



## 01. BAUDELOPARK, GENT

*Our route starts in the centre of Ghent, more specifically in the Baudelopark (Baudelo Park). This park is about 800 m from Korenmarkt, the square in the city centre.*

This park has been restructured in a number of phases, during which two roads with motorised traffic (one even with a bus route) were eliminated. In their place came cycle and pedestrian paths, a lowering of the quay and more green spaces. The paths that make up the cycle route that runs through the area are 4 m wide (sufficient for mixed cycle and pedestrian traffic) and are made of exposed aggregate concrete.



*Photo 1 - Baudelopark*

*From the Baudelopark, we follow the Willem-I quay southwards towards Steendam.*

Since the redevelopment of the Baudelopark, this quay has been a dead-end street for car traffic, designated as a residential area. Cyclists and pedestrians can however pass through, which is indicated by a variation on the familiar traffic sign.



*Photo 2 - Of "through" street sign*

## 02. UNDERPASS ST-JORISBRUG, GHENT

*Just before the crossing point with the Steendam, take the underpass on the left under St-Jorisbrug (St George's Bridge).*

This underpass was opened in 2009. Such underpasses for cyclists and pedestrians are a "speciality" of Ghent. There is a cycle path (with co-use by pedestrians), which is specially constructed along the waterfront under a bridge. Cyclists (and pedestrians) can use it to cross a busy road for motorised traffic at a different level which of course contributes greatly to cycling comfort and safety.

### 03. BAVOBRUG, GHENT

*We continue to cycle along the water, via Nieuwbrugkaai, until we come to Veermanplein. In front of the square is the Bavobrug (Bavo Bridge), which spans the Nederschelde here, just before its confluence with the River Lys (seen on the left in the direction of travel). The bridge is only accessible for pedestrians and cyclists.*

The cables of this bridge, which opened in 2008, are of stainless steel and replace a classic bridge balustrade.

The section of the Nederschelde from this Bavobrug to the current Wijdenaardbrug (Wijdenaard Bridge) (375 m further, on the right in the direction of travel) was filled in in 1960 and turned into a car park.

Around the turn of the century, plans were made to restore the water connection, now that collectors had been installed, which ensured that untreated waste water was no longer discharged into the watercourses as had previously been the case. It is only recently (2018) that this waterway was fully reopened. The quays of this opened waterway are low-traffic areas; with part of them even included in the low-traffic area of the city centre.

*We now cycle over the Bavobrug and then along the Van Eyck swimming pool (Belgium's oldest swimming pool, built in 1886) in the direction of De Vigneplein. We turn left, towards the Slachthuisbrug (Slaughterhouse Bridge), which we leave halfway on the right (after the bridge over the first watercourse) and this brings us to Visserij.*

## 04. VISSERIJ, GHENT

This one-way street is accessible for cyclists in two directions, as for that matter are most of the streets in Ghent. A section of Visserij was the first cycle street in Belgium (opened in 2011). According to the Belgian highway code, in a cycle street, cars are not allowed to overtake cyclists. Cyclists are allowed to use the full width of the carriageway (in one-way streets and in the direction of travel for cars) or the right half of it (in two-way streets).

*We cycle on all the way down Visserij, a distance of just over one kilometre. Halfway along, after about 500 m by the Lousbergbrug (Lousberg Bridge), there is a crossing point with another cycle route. The other cycle route has the right of way here, among other things because there are a couple of bus lines, which will eventually be replaced by a brand new tram line.*

*We cycle further down Visserij until we come to Keizersvest. Just before the sharp turn to the right where the cycle street ends, we use the speed table to take the cycle path on the left along the water, which brings us under the viaduct (of the city ring road R40) into Keizerpark.*



Photo 3 - The speed table on Visserij that leads to the cycle path under the R40

## 05. KEIZERSPARK AND ITS TWO BRIDGES, GHENT

*We first cycle over the large Keizerparkbrug (opened in 2004) with its two distinctive tall pylons. At the foot of the bridge the path splits. To the left, it goes via the small Keizerparkbrug to the borough of Gentbrugge. However, we cycle via the farthest path on the right and use the underpass under Brusselsesteenweg.*

Keizerpark underwent a thorough reconstruction in 2009, making it a modern and popular spot and a hub for cyclists and walkers. Keizerpark is connected by two cycle bridges, both named Keizerparkbrug (Keizerpark Bridge) to Visserij on one side and to the Scheldekaai on the other.



Photo 4 - The large Keizerparkbrug



Photo 5 - The start of the underpass under Brusselsesteenweg

*Exiting the underpass, we go left through a passage over the Franse Vaart and then immediately turn right onto the road with the same name. The water of the Franse Vaart is now on our right and we follow this watercourse. A little further on, we turn to the right - always following the water - onto the Marie Popelinkaai, a path only for cyclists.*



*Photo 6 : Marie Popelinkaai*

*The Marie Popelinkaai crosses the Edward Pynaertkaai a little further on. At the intersection, we cycle straight ahead and use the cycle underpass under the St-Lievenspoort. We now follow the path along the River Scheldt.*

This path runs along the edge of an office complex and is very narrow (too narrow even) in places. However, talks are ongoing with the owners of the adjacent land to release land in order to widen the cycle path.

*When the cycle path finally starts to widen, we find ourselves at the foot of the Louisa D'Havébrug (Louisa D'Havé Bridge).*

## 06. LOUISE D'HAVÉBRUG, GENT

This bridge was opened in 2020. It connects the borough of Ledeborg (on the side where we are now) with the Stropwijk and the city's main railway station Ghent St-Pieters on the other side.

The bridge was given three access ramps, two on the Stropkaai side and one in the park, along the Ledeborg side. This is in line with the expected cycling volumes.

This bridge is an important point in the network because it allows direct passage from one bank of the Scheldt to the other.



*Photo 7 - Louise D'Havébrug*

*We now cycle up the incline to this bridge and at the top we choose to go right and descend to the Stropkaai.*

The Stropkaai is a low-traffic route and cycle street along this bank of the Scheldt. Down to the left, it is closed off to car traffic (by bollards). The path to the left along the water leads us away from the city towards the football stadium (AA Gent's stadium) and the borough of Zwijnaarde. To the right, the route leads to Ghent city centre.

*On the Stropkaai, we follow this quay only very briefly and then we turn left onto Lentestraat.*



*Photo 8 - The start of Lentestraat as cycle street*

The realisation of the Louisa D'Havébrug created a direct connection between the borough of Ledeborg and Ghent St-Pieters station.

Lentestraat is part of this connection and was transformed into a cycle street in 2023 with its distinctive red top layer and the cycle street pictogram at the start of the road. Note that at the next intersection (with Stropstraat) the cycle street has right of way.

*At the next intersection, i.e. the second intersection (Lentestraat meanwhile became Herfststraat), we turn left onto Ottergemsesteenweg, which we follow until the intersection with traffic lights (Burggravenlaan).*

*At this intersection, we continue to cycle straight ahead.*

Note in passing that cyclists are allowed to turn right on a red light here. This is permitted in Ghent if it can be done safely.

The cycle paths and the advance stop lines for bicycles are coloured red. It is often done like this at conflict points.



*Photo 9 - Intersection Ottergemsesteenweg with Burggravenlaan*

*We continue straight ahead and cycle under two railway embankments. At the roundabout we now come to, we continue straight on along Ottergemsesteenweg.*

## 07. START OF BICYCLE HIGHWAYS F7 (GHENT - KORTRIJK VIA DEINZE AND WAREGEM) AND F45 (GHENT - KORTRIJK VIA OUDENAARDE), GHENT

*Directly after the roundabout, we find ourselves at the start of two bicycle highways, the F7 and the F45.*



*Photo 10 - Info sign Bicycle Highways along this part of Ottergemsesteenweg (just after the roundabout)*

Bicycle highways are long-distance cycle routes that as much as possible run along low-traffic streets/roads. Bicycle highways are often found alongside railways, waterways or motorways. These can be true cycle roads (with no or very limited co-use with car traffic), cycle streets, home zones, etc.

The bicycle highways are conspicuously signposted with blue and white signs and pictograms, which we will see very frequently from now on. The bicycle highways are constructed by the Flemish provinces with support from the Flemish Region. The bicycle highways in and around Ghent are realised by the Province of East Flanders.

*We now continue along De Pintelaan, where the bicycle highway consists of a rather narrow cycle path with pavers. In the future, there will be a wider asphalt cycle path here.*

*Past the first traffic lights (with Koekoeklaan/Koolmeesstraat), where we cycle straight ahead, we get a taste of this better cycle path.*

*At the next two intersections with traffic lights (Zwijnaardsesteenweg and Galglaan respectively), we continue straight ahead. After the second intersection, we have to cycle on the cycle path between the trees in the middle of the road (be careful when making the crossing).*

The cycle path between the trees is relatively narrow and somewhat bumpy (due to the pavers). Breaking up the paving and widening the cycle path would probably have a very bad impact on the trees that line this cycle path. Therefore, there are plans to transform the right part of the road (in the current direction of travel) into a cycle street, with co-use only for cars that have a destination in the adjacent buildings. The left part of this road would then be used by the through car traffic (perhaps one-way), while the central reservation could then be greened.



*Photo 11 - Cycle path between the trees on De Pintelaan*

## 08. PARKBOS BRIDGES (ANDRÉ DENYSBRUG AND ZOË BORLUUTBRUG), GHENT

*At the end of the cycle path between the trees, we are steered to the right and must briefly follow the road carriageway again, just before the junction with lights (crossing with Oudenaardsesteenweg). At this busy intersection, we cycle straight ahead (here too, on the other side of Oudenaardsesteenweg, we are permitted to turn right on red). We now follow a rather narrow cycle path and halfway down the road we cross to the left to the incline of the first Parkbos bridge.*



*Photo 12 - The start of the ramp of the André Denysbrug.*

The Parkbos bridges are two cycle and pedestrian bridges in the south of Ghent on the clustered bicycle highway F7 (Ghent-Deinze-Kortrijk) and F45 (Ghent-Oudenaarde-Kortrijk). The two bridges also give cyclists and walkers from Ghent access to the Parkbos. They are located on the former course (before 1913) of the Ghent-Kortrijk railway line, and were opened in June 2018.

The first bridge is the André Denysbrug (André Denys Bridge). The 130-metre-long cycle bridge, named after a former Governor of East Flanders, takes cyclists and walkers over the R4 (Ghent outer ring road) and the Ringvaart canal.

