

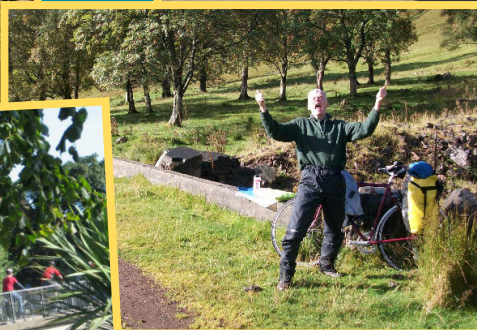
SP^{OKES}

*The
Lothian
Cycle
Campaign*

FAVOURITE CYCLE RIDES

£2

in Edinburgh & the Lothians



*Prizewinning
ideas for
exploring –
using Spokes
maps*



On Foot
By Bike

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The Competition

This booklet describes eight of the best entries in a recent Spokes 'My Favourite Bike Ride' competition.

Winners were chosen not just on the routes, but also on why they were so special. The rides in this booklet were selected from the best entries so as to give a variety of areas, distances and types of ride.

Whether you use your bike every day for work or shopping, or whether it spends much of its life at home, we hope the ideas here will inspire you to have some extra fun exploring.

How to use this booklet

The ideas in this booklet are just that: ideas for exploring, not detailed routes. So you'll need to use the booklet together with a detailed map to plan your route. We strongly recommend our excellent Spokes maps of Edinburgh, Midlothian, West Lothian and East Lothian – you won't find anything better.

Most of the routes are a mixture of cycle paths and quiet roads, but don't feel you have to stick exactly to each route as described. You may want to shorten or lengthen the ride, or you may get further ideas from the maps. And when you're out on the bike, if some other turning looks interesting, why not try it?

For further information about these routes, see www.spokes.org.uk/rides

Remember

Always ride sensibly, considerably and legally

Note: *Spokes and the authors of the routes in this booklet offer the information in good faith, but we take no responsibility for how you use it. You are entirely responsible for your own safety when using these routes or any of the other information in this booklet. We have checked the routes on the ground, but there will be changes as time passes.*

Spokes welcomes feedback from users of our maps or of this booklet.

SPOKES
www.spokes.org.uk


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St. Martin's Community Resource Centre,
232 Dalry Road, Edinburgh EH11 2JG

The Rides





- 1 East Edinburgh Parks and Panoramas
- 2 Cramond Lifesaver
- 3 South West to Riccarton
- 4 Out to East Lothian
- 5 Go West on the John Muir Way
- 6 Midlothian Hills and Woods
- 7 Rivers and Ropeswings
- 8 Home from Armadale

Key to ride descriptions


 Approximate mileage

 Approximate cycling time,
excluding breaks


Spokes map(s) required:


 Edinburgh  Midlothian
 West Lothian  East Lothian


Key to route maps


 Interesting feature or landmark
on or near the route


 Off-road path

 Quiet road - usually with comfortable
cycling conditions for most cyclists

 Busy main road - some cyclists
may find the fast or heavy traffic
intimidating

 Other roads, not part of the route but
shown for general guidance

 Take care at road crossing

 Railway line - not all stations shown

NCN Sustrans National Cycle Network



1 East Edinburgh Parks and Panoramas



◀ 15 miles ⌚ 2-3 hours E

This route visits several parks and open spaces on the east side of Edinburgh, as well as places of interest with very different characteristics. Parts of it are particularly green and peaceful, yet it never ventures more than a few miles from the city centre.

Most of the route is on quiet roads and paths, but there are several busy road crossings.

