

The Innocent Railway



INTRODUCTION

Early in 1981 the Regional Council decided that various disused railway lines should be acquired and that a programme should be prepared for converting these for use by cyclists and pedestrians. This leaflet describes the Innocent Railway Path in south east Edinburgh and various connecting links provided by Lothian Region and the City of Edinburgh District Councils.

HISTORY OF THE "INNOCENT" RAILWAY

The route follows that of one of the earliest British Railways — the Edinburgh and Dalkeith, the first railway into Edinburgh. It was planned in 1824-26 and constructed in 1827-31, between St Leonards and collieries near Dalhousie. James Jardine, an Edinburgh Civil Engineer, designed and built the railway. Double rail track 4ft 6 inches (1.37m) wide was laid throughout. The wagons were hauled by horses, but with stationary steam engines to haul trains up an inclined plane into St Leonards Depot. Developed for carrying coal and agricultural produce a passenger service was rapidly initiated using wagons, open carriages and converted stage coaches. From 2 June 1832-1845 it carried 200,000 to 300,000 passengers per year — more passengers per mile than the Liverpool and Manchester railway. Coal traffic was about 300 tons a day.

After a reference by Dr Robert Chalmers to "the innocence of the railway" because of its pastoral and innocent appearance in comparison with the more sophisticated railways using steam locomotives where any accidents were more likely to be severe, it became known as the 'Innocent' Railway. As there were no intermediate stations passengers joined and alighted where they wished. A branch to Fisherrow was opened in 1834 and those to Dalkeith and Leith in 1838. Bus connections were provided (fare 3d) from St Leonards to North Bridge, Fisherrow — Musselburgh and Dalkeith — Newtongrange.

In 1845 the line was bought by the North British Railway for £113,000, the gauge changed to 4ft 8½ inches (1.43m), and the horses and inclined plane replaced by steam locomotives upon reopening in July 1847 when it was also connected via Portobello to Edinburgh Waverley, and the route past Dalhousie was eventually extended to Carlisle to form the 'Waverley Line'. As passengers now had an alternative terminus in central Edinburgh the passenger service to St Leonards declined and was finally discontinued on 30 September 1860. Goods traffic to St Leonards continued until 5 August 1968.



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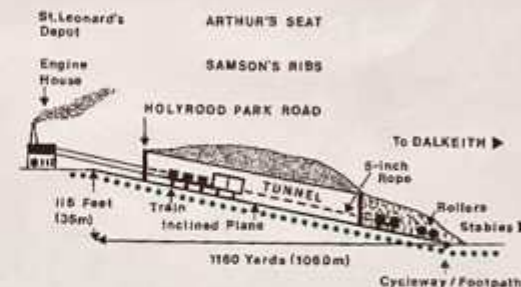
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Interesting features of the original work which still exist are:

Inclined Plane

1,160 yards (1,060m) long, gradient 1 in 30 (3%).

This extends from St Leonards Depot, through the tunnel to the stables area located about 600 yards (550m) beyond the eastern portal. It was constructed in 1827-29 and equipped in 1830-31 with two 25 HP steam engines at the top of the incline. Descending trains were counter balanced by ascending trains.



EDINBURGH AND DALKEITH RAILWAY
Inclined Plane (1831) — Vertical Profile

Tunnel

566 yards (518m) long, 20ft (6.1m) wide with semi-circular roof 15ft (4.6m) high at the centre.

This was constructed in 1827-29, and lined in Craigleith Stone. It was one of the earliest railway tunnels in the world.

Stone Block Sleeper from Iron Chair and Rail

This is built into the south wall about 50m east of the observation platform near Duddingston Loch.

Cast Iron Bridge over the Braid Burn

Span 18ft (5.5m).

This was made and erected in March 1831, and painted by the Shotts Iron Co for £133.10s.0d. (£133.50). It originally extended over the full width of the Railway between the boundary walls. The cast iron beams, which are curved in top elevation, are of "L" and inverted "T" cross-section. They are of outstanding interest, being among the earliest surviving examples of their type anywhere in the world.

