

Old Calton Burial Ground has a distinctive landscape. Inside its high walls, rows of burial enclosures line up to create a miniature city of the dead. Seen from afar the obelisk of the Martyrs' Monument and David Hume's mausoleum make their mark on Edinburgh's skyline.

1718

The Incorporated Trades of Calton was granted land by Lord Balmerino to establish Old Calton Burial Ground.

1776

Philosopher David Hume was buried at Old Calton. Hume enjoyed **fame throughout Europe for his ideas about history and philosophy**. Hume was an atheist. His views on religion were very unpopular, so after he died his grave had to be **placed under guard**.

1777

Completion of David Hume's tomb, **designed by architect Robert Adam**. In his will, Hume requested his tomb bore only a simple inscription and not cost too much to build ('no more than £100'). His relatives didn't follow these instructions very closely and built an **elegant mausoleum** (a building to house the dead).



1816

During the construction of Waterloo Place, Old Calton was cut in two and an 'orphan' section was left across the north side of the road.

1817

New Calton burial ground was built. Among the first graves in New Calton were the burials disturbed by the building of Waterloo Place.

1844

Construction of the Political Martyrs monument, which immortalised Thomas Muir, Thomas Fyshe Palmer, William Skirving, Maurice Margarot and Joseph Gerrald and their struggle for parliamentary reform. In the late 18th century, only male property-owners could vote and ballots weren't secret. Rich landowners could (and did) influence elections. The authorities were alarmed by the reformers' campaign and put a stop to it. In 1794, all five men were tried and convicted of conspiring with Revolutionary France. **They were sentenced to 14 years transportation to Australia.** Thomas Hamilton, who designed the obelisk, is buried in nearby in the Old Calton Burial Ground. A second monument just like this one was put up in London's Nunhead Cemetery.

1856

The Barony of Calton became part of Edinburgh and the Council took on the management of the burial ground.

1893

The **memorial to the Scottish-American soldiers who served in the Union army during the Civil War** was unveiled by Edinburgh's American Consul. Known as '**The Emancipation**', the handsome monument depicts the figure of a slave reaching up to President Abraham Lincoln and is the only Civil War monument outside the USA. This reminder of the ties between Scotland and the USA was sparked by the actions of **Mrs McEwan**, whose husband John was killed fighting for the Union Army. She petitioned Edinburgh's US Consul, Mr Bruce, for a widow's pension. First his wife, **Mrs Bruce**, took up her cause, and then the Consul himself.

1863

Old Calton was so severely overcrowded that Edinburgh's Medical Officer called for its immediate closure.

1865

The ground was closed to new interments.

Appetite whetted? Why not visit some of the other World Heritage Site graveyards?

Go green and do this on foot instead of taking the car, and you could save some CO2 emissions, too!

Check it out: From Old Calton Burial Ground (3) to:

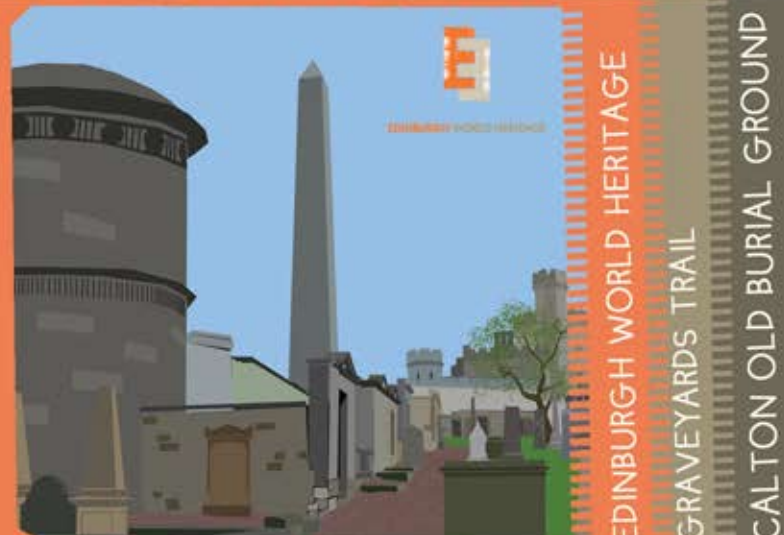
- > To Canongate (1) – 0.5 miles: 0.19 kg CO2
- > To New Calton (2) – 0.3 miles: 0.11 kg CO2
- > To Greyfriars (4) – 0.8 miles: 0.25 kg CO2
- > To St Cuthbert's (5) – 1 mile: 0.31 kg CO2



With thanks to project volunteers Anna, Angela, David, Elisabeth, Jiyeon, Stephen and Val.