Tim Smith

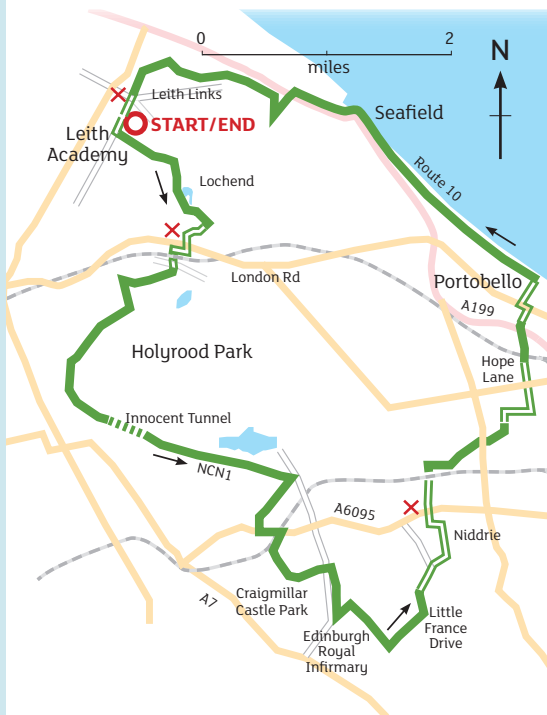
Tim cycles almost every day. Rather than following familiar routes, he likes experimenting with random turns, for the fun of seeing where they take him and for the 'surprise of discovering what's waiting round the corner'.

♥ Why this is my favourite ride:

This is a stress-free ride which links some of my favourite open spaces. It includes long-standing features, such as Holyrood Palace and the Innocent Tunnel, as well newer ones like the ERI and Bioquarter. It also offers panoramic views over the east of the city.

▶▶ Start / End: Easter Road, by Leith Academy

- ▶ Take the Restalrig Path. After 500 yards, ascend the ramp on your right, then go through Lochend Park to Marionville Road.
- ▶ Cross London Road into Lower London Road. From Sunnybank Terrace, go under the railway bridge to Spring Gardens, then through a gate into Holyrood Park.
- ▶ Head south west alongside the main road through the park. Shortly after passing Our Dynamic Earth, go up a short flight of steps on your right to Dumbiedykes. Continue through St Leonards and the Innocent Tunnel (NCN 1).
- ▶ At the next road junction, turn sharp right. Cross Peffermill Road into Craigmillar Castle Park. Take a path on your left towards the castle, then descend to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.
- ▶ Turn left on Little France Drive. Go through Niddrie to Hay Avenue, then under a railway bridge and turn right on the Innocent Path.
- ▶ After crossing Duddingston Park South, turn left into Magdalene Gardens. Follow the signposted route across Milton Road, along Hope Lane, over the railway and into Portobello.
- ▶ Turn left on the Portobello Promenade and Seafield Road (Route 10). After two miles, turn into Seafield Street and take the path to Leith Links. Return to the start point via Duncan Street and Easter Road.





2 Cramond Lifesaver

◀ 6 miles ⌚ 1-2 hours E

This ride offers extensive views over the Forth, including glimpses of its three bridges, with Cramond Island's causeway emerging at low tide. You also pass the distinctive bronze sculpture, 'Going to the Beach'.

Most of the route is on well-surfaced paths, with no difficult hills. It's entirely traffic-free except for a quarter of a mile on West Shore Road, and is therefore ideal for novices and families. It is suitable for all types of bike.

▶▶ **Start:** Trinity **End:** Cramond Harbour

- ▶ From the foot of Trinity Road, head south on the railway path.
- ▶ After passing through the tunnel, you reach the path junction at Five Ways. Turn right here and follow the path west for one and a half miles.
- ▶ Just before the red bridge over Ferry Road, turn sharp right and go down the ramp to the shared-use pavement alongside West Granton Access. Continue north, through a subway and into Saltire Square, where you'll see the sculpture, 'Going to the Beach'.
- ▶ Continue on the bike path to West Shore Road. Follow this road west for a quarter of a mile. Where it swings inland, join the path on your right, which takes you to the Silverknowes Esplanade. Continue west to the flagpole by Cramond Harbour.

Variations: To return to the start point, either retrace your steps, or follow the route back to West Shore Road, then continue east along West Harbour Road and Lower Granton Road. This option is shorter, but less attractive and with more traffic.



