

Edinburgh Geological Society – Excursions 2026



Excursion title:	Calton Hill from the bottom-up
Date & start time:	Wednesday, 29 th April 2026 at 19:00
Finish time:	21:00
Leader(s), organisation:	Dr Al McGowan, Edinburgh Geological Society

Excursion summary:	<p>Calton Hill is part of the wider landscape that has been left by the deposition and erosion of a suite of volcanic and volcanoclastic rocks deposited by igneous activity during the Early Carboniferous.</p> <p>To better understand the igneous activity, the excursion will trace the geological units from the lowest tufts and lavas that form the cliffs of Calton Craigs up through the alternating sequence of lavas and tufts. Another aim of the excursion is to compare the sequence of rocks exposed on Calton Hill with those in Holyrood Park.</p> <p>Some of the lavas are well-exposed and allow more detailed study of the characteristics that allow the different types of Carboniferous lavas to be differentiated in the field. After crossing the summit area, the final locality to be visited exposes an intrusive dyke on the descent to Greenside.</p>
Meeting point:	<p>Foot of steps at Calton Road exit from Waverley Station.</p> <p>Parking available in the station car park or on the street.</p> <p>NGR: NT259739</p> <p>W3W: modest.handy.pile</p> <p>Postcode: EH8 8DL</p>
Transport details:	Plenty of public transport available via bus or trains.
Outline of the excursion route:	<p>From Calton Road Bridge along the Calton Road.</p> <p>Steps up to Regent Road.</p> <p>Ascend Calton Hill via the road off the roundabout opposite St Andrew's House.</p> <p>Follow Regent Walk to west then ascend to viewpoint with interpretive boards.</p> <p>Move northwards to trig point then descend paths to Greenside entrance to Hill.</p>
Terrain, walking distance, height gain:	Walking on pavements, stone steps, paths and areas with short grass. Distance around 2 km with 60 m of elevation gain.
Excursion Grade	<p>A - Easy field trips participants should be used to walking 1 mile (1.6 km), on good coastal paths and beaches of sand and pebbles.</p> <p>Note these grades are not an extensive list of difficulty so please read the full excursion form or inform the excursion secretary if you have any questions or concerns.</p>
Additional Hazards not included in the EGS Excursion Handbook:	none
Control measures required	none

to mitigate against any Hazards referred to above:	
Hard hats or Hi-viz clothing needed?	no
May dogs be brought on the excursion?	yes
Toilet information:	Toilets in Waverley Station main concourse at start
Geological map sheet:	SO32 Landranger 64 Explorer 350
References:	Lothian Geology - an Excursion Guide (Edinburgh Geological Society): https://earthwise.bgs.ac.uk/index.php/Arthur%27s_Seat,_Calton_Hill,_Edinburgh_-_an_excursion Discovering Edinburgh's Volcano. A geological guide to Holyrood Park (EGS): https://edinburghgeolsoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/discovering-edinburghs-volcano.pdf Calton Hill Leaflet https://edinburghgeolsoc.org/downloads/rigsleaflet_caltonhilla4.pdf Geology of the Neighbourhood of Edinburgh [https://webapps.bgs.ac.uk/memoirs/docs/B01944.html . Search on document for Calton Hill and there is a useful table of the thickness of units in the succession]

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Excursion grade key

A grade field trips participants should be able to walk 1 mile (1.6 km), on good coastal paths and beaches of sand and pebbles.

B grade field trips all participants should have good balance and be fit enough to walk up to 3 miles (4.8 km), sometimes on uneven ground (such as rocky shores).

C grade field trips all participants should have very good balance & be fit enough to walk up to 4 miles (6.5 km), sometimes on more uneven ground than for B grade (such as rocky shores with small boulders), on steeper slopes, & for light scrambles.