

My Favourite Place by Bike: SPOKES 2012 COMPETITION

Spokes, the Lothian Cycle Campaign www.spokes.org.uk 0131 313 2114 twitter SpokesLothian

Our 2012 Spokes summer competition asked for *My Favourite Place by Bike*. Somewhere in Edinburgh or the Lothians to be, visit or experience with your bike. As we hoped, the competition sparked a whole range of ideas which we hope you'll be inspired to try – on your bike!

Many thanks to all who entered, for such a range of ideas and inspiration - from everyday local pleasures to remote or hidden-away places! Thanks too to the Spokes competition organisers, the prize donors, and our outside expert assistant judge, **Andy Johnson**, Director of *Camera Obscura & the World of Illusions*.

The Best of the Best

Top winner **Mark James** sent an inspiring description of the *Whittinghame Water rope-swing* in East Lothian - evoking a real sense of place (“*a location enhanced by the journey*” - about 5 miles from Dunbar) and season-round enjoyment, with a clear purpose of encouraging the next generation of cyclists too. An 'awesome' playground that adds further happiness to being out on a bike.

Second was **Margaret Hanson**, for her poetic and broad-ranging listing of the virtues of the *Union Canal* - a fresh and multi-layered perspective on a well-known route, with closely observed detail even the possibility “*that it could take me to Glasgow and the Atlantic beyond...*”

Third was **Katharine Wake**, also making something new of a well-known cycling area, the Esplanade between Cramond and Silverknowes. “*You know you'll be back*” after reading her ode to it.

Fourth was **Mike Trotter** – we really liked the fact that his a favourite spot is on his everyday commuting journey, raising the spirits for the day ahead. “*There's not a day goes by that I don't remind myself how lucky I am.*”

The Most Favoured Places

Two places were each nominated by 4 different entrants - so these would be top choices for anyone looking for a guaranteed enjoyable experience with your bike. Both combine options for traffic-free cycling with a sense of beauty and of nature, right inside or adjacent to the city.

Cramond has the terrific traffic-free esplanade, together with an island, a cafe, wildlife and the carved stone fish mentioned by every entrant who chose Cramond!

Holyrood Park, if you take the high road, has incredible views of Edinburgh opening up below as you round the corner, and nighttime is another extra-special experience. There's much more wildlife than you might expect, a traffic-free path beside the main road, and the high road is particularly good on Sunday because cars are banned!

East Lothian easily came top for out-of-Edinburgh nominations, with 12 different places suggested, ranging from hills and traffic-free routes to a pub in Ormiston!

Overall Thoughts

The judging panel thoroughly enjoyed the wide range of entries. The prizewinners illustrated a wide range of types of place – a destination to cycle to for some other activity; a nearby place you enjoy cycling in; a destination out in the Lothians; an inspirational view in everyday commuter journeys; places known to all as good to go with your bike, and semi-secret places – such variety helps capture the essence of why it's better by bike.

There were surprisingly few 'abstract' entries, but one person lauded the Glasgow-Edinburgh train's bike spaces, another's ideal 'place' was just being on his bike, whilst someone else really enjoyed reaching their own front door!

Some entries chose key sections of the steadily-improving cycling infrastructure in Edinburgh and Lothian; some nominated original and over-looked or under-rated routes and destinations, such as a Saturday coffee morning in Torphichen or the still semi-derelict Western Harbour area in Leith. Some described exciting and even secret places – we'll not give them away here, you'll have to look at the entries to find them!

THE TOP ENTRIES

NB - to see all entries in full, and previous comps, go to...
www.spokes.org.uk – *downloads-odds&ends- competitions*]

The top 12 entries [with 10 prizewinners] are...

1 Mark James	Whittinghame Water ropeswing, East Lothian
2 Margaret Hanson	Union Canal
3 Katharine Wake	Cramond/Silverknowes esplanade
4 Mike Trotter	Top of Leamington Walk
5 Patricia Andrew	Gullane Hill, East Lothian
6 Peter Hawkins	Torphichen, West Lothian
7 Ken Morrison	Dunsapie Loch
8 Tim Smith	Western Harbour View, Leith
9 Elaine Appleby	Holyrood Park
10 Benni Whiteley	Astley Ainslie Hospital grounds
11 Martin Gemmell	Cairnpapple Hill burial mound, West Lothian
12 Helen Todd	Craigie's farm shop & cafe, South Queensferry

PRIZES - Top prizewinner has first choice of prize, and so on till all are claimed

Sustrans	www.sustrans.org.uk	Set of all Sustrans Scotland maps
ScotRail	www.scotrail.co.uk	Return 1 st for two between any 2 Scottish stations
Scottish Seabird Centre	www.seabird.org	Family ticket
EDINBURGH BICYCLE COOPERATIVE	www.edinburghbicycle.com	Revolution advanced toolkit [£59.99 rrp]
Peters Yard	www.petersyard.com	Food hamper + voucher
Camera Obscura/ World of Illusions	camera-obscura.co.uk	Family ticket
Kalpna Indian Vegetarian Restaurant	www.kalpnarestaurant.com	Meal voucher for 2
Velo Ecosse	www.veloecosse.com	Bike service worth £30
Reisse Hairsalon	0131 332 4013	Hair cut and blow dry by Keith Angus
Donation	-	Set of stainless steel barbeque tools