

Spokes competition 2015, Entry 6

Explore East Lothian – the perfect cycling county

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...**Commonwealth Pool** b. End point (or circular)... Commonwealth Pool

c. Brief description...**24 mile route, mixed road and track, for mid-range riders**

http://gb.mapometer.com/cycling/route_4127614.html



5. Any interesting / useful / beautiful features / facilities en route ...Lava columns, Duddingston Village, Dussington House, Musselburgh Harbour, Levenhall Links and Esk nature reserves, John Muir Trail, Cockenzie House (coffee, food, loo), Battle o Prestonpans site, Meadowmill Sports Centre (coffee, food, loo), Fa'side viewpoint, Queen Margaret University grounds

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**]. [320 words]

The Commonwealth Pool is a favourite start for a run – on this one we head for Duddingston Low Road, past the amazing lava columns and through Duddingston Village. After mere metres on the main road, turn right to take in the golf course (assessed by me as cyclist safe) and Duddingston House, former estate mansion, now high-end apartments.

For a quick exit from town I took Milton Road to Musselburgh, but NCN1 is a leisurely option. You can pick the Promenade or New Street to make your way to the Esk crossing, and bird watchers could now find sights of interest at several points.

Take to the dunes if you want a bit of easy off-road. Early summer gives a fine display of wild flowers, supplemented by planting where we rejoin NCN76. You can follow NCN76 or the John Muir trail, though historic Prestonpans, past the closed power station and on to Cockenzie. For coffee and snacks choose the upmarket (18th century Cockenzie House) or mass market (Meadowmill Sports Centre). Between these 2 rest stops you are crossing the site of the Battle of Prestonpans, with several viewpoints and information boards. If you take a wrong turn, you just find something else of interest!

The best surprise is to come. A marked cycle route takes you on an easy gradient to Tranent, under the A1 and the busy Edinburgh Road, then minor roads lead to the beautiful viewpoint just NE of Fa'side Castle. We were there near sunset! There follows a descent, exhilarating or nerve-racking according to temperament, and a return via Salter's Road and Whitecraig to Edinburgh on the well signed NCN1.

There's opportunity for one more diversion after the roundabout and Monktonhall Place. Turn left across the grass before Mayfield Park, though a big puddle into the well-landscaped watery grounds of Queen Margaret University. Then rejoin the normal route back to the Innocent Railway.