

Top to bottom: King's Norton Junction, just south of the route. Harborne Walkway. Cannon Hill Park. Sustrans' Rea Valley Route

Weekender

Brum for beginners

City rides done right avoid cars. **Kieran Yates** describes a 16-mile loop that runs beside some of Birmingham's many waterways

Towpath etiquette

For advice on canal-side cycling, visit cyclinguk.org/canals



KIERAN YATES

New cyclist

Kieran started cycling again with New Roots in March 2020

Britain's second biggest city has a rich industrial heritage: it's been called the first manufacturing town in the world. But these days it's a long way from the smoke-blackened inter-war landscape portrayed in TV's *Peaky Blinders*. Birmingham has more parks than any other city in Europe and more miles of canal than Venice (though fewer gondoliers!). Pick your route and there are great cycle rides to be had.

New Roots CCC is a Cycling UK affiliated community cycle club that leads rides – open to all but primarily beginners – from Edgbaston Reservoir every Friday at 2:30pm. This is one of my favourites. It's mostly flat, with good path surfaces, little interaction with traffic, and some great scenery. For much of the way, you wouldn't know you're riding through the UK's second largest city.

New Roots also has a bike maintenance workshop for bike servicing and refurbishing. Old bikes are upcycled for use by people who wouldn't be able to afford a new one. Unwanted bikes are always welcome. ●



Weekend ride

BRUM FOR BEGINNERS

• Route name: Birmingham waterside ride. • Start/Finish: Edgbaston Reservoir car park. • OS grid ref: SP045867. • Map: OS Explorer 220. • Ride length: 25.7km [16 miles]. • Climbing: 102m. • Bike type: any. • Ride level: beginner. • GPX file: cyclinguk.org/birmingham-weekender



1 EDGBASTON RESERVOIR
Starting by the Tower Ballroom, warm up with a clockwise circuit of the reservoir. It can get busy with walkers so take care. Leave the reservoir behind the Midlands Sailing Club and make for Summerfield Park.

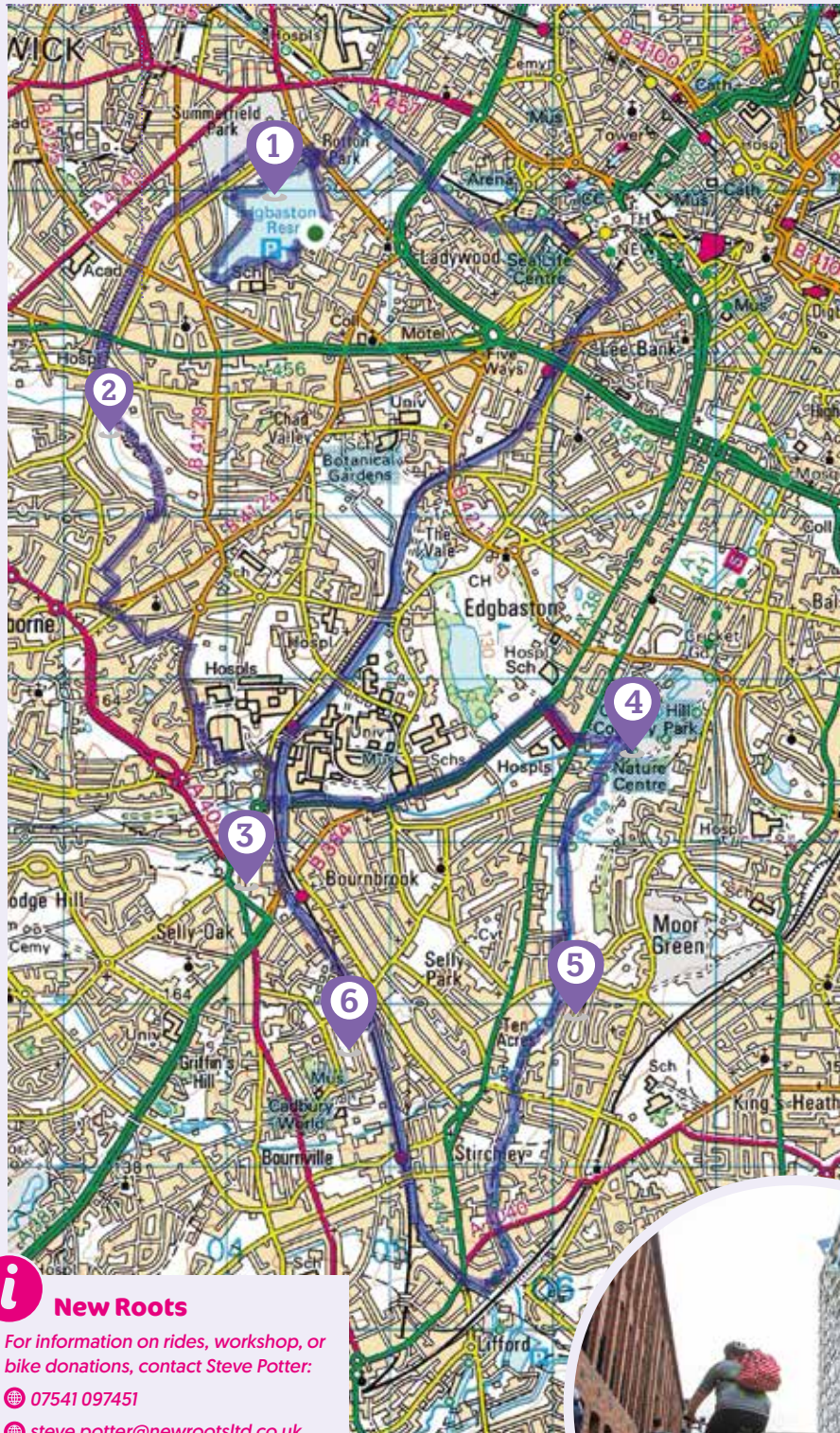
2 The Harborne Walkway
The Harborne Walkway is a beautiful stretch of what was once a railway. It used to see fly-tipping but the local community cleaned it up. It's about 1.5 miles long and is well surfaced, although there's a drop of a few inches at the edges in places.

3 Ariel Aqueduct
After the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, you join a cyclepath near a roundabout. As you go round the corner, you'll see the Ariel Aqueduct, built in 2011. Passing under it, you join an excellent, blue-surfaced cycle route beside the A38.

4 Cannon Hill Country Park
This is a lovely place to have a break. There are boating lakes, bowls, tennis, families having picnics, and so on. Birmingham Wildlife Conservation Park is a small zoo at the edge of the park.

5 Rea Valley Route
Follow the signs onto the Rea Valley cyclepath, a Sustrans route. You could follow the River Rea north into the city centre but our route goes south. You'll cross a few roads but keep on it until you reach the southern end.

6 WORCESTER & BIRMINGHAM CANAL
Turn right on the towpath towards the city centre. You'll pass the Cadbury factory (sometimes you can smell the chocolate) and over the Ariel Aqueduct. Follow the canal all the way into Birmingham centre.

**New Roots**

For information on rides, workshop, or bike donations, contact Steve Potter:

☎ 07541 097451

✉ steve.potter@newrootsltd.co.uk

