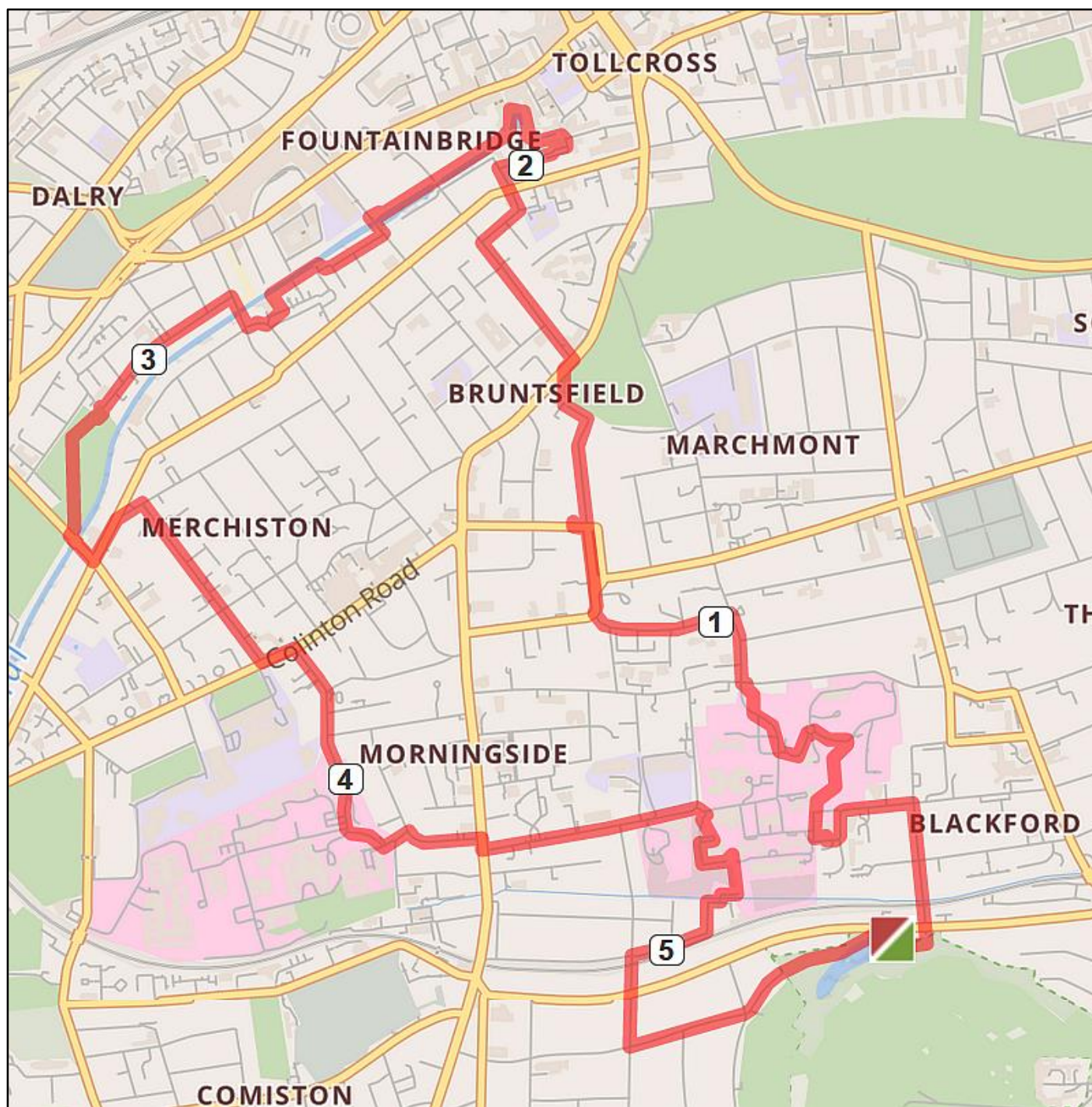


Canal Basin



Mapometer https://gb.mapometer.com/edit/route_5191349.html

Leave the gazebo and exit the Blackford Hill Park by the Charterhall Road Gates. Cross over to climb Oswald Road. Turn second left along South Oswald Road. Near its far end use the pedestrian access to enter the Astley Ainslie site [See note 1]. A path leads left. At the roadway go sharp right, keeping the traffic island and butterfly-shaped buildings to your left, and the wooden huts to your right. Ahead, and slightly right, find a gateway through a stone wall. A tarmac path, flanked by birches, passes a pet cemetery (for dogs and horses). Ascend beside

rhododendrons towards the fine, Italianate house of Saint Roque [2]. The lawn is thought to be a possible plague gravesite, and the grass beyond the road is the most likely location of the former fifteenth century Chapel of Saint Roque. Turn left towards the roundabout, passing cedars and admiring the Giant redwood tree to the right [3]. Beyond the roundabout, and Monterey cypress, keep left along the road and footpath passing Canaan Park Villa [4]. At the T-junction, turn right and follow the footpath which passes between the substantial villa (dating from 1805) of Canaan House [5] and the Consultants' Bungalow (an unusual C-plan neo-Georgian house with wide swept roof) [6] up to the entrance gates (with neo-Georgian-style sentry lodges, late-17thC-style locked gates and railings, and original lodge house).

