

PLEASE NOTE: This document is the draft wording for the final printed booklet of prizewining entries for the 2005 Spokes *My Favourite Bike Ride* competition. Unfortunately the printed booklet, containing photos and outline maps, was produced using an uncommon software format, and is not convertible easily to pdf. Copies of the printed booklet are still on sale for £1.50 including postage from Spokes [as at December 2010].

MY FAVOURITE BIKE RIDE

This booklet describes some of the most interesting entries from a Spokes competition in which entrants were asked to describe their favourite bike ride in or around Edinburgh. Whether you use your bike every day for work or shopping, or whether it spends most of its life at home, we hope the ideas here will inspire you to get your bike out for a fun purpose!!

The competition was not judged on whether the routes were 'ideal' in some sense, but on why they were the person's favourite route. So the booklet tells you, for each route, who suggested it and why it's their favourite. Also any interesting or useful features which they mentioned about the route.

USING THE BOOKLET

Please be very aware that the ideas in this booklet are just that – ideas – not fully detailed routes. We aim to give you ideas for exploring – so it's essential to use these 'routes' in conjunction with a detailed map, and to have a good look at the map before setting out. We strongly recommend using the excellent Spokes maps of Edinburgh, Midlothian, West Lothian and East Lothian, and for each ride we tell you which you would need in order to work out the exact details of your ride. Don't feel you have to stick exactly to the rides as described - the maps may give you further ideas, or you may want it longer or shorter than the original. And when you're on the bike, if some other turning looks interesting why not try it?

Most of the rides involve some, or quite a lot, of on-road cycling, but using Spokes maps you will normally find reasonably quiet routes. And remember - please always ride sensibly, considerately, carefully and legally.

If you're a regular cyclist, or a fairly independent person, just get on with it. If you need a bit more confidence before tackling your own routes, you can go out for very easy group rides with TryCyclinginEdinburgh [.....] or for longer ones with Spokes Sunday Rides Group [.....].

Other useful maps are the **Sustrans National Cyclerooute Network**, routes 1 and 75 [Edinburgh section], on sale from www.sustrans.org.uk 0800.XXXXXXXXXX. In this brochure, **NCN** refers to these routes.

Spokes and the authors of the routes in this booklet offer the information in good faith, but we take no responsibility for your use of them.

CREDITS

Organisations giving prizes

People involved in producing this booklet

ABOUT SPOKES – JOIN US

[Or on the back page]

Also – how to buy Spokes maps

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LOCATION MAP

Including boundaries of spokes maps

1 THE WOW EDINBURGH CYCLE RIDE 335 words

DAN OGILVY - FIRST PRIZE WINNER

Dan came to Edinburgh in 1982 to drive buses, which he did for 2 years, subsequently having a variety of jobs in the mental health field. He uses his bike all the time, and can't imagine living anywhere without one. He bought his dream bike nearly 25 years ago, a Raleigh Clubman lightweight tourer, and it's still serving him well. Another favourite ride is to North Berwick, returning with cakes - usually carried in the tum!

IT'S MY FAVOURITE BIKE RIDE . .

“Mainly off-road, free of traffic lights, a real liberator – in the city, yet away from it. Lots of history, places and buildings of interest, lots of sky, and very different areas of the city. Haymarket Buzz, Newhaven Harbour peace [see photo], Leith bustle, Arthur Seat grandeur – It's a Wow!”

INTERESTING FEATURES EN ROUTE

Old train track, now cycleway, with railway architecture, trees and high up the sky. Harbours – Newhaven and Leith docks – Royal Yacht Britannia. Leith arboretum. Arthur's Seat, with views to East Lothian, Fife, the Palace and the Castle.

SPOKES COMMENT

Quite a few road links needed, mainly fairly quiet ones, but plan your route carefully in advance if with young or inexperienced cyclists.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Approximate distance 25 km

Approximate time 2-4 hours

Spokes Map(s) needed The Edinburgh Cycle Map

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ROUTE

Haymarket to Roseburn using track by railway

- Roseburn railway path north then east, through rail tunnel to Newhaven Harbour
- Leith Docks – Ocean Terminal
- Through Leith via Bernard St, Cadiz St
- Path from Leith Links to Eastern General hospital, then right along disused railway.
- Road link to Meadowbank, then Royal Park – high road past Dunsapie Loch
- Road link past Commonwealth Pool, to Meadows
- By road [NCN75] to the canal then to Haymarket.

