

# SPIN

CYCLING IN SCOTLAND

spring\_2013

## ROUTES

TWO GREAT MTB ROUTES  
*from* FERGAL MACERLEAN

## CLOTHES

SPIN CHECKS OUT  
BIKE FASHION

## EAT

CYCLING SUPERFOODS  
& REVIEWS OF  
BIKE CAFÉS

PLUS...NEWS,  
ADULT CYCLE TRAINING,  
EVENTS AND MORE



# NEWS



Bike demos



BMX stunt displays



Stalls and trade stands

## SCOTTISH BIKE SHOW

### ...DE-CAMPS TO VELODROME FOR 2014

After two successful years at Glasgow SECC, Scotland's annual cycling show is moving to the new home of track cycling for 2013, as the Scottish Bike Show sets its numerous stalls out at the Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome and Emirates Arena this April (27th and 28th).

IN ADDITION to the wide range of stands from retailers, manufacturers and industry bodies there's a huge range of things to see and do at the show this year. Taster sessions on the track will be running in the Velodrome, while the BSD BMX stunt team perform their amazing stunts in the centre area. Outside the area, a 1km test track will provide all visitors with a vast array of international bike brands to demo throughout the weekend. Spinning classes will also be running, and a brand new presentation area will host interactive workshops, demonstrations and talks by representatives from international bike brands and cycling celebrities.

If that isn't enough to entice you along, Scottish cycling legend Graeme Obree will also be there showing off his self-built creation, the 'Beastie', which he is hoping will allow him to set the human powered land speed record later this year.

Cycling Scotland will be there on the day so come and see us on our stall for giveaways, competitions and for a bit of a chat.

You can book tickets and find out more at [www.thescottishbikeshow.com](http://www.thescottishbikeshow.com)



Taking the scenic route from Glasgow to Edinburgh

### Freshnlo Pedal for Scotland

## TO SUPPORT STV APPEAL

SCOTLAND'S BIGGEST bike ride is back for 2013 with a new charity partner. Freshnlo Pedal for Scotland will now support the STV Appeal, which raises money to combat child poverty in Scotland.

A host of STV stars, including weatherman Sean Batty are already in training for the ride to show their support and inspire others to get involved. STV sports presenters Caroline Henderson and Raman Bhardwaj and STV North news reader Louise Cowie will be joining Sean on the 47 mile Challenge Ride.

Sean Batty, STV weatherman, said: "I wouldn't describe myself as a cyclist at all, but each year my challenges for the STV Appeal have had some involvement of cycling. In 2011 I cycled nearly 130 miles from Stornoway to Lochboisdale on South Uist, and then in 2012, took up the challenge of cycling from Glasgow to Edinburgh along the canal paths. I've been able to do both of these trips with just a little training so it shows that everyone can get involved in a cycling challenge like this and it's a great way to get fit."

**Freshnlo Pedal for Scotland returns on 8th September with a 47 mile Challenge Ride and 110 mile Sportive Ride. Family Rides in Glasgow and Edinburgh are also due to be announced very soon. To register head to [www.pedalforScotland.org](http://www.pedalforScotland.org)**



STV stars saddle up for the 2013 ride



### Pedal on Parliament

## RETURNS FOR ROUND TWO...

LAST YEAR over 3000 cyclists descended on the Scottish Parliament to ask for safer conditions for cyclists as part of the Pedal on Parliament event. On May 19th this year, the organisers are hoping to attract even more people along for a second demonstration aimed at highlighting the huge demand that exists for better cycling conditions in Scotland.

**Starting at the Meadows in Edinburgh at 3pm, the ride will take cyclists through the Capital to Holyrood where the event will finish with a picnic. To find out more about the event head to [www.pedalonparliament.org](http://www.pedalonparliament.org)**

# COMMUTE

Last year SPIN marked the arrival of Spring with a full on guide to cycling to work. As the milder weather and lighter days of 2013 approach, we're back with another look at ditching the commute for two wheeled freedom, this time checking out how to build confidence, what to wear and what to eat.



Cycle skills sessions can provide a massive confidence boost for cycling in traffic

# CYCLE TRAINING

## NOT JUST FOR KIDS...

For people of a certain age, perhaps those who are able to remember the Tufty Club or Charlie the Cat's sage advice to stay away from strangers, the mention of cycle training may well elicit memories of a fun afternoon at school where you got out of lessons. You possibly cycled round the playground under the supervision of a nice policeman who gave you a cool enamel badge at the end of it. What may not be as easy to call to mind are the road skills that you were supposed to away from that training.

AS IT STANDS, cycle training has come a very long way since the 70s and 80s, and the current Bikeability Scotland scheme teaches control skills, road skills and even advanced junctions across its



three levels. As more and more children receive this training, the future looks bright for the coming generations to be confident cyclists at ease on the roads. But what about the 30 and 40-somethings that got just a few afternoons weaving unsteadily between traffic cones?