Mike Nicholson

After years of cycling, Mike was knocked off his stride by a long illness and a stay in hospital. But a new bike and the prospect of a big ride with friends got him back in the saddle. Using his Cramond route to build up his strength, he has now cycled coast to coast across England, keeping a promise he made from his hospital bed.

♥ Why this is my favourite ride:

Most people will see this route as being busy with dogs, runners, prams and scooters. For me, it is about the early morning – about space, sea, solitude and the smoothest of rides with just the occasional scrunch of a seashell to remind you where you are.





3 South West to Riccarton

21 miles 3-4 hours **E**

This circular ride links several beauty spots - Holyrood Park, Blackford Glen, Colinton Dell, the Water of Leith, the Heriot-Watt campus and the Union Canal – all of which are lovely throughout the year.

The route, which is suitable for all levels of experience, is largely off-road, but there are some busy main road crossings. Some of the paths might be muddy when wet. Take special care when crossing the railway in Donkey Lane.

Start / End: The Meadows

- ▶ Head east on North Meadow Walk, then follow NCN 1 through the Innocent Tunnel.
- ▶ At the first road after the tunnel, turn sharp right, heading south west through Craigmillar Castle Park and Inch Park, then along Double Hedges Road.
- ▶ At the foot of Kirk Brae (busy road junction), go west on Blackford Glen Road and through the Hermitage of Braid.
- ▶ From the Comiston Road traffic lights, take Greenbank Road, Ashy Path and Greenbank Drive towards Firrhill. Cross Colinton Road and continue west by Paties Road and Katesmill Road to the Water of Leith path.
- ▶ Follow the river to Juniper Green, then cross Lanark Road and take Baberton Avenue and Juniper Park Road, skirting Bloomiehall Park and the golf course. In Donkey Lane, dismount to cross the railway, then continue to Riccarton Mains Road and the Heriot-Watt campus.
- ▶ Leave the campus by the north gate. From Hermiston House Road, join the Union Canal (NCN 754) for the final leg back to town.

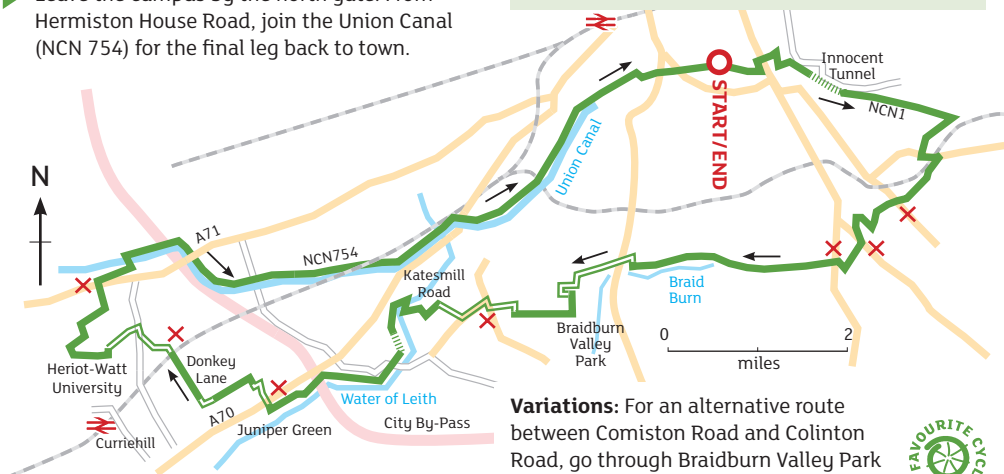
Peter Martin

In a lifetime of cycling, Peter has progressed from tricycle to bicycle to tandem and back to trike. He has toured, raced (slowly), organised races, led a CTC group, and always cycled to work. He says 'the bicycle is a non-prescription medicine which always works'. His wife says it is his religion.



