



21 June 2023

BEST DAYS OUT BY BIKE AT NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND PLACES

- **Conservation charity shares its recommendations for the best days out by bike at its properties to enjoy this summer and all year round**
- **Scottish cyclist and adventurer Mark Beaumont shares his favourite cycling-friendly Trust places**
- **Advice for cyclists to get the most from their visit to National Trust for Scotland places and to help the charity protect the places in its care**
- **New Trust guidance urges cyclists to enjoy, share and protect its places by planning ahead and riding responsibly**

Record-breaking Scottish cyclist and adventurer Mark Beaumont has shared his favourite days out by bike at National Trust for Scotland's places alongside a host of cycling-friendly recommendations by the conservation charity to enjoy this summer, and all year round, while riding responsibly to help protect the environment.

The globe-trotting adventurer, who now works as a broadcaster, entrepreneur and public speaker, highlighted his favourite cycling-friendly National Trust for Scotland places to visit, urging cyclists to follow new guidance from Scotland's largest conservation charity, to help it protect the landscapes and nature in its care. The guidance, which also includes tips on finding the best routes and ground conditions, supports the charity's objectives to provide access and enjoyment for everyone.

Mark said: "Cycling is the perfect mode of transport to explore some of the National Trust for Scotland's sites. I would encourage everyone to get out and spend time in nature, it's good for your physical and mental health. But fundamentally, for young people, it also gives them an empathy for, and an appreciation of, the need to look after the environment.

"You've got to spend time in nature, and in wild places, to understand how to interact with it and look after it. I spend much of my life taking people fell-running and mountain-biking, and talking about how you look after paths, and how you ride in a way that is sympathetic to the environment. Go into these places, appreciate them, capture only memories and photographs - and learn to interact with nature in a sustainable way.

"My favourite National Trust for Scotland places to visit on bike are Culzean Castle and Country Park in Ayrshire and The Hermitage in Perthshire. I enjoy visiting Culzean as it provides a family-friendly cycling location suitable for all levels, with an expanse of

grounds and a host of historic features and attractions to see on two wheels. The Hermitage, which has been a favourite of mine since childhood, offers a more tranquil place to enjoy by bike with plenty of cycling paths to explore through its magnificent forests, and is easily accessed by the National Cycle Network route 77 that runs through Dunkeld.”

Alongside Mark’s favourite Trust places for cycling, the conservation charity has provided recommendations for the best days out by bike at its properties across the country including (further information on each route included in notes to editors):

- The Hermitage, Perthshire
- Culzean Castle & Country Park, Ayrshire
- Brodie Castle, Moray
- Balmacara, Ross-shire
- Crathes Castle & Estate, Aberdeenshire
- Mar Lodge Estate, near Braemar
- (Cycle route to) Culloden Battlefield, Inverness
- Pollok House, Glasgow
- Preston Mill, East Lothian

When he’s not circumnavigating the globe by bike in a record-breaking 78 days or scaling a nearly 7000m mountain in Chile before riding 300km to the Pacific Ocean, Mark likes nothing better than to take his family on visits to the great outdoors and recommends exploring all Scotland has to offer on bike, something he enjoyed greatly as a child.

Mark continued: “We spent a lot of time when I was a child doing family trips to Trust places and building up our own idea about Scotland and its history. Now I’ve got my own daughters, we enjoy visiting places around the country in our campervan. We’re great fans of packing up and heading off on adventures with the bikes on the back.’

“We’re especially lucky to have access to the stunning landscapes across the country and it’s an absolute privilege that we get to enjoy them right on our doorstep. Getting outdoors and enjoying that privilege is the best way to learn about the importance of caring for our beautiful countryside and with our National Trust for Scotland membership we’re helping to support the vital conservation work they do to conserve and protect our natural assets for future generations to enjoy.”