The lack of cycle training available to adults is something of a barrier to many people using their bikes more often. Surveys repeatedly show that people's main reservations about cycling stem from the feeling that they are just not safe on the roads. Cycle training can really help overcome that, but it's not widely available. That's why a new pilot is due to launch with cycle retailers in Edinburgh to offer confidence-boosting cycle skills sessions through bike shops.

A range of options will be available to provide would-be commuters with road skills they need to be more confident cyclists. The sessions will range from driving lesson style one-to-one training with an instructor, a 2.5 hour Essential Cycling Skills session through to the full 8 hour Commuter Course. The pilot will be running in the Edinburgh branches of Alpine Bikes, Edinburgh Bike Co-op, The Tri-Centre and the Bike Station in May 2013.

Cycling Scotland Chief Executive Ian Aitken outlined the importance of the pilot scheme: "Many of the hang-ups most people have about cycling in traffic come from a lack of confidence rather than any serious issues with other vehicles. People who've been through cycle training find it boosts their confidence enormously and gives them a really solid education of how to use the road as a cyclist. After that, cycling amongst even fairly busy traffic doesn't seem anywhere near as scary."

The pilot aims to make skills sessions much more accessible by making them available in bike stores. If the pilot is successful, Cycling Scotland hopes that this can be replicated across the country. To find out more about the pilot email [matt@cyclingscotland.org](mailto:matt@cyclingscotland.org)



### TRY OUR QUIZ

If you're not sure whether cycle training is for you, why not test your cycling knowledge with our quiz?

#### BASIC SKILLS

- 1 In the UK, which brake lever typically controls the front brake - left or right?
- 2 The best way to pedal is with your:
  - A. Instep
  - B. Ball of foot
  - C. Heel
3. What is the name given to the number of times a cyclist turns the pedals in one minute?

#### BIKE SET UP AND MAINTENANCE

1. Saddle height should be set so that:
  - A. One foot can just rest on the pedal at its lowest point, with leg fully stretched
  - B. Both feet can comfortably touch the ground
2. What's wrong with this picture?



#### ON THE ROAD

1. When cycling on the road, where is your recommended default position on the carriageway?
  - A. By the kerb
  - B. In the centre of the lane
  - C. Just inside the centre line
2. You are behind a HGV at a junction, which is indicating left. Which action is UNSAFE?
  - A. Filter down the side of the vehicle and wait at the junction.
  - B. Wait behind the HGV.
3. What road feature enables cyclists to get priority at junctions?

#### GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

1. It is illegal to cycle on the pavement - true or false?
2. How much room should a car give a cyclist?
  - A. One car door
  - B. A metre
  - C. The same amount of space as you would another car

Answers can be found below. How did you get on?

- 1 - 5 POINTS**  
Oh dear, that's quite poor. Get yourself some training ASAP!
- 6 - 8 POINTS**  
Better, but it's clear a bit of cycle training could still teach you a few pointers
- 8 - 10 POINTS**  
Pretty good. We're always on the lookout for new instructors you know.

#### ANSWERS:

- BASIC SKILLS**  
1. Right / 2. B / 3. Cadence
- BIKE SET UP**  
1. A / 2. Forks wrong way round
- ON THE ROAD**  
1. B / 2. A / 3. Advance stop lines
- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE**  
1. True / 2. C

IS THERE anything more soul destroying than filling your car up with petrol? Tipping hugely overpriced, smelly, polluting liquid into a tank on an identikit concrete forecourt, watching the pound signs clock ever upwards can be a dispiriting experience. For a cyclist of course, the direct equivalent is sitting down to a plate of food, and while food prices have done their share of rising in recent years, at least the fuel for your journey tastes brilliant on the way down. SPIN takes a look at the best fuel to eat as a cyclist, and also the best places to eat it.



# FILLING YOUR TANK



Snaffling a guilt free cake when you've been out for a weekend pootle on your bike is all very well, but if you're going to be cycling to work on a regular basis, it's worth looking at what kind of nutrition is going to help make sure your energy levels don't crash before you reach the office. SPIN suggests some crafty meal options that mean no matter what time of day you're heading out on the bike, you'll always reach your destination feeling energised.

## BREAKFAST

### MUESLI OR PORRIDGE WITH FRUIT

*A brilliant source of slow release energy*

### BLACK OR GREEN TEA

*A cycling superfood - tea can prevent muscle soreness when taken and prepared the right way. Google it.*

## ELEVENSES

### PEANUT BUTTER ON BROWN TOAST

*Gives you carbs to burn as fuel, plus more slow release goodness from the nuts.*

### CHOCOLATE MILK

*Forget all that isotonic bullhockey - milk has been shown to be the best form of rehydration after a cycle. Want the best news? Chocolate milk is even better for science-y reasons to do with glycogen or something. Who cares - chocolate milk!!*

## LUNCH

### SANDWICHES

*The undisputed king of luncheontime, the sandwich is also a cyclist's best friend. Satisfying and portable, the sandwich is a great way to package ingredients that can aid both energy levels and recovery. Here's some suggestions...*

