

We want to publish your local group's favourite route. Contact the editor to find out what's required (p80)



At 26 miles, the right-on-the-coast road between Larne and Cushendall is the longest in the UK



(Left) Camlough harbour: good elevenes stop (Below) 'The fertile glen', Glenariff



Photos: Chris Juden



CTC Northern Ireland

No one knows great rides like CTC's local groups. David Jeffery describes a ride through the nine glens of Antrim

CTC Northern Ireland celebrates its 80th birthday this year, having been founded on 14th March 1928. A pity they couldn't have waited for St Patrick's day on the 17th! Regular Sunday rides start from Belfast around the neighbouring counties of Antrim and Down and sometimes over to Armagh, Tyrone and Londonderry in the longer summer days. There's a Saturday ride once a month, club tours and special longer rides. These include 'Around the Lough', a circuit of Lough Neagh, riding the A2 coast road from Derry to Belfast (actually a fairly quiet road on the whole), and a ride visiting all nine glens of Antrim in the day.

The biggest success story of recent years has been the midweek group, our own WWW or Wednesday Wobbly Wheelers. Consisting mainly of retired members, the group makes frequent use of train services to get further afield, usually to the nearest tea shop. New members are always welcome to any of our rides. In the winter we have a fortnightly clubroom with a wide range of speakers and lively backchat.

NINE GLENS OF ANTRIM RIDE

Originated by member Liam Goss, the route starts from the railhead and ferry port at Larne. The club event ends at Cushendall

for an overnight stay where there are several B&Bs in the village. Because a variety of loops are possible around the glens, the route can easily be modified to suit the time available.

The first nine miles are flat, along the A2 coast road. Construction began in 1832 and took 10 years to complete. Before then, the Antrim coast villages were only reachable overland by precipitous tracks over the high headlands. The district had better communication by sea to Scotland than by land to Belfast. The first headland, two miles out of Larne, is passed through using the short Blackcave Tunnel. In other places the cliff was blasted away to form a platform for the road. At 26 miles from Larne to Cushendall it's the longest coast road in the British Isles. There's a cafe in the country park at Carnfunnock.

At the village of Glenarm the hard work begins, turning up Glenarm (Glen of the army). The names of the glens say much about the local history. A gradual climb on the B road brings us into a country of sheep and drystone walls. Cresting the hill, the first minor road on the right is taken to descend Glencloy (Glen of the hedges). You can stop for elevenes in Carnlough. This is one the 'white harbours' on this coast, built of limestone to export the mineral as agricultural lime.

Next there's more coast road to Waterfoot

with impressive limestone cliffs. Approaching the village, turn left into Glen Road, to enter Glenarriff (the fertile glen). The road starts level, but as it crosses a stone bridge it rises. At the second sharp turn climb steeply to the main road or detour to the Manor Lodge restaurant. Climb steadily to the summit and turn right to reach another summit before descending into Glenballyeamon (Edwardstown Glen). That's four glens done, so you've earned a lunch stop at Cushendall. If you have made arrangements to stay the night here you can drop off your overnight bag!

After lunch it's a steady climb up Glanaan (Glen of the colt's foot or rush lights) to Bryvore Bridge then west over moors and through forests to the valley of the river

Bush. A clear day will give views of Rathlin island and Scotland. See if you can pick out the Paps of Jura. A minor road is taken down Glentaisie (the glen of 'Tasie of the bright sides' a princess from Rathlin island) to arrive in Ballycastle, which has several cafes.

Returning south, the B road up Glenshesk (the sedgy glen) leads to the same minor road used on the outward leg to bring you back to Bryvore Bridge, but this time it's uphill all the way. You can sit on the bridge and relax for a while now, for the remainder of the ride via Glendun (the glen of the brown river) is nearly all downhill. Reaching the main road at the viaduct, it's a short ride through Glencorp (the glen of the slaughtered) to the finish at Cushendall.

**FACT FILE:
NINE GLENS OF ANTRIM**

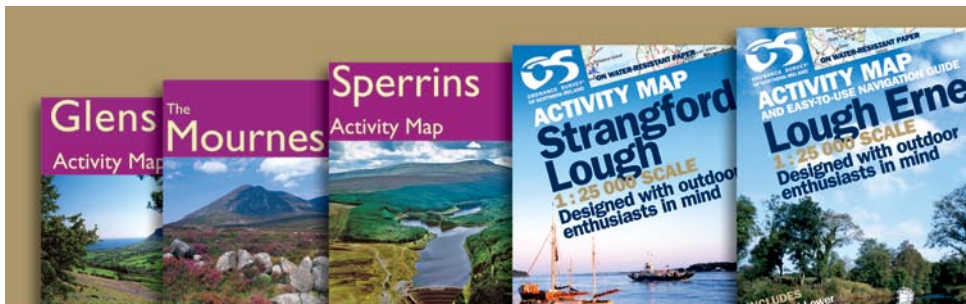
DISTANCE: 93 miles **TIME:** 8-10 hours depending on pace/stops **TERRAIN:** quiet roads, flat on the coast and well-graded climbing inland **WHEN:** club event in July, otherwise to suit yourself **MAPS:** OS of Northern Ireland 'Discoverer' series 5 and 9 (1:50k) **MORE INFORMATION:** email david_jeffery64@hotmail.com or tel: David Jeffery 028 9020 8727 **WEBSITE:** www.ctc-ni.com



DIRECTIONS

- Take the A2 north from Larne for 9 miles.
- In Glenarm village bear right at the mini-roundabout, following the A2.
- Cross the river and take the first left turn, the B97 uphill.
- Keep left on the B97 and climb 4 miles to the summit.
- First right into Ballyvaddy Road.
- Descend to the coast and turn left onto the A2.
- Proceed north on the A2 for 10 miles.
- Approaching Waterfoot, turn left into Glen Road.
- Take the second sharp turn and climb steeply.
- Left at the A43 for 3 miles to the junction with the B14.
- Sharp right onto the B14.
- Follow the B14 over the top of the hill.
- Descend on the B14 to Cushendall.
- Left, over the bridge and left again on the A2 for 1.5 miles.
- Left into Glanaan Road and climb to Bryvore Bridge.
- Right over the bridge and left onto Altarichard Road.
- Climb over the moor and descend.
- Keep right on Altarichard Road.
- Right onto Coolkeeran Road.
- After 2.5 miles cross the B15 onto Lagge Road at the church.
- After a mile, right into Hillside Road just before meeting the A44.
- Continue along Hillside Road toward Ballycastle.
- Right on the A44 into Ballycastle.
- Follow A2 to the seafront.
- Left at the seafront following the A2 for about 200 yards.
- Keep right onto the B15 heading south.
- 11 miles on the B15 will return you to the church you passed earlier.
- Left at the crossroads into Coolkeeran Road.
- Retrace your earlier route along Coolkeeran Road and left onto Altarichard Road.
- Keep left on Altarichard Road.
- Climb back to Bryvore Bridge.
- Left along Glendun Road.
- After 4 miles, bear left up the lane onto the viaduct.
- Right onto the A2 into Cushendall.

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Top spots for fishing, canoeing, sailing, the best walks, climbs and cycle trails as well as bird sanctuaries and nature reserves are all pinpointed on every OSNI Activity Map!

**ACTIVITY MAPS OF NORTHERN IRELAND
PERFECT FOR OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS!**

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