

Edinburgh circumnavigation route description

Disclaimer. *Note: The information given on this website has been provided in good faith, it is intended only as a general guide. You are advised to verify the accuracy of information before relying on it. It is the responsibility of individuals to approach outdoor activities such as walking in urban areas with caution.*

Leg 1 Ocean Terminal to Whitecraig Village

Begin the walk at the small, secluded promontory of West Pier, with its lovely view of Western Harbour, The Royal Yacht Britannia and a Gormley statue. West Pier is quickly reached by heading north, from the Main Entrance of Ocean Terminal, and then turning left past Debenhams. The aim over the next 9 km is to follow the coast to Musselburgh, while avoiding busy roads and streets. Our route takes us south-eastwards, passing to the north of Victoria Dock. Bear right at the dock end along Rennie's Isle. Cut left through housing to cross the Swing Bridge and pass to the south of the Albert and Edinburgh Docks. On reaching the Casino, turn right up Constitution Street. Cross the busy junction with great care. Continue inland south, passing Khublai Khan's, to Leith Links. Proceed eastwards along its northern border. Rise diagonally, to the left, onto the raised cycle-path, which is then followed for 1 km to Seafield Street. Having used the cycle path to avoid the busy Leith streets we now negotiate our way back towards the coast. Cross Seafield Road at the lights. Go slightly left to get across the railway at the level-crossing and so enter Marine Esplanade. Turn right immediately in front of the Sewage Works. Follow the path all the way to Portobello Promenade. Continue along the Promenade to Joppa. Walk along the seaward side of the main Musselburgh Road. Cut left onto the sands when possible, and on to Fisherrow Harbour. Continue eastwards along the Promenade and the seaward side of the Links. Turn sharp right up the true left bank of the River Esk. Cross to Eskside on the right bank. Go under the main Musselburgh Bridge. Continue upriver. Go over Olivebank Road at the roundabout, and walk onwards alongside the river, past the old Mills, towards Stoneybank. Continue along this riverside path all the way to Cowpits Road. Continue south. On reaching the main road, turn sharp left into Whitecraig Village.

Leg 2 Whitecraig Village to Bilston

Head southeast across the village green. After a hundred yards, cross Whitecraig Gardens and bear slightly more to the south along Deantown Drive. Soon turn left, passing the bowling green now on your right. Go behind housing and under the old railway at a narrow underpass before rising right onto it. This is the first of seven sections of old railway and tramways used by this 2nd leg of the circumnavigation. Follow the path (on a 200° bearing) for 3 km all the way to the outskirts of Dalkeith. On reaching the B6414 turn right along the pavement. At the next set of pedestrian lights cross and go 90° right passing a recreation area. Cut left at The Salter's Inn, and then right, so proceeding along Salter's and Gibson Drive through a small housing area. Exit right, dropping slightly down steps and grass to cross the road-bridge over the South Esk. Immediately head up through the small nursery area, exit left to climb to Allan Terrace, still on the 200° bearing. Turn right and then left into Gibraltar Terrace, and then Road, and so head towards Lidl. At Lidl's turn right onto the main Newmills Road, cross at the pedestrian lights into the central Dalkeith square. Leave Dalkeith along Eskbank Road passing Kings Park on your left. Cross to the northwest side of Eskbank Road to gain the cyclepath (the 2nd of our old railtracks) at the Water Tower. Follow the path as it forks (old railway #3) left beneath Eskbank. Carry onwards, through old railway cuttings, to Hardengreen. When the path divides turn acutely to the right heading towards Tesco's. Take care here, on reaching small warehouses you need to find the path leading off to the left, heading towards the pedestrian bridge. This dead-straight, old railway (#4) is followed for a long stretch (over 3 km) past Bonnyrigg and onwards all the way to the outskirts of Polton. At Cockpen Road just cross and continue onwards. Look out for lamp post number 33. At this exact point leave the old railway, cut right through garages into a housing estate. Turn left into Cockpen Crescent. Follow it as it swings right, to diverge left through a small snicket onto the main Rosewell Road. Turn left; soon cross where the road narrows and head off on a bearing of 280° along the left-hand edge of the recreation ground. Fields lie to our left, housing estates to our right. Merge with Cameron Crescent to crest a small rise with excellent views of the Pentlands and the route ahead. Clearly visible are the radiomasts and woodland of the Boghall to Hillend section of Leg 3. Continue down, still at 280°, turning left, a few paces

beyond the Lothian Bus route terminus, along the marked footpath at the field edge. When the field ends turn right and cross directly over the Rosewell Road onto a driveway. Following this drive, bear slightly right down the Cast, an overgrown path (also know as Notlop – Polton backwards!) to Springfield Mill (old railway sidings, #5). Walk through the old mill grounds (now a nature reserve) to exit and cross the minor road-bridge to the left bank of the River North Esk. We leave this narrow road immediately by turning-in left into woods to climb steep steps. Cross a magnificent little arête - the River North Esk is below on your left, Bilston Burn on your right. Head westwards and upwards. Keep going, finally turning right, at the top, to gain the Lasswade viaduct (Railway, #6). Cross the viaduct to the left bank of Bilston Burn. Turn immediately left. Head due west through extensive old railway marshalling yards (7th and last of the old railway branch-lines) and levelled coal tips for about $\frac{3}{4}$ km. Bear slightly left at a rise. Wiggle back right, following the footpath signs. Eventually drop down left, in trees, to re-cross Bilston Burn and continue westward. Exit the woods by passing to the left of the tree-house village of the Bilston bypass protesters. Recross the Burn on a substantial stone structure to pop out of the woods at the Bilston VW Garage.