CONVERSION TO CYCLETRACKS

The 1.5km long section of route between Duddingston Road West and the southern portal of the railway tunnel was opened as a cycletrack on 11 August 1982. Progress on other sections of route has been as follows:—

Duddingston Park South — Magdalenes Area		0.7km
St Leonards Hill — Brown Street	1985	0.4km
Magdalenes — Milton Road	Nov 1985	0.8km
Newcraighall/Whitehill — Musselburgh Station	Dec 1986	0.9km
Innocent Railway Tunnel — East Parkside	Feb 1989	0.9km
Duddingston Road West — Duddingston Row	June 1989	1.2km
Duddingston Row — Duddingston Park South	Sept 1990	0.7km

Other sections on which it is hoped to complete work in the next few years include:—

Brunstane Road South — Musselburgh Road	1.5km
The Jewel — Newcraighall Road	0.7km
East Parkside — St Leonards Hill	0.3km
Brown Street — Viewcraig Gardens	0.1km

For most work completed prior to 1989 construction was carried out for the Regional Council by teams employed under the Special Measures Programme of the City of Edinburgh District Council with financial support from the former Manpower Services Commission. Contractors since then have included ERDC Ltd, Pennant Plant Ltd and the Regional Council's Director Labour Organisation, 'Inroads'.

USE OF THE CYCLETRACK

The route has been constructed for joint use by cyclists and pedestrians, although it will occasionally be used by motor vehicles for maintenance or emergency purposes. Cyclists are asked to be aware of pedestrians and to take special care when approaching them, particularly elderly, disabled or blind people and young children. A bell may be used to warn of a cyclist's presence. Cyclists should take particular care entering the route or emerging on to the road at the accesses. Some cyclists may prefer to dismount in order to make these turns, especially when crossing a road. The 'slot and bar' access has been designed to allow cyclists to negotiate it at low speeds or dismounted. In a few instances the height difference between the route and the surrounding ground has meant that steps have had to be installed. Here there is usually a ramp or board up which cyclists may push their bicycle.

CONSTRUCTION

The disused railway bed has been almost completely overgrown following the closure of the railway. This has been cleared over a width sufficient for the new track, but leaving those bushes and trees which were to be retained to form part of the landscape of the line. Thus a rigid, straight alignment has been avoided. The track is generally 3 metres wide allowing for use by both cyclists and pedestrians. On either side of this a further half metre has been cleared of obstacles which could catch and upset a cyclist riding near the edge of the track.

Gates or pens for pedestrian access and 'slot and bar' for cyclists have been installed to limit access to the intended users and keep out motor cycles, cars and other unauthorised motor vehicles.

The cycle track was first formed with a 100mm thick compacted layer of old railway ballast, surfaced with a 25mm thick layer of fine crushed whin stone. This surface is generally satisfactory for modest numbers of cyclists riding at moderate speeds and for use by pedestrians and people with prams and wheelchairs. However, with experience of rather higher levels of use an asphalt surface has now been added to reduce annual maintenance costs.

The drainage system over some sections of route has had to be refurbished or renewed. An observation platform has also been constructed, about 250 metres west of Duddingston Road West, to provide a view over the Bawsinch Bird Sanctuary and to the Cedar of Lebanon tree on the skyline.

TRAFFIC SIGNS FOR CYCLISTS

Cyclists, like other road users, must obey the traffic signs erected generally as required along roads. Some signs have been erected in Edinburgh specifically to help cyclists, as follows:—

Signs giving Information and Directions



Direction sign for cyclists with main destination and distance in miles.

