

# Lothian Transect Route. Leg 3

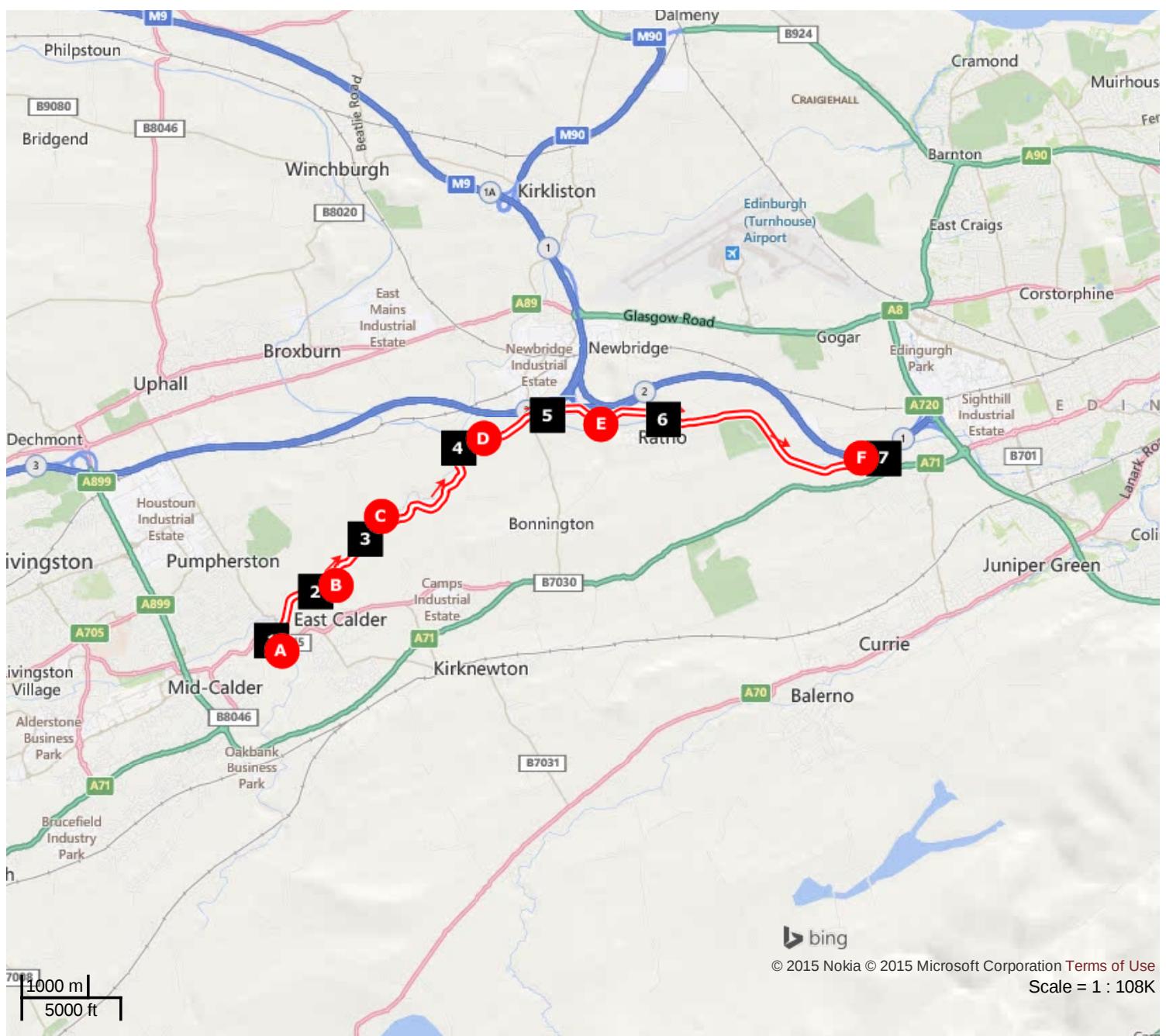
Starts at Mid-Calder

2 hours 46 minutes | 8.4miles 13.5km | Leisurely



ID: 0.7074 | Developed by: Roy Thompson |

Mid-Calder to Long Hermiston. Third 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

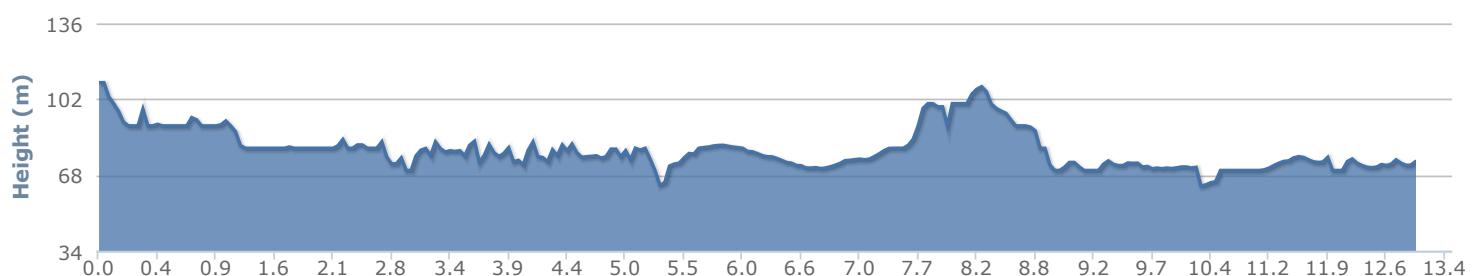
— Alternative Route

● Point of Interest

■ Waypoint

Distance: 13.44km Ascent: 209m Descent: 238m

## Route Profile



\*move mouse over graph to see points on route

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## Starts at

Mid-Calder, Torphichen Arms

## Ends at

Long Hermiston, north entrance to Heriot-Watt University grounds

## Getting there

*Walk start : First Buses 27/28 run on the Edinburgh - Bathgate route (approx every 15 mins).*

