

# Lothian Transect Route. Leg 2

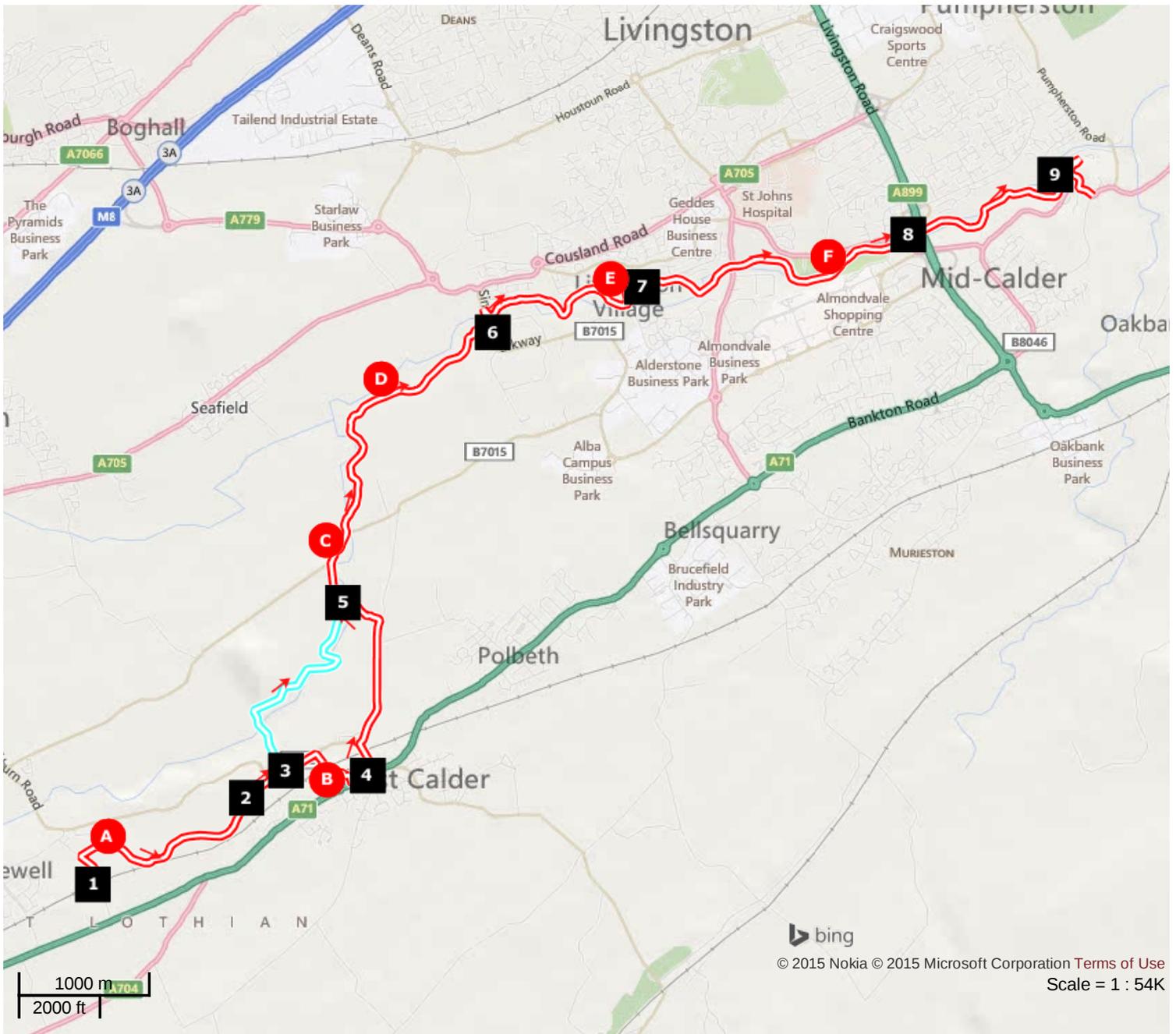
Starts at Addiwell Railway Station

3 hours 3 minutes | 9.2miles 14.8km | Leisurely



ID: 0.7073 | Developed by: Roy Thompson |

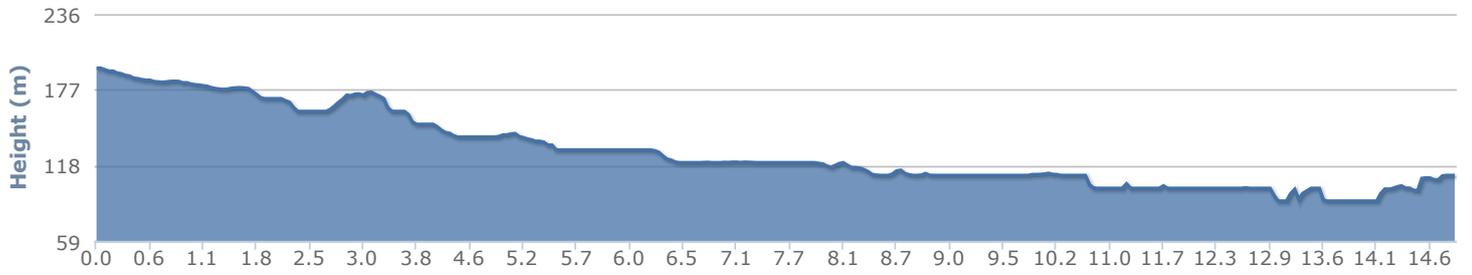
Addiwell to Mid-Calder. Second leg of a 90-mile walk across the whole of the Lothians, using quiet footpaths, country parks, disused railway lines, river banks, tracks and the occasional minor road.



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

Distance: 14.75km    Ascent: 82m    Descent: 166m

## Route Profile



\*move mouse over graph to see points on route

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## **Starts at**

Addiwell Railway Station

## **Ends at**

Mid-Calder

## **Getting there**

Walk start: Addiwell Railway Station. Trains run from Edinburgh, or Glasgow Central, typically every hour.

Walk end: Mid-Calder. First Buses 27 & 28 on the Edinburgh – Bathgate route (typically every 15 min).

## **Route instructions**

**[1]** This second leg of the Lothian Transect Route starts at Addiwell Railway Station. If alighting from the Edinburgh to Glasgow (via Shotts) train at Addiewell, cross the footbridge to follow the slip road down towards Addiewell. Keep left at the minor road to pass the wire-fencing of car-auction show grounds. Turn right along a new road which gently curves round to the right. Pass the front of HM Prison Addiewell to discover a footpath which leads up onto Addiewell bing. Pass a recycling area below, on your left, while making towards the broad, open summit of the bing.

**[2]** On approaching the summit bear right, where the footpath divides, to head gently down towards an angle in the trees. Continue on the faint path down through the trees to a corner on the B792. Take care when stepping onto the road. Go right along the narrow verge of this minor road. Our main route carries on ahead along the road verge, an alternative route follows instead a footpath leading off to the left.

**[3]** Keep straight ahead. Pass an isolated cottage on the right, and as more housing is approached take the signed footpath, on the right, towards West Calder which is seen on the ridge ahead. Over the railway turn sharp left, then right (Society Place), and finally left at Main St., to arrive at the centre of West Calder.

*Dickson St. in the centre of West Calder, provides public toilets.*