Why this is my favourite ride:

In a city like Edinburgh, with its wealth of paths, there are endless opportunities for discovery. The combination of fresh air, gentle exercise in beautiful surroundings and the company of good friends leaves you feeling refreshed, reinvigorated and happy. The effect lasts several days.



Variations: For an alternative route between Comiston Road and Colinton Road, go through Braidburn Valley Park and along the path by the Braid Burn.





4 Out to East Lothian

◀ 24 miles ⌚ 3-4 hours **E** **EL**

There's lots to see on this ride: Holyrood Park, Duddingston Village, Musselburgh Harbour, the mouth of the Esk, Levenhall Links (great for bird watching), the Prestonpans battle site and the extensive views from Falside Castle. The 18th Century Cockenzie House makes a good coffee/toilet stop.

The route is a mix of roads and good paths although the section east of Musselburgh is rough in parts. There are some short stretches on busy roads.

▶▶ **Start/End:** Royal Commonwealth Pool

- ▶ Go into Holyrood Park and turn right at the first roundabout. Follow the road through Duddingston Village.
- ▶ After crossing Duddingston Road West, take Cavalry Park Drive across the golf course to Milton Road West. Follow this busy road east for two miles until it joins the main road into Musselburgh.
- ▶ Continue through Fisherrow and along the waterfront. After crossing the River Esk, take the track by the sea wall. This is NCN 76.
- ▶ Continue on NCN 76 through Prestonpans.
- ▶ At Cockenzie, turn right onto the B6371. After half a mile, take a track forking off to the right. This crosses the busy B1361 before emerging at Tranent. Then take Birsley Road for the long steady climb to Falside Castle.
- ▶ Descend steeply to the A6094, where you turn left into Whitecraig.
- ▶ At a small roundabout, turn right to join a path by the River Esk. You are now on NCN 1, which will take you all the way back to the start point.

Variations: To avoid the busy Milton Road, take the Innocent Path to Brunstane Station, then follow the Brunstane Burn and Edinburgh Road to Fisherrow.

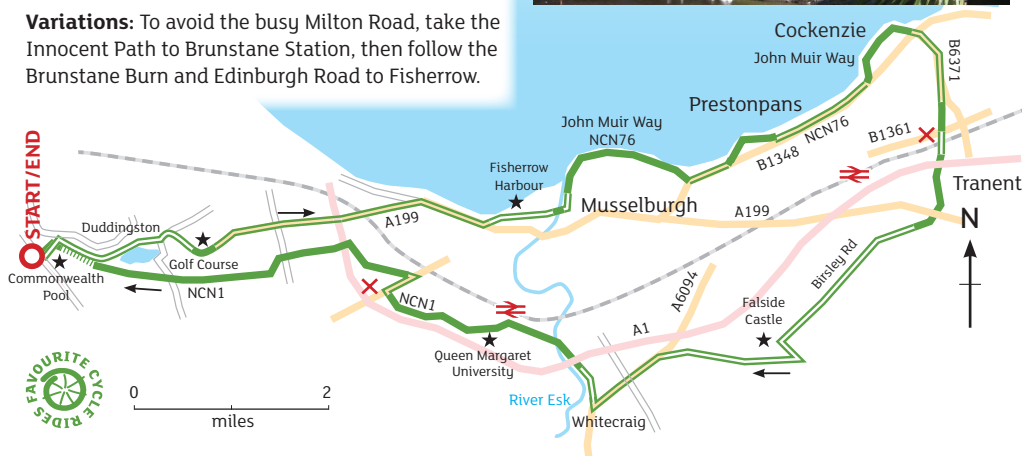
Eileen Holttum

Eileen says that cycling has been an important part of her life for over 60 years. She has cycled in the USA and India, as well as many European countries. She has also completed the high-level Scottish Sea-to-Sea route.



♥ Why this is my favourite ride:

There's so much historical and natural interest on this ride. I particularly like the amazing views from Falside Hill and the exhilarating descent afterwards. Navigation is never a problem: if you take a wrong turn, you'll just find something else of interest.





