

Spokes competition 2015, Entry 8

Harrison Park to Harlaw reservoir by canal and old railway

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... Harrison Park

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

c. Brief description...

Harrison Park then South West along canal and over aquaduct. Turn left over Lanark road, follow old railway track through Colinton Dell and Colinton tunnel. Keep on railway track past Spylaw Park then up the Water of Leith past the by-pass. At Currie turn left onto minor roads and uphill to South at Kinleith. Follow road round at top of hill then turn left for short stretch to Harlaw visitor centre.

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

Canal side, riverside and woodland for most of the way. Good views at aquaduct.

Toilet at visitor center. Good snack van at visitor centre at weekends in the summer.

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*].

If I am going on a bike ride to get somewhere, say to work, then efficiency is important. But if I am going for a bike ride for pleasure then a number of other factors become important. Good scenery, a minimum of motorised transport, and the ability to take my time are things I look out for, as well as an interesting destination. That's why going by the canal, Colinton Dell, and the Water of Leith towards Harlaw reservoir is my favourite bike ride. The route avoids traffic most of the way and passes lovely scenery: woods, canal and riverside.

The canal towpath and the route along the old railway by the Water of Leith are popular with walkers as well as cyclists. This means you shouldn't be going fast. It is not a route for commuting, it is a route for savouring. In spring and autumn especially, the woods round about add colour and interest. The, at the end of the ride, you get to Harlaw reservoir, a delightful spot for a walk. Take a picnic, and the tables at the visitor centre are an ideal spot to have a bite to eat.

It's not a long route, so this is not a hard day's ride; though you will have noticed the hill up from Currie!. But you have benefit later: it is almost all downhill on the way back a pleasant end to my favourite bike ride.