

FAMILY/BEGINNER RIDES

CYCLING ON & OFF THE

Weavers Wheel

by **KEVIN
RIDDEHOUGH**

K. Riddehough

**A series of cycle routes
starting and finishing in
Blackburn with Darwen**

BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN
CONNECT

As I started to put these routes together I didn't realise just how difficult it would prove to be.

It wasn't the actual act of mapping the routes and taking the reader through turn by turn routes, that was the easy part. What has proved to be a really tough task has been deciding which routes to include and harder still, which to leave out!

I've been cycling now for many years and I'm very happy to say that for the majority of those countless thousands of miles I've really enjoyed the riding.

How could I or anybody else fail to enjoy the areas that surround us? In Lancashire we have the enviable position of being spoilt for choice on where to ride on any given day.

Whichever route I choose to ride the one thing that I'm sure of finding in abundance is hills, and lots of them, but don't let this put you off, the rewards for your efforts are the views that could adorn any of the finest calendars that we buy each year. With a little bit of patience and riding at a pace to suit you, there's no reason why you can't begin to enjoy hill climbing as part of your rides.

I couldn't begin to compile a list of my favourite routes without mentioning a huge thanks to a few guys who have ridden regularly with me: Craig (satnav) Rawcliffe, Shutts, Gilly, Dave Southward, Kev Buck & my wife Victoria. The above first mentioned is one of the greatest inspirations to anyone who chooses to ride a bike. His vast knowledge of not only routes but all things cycling has become stuff of legends within our group. To all others mentioned, and sorry for those missed out, it really is a constant source of pleasure riding with you. I also couldn't forgive myself if I wasn't to give a very special thanks and a mention to somebody who's been a great inspiration to me. James Syson of BwD has unrivalled enthusiasm when it comes to encouraging people to take up alternative travel and, for me he's been a constant guide, thanks James.

When we get a new rider join us I often hang back and chat with them trying to find out general information but mainly what they get out of cycling. The answer more often than not is always the same. It's not just about the cycling, it's also and often more importantly about the camaraderie. We've developed our own unique brand of welcoming new riders who join us, and its thanks largely to the above guys and those I've missed out who have created this.

This isn't unique to our group though and, cycling seems to attract and nurture the social side of people.

So, along with my wife Victoria, we've enjoyed over the last several years encouraging new or returning riders. In particular, we try and encourage families to get out and about and ride together as a family. We've enjoyed some fantastic rides with our 10-year-old daughter, Summer. You'd be amazed at just how resilient younger kids can be and often will be still going strong when the adults are beginning to flag a little.

A ten-mile ride is possible for even the youngest riders, all we need to do is make it fun, or better still an exciting adventure. Riding on the road with youngsters is a very real hazard and I wouldn't suggest this to just anyone, but even this with the right amount of care and planning is an achievable goal for you.

In compiling these rides I set myself the challenge that each route should achieve four objectives which I feel could help encourage local people to consider cycling:

- 1 Through routes that are accessible to all levels, I want to encourage as many riders to experience and enjoy the benefits of a simple bike ride.
- 2 By gradually building confidence on the bike I want to give riders the self-belief that they can go that little bit further next time they venture out, and maybe even think of swapping their existing journey plans one day a week to riding to school or work.
- 3 With clever use of local cycle paths and quiet lanes, I want to show riders just what's on offer just a very short distance out of our town centres.
- 4 In completing each section, I want to inspire riders to have a go at the routes in the next section, and in doing so work their way towards the advanced rides.

We are truly blessed in the area we live in. I couldn't think of a nicer way of travelling around on these routes than by bike. In the warmer months, a ride into the countryside is probably the best stress buster I can have. But don't just take my word, have a ride and see for yourself.

Also why not download for free the new and brilliant Cycling App for Blackburn with Darwen and enjoy reading about these rides at any time.



Kevin Riddehough

THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

In February 1894 in Birmingham, a meeting was called by Tom Groom to talk about cycling and how working people could benefit.

That meeting in Birmingham 122 years ago established an early social movement for health and the club they set up was joined by 69 more across the country by 1897. Cycling was a way of getting around from which almost everyone could benefit and “it offered to members of a cycling club the health and freedom of the open road in the company of others of like mind”.

Rolling forward to 2017, it's clear that those cycling clubs embodied the spirit of the five ways to wellbeing, more than 120 years ago, finding ways for working men and women to connect, be active, notice, learn and give. However, we live in a different era and while life expectancy continues to increase, the burden of non-communicable disease continues to grow.

Physical inactivity is a major risk factor for 6% of global mortality, and fourth major risk after high blood pressure (13%), tobacco use (9%) and high blood glucose (6%). Levels are growing and acting as a driver for non-communicable disease including diabetes and cancers, and for other health risk factors including increased blood pressure, blood sugar and obesity. Physical inactivity is the leading cause of the burden of 21-25% of breast and colon cancers; more than a quarter of all diabetes (27%) and almost a third of all ischaemic heart disease (30%).

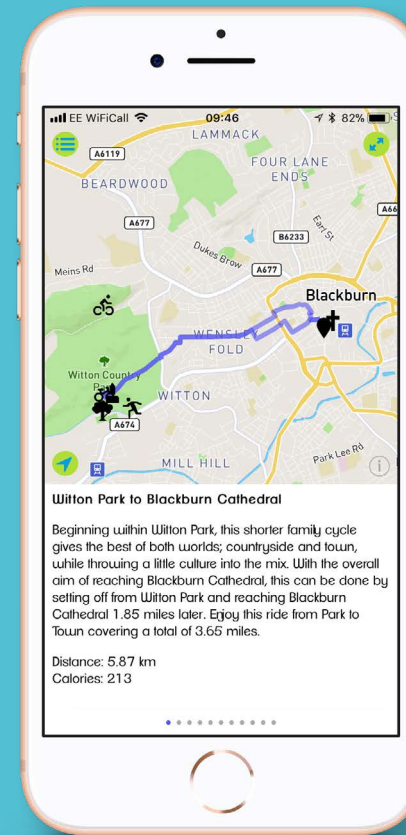
In the UK, physical inactivity plays a major role in the burden of disease and its impact on the Health and Social Care system and the economy, with estimated spending of £1bn on ill health due to physical inactivity. It has been estimated that significant increases in walking and cycling would save £17bn for the health service in England and Wales.

There is strong and consistent evidence that increasing physical activity participation will reduce future risk for all-cause mortality and non-communicable diseases including coronary heart disease and stroke, diabetes, respiratory diseases and cancers, hypertension, colon cancer, breast cancer and depression.

This booklet should provide great inspiration to cyclists and non-cyclists alike to try out some of the wonderful local routes. The Weavers Wheel is a fabulous local resource and these routes which run around it and out from it confirm Blackburn as a great place to cycle however far you want to go. So in the words of the world's greatest ever cyclist “Ride as much or as little, or as long or as short as you feel. But ride” (Eddy Merckx). As Hippocrates acknowledged more than 2,400 years ago the right amount of exercise is part of a safe route to health.

Ken Barnsley, Public Health, BwD

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All our rides are also available on our fantastic **Connect East Lancashire Cycle App**.

The app is **FREE** to download on all Apple and Android phones and can be found on the Apple store or Google Play Store by searching '**Connect East Lancashire Cycle App**'.

Alternatively scan the QR codes below, visit or visit our website:

bwdconnect.org.uk



APPLE APP



ANDROID APP



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DOWNLOAD OUR APP
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FAMILY/BEGINNER RIDES

The rides in this section have been carefully selected to give you the rider, where possible a taste of bike riding but with the *safety* of cycle paths.

We've ridden with numerous younger children over the years and until they find their confidence, a road is no place for the young rider.

Children very quickly learn to adapt and ride safely, but this will need constant **supervision** from you and if you do venture onto the quiet road sections, you'll need to be acutely aware that they will have no concept of how roads and traffic works.

Whenever I've ridden with my daughter, I always ride just behind her and I'm on the constant look out for **traffic**, in front, behind and from the sides.

