

Lothian-90

A new 90-mile walk across the whole of the Lothians, using quiet footpaths, disused railways, river banks, tracks and the occasional minor road.

Leg 6. Gorebridge, Pathhead Ormiston (10 miles).

Head uphill, from Hunter square on Gorebridge Main Street, up Bonnybank Road. Keep on upwards. Stobhill Primary School is on your right. A path continues straight ahead. Bear left in the trees. Cut through, right, to the radio-mast on Barleyknowe Rd. Cross. Enter the left-hand field. Follow the field boundary up to Common Wood. Once over the style follow the minor road round, and down, to the right. At Moss Cottage turn left. The farm track passes deserted buildings with a distinctive chimney. Pass more buildings to find the Esk Valley Trail signposted to the right. The footpath leads downward, to cross Vogrie Burn and thence reach the B6372 at Newlandrig. Cross and follow the pavement left to enter Vogrie Country Park at the 2nd road junction. The path, through trees, soon reaches a picnic-spot and toilets. Carry on towards the NE, towards BBQ1, (Vogrie House will be seen through the trees to the right), gradually swing to the N, re-cross the Vogrie Burn, to follow the old entrance-road NW to eventually exit the Park at Rookery Lodge Gates. Turn right along the pavement into Dewarton, turn sharp right between houses. Head along the track to pass Woodhead Farm and carry on through to Ford. Cross, turn right and follow the pavement up to Pathhead. Telford's magnificent Aqueduct lies to our left. Cross the busy A68 to follow Hill Road almost due north to the Lion's Gate. Pass through to enter the grounds of Preston Hall. Just keep on to the north; magnificent specimen trees lie all around. First head along the Road; then along a field track – the Temple lies to the left. Pass through a white gate into woods. Keep on, still northward along the secluded woodland path to reach the old North Gates. Turn right along the minor road. Turn left at the first junction. Pass under electricity cables to West Byres. At the junction go right, a few tens of metres, to enter the old Ormiston Estate, on the left. Belsis Burn lies on the left. A detour, right, leads to the Ormiston Yew. (The Great Yew is undoubtedly the largest, and most magnificent, of its kind in Scotland). Our route carries on ahead to reach the A6093. Cross and go right on the wide verge, to quickly reach the B6371 which turns off left and so into Ormiston.

Leg 7. Ormiston to Haddington. (10 miles).

Walk east along Main Street, passing the 15th century Mercat Cross (on its traffic island). Turn right down Cross Loan, then left along Hillview Road. Follow this into fields, to go left at a cross track. This old Pencaitland railway passes behind an imposing modern grain-store to quickly reach an old Y-shaped railway junction. Branch right to cross the small Puddle Burn, and soon head left off (for the present) the old Macmerry railway track. Any 'uncouth' shouting will be from the Hibernian Training Centre over the fields to the left. Follow the footpath for 1 km through the sinuous woodland strip. At the B6355 cross and continue directly ahead. In a further ¼ km, at a junction of paths, continue straight on, over the old Macmerry railway-track, along the woodland strip of the Winton Estate. After another ¾ km the Estate track swings 90° right. Finally exit the Estate in a further ½ km, at a path junction, where a good track leads left to Newtown. Pass cottages on the right to arrive at the

Community Hall. Cross the commuter 'rat run' of the dreadful B6363, by wiggling left and immediately right to gain the pleasant minor road into Boggs Holding. At the red telephone box go 90°-left for 200m. A few paces before reaching the B6363 take the woodland strip to the right. This leads through to another minor road, which we follow left to a road junction and the entrance to Hodges Farm. Walk up to the farm. Swing right in front of it and onwards past Nursery Wood into Butterdean Wood. Find a track that traces along the right-hand edge of Butterdean. On passing the back of a nursery, Alba Trees, exit the Butterdean plantation over a stile and so follow along the northern edge of the nursery. Our route now continues, by and large, on this eastward heading all the way to Haddington. On emerging at a minor road, we continue directly ahead for a further 400m. At the minor cross roads head left (temporarily northwards) for 200m. A footpath (right) allows us to resume our easterly course for 1.5 km. On reaching a minor road, go left passing new houses. Soon turn right, in woods, along a good track (eastwards again) towards Letham Mains. Keep on ahead. The path basically follows Letham Burn all the way into Haddington. Just before Clerkington housing estate cross the burn at a small footbridge. Carry on, right, along the road. At the road junction, with the main A6093, bear left towards Haddington. Cross the A6093. Ignore Long Cram to find, sharp right, a broad grassy swath just beyond Acredales. Take this to its close, where a snicket leads left into a small housing enclave. Resuming our eastwards march, we cross Wellside Rd. to pass through yet another snicket and to take a footpath that swings around the northern edge of the playing fields at the back of the Knox Academy. Ever eastwards our route leads us on to a vennel, passing St Mary's Primary School and more playing fields on our right. At the entrance to Nelson Park we turn left (Nelson Park Road) to disgorge into the hubbub of Haddington Town Centre.

