

3.7 South Queensferry to Edinburgh

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Distance 16.1 miles 25.9 km

Terrain pavement and cycleway at first, then Edinburgh provides a surprising mix of rugged paths, roads/pavements, cycleway and canal towpath

Grade after the flat coastal walking, this section has some surprisingly hilly parts as it meanders through the city

Food and drink South Queensferry (wide range), Cramond, Edinburgh generally (wide range)

Summary a long section dominated by Edinburgh pavements and tarmac; the Union Canal towpath gives lofty views but the official route misses out the city centre altogether



- Start from The Binks, a headland with car park and information boards. Margaret, Queen of Scotland from 1058-93, endowed this crossing for pilgrims going between Edinburgh and Fife, and used it herself en route to Dunfermline. Ferries continued to land here until 1812.
- The Way then passes through historic South Queensferry, with its cobbles, vennels and crow-stepped gables. After the harbour, with Forth Bridges Viewpoint, follow the High Street which is lined with historic buildings and a good range of cafés and pubs.



South Queensferry harbour





- About 350 m beyond The Binks is South Queensferry Museum (admission free, closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays, tel 0131 331 5545). There is access to the shore at intervals, with views dominated by the bridges: see the panel.
- Pass Hawes Pier at mile 77.3, from where the Maid of the Forth leaves for Inchcolm Abbey. After the Forth Bridge itself, pick up a shady rural cycleway (NCN76), walled on the left, with views over the shore.
- The cycleway enters Dalmeny Estate by its Longcraig Gate and passes through mixed woodland.



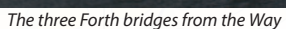
Three Forth bridges

The Queensferry Crossing opened in 2017, just west of the existing road bridge which opened in 1964. Concerns about traffic levels and maintenance of its suspension cables led to the commissioning of the new road bridge. Traffic is shared between them.

The original Forth Bridge opened in 1890 and has carried the mainline railway ever since. It was the world's first giant steel bridge and the never-ending task of repainting became a figure of speech. However since 2011 an epoxy paint promises a 25-year respite. In 2015 it was inscribed as Scotland's sixth World Heritage Site: www.theforthbridges.org.

Maid of the Forth at Hawes Pier







Dalmeny House

- At mile 78.9 the Way passes Hound Point: a tiny detour to the left takes you to a picnic area with great views over the Forth and its bridges. To the south-east is the distinctive silhouette of Arthur's Seat; look north-east for the distant cone of North Berwick Law.
- At mile 80 the Way approaches the imposing Dalmeny House.



Cyclists go ahead on NCN76 and at mile 81.6 km turn right to rejoin walkers.



Walkers turn left to follow the 'Shore Walk', an unusual woodland walk enriched by the aroma of seaweed. At mile 81.4, approaching Cramond Island and causeway, look out for a junction where you turn right uphill and within 350 m rejoin the cyclists on NCN76.

- NCN76 now follows a lane beside farmland heading inland for a mile. This section feels rural except for the sounds of planes to Edinburgh Airport.
- Exit through a barrier then turn left through a gate and left again. Keep left below the pub to cross the River Almond by historic Cramond Old Brig.
- Keep left on the cycleway, past expensive modern houses, and go up to the road (Barnton Avenue West). Cross over and follow the cul-de-sac past more mansions with security gates.



Dalmeny House

The home of the Earl of Rosebery, Dalmeny House is an unusual and striking Tudor Gothic mansion.

Designed by William Wilkins: it was completed in 1817. It houses an outstanding collection of paintings including works by Raeburn and Gainsborough and Napoleonic memorabilia. Set in parkland: the landscape was designed during the early 19th century. The house can be viewed by guided tour only and in 2023 was closed for major refurbishment. For updates visit www.dalmeny.co.uk or tel 0131 331 1888.



- Follow the cycleway between the golf courses and follow Barnton Avenue and all the way to mile 84.5 just after the entrance to the Royal High School.
- At the corner where the road turns left, leave it to enter Davidson Mains Park, making a right-left dogleg on a path on the western edge of the open grass. After 80 m fork right through the trees and head south-west for 250 m.
- Descend to, and cross over, the A90 main road at the traffic lights. The Way now meanders to avoid the busy Clermiston Road, but if traffic is light, walkers may prefer to follow Clermiston Road pavement south to mile 85.3 where the Way rejoins the main road: skip to bullet 8.
- Otherwise, turn right briefly along the A90 pavement, then make three left turns (up Clermiston Drive, Clermiston Hill and Clermiston Crescent): look up for signs high on the lamp-posts. A fourth left turn brings you to mile 85.3 on Clermiston Road: turn right to pick up the roadside path past the hotel.



- After a further 300 m beside Clermiston Road, cyclists turn left along Cairnmuir Road and right down Kaimes Road until it descends to the busy A8. Go left briefly along or beside this road.

- Within 50 m turn right on a path beside the crescent-shaped Silvan House. At its back pick up a cycleway heading east around Carrick Knowe. After about 600 m this curves south and is joined by the walking route at mile 87.2.



Clermiston Tower

- To take our city centre shortcut instead turn left here along Balgreen Avenue and go straight on into Saughton Crescent: see page 60.