So my advice after years of riding bikes with younger children is simply this, take it **slowly**, don't expect too much too soon and above all stay safe. If you're in doubt stay off the road until confidence and **road awareness** has built up, we're trying to encourage the **next generation** of cyclists not scare them off. For building road awareness you can use the two excellent **facilities in Corporation Park** and near **Witton Stocks**, here you'll find two cycle tracks that have been designed to give youngsters a **taste of road riding** without the dangers of actually being on road. They're both fully equipped with junctions, right and left turns, mini roundabouts and zebra crossings, **perfect for starting out**.

Ride the routes in this section with care, but ride them often so that you build **confidence in riding together**, and above all, enjoy the rides.

RIDE NO.	RIDES	DISTANCE	PAGE
FAMILY / BEGINNER RIDES			
1	Witton Park to Feniscowles	6km	8
2	Witton Park to Ewood Park	8.5km	10
3	Witton Park to Blackburn Cathedral Quarter	6km	12
4	Royal Blackburn Hospital to Whitebirk via the Arran Trail	13km	14
5	Ewood to Royal Blackburn Hospital	8km	16

RIDE

1

WITTON PARK
TO FENISCOWLES

Suitable for: **ALL ABILITIES** / Mix of cycle paths & some quiet roads



Time to complete: 6km – 40 minutes*

Facilities en-route: Café at Witton Park Pavillion
Toilets at Witton Park

*Approximate times based on an average speed of 6mph

RIDE

1

WITTON PARK TO FENISCOWLES

This is a great little family ride using in the main cycle paths or quiet roads.

Riding through some lovely areas, but never too far away from the starting point, this is a great way to start family cycling.

Start and finish at the cycle centre in Witton Park, the kids can always run off any excess energy at the wonderful Wits play area.

- 1 Starting from the cycle centre at Witton head towards the Athletics stadium and car park at the main entrance. Just prior to the car park barrier take a right onto the track that has the river running on your left. Cross the bridge and go right with the sports fields on your left.
- 2 At the next bridge you will join the Weavers Wheel turning left and crossing the car park with care onto Tower Road.
- 3 Head straight across Tower Road and take the path directly in front of you climbing up to the wooded area, this is quite a steep climb but only a short one. Continue on through the wooded section, beautiful in spring when the bluebells are in bloom, and cross the railway bridge- please take care at this section as this is a popular path used by walkers & riders.
- 4 Leaving Witton Park behind for now we head left onto the Crescent. Follow this all the way round taking the first left turn, (still The Crescent).
- 5 At the T-Junction turn left onto Woodlands Avenue and continue to the main road junction. Here we're making a left then almost immediate right onto Cherry Tree Lane. The safest way to cross this busy road is to walk along the footpath section and then when safe walk your bikes across the main Preston Old Road. Continue along Cherry Tree Lane following Weavers Wheel signposts towards the Leeds & Liverpool canal towpath.

- 6 Turn right on the canal towpath heading towards Feniscowles. Just before bridge 99 we leave the canal through a pinch gate and take the path down to a track that takes us to Park Farm Road - please take care on this descent. There's a steep climb to take us away from this path back up to the road.

- 7 Turn right onto Park Farm Road and then continue before taking your second right, Rosebay Avenue. Follow this all the way round, at the end turn right and then an immediate left onto a short section of road that soon comes to a footpath down to Preston Old Road, same as before the safest way to cross here is to walk your bike across the road.

- 8 Turn right on the main road - if concerned about traffic it's much safer to dismount and use the footpath on the opposite side for the short time we're on this main road.

- 9 Take the first left turn onto Sunnyside Avenue and turn right at the T-junction onto Woodlands Avenue.

- 10 Take the 3rd left turn onto The Crescent before making a left turn around The Crescent. Soon you will make a left turn that will take you back over the bridge and into the wooded area. Take great care on the steep descent as you are leaving the wooded section heading towards Tower Road.

- 11 Cross over Tower Road and go through the car park to the bridge over River Darwen.

- 12 Cross over the bridge and continue on this path past the Wits playground and back to the start point.