Leg 8. Haddington, East Linton, West Barns.

Leave Haddington's central square, immediately west of the Town House (with its distinctive, ornamental, 150 ft high spire, at the junction of Court, Market, and the High Streets) by heading south along Nelson Park Road (public toilets on the right). Do not enter the Park Gates, but take the vennel to the left, then right along a snicket that dog legs through to Mill Wynd. Left here, cross at the junction. Pass through the gates into the grounds of St Mary's. Keep straight on, bearing left past the church, to exit into The Sands. At the cylindrical dovecot of Lady Kitty's Garden turn right over the arched, old Nungate Bridge. Take steps down to the left, then right through a snicket into Tyne Court, exit at the far left. Turn right into St Martin's Gate. Swing right into Bullet Loan. Pass St Martins on the left. Go left at Lennox road, to soon cross Whittingehame Drive and head through the semi-ornamental West Gates (of the old Amisfield estate) into the parkland golf course. Follow the driveway straight on, past the club house, and on to the far end. Exit onto a minor road which we follow left to Abbey Bridge. Once over we turn left and drop down to the river bank. Proceed downstream for 5 km to East Linton. Having gone under the impressively, lofty A1 bridge, and the old A199 road bridge, turn left up Distillery Wynd immediately before the lattice-worked railway bridge. Turn right along Station Road. Do not enter East Linton but continue along Station Road, over the river and out along Mill Wynd towards Phantassie. The railway embankment lies parallel on the right. Before the roundabout a marked footpath (which we will follow) leads off to the left. [First go ahead two dozen paces to admire the John Rennie Commemorative baluster.] Return

to the footpath which follows a double dogleg right-left-right-left around buildings and leads to the beehive-shaped Phantassie doocot. Immediately before the doocot take the right-hand field boundary to a footbridge bridge over the Tyne. Cross and follow the John Muir Way downstream. The Way crosses back over the Tyne and, after two fields, rises to the minor road at Tynninghame Bridge. Turn right (footpath in field alongside) the road. Soon turn left along a quiet lane towards the estuary. On reaching the embankment, go right then left to follow alongside the shore beside World War II relics. Keep ahead for 2 km. A bridge crosses a stream. Once over bear slightly right. A conifer plantation lies to the left; East Links Family Play Park to the right (the lamma love to be fed - ordinary grass suffices). On re-gaining the coast (toilet block) keep ahead along the John Muir Way. At the Biel Water cross the footbridge. Carry on, past Seafield Pond and a caravan site. A straight section of path ends at Shore Road which we take right, to head up to the main Edinburgh Road at West Barns.

Leg 9. West Barns to Dunglass.

At the eastern end of West Barns, at the Edinburgh Rd, High St, Shore Rd crossroads follow Beveridge Row 300m to the SE (inland) to pass beneath the main railway line. In a further 200m go left(east) between sandstone gate pillars. From now on the route broadly follows this general eastward heading all the way to the coast. The lane curves along between fields, then trees. At a cottage, follow a more minor track ahead, through a semi-ornamental gateway, into woodland. Soon cross Kelly Rd to continue straight onwards, at the back of housing. Beyond the housing, continue ahead through a more open suburbia, to cross Lochend Rd. Here, strike slightly left, behind Ashfield Store, into the housing estate. Follow Warrender Cres as it bends right-left-right, giving glimpses of Dunbar church ahead. Enter Ashfield Court which heads towards some distinctive mid-rise housing. To the left of the housing a footpath, through a small grassy area, leads down. Turn left to follow Spott Rd northward, under the main railway line, and on towards the coast. At the main A1027 turn right along the pavement. 150 m brings a left-turn down Golf House Rd. At the bottom join the John Muir Way. Head right, alongside the Esplanade. A minor road leads through the golf course. Where appropriate bear left and follow the coast. Easy walking along the coastal path takes us 9 km to our journey end at Dunglass, passing Whitesands (toilet block), Barns Ness (geology trail and lighthouse), Torness (Point and power station). The Way passes the power station on its seaward side. Next, after passing caravans and a pleasant sandy beach, the path rises (to cross a stream inland) and then return seawards to follow an old wall. After walking alongside two long fields, cross another stream, and then proceed along more beach before taking a path inland, in woods, to arrive at cottages and five(!) bridges which cross the river Dunglass. This is the far eastern boundary of the Lothians and the end of the Lothian-90 walk.

[Eve's Buses call at Dunglass on certain days. On other days cross the river Dunglass by the road bridge (inland from the rail bridge and near the entrance to Dunglass Collegiate Church). Here a marked footpath leads upstream. After less than a mile, turn left to pass alongside trees and so arrive in Cockburnspath. The bus stop (for the Perryman's Edinburgh-Berwick service) is located on the far, seaward edge of the village, near the bowling-green.]

Roy Thompson (Feb 2014)