Leg 3 Bilston to Colinton

Take the street at the left-hand side of the VW Garage into Bilston. Turn left along Myrtle Crescent. Follow this wiggling right and then left along Park Avenue to emerge onto Seafield Road. Turn left, and immediately cross to the abandoned lane. Follow it to the left to emerge on the busy Seafield Road. Turn right and head towards the Pentlands. Stay on the footpath on the right-hand side of the road, facing the traffic, for some 250 m. Cross into a roadway where a footpath (Cow Lane) goes off to the right. This quiet path winds its tranquil way to emerge at Boghall on the A702. Cross to the far footpath, turning left to come upon the entrance to Boghall on your right. A path leads directly uphill at first, but then turns left, right and left again to traverse out by farm buildings. Here rather than turning up the track, a nice variant is to cross over the track and instead head past a pond to a small bridge. Go over, up steps and up the right bank of the Boghall Burn Ravine in pleasant woods – an ideal, sheltered coffee-spot. Soon drop down more steps to re-cross the burn, climbing up to rejoin the track. Turn left. Our medium-term target, in this Pentlands section of the

Leg, is the Green Craig Water Cistern above Dreghorn. There are numerous possible routes to it. Our route only climbs a modest amount, and is moderately direct, but primarily has been chosen for its expansive views across the whole of Edinburgh. At a cottage we go right into a field. Turn immediately left uphill. Pass through to a higher field. Aim uphill towards the radiomasts. Pass between the masts. On reaching a stile no more height needs to be gained. Cross the stile and begin a long traverse towards Hillend. Follow along on the top side of the wood. Once over the subsequent stile turn sharp left, on a narrow footpath, steeply up-hill to pass to the left of an old Iron-Age settlement. Having crested the rise, cross left over the next stile. At this point do not start to climb Caerketton Hill, instead traverse right alongside the fence at the top of the Hillend ski-area. Continue the traverse above the 'T'-wood. The path drops, passing a signpost. Here do not climb up the slope, nor shortly after this, cut down towards Swanston, but instead continue traversing on the same general direction as before (eastward) along the northern edge of the Pentlands. A rough path takes you (north-eastward) alongside the bottom edge of an old wall. The path gently rises and falls, as it becomes a wider track. Try to spot our lunch place - five lonely trees on a small escarpment well ahead. After a few 100 m the main track veers right downhill. Here we go slightly left to ascend a gentle gully (due east) to come out at our lunch-spot trees. The magnificently broad view across the whole of Edinburgh from this little-frequented shelf is well worth the climb. After lunch it is important to head due north for 50m on a narrow sheep-path through gorse in order to climb a stile over a barbed-wire fence. Once safely over turn left alongside the fence. Where the fence swings up to the left we carry on along our traverse, beneath Allermuir Hill, across a couple of streamlets to find a sheep-trod which slopes gently down, and around the convex hill-slope, to come out at the Howden Burn by the Green Craig Water Cistern. Cross to the cistern and take the broad track that heads north into the woods. Pass through gates and down through the woods. On emerging at a large field bear diagonally left (north-west), on a dog walkers' path, to reach the electricity pylons and the Braid Burn. Leave the field and proceed beside the burn beneath the by-pass. Continue slightly east of north alongside the burn and down an old polo-field edge to reach the road at the entrance to Dreghorn Woods. Turn left over a bridge into Dreghorn Loan which is followed to bring you out at the Colinton traffic lights.