*After this bridge, we continue straight ahead to the next bridge (via a spiral ramp).*

A little further on, a spiral ramp (127 metres in length) takes cyclists to the top of the second bridge, the Zoë Borluutbrug (Zoë Borluut Bridge, named after a local benefactress), which takes us over the busy E40 motorway. On the other side, this bridge has a "normal" incline. The spiral ramp was necessary to fit the bridge in Leebeekstraat.



*Photo 13 - The spiral ramp*

These Parkbos bridges had a total cost of just over 5 million euros and the costs were borne by various parties (mainly the Flemish Region, the Province of East Flanders, the city of Ghent and the municipalities of De Pinte and St-Martens-Latem).

*Beyond the Parkbos bridges, the bicycle highways run through the Parkbos area.*

The Parkbos is not a true nature reserve, but a protected landscape. Surfacing in exposed aggregate concrete would not be granted a permit.

A semi-hard surface of bonded porphyry, which is water-permeable, was therefore chosen. Whether this is the best solution for cyclists, we leave undecided. In any case, in the future, it will supposedly be replaced by a different surface (as from autumn 2024).

*After the Zoë Borluutbrug, at the subsequent T-junction with Ryvisschestraat we have to turn right for a moment and then immediately left through a residential neighbourhood. At the other side of this neighbourhood, there is another semi-hard surface road, which continues straight on for 1 km.*



*Photo 14 - Semi-hard surface road between Ryvisschestraat and Klossestraat.*

## 09. CROSSING KLOSSESTRAAT (MUNICIPAL BORDER GHENT - DE PINTE)

*Further on, this stretch of unpaved road ends at the junction with Klossestraat. This is also the municipal boundary between Ghent and De Pinte.*

The crossing is arranged using a (rather too) narrow central reservation. Fearing noise and vibration nuisance to the nearby houses, the construction of a speed table was not proceeded with.



*Photo 15 - Crossing construction on Klossestraat*

## 10. F7 EN F 45 IN DE PINTE

*After the crossing, we continue straight ahead and, a little further on, the bicycle highway turns into a wide two-way cycle path running along the left of the road. Halfway along, this cycle path turns into a cycle street with mixed car/bicycle traffic.*

Note how this transition between cycle path and cycle street is made safe with a speed table and with right of way for cyclists.



*Photo 16 - Speed table*

*Here the bicycle highway has just about reached the current railway line, which it now follows.*

*We continue to follow the bicycle highway, which has the form of a cycle street here. Further on, it becomes an exclusive cycle and pedestrian path, no longer accessible to motorised traffic. We continue along the railway line and arrive at De Pinte station.*

## 11. DE PINTE RAILWAY STATION

De Pinte is a residential municipality with a well-connected railway station (trains to Kortrijk, Ghent, Brussels and Antwerp among other destinations). A considerable number of train passengers come to the station by bicycle, as evidenced by the extensive cycle parking facilities. Also note the double-deck racks, an increasingly common type of racking at the larger stations in Flanders.



*Photo 17 - The station with a view of the double-decker racks*

## 12. SPLIT F7 AND F45, DE PINTE

*Just past De Pinte station, we come to a splitting of two bicycle highways, namely the F7 (to Deinze) and the F45 (going to Oudenaarde).*



*Photo 18 - The splitting of the two cycle routes*

*We want the F7 towards Deinze and for this we go right and use the railway crossing over the regional railway line to Oudenaarde. A couple of dozen metres further on, we take a left and follow the electrified main line to Kortrijk.*

From this point, the bicycle highway runs parallel to the Ghent-Kortrijk railway line for many kilometres. Sometimes it is a cycle street and sometimes an exclusive cycle path or even a very low-traffic road (with co-use only for cars of people living in the vicinity).

*After a good two and a half kilometres, we arrive at the first level crossing, at Klapstraat in the municipality of St-Martens-Latem.*

Increasingly, cyclists on a bicycle highway have the right of way over the crossing car traffic. Here, however, the cycle route does not have the right of way, the reason being that waiting cars could block the railway track.

### 13. LEVEL CROSSING KLAPSTRAAT, ST-MARTENS-LATEM

*Here, the bicycle highway is briefly routed away from the railway. It was not possible to expropriate the houses close to the railway line.*

*Therefore, the bicycle highway briefly follows a winding rural road, which here has the status of a cycle street.*



*Photo 19 - Bicycle crossing at Klapstraat*

*A few hundred metres further on (we are already on Deinze territory (borough of Astene), we turn right, back towards the railway line. The bicycle highway here uses a road leading to a level crossing (which has been removed). The road was resurfaced and cuts through towards the railway line.*

*From now on, the bicycle highway again follows a path along the railway line, which here bears the name "Prinses Elisabeth Fietslaan".*

After the first level crossing (again no right of way for bicycles for the reason mentioned above), we notice a new residential development on the left in the Deinze borough of Astene. The new homes will be well-connected to the bicycle highway, making them a little over 4 km away by bicycle from the centre of Deinze. Further along the bicycle highway, we also see new residential developments with easy access to the bicycle highway.



*Photo 20 - Access to the bicycle highway from the land development.*

Locally, we even see older houses, which have private access to the bicycle highway from the back garden.