VARIATIONS

Karen McNish suggested a shorter circle: Holyrood Park – McDonald Rd – path and tunnel to Newhaven – then as Dan to Holyrood, where you can relax by feeding the ducks.

2 LINLITHGOW TO EDINBURGH 336 words

MALCOLM BRUCE - SECOND PRIZE WINNER

After learning to cycle as a child, and giving up as so many do, Malcolm returned at the tender age of 19. He is now a keen advocate of keeping children's interest, and set up a cycle club at his son's primary school. Malcolm is an education officer at Gorgie City Farm and a long-standing Spokes member - famed in the past for his cycling war cries of “.....” Unusually, Malcolm enjoys riding off-road in the evenings/dark (with a good set of lights). The attraction? It may seem a batty idea, but that's part of the appeal - try it yourself and see!

IT'S MY FAVOURITE BIKE RIDE . .

“Wildlife - bats, buzzards, badgers;

Tamelifie - ponies, parrots, people;

Diversions - Dundas Castle, N Queensferry, Zeebrugge(!); End - pint of IPA with companions at Haymarket”

INTERESTING FEATURES EN ROUTE

Refreshments - Canalside Bistro near Linlithgow [see prize donors, page 1]; Ryrie's pub at Haymarket.

More features.- Midhope Tower, Hopetoun Estate, sea and bridges at South Queensferry, Dalmeny Estate.

SPOKES COMMENT

Mainly well-surfaced paths and quiet roads – suitable for any bike. Perhaps rather long for novices or young children. Avoid using train at busy times.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ROUTE

- Train from Haymarket to Linlithgow.
- East along canal to Park Farm (Bistro), then minor road east through Philpstoun and under M9.
- Cross A904 [careful!] to dual use pavement eastward, then left for Abercorn.
- Enter Hopetoun Estate by west gate: go straight ahead on grassy track when road turns sharp left. Exit park by east gate.
- Shore road through South Queensferry, under rail bridge and left into Dalmeny Park.
- Through park to Cramond Brig entrance.
- Follow NCN1 to almost end of path at Roseburn then left through new housing to Haymarket.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Approximate distance 30 km

Approximate time 2-5 hours

Spokes Map(s) needed West Lothian and Edinburgh

VARIATIONS

Vicki Husband suggested a simpler route, suitable for novices / older children: follow Canal towpath from Leamington Bridge to Linlithgow, returning by train.

3 PENTLAND HIGH ROAD 359 words

GOFF CANTLEY

Since retiring early, Goff has cycled more and finds pleasure in both city and out of town cycling. CTC midweek rides, shopping trips involving Edinburgh's cycle paths and cut-throughs, and long rides on some of the more distant parts of the Sustrans network in Scotland all get the thumbs up from Goff.

IT'S MY FAVOURITE BIKE RIDE . . .

“Such a variety of scenery and country views; so little contact with traffic; so often a wildlife experience; so often different in light and shade; so close to suburban Edinburgh but so wild in parts. So good to rest at the top SW corner after the hill climb!”

INTERESTING FEATURES EN ROUTE

Contact with the natural world of the Water of Leith; quiet tree-lined lanes bordering open fields, views to the open Pentlands hill country and north to the Ochils and Highlands. Mostly level but with one challenging climb to test your fitness. Pottering by 4 scenic reservoirs, with toilets and ranger centre at Harlaw.

SPOKES COMMENT

Mainly off-road and quiet roads. Possible with any bike but rough tracks in places so not ideal for narrow-tyred road-bikes. Long gradual uphill from Balerno and steep, rough downhill sections from East Kinleith so suitable for more experienced riders.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ROUTE

- From West Mill Road, Colinton, by Water of Leith path to Balerno.
- By Johnsburn Road and Cockburnhill Road, left fork for Cockburn Hill Farm and steady climb to road along edge of Pentlands.
- At Red Moss Nature Reserve, track past car park to Threipmuir then Harlaw Reservoirs.
- Rejoin road at Harlaw Farm, right turn and continue north-east to East Kinleith Farm.
- Sharp right then left round farm cottages for track to Clubbiedean.
- Steep track down to Torduff, steeply down again to Balerno then Colinton.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Approximate distance 23km

Approximate time 2-3 hours

Spokes Map(s) needed West Lothian and Edinburgh

VARIATIONS

Bruce Laidlaw, **Jenny Swan** and **Neil Robertson** all suggested rides in this area, starting at Bonaly, Lochrin Basin and Colinton respectively but taking the more direct route from Balerno to Red Moss car park.