5 Go West on the John Muir Way

◀ 21 miles ⌚ 3-4 hours E WL

This ride uses part of the 134-mile John Muir Way. It takes you through delightful woodlands and along the shores of the Forth. It offers the chance to visit Hopetoun House, Blackness Castle and Linlithgow's historic town centre and palace.

The route favours paths and quiet roads, but includes a short stretch on the busy A904. There is one steep climb. Frequent train services will get you home from Linlithgow, but bike spaces are limited so avoid busy times if possible.

▶▶ **Start:** Davidson's Mains **End:** Linlithgow

- ▶ Follow NCN 1 through Barnton to Cramond Brig, then turn right on NCN 76/John Muir Way through the Dalmeny Estate. Go under the Forth Bridge and through South Queensferry.
- ▶ Continue west past Port Edgar. About a mile west of the Queensferry Crossing, turn half-left into the grounds of Hopetoun House.
- ▶ Stay on NCN 76/JMW as it passes to the south of the house, and then through woods and along the shore to Blackness.
- ▶ Climb the steep B9109, turning right at the top (care needed here), and then left on a quiet road to Philpstoun.
- ▶ Head west along the canal towpath to Linlithgow, from where you can take a train back to Edinburgh.

Variations: For a longer, circular ride (28 miles), head east on the canal at Philpstoun. At Niddry Castle, continue east on a minor road, then on through Kirkliston to Cramond Brig, and retrace NCN 1 to the start point.

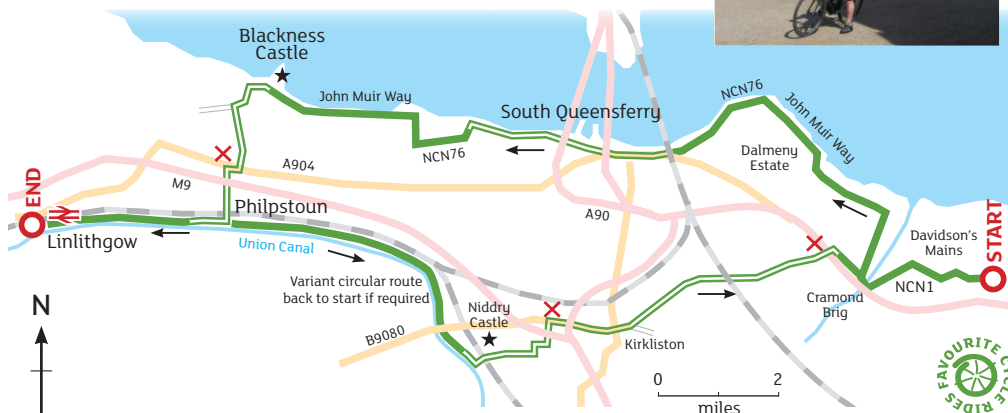
Malcolm Bruce

Malcolm attended a bike-in in Princes Street in the 1970s, and has been cycling and campaigning ever since. He says cycling is the quickest way around town and the best way to see the country. He and his pals now ride the 'lung-busting passes' of the Alps and Pyrenees every year.



♥ Why this is my favourite ride:

This is an adventurous ride through varied woodlands and coastline, with a historic burgh at the end. It will whet your appetite for exploring the whole of the John Muir Way, from Dunbar to Helensburgh.





6 Midlothian Hills and Woods

12 miles 2-3 hours 

This varied ride takes you through fine open countryside and charming villages. Much of the route is on high ground, with splendid views towards Edinburgh, the Pentlands, the Moorfoots and the Tweed Valley. Optional detours include Vogrie Country Park, Crichton Castle and the historic Crichton Collegiate Church.

The route is entirely on roads, but most of these are very quiet, and some are virtually traffic-free. There are several hills, with a particularly steep climb at the start. Gorebridge is on the Borders Railway, which makes the ride easily accessible from Edinburgh, but bike space on trains is limited so it's best to avoid busy periods.