*Walk end : First Bus 27/28 to Edinburgh*

*(First Bus. Further information from <http://www.firstgroup.co> )*

## Route instructions

**[1]** With your back to the Torphichen Arms turn right, and then immediately right again down Gasworks Brae into a small park. Cross the leftmost bridge to find a path which takes you beneath the imposing stone arch of the old coaching-road. Beyond, climb the steep flight of steps, turning left as the top is gained. A good path leads through trees and alongside a field to reach a cross-path. Rise up to the cross-path. Turn right and follow the cross-path as it meanders alongside the R. Almond. Pass the modern sewage works. Cross the R Almond at the bridge immediately below the weir.

**[2]** Once across the river, the route follows the canal feeder and river downstream all the way (2.5 miles) to the Union canal. Pass beneath the imposing railway viaduct using the quaint old shelter (see photo). Leave the feeder channel when it is cleverly routed across the river, instead just carry straight on following the riverside path downstream all the way to the Ranger Centre.

*The excellent Ranger Centre serves coffee, ice-creams, etc. It also provides information displays & leaflets about the Park. Toilets.*

**[3]** On leaving the Centre, carry on downstream. Almost immediately, beyond the old stable block (now toilets) bear right and cross the suspension bridge. Carry on over many stiles, and through many gates. Just before reaching the canal aqueduct climb to the right up steps. Turn left and slant down to pass under the canal. Once through, immediately climb steep stone steps on the right to arrive at the canal basin.

**[4]** At the top of the stone steps, turn left towards Edinburgh. Follow the towpath, for a mile, until a signed footpath to Platt Hill branches off.

**[5]** At the Platt Hill junction take the footpath along the field edge and pass alongside the busy motorway slip-road. On nearing the summit of Platt Hill be sure to detour slightly right in order to look down into the indoor climbing area. Return to the path to continue ahead and onwards, along a quiet, tree-lined, old lane, to emerge in Ratho. Turn right, to reach the delightful Ratho Church.

**[6]** Immediately after Ratho Church re-join the canal. Turn left towards Edinburgh. Walk for two miles along the towpath to bridge number 12 at Hermiston.

**[7]** At bridge 12, rise up to the road. Turn right, cross the canal and walk a short distance, past the cottages of Wester Row on your right, and so reach the main A71. Turn left along the A71 to arrive at the end of leg 3, at Long Hermiston.

*The Heriot-Watt bus-stop lies a few dozen paces to the left along the A71. First buses 27/28, for Edinburgh, stop here (approx every 15 mins).*

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

- A.** Calderwood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This ancient woodland bounded by the Murieston and Linhouse waters, has been woodland for hundreds of years. It has a long history. Trees were cut for charcoal in the 1500's. Cattle drovers resting their cattle here in the 1700's. The Forestry Commission extracted timber for building projects during the Great War.
- B.** Naismyth Bridge, built around 1800. Question: who invented compression riveting? The bow and string bridge? Helped develop the world's first paddle steamer, and according to celebrated Scottish painter Sir David Wilkie, was "*the founder of the Landscape Painting School of Scotland*"? Answer: Alexander Nasmyth.
- C.** Almondell Country Park follows the line of the River Almond, with well made paths and roads criss-crossing the river over a variety of bridges. It is a popular location with walkers and families. The Union Canal Feeder runs through it for 3.04 km. Water for the narrow canal feeder channel originates in Cobbinshaw Reservoir, then runs via the Murieston and Linhouse Waters, and the River Almond to the Mid-Calder weir. Burke and Hare (later better known for taking their trade in body snatching to extremes, and murdering victims for sale to the medical establishment) were two Ulstermen who came to Scotland to work as navvies on the building of the Union Canal, and its feeder.
- D.** Lin's mill Aqueduct was built with advice from Thomas Telford. He used an iron trough to achieve water-tightness, Lin's grave (1645) inscribed with a shield, skull & crossbones lies nearby. Lin is popularly known as "*the last person to die of the plague in Scotland*". No-one would help his wife bury him, so she had to put his body in a sack and drag him into the woods for burial..
- E.** Ratho Climbing Centre. The largest indoor climbing centre in Europe.
- F.** Union Canal Bridge No 12. The Edinburgh and Glasgow Union Canal runs for 32 miles and 1¼ furlongs. The canal, constructed to bring minerals, especially coal, to the capital opened in 1822. The 62 bridges are all numbered. Close by to bridge 12, in 1834, John Scott Russell a young Scottish engineer made a remarkable discovery - the soliton. He was observing the motion of a canal boat, which was being rapidly drawn along by a pair of horses, when the boat suddenly stopped—not so the mass of water in front. It accumulated round the prow of the vessel in a state of violent agitation, then suddenly rolled forward with great velocity, assuming the form of a large solitary heap of water. Russell jumped on a horse, to overtake the single wave still rolling along at some eight miles an hour. The wave only gradually diminished, and after a chase of one or two miles Scott Russell lost it in the windings of the channel. It was not until the 1960s, and the advent of modern computers, that the significance of Scott Russell's discovery became apparent, especially in the field of fibre optical communications.

## **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



**Shelter below viaduct**  
Photo taken by: Roy Thompson



**Steps at Mid-Calder**  
Photo taken by: Mrs C.L. Thompson



**Union Canal**  
Photo taken by: Mrs C.L. Thompson

