

Spokes competition 2015, Entry 13

Reservoir & RAF Kirknewton loop.

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

Experienced cyclists / Novice cyclists / people looking for a local adventure

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

/ Ed south / Ed west / West Lothian

4. Brief description of route

a. Corn Exchange b. Circular

c. Ride out from the corn exchange to get onto the Water of Leith path heading out to Balerno. From Balerno climb to Harlaw Reservoir, then ride along the water past Threipmuir. Exit the car park turning right, then take the first left heading west into farmland. A right (where the straight-left leads to a dead end and farmhouse), then a left at a split. When you come to a split with a farmyard traffic island, take the right and your next crossroad will be with the A70 at RAF Kirknewton. Follow the A70 back either to get back on the Water of Leith at Balerno, or all the way home.

The route is about 23 miles from the Corn Exchange and should take 2-3 hours, mainly depending on how long you end up enjoying the scenery. It is particularly suited to a cyclocross bike, but can easily be done on a road bike by taking the A70 instead of the Water of Leith.

Map of the route here: <https://goo.gl/maps/PYVhc>

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

The route takes you along the Water of Leith, transporting you instantly out of the perceived city centre, past the Redhall Walled Garden and out towards the Pentlands. The climb up to Harlaw delivers you to the Pentlands and their magic waters. Threipmuir is often warm enough to swim in during summer months. The country lanes to RAF Kirknewton are delightful and have almost no traffic.

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].**

I love how quickly the Water of Leith sucks you out of the city and into countryside. It is magic! I live near the Corn Exchange, so it takes me 5 minutes to be relieved of my urban existence. Then the climb to Harlaw is just enough to dust the cobwebs off the week's grind, and the reservoirs are magic all year round, even covered in ice. If it's warm enough, Threipmuir is good for a swim. Then, rather than going home, you can meander through the rolling country lanes, between farms and fields, which is one of my favourite places to ride - rolling but not strenuous, little traffic and a good dose of rural life. Riding back along the A70 is fun and reasonably fast. The thing I love about the loop is that it delivers the variety, beauty and adventure of a long ride, but is packed into a timeframe that can be squeezed into a weekday.