- After 550 m of roadside path, cross Clermiston Road to enter Corstorphine Hill woods through a green gate, and walk up the lane past the Walled Garden.
- Follow JMW waymarkers up to the comms mast and Clermiston Tower, built in 1871 as a memorial to Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832). When the tower is open (Sunday afternoons), it's worth climbing 101 steps to its gallery for the view.

West over the Forth bridges from Dalmeny

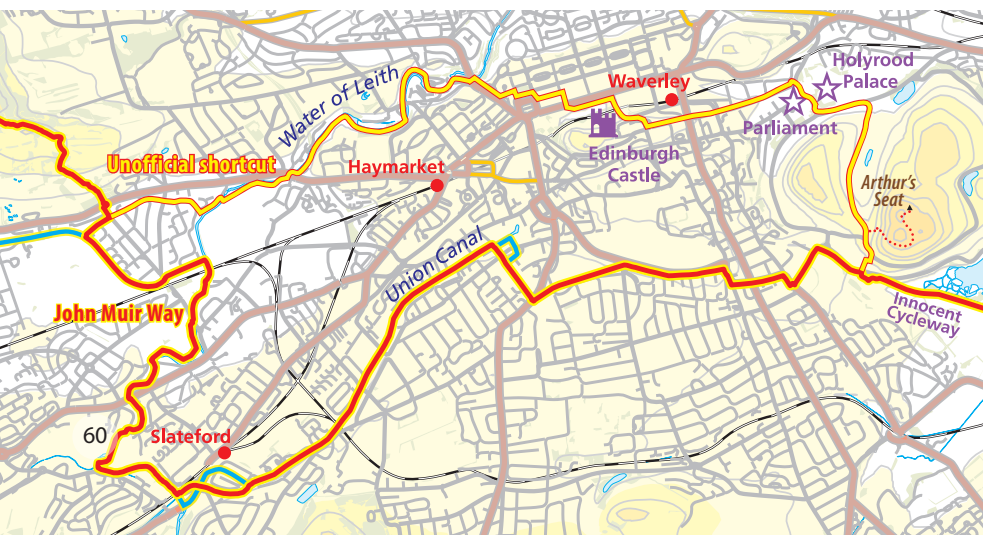




East towards Arthur's Seat from the viewpoint

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 After the tower, backtrack downhill, heading south among trees, then bear left across a grassy area to climb a dozen steps with handrail. Reach the Zoo's tall metal fence and follow a rough path beside it for 500 m to the 'Rest and Be Thankful' viewpoint.
- Descend through a stone gateway to a fingerpost and follow its line south through trees, watching for marker posts. About 200 m south of the viewpoint, the route swings left (south-east) around the corner of the golf course fence, and after 450 m of further descent it exits through gates to the main road at mile 87.
- Detour left to cross the busy A8 at the lights, and continue south-east on Balgreen Road. Within 100 m you reach its intersection with Balgreen Avenue (mile 87.1), where the Way turns right and rejoins the cyclist option along the edge of Carrick Knowe. Read the paragraph below for an alternative route.

The official Way now makes a detour to the south-west including a flight of steps to the Union Canal, bypassing the city centre and its World Heritage Sites. Many readers will follow this route, see pages 61-2. Others may prefer our unofficial shortcut which saves nearly 2 miles, takes in the major sights of the city centre and makes it easier to climb Arthur's Seat. It begins by turning left into Saughton Crescent at mile 87.1. It is described fully under **Bonus content** on www.rucsacs.com/books/jmw and summarised on the map below.



- From Carrick Knowe, continue south past the golf club and pass the tram station. Cross the road at the lights and continue for 330 m to approach Murrayfield Stadium. Just before the bridge over the river, turn right to pick up the Water of Leith Walkway (which is also a cycleway).
- Follow this riverside path through Saughton Park for about 2.8 km to reach the Slateford Aqueduct, built in 1822 to carry the Union Canal over the road and river. For the Water of Leith Visitor Centre (open daily, admission free, café), stay on the walkway.



Refurbished Bandstand, Saughton Park

- To continue the Way, cyclists may prefer to keep ahead, soon turning left along Lanark Road to follow the signed detour around mile 90. Alternatively, the main Way backtracks slightly and climbs 87 steps up to the Union Canal (with ramp for pushing bikes). The Way turns left and follows the towpath north-east, but you may wish first to divert briefly right to enjoy the views from this lofty aqueduct.
- At mile 91.8, the towpath ends at Lochrin Basin. Cross the canal just before it at Leamington Lift Bridge. Walkers go straight up Leamington Terrace, which climbs steadily to meet Bruntsfield Place. Cyclists either dismount (to observe the one-way system) and do likewise, or else take an indirect route through Lower and Upper Gilmore Place to resume Leamington Terrace.
- Cross Bruntsfield Place at the lights and turn left along the tarmac cycleway across Bruntsfield Links, heading straight across Whitehouse Loan.
- At its end, continue along the south side of The Meadows on a tarmac path which gives good views north to the castle and east towards Arthur's Seat. Bus routes run here too, and there is plenty of accommodation on Edinburgh's south side.

Across The Meadows to Edinburgh Castle