RIDE 2 WITTON PARK TO EWOOD PARK

Suitable for: **ALL ABILITIES** / Mix of cycle paths & some quiet roads



Time to complete: 8.5km – 50 minutes*

Facilities en-route: Café at Witton Park Pavillion / Toilets at Witton Park

*Approximate times based on an average speed of 6mph

RIDE 2 WITTON PARK TO EWOOD PARK

Another great little route which takes you through a beautiful wooded section as you leave Witton Park and then out onto the canal for a steady ride down to Ewood and back.

- 1 Starting from the cycle centre at Witton Park head towards the Athletics stadium and main car park near the park entrance. Just prior to the car park barrier take a right onto the track that has the river running on your left. Cross the bridge and go right with the sports fields on your left.
- 2 At the next bridge we join the Weavers Wheel turning left and crossing the car park with care to reach Tower Road.
- 3 Crossing the road take the path directly in front of you climbing up to the wooded area, this is quite a steep climb but only a short one. Continue on through the wooded section and cross the railway bridge, but take care as this is a popular path used by walkers & riders alike.
- 4 Leaving Witton Park behind for now we head left onto the Crescent. Follow this all the way round taking the first left turn, (still The Crescent).
- 5 At the T-Junction turn left onto Woodlands Avenue and continue to the main road junction. Here we're making a left then almost immediate right onto Cherry Tree Lane. The safest way to cross this busy road is to walk along the footpath section and then when safe walk your bikes across the main Preston Old Road. Continue along Cherry Tree Lane following Weavers Wheel signposts towards the canal towpath.
- 6 Turn left onto the canal path following the Weavers Wheel in the direction of Town Centre & Ewood.
- 7 Leave the canal towpath as directed by the Weavers Wheel signage riding past a bowling green on your left side.
- 8 At the end of the path turn right to cycle along the shared off road path following alongside Aquaduct Road until you reach the Empire Theatre. Cross at the safe crossing points and take the bus lane.
- 9 The route back is a reverse of the outward journey until you reach a sign pointing you towards Witton Park on the right. Take this path and cross the bridge over the railway line along Speedwell Street.
- 10 At the end take a slight left turn then immediate right onto a shared cycle path.
- 11 At the bottom of this path you emerge onto Preston Old Road just opposite the main entrance to Witton Park. Cross at the safe crossing and enter the park back to your start point.

RIDE
3WITTON PARK TO BLACKBURN
CATHEDRAL QUARTER

Suitable for: **ALL ABILITIES** / Mix of cycle paths & some quiet roads



Time to complete: 6km – 45 minutes*

Facilities en-route: Café at Witton Park Pavillion / Toilets at Witton Park
Numerous cafés at Blackburn Cathedral Quarter

*Approximate times based on an average speed of 6mph

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RIDE
3

WITTON PARK TO BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL QUARTER

The new Cathedral Quarter and Blackburn town centre have so much to offer.

Why not have a change, leave the car at Witton Park and ride into town taking advantage of this superb family friendly route.

You'll see so much more on your way in and out of the town.

1 From outside the Cycle Centre we head away in the opposite direction of the play parks with the running track on your right using National Cycleway route 6. We begin a little climb up and out of the park with Witton Park High School on our right, as we leave Witton Park we are met with a safe pelican crossing point to take us over Buncer Lane. Cross the road at the pelican crossing onto Higher Witton Road and make your way to the next junction.

2 At this point we are still following National Cycleway route 6. Turn right onto Rolleston Road and shortly after turn left onto St Marks Road. Within 200m you will reach the junction with Wensley Road.

3 Continue along Wensley Road for just under a mile and on our right passing the now defunct gas holder that dominates the skyline. At the end of Wensley Road at the junction with Montague Street, we make a left turn and reach our second major road safe pelican crossing point with Blackburn College facing us across the road.

4 Crossing at the pelican crossing and keeping the main Blackburn College campus on our right, we continue along this path until we reach Northgate with King Georges Hall on the left, and the William Gladstone statue in front of us.