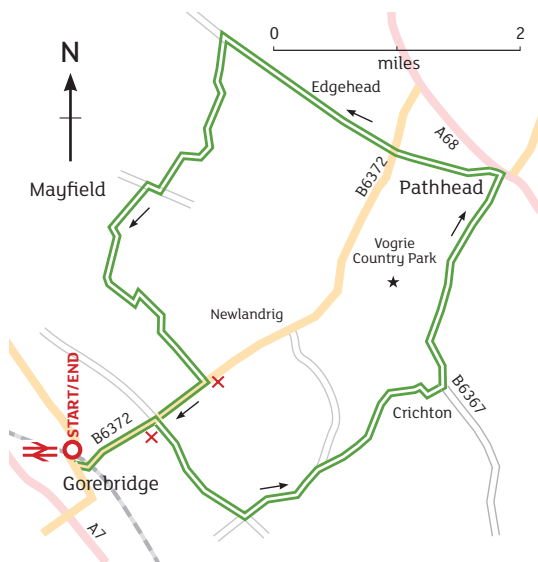


Yvonne Warrington

Yvonne is based in Newtongrange, where she has lived for several years. She is a keen mountain biker, and enjoys exploring the Midlothian countryside, looking for new trails.

Why this is my favourite ride:

I've spent many happy hours in the saddle, exploring this area. I've seen some great bird life, including buzzards circling high up, and in spring the fields are full of skylarks. Vogrie Country Park is a gorgeous woodland, with plenty of tracks to explore. I particularly love the area on summer evenings. Sitting on top of a hill, looking out over Edinburgh, watching the setting sun, is one of life's pleasures.



Start / End: Gorebridge Station

- Take the B6372 (Lady Brae) from Gorebridge (signposted to Vogrie Country Park). Turn right at the crossroads at the top of the hill and continue for about a mile.
- At the next crossroads, turn left in Colegate Road. This is a narrow road which descends to a small bridge over the Tyne Water, then climbs steeply to the village of Crichton.
- Turn left on the B6367, heading north east to Pathhead. On reaching the A68, turn sharp left on a minor road, signposted to Ford. Stay on this road for nearly two miles as it crosses the B6372 and passes the village of Edgehead.
- Turn left on a narrow road, signposted to D'Arcy and Mayfield. At the next junction, turn right, then turn left, keeping Mayfield on your right.
- Continue for a mile and a half before regaining the B6372. Turn right here and go down the hill to Gorebridge.



Variations: To visit Vogrie Country Park, turn left from Colegate Road onto a narrow road to Newlandrig, from where a path leads into the park. For another interesting detour, follow the signposts from Crichton village to Crichton Collegiate Church and Castle.





7 Rivers and Ropeswings



◀ 20 miles ⌚ 3-4 hours 

This is a varied ride with plenty to do along the way: visit John Muir's birthplace in Dunbar, walk up Traprain Law, view the 16th Century Preston Mill, and even swing across a river on a ropeswing. There are also fine views over the Forth.

Parts of the route are on unsurfaced tracks and paths, some of which are rough and muddy and therefore better suited to mountain bikes than hybrids or road bikes. Dunbar is a short rail journey from Edinburgh, but some trains require bikes to be booked in advance.



▶▶ Start / End: Dunbar Station

- ▶ From Station Road, turn left into Countess Road, then left again down a narrow lane that goes under the railway. Follow paths and tracks south west to Eweford. From School Brae, take a farm road under the A1.
- ▶ Continue south west. The road climbs to Pitcox, then joins the B6370. Shortly after, veer right towards Biel and turn left before the bottom of the hill.
- ▶ At the next crossroads, go straight ahead to the bridge, from where you can see the ropeswings (use them at your own risk). Then retrace your steps to the crossroads. Turn left.
- ▶ After a short climb, turn left again. About a mile after passing Traprain Law, turn right on NCN 76. Continue on this narrow road past Nether Hailes and Hailes Castle, then under the A1 to East Linton.
- ▶ Leave East Linton by the B1407. About half a mile after passing Preston Mill, turn right. Cross the Tyne by a footbridge next to a ford. Turn left at Knowes Farm shop.
- ▶ Turn left on the A198, then right on a narrow track. This is the John Muir Way. Follow it to West Barns and Belhaven, then back to Dunbar.