### VEGGIE PITTA

**Pitta bread, hoummous, bean burger, sliced low fat cheese, sliced avacado, shredded carrot, rocket.**

*High fibre meat-free option that helps replace lost electrolytes.*

### CRUNCHY TUNA SALAD

**Whole grain bread, tuna, sliced apple, dijon mustard mayonnaise and toasted almonds.**

*Low-fat, postride recovery meal with a balanced boost of carbs and protein. The omega 3 in tuna helps improve blood flow and according to the University of California, 'help wash out inflammatory cells in damaged muscles that cause pain and swelling'.*

### PEANUT BUTTER, BACON AND HONEY

**2 slices of toasted raisin bread, honey, peanut butter, bacon.**

*A salty sweet energy blast.*

## DINNER

### TOFU

*Yeah, tofu. It might not be top of your shopping list on the average week, but the branched-chain amino acids in soybeans stop muscle degradation during long rides while the antioxidants help alleviate post-ride aches and pains, so it's worth thinking of ways to incorporate it into meals. How about a tofu curry? That way you can incorporate turmeric, yet another superfood for cyclists, loaded with a potent anti-inflammatory compound called curcumin, which may help to increase endurance and speed recovery.*

*Of course, if that's all a bit too hippy-dippy for you, you could always just tuck into some lovely pasta and rub some Deep Heat on your achy thighs instead.*

# BIKE LOVE CAFÉS

## RUBBISH AT COOKING? FEAR NOT – THERE'S A NEW TREND EMERGING FOR BIKE CAFÉS.

SPIN took a look at a few across the country...

### RONDE BICYCLE OUTFITTERS - EDINBURGH

66-68 Hamilton Place, Stockbridge  
Edinburgh EH3 5AZ  
t: 0131 260 9888  
e: info@rondebike.com  
w: rondebike.com  
fb: facebook.com/RondeBicycleOutfitters  
tweet: twitter.com/Rondebike

#### WHAT THEY SAY:

Ronde is a new experience: A bicycle shop combining the best of road, sportive, urban and 29er bicycles, clothing and accessories. A café serving great coffee, displays of contemporary photography, print, films, magazines and books. A place to meet, a place to think, a place to share experience get good advice and great service.

#### WHAT WE SAY:

A smart affair in the trendy Stockbridge area of Edinburgh, Ronde Bicycle Outfitters has a clear leaning towards the more seasoned cyclist with a wide range of bikes, components and accessories available.

In addition to common fare such as bike fitting, servicing and maintenance workshops, Ronde's USP is its offer of tailored training plans for those targeting a specific event or looking to start racing for the first time, through its dedicated Fit and Training Studio.

In the shop, a new range of Rapha clothing is up for grabs as is CMP, the nutrition programme of choice Team Sky Pro Cycling. Mavic wheels are also available alongside the sportive carbon fibre range.

Gluten free and/or veggie soup is always available in addition to specials including Lamb Tagine, Cream of Mushroom, or a personal favourite, puy lentil and Cumberland sausage.

#### SAMPLE MENU:

Take away coffee: from **£1.90**  
Homemade soup of the day: **£3.80**  
Meal deal (coffee and pastry up to 11am): **£3**

### VELOCITY CAFÉ AND BICYCLE WORKSHOP - INVERNESS

Crown Avenue  
Inverness IV2 3NF  
t: 01463 419956  
e: hello@velocitylove.co.uk  
w: velocitylove.co.uk  
fb: facebook.com/velocitycafe  
tweet: twitter.com/velocitylove

#### WHAT THEY SAY:

Velocity is a cafe and bicycle workshop based in Inverness. We've one aim, and that's to help people get on their bicycles and promote a healthy, happy lifestyle.

#### WHAT WE SAY:

The overwhelming theme of this city centre bicycle haven is love. Love of cake, love of coffee and of course, bike love. The Chesterfield sofa, retro furnishings and presence of Scrabble may bring back fond memories of visiting your gran - in a nice way.

It's not all about sipping coffee and eating cake, Velocity works closely with local communities to encourage cycling regardless of age or experience. From 1st April, Velocity will offer two types of membership, or as they prefer to call it, 'friendship' – free with pay as you go extras or a monthly subscription of

£7.50 (£4.50 unwaged). If you opt for a free friendship then extras will set you back about £4 an hour for access to the workshop and £5 per half hour for a one-to-one session with a mechanic. Paying members receive unlimited access to the fix-your-own-bike workstands and can access 5 of Velocity's courses for £60 – a saving of £3 per class. In addition, paying members can take advantage of monthly deals at the café and will receive a 10% discount on venue hire, tea and coffee and merchandise.

There are plenty of exciting outreach activities coming up in 2013, including working with local schools to increase levels of cycling to school, skills sessions throughout the summer and maybe even a wee trip to Belladrum Festival.

#### SAMPLE MENU:

Take away coffee: **£1.80**  
Take away sandwich: **£3**  
The wheel meal deal (Simple soup – served with salad, a hot drink or glass of cordial, a piece of fruit): **£5**

### RIG BIKE SHOP AND LUKE MONAGHAN'S VELODROMO CAFÉ - GLASGOW

141 West Regent St (basement)  
Glasgow  
t: 0141 237 5262  
e: rig143@hotmail.co.uk

While making my way down to the basement I was confronted with a sweaty man sawing on a piece of wood. On seeing me he smiled and said "It's for out the back. I'm building a shelter." which kind of set the tone for my reviewing experience of this hard working grimy bike shop.