5 Moving away from the statue we head down Northgate with M&S on our left and behind us.

6 At the end of this narrow walkway cycle path, we do a little right onto Lord Street West then onto Corporation Street and then King Street in quick succession.

7 We then make our way down Fleming Square to our destination of Blackburn Cathedral Quarter.

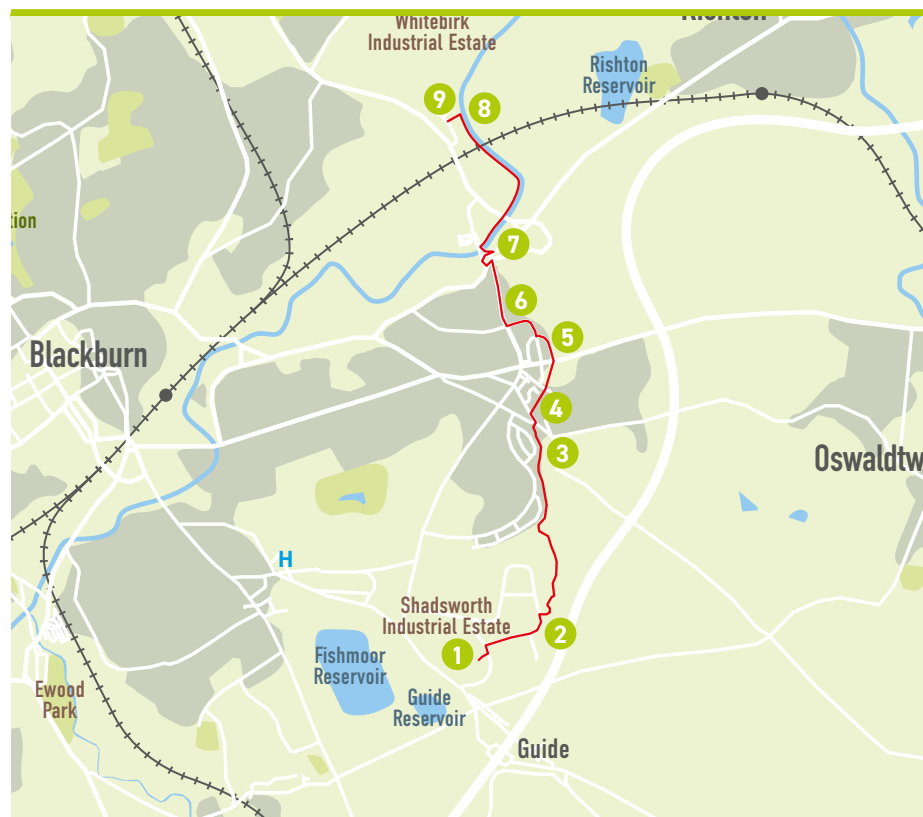
8 Leaving the Cathedral behind us by moving back along Fleming Square. We pick up King Street and follow the contra flow cycle lane down as far as we can go. Here we turn right onto Prince's Street and at the top left onto Fielden Street and down to the traffic lights.

9 Here, using the lights to cross safely we follow a quiet section of Montague Close, across Stoneyhurst Road, and onto Carlinghurst Road.

10 Here we make a right turn onto Sunnyhurst Road. At the top we turn left onto Wensley Road and pick up National Cycleway route 6 to return along the same route we came out on, all the way back to Witton Park.

RIDE
4ROYAL BLACKBURN HOSPITAL
TO WHITEBIRK RETAIL AREAS
VIA THE ARRAN TRAIL

Suitable for: **ALL ABILITIES** / Mix of cycle paths & some quiet roads



Time to complete: 13km – 1hour 10minutes*

Facilities en-route: Café at The Range with Toilets

*Approximate times based on an average speed of 6mph

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RIDE
4

ROYAL BLACKBURN HOSPITAL TO WHITEBIRK RETAIL AREAS

This ride follows a section of The Weavers Wheel that showcases our town at its very best with some great paths and views as we descend from the Shadsworth Business Park down through Knuzden and onto the retail area of Whitebirk.

