

Weekend ride

ACROSS SCOTLAND ON THE FLAT

- **Start/finish:** start Bowling (NS 451 735), finish Edinburgh (NT 246 728) • **Maps:** OS Landranger 63, 64, 65, 66 • **Ride length:** 101km [63 miles] • **Climbing:** essentially none – it's flat
- **Bike type:** any • **Ride level:** any • **GPX file:** cyclinguk.org/weekender-scotland-on-flat

1 Bowling

From Bowling Station, half an hour's train journey from Glasgow Queen St, follow signs along the brief rail path to join the canal. There's a bike shop (no hire) and café. A smooth gravel path follows the canal past a giant bike sculpture in Clydebank and then painlessly into, round, and out of Glasgow.

2 Lambhill

At the edge of Glasgow, stop off at Lambhill Stables, a friendly – and award-winning – community café. From here to Falkirk it's a long, open stretch of canalside trundling, with low, gentle hills either side. In the town you brush past en route are several signed opportunities for cafés, snacks and so on.

3 FALKIRK
You'll see the swanlike

form of the Falkirk Wheel appear in the canal basin to your right. Carry straight on and you soon get to the Kelpies (pictured above). Or turn right past the wheel to leave the Forth & Clyde Canal to step up to the Union Canal, which takes you Edinburgh. On your way out are some fun-spooky tunnels, as well as a train station.

**4** LINLITHGOW

Stop off at this charming lochside town, whose now-roofless but largely complete medieval palace was the birthplace of Mary, Queen of Scots. Plenty more refreshment opportunities here (and another train station if you need it).

**5** Broxburn

The canal zigzags slowly through a post-industrial landscape of spoil heaps and more towns. A few miles of backwater-feeling riding take you through Ratho and along some giddy, narrow-pathed, cobbled viaducts – best walked!

6 EDINBURGH

The towpath goes steadily from outskirts to suburbs to centre, past pleasant parks near the final basin. Maybe savour a picnic? After the end basin, follow signs a mile or two across another park to the Old Town and Waverley Station. Or you can round off the ride in stunning style by cycling down Edinburgh's Royal Mile, past Holyrood, then clockwise round Arthur's Seat.