They have a plethora of vintage cycling parts neatly displayed in class cabinets that will have you salivating from the minute you walk in. As one of the Cycling Scotland staff recently said "I could happily spend all my

wages in there on payday no problem." I'm not sure his wife would be too happy with him if he did.

The shop attracts a multitude of cyclists from commuters to die hard fixed gear city riders to roller derby girls who come along to purchase skating gear at 5th Blocker Skates. If you do decide to stick your head in for a quick peek hopefully you'll get to see local pet celeb "Jeff" while you're down there. He is extremely lazy, doesn't do any work around the shop and is most likely to be sleeping upside down with his legs in the air.

Rig stock a variety of track, commuter and road bikes but can also build you a bespoke single or fixed gear bicycle from £200.

Food: Not quite as diverse as previously mentioned cafés but the food and drink is of high quality. Their coffee is supplied by Glasgow based company Dear Green Coffee Roasters with paninis delivered locally from WTMS.

#### SAMPLE MENU:

Sit-in or Takeaway latte: **£1**  
Sit-in or Takeaway tea: **50p**  
Sit-in or Takeaway soup and bread: **£1.75**  
Sit-in or Takeaway Panini: **£3.50**

### SIEMPRE BICYCLE CAFÉ - GLASGOW

0141 334 2385  
info@siemprebicyclecafe.com  
162 Dumbarton Road  
Glasgow  
www.siemprebicyclecafe.com

#### WHAT THEY SAY:

An independent and creative, urban bicycle café that provides a range of bikes, distinctive cycle clothing, accessories and bike services as well as locally sourced, tasty, healthy food and drinks for those on the move or in need of a rest.

#### WHAT WE SAY:

Situated on Dumbarton Road right next to Kelvinhall Underground this Glasgow cycle café provides sit in and take away options and an organic menu. They also have a take-away hatch facing the tube station so commuters can grab their breakfast or lunches on the go.

However, this isn't just a café, it's a bicycle café - so what about the bikes? Siempre are extremely passionate about cycling and it shows through the time and effort put in to the layout and design of the space. With their cool logo and funky colours it's an extremely easy place to kick back, relax and watch the busy world of Dumbarton Road passing by. There is no need to worry about locking your bike outside as there is space to rest your trusty steed inside the café area.

Siempre sell a range of classic, urban and sportive road bikes that include the likes of Raleigh, Schwinn and Cinelli and stock all the usual accessory essentials such as tubes, pumps, locks and lights.

Siempre pride themselves on being a hip, urban, trendy bike store so it's less of the hi-vis and lycra and (if you know your cycling fashion) it's in with the Georgia in Dublin, Fabric Horse and Water Off A Ducks Back. Siempre's clothing section has a huge variety of stylish and alternative cycle wear for ladies but carry stylish pieces for the gents too.

Food: Errrrm... delicious. Check out their Bistro Boxes. Perfect for sharing with friends and family, even better for eating all to yourself. They come full of select cut meats, artisan cheeses, crusty bread or gluten free oatcakes. Highly recommended at £4.95.

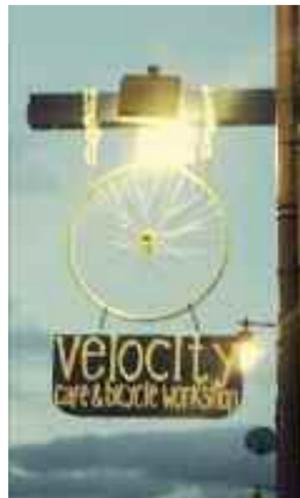
#### SAMPLE MENU:

Take-away latte: **£2.25**  
Take-away porridge: **£1.50**  
Take-away Philly Cheesesteak Sandwich: **£4.95**

Rig and Velodromo



Velocity, Inverness



Ronde's funky interior



Branded mugs!



Jeff the Dog



Siempre take-away hatch





# WHAT TO WEAR

**Bike clothing doesn't need to glow in the dark you know. SPIN checks out some cool clobber for cyclists, with no hi-viz in sight.**

## POPPY BLOUSE

Pashley have long been flying the flag for classic British style, supplying commuter and industry with solid and classically styled bikes since 1926. In keeping with the wicker basketed, leather seated style we have come to associate with this great British icon, the Poppy Blouse is a genteel item that features a pin tuck detail, allowing for a little much needed extra fabric across the back. Likewise, the puff sleeves also allow for some extra movement. Being 35% silk, the blouse is light and ideal for keeping cool en route.



**VERDICT** Chic and practical, if a little pricey  
**RRP £95** FROM [pashleycollection.co.uk](http://pashleycollection.co.uk)

## LEVI'S COMMUTER

We looked at the 511 Slim Commuter Jeans for men (they don't seem to do a women's equivalent) which are designed for the urban cyclist to "ride, live and work in the same pair of jeans". No, we're not talking the student next door who thinks a washing machine is the stuff of fiction. Levi's are clearly aiming at the style conscious twenty-something professional with these on trend slim fit jeans.