Leg 4 Colinton to Cramond Brig

This leg through eastern Edinburgh, despite having to cross three railway lines, three major A-roads, two shopping malls, one canal and one business park, is remarkably quiet for long stretches. Begin by heading south-west up Woodhall Road. Soon on the right, after houses and at the top of steps, take the level path, in trees, high above the Water of Leith. After this emerges turn right, and right again, down the steep West Mills Road. Continue westward passing mill re-developments to a pedestrian bridge across the river. Go under the old railway underpass, and turn left upstream. Continue for 1.5 km, under the noisy by-pass and past more mill re-developments. Just after passing beneath the electricity power-line go under, and then left up steps onto, the Blinkbonny Bridge. From now on our route, by and large, progresses to the north-north-east. Climb Blinkbonny Road up to the busy A70. Go slightly right and cross very carefully to take Muir Wood Road. Follow as the road swings left, and then cross to the Wilderness Wood footpath. Take this, negotiate the unmanned level-crossing, and continue on the minor road between fields. On reaching Riccarton Mains Road cross, go slightly right and then left into the grounds of Heriot-Watt University. Bear right almost immediately through car parks and alongside Murray Burn. Steer a north-westerly course between research buildings to Hermiston Walk. At the north end of the Walk pass the entrance Lodge to cross the A71 at a pedestrian island. Turn left for 50 m then 90° right passing old terraced cottages on a quiet, minor road. On reaching the Union Canal join the towpath on the northern bank and follow it eastwards, re-cross the busy by-pass using the aqueduct. Where the canal swings south we take a rough footpath which diverges off to the left to join Cultins Road. Turn left along the broad, grassy border. Pass the Business Park to find a narrow alley that takes us into Hermiston Gait Retail Park. Turn right along the footway through the Retail Park to Edinburgh Park Railway Station. Go straight across the road/tram-track, enter the station, and go up either the stairs or lift to cross the line. Descend and continue on, on a generally north-north easterly course. After 500 m turn 90° left onto a narrow path. This leads between buildings to re-cross the tramline and reach a pleasant water feature at Edinburgh Business Park. Turn right along the water's edge, tracing it northwards for around 500 m. At an appropriate point cross back over the tram-tracks and proceed to the large roundabout on South Gyle Broadway. A convenient underpass leads us underneath. Strike up half-left and so arrive at the Gyle Shopping

Centre. Skirt the Centre on its left. Take the footpath which rises behind up to the busy Glasgow Road. We are heading out towards the old airport along Turnhouse Road. However here, by far the best plan is to walk in towards central Edinburgh along the Glasgow Road, passing the nightmarish Maybury roundabout until a pelican crossing is reached. Cross, go back to the Maybury roundabout. Negotiate it using its various pedestrian crossings, and then proceed along the pavement of Turnhouse Road facing the traffic. A 1 km stretch brings us to Meadowfield Road. Turn 45° right up this quiet minor road. Go right at the top. After 150 m find a way into the road leading to the Braehead dump/quarry. Immediately before the quarry entrance a narrow lane diverges off left. Follow this alongside the Turnhouse Golf Course, through a damp patch, and along a field edge to enter the Cammo Estate through a back entrance. Keep on north-north-eastward through woods, for 500+ m, to emerge at the Cammo road. Various paths converge at this point. We want to go sharp right here to follow a dog-walkers' path down through the field, heading for the clump of trees at the far left-hand corner. Get over the broken-down fence to find a partially concealed snicket, between houses, which leads to the River Almond. We keep to the riverside path all the way to Cramond Brig.

Leg 5 Cramond Brig to Ocean Terminal

Continue downstream, on the right bank for 1.5 km. Bear right up School Brae. At the top, turn left along Whitehouse Road. Do not go down Cramond Glebe Road. Instead carry on a few dozen paces past the road junction, to find a path leading off to the left. Head down, towards the coast, through an old walled garden, visit the Kirkyard and Roman Fort. Carry on down an indistinct footpath to the site of a Mesolithic hunter-gatherer homestead, and then down to Cramond village. Turn right and promenade towards Granton. When the promenade splits, after 2 km, bear right and take the West Shore Road leading up towards the old gasworks. On the shoulder of the bend, enter the park to your left. Walk through on the landward side of the gasholder, passing water features to emerge at Waterfront Broadway. Continue eastwards along Waterfront Ave towards Granton, passing the main entrance to the fine Royston House. Our route continues eastward, sloping gradually down on a more northerly bearing to W. Harbour Road. Cross directly over and proceed north along Chestnut Street. Turn right along Hesperus Crossway. Go left on reaching Heron Place, and

then right around the back of flats, and so reach Granton Harbour with its pleasant views across to Western Harbour, our penultimate destination. Walk south along the quayside and Lochinvar Drive to Granton Square. Continuing in the same general southerly direction, cross this busy roundabout and find a quiet road (not steps) heading up Granton Crescent. The tranquil streets of Granton View and Lufra Bank rise gradually and lead us eastwards to Granton Road. Cross with care, using a pedestrian island to the right, to walk along the leafy Boswall and Primrose Bank Roads. At their end turn left down Trinity Road. Go right after the lights, past Starbank Park, noting the award-winning Basil Spence Flats in Laverockbank Terrace, to enter Newhaven. Cross over to the Harbour, walk past the Fish Market Hall and round to gain the long, gracefully-curving Western Breakwater that takes you along this man-made peninsula, past futuristic tower-block apartments, to the Old Lighthouse. Turn right and continue around the outside of the Western Harbour peninsula, with views across to our final destination of Ocean Terminal. Return inland along Western Harbour's eastern edge. Cut across any still-to-be-redeveloped open spaces to arrive at Asda. A route past the Flour Mill Entrance leads us back to our starting point of Ocean Terminal.