

The occupations of those buried in the Kirkyard tell us about life in the Canongate.

13. Before 1851 Canongate was a separate burgh from Edinburgh. Originally the **mercāt cross** stood in the middle of the street, but in 1737 it was moved to beside the Canongate Tolbooth and then into the Churchyard in 1953. The Mercat Cross denotes the right for the Burgh to hold its own markets. Unusually, Canongate craftsmen were also initially allowed to trade in Edinburgh, a privilege that often brought tensions to neighbourly relations.

14. **James Weddell** was a confectioner – someone who made and sold sweets. Although his shop was in Hanover Street, in the New Town, as we will see later, one of his key ingredients, sugar, was refined here in the Canongate.

15. **Robert Campbell** was a smith and ferrier (the old spelling of "farrier" – a person who made and fitted horseshoes and looked after horse's hooves).

His stone bears the tools of his trade a hammer and pliers, as well as a crown to indicate he was part of the Hammermen Incorporation. This incorporation was a fraternity that regulated the practice of all types of metal working in the Burgh.

16. **George Chalmers**, left a bequest to found a "new infirmary or sick and hurt hospital" on Lauriston Place. Yet as a plumber he also helped to improve health within the City. Edinburgh was expanding rapidly and there was a need to improve water supply and sanitation. With the absence of fresh running water and toilets, outbreaks of Typhus and Cholera were both commonplace and deadly.

17. **James Gilbert** was a brewer in the North Back of Canongate – the old name for Calton Road. There were many breweries in the Canongate in the 18th and 19th centuries. This was partly because beer was safer to drink at this time than the water which was available!

18. Bread formed a staple part of the diet of the poor during the 18th and 19th centuries. Bakers like **Thomas Thompson** were important to an area like Canongate where many people lived in poverty. Thompson's mother-in-law's surname is Baxter, which is the old Scottish word for baker.

19. Several members of the **Coachdrivers Society** are buried near this stone. The drivers operated the Edinburgh to London route from White Horse Close at the foot of the Canongate. In 1754, it took coaches 10 days in summer and 12 in winter to make this journey of about 400 miles.

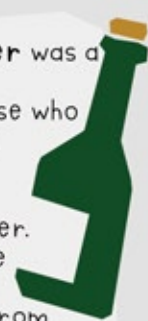
20. **James Hunter** was a vintner or a wine merchant. For those who could afford them, wines offered another safe alternative to water. Unlike locally-made beer, wine was usually imported from France.

21. **Alexander Miller**, Glazier, was probably active when work on the New Town started in 1765. The New Town houses, with their many large windows, would have provided lots of work for glaziers.

22. **Alexander Ramsey** who died in 1764, was a slater, which is the old spelling of a roof slater.



ROAD



OLD TOLLBOOTH



CANONGATE

Make the stories of those buried in the Kirkyard come alive by following in their footsteps and exploring the Canongate.

23. The buildings on either side of **Bakehouse Close** date from the 16th and 17th centuries. These are some of the oldest surviving buildings in the Canongate and give a sense of how the Burgh would have looked before the major rebuilding programmes of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Bakehouse Close is entered through a "pend" (or archway) and was where bakers worked - which explains the "Bakehouse" part of the name. "Close" is a narrow passage running between buildings, which were often gated and closed at night.

Other terms particular to old Scottish towns include "land" - a building of several stories divided into separate flats (confusingly called "houses") and "wynd", which was a narrow open thoroughfare leading up or downhill between high buildings to link streets at different levels.

24. Every Scottish burgh possessed a tollbooth, acting as courthouse, prison, meeting place and the means of collecting tolls from travellers entering the burgh. Today **Canongate Tollbooth** houses the People's Story Museum that explores the lives of ordinary people at work and play from the late 18th century to modern times.

25. In the 18th century, British colonies in the West Indies were major producers of sugar. Leith became a base for both sugar imports and refining. A house for baking sugars was set up at Leith in 1751 and a year later another was established here in **Sugarhouse Close**.

26. This tenement's cartouche is dated 1677. It was moved from an earlier building here known as "**Bible Land**", which was built by the Incorporation of Cordiners or shoemakers. This stone bears their arms, which includes the curved blade used to cut leather.

27. A second plaque also bears the arms of the cordiners, and is inscribed "**Blessed is he that wisely doth the poor man's case consider**". Several other buildings on Canongate are inscribed with mottos and religious texts - most famously Huntly House - just opposite Canongate Kirkyard - known as the "speaking house".

28. George Chalmers, whose gravestone is in the Kirkyard, lived and worked near here and the 1829 Directory lists him residing at Weirs Close, 208 Canongate.

29. Coopers made barrels. Canongate's many breweries would have needed a constant supply of these for their beer. So **Cooper's Close** would have been a good place for coopers to set up in business. The last brewery to operate in Canongate stood very close to here, on the site now occupied by the Scottish Parliament.

30. **White Horse Close** takes its name from an inn which used to stand at its north end. In its day this was one of the best known coaching inns in Edinburgh and journeys to London would start from its courtyard. The close was also once home to William Dick who founded the Royal School of Veterinary Studies in 1823.

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- Check it out: From Canongate Kirkyard (1) to:
- > New Calton Burial Ground (2) - 1 mile: 0.3811 kg of CO₂
 - > Old Calton Burial Ground (3) - 0.7 miles: 0.2156 kg of CO₂
 - > Greyfriars Kirkyard (4) - 0.8 miles: 0.2464 kg of CO₂
 - > St Cuthbert's Kirkyard (5) - 1.3 miles: 0.4005 kg of CO₂



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THE FRIENDS OF THE
CANONGATE KIRKYARD

Burgh and Burials Trail

II TRADES