Scan the code to find out more about the Edinburgh World Heritage Graveyards Project!



EDINBURGH WORLD HERITAGE

GRAVEYARDS TRAIL

CALTON OLD BURIAL GROUND



Old Calton is unusual because it was established by the Incorporated Trades of Calton. At this time it was more usual for the dead to be buried in their local parish churchyard. Incorporations were bodies that set rules to ensure the work of their members was of good quality and earned a fair price. Any type of worker could join the Calton Incorporation, unlike most other places where there were separate groups for different trades. Looking at the gravestone carvings and inscriptions opens a window onto the long lost working life of the Barony of Calton.

Metalworkers

Builders

The **Hammermen** included all crafts that used a hammer on metal, notably blacksmiths but also goldsmiths, jewellers and watchmakers.

A large wall monument **3** and two nearby headstones **1** **2** all commemorate hammermen working in the 18th century. Their emblem was a **crown and hammer**, as seen at the top of their stones.

The profession of **Captain John Gray** **9** is shown by a **ship and anchor**. On the back of his gravestone is a pair of **compasses and a set-square**, the trade symbols for Thomas Gray, 'wright'. A wright was a carpenter, someone who built in wood. It is possible that Thomas built ships.



When blacksmith **George Reoch** **4** died in 1840 the old symbols were no longer being used. However, look closely and you'll see that the stones are shaped like metal panels with 'screws' carved into them. This is a clever design tailor-made for a family of blacksmiths.

The compass and set square also symbolize the craft of builders, who worked in stone. You can see an example of these symbols on the stone of **William Lunn**, **10** a builder.

Shoemakers

The traditional symbol of shoemakers is the cordiners' knife, a crescent-shaped tool for cutting leather (cordiner is another word for shoemaker). The crown shows that **James Forsyth** **5** was a member of the Trades Incorporation. A different kind of crown appears on the gravestone of **shoemaker Adam Brown** **6**. Here it is worn by a winged soul (the spirit of a dead person). People believed that after death your soul would fly up to Heaven, so this is a **symbol of immortality**. These emblems are very different to the skulls, bones, grave-digging tools and empty hourglasses that symbolise death (see for example stones **3** **5** **9**).

The inscription on the **Morton family's** striking mural monument **7** records several generations of shoemakers. **Margaret Couotts** was herself the daughter of a heelmaker, showing how trades often stayed within the same families.

Usually sons followed fathers in the same job. However one shoemaker's son, **David Roberts**, **8** became a famous artist in London instead. He put up this headstone to his parents in **memory of a loving family home**. The story goes that his parents encouraged him to practice his art on his mother's whitewashed walls with burnt match ends.



- Also keep an eye out for:
- A** David Hume's Monument
 - B** Martyrs' Monument
 - C** The 'Emancipation', memorial to the Scottish American Soldiers who served in the Civil War

Publishers

Edinburgh is a UNESCO City of Literature. For centuries people have earned their living by writing, publishing and selling books. Two of its most successful publishers are buried here: **Andrew Constable** **11** who published Sir Walter Scott's novels, and **William Blackwood**, **12** creator of the famous literary review 'Blackwood's Magazine'.

In the 19th century it was less common to use gravestone symbols to depict the occupation of the deceased but the **lyre** on the stone of bookseller **John Roberts** **13** is perhaps intended to show his ties to the arts.

An extraordinary figure in Edinburgh's publishing history is **Peter Williamson** or 'Indian Peter'. **Kidnapped as a child** in Aberdeen, after a spell as a white slave in North America, Peter was captured firstly by Native Americans and later by the French army. Eventually freed, Peter published Edinburgh's **first street directory** and established the city's first postal service. His grave in Old Calton is **unmarked**.