

Spokes competition 2015, Entry 39

Westfield Rd to Balgreen Road along the Water of Leith

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

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

4. Brief description of route

a. Start point... Westfield Road on the east side of Wickes

b. End point (or circular)...
Balgreen Road opposite Saughton Park

c. Brief description...

Escape the busy traffic for at least 5 minutes, avoid a very busy roundabout and absorb the tranquillity of the woods and river

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

Idyllic ride over, then along the Water of Leith through the trees. Seasonal delights. Adventure potential.

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*].

You need to have a high point on your daily ride to work and this is mine. It's actually a very short section of my total ride across the city of around 5 miles but it's like cycling over the edge of a folded map into a completely unexpected and rich place. Immediately the noise and smell of the traffic has gone, replaced by the burble of the water, or a steady swishing noise if there's been rain overnight. I can visualise the Pentland Hills miles upstream where the water began its journey down hill; I've walked there in all weathers and seasons.

Cycling allows you to approach and pass the creatures of the woods quietly: a family of ducks breakfasting along the green river weed; two squirrels playing catch up the trunk of one of the massive, ancient beech trees; chaffinches prospecting where a passer-by has dropped a few crumbs. Then there are seasonal transitions to be absorbed – the bluebell carpet of May and the crunchy leaves of October; the dappled light of summer day and the crackly frost of January. Best of all is the knowledge that if I was really daring I could cycle on for miles in either direction when I'm on the return journey at the end of a weary day and discover what's over the next fold in the map.