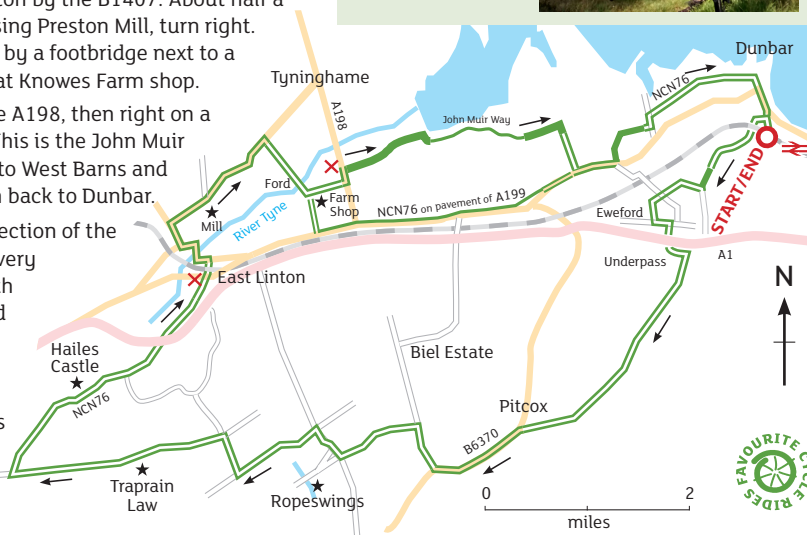
Variations: This section of the John Muir Way is very rough in parts, with many puddles and potholes. You can avoid it by taking NCN 76 instead, although this goes alongside a busy road for a couple of miles.

Mark James

Since cycling to school in the 1970s ('because it meant longer lying in bed'), Mark now rides for the pure joy of it, as well as for practical purposes. He has entered the occasional triathlon, and toured by bike in the UK and abroad. He has also been involved with cycle training and bike maintenance classes.

♥ Why this is my favourite ride:

The route goes through great countryside on quiet roads and tracks. You could do it in a couple of energetic hours, but it's better to take a picnic and devote the day to it, especially as there is so much fun stuff to do. The miles pass relatively easily – even the hills.





8 Home from Armadale

◀ 27 miles ⌚ 3-4 hours  

This route features great open views and pleasant woodlands. You pass the 'Pyramids' sculpture and picturesque Livingston Village. In Almondell Country Park there is a canal feeder and a wooden tunnel beneath a viaduct.

You're never far from a railway station, so there's scope for shortening or lengthening the ride. You cycle on quiet roads and paths, most of which are well-surfaced, with easy navigation.

▶▶ **Start:** Armadale Station (on Edinburgh to Helensburgh line) **End:** Fountainbridge

- ▶ From Armadale Station, follow NCN 75 east alongside the railway line towards Bathgate.
- ▶ Stay on NCN 75 as it weaves through Livingston, passing the Pyramids and Livingston Village.
- ▶ The path continues under the Camps Viaduct and enters Almondell Country Park.
- ▶ Leaving the park by the south gate, continue on NCN 75 all the way back to Edinburgh. The route crosses the A71 (care needed), and then goes by way of Kirknewton, Long Dalmahoy Road, Balerno, the Water of Leith path and the Union Canal.

