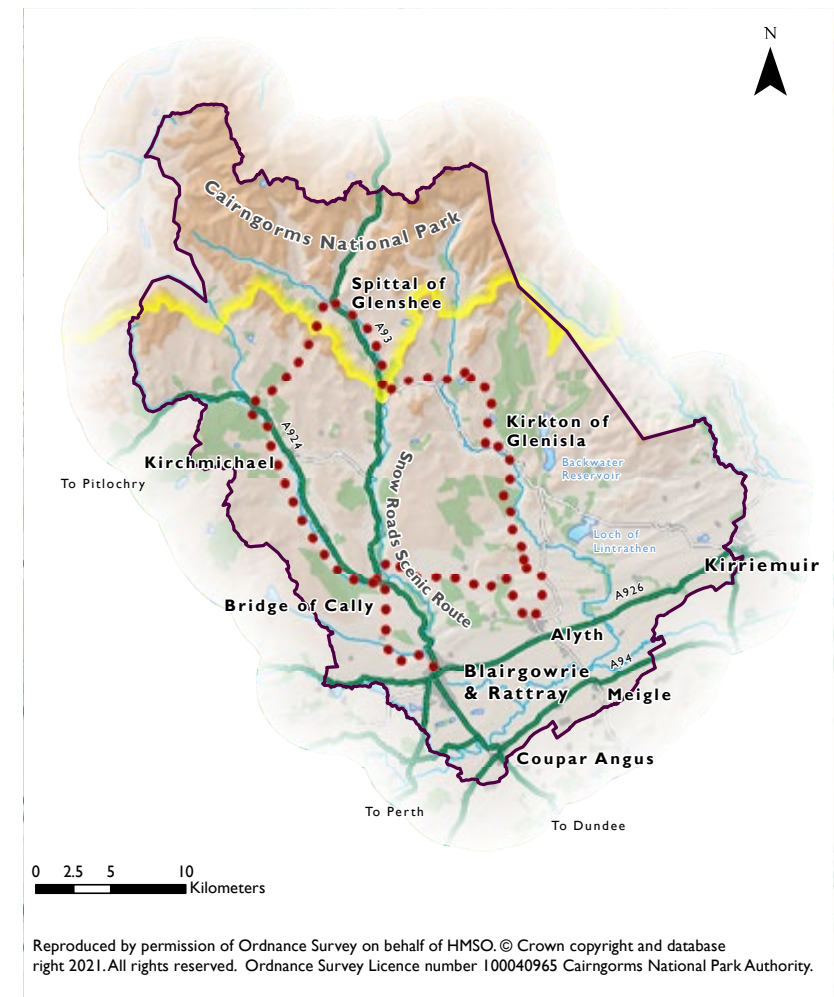
ROUTE DESIGN
Markus Stitz



CONTENT CURATION
Clare Cooper

THE CATERAN ECOMUSEUM

A Museum Without Walls – All Our Sites Are Outside



FROM DEEP TIME TO OUR TIME

Cycling across the CATERAN Ecomuseum

The CATERAN Ecomuseum is a museum without walls – all our sites are outside. Designed to reveal the hidden history of CATERAN Country by the community who live here, it tells the story of its people, places and landscapes, from pre-history to the present day.

Situated on the 500-million-year-old Highland Boundary Fault – the great geological feature that divides the Scottish Highlands from the Lowlands – the CATERAN Ecomuseum's human history stretches back through millennia with sites identified from Neolithic times.

There are Pictish stones to excite your curiosity, unknown stories from the legends of King Arthur and Finn mac Cumhaill, contemporary histories of the Scottish Traveller Community, important events linked to the great Jacobite rebellions and fables of the CATERANS themselves – the Highland clan warriors who came to be associated with cattle raiding.

You can discover the history of Scotland's Berry Capital, Blairgowrie, and visit the site of its Victorian textile mills, walk a part of the Highland Boundary Fault in Alyth and enjoy its well-preserved old town centre, see one of the most important collections of Pictish stones in Western Europe in Meigle and imagine the hustle and bustle of the great medieval Cistercian monastery at Coupar Angus.

A hike or cycle along the CATERAN Trail, one of Scotland's great long-distance footpaths, will take you across magical Glenshee to the small villages of Kirkmichael and Glenisla, offering you spectacular views across huge landscapes sculpted by glaciers and traversed by ancient rights of way.

This booklet introduces you to the cycling routes we've designed, which offer something for people of all ages and cycling experiences.

Guiding you through the natural and cultural heritage of the Ecomuseum, they offer some of the best cycling adventures you can have in Scotland.

Cycle along old drove roads and through ancient woodlands, past prehistoric stone circles and medieval tower houses, across modern-day rewilding estates and into historic market towns – each route links you to sites of interest from deep time to our time, all framed by the gentle Vale of Strathmore, the rolling Braes of Angus, the beautiful Glens of eastern Perthshire and western Angus, and the breathtaking Cairngorm Plateau.