### FEATURES INCLUDE:

- Water-resistant and dirt-repellent NanoSphere® protective finish*
- Odour-resistant Sanitised® protective finish*
- Reflective 3M™ Scotchlite™ tape on interior cuffs*
- U-lock storage on waistband; double-layered seat and back pockets*
- Rolling up the cuffs reveals a reflective to help you be seen on the road - a simple but effective addition.*

**VERDICT** Clever take on a trusted brand  
**RRP £70** FROM [levi.com](http://levi.com)

## WINDJAMMA JACKET

Surface Clothing have created a range of fashionable clothing aimed at the urban cyclist, but equally at home in the pub or out with the dog. We were particularly enamoured with the eye catching Windjamma Jacket, a light weight durable number that is quick drying and shower proof. Available in a range of colours, including a student friendly orange and brown, this is a great option for those who don't want to join the high vis gang but want still want to be visible on the road.

**VERDICT** Bold and bright  
**RRP £64.99** FROM [surface-clothing.com](http://surface-clothing.com)

## BOW PEEP GLOVES

We know its spring time, but we also know that the seasons in Scotland can't be trusted. That's why we chose to highlight these super stylish fingerless gloves from women's cycle clothing specialist Ana Nichoola. It's not all style over function, however. These gloves have a fully cushioned palm and have been designed with the cycling newbie in mind.



**VERDICT** Retro chic with a plenty of substance  
**RRP £24.99** FROM [ananichoola.co.uk](http://ananichoola.co.uk)

# GET INVOLVED

Spring has officially sprung and that means it's time to get your bike back in regular service. Just in case you're lacking in inspiration, SPIN has the best cycling routes and events here to lure you into the great Scottish outdoors. If indoors is more your thing, that's still no excuse - we check out how to get a crack at the new velodrome and chat to pro-cyclists for their hint and tips.



## TOP SPRING CYCLING EVENTS

FIND ALL THESE EVENTS AND MORE AT [BIKEEVENTSSCOTLAND.COM](http://BIKEEVENTSSCOTLAND.COM)



GLENTRESS SEVEN



UCI DOWNHILL WORLD CUP

### MAGGIES MONSTER BIKE HIKE 4 - 5 MAY

In one weekend, 4 - 5 May 2013, you can make a Monster difference for people with cancer by taking on Maggie's outdoor adventure in the Scottish Highlands. This 24 hour team event challenges you to bike 31 miles and then to hike 9, 23 or 41 miles to our Bronze, Silver or Gold finishes. The route takes you along the beautiful Great Glen Way from Fort William to Inverness. Maggie's supports you from start to finish making sure you have an unforgettable experience on this exhilarating and demanding course.

To sign up, all you need is a team of two to six people and a support team crew of at least two people. You also need to be over 18 on the event day. We ask you to pay a registration fee and commit to raising £375 each.

### GLENTRESS SEVEN 2013 1 JUNE

Held for the first time in 2011, the GT7 was an immediate success. A great course using some of forest's best man-made and natural riding, combined with a fantastic event village and a very friendly atmosphere.

It's a seven hour mtb race for individuals and teams of two or three, with the emphasis on great trails and a ton of fun - the route will feature some fantastic trail riding, including some normally unavailable sections of great singletrack. The event is aimed at all levels of mtb rider, so you can go as hard or easy as you like.

The idea is to complete as many laps as possible within the seven hours. The course is around 11km with 450m of up and down. Full details closer to the time of the event. The main descent is a total classic, but it's only available for the day - a lot of these trails are closed again straight after the event.

If you're not out on course, the event village and transition area will be rocking all day and full facilities will be available on site. There's camping with Glentress Wigwams right next to the race arena too.

### UCI DOWNHILL WORLD CUP 8 - 9 JUNE

Two great days of competition on the Saturday and Sunday, plus lots of other activities in and around the World Cup Village. The Nevis Range ski area is taken over by the World Cup on these days and access to the World Cup Village and the event is by ticket only, available in advance or on arrival.

In the week before the World Cup (3-7 June), the site is being prepared with training and 4X qualifications on Friday. Nevis Range is accessible to all and the gondola operates normally during this period.

On the Saturday night, the action moves from the World Cup site at Nevis Range to Downhill Downtown in Fort William.

Daily schedules and start lists can be found on various notice boards around the World Cup Village during the event itself.

### THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL OF CYCLING 15 - 23 JUNE

To be a proper Edinburgh style festival, it has to be a city-wide event over at least a week, as a real showcase for all aspects of bicycle culture and the host city. Most Festivals of Cycling seem to revolve around the sports side of cycling, with a race or two, maybe a sportive and a family event tacked on the side. But there is so much more to riding bicycles than this!

The Edinburgh Festival of Cycling isn't just about a few cycle races and a closed road ride for families. It isn't only about "Cyclists", it's about people who use or who would like to use a bicycle for whatever reason, therefore it does include a wide range of sporting, cultural and fun events, across the city.