## 14. KARMSTRAAT CYCLE TUNNEL (IGNACE VAN PRAETTUNNEL), DEINZE

*About 800m further on, we come to Karmstraat.*

There used to be a level crossing here, but it was recently removed. In its place, there is now a pedestrian and bicycle tunnel, which we see on the left in our direction of travel. This tunnel is quite wide, with a kind of advisory zone for pedestrians, in addition to two lanes for cyclists (one for each direction). This tunnel gives the residential areas on the other side of the railway line easy access to the bicycle highway despite the disappearance of the level crossing.



*Photo 21 - Karmstraat tunnel*

*We continue to follow the bicycle highway along the railway line and after 3 level crossings, the bicycle highway uses an existing path (paved in concrete) along the railway line that leads to a sports field and a cemetery.*

*Further along, you cannot fail to notice that the railway line is gradually being elevated on a raised track bed.*

*At the next intersection with Gampelaeredreef, the bicycle highway does have right of way: due to the raised bed of the railway, there is no longer a level crossing here.*



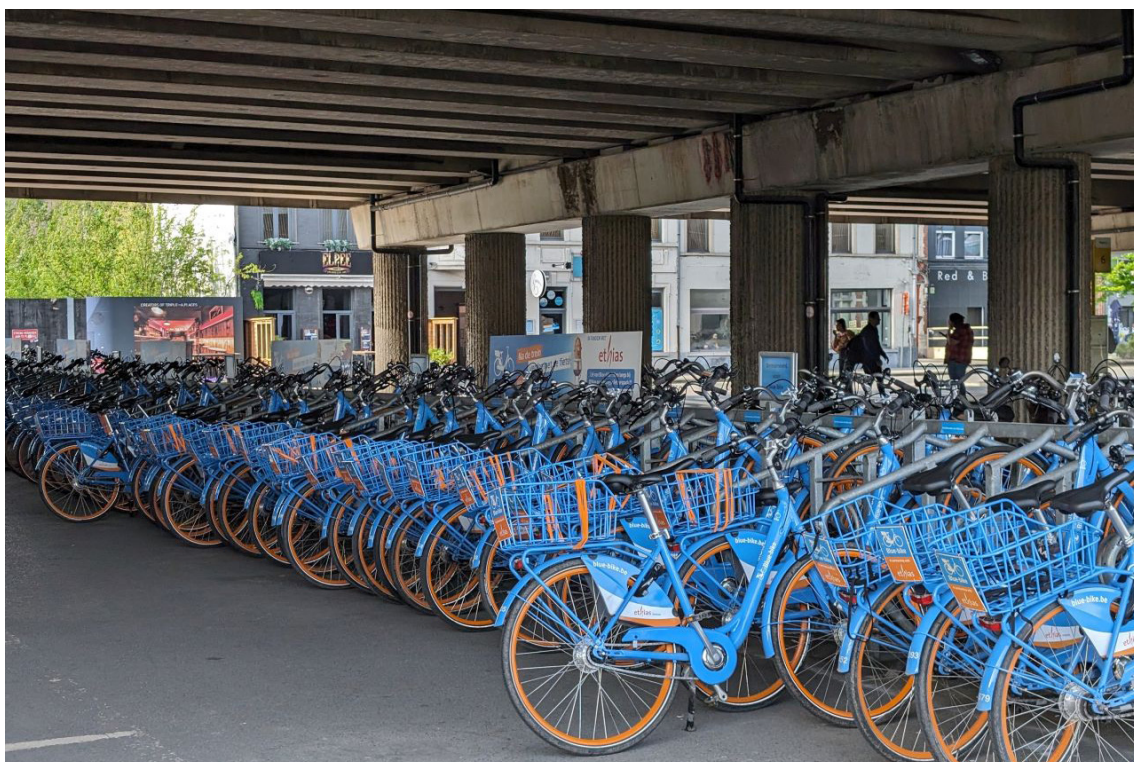
*Photo 22 - Cyclists with right of way at the intersection with Gampelaeredreef*

*We continue to follow the F7 until we reach Deinze railway station.*

## 15. DEINZE RAILWAY STATION

*About a kilometre further on, we arrive at Deinze railway station.*

The station itself is at level +1, leaving plenty of space under the railway track. The space may appear somewhat inhospitable, but there is ample room for a bus station and cycle parking. We cycle straight on and just before the crossing with Gaversesteenweg, we see a bike parking area with blue bicycles, the so-called "Blue Bikes". This is a "back to one" cycle renting system found at major railway stations. Membership costs 12 euros per year which, at more than 100 locations, entitles you to rent a bike for 24h for at most 3.50 euros. Thanks to an intervention by the city of Deinze, Blue bikes are even free here (for members of the system).



*Photo 23 - Deinze station with the Blue Bikes*

Deinze was voted the best cycling city in Flanders in 2015, 2018 and 2020 (in the category of municipalities with between 20,000 and 50,000 inhabitants). The management opted to focus on a number of bridges and tunnels for cyclists, some of which we are going to take a look at.