To help cyclists make the most out of their visits to National Trust for Scotland places, the conservation charity has published [new guidance](#) encouraging visitors to enjoy, share and protect its places by riding responsibly. Those wishing to cycle at National Trust for Scotland properties are asked:

- Please ride responsibly to make it safe for all path users and to help us look after our precious places
- Ride at a speed that does not alarm pedestrians or nearby wildlife, slowing down or dismounting, if necessary

- Please consider your route, keep to existing tracks and follow any signage, taking care not to damage or disturb sites with sensitive and/or designated ecological, geological or historical features. On narrow paths please dismount rather than riding off-path as this erodes path edges and can damage habitats
- Plan ahead by using the 'Planning Your Visit' section on each of the Trust's dedicated property pages for information on facilities such as bike racks for example
- Speak to local rangers and other members of National Trust for Scotland staff at the property to check where cycling is permitted, advise on the best routes, areas to avoid and ground conditions for cycling
- Find cycle-friendly routes to National Trust for Scotland places with the National Cycle Network <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/national-cycle-network/the-national-cycle-network-in-scotland/>

The new cycling guidance supports the National Trust for Scotland's vision to deliver Nature, Beauty and Heritage for Everyone. The project is one of many contributing to its 10-year strategy, launched in 2022. It supports the Charity's engagement and conservation objectives, to provide inspiring heritage visitor experiences, to enable nature to flourish and to enrich Scotland's protected heritage. Read more about the strategy at: <https://www.nts.org.uk/our-work/our-strategy>

ENDS

Notes to Editors

The best days out by bike at National Trust for Scotland places:

- **The Hermitage**, Perthshire - National Cycle Network route 77 runs through Dunkeld, offering easy access to the Hermitage and the forests behind it, which have plenty of cycling paths to explore. There's a five-mile flat off-road route from Birnam to the Hermitage, ideal for a family afternoon out. On arrival at the Hermitage, there is a bike rack and temporary toilet facilities (until October). The new River Tay Way will also include a section running through the Hermitage.
- **Culzean Castle & Country Park**, Ayrshire - Cycling is a family-friendly way to get around the multitude of historic features and attractions at Culzean Castle and Country Park. From the Home Farm car park, an easy pedal along a wide path takes you to the Deer Park, where lovely llamas also mingle among the herd. Nearby, the iconic ruined arch frames a view of the castle – the perfect photo spot! An ice cream stop and two adventure playparks provide the ideal destination for young visitors. Or lock up the bikes and nip down the footpath beyond the pagoda to explore the beach.
- **Balmacara**, Ross-shire - The traditional Highland crofting estate is best explored by bike. Follow the single-track road network and the 27km of public footpaths to discover townships, woodland, hills and coastline, with spectacular views along the

way. These waymarked routes are essentially footpaths, and while not mountainous, they are steep in places and the surface is not specifically designed for bikes, so some care, skill and experience is advised. Pick up a leaflet on site or contact the local National Trust for Scotland team at the property in advance for advice on route choice and ground conditions, including the best areas for cycling.