The festival also coincides with this year's Bike Week [www.bikeweek.org.uk](http://www.bikeweek.org.uk)

### THE HIGHWAYMAN CHALLENGE 17 AUGUST

The 2nd running of the popular Highwayman Challenge Audax event takes place on the 17th August, pitting riders against the climbs of the Ayrshire Alps Cycle Park including Tairlaw Summit.

The Highwayman Challenge is the opening event of a weekend of cycling activity in South Carrick, including the historic Davie Bell Road Race.

Run under the regulations of Audax UK, this is not a race, but participants must maintain a minimum average speed to complete the event.

# CYCLE ROUTES

Memories are made on two-wheeled forays and now is the time to forge new ones and explore some of Scotland's finest cycle routes.

TRAVEL WRITER **FERGAL MACERLEAN** PICKS TWO OF HIS FAVOURITE RIDES FOR THIS SEASON

**M**AKE THE MOST of the lengthening days to enjoy some fabulous cycles – many of which can be easily reached by train for a superb day trip from your doorstep. Or take a short break to experience the world class trails and roads on offer.

The routes outlined here – one to the pretty island of Kerrera in Oban Bay, the other to the wild and impressive setting of Loch Ossian on Rannoch Moor – will

whet anyone's sense of adventure without being too demanding. In fact children will delight in splashing around remote Loch Ossian while Kerrera has something for all riders. Both routes are accessible by train.

ScotRail takes bikes for free. Space is limited but booking in advance is simple. See their website for everything you need to know at [scotrail.co.uk/cycling](http://scotrail.co.uk/cycling).

If the routes tickle your fancy you can find more stunning rides across the Highlands and Islands with Bike Scotland: Book Two with forty on- and off-road routes of varying difficulty and length, ranging from a pancake flat two-hour canal trip to the country's highest road pass.

**HAVE FUN!**  
Fergal MacErlean

Views to low lying Lismore from above Barr-nam-boc Bay

## 2 AROUND LOCH OSSIAN



Stunning scenery by Loch Ossian

Try this good introduction to off-road riding in a magical setting only accessible by train.

Corrour Station, on the west Highland line, is fantastically isolated. Opposite the old station house, which has an inviting restaurant stands the corbett Leum Uilleim and to the north-west can be seen the Easains. Moorland extends as far as the eye can see and, as the train pulls away to disappear into the folds of the landscape, it can be a lonely place.

However, you're guaranteed peace and quiet on this easy mountain bike trip, which is ideal for older kids. Follow the one and only track to reach the crest of a hill for your first sight of Loch Ossian. It is a quintessential Highland scene with the elongate loch and Scots Pine clad islands nestled beneath the hills. Lying within the large deer stalking Corrour estate, which welcomes walkers and cyclists, it is a place of great beauty. Aside from the railway line there is only one road into the far end of the loch which is for estate traffic only.

Ossian was the name of the narrator of a collection of

poems which the Highland poet James Macpherson published in 1762; he claimed to have translated them from an ancient Scots Gaelic source. The work, which was hugely popular, and influential among the Romantic movement, detailed the heroic life and times of Ossian's father, the warrior king Fingal. Controversy raged over the authenticity of the work which put a Scottish bent on the traditional Irish stories of Oisín, son of Fionn Mac Cumhaill, a light footed warrior in the mythological Fianna.

As you approach the lochshore take the left track which climbs with views of the top of Ben Nevis, its steadfast neighbour Aonach Mór, and the conical Binnein Beag at the edge of the Mamores. Above the track, rises Beinn na Lap. This is one of the easiest munros to climb thanks to the area's elevation – the loch lies at almost 400m above sea level.

The track swings round to follow the northern shore, through pine woods, and is a joy – it seems to have a disproportionate amount of downhill! At the far end there's a plaque to Sir John Stirling Maxwell, who bought Corrour in 1891, for his pioneering pine

planting projects which led to large scale afforestation of the British uplands.

Pass Corrour Lodge Castle which is an eye opener with its modernistic turret and triangular glass panels. Follow the southern lochshore track; the track is rougher on this side and can have waterlogged patches. Enjoy some good descents and continue through a couple of deer fences which can be opened.

Further on, as you leave the woods behind there are excellent views over the western end of the loch and the SYHA eco-hostel which sits there in a prime position.

**START / FINISH**  
**CORROUR TRAIN STATION**  
**DISTANCE**  
**14KM**  
**TIME**  
**2 HOURS**  
**MAP**  
**OS LANDRANGER 41, 42**  
**TERRAIN**  
**SOME HILLS; LANDROVER TRACK (ROUGH IN PARTS)**

## 1 THE ISLE OF KERRERA



The short ferry ride across the Sound of Kerrera

Escape to the enchanting island of Kerrera just minutes from the west coast town of Oban where cars are a novelty.

This may be a short route in terms of distance but it offers enough excitement to make it worthwhile for a decent mountain bike spin. It can be shortened for all the family by returning from the island's tearoom too (3km one way from ferry).