Visit www.cateranecomuseum.co.uk/explore to find out detailed route information for each route.

First Edition published by the CATERAN Ecomuseum 2021



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Designed by Pulse North

Individual cyclists are responsible for their own welfare and safety and for being properly equipped for conditions. The publisher cannot accept liability for any ill-health or injury, however caused.

All feedback will be welcomed. Please email your comments to thecateranecomuseum@gmail.com



<https://www.komoot.com/user/1758518065079>

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FOREWORD

It's been such a pleasure to work with you Markus. What were your personal highlights as you travelled around the Ecomuseum designing all these amazing cycling routes for us?

It's really tough to pick a highlight, as the area has so many different things to offer at the same time. But if I have to pick one, it surely is cycling the Monega Pass, especially on a good day. I've been there many times now, but each time I return I find something else that captures my imagination.

You've created routes across our landscapes for mountain bikes, gravel bikes, road bikes and touring bikes. Is there a particular time of year that you would recommend visiting or can folk enjoy the itineraries across the seasons?

I'd suggest April & May are the best times to visit. There'll still be some snow left on the peaks of the Cairngorms, which makes the scenery look even more dramatic. September & October are ideal months too. But I have designed the routes so most of them can be cycled in any season. There's no month that wouldn't be enjoyable.

As part of our 'Travel for All Our Tomorrow's' project, you made a film called 'Built To Last' that not only shares your experience of cycling through the natural and cultural heritage of the Ecomuseum, but introduces local people who love to cycle here too. What is it about cycling that creates such a positive and powerful feeling for people?

For me, cycling is one of the best activities to connect with others. If you're travelling by bike there's no cage around you, so people engage much more than if you are travelling by car, for example. Cycling also gives you the ability to stop as much and where you want, so is amazingly suited for exploring the Ecomuseum. And there's the bond that connects you with other people that share the same passion.

Cycling has an important role to play in how we take care of beautiful places like the Cateran Ecomuseum so that they are there for future generations. How do you think we can encourage more people to travel for leisure in this way?

We need to offer people the infrastructure that makes it easy for them to get to places. At the moment it's often difficult to travel by bike, but I think the tide is slowly turning. And personally I think we need to rethink our priorities too, and trade some of our comfort in for keeping this world a place future generations can enjoy.



IT'S EASY TO TRAVEL TO THE CATERAN ECOMUSEUM

The Cateran Ecomuseum is close to both the cities of Perth and Dundee and on the way to the Cairngorms National Park. The SnowRoads Scenic Route runs through it.

This centrality gives us great links to Scotland's other three major cities – Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Getting to the Ecomuseum car-free

You can take Ember's electric bus service between Edinburgh, Dundee, Perth and Kinross. The best way to book tickets is online at ember.to.



You can take the train as far as Dundee and Perth, where you can get the no. 57 bus, which serves Alyth and Blairgowrie.

Our website also gives information on traveling in from Braemar, Pitlochry, Dunkeld and Kirriemuir.

Getting around the Ecomuseum car-free

We've got a section on our website that tells you how to get around the Ecomuseum car-free once you get here. Please go to:

www.cateranecomuseum.co.uk to find out more details.

BEST TIME OF YEAR AND WEATHER

Our cycling itineraries can be enjoyed throughout the seasons, but we would advise that you are always fully prepared for the weather and riding conditions, whatever time of year you choose to come. Please be aware that snow might make the higher lying sections of the routes impassable from December - April or significantly increase your journey time.

There's plenty of advice online about keeping your wheels turning through all weathers and how to keep warm, dry, hydrated and safe.



HOW LONG WILL EACH ROUTE TAKE?

All routes in this booklet are designed as day trips. Some take as little as a couple of hours, some will require the whole day to ride. You can also combine them into a longer cycling journey. If you are a visitor to the Ecomuseum area, please consider staying for a few days and take your time enjoying a few of them, or intersperse them with some of our walking itineraries. The routes listed in this booklet are not waymarked, and the maps are not sufficient to navigate. You'll find a good overview of the routes, more detailed information, maps and the GPX files to download via the links below and on our website.

ROUTE CATEGORIES EXPLAINED

Easy ●

These routes are suitable for all fitness and skill levels. They include no steep sections, both on and off-road. The distance between services, to stock up on food and water, is no more than 10 km. They might contain short sections of singletrack up to level S1, comprising mostly compacted gravel or solid earth with some flat roots and smaller rocks. The surface may become loose at times and periods of stand-up riding may be required to overcome obstacles. They include no sections without an obvious path but can contain gates along the route.

Straightforward ● ●

These routes are suitable for riders with good fitness and advanced riding skills. They can be finished in less than three hours, are not longer than 30 km in length and contain no more than 600 m of ascent. The distance between services, to stock up on food and water, is no more than 20 km. They might contain short sections of singletrack up to level S1, comprising mostly compacted gravel or solid earth with some flat roots and smaller rocks. The surface may become loose at times and periods of stand-up riding may be required to overcome obstacles. They include no sections without an obvious path but can contain gates along the route.

Challenging ● ● ●

These routes are suitable for riders with good fitness and advanced riding skills. They can be finished in less than five hours, are no longer than 50 km in length and contain no more than 1000 m of ascent. The distance between services, to stock up on food and water, is no more than 25 km. They might contain short sections of singletrack up to level S2, comprising a looser surface, as well as many roots and rocks. Narrow curves and steeper gradients are to be expected. Readiness to brake at all times is required, as is the ability to shift your center of gravity on the bike. They may include sections of up to 1 km without an obvious path, which requires pushing the bike can contain gates along the route.

Expert ● ● ● ●

These routes are suitable for riders with very good fitness and expert riding skills. They will take more than five hours to finish and may contain more than 1000 m of ascent. They may include steep sections over 20% off-road and on-road, and may be more than 20 km away from the nearest public road. The distance between services, to stock up on food and water, can exceed 25 km. They might contain short sections of singletrack up to level S2, comprising a looser surface, as well as many roots and rocks. Narrow curves and steeper gradients are to be expected. Readiness to brake at all times is required, as is the ability to shift your center of gravity on the bike. They may include sections of more than 1 km without an obvious path, which requires pushing the bike, and can exceed an altitude of 650 m above sea level. They can contain gates and stiles along the route, which may require lifting the bike over fences.



Route (Sorted by Difficulty)	Miles	Km
Forter & Folda Road Bike Rove Suitable for: Road Bikes Route Category: Easy ● Riding Time: 1 hour Total Ascent: 60 m Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/forter-folda	5.2	8.31
Kitty Swanson's Family Gravel Bike Gallivant Suitable for: Gravel and touring bikes (we recommend at least 30mm wide tires) Route Category: Easy ● Riding Time: 1–1.5 hours Total Ascent: 70 m Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/kitty-swansons	9.1	14.7
Hill of Alyth Road Bike Ramble Suitable for: Road Bikes Route Category: Easy ● Riding Time: 1–1.5 hours Total Ascent: 160 m Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/hill-of-alyth-bike	7.6	12.2
Glenisla Forest Gravel Bike Meander Suitable for: Gravel Bikes Route Category: Straightforward ● ● Riding Time: 1.5–2 hours Total Ascent: 180 m Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/glenisla-forest	7.5	12.1

Route (Sorted by Difficulty)	Miles	Km
Three Towns Road Bike Ride Suitable for: Road Bikes Route Category: Straightforward ● ● Riding Time: 2–3 hours Total Ascent: 290 m Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/three-towns	22.3	35.9
Loch of Lintrathen Road Bike Tour Suitable for: Gravel and touring bikes (we recommend at least 30mm wide tires) Route Category: Straightforward ● ● Riding Time: 1–2 hours Total Ascent: 300 m Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/loch-of-lintrathen	16.2	26.1
Glenisla & Kilry Gravel Bike Trail Suitable for: Gravel & Mountain Bikes Route Category: Straightforward ● ● Riding Time: 2–3 hours Total Ascent: 290 m Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/glenisla-and-kilry	11.3	18.3
Kindrogan Woods Gravel Bike Circular Suitable for: Gravel bikes (we recommend at least 39mm wide tires) Route Category: Straightforward ● ● Riding Time: 2–2.5 hours Total Ascent: 300 m (340m) Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/kindrogan-woods	9.6	15.4
Hill of Alyth & Bamff Wildland Mountain Bike Tour Suitable for: Mountain bikes (or experienced gravel bike riders) Route Category: Straightforward ● ● Riding Time: 1.5–2 hours Total Ascent: 290 m Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/hill-of-alyth-bamff	7.9	12.7

Route (Sorted by Difficulty)	Miles	Km
Strathmore's Secrets Road Bike Reveal Suitable for: Road Bikes Route Category: Challenging ● ● ● ● Riding Time: 3 - 4 hours Total Ascent: 290 m Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/strathmores-secret	26.5	42.6
Drimmie Woods Gravel Bike Stravaig Suitable for: Gravel bikes Route Category: Challenging ● ● ● ● Riding Time: 2.5 – 3.5 hours Total Ascent: 440 m Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/drimmie-woods	16.6	26.7
Cateran Gran Fondo Road Bike Adventure Suitable for: Road Bikes Route Category: Expert ● ● ● ● ● Riding Time: 6–7 hours Total Ascent: 1050 m Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/cateran-gran-fondo	67.7	109
Backwater & Glenisla Gravel Bike Jaunt Suitable for: Gravel bikes (we recommend at least 39mm wide tires) Route Category: Expert ● ● ● ● ● Riding Time: 6–8 hours Total Ascent: 860 m Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/backwater-glenisla	39.6	63.7
Monega Pass Mountain Bike Adventure Suitable for: Mountain bikes (or very experienced gravel bike riders) Route Category: Expert ● ● ● ● ● Riding Time: 5–7 hours Total Ascent: 1220 m Full details: https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/monega-pass	26.1	41.9



'Cycling expands the range of the wilderness I can reach and enhances my experience of the Scottish outdoors.'

- Louise Chavarie

STRAIGHTFORWARD CHECKLIST FOR YOUR CYCLING TRIP IN THE CATERAN ECOMUSEUM

- Check that your bike is in good working order, especially brake cables and pads, tires and drivetrain. If riding an e-bike, make sure your battery is fully charged. Check the Cateran Ecomuseum website for e-bike charging points. This infrastructure is developing.
- Check the forecast and consider that weather conditions can rapidly change.
- Bring lights if your ride could extend into non-daylight hours. Parts of the Cateran Ecomuseum are very remote, and routes can take longer than anticipated.
- Essential kit for a ride:
 1. A pump, spare tube, patches and tire levers
 2. A multitool (preferably with a chain tool)
 3. Spare link to fix your chain
 4. Waterproof jacket
 5. Other wind/rain protection you prefer, depending on season
- While you can use your mobile phone for navigation, please consider that some areas have no mobile reception. Either download the routes on your phone or GPS device so you can use them offline, or take a printed map as backup.



ACCOMMODATION, FACILITIES AND REFRESHMENT

There are plenty of different kinds of accommodation on offer across the Ecomuseum geography. Providers who have identified themselves as cycling and/or walking friendly and those who offer pick up and drop off for the Cateran Trail are detailed on our website, along with places where you can hire bikes or get your bike fixed, and some of the main cafes you'll find along the routes – all of which have publicly available toilets.



'There's no limit to what you can do and how far you can go. You can just do what you like with it, that's my major thing.'

- Neil Tuer



'We saw only one other person all day in these quieter parts of the Cairngorms and it was all the more special for it.'

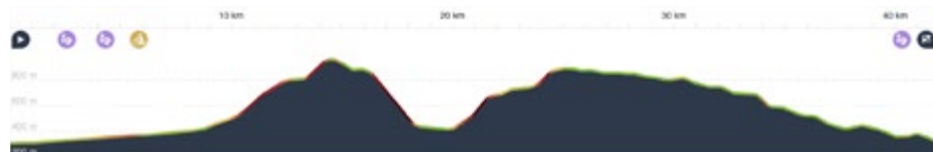
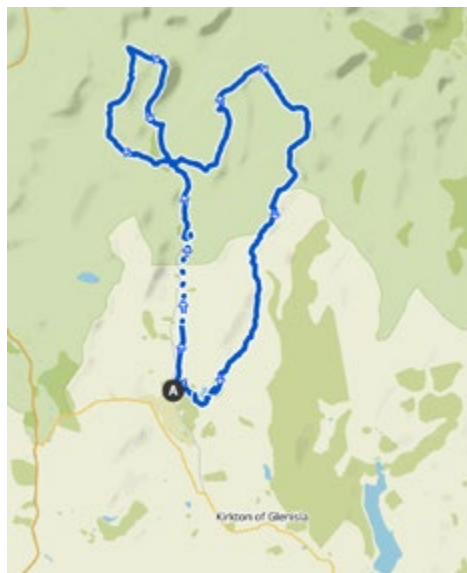
- Naomi Freireich



MONEGA PASS MOUNTAIN BIKE ADVENTURE

A world-class mountain bike ride on two ridges in the superb surroundings of the Southern Cairngorms National Park with 360 degree views over mountains and deep glens, and a final section through woodland past the beautiful Auchintaple Loch. Best enjoyed on clear and calm days, as the majority of the route is very exposed.

In addition to travelling along one of Scotland's oldest droving routes, you'll enter one of the Ecomuseum's most biodiverse sites, Caenlochan and enjoy one of Scotland's most iconic trees around Auchintaple Loch.



Full route details here:

<https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/monega-pass>

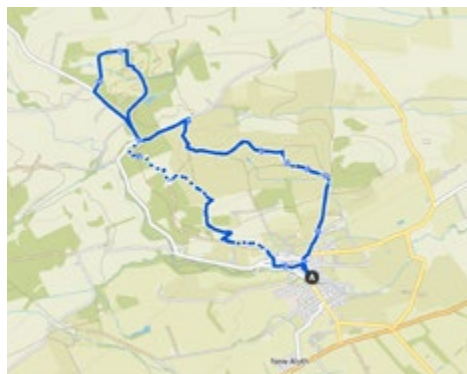




HILL OF ALYTH & BAMFF WILDLANDS MOUNTAIN BIKE TOUR

A circular mountain bike ride with superb views, the chance to spot beavers in Bamff Wildland – one of Scotland's newest re-wilding projects – and a great finish on a twisty natural trail through woodland and a purpose-built mountain bike track at Alyth Bike Park.

Along the way, you will travel past one of the most beautiful spots in the Ecomuseum, the Den 'O' Alyth and across one of the last remaining 'commonies' in Scotland.



Full route details here:

<https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/hill-of-alyth-bamff>

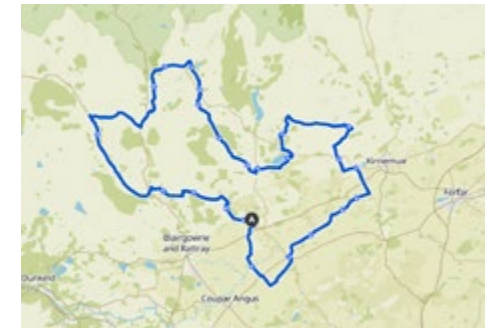


ROAD BIKING



CATERAN GRAN FONDO ROAD BIKE ADVENTURE

Although a few kilometres short of the official Gran Fondo distance of 120km, this challenging loop takes riders deep into the Ecomuseum and offers views and quiet roads which are nothing short of magnificent, with lovely coffee stops and a sprint finish through the Vale of Strathmore.



The route takes you through the Ancient Royal Forest of Alyth and introduces you to some of the most important prehistoric sites in Europe. You'll ride alongside one of the largest Roman Forts in Britain, see castles and a tower house, and be able to stop off at one of the loveliest wildlife reserves in the Ecomuseum.



Full route details here:

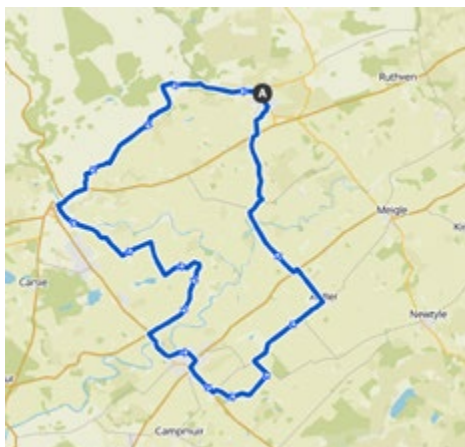
<https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/cateran-gran-fondo>



THREE TOWNS ROAD BIKE RIDE

A great tour between three historic market towns in the Cateran Ecomuseum that provides a superb day out on two wheels or a great connection between various other routes in the Ecomuseum.

Amongst the many points of interest along the way are two ancient Culdee sites, an imposing Neolithic burial mound, a looted Kirk Bell and plenty of cafes where you can stop for refreshments!



Full route details here:

<https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/three-towns>



'Freedom and joy, connection to landscape and connection to myself. Actually I'm most connected to who I am when I'm out in wild spaces and cycling and connected to the landscape.'

- Jane Wilkinson





LOCH OF LINRATHEN ROAD BIKE TOUR

This cycling tour takes you toward the eastern boundary of the Cateran Ecomuseum and around the pretty Loch of Lintrathen, an important reservoir of water for the City of Dundee with a wildlife reserve that attracts vast numbers of wintering wildfowl.

The route starts and finishes in the historic market town of Alyth and along the way you will pass a souterrain, two standing stones and a medieval deer park.



Full route details here:

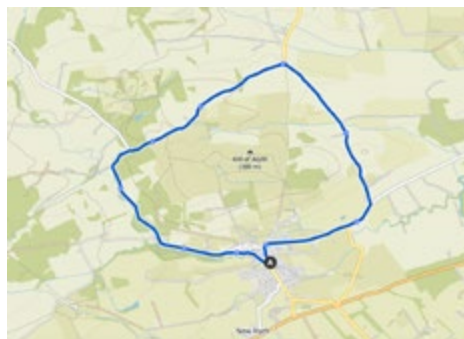
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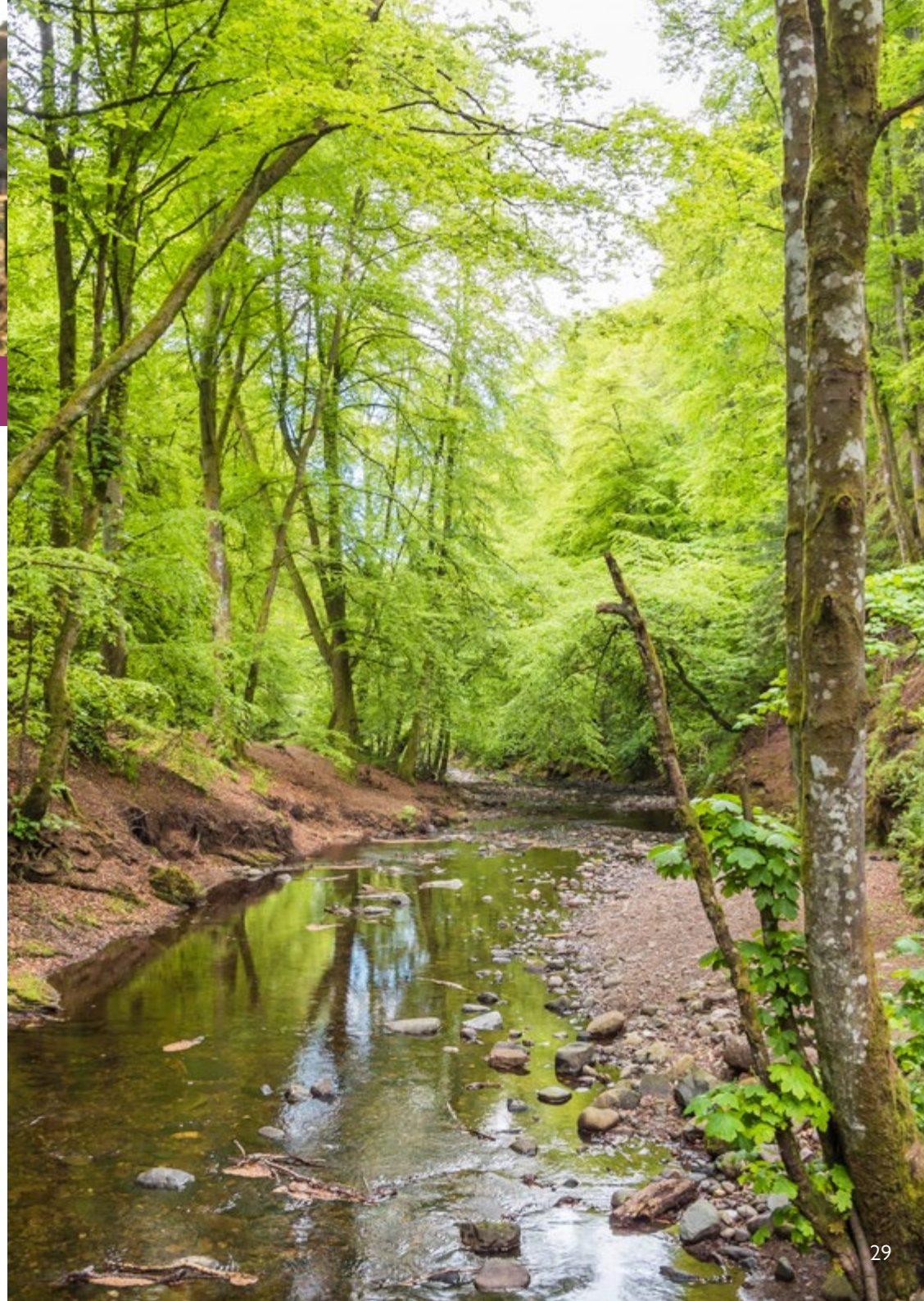
HILL OF ALYTH ROAD BIKE RAMBLE

This easy loop, suitable for most bikes, takes you past one of the many prehistoric standing stones in the area and through Bealach Gabráin, the narrow pass between the Hill of Loyal and the famous Iron Age fort of Barry Hill. It continues through beautiful farmland landscapes and the Den 'O' Alyth's ancient woodland.



Full route details here:

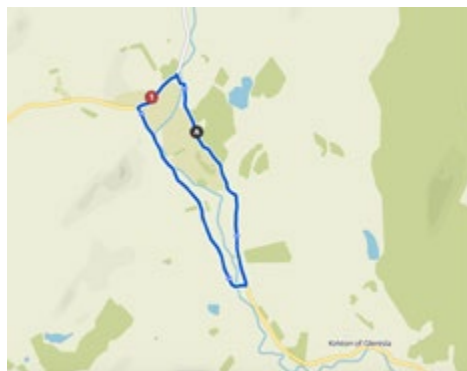
<https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/hill-of-alyth-bike>





FORTER & FOLDA ROAD BIKE ROVE

This easy loop, suitable for most bikes, takes you through the spectacular scenery of one of the Ecomuseum's loveliest glens. Riding alongside the River Isla you will pass by some of its most historic sites and hidden treasures.



Full route details here:

<https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/forter-folda>





STRATHMORE'S SECRETS ROAD BIKE REVEAL

This cycling tour takes you across one of Scotland's most beautiful and fertile valleys: Strathmore. Through quiet backroads with breathtaking views north to the Grampians and Cairngorms, you will visit ancient human settlements, prehistoric standing stones and the site of an unusual looted treasure.



Full route details here:

<https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/strathmores-secrets>



'It's a great way to see the countryside, it's a great way to meet people and just enjoy life and keep fit.'

- Bob Ellis



GRAVEL BIKING



KITTY SWANSON'S FAMILY GRAVEL BIKE GALLIVANT

This is a mostly flat and beginner and family friendly gravel route, which is also suitable for touring bikes. Discover the wildlife and landscapes on both banks of the River Ericht, connected by Kitty Swanson's Bridge on a ride through the heart of Scotland's berry-growing county.



This route takes you alongside one of the Ecomuseum's great rivers, the Ericht and across some of Strathmore's most fertile lands. You'll pass a kettle hole left over from the last ice age, now a special area of conservation, and you'll be able to spot all sorts of wildlife, including evidence of beavers.



Full route details here:

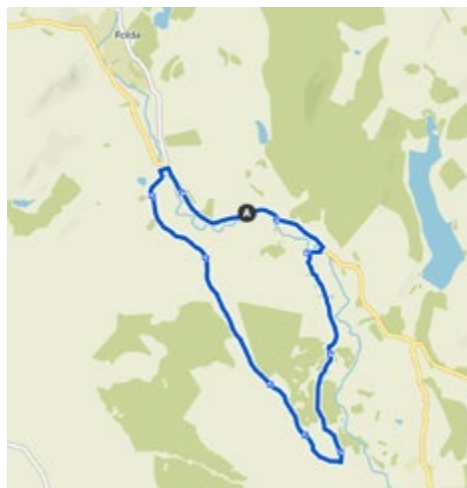
<https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/kitty-swansons>



GLENISLA & KILRY GRAVEL BIKE TRAIL

This route combines great off-road cycling and a fabulous quiet road with rewarding views, featuring parts of the Catevan Trail, one of Scotland's great long distance trails.

Along the way you'll travel through the pretty Kirkton of Glenisla with its ancient farming community, and past Brackny Bridge, the oldest known bridge of its type in Scotland.



Full route details here:

<https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/glenisla-and-kilry>



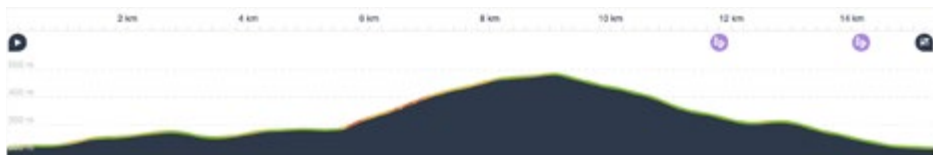


KINDROGAN WOODS GRAVEL BIKE CIRCULAR

A mainly sheltered gravel bike route past an old curling pond through the woodlands of Kindrogan Forest. An extension, for more adventurous riders, passes the site of Bronze Age roundhouses at Pitcarmick, but involves carrying the bike over a small bridge and some boggy terrain.



You will start in the ancient village of Kirkmichael, once an important market in the cattle trade between the Highlands and the lowlands, where there are a number of points of interest including The Bannerfield, an important site in the 1715 Jacobite rising.



Full route details here:

<https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/kindrogan-woods>





BACKWATER & GLENISLA GRAVEL BIKE JAUNT

An all-day gravel adventure through the heart of the Cateran Ecomuseum with great views of mountains, quiet lochs, old castles and a breathtaking waterfall.

You'll travel through the ancient farming community of Glenisla and past the lovely Backwater Reservoir before arriving at one of the most favoured spots for walkers of the Cateran Trail, Auchintaple Loch.



Full route details here:

<https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/backwater-glenisla>





DRIMMIE WOODS GRAVEL BIKE STRAVAIG

This enjoyable cycle ride takes you across the Ancient Forest of Alyth and past some of the Ecomuseum's most evocative prehistoric sites, including two stone circles and one of the biggest Megaliths in the area. A visit to the birthplace of the famous covenanter Donald Cargill offers spectacular views across Strathmore, one of Scotland's most beautiful and fertile valleys.



Full route details here:

<https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/drimmie-woods>

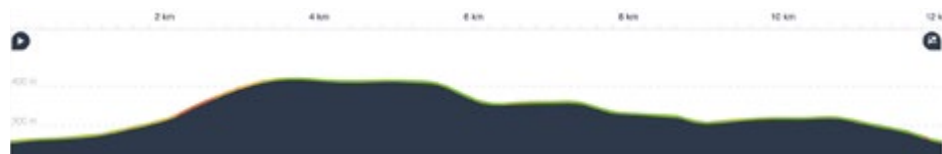
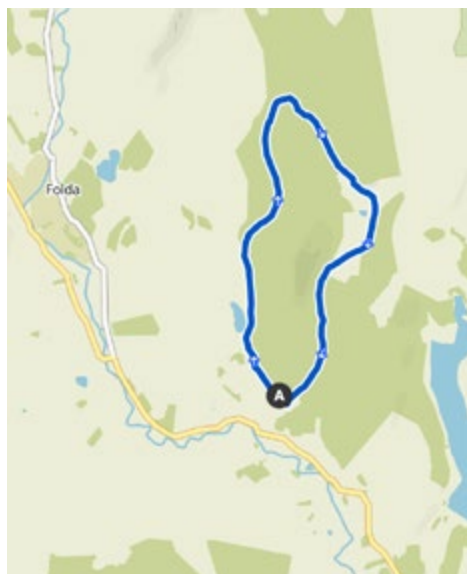




GLENISLA FOREST GRAVEL BIKE MEANDER

This family-friendly itinerary involves no public roads, offering various side options to extend the route.

You'll be able to stop off in the Kirkton of Glenisla and visit its pretty kirk and ancient ladywell. You can also enjoy a stop at the lovely Loch Shandra, a popular fishing spot.



Full route details here:

<https://cateranecomuseum.co.uk/itinerary/glenisla-forest>



WHAT IS AN ECOMUSEUM?

Originating in France in the 1970's, Ecomuseums focus on the identity of a place with the term "éco" being a shortened form for "écologie". Still a relatively new concept, there are around 300 worldwide, mostly in Europe, but there is only one other in Scotland, on Skye.

Set in specific landscapes, they offer:

- an opportunity for local people to share the unique heritage of where they live in a way that is meaningful to them and which preserves the objects, sites and cultural practices they value.
- a holistic nature and culture frame for the interpretation of cultural heritage, quite different to traditional museums' focus on the specific items and objects of their collections, sited inside a building.
- a focus for community empowerment and regenerative tourism.

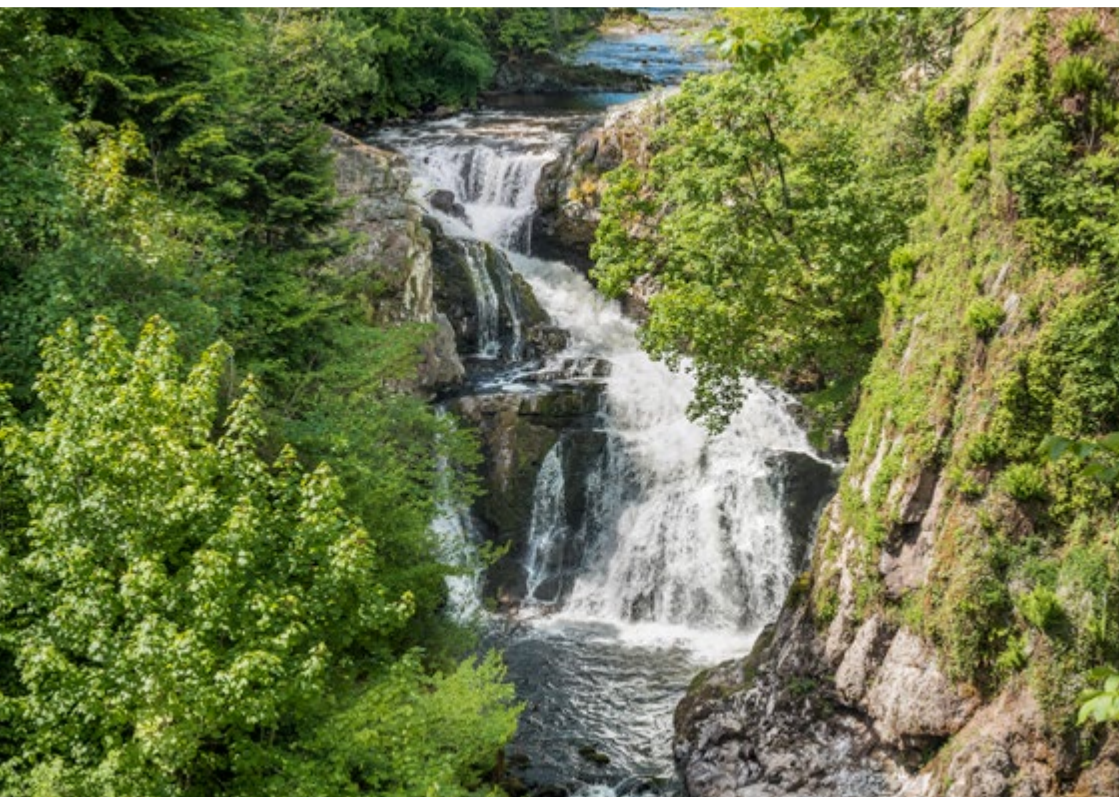


CREDITS

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This booklet introduces you to the cycling routes we have designed across the CATERAN Ecomuseum, which offer something for people of all ages and cycling experience.

Guiding you through the natural and cultural heritage of the area, they offer some of the best cycling adventures you can have in Scotland.

Along old drove roads and through ancient woodlands, past prehistoric stone circles and medieval Tower Houses, into historic market towns and across modern-day rewilding estates, each route links you to sites of interest from deep time to our time – all framed by the gentle Vale of Strathmore, the rolling braes of Angus, the beautiful glens of eastern Perthshire and western Angus, and the breathtaking Cairngorm Plateau.

Visit www.cateranecomuseum.co.uk to find out detailed route information.