

# Spokes competition 2015, Entry 29

## Holyrood to Newhailes

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...

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. Start point... St. Leonard's Tunnel, St. Leonard's Lane, off St. Leonard's Street.

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

c. Brief description...

The route begins with a tunnel that goes from St. Leonard's to Holyrood Park. From here it is mainly traffic-free, following a path along a disused railway line. There is cycle route signage along the route and you should follow directions to Musselburgh.

When you reach Brunstane Station, where you come across a home wares shop with a large car park, the signage is slightly confusing. You should follow the National Cycle Route One signs. This means you must take your bike over the railway footbridge.

When you reach the village of Newcraighall you turn left onto Newcraighall Road (the opposite direction to the cycle route signs). This is the only part of the route where you have to go on a road and it is only for two minutes. At the roundabout turn left to reach Newhailes, a handsome Georgian villa where you can go on a guided tour and explore the grounds.

This is a 5 mile route and the close proximity to several train stations gives the option to return by rail.

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

The St. Leonard's tunnel is 320m long and quite steep downhill- it is a thrill to cycle through it in the gloomy light.

Great views of Holyrood Park and Arthur's Seat on leaving the tunnel. The pathway is lined with wildflowers in the summer.

Travelling on the old trackbed of the Innocent Railway, Edinburgh's first railway, so-called because it was a horse-drawn system in an era when steam engines were considered dangerous. There is an information panel about the railway just before the route crosses Duddingston Road West.

Miner's cottages in Newcraighall. There are some very pretty cottages with bright gardens on Newcraighall Road.

Newhailes is a National Trust property offering guided tours. There is a café in the stables, so this is an ideal stop for post-ride refreshments. Or you could take a picnic and enjoy the grounds of Newhailes.

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].

### Nature, history and excitement!

First off there is the adventure of cycling through the St. Leonard's tunnel. It is dark and there is a sudden drop in temperature. On a roasting hot day this tunnel is probably the best place in the city to cool down. It always surprises me that the tunnel is actually quite steep inside it, so it is a speedy descent, but a long and gradual climb on the way back. This tunnel is one of Edinburgh's secrets and it takes a bit of effort to find it. The entrance is located within a residential complex of flats and seems a very unlikely place to find an old railway tunnel. After leaving the tunnel there are glorious views of Arthur's Seat and Holyrood Park.

**CONTINUED OVERLEAF**

The Innocent Railway path is an instant escape from the city into nature, although urban life is hidden just beyond the trees and bushes that shelter it.

Newcraighall was a mining village until the mine closed in 1968 and there is a legacy of pretty cottages that once belonged to the miners.

Newhailes is a great place to end a cycling route. The house has beautiful Georgian symmetry and the fascinating guided tour reveals an interior with a surprisingly lived-in feel. The library has a marble fireplace and polar bear rug. You can find a snug table in one of the stalls of the former stable house that is now the tea room.



[nb - 3 photos submitted – we said “one or two”]