Notes

Edinburgh has a particularly long and illustrious history; so it is not surprising that many features of historical or architectural interest are encountered along the circumnavigation route. A selection of these includes:- the oldest site of human habitation in Scotland (10,500 BP) – a classic Mesolithic hunter-gatherer homestead; the mediaeval bridge (ca 1488) of Cramond Brig where King James V was set upon by gypsies; a 15th century Kirk Tower (Oliver Cromwell's soldiers made off with the Kirk bell in 1651, but "*after much solicitation"* later arranged for its return); Newhaven Harbour where King James IV's huge warship the *Great Michael* was built between 1507 and 1511 (this 300 cannon monster far outsized its puny contemporary, the *Mary Rose*; Bonnyrigg village, whose name does not, as might at first be imagined, mean "*beautiful place*" but "*bony ridge*" as, following the battle of Pinkie (1547), the countryside hereabouts was strewn with dead bodies, their bones being unearthed for many years to come; the late 18th century cottage at Swanston, where Robert Louis Stevenson spent many summers, and which became the setting for several of his novels and poems; the now-landscaped tips and coal yards of Bilston Glen (this super-pit sunk in 1952 became one of the National Coal Board's most successful developments but was abandoned in 1989 following the miners' strikes when Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister); the Royal Yacht Britannia (keel laid 1952), now permanently at anchor at Ocean Terminal; the Saltire Award tenements and town houses at Newhaven (1957), which innovatively combine modern and Scottish vernacular and confirmed Basil Spence as a key figure in post-war architecture; and finally the still (2012) unfinished Edinburgh tram-track.

Also along the walk many geological and topographical features make their presence felt. Indeed the Edinburgh district is one of the classic areas for geology, with its world-famous rock outcrops, spectacular landforms and unique historical association with the development of geology through the seminal work of James Hutton, internationally recognised as the '*Father of Modern Geology*'. Scotland is also famous the world over for its lochs. These too featured on the walk. Much of the low ground around Edinburgh occupies the sites of extinct prehistoric lochs, formed at the

close of the Ice Age. Several of these now dry, prehistoric lake-beds were traversed on the walk, particularly in the vicinity of Gogar.

The bedrock of Edinburgh, and its hinterland, largely derives from events that took place during three geological periods (the Silurian, Devonian and Carboniferous). Immediately before this time-period Scotland was involved in a collision of super-continents. It rammed into England, thereby forming a massive mountain chain, not dissimilar to the Alpine-Himalayan Chain of today. In the Devonian a vast, semi-arid, rift valley cut through the mountain chain. In essence the remains of one of these rift-valley faults forms the steep slope that is climbed, on the walk, near Boghall. Inexorably, during the succeeding Carboniferous period, a huge delta, fed by muddy rivers eroding the ruins of the mountain chain, infilled the tectonically subsiding rift. In combination with an encroaching, warm, shallow sea, the riverine sediment influx generated a sediment sequence many kilometres thick in an ever-hanging environment. This ranged from terrestrial semi-desert through lacustrine, lagoon, tropical swamp-forest, estuary, shallow marine to coral reef. These amazingly varied sediments are seen at many locations on the walk, for example on the coast at Granton (fish beds) and Portobello (coals); and in the banks of the rivers Esk, Almond and Water of Leith (deltaic cycles). The most recent bedrocks encountered on the walk were laid down in the steamy, equatorial forests of the Upper Carboniferous to form the Coal Measures. The easternmost sections of the circumnavigation walk wend their way through coal-mining areas that probably date back to a Charter of 1189. Here the route makes good use of footpaths following the tracks of old, disused railways and tramways which formerly fanned out to service the coal mines. One final feature of geological interest used by the walk is the double raised beach, dating from post-Glacial times. It forms the curvilinear grassy bank that parallels the promenade along much of Edinburgh's coastline and is especially well displayed at Silverknowes.