Signs giving Orders



Route for use by cyclists and pedestrians only
(a) separate cycle track and path
(b) no separation



Prohibitions
(c) cycling prohibited
(d) No entry to motor vehicles (but cyclists may proceed)

SAFETY

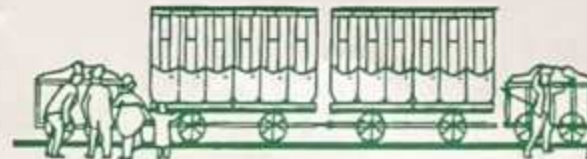
In recent years cycling has grown in popularity and regrettably the number of accidents involving cyclists has increased to approximately 250 per year in Lothian Region. Within Edinburgh three quarters of accidents happen at road junctions so take special care when travelling to or from this cycle track. Bicycle riders are exposed and vulnerable, and when they are involved in accidents their machines give them virtually no protection. Wear a helmet, especially if using fast roads.

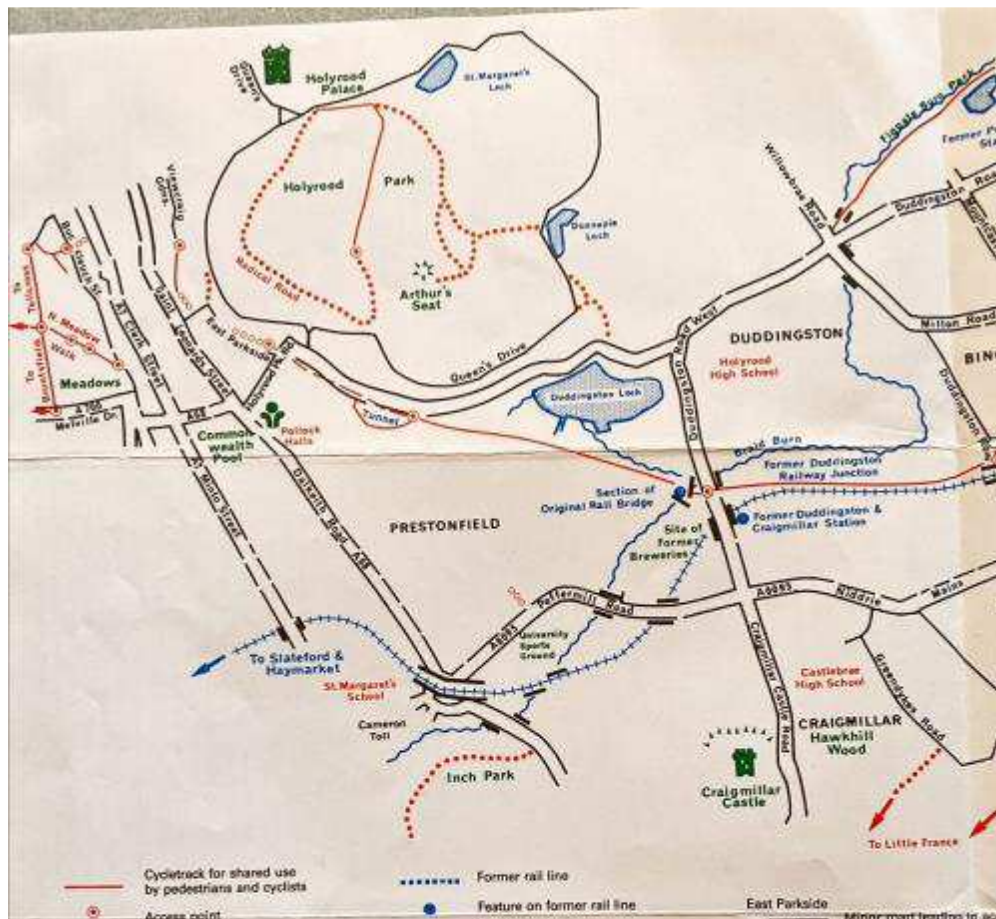
Cyclists, this special cycle track will help you make your journey safer. There are other steps which can be taken in addition to help further:—

- keep your bicycle in good working order and fitted with suitable reflectors
- follow the rules that apply to other road users, observing the warning signs and those giving orders, traffic lights, pedestrian crossings, one-way streets and the requirements of the Highway Code
- keep a good look out all around
- signal clearly and in good time before making any turn or changing lanes
- do not make sudden swerves, particularly around parked vehicles, or zig-zag moves which surprise other road users
- take particular care when cycling in or alongside traffic queues
- wear bright clothes and use bright lights at night. A reflective and fluorescent belt, arm-band, slipover or jacket can help you to be seen better.

CYCLING ORGANISATIONS

Organisations for cyclists in the Edinburgh area include: Lothian and District Association Cyclists' Touring Club
Secretary: Mr J. Murdoch, 36 Comley Bank Place,
EDINBURGH EH4 1EP
SPOKES, c/o St Martin's Church, 232 Dalry Road,
EDINBURGH EH11 2JG





THE PALACE OF HOLYROOD HOUSE

The Abbey of Holyrood (now ruined) was founded in 1128 by David I. The guest house for the abbey became the nucleus of a royal residence. Between 1493 and 1501 James IV began building what are now known as the Historic Apartments in the northwest corner of the Palace. The majority of the Palace, including the State Apartments, were begun under Charles II in 1671. The Palace is still in regular use as a Royal residence and contains many treasures, including some of the personal belongings of Mary Queen of Scots, which may be seen throughout most of the year.

ARTHUR'S SEAT

Arthur's Seat is one of the remnants of a long extinct volcano. R. Louis Stevenson remarked 'it is worth a climb even in Summer to look down upon the loch from Arthur's Seat, but it is tenfold more so on a day of Skating'.

CRAIGMILLAR CASTLE

The central tower house was built by Sir Simon Preston who acquired the barony of Craigmillar in 1374. After Rizzio's murder in 1566 it became the residence of Mary, Queen of Scots. It was also a favourite resort of other Stuart monarchs.

DUDDINGSTON LOCH

Bawlinch Nature Reserve was bought in 1971 for £1,000 by the Scottish Wildlife Trust to provide a buffer zone for Duddingston Bird Sanctuary and provide additional habitats.



DUDDINGSTON

Duddingston village owes its existence to a church built by monks from Kelso in 1143. Parts of the Norman building may still be seen today. Note the jough collar and leaping on stone by the entrance to the churchyard. Another historic building is the house in The Causeway where Bonnie Prince Charlie resided before his victory in 1745. It is said that James VI frequented the Sheep's Heid Inn and in 1580 presented an embellished ram's head and horns for adorning the bar.

NEWCRAIGHALL

Newcraighall was a mining village for more than 150 years up to 1968. The houses on the north side of Whitehill Street date from about 1800. The mine roads eventually went out several kms under the sea and in the 1920's, the 1,000 employees produced over 250,000 tons a year.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The District Council and the Regional Council have jointly published a free leaflet "Cycle Routes in Edinburgh" which is obtainable from the Department of Highways, 19 Market Street, Edinburgh EH1 1BL.

SPOKES, the Lothian Cycling Campaign, have produced a more detailed map covering most of Edinburgh showing various kinds of facilities and advisory routes for cyclists. This is available at a price of £1.50, from their office c/o St Martin's Church, 232 Dairy Road, Edinburgh EH11 2JG.

Some leaflets have been published by the Department of Transport for public information. In recent years these have covered topics such as traffic signs for cyclists, and high visibility equipment for pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. Copies may be obtained from Police Headquarters, Fettes.

There are several publications on the history of existing and former railways in the area and details of places of interest near the routes shown in this leaflet. Some of these may be available in local libraries:—

- Hunter D L G Edinburgh's Transport, Advertiser Press 1964
- Thomas J A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain Vol. VI Scotland. The Lowlands & Borders, David & Charles 1971.
- Wright G, Adams I & Scott M A Guide to Holyrood Park and Arthur's Seat, Gordon Wright 1987.
- Cent M Villages of Edinburgh Vol. 1, John Donald Publishers Ltd 1986.
- The Abbey and Place of Holyrood House, Official Guide, MSO.
- Craigmillar Castle, Official Guide, HMSO.
- McAdam A D Geological Guide to the Arthur's Seat Volcano, Edinburgh Geological Society 1986.