

Spokes competition 2015, Entry 17

Cramond Lifesaver

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 / Other – specify...

Anyone!

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

Ed north

4. Brief description of route

a. Start point... Starting in Trinity joining the bikepath on Clark Road and heading west past Ainslie Park Leisure Centre, eventually turning right (downhill) just before the bikepath crosses the red bridge. Continue downhill (north) on bike path adjacent to road. Take the right fork of the path to go under the road – the bike path continues – when it meets the road with new flats opposite cross over and pass the 'To the Sea' statue - continue downhill towards the sea. At Lower Shore Road go left on the road for a quarter of a mile and then cross the road to join the path which goes to the sea (at the point where there are a handful of parking spaces). Follow the path by the sea all the way to the flagpole at the crossing to Cramond Island. Return on the same route or follow the Lower Shore Road and Granton Road to return to Trinity.

b. End point (or circular)... circular

c. Brief description... This is a trip from Trinity to Cramond flagpole and back

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

The 'To the Sea' statue, the giant fish statue, the sea, an ice cream van, Cramond island and path which emerges at low tide, a distant view of Forth Road and Rail Bridges and of the new bridge emerging. Café (reopening soon I think). There are also little 'brass rubbing' plates on one stretch of the bike path by the sea (at the east end).

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*].

This route for me is about recovery. Some heavy duty treatment during 2011 saw that year finish with a 3 week stay in hospital and a stem cell transplant - or a 'whole system reboot' as one friend called it. Early in the new year as I shivered my way upright again, my sister gave me a new bike to help get me fully back on my feet. What an amazing gift!

From my home in Trinity I speculated that cycling along the front to Cramond and back could be my medicine. This 9 mile journey became my lifesaver, getting me safely back up and out and fit again within weeks. I was cycling in February and March – early morning air biting at my face and hands, frosty surface testing my skid control, an occasional westerly to fight against, but always beauty looking out to sea, whatever the weather. I grew to know and love the landmarks along the ride – the 'To the Sea' statue, a cluster of Scots pines, the giant stone fish, the Forth Bridges emerging in the distance, the flagpole which marked my turning point for home and a sight of the Granton gasometer like a giant godly crown.

People may see this route as busy with dogs and runners and prams and scooters and wheelchairs – but it can be a place to take your stabilisers off whatever age you are. For me, as I got used to my legs and the rest of me working again, the route was always about early morning – about space, sea, solitude and the smoothest of rides with just the occasional scrunch of a seashell to remind you where you are – it was and will always be about feeling better and stronger with each push on the pedals.