

The Edinburgh fEASTival

1. Name: The Edinburgh f**EAST**ival

2. For whom: Would suit a range of cyclist types. To do the *whole* circuit, reasonably confident cyclists who can either read a map or who know the local area well; although many of the off-road sections would suit anyone, including families with children, if they were just doing a shorter distance convenient to where they live.

3. Where: The east side of Edinburgh city.

4. Route: This circular ride visits a wide range of cycle facilities and places of interest on the east side of Edinburgh. To navigate it confidently would probably need the aid of the *Spokes Edinburgh Map*. The full distance is **15.5 miles**, of which **11 are off-road**, but there are several optional short-cuts to suit individual preferences. On-road sections are minor or residential, except for two *very short* bits of busy road, which could be walked if necessary. Anti-clockwise, the path at Dumbiedykes might also need to be walked.

(As stipulated in the rules I've simplified my route description, which goes anti-clockwise. Reference to a map should make the turnings, and short-cut options, clear.)

Leith Academy – Hawkhill ramp – Lochend Park – Meadowbank – Holyrood Park – Dumbiedykes – St Leonard's – Innocent Path – Peffermill – Craigmillar Castle Park – RIE – Bioquarter – Greendykes – Wisp – Whitehill Rd – Newcraighall – Brunstane – Magdalene – Hope Lane – Portobello – Seafield – Leith Links – Duncan Place (*return to start*).

5. Features: This ride allows for mainly stress-free cycling by linking some favourite peaceful, green and open spaces: Lochend Park, Holyrood Park, Craigmillar Castle Park, Edinburgh Bioquarter, Little France Drive, The Wisp, Portobello Prom, Leith Links.

It also takes in not only long-standing features such as Meadowbank, Holyrood Palace, Salisbury Crags, the Engine Shed, the Innocent Tunnel, Craigmillar Castle and the Hope Lane footbridge, but also *new* developments such as the RIE campus, the still-unfinished but nicely-landscaped Bioquarter, the Little France Drive link to Greendykes and the as-yet-unnamed new road (with shared-use footway) up the hill to join The Wisp.

The latter section also gives some great panoramic views looking north and west over the whole eastern side of the city.

6. Why this is a favourite: With a keen interest in maps, I have watched for many years as Edinburgh has slowly developed a more connected-up network of cycle routes, now helped by the contemporary Planning requirement for good cycle facilities to be included in most new developments. I love riding these new facilities while they are still pristine and new (and preferably before the utility companies can come along, dig them up and ruin them!). I also love using my ingenuity to find ways of linking up a mixture of older and newer routes to create variety and interest when I'm out for a leisure ride. If I can also contrive some high-level views and some stimulating sea breezes into the same ride, so much the better!