

Spokes competition 2015, Entry 11 **Midlothian South Explore**

2. Who is it suitable for? [it doesn't need to suit everyone] circle all that apply...

Families with young children / **Experienced cyclists** / Novice cyclists / **Mountain Bikers**

3. Where is the route located? circle all that apply ...

Ed central / Ed north / Ed south / Ed east / Ed west / East Lothian / **Midlothian** / West Lothian

4. Brief description of route

a. Newtongrange Train Station b. End point (or circular)... Newtongrange Train Station

c. Brief description...

This is a route to celebrate the best of Midlothian South. It takes advantage of the new Borders Railway and can take in a visit to The National Mining Museum and Vogrie Country Park.

The area has numerous paths, tracks, quiet B Roads and singletrack. My advice would be to scan your options on a map and decide your itinerary before setting out. Strava is my top tip for discovering what is out there. The off road sections would be suitable only for mountain bikers, as the tracks can get a bit rough underwheel. Top tip - follow Lingerwood Road in Newtongrange uphill, past the farm and out onto open country. Take your pick from there.

5. Any interesting / useful / beautiful features / facilities en route

- There are all the usual facilities in Newtongrange village. Cafes, shops, The Dean Tavern, even a local bike shop
- Some wonderful countryside as you make your way up through fields and woods.
- Great views over Edinburgh, the Pentland Hills and the Forth
- Great views to the South, over the Lammermuirs and west towards the Tweed Valley
- You'll also see some great birdlife. There are usually buzzards circling high up. In the springtime, the fields are full of skylarks.
- There's some gorgeous wooded parkland at Vogrie Park. Vogrie has plenty tracks to explore and a fine cafe.
- Combine the day with a gastro-pub dinner at the Sun Inn. The food, wine and service are absolutely amazing

6. Why is this a favourite route of yours? [This question is very important in the judging. You can just write one or two sentences or up to 300 words maximum].

Midlothian South has some great scenery but is often overlooked in favour of the Pentlands and the Tweed valley. Having moved to the area several years ago, I've spent many a happy hour in the saddle exploring the range of tracks in and around the Newtongrange area. I particularly love the area on summer evenings, when I fancy a quick blast on the bike after work. No driving. No hassles. Just grab the bike and head off. Sitting at the top of the hill, next to Camp Wood, looking out over Edinburgh and watching the sun set in the west is one of life's pleasures.

So, with the opening of the Borders Railway, city folk can jump on a train and be out at Newtongrange within 20 minutes. With the National Mining Museum, Vogrie Park and great local facilities, there's something for everyone.