An alternative route leaves the B792, by branching off to the left, before the cottage. A footpath over the R Breach gives access to the Five-Sister's Bing (see photo). The alternative route continues by passing along the right-hand base of the bing. Climb over sturdy (locked) metal gates to join a good path along field edges. The path leads onwards past a cement works to soon re-join the main route.

**[4]** Leave the centre of West Calder by heading east towards the traffic lights. Turn left down Cleuchbrae and under the railway. Soon turn right towards the Five Sister's Zoo. Later do not turn off to the zoo, but carry straight on, passing houses on the left to reach woods. Here a footpath descends steep steps to cross the R. Breach. Follow the path downstream. Rise, left, to a minor road. Soon, in amongst a caravan depot, a narrow road comes in from the left. This is the junction where the alternative route rejoins the main route.

**[5]** Keep straight ahead on the metalled, minor road to quickly join the B7015. Go right a few yards. Ignore the minor road opposite. Instead, to its right, cross to follow the footpath leading off towards Easter Breich. The path winds alongside the R Breach. Cross a bridge as the Breach approaches the Almond, and follow the Almond downstream. Beyond Kirkton Campus, climb up (right) to use the elevated road bridge (of Simpson Pkwy.) to cross the R. Almond.

**[6]** Once over the road bridge, turn down right back towards the river. In broad terms, the R. Almond is now followed all the way to mid-Calder. However, a short stretch beyond the buildings and paddocks of the Almond Valley Heritage Centre, when the riverside path rises to an arched, road bridge made of stone, the Lothian transect Route breaks away from the riverside to follow the road (Charlesfield Lane) to the left and

visit Livingston Village.

**[7]** Turn right at the Inn to follow the road eastwards out of the village. A footpath is soon found (after Maukeshill Court) which slopes slowly down, right, to lead you back to the riverside paths. Carry on along a series of footpaths all leading downstream. Halfway to mid-Calder the path momentarily rises, slightly left, to a road junction (B7015 / Almond link road / Calder Park Road).

**[8]** Cross with care and head back down to the right to once again resume following the riverside downstream. Pass wooded areas and picnic tables to arrive at the mid-Calder weir.

**[9]** At the mid-Calder weir cross the river, and then gently rise alongside wooden fencing. Half-way up the valley-side turn sharp right to follow a narrow track which leads to the A705. Turn left into mid-Calder, and so reach the end of Leg 2 of the Lothian transect and the bus stops for Edinburgh and Livingston.

*Established in 1747, the Black Bull is the old droving Inn. Their hot soup is recommended. Toilets within.*

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

**A.** Addiewell is a key locality in the history of W. Lothian. In the 1850's and 60's James Young set up the paraffin oil industry here. He chose to build a large factory at Addiewell, due to its location on the Breich river. By the 1900s nearly 2 million tons of shale were being extracted annually across West Lothian, employing 4,000 men. This was the world's first ever commercial oil / petrochemical industrial. Addiewell Chemical Works grew to occupy seventy acres of ground fully covered by buildings, tanks, condensers and railway sidings. The process of retorting crude oil left huge amounts of waste. On average the manufacture of 10 barrels of oil left 6 tons of burnt shale waste. Huge waste bins littered the landscape. Only 19 remain today. In Addiewell village itself some 360 houses, built of brick, formed rows and tenements. Conditions were primitive. No wash-houses were provided. For about 300 of the houses there were only a total of twelve privies of a most objectionable character. Ash-pits were provided, but they were a positive pestilence in the summer time, and at all times a danger to the health of the community. Clothes poles were studded here and there in the back courts. Water was procured from some seventeen stand-pipes, and the sewage flew down open channels. The sanitary conditions generally existing were bad in the extreme. Most of the housing was demolished in the 1930's/40's. One row of the higher quality (foreman) housing survives at Faraday Place.

**B.** West Calder. Most reserves of oil shale lay beneath rural areas where there were few existing towns to accommodate an influx of incoming workers. The new oil companies therefore needed to construct housing for their workforce. Housing was allocated according to rank within the company; spacious rows were provided for foremen, and semi-detached villas for managers. Much of the early housing, notably in the West Calder area, was poorly constructed and soon deteriorated into insanitary slums. Many of these were demolished during the 1920s and 30's, and their occupants re-homed in new County Council estates.

**C.** Oakbank Cottages, Westwood. Constructed c.1918 to house workers at Oakbank Oil Company's nearby Westwood Mine.

**D.** The River Almond is the lifeblood of the area. The River is 28 miles long, rising in North Lanarkshire near Shotts and running through the middle of West Lothian and indeed through the very middle of Livingstone New Town itself. It finally drains into the Firth of Forth at Cramond, near Edinburgh.

**E.** Livingston Village dates back to the 12th century. Livingston Old Kirk dates from 1732 and is a fine example of plain Presbetyrian architecture. On the Main Street is the old Pub, the Livingston Inn, known to the locals as the "*Livi Inn*".

**F. Livingston Civic Centre.** Livingston is West Lothian's largest town. During the past fifty odd years over 50,000 people have chosen to make it their home. In 1962 the government was seeking suitable sites to relocate Glasgow's over-spill population. Livingston was created as a New Town along with East Kilbride, Irvine, Cumbernauld and Glenrothes. From the outset the Livingston master plan was that it should be the regional centre for the whole of the surrounding area. Livingston is based around neighbourhoods, each with its own schools, shops, health services and other resources, with good road access and good pedestrian walk ways. The huge shopping mall, situated immediately opposite, on the other side of the R. Almond, lies right in the heart of Livingston. It forms Scotland's leading retail destination with over 155 shops.

### **Notes**

**For Background Notes to all nine 'Lothian transect route' walks:**

see Additional Information Notes to "Lothian transect route Leg 1".

### **Acknowledgements**

Developed by: *Roy Thompson*



**Five-Sisters bing**  
Photo taken by: Roy Thompson



**Bing flora**  
Photo taken by: Roy Thompson