*We now cross the busy Gaversesteenweg and continue to follow the F7 towards Kortrijk.*

## 16. JACQUES ROGGEBRUG, DEINZE

*The F7 now climbs along the railway embankment to about the level of the railway line. We now reach the Jacques Roggebrug (Jacques Rogge Bridge).*

Located on the bicycle highway between Kortrijk and Ghent, the bridge is named after the former president of the International Olympic Committee. Jacques Rogge was also an honorary citizen of Deinze. He died there in 2021 at the age of 79. The bridge has a width of six metres and spans half a kilometre. It crosses over a number of roads, including the very busy N35, a trunk road with 2x2 lanes that can now be crossed without danger.



*Photo 24 - Jacques Roggebrug*

As well as the large cycle bridge (Jacques Roggebrug) over the busy N35 trunk road (with 2x2 lanes), two access ramps were also built, by Velostraat on the east side of the trunk road and by Sint-Hubertstraat on the west side. In total, this means that the bridge has a length of 600 m.

## 17. FIETS- EN VOETGANGERSTUNNEL TONNESTRAAT (ADRIATUNNEL), DEINZE

*We cycle over the Jacques Roggebrug until we are again back at ground level. At this spot, we turn left and then immediately right again, into the tunnel under the railway line.*

This tunnel is also a replacement for a level crossing.



*Photo 25 - Cycle and pedestrian tunnel Tonnestraat*

*Coming out of the tunnel, we turn immediately left onto the road "De Tonne", part of an industrial zone. We cycle along Tonnestraat until we reach a T-junction, where we turn right and cycle further until we reach the intersection with the busy N43 trunk road.*

*We cross this trunk road and follow it to the left.*

There are a great many trunk roads like this in Flanders. On these, the cycling infrastructure is very rudimentary and consists of a ground-level, narrow adjacent cycle path. Such infrastructure offers little protection against fast-moving car traffic and is therefore often criticised; some even talk about "suicide lanes".

Fortunately, more and more of these roads are being redesigned with separated cycle lanes, as prescribed in the "Cycling Provisions Handbook" of the Flemish Region. In the centre of Deinze, this trunk road has already been redesigned with separated cycle lanes.

*A little further on at the traffic lights, we turn right into Molenstraat.*

*We follow Molenstraat for a good 300 m and then turn into the first road on the right, Machelenbinnenweg, which has a cycle path.*

*We follow this road which, 600 m further on, goes into a tunnel under the railway line. After this little tunnel, we take the second road on the right. Then at the next crossroads (with speed table), we take the road to the left (only accessible for cyclists and pedestrians). This road brings us to the towpath along the River Lys.*

*Via the towpath (only accessible for cyclists and pedestrians), cyclists can cycle safely to the centre of Deinze. It means that they no longer need to cross the busy N35 ring road. The towpath runs under that ring road.*



*Photo 26 - Connecting road towards the towpath.*

## 18. TOWPATH ALONG THE RIVER LYS, DEINZE

*We now follow the towpath along the Lys, which first passes under the bridge with the N35 ring road. A little further we come to a new bridge, the Brielpoortbrug (Brielpoort bridge).*

## 19. BRIELPOORTBRUG, DEINZE

The new Brielpoortbrug over the Lys in the centre of Deinze is an important realisation in the removal of barriers for pedestrians and cyclists in Deinze. The Brielpoortbrug is also an important link in the urban renewal project "Living by the Lys II", within which the site of the former city gasworks is being redeveloped. The bridge forms a soft connection between the car park of the Brielmeersen recreation domain and the centre of Deinze, whereas previously the Lys still separated the two. The car park can therefore play a full role as a peripheral parking place for the city centre. Thanks to this car park, a number of parking spaces in Tolpoortstraat - Deinze's main shopping street - could be reassigned.



*Photo 27 - Brielpoortbrug*

Brielpoortbrug (Brielpoort Bridge) is 38 m in length and 4 m wide. It is a mechanical swing bridge with a gradient of 4.5%. The gradient has been kept to a minimum to make it attractive for pedestrians and cyclists. Vessels with a height of up to 3.2 m can pass under the bridge without the need to have it raised; for larger vessels, the bridge needs to be raised.

Ultimately, Flemish Waterway was responsible for the realisation of the Brielpoortbrug and the city of Deinze was responsible for most of the funding.

*We now cross this Brielpoortbrug and turn immediately right onto Lucien Matthysstraat, which is designated as a cycle street. At the next intersection, we turn right and a little further on, at a new intersection, we turn left onto Markt.*

## 20. MARKT DEINZE

This very elongated market square was redesigned about a decade ago with much more space for recreational activities.



Photo 28 - Markt Deinze

*We cycle to the end of Markt where we come to the roundabout. Here, we take the second exit. After about 50 metres, just beyond the point where the bridge incline merges with our street, cyclists are asked to cross over to the two-way cycle path along the Schipdonkkanaal (Schipdonk canal). After crossing, we turn right and follow this cycle path northwards.*

## 21. SCHIPDONKKANAAL, DEINZE

*From here, we now follow the Schipdonkkanaal.*

This canal runs from Deinze (as a diversion channel for the River Lys) to Zeebrugge where it flows into the North Sea. From Deinze, we first follow a two-way cycle path along the canal for about two kilometres. On the right side of the canal, there is a road connecting to an industrial area. But further on, the car use of the road stops and cyclists can use the entire width of the towpath. From here on, there is only shared use with adjacent landowners and permit holders.