4 MORTONHALL ESTATE 361 words

GORDON DAVIES

Munro bagging might not be the most obvious way to get into cycling but that is what started things for Gordon a few years ago. [Maybe that's why his favourite local ride is “not hilly”!] Highland rides to remote mountains are now accompanied by lots of leisure rides around Edinburgh with friends, and all using the one hybrid bike.

IT'S MY FAVOURITE BIKE RIDE . .

“Not hilly, but a very varied ride with fantastic views to East Lothian, Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh Castle, Fife and the Firth of Forth.”

INTERESTING FEATURES EN ROUTE

Woods, fields with horses, and wonderful views as above. Shops, cafe and toilets at Klondyke Garden Centre. Note – we extended Gordon's route to include ideas from **Harris Keillar**, who also mentions Mortonhall Arboretum and Morton Farm Doo'cot as points of interest.

SPOKES COMMENT

Mainly off-road or quiet streets, but 3 busy main road crossings. Suitable for supervised novices and family cycling. Some paths can be muddy – save for dry weather if using road bikes. There are two locked gates: you must use adjacent narrow kiss-gates or lift your bike over.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ROUTE

- From Biggar Road, just south of Fairmilehead crossroads, east through the Wintons and to Morton Mains.
- Field track to Broomhills and out to Frogston Road.
- Across main road, by Mortonhall Park Gardens to Klondyke Garden Centre. Past caravan park.
- Just after Stables Bar, left for track across fields and through woods to Braid Road.
- Across Comiston Road and by Pentland View or through park to Camus Park, across Oxfangs Road and by Swanston Avenue back to start.

Alternative (avoiding roads)

- From Braid Road entrance to Mortonhall Golf Course, through woods. After passing Buckstone Primary, right fork onto path for Mounthooly.
- Down Mounthooly Loan, right into Frogston Road West and left for Birrell Collection Nursery and Morton Mains.

Extension east

- From Stables Bar by Stanedykehead to Alnwickhill Road.
- Steep downhill and left into Liberton Drive
- Left just after golf range on left, past Meadowhead Riding Stables and return to Stables Bar

FACTS AND FIGURES

Approximate distance 13 km

Approximate time 1-2 hours

Spokes Map(s) needed Edinburgh

5 LOANHEAD TO ROSLIN & HILLEND 292 words

NEIL ROBERTSON

Neil took up cycling to combat middle aged spread and as cyclists of a certain age know, this works! Now he has spread his wings instead, helping at cycling initiatives such as TrycyclinginEdinburgh, and leading CTC and SPOKES rides. Neil has a couple of mountain bikes, one for commuting and a fancier one for off-road riding.

IT'S MY FAVOURITE BIKE RIDE . .

"The route is very scenic, largely away from towns and traffic, and has no long or steep gradients."

INTERESTING FEATURES EN ROUTE

Rural views and wildlife in Roslin and Rosewell areas.

Rosslyn chapel and castle near the route.

Various shops and pubs easily accessible at various points.

SPOKES COMMENT

Short ride on paths and quiet roads, minimising contact with the many main roads in this area. Care needed at crossings of A701 and on short section of A703. Suitable for accompanied novices, probably not young children. Suitable for any bike, but Roslin section muddy if wet.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ROUTE

- From traffic lights in centre of Loanhead, south to Cemetery Road to access railway path: over restored Bilston Viaduct to Roslin village.
- Just after turn-off for Rosewell, left turn for Oatslie Sandpit, leading to Auchendinny Road.
- Right turn to reach A701 dual carriageway. Across this then right, using pavement and section of old road.
- Left turn for Bush Estate. Right turn for Easter Bush and through to A703.
- Left along A701 towards Hillend then, after almost 1 mile, right turn for Damhead.
- Right again to reach A701, straight over at roundabout beside IKEA then right and through "Cycles only" section back to Loanhead.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Approximate distance 13km

Approximate time 1½-2 hours

Spokes Map(s) needed Midlothian

6 DALKEITH/MUSSELBURGH CIRCLE 252 words

DAVID WARDROP-WHITE

David is the living proof that even a management consultant can be an active ambassador for cycling! He is a Sustrans Ranger for NCN route 1, from near his home in Dalkeith, to the Midlothian/Borders boundary. A particular passion is cycling in the Hebrides. David hopes to steer his company to a Cycle-Friendly employer award in 2006.

IT'S MY FAVOURITE BIKE RIDE . .

"It's largely off-road, but wide and well-surfaced. There's a lot to see of views and nature, and refreshments can be found in Musselburgh."

INTERESTING FEATURES EN ROUTE

Beach, bird reserve and pond, in Musselburgh area.

Path beside beautiful river Esk.

Dalkeith Park and Palace.

SPOKES COMMENT

Mainly good paths and minor roads, but the coastal track is rough in parts. Care needed on two sections of busy A6094. Suitable for experienced riders and accompanied novices able to cope with the main road sections.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ROUTE

- From east end of Dalkeith High Street, through Dalkeith Park, past adventure playground and over Laundry Bridge.
- Right onto A6094, to Wallyford
- Path through Levenhall Links Leisure Park to mouth of River Esk.
- Path/sideroads following east bank of River Esk through Musselburgh, joining Esk Valley Cycleway, then NCN1 to Whitecraig.
- Left onto A6094 through village, then right onto National Cycleroute 1. Pass new High School, continue to Dalkeith.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Approximate distance 21 km

Approximate time 1½-2½ hours

Spokes Map(s) needed Midlothian

7 CRAMOND LOOP 402 words

SARAH WILD

Sarah lectures in Public Health Sciences, travelling daily on her (t)rusty 22-year-old Raleigh Royale - which has also commuted in California and Geneva. Weekends usually include a leisure ride, with Bykaboose Gecko trailer in tow if shopping needed. The photo shows Sarah, partner Christopher, and Dawes Galaxy tandem on holiday in Gouarec, France.

IT'S MY FAVOURITE BIKE RIDE . .

"It's close to the city, but going to the seaside makes it feel as though you're on holiday! The route is suitable for road bikes, isn't too flat or too hilly, and can be lengthened (via Botanics) or shortened (via historic Granton gasometers) depending on how you're feeling."

INTERESTING FEATURES EN ROUTE

Coast lovely at all times of year. Walk out to Cramond Island when the tide is out. Coffee shop and toilets at Cramond.

SPOKES COMMENT

Mainly on well-surfaced cyclepaths. Suitable for accompanied novices but care needed on two busy roads – Whitehouse Road and Granton shore (both can be avoided – see below)

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ROUTE

- Roseburn to Craigleith by cyclepath.
- Left fork at Sustrans Millenium Milepost, then NCN 1.
- Right onto Whitehouse Road for half a mile, then sharp left down School Brae and sharp right along River Almond to Cramond
- East along esplanade to end, then road along shore to Lower Granton Road.
- At end of Trinity Crescent, cross road to join cyclepath south to 5-ways junction.
- Back to start by North Edinburgh Cycleroute.

Alternatives

1. From 5-ways junction to Water of Leith path, Rocheid path, Inverleith Park, Craigleith Hill Av, back to Cycleroute
2. (Avoiding Whitehouse Road) – across Whitehouse road and steeply down to river. Right turn along riverside path, muddy if wet, and two long flights of steps (carry bike) to river mouth.
3. (Avoiding West Granton Road) At end of esplanade, Caroline Park Avenue, new roadside path to Crewe Toll, back to North Edinburgh path.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Approximate distance 15 km

Approximate time 1½-2½ hours

Spokes Map(s) needed Edinburgh Cycle Map

VARIATIONS

John Allen suggested an opposite circle: Canonmills, Inverleith Park, Craigleith Hill Avenue, cyclepath, Caroline Park, Cramond and back by NCN 1 (signposted). See Herons, Kingfishers, Brambles, Wild garlic, Cramond Inn and Tony Blair's old school! **David Gardiner** operates guided recumbent rides here [226.4683, laid-back@blueyonder.co.uk], even promising a slight chance of spotting Ian Rankin or J.K Rowling!