Exit, cross Grange Loan, and walk up Whitehouse Loan. Note the small, stone panels labelled 5 and 7, on both sides of the Loan, which marked the course of the old city water pipes (1675). Turn left along Clinton Road. At the end keep right and then proceed straight ahead along the one-way system of Greenhill Gardens. As a small diversion, go left along Chamberlain Road for a few paces. Opposite find a small gateway which leads into the secluded plague-tomb garden [8]. Return to Greenhill Gardens and carry on towards Bruntsfield Links. At the links turn left along Bruntsfield Terrace. Cut across the corner of the links to arrive at the pedestrian lights at the end of Leamington Walk. Cross to follow Leamington Terrace down towards the canal. But before reaching Gilmore Place itself, turn right along Upper Gilmore Place. Follow it left alongside the free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Cross straight over Gilmore Place and down Lower Gilmore Place.

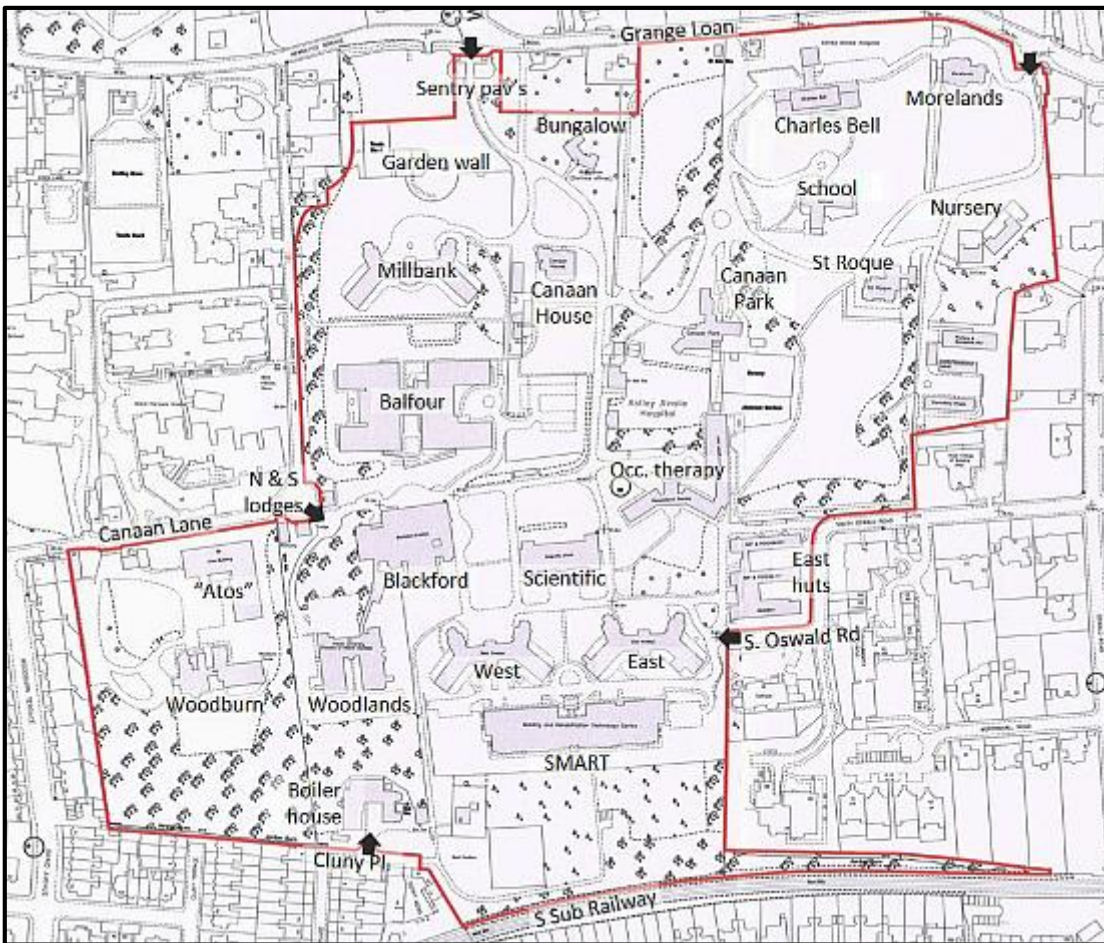
Before reaching the canal turn right along Lochrin Basin Lane. Towards its far end an unobtrusive metal strip, set in the paving, marks the outline of the old Lochrin Basin [9]. At the lane's end turn left along West Tollcross and left again into Canal Walk to reach the present-day terminus of the Union Canal. Turn right to circle around the terminal basin. Pass black swans and through the cafe area.

Keep alongside the canal on the wide towpath. Pass the lifting bridge [10]. At the next bridge [11] take steps up and cross the canal. Once over, turn right along Home Terrace and through to Dorset Place which leