



Southern Upland C2C – Portpatrick to Pease Bay

Summary

This is an epic trip across one of the widest and wildest parts of Scotland, following every type of trail imaginable. We link up some of Southern Scotland's finest trail centres with an unsurpassed wild route. The scenery is more akin to what you would find in the Highlands and the riding is superb on this classic journey.

Highlights

World-class trails at Kirroughtree
Twisty singletrack in Ae forest
Stunning scenery through the Moffat Hills
The wild and exposed Lammermuir Hills
The pies in Melrose!

Example 6-Day Itinerary

Day 1. You arrive in Scotland. We can help you with transport to Newton Stewart, 'Gateway to the Galloway Hills'. We can get the bikes organised and maybe take the chance to have a blast on some local trails and talk through the trip.

Day 2. Portpatrick to Newton Stewart - 74km/46 miles; 950 metres of ascent

Weaving along an interesting coastline, the trail passes old lighthouses at the edge of windswept cliff tops before heading inland across open moors where the smugglers and covenanters used to roam, passing bothies and ancient caves. The riding gets pretty challenging as the Galloway Hills draw ever closer. A long downhill takes us to the market town of Newton Stewart for our overnight stop.

Day 3. Newton Stewart to Thornhill - 85km/53 miles; 1235 metres of ascent

Straight away, we head off-road through the UK's largest forest park. This is a jewel in the crown of the world famous 7stanes mountain bike trail network with sweeping berms, challenging climbs and thrilling single-track. A back road section leads us up the Ken valley before a roller-coaster of a route to Thornhill, birthplace of the bicycle, invented here by Kirkpatrick MacMillan in 1839.

Day 4. Thornhill to Moffat - 48km/30 miles; 770 metres of ascent

Leaving Thornhill, we take on some of Scotland's finest natural feeling single-track at Drumlanrig Forest. Rocks, roots, thrilling down-hills and beautiful forest scenery make this a not to be missed section of the trip. Before we have time to catch our breath we head east through the remote Lowther Hills to take on some man-made trails through Ae Forest with its big berms and rugged tracks. One last up and over takes us to the pretty town of Moffat.

Day 5. Moffat to Peebles - 64km/40 miles; 1385 metres of ascent

We start the day with a challenging climb into the Moffat Hills with arguably one of the biggest views in Scotland. Our reward for the climb is a view down Moffat Dale and a stunning descent into the Ettrick Valley - one of the main tributaries for Scotland's most famous salmon river. A big climb over exposed hill country rewards us with some awesome views and blistering descents before reaching Peebles, our stop for the night.

Day 6. Peebles to Lauder - 57km/35 miles; 1055 metres of ascent

Today we make our way east over open hillsides on the intimidating Minch Moor in Traquair Forest. We tackle the testing trails and summit the Three Brethren before a rapid descent to Melrose. We refuel on those pies in Melrose before some great trails lead us up to our night's destination at Lauder.

Day 7. Lauder to Pease Bay - 50km/31 miles; 955 miles of ascent

With the biggest hills behind us we can almost smell the North Sea as we head over the windswept and desolate Lammermuir Hills just south of Edinburgh. Fantastic scenery, awesome trails and the knowledge that we are about to complete an amazing achievement will keep us going to reach the official end of the Southern Upland Way on the North Sea coast at Pease Bay. We'll meet you there and be the first to congratulate you before taking you to either Edinburgh or Dumfries for a well-deserved celebratory night on the town!

Duration:

7 nights' comfortable accommodation
6 days of adventurous biking

Total Distance:

390 km or 241 miles

Includes:

- 7 nights' accommodation
- Baggage transfers
- SMBLA qualified expert guide or comprehensive maps and directions
- Vehicle back up (guided and self-guided trips)
- Phone support (independent trips)
- Pick up in Dumfries at the beginning and drop off in either Dumfries or Edinburgh at the end of the trip

Available on request:

- Pick up and drop off from other public transport links
- Bike and Kit Hire

Grade:

Technical Grading: **Red**

Dates:

Guided, self-guided or independent trips are available between March and October for groups of 2 or more. Contact us with the dates you have in mind.

What bike?

The trails on our Southern Upland C2C can be ridden on a standard hardtail. A full suspension bike will make the riding more manageable and comfortable!

To make a booking or for more information:

Email us: info@trailbrakes.co.uk
Phone us: +44 (0)7922 653327 or +44 (0)141 6286676



Southern Upland C2C – Further Information

Accommodation and food

We use only tried and tested accommodation providers on our trips so that we know that you will receive an excellent level of service. They provide everything you could need after a long day in the saddle from bike storage to hot showers, hearty breakfasts and comfortable beds. Accommodation in bed and breakfasts and hotels are always on a bed and breakfast basis and trip prices are based on two people sharing a room, unless otherwise arranged. If you would prefer hostel or bunkhouse style accommodation, breakfast is not included although most hostels can provide meals at an additional charge. Hostels will often have cooking facilities so that you can prepare your own meals if you'd prefer. Wherever you stay you will be able to get an evening meal within walking distance. Lunches can usually be bought during the course of the day as you will be passing through towns or villages. It is advisable to carry plenty of snacks with you each day to keep the energy levels up!

Check-in at your accommodation will ordinarily be between 4 pm and 9 pm. Please telephone your first night's accommodation to let them know at what time you're planning to arrive. If you require an early check-in, most accommodation providers will try to adapt to your requirements but please phone ahead to ensure that an early check-in is possible. Sole occupancy rooms are usually available in hotels or guest houses so please ask us if you'd prefer to have your own room. A single supplement from £30 per person, per night will apply.

Clothing and kit

Southern Scotland receives a generally mild climate all year round with the Gulf Stream passing our western coastline. There are even palm trees growing in the region! The east is generally a bit drier but cooler than the west, however conditions can and do change quickly especially on higher and more exposed areas. It can rain at any time of year, sometimes all day and we often get four seasons in a day, so come prepared! A full kit list is available on our website (<http://www.trailbrakes.co.uk/kit-list-equipment-recommendations>) and a list of useful items will also be sent to you when you book your trip with us. General climatic information for Scotland is available here: <http://www.scotlandinfo.eu/weather-climate.html>. Up-to-the-minute weather forecasts for specific regions of the UK are available at the met office website (<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/forecast/>).

It is advisable to bring a small back-pack (between 15 and 20 litre capacity) with you on your trip, in which you can carry spare clothes and basic spares and tools that you might need during the course of a day on the bikes. In some cases, where we will be riding in wilderness for the full day, food and drink will also need to be carried.

Midges!

Midges (small biting insects) can be a pest in the Highlands but are usually not a problem when you're on the move. If you decide to stop for a break in a sheltered spot where there is no wind and there are trees and water in the vicinity, there will always be midges around. They rarely cause a serious problem, they're more of a nuisance, but some people react badly to their bites and develop an itchy red spot which can be irritating. Some insect repellent is advisable, those containing DEET being the most effective, and cream is available in pharmacies that relieve the irritation of the bites.

The trails

There is almost every type of trail imaginable on this trip, from purpose built cycle paths to old drove roads, forestry trails and superb single-track. The surfaces are all generally hard packed or rocky. Some parts are technically challenging so some off-road experience will be required. This trip has a **Fitness Grading** of **6** which means that you should have a high level of fitness and stamina from regularly taking part in cycling-based activities. You are comfortable riding for up to 7 hours per day. The route will include sections of physically demanding terrain including long, steep climbs. This trip has a **Technical Grading** of **Red**, meaning that the route is suitable for proficient mountain bikers. Trails can be steep and rough with some technical sections including large rocks and water crossings. Some off-road biking experience is required.

Guided trips

Our guided trips are designed to give you a hassle free way to enjoy the amazing biking in Scotland. We include a friendly, knowledgeable, SMBLA qualified guide who, as well as navigating you along the trails, can also give you tips to improve any aspect of your riding and take you on the best trails in the area. Our guides also carry spares and tools to help you keep rolling in the event of a mechanical problem, though if you're bringing your own bike you would be advised to bring spare inner tubes and spare parts specific to your bike, for example brake pads and rear mech hanger. In the event of a serious mechanical problem, our guides will be on hand to take you to a local bike shop. Our guides are trained

in outdoor-specific first aid techniques so will make sure you, as well as your bike, are well looked after on the trails. As well as navigating for you, our guides are knowledgeable when it comes to the turbulent history and fascinating natural history of Scotland. They will be delighted to share with you their knowledge of the areas through which you will be biking and point out wildlife and interesting historical locations along the way.

Self-guided trips

Experience the same great trails and accommodation as on the guided trips but without the support and knowledge of a guide. We will still do all of the organising for you and you'll be provided with comprehensive trail maps, advice, transport, baggage transfers and a full itinerary. There will always be someone on the end of the phone in case of emergencies too.

Independent trips

Our Independent trips offer ultimate flexibility. They are very similar to our self-guided trips but are aimed more at experienced cyclists who are confident enough to be able to fix basic technical bike problems on the hoof. Although you won't have the support of our back-up team, we will always be available on the end of the phone for advice and we will provide you with a list of bike shops and taxi companies along your route in case you encounter any mechanical issues that you can't deal with yourself. We'll still arrange a fantastic trip including transport from one end of the route to the other, quality, tried and tested accommodation and we'll transfer your bags each day leaving you free to enjoy the biking and scenery.

Vehicle support

Whether you go for a guided or self-guided trip, we will provide a back-up vehicle full of spares and tools to carry your baggage between your accommodation each day. Our drivers are proficient bike mechanics so will be able to help you out with common technical problems. If the issue is a bit more serious, they will be able to take your bike to a local bike shop for some TLC. Their main aim is to keep you and your bike on the trails!

If you opt for an independent trip, we won't be there in person to offer assistance in the event of any mechanical or physical issues that you can't resolve yourself. Instead, we will provide a list of bike shops and taxi companies located along your route. We will also only be a phone call away in case you need any further advice.

Bike hire

We work with local bike shops to provide you with the latest bikes for hire. There are a full range of bikes from standard hard-tails to flashy full-sussers! If you need to hire a bike, please let us know at the time of booking and we will make sure that we get the right bike for you. Please check the bikes before you leave your starting location to ensure that they are in full working order and check with the person providing your bikes that the bike is set up correctly for you. Once you leave your starting location it may not be possible to exchange your bike, and, if you are taking part in an independent trip, any mechanical problems that you encounter during the course of your trip are your own responsibility. You will be expected to pay for any damage to hire bikes, other than wear and tear.

Hire bikes are provided with standard mountain biking saddles and flat pedals. You are welcome to bring your own saddle and/or clipless pedals to make your ride more comfortable. Please note that, if you're taking part in an independent trip, you may have to change your saddle and/or pedals yourself so please bring suitable tools (a pedal spanner and set of allen/hex keys) with you in order for you to do this.

Transport and baggage transfers

We are always happy to help you to get to where you need to be as quickly and easily as possible. We can provide transfers from any local airport, train or bus station or ferry terminal to your accommodation at the beginning of your trip and back again at the end. Just let us know where and how you intend to arrive at your destination and we will arrange a pick-up for you. Please note that an extra charge may apply to cover fuel costs.

We transport your bags between each night's accommodation during your trip, leaving you free to carry a small day-pack containing some spare clothes, food and drink. Please note that baggage should be limited to one bag per person, not exceeding 20kg per bag.

Any questions?

If you'd like some further information or want to ask us anything at all about our biking trips please don't hesitate to contact us on the details below:

Email: info@trailbrakes.co.uk

Phone: +44 (0)7922 653327 or +44 (0)141 6286676