From Oban cycle south past the ferry terminal, keeping to the coast road, for the 3km flat run to Gallanach which is very pleasant, and reasonably quiet, after the first 500m. After passing underneath Ardbhan Craigs you'll reach a small jetty and a parking space.

A two-minute ferry crossing plies the crystal clear water and is hailed by the simple measure of turning a marked board. Life is simple on this quiet seven-kilometre long island, home to a population of 30.

On the island follow the old drove road left alongside Horse Shoe Bay. The track is fairly

rough and further down the island there are a few hills but overall it shouldn't present any problems. Keep left at a fork and continue to reach The Little Horse Shoe Bay, complete with picturesque wreck.

Further on, at a second fork by a house, keep on the main track to veer right, uphill. The road then hesitates briefly before a fun descent down to the sparkling sea where it levels out by the Kerrera Bunkhouse and Teagarden at Lower Gylen. This has a suntrap patio where you can relax with birdsong ringing in your ears.

A short walk, reached by following a stream, leads down to the sea at Port a' Chaistell. The narrow seaweed-filled bay is a popular swimming spot where you can enjoy views out west past Mull and beyond to the deep blue sea. Close by lies the 16th century MacDougall stronghold, Gylen Castle, on a high perch.

Back in the saddle follow the track past the tearoom on a combination of landrover and narrow single track. The track jaunts by the seaweed-strewn shore for a while before

swinging inland and uphill past a house called Ardmore on the right.

Continue, with views of Lismore and the Firth of Lorn, to cycle by Barr-nam-boc Bay where a landrover track climbs sharply. From there it's a fast, rocky and downhill all the way to the ferry.

**START / FINISH**  
**OBAN TRAIN STATION**  
**DISTANCE**  
**15KM**  
**TIME**  
**3 HOURS**  
**MAP**  
**OS LANDRANGER 49**  
**TERRAIN**  
**HILLY; TRACKS**

These routes are taken from Bike Scotland Book 2. SPIN readers can save 20% on this and any other Pocket Mountains book by ordering from [pocketmountains.com](http://pocketmountains.com) and entering discount code **CYCLESCOT**



## SYHA HOSTEL

If you're heading out on these more remote routes, it makes perfect sense to make a weekend of it and stay a night while you're away. Youth hostels are an amazingly cost effective way to turn a day out on the bike into a weekend mini-break – here's the two hostels that are perfectly situated for our two routes....



### OBAN YOUTH HOSTEL

Situated on the town's stunning waterfront, a stone's throw away from the centre and the ferry port, Oban Youth Hostel boasts modern facilities and décor which have been awarded 5 stars from VisitScotland. Facilities include a range of room sizes, all with en-suite facilities, some with superb bay views, a self-catering kitchen, as well as the Raasay dining room offering breakfast, snacks and meals. Oban is the place to come for exploring the Argyll region and a popular gateway to the Western Isles.



### LOCH OSSIAN YOUTH HOSTEL

This traditionally-styled eco-hostel, set high on Rannoch moor, offers a true sense of remoteness. Our popular Youth Hostel operates with wind and solar power, grey water filtration and dry toilet systems. With only 20 beds, accommodation at Loch Ossian is only available in multi-share but groups and families do have the option of booking a dorm room for exclusive use. Drying is available on two overhead racks and boot stands by the fire and although the Youth Hostel has no showers, the wash rooms have hot water. Loch Ossian Youth Hostel is only accessible by rail, bike or foot.

Find out more about SYHA Hostelling Scotland's network of over 70 tourist Youth Hostels at [www.hostellingscotland.com](http://www.hostellingscotland.com)

### SYHA PROMOTION

SYHA Hostelling Scotland is offering SPIN readers an exclusive 30% off hostel accommodation on stays taken 2nd April – 31st July when booked by 31st May. Pick a Youth Hostel, choose your dates and book online with the promotional code below.

Promotional Code: **SPIN/SYH**

Book online at [www.hostellingscotland.com](http://www.hostellingscotland.com)

#### TERMS & CONDITIONS:

Customer must quote promotional code at time of booking – no discounts can be applied retrospectively

Discount applies to new bookings only

Offer does not include RentaHostel, private hire, catering or SYHA Affiliate Hostels

Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer (including payment by Tesco vouchers)

Offer applies to accommodation only (bed & room bookings)

Standard terms and conditions apply

Subject to availability

# THE VELODROME

When is going round in circles not a bad thing? When you're riding the brand new Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome in Glasgow, that's when. The iconic venue opened in October 2012, nearly two years ahead of the 2014 Commonwealth Games for which it has been built, and has already hosted several high profile track cycling events.



The best thing is, the track is not just for professionals, anyone can become accredited to use it. Spin got the inside track (pun very much intended) on what's it like to use the new facility from both perspectives by chatting to amateur cyclist Chris Johnson on getting accredited, and also to pro-cyclist, Commonwealth medallist and 2014 hopeful Charline Joiner about using the new base to prepare for victory.

**Chris Johnson**  
keen club cyclist

**SPIN:** How can Spin readers get to ride the Velodrome?

**Chris:** A great way to try the Velodrome is to book on an accreditation 1 (introduction) session and be guided by one of the skilled coaches based at the Emirates Arena. Glasgow Life facilitate this process and once you have registered their online booking system is fairly easy to navigate. Even easier, if you live close to the track, just call in and the people on the front desk can get you set up.

**How long does accreditation take?**

The full accreditation process involves four sessions, each 1-2

hours long. The first two sessions are shorter 1 hour sessions providing an introduction to riding the special track bikes and getting onto the banking. Accreditation 3 and 4 get a lot more exciting with racing tips and group exercises.

**What skill level do you need?**

As you go through the various accreditation sessions you build skills so it's a natural progression. The introduction assumes you can ride a bike, but beyond that a bit of enthusiasm will go a long way! Some of the activities at level 3 and 4 require a bit of speed so a reasonable fitness level is good by this point.

**What does it feel like to ride the track?**

It's a great rush, especially in the indoor arena. The first time you go round the banking can be a little disconcerting, but as you build a bit of confidence you'll be desperate to launch yourself round the fastest lines! It doesn't take long at all to get used to the feel of the track and gauging speed. Even the sound of the bike on the wooden boards is exhilarating. The only trouble with the track is despite the fact you're just going in circles the time flies and before you know it the next group have arrived and its time to finish. Fear not, you can book the next session at the desk on the way out!

**Charline Joiner**  
pro-cyclist

**SPIN:** Have you competed on the new track yet?

**Charline:** Yes, the Scottish National Track Championships were held at the new Chris Hoy Velodrome in Glasgow, which was linked to the Thunderdrome event where I won the Keirin Scottish national title. The atmosphere was fantastic and I could just imagine what it would be like competing in front of a home crowd in Glasgow 2014.

**What does it feel like to race in the new facility?**

The facility is amazing. It's so big and impressive, a facility like this is bound to make a massive difference to sport in Scotland. The track is great - it rides really smoothly as all new tracks do. The design of the track boards are a little different to what I'm used to but because I train there every week I'm getting used to it and learning the different ways to use the track to my advantage in races. It's just so great being able to go to training not having to be worried if it will rain or not.

**How important is it for Scotland to have a facility like the velodrome?**

I really think that more people are becoming interested in cycling due to the fact it's televised more and more often. I know that there has already been a high demand for the accreditation sessions and coaching classes. Everyone wants to have a go on the track and now there is one available in Scotland with a roof on it. No cancellations due to rain or wind. The Scottish National team are training on it every week so it should give us a little advantage leading into Glasgow 2014 and the juniors also have weekly access to it which will improve them massively. The future looks bright.

**What's your top piece of advice for people going along to have a go on the new track?**

Remember that you are lucky to have a track of world class standard in our country so enjoy the experience, soak it all in and relax. The more tense you are on the bike, the more difficult it will be, so relax the upper body and keep pedalling and always apply pressure to the pedals especially in the bankings.

NEWS  
IN BRIEF



## GIVE ME CYCLE SPACE BACK ACROSS THE COUNTRY

CYCLING SCOTLAND'S successful awareness campaign for children cycling to school is back in April this year. The campaign will be running in partnership with 15 councils and will be supported by national TV, press and radio advertising. Last year's campaign was shown to have a huge impact on target audiences in consumer research, and resulted in an average increase in cycling to school of 22% across the participating schools.

## MAJOR CYCLING POLICY SHIFT IN LONDON AND CAPS REFRESH FOR SCOTLAND

**BORIS JOHNSON** has unveiled a hugely ambitious new plan for cycling in London that seeks to show Londoners that, in Boris' own words, "their transport future is lying in their garage under a pile of disused barbecue equipment."

The truly revolutionary plan sets out the Mayor's transformational ambitions for making the Embankment's four-lane, traffic-laden thoroughfare into a 'bike Crossrail' while also taking motor traffic away from one lane of the Westway motorway flyover - the ultimate symbol of car-centric urban planning - to instead be devoted solely to a segregated cycleway complete with a bridge for bikes.

However, even more important than these ambitious projects is the commitment to safer streets and increased investment in cycling infrastructure and complementary programmes, such as cycle training.

### THE KEY OUTCOMES OF THE VISION ARE:

1. A tube network for the bike - Establishing a network of direct, high-capacity, joined-up cycle routes linked into the Tube and other transport networks.
2. Safer streets for the bike - Making streets and spaces places where cyclists feel they belong and are safe.
3. More people travelling by bike - Doubling cycling in London in the next 10 years.
4. Better places for everyone - Creating a 'village in the city', safer communities, vitality and life in underused streets and less congested public transport and road networks.

The release of this Vision comes at an opportune time - the refresh of the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (CAPS) is currently underway, and the Mayor's Vision for Cycling in London provides an inspirational blueprint for ambition and commitment to cycling that could positively influence the CAPS refresh process. There are loads of bold ideas that could be replicated in the revised CAPS to make Scotland's communities greener, safer and more pleasant to live and work in.

You can read the Mayor's Vision for Cycling at [www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk)

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