*We are now going to follow this canal for about 10 kilometres along the very low-traffic towpath that is often lined by trees.*

*The bridges over this canal are always elevated ones (so there is no need for movable bridges), which also means that, as cyclists, we are not confronted with crossing car traffic and can therefore cycle on happily.*

The towpaths along canals and rivers are very popular places for recreational cyclists in Flanders. They are therefore part of a signposted network for recreational cycle traffic set up by the provinces. The network has been signposted with numbered nodes.

## 22. EMERGENCY BRIDGE OVER SCHIPDONKKANAAL, NEVELE

*Near the villages of Vosselare (right in direction of travel) and Nevele (left in direction of travel), on the other side of the canal we come across a temporary emergency bridge for pedestrians and cyclists.*

The old cycle and pedestrian bridge over the canal is being replaced. After extensive investigation, the waterway authority decided to renovate the bridge completely. As an alternative, a temporary emergency bridge was constructed with stairs and cycle grooves. This allows cyclists to still cross the canal, albeit not as comfortably with heavy electric bikes. The new bridge is expected to be ready in the summer of 2025.

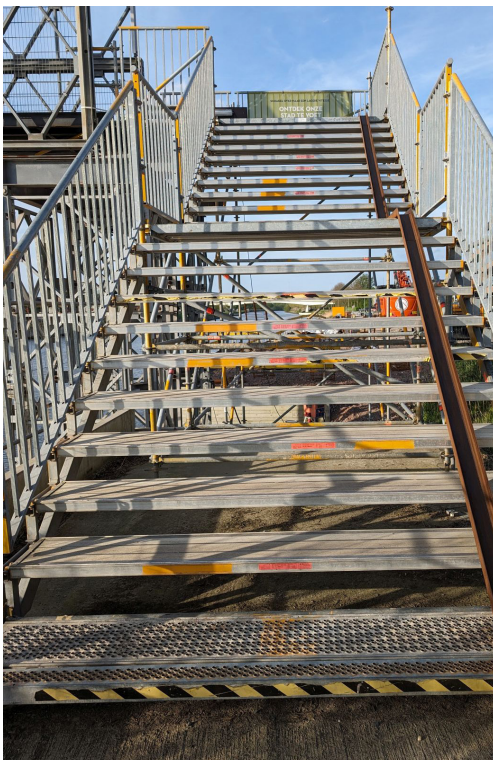


Photo 29 - Emergency bridge for cyclists

## 23. INTERSECTION OF SCHIPDONKKANAAL WITH THE BRUGES-GHENT CANAL

*We continue to follow the towpath and, after several more bridges, we arrive at the intersection of the Schipdonkkanaal with the Bruges-Ghent canal. Here we take the towpath along the latter and head back towards Ghent. We just have to follow the towpath, which turns to the right just after the Schipdonkbrug (Schipdonk Bridge) at the crossing of the canals and changes into the towpath along the Ghent-Bruges canal towards Ghent.*

Along this part of the Ghent-Bruges canal, too, the bridges have been built at level +1, so that we cyclists can continue cycling undisturbed under these bridges. We follow this towpath for about six kilometres.

*Approaching Ghent, the towpath turns to the right. This brings us to the junction of the Ghent-Bruges Canal with the Ringvaart canal around Ghent.*

The Ringvaart canal in Ghent (opened in 1969) is a canal with a length of 21.6 km that describes a semi-arc around the city of Ghent and that connects all the watercourses running through the city. It means that the shipping traffic no longer needs to pass right through the city.

## 24. SPEYBRUG

*We follow the towpath until we come to the remarkable Speybrug (Spey Bridge).*



*Photo 30 - Speybrug*

*We cycle under this bridge and then immediately take a U-turn and cycle up the incline to the Speybrug itself. At the top, we take a right and cycle over this bridge over the Ghent Ringvaart Canal.*

The bridge itself was built in the 1960s, a time when cyclists were thought to be a dying breed. This is reflected in the infrastructure: the bridge certainly does not have enough space to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians. Therefore, ochre-coloured bicycle advisory lanes were chosen on the bridge here. There is however a cycle path in the descent from the bridge.

*We follow this cycle path, which transitions further up into an adjacent cycle path (in the other direction, the cycle path is separated). We now cycle under the Brugsevaartbrug and once again cycle parallel with the Ghent-Bruges canal.*

## 25. LIEVEGEM-GHENT MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY

*Further up, Trekweg along the canal becomes a one-way street for cars; cyclists are permitted in both directions. And 200 metres further on, we come to the municipal border between Lievegem and Ghent. From Ghent, Trekweg is designated as a cycle street.*



*Photo 31 - Start of cycle street*

*We continue cycling along Trekweg next to the water, towards Ghent. After about 800m, we come to the Mariakerkebrug (Mariakerke Bridge), which passes high over the canal and Trekweg.*

From this bridge, there used to be a relatively narrow cycle path along the waterfront in the direction of Ghent. During the COVID period, cyclists were directed to the roadway and the cycle path was reserved for pedestrians. Subsequently, this arrangement was retained on a permanent basis, albeit with the roadway now clearly designated as a cycle street with a red coating and a grey central separator. Moreover, the traffic circulation was changed so that only local car traffic can use this cycle street.



