

# Lothian Transect Route. Leg 1

Starts at Harthill Motorway Services

3 hours 31 minutes | 10.6miles 17.1km | Leisurely



ID: 0.7072 | Developed by: Roy Thompson |

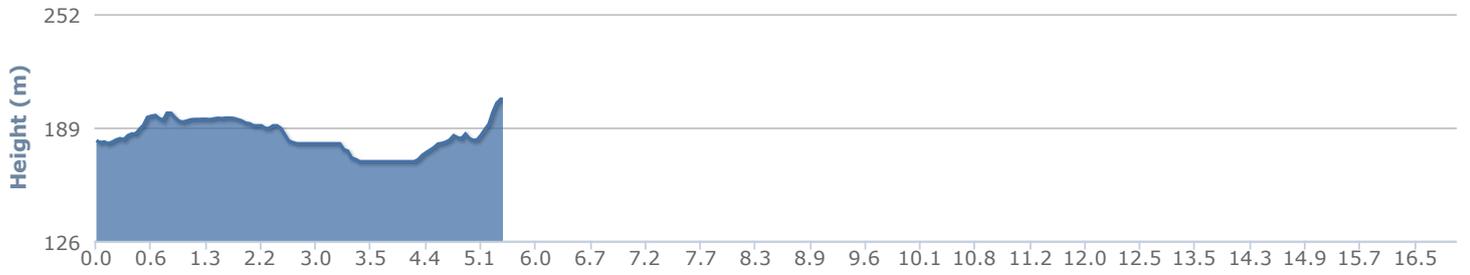
Harthill to Addiewell. First leg of a 90-mile walk (in 9 stages) across the whole of the Lothians, using quiet footpaths, country parks, disused railway lines, river banks, tracks and the occasional minor road.



— Main Route    — Alternative Route    **H** Point of Interest    **4** Waypoint

Distance: 17.00km    Ascent: 162m    Descent: 151m

## Route Profile



\*move mouse over graph to see points on route

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## **Starts at**

Harthill Services (south)

## **Ends at**

Addiewell Railway Station

## **Getting there**

Walk start: Harthill Services are most easily reached by public transport using the frequent (every 15 min) X900 Edinburgh to Glasgow Express bus, or by the X900 Glasgow to Edinburgh Express bus. Other, less frequent, buses are

22: Edinburgh - Broxburn - Livingston >> Livingston - Blackburn - Whitburn - Harthill

22A: Queensferry - Kirkliston - Broxburn - Livingston >> Livingston - Blackburn - Whitburn - Harthill

X22: Edinburgh - Broxburn - Livingston >> Livingston - Blackburn - Whitburn - Harthill

Walk end: Trains run from Addiewell to Edinburgh, or to Glasgow Central, typically every hour.

## **Route instructions**

**[1]** The Lothian Transect Route begins at Harthill Services. Alight from the X900 Edinburgh to Glasgow Express bus at Harthill Services (cafe, toilets). Walk south-east, up the service road, towards Harthill village. Bear right towards the far corner of a football pitch, and onwards along Dunn Terrace through the outskirts of Harthill. Turn right uphill at Westcraigs Rd. to reach the prominent Harthill Church (St Andrew's) at the junction of the B718 and B7006.

**[2]** On reaching Harthill Church head left, along the pavement of the B7006 to the true start of the transect - the Border of North Lanarkshire and West Lothian. Still on the pavement keep on ahead proceeding eastwards past Greenrigg. On crossing the nascent R Almond, step left through the low fence and take a footpath into the trees of the delightful Polkemmet Country Park. Follow woodland paths that wind alongside the river bank. Cross the river at a rustic bridge, and carry onwards over lawns to the Centre (toilets, cafe, owl centre).

**[3]** On leaving the Polkemmet Country Park Centre pass to the right of the old walled garden (now a bowling green), and bear left to follow a woodland track along the bank of the river. Carry on to the far end of the golf course and visit the Polkemmet Horn (beside the motorway).

**[4]** Leave the Polkemmet Horn by retracing your steps 100m to cross the Almond at a small bridge. Head south following a track along the outside of the golf course. Regain the B7006/A705. Go left. Cross before the large roundabout. Turn right beneath the electricity power lines. Keep on (south) and gently uphill along Polkemmet Rd. When the housing on the left ends (at Burnhouse), and before an industrial estate is reached, go left along the old railway line (Town Walk). Pass schools to your right to cross the A706. Here veer slightly left, beside a high, old wall, to visit South Whitburn Church.

**[5]** Exit the South Whitburn Churchyard, go on through the War Memorial Park, past the Community Centre, to join the White Burn. Follow the burn downstream. Cross near Blaeberry Park. At a minor road, re-cross to the left bank. Carry on downstream. Cross back again at a small pedestrian bridge. At this point head back upstream, 100m or so, to turn up, and left, to join a footpath along a shelterbelt, behind housing. Keep to the path as it meanders along more shelterbelts, at the back of the land belonging to the Bickerton Lowland Crofts. We are heading for East Whitburn bing. Go directly over a minor road. Almost immediately cross the old East Whitburn to Foulshields railway line and go slightly left onto the gentle slopes of the

refurbished bing. At the first junction take the right hand path heading due east. This path rises, through conifers, before branching right into a clear area atop the bing. Admire, or be bemused by, the kitschiness of the dog cemetery.

**[6]** Keep ahead over the level summit of East Whitburn bing, and set off south-west across scrubby open ground to find a rough path that leads back down to the old East Whitburn to Foulshields railway line. Turn left along the line. Soon drop down to take the footpath, to the right, beside a small stream. The path winds about, but shortly emerges onto a minor road. Follow the road, left, to a T-junction. Turn right then left at the next junction to take Hen's Nest Rd towards Bents.

**[7]** Proceed along Hen's Nest Rd. In an entrance way, on the right, just after the old county boundary (stream), find a footpath that parallels the road. Eventually the minor road is rejoined and followed to the B7015 at Bents. Turn left (old signpost) taking the road into Stoneyburn. Near the middle of Stoneyburn turn right down Meadow Rd. and near a play area take the path that leads straight on. Once across the R. Breach follow the left-hand path to rise through woods over the gently landscaped Loganlea bing.

**[8]** Once through the woods of Loganlea bing turn left at the minor road into Loganlea. Proceed along the main Loganlea drag. After Loganlea Rd. crosses an incised stream, turn right up Addiebrownhill. Just before the railway bridge, turn left along the footpath beside the railway. The path leads you directly to Addiewell Railway station, where this first section of the Lothian Transect Route ends.

### **Additional 'Point of Interest' information**

**A.** Harthill, originally part of Linlithgowshire, grew up as a result of the coal mining industries of North Lanarkshire, and some of the original old miners' homes remain.

**B.** Greenrigg was once a thriving mining village and produced large amounts of coal. The remains of the mine form a large mound of debris or "Bing" now largely covered with wild flowers and grass, which serves as a barrier between the local football pitch and the nearby M8 motorway.

**C.** Polkemmet. In 1767 the 'Turnpike' system was first established in Scotland. 'The Edinburgh to Glasgow Flyer' stagecoach passed through Harthill and Whitburn up to 20 times a day. The 'Halfway House' which is now a private dwelling at Polkemmet Country Park was where the horses were changed and watered.

"The Horn" is a 79 ft high sculpture located beside the M8 motorway. The stainless steel sculpture was inaugurated in 1997. On windy days, it plays recorded music, poetry and famous quotes.

**D.** At 4.9 km, Polkemmet was the deepest pit in Scotland. Over 60 years of production had left Polkemmet blackened and scarred. Remnants of the mining operations had been left smouldering in large mountains of spoil, otherwise known as bings. The infamous No3 burning bing was still actively giving off fumes in the 1980s when "*The smell of rotten eggs was pronounced. Black plumes covered the town, kids went to hospital with asthma and cars were pitted by acid rain.*" Today the area is one of the largest reclamation and regeneration projects in Europe. The £650M Heartlands development includes plans for 2,000 homes and a business park, as well as leisure, education and community facilities to be built around two PGA quality golf courses. This huge project aims to drive forward the economy of Scotland's central belt.

**E.** Whitburn South Parish Church - dates from 1729. A tastefully restored memorial to Elizabeth Burns (1784—1817), the eldest daughter of Scotland's National bard, can be found in the Kirkyard. Elizabeth, who was the illegitimate daughter of Robert Burns, married John Bishop, overseer at the Polkemmet estate. They resided on the Polkemmet estate in the 'Halfway House'.

**F.** East Whitburn bing. Deep coal mining only began in the Whitburn area in about 1900. By the end of World War II there were eight deep pits in production to the east and west of Whitburn, employing some

5,000 men. Whiterigg colliery employed 1000 men at the time of its closure in 1972. This former colliery and bing is now a community woodland.

**G.** Loganlee bing is today owned by West Lothian Council. The site originates from a colliery bing which was reshaped and planted as part of a derelict land reclamation scheme in the early 1980's. Despite its recent origins the bing already has a well-established woodland.

## Notes

### **Background notes to all nine "Lothian Transect Route" walks.**

- Lothian is the region of the Scottish Lowlands lying between the Firth of Forth and the Southern Uplands. It encompasses the old, historic counties of West Lothian, Edinburghshire (Midlothian), and East Lothian. The complete 'Lothian Transect Route' crosses the whole of the Lothians, from its far western edge (Harthill) to its most easterly point (Dunglass), in nine 10-mile long sections. All nine legs have been designed to begin and end at places well served by public transport.
- West Lothian sits astride the main routes between Edinburgh and the west. Originally a pleasant, fertile and well-wooded county, West Lothian became industrialised from the 1840s onwards. First ironstone, then coal and shale mining dotted the landscape with bings. Today the remaining bings are treasured as industrial monuments - the pink ones are shale, the grey ones coal. Since WWII the heavy industry has gone and been replaced by electronics and service industries. Thousands of houses came with the development of Livingstone New Town. Such overspill towns were an ambitious post-WWII attempt to meet Scotland's housing challenge, caused by the shortage in the big cities. Despite all these C19th and C20th developments it is possible to walk across West Lothian along quiet footpaths, through pleasant community woodlands, over reclaimed bings, along riversides and through old country parks.
- Midlothian provides more space and solitude. The transect route crosses through the Pentland Hills, ever popular with hill walkers or outdoor enthusiasts, and then onward through more old mining and manufacturing areas into a rich agricultural landscape. Old railway lines nowadays provide handy walking and cycling paths.
- East Lothian is one of the most picturesque areas of Scotland. It also had an extremely important agricultural and industrial past. Officially the sunniest and driest area in Scotland, it has a gentle, open aspect and is home to a rich variety of wildlife. It is bounded on the south by the Lammermuir Hills and stretches eastwards to the boundary with Scottish Borders at Dunglass.

## Acknowledgements

Developed by: *Roy Thompson*



East Whitburn bing summit  
Photo taken by: Roy Thompson



Lothian Transect Route  
Photo taken by: Roy Thompson