1 Starting from RBH follow the off road cycle path along Haslingden Road to Lions Drive. Following the signs for the Weavers Wheel take a right turn onto Dutton Way and descend down the slight decline.

The road goes through a left bend and on straightening out we begin passing open fields on our right hand side.

2 The Weavers Wheel is signposted through the Arran Trail leading us off into the fields and down through a superb lightly wooded section.

3 Continue descending this path all the way until you emerge at Knuzden Brook. Cycling through a little playground you will emerge at Haslingden Road. Following Weavers Wheel signage turn left and ride for approx. 200 yards before crossing the road into a wooded off road section.

4 Riding through this picturesque little wooded section with Knuzden Brook babbling away on your right hand side the path soon emerges out onto St Ives Road where with great care you will cross and take another section of an off road path to reach Accrington Road.

5 Cross Accrington Road at the safe crossing point and continue along Peronne Crescent. Turn right onto Maricourt Avenue and continue round to the junction with Whitebirk Road.

6 Turning right make your way down to the main roundabout with the Red Lion pub on your right.

7 Using the official crossing points make your way round the roundabout, taking the path to the right of the second exit (straight ahead). This takes you to the canal towpath which you should continue along until reaching the BMW garage.

8 You can either come off to access the retail park or continue along the canal to reach Hyndburn and routes beyond.

9 Our return route is an exact reverse of our inbound route taking us up through Knuzden and back along the Arran Trail following the Weavers Wheel signage until we reach Haslingden Road.

RIDE
5EWOOD TO ROYAL
BLACKBURN HOSPITAL

Suitable for: **ALL ABILITIES** / Mix of cycle paths & some quiet roads



Time to complete: 1 hour 15 minutes*

Facilities en-route: Café at Royal Blackburn Hospital

*Approximate times based on an average speed of 6mph

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RIDE
5

EWOOD TO ROYAL BLACKBURN HOSPITAL

Starting from the car park behind Ewood Bikes this super little route will leave you breathless with some of the finest views over the West Pennine Moors. Using the Darwen Parkway off road path we're afforded views of Darwen Jubilee Tower and the expansive moors as we head over to Lower Darwen.

You will be amazed that you are only just a few short miles out from town.

1 From the car park behind Ewood Bikes, take the Weavers Wheel route and make your way over one of the high points of the Weavers Wheel. High in more ways than one, at the top of the Darwen Parkway section the views are simply stunning. Take a well-earned breather at the top to stop and admire the views we sometimes miss as we drive by in the car. There are some short, steep sections on this part so take care when ascending or descending.

2 At the end of this section of the Darwen Parkway we come out at a row of terraced houses with Alum House Brook running on your right hand side.

3 We leave the path through a pinch gate and come onto Millbrook Street. At the end of here we turn left onto Fore Street and have a short little section of road riding.

4 Continue over the mini roundabout and pass under the impressive viaduct bridge. As the road bends round to the right there's a car park on your left directly opposite the Hindle Arms pub.

5 Enter the car park and at the far end pick up another section of the Darwen Parkway and Weavers Wheel. This section will take you up a few steep but short climbs to the top of Stopes Brow - a safer more pleasant way of climbing Stopes Brow than the main road.

6 At the top of the climb to your right is St James' Primary School. Turn right onto Newfield Drive and then take a right turn towards Roman Road.

7 Turn left on Roman Road and continue past Beechwood Garden Centre. Follow this road all the way along with Fishmoor Reservoir high on your right hand side until you reach Observatory Road. Turn right and follow through to Old Bank Lane and turn right.

8 The Royal Blackburn hospital complex is now in front of you. Crossing this busy road, you can enter the hospital grounds via a safe crossing point and make your way around to the main A&E department where there are plenty of bike parking spaces available.

9 The return journey is the same until you reach Roman Road. Turn left here and then at the mini roundabout turn right onto Manxman Road.

10 At the bottom of the hill you will see the Manxman Animal Trust Centre on your left. Just after here is a series of paths to take you back to the Darwen Parkway and your start point.



Photo: John Rutherford

BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN
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