*Photo 32 - Willemotlaan as cycle street*

## 26. WESTERRINGSPoorBRUG, GHENT

*Almost a kilometre and a half further on, we arrive at the Westerringspoorbrug (West Ring Railway Bridge), commonly referred to as the “little blue bridge” because of its colour.*



*Photo 33 - Little blue bridge over the Ghent-Bruges-Ostend canal*

Here, two urban cycle routes intersect. One is the East-West cycle route that we have been following so far, which leads to the city centre, and the other, the Westerringspoorroute, which is a tangential connection (and therefore not directed to the city centre) runs between a number of Ghent's boroughs and St-Pieters station, Ghent's main railway station and, as the F400 (small ring route around Ghent), is part of the network of bicycle highways.

Previously (before COVID), car traffic was allowed here, which led to accidents with cyclists. Since the roadway was converted into a cycle street, car traffic was closed off at this point by bollards, which also made this route low-traffic.

*We turn right at this point and now follow the Westerringspoorroute (West Ring Railway Route). This cycle route is often embedded in greenery and passes a number of green areas and parks. Some caution is therefore advised with regard to other users of these parks.*

*We first traverse Fluweelpark (Fluweel Park) and halfway through this park, the cycle route intersects it. We then continue along our path that runs parallel to Fluweelstraat, which is designated as a residential area. We then cross the busy Brugsesteenweg (no right of way) and continue straight ahead.*

*We enter Malpertuuspark (Malpertuus Park) and further on we cycle along the edge of the Bourgoyen-Ossemeersen nature reserve, one of the green lungs of the city of Ghent.*

## 27. HOOSMOLEN AND BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER LYS

*We cycle for a good kilometre along the edge of this nature reserve in pleasant green surroundings. After a while, we come to the Hoosmolen, a remnant of a former mill.*

*We take the cycle and pedestrian bridge over an arm of the River Lys and then turn immediately left and follow the towpath along the river.*

*A little further on, we come to the underpass under the very busy Drongensesteenweg.*

## 28. DRONGENSESTEENWEG UNDERPASS

Drongensesteenweg is one of the city's most important roads, because it connects the R40 (inner ring road) with the R4 (outer ring road), and also connects to the E40 motorway.



*Photo 34 - Underpass Drongensesteenweg*

The underpass here is particularly comfortable. In the middle of the underpass, a light shaft is provided between the two directions of traffic on Drongensesteenweg to bring in more natural light. The underpass was opened in the summer of 2021 at a cost of 2.65 million euros (paid for by the city of Ghent, the province, the Flemish Region and Europe (ERDF)).

*On the other side of the underpass, there are branches-off leading to the nearby residential areas.*

*We continue to follow the cycle path along the Lys until we reach the next cycle bridge over the Lys, the red Alice Béviairebrug (Alice Béviaire bridge).*

29. ALICE BÉVIAIREBRUG, GHENT

*This simple red bridge spans the Lys and connects the Westerringspoorroute (which we leave here by cycling left over this bridge) with the garden district of Eiland Malem.*



*Photo 35 - Alice Béviairebrug*

*We take the bridge here and continue cycling straight ahead through this homogeneous district.*

*(an optional deviation: instead of crossing the Alice Béviairebrug, those who wish to do so can follow the towpath straight ahead along the Lys. A good 300 m further on, the towpath "collides" with the Watersportbaan (a waterway used for rowing races), which formed a barrier for pedestrians and cyclists. But work on a new cycle and pedestrian bridge is now finished. This brand-new bridge (the Annie Vande Wielebrug (Annie Vande Wiele Bridge)) provides a connection to Ghent St-Pieters station.)*

*After a few hundred metres - just before the R40 city ring road - we can take the renovated underpass (opened in July 2023) under that city ring road (the Ekkergerbrug underpass).*

## 30. ONDERDOORGANG EKKERGEMBRUG, GENT

The bicycle and pedestrian underpass at this location is not new. There used to be an underpass, but it was in need of repair and this was used as an opportunity to make the new underpass safer and easier to access. The sharp bend on the Leiekaai side and the steep inclines of the past are now definitely a thing of the past. The city of Ghent funded it in full (about 900,000 euros).



Photo 36 - Ekkergembrug underpass

*We now continue on the other side of the underpass along the Leiekaai. We follow the street that runs along the River Lys. After a few hundred metres, the road makes a sharp turn to the left. However, we cycle straight on, onto the grounds of a social housing complex. The cycle route runs through here, but is not yet properly implemented; an improvement project is in the pipeline.*

*On the other side of this housing complex, the cycle route comes out on the incline of a bridge over the River Lys to a park. We cycle straight ahead (not taking the bridge to the park) and immediately afterwards turn right, descending again to the road that runs alongside the Lys. We follow this all the way to the point where the Lys changes to become the Coupure watercourse.*

*Here we take a right, but take care to take the cycle underpass on the left under the Contributiebrug (Contribution bridge).*

## 31. UNDERPASS CONTRIBUTIEBRUG

This underpass opened in spring 2022. Previously, the heavy cycle traffic had to cross the busy Contributiestraat at the traffic lights. These have now been removed and cyclists can cycle unhindered under Contributiestraat. The cost of the underpass itself was €2,752,855.16 (incl. VAT), €2,408,387.50 of this was a subsidy from the Cycle Fund (Flemish Region + Province); the rest was paid by the city of Ghent, which has also invested heavily in the development of the area around this underpass.