Variations: Leave the park by the north gate, then after half a mile turn right to join the canal. Stay on the towpath (NCN 754) for a level nine-mile ride to Fountainbridge. Alternatively, stay on NCN 75, but where the road turns right to Balerno, continue east along Long Dalmahoy Road to the Heriot-Watt campus. From there, you can link up with Ride 3, in either direction



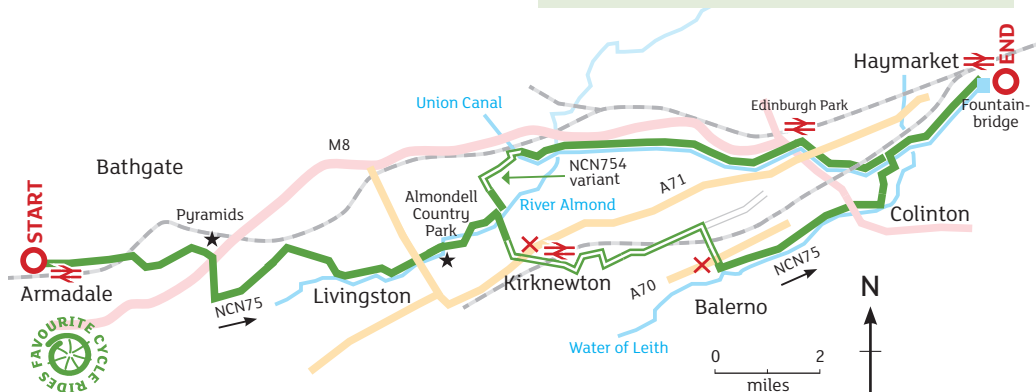
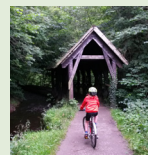
David Monaghan

David got back into cycling when he found that it was his only practical way of getting to work. Until recently, he used his bike mostly for getting around town, never cycling more than ten miles at a time. But now he rides for fun as well, and enjoys longer trips outside Edinburgh.

♥ Why this is my favourite ride:

This ride is so different from the 'grim bits' of West Lothian you might be expecting.

There's plenty of coasting on the gentle descents. You pass through lots of open country with fine views to the south and east, and there's plenty of woodlands.





About Spokes



WHAT WE DO

Spokes has two aims: to encourage and help more people to use bikes more often; and to persuade the government and local councils to make better provision for everyday cycling.

We are interested in cycling as a fun, convenient and cheap means of getting around - for work, shopping, school and leisure (but not cycling as a sport). Cycling, along with walking, public transport and reduced car use, all of which we support, also makes a vital contribution to tackling the climate, pollution and obesity crises.

To help people cycle, we publish wonderful cycle maps of Edinburgh and of the three Lothian council areas. We organise fun rides and we work with bodies like the Bike Station and Edinburgh Festival of Cycling to encourage everyday cycling.

CAMPAIGNS

As well as 'official' Spokes letters and lobbying, we make a big effort to tell members when it is a useful time to write to whom about what. As a result we have had many successes at local and national level – councillors and MSPs are influenced by hearing from the people who vote for them.

Over the years, many on-road and off-road facilities around Edinburgh have resulted from such efforts – starting in the 1970s and 80s with a seven-year campaign to achieve the original Middle Meadow Walk cycleway. We are now at the stage where councillors are planning segregated cycle routes on main roads to and through the city centre. The City of Edinburgh council was the first council in the UK to allocate a fixed percentage of its transport budget to cycling.

JOINING SPOKES

We'd like you to join us. You will get a printed magazine three times a year and email circulars roughly monthly, with information on new cycle routes, events, and how to help yourself, your family, your friends and other cyclists by contacting your councillor and MSP.

Download and print a membership form at www.spokes.org.uk – see the membership tab - or ask us to send you one.

USEFUL LOCAL CONTACTS

www.spokes.org.uk	Latest news, online map sales, factsheets, etc
www.thebikestation.org.uk	Cycle training, bike repair, refurbished bikes
www.snowcycle.co.uk	Spokes Sunday rides - 'Explore, Dream, Discover'
www.cycling-edinburgh.org.uk	All known local organised bike rides
www.edinburgh.gov.uk	Transport – cycling pages, reporting potholes, etc
www.sustrans.org.uk	Maps for National Cycle Network throughout the UK
www.edfoc.org.uk	Edinburgh Festival of Cycling

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