- **Brodie Castle**, Moray - The grounds offer acres of space for wee ones to explore. Take to the well-made paths and forest tracks around the pond, little riders will make easy work of the paths before enjoying some exciting play time in the Playful Garden. Brodie is on the Inverness-to-Aberdeen Cycle Route 1, ideal for experienced cyclists who're used to riding on quiet country roads.
- **Crathes Castle & Estate**, Aberdeenshire - Close to the route of the Deeside Way, an easy-going shared cycling and walking trail that's part of the National Cycle Network, running from the centre of Aberdeen to Ballater. Cycle racks are available at the castle and garden to store bicycles securely, before enjoying the courtyard Café 1702, exploring the magnificent 16th-century castle, sculpted topiary and gorgeous walled garden. Across the wider estate is a varied landscape that's rich in wildlife, accessed by 24km of trails including pedal-friendly routes.
- **Mar Lodge Estate**, near Braemar - Mar Lodge Estate is the place to come for mountain views, Caledonian pinewoods and a remarkable variety of wildlife. A popular way to access this incredible area is to cycle via minor roads from Braemar alongside the River Dee to Queen Victoria's favourite picnic spot at Linn of Dee. Lock up bikes at new dedicated bicycle racks to head off and explore the stunning Cairngorms landscape on foot. Tackle the return leg initially on roads on the north side of the river, before diverting south via Mar Lodge to cross the recently restored Victoria Bridge and re-join the outward route.
- **Culloden Battlefield**, near Inverness - The battlefield is on the National Cycle Network. Follow the blue Route 1 cycle signs from the centre of Inverness towards Nairn, passing the university campus and heading through Smithton and Balloch. After a long climb that passes under the railway line, keep pedalling to a crossroads – from here, turn right and follow a path that forks left off the road to reach the battlefield visitor centre. There are plenty of bike parking spaces, a great café, and the start of a 10km circular trail across the wider battlefield (onto Forestry and Land Scotland paths) offering a sense of the full scale of the last pitched battle on British soil.
- **Pollok House**, Glasgow - Glasgow's South West City Way cycle route has been extended to the north-eastern edge of Pollok Country Park, making it possible to travel here all the way from the city centre on car-free cycle lanes. At the heart of the country park is Pollok House, a grand home in the care of the Trust. Enjoy a

family-friendly pedal around the park past the Burrell Collection and herd of Highland Cattle, then head inside the elegant house for a guided tour – don't miss the wonderful art collection or the fascinating servants' quarters downstairs. Finish off with delicious home-baking in the Edwardian Kitchen café or an ice cream by the river.

- **Preston Mill**, East Linton – Visitors can cycle from East Linton village, or take your bike and travel by train, cycling from the station at Drem. The picturesque mill on the banks of the River Tyne is also a good place to take a break while doing the John Muir Way (it's on the section from Dunbar to North Berwick). Grab an ice cream and relax in the picnic area, then take a wander through the grounds to spot otters or herons on the walk from the weir along the river to Phantassie Doocot. There's a bike rack at Preston Mill and helpful staff even keep a pump and puncture repair kit under the counter for any cycling mishaps.

Other sources of cycling information in Scotland include:

- **Do the Ride Thing (Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland)** – provides mountain biking guidance and advice from industry experts, for all types of riding in Scotland from urban centres to the high hills: <https://dmbins.com/do-the-ride-thing/>
- **Scottish Outdoor Access Code** – Your comprehensive guide to responsible outdoor access and responsible land management in Scotland: <https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/act-and-access-code/scottish-outdoor-access-code-visitors-and-land-managers/what-scottish-outdoor-access-code>
- **E-Bike regulations:** Electric bikes: licensing, tax and insurance: <https://www.gov.uk/electric-bike-rules>

About the National Trust for Scotland

Established in 1931, the National Trust for Scotland is Scotland's largest conservation charity and cares for, shares and speaks up for Scotland's magnificent heritage.

Over the last 90 years the Trust has pioneered public access to and shared ownership of some of the most magnificent buildings, collections and landscapes in Scotland. It cares for more than 100 sites, from ancient houses to battlefields, castles, mills, gardens, coastlines, islands, mountain ranges and the plants and animals which depend upon them.

In March 2022 the National Trust for Scotland launched *Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone*, its ten-year strategy which sets out the ambitions of the charity over the coming decade. From speaking up for Scotland's heritage which doesn't have a voice, to improving the lives and wellbeing of people across the country, and responding to the

climate and biodiversity crisis, the Trust will build on its work in recent years to grow its impact and conserve and restore more of Scotland's heritage, as it moves towards its centenary in 2031.

Scotland's largest membership organisation, the National Trust for Scotland relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work.

For more information on the National Trust for Scotland visit www.nts.org.uk.

The National Trust for Scotland is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC 007410.