*Photo 37 - Underpass Contributiebrug*

*After the underpass, we continue along a cycle street (Coupure Links). Again, we note that there was a cycle path between the trees and the Coupure, which has been converted into a footpath. The route we are now following is the busiest cycle route in the city of Ghent.*

In 2023, 2,917,993 cyclists passed along it here. On a daily basis, more than 10,000 cyclists regularly pass along here; the absolute record was set on Tuesday 10 October 2023 with 16,016 cyclists. These volumes could no longer be handled comfortably on the narrow cycle path, which could not be widened for a number of reasons (preservation of greenery, protected townscape).

In 2018, there was a drastic change when the narrow cycle path on Coupure Links was officially designated as a footpath. Cyclists moved to the carriageway and even became the main user there as the road became an official cycle street. With this, motorised traffic (here local one-way traffic) is no longer allowed to overtake cyclists. In 2017, with the Ghent Circulation Plan, measures had already been taken to reduce the motorised traffic. Cyclists are now the main users of this axis; through car traffic has been referred to the parallel urban ring road R40.

The cycle streets were also given right of way over side streets at the remaining intersections. Where there are very busy side streets, there are underpasses.

## 32. ONDERDOORGANG ROZEMARIJNBRUG

*After the underpass that we just passed, there is a new underpass a few hundred metres further along that dips under the Rozemarijnbrug (Rosemary Bridge).*

Once again, this allows cyclists to avoid a busy thoroughfare, which furthermore has two tram lines. This underpass is constructed of exposed aggregate concrete. It was opened in the summer of 2016. The cycle underpass was constructed with the help of subsidies from the Cycle Fund with the Province and the Flemish Region each contributing 40% of the cost. The remaining 20% has been financed by the City of Ghent for a total amount of over 1,270,000 euros.



*Photo 38 - Underpass Rozemarijnbrug*

### 33. SINT-AGNETEBRUG

*We continue to follow the Coupure Links and come eventually to two bridges, which are located shortly after each other. First there is the modern Hospitaalbrug (Hospital bridge) which is closely followed by the St-Agnetebrug (St-Agnes Bridge) drawbridge.*

The latter is virtually car-free. The area around this bridge is a small pedestrian area. We are now at the crossing point of two important cycle routes, namely the East-West route that takes you up the incline here towards the university district and a cycle route along the Lys between St-Pieters Station and the city centre. Before the 2017 circulation plan, there was heavy car traffic here, but now the through car traffic has been diverted onto the city ring road.

*We turn left here to cross St-Agnetebrug.*



*Photo 39 - St-Agnetebrug with pedestrian area around it*

In the past, a number of cyclists fell on the then wooden and often slippery bridge deck. It was therefore decided to give the bridge a non-slip surface. A waterproof layer of epoxy resin was applied directly to the crossbeams. Granules were sown into this layer, giving the bicycle tyres more grip on the bridge deck and helping cyclists to adjust their speed. This removed slip hazards for cyclists riding downhill from Blandijnberg via Verlorenkost onto the Sint-Agnetebrug towards the centre of Ghent.

## 34. AXIS OF HOORNSTRAAT-VOLDERSTRAAT, GHENT

*After the St-Agnetebrug, we continue straight ahead along the road that runs alongside the Leie and which is designated as a cycle street (Lindenlei and Recolletenlei). At the next bridge (with tram lines), the low-traffic area in the centre of Ghent begins. We continue straight on into the Ajuinlei, a cycle street in this low-traffic area. At the next bridge, Predikherenbrug (Preachers Bridge), we turn right and now follow the East-West route through the city centre.*

The East-West route actually runs from the borough of Mariakerke through the city centre to Dampoort and the borough of St-Amandsberg.

The cycle route does not have its own cycle lane here, but a number of measures have been taken so that cyclists have as much right of way as possible here and that there is as little car traffic as possible:

- Bollards by the Korte Meer prevent through car traffic on this cycle route
- Sometimes the cycle route has right of way over side streets (this is not the case where the cycle route crosses a tram line)
- Part of the route is designated as a cycle street.

This cycling route has right of way over the side streets at some intersections, but not in the streets up to Gouvernementstraat (the sixth street on the left).

## 35. NEDERSCHELDE, GENT

*We then turn left into Gouvernementstraat (sixth street on the left from the Predikherenbrug). At the next junction, we continue straight ahead and then turn right past St Bavo's Cathedral and so onto Bisdomplein, near the recently reopened Nederschelde.*

*Here we have another view of the reopened Nederschelde (opened in 2018); we see the part to the left of the wide bridge. See also the description of the reopened Nederschelde under point 3.*

*We turn left and follow the cobbled road on the left side of the waterway.*

## 36. BAUDOLOPARK, GENT

*At the intersection with St-Jacobnieuwstraat, we cycle straight across the renovated Oude Beestenmarkt. After this market, we follow Nieuwbrugkaai and come again to the Bavobrug, which we also passed at the beginning of our cycling tour. We cycle left along the water once more using the underpass under the St-Jorisbrug, arriving at the Baudelopark, the start of our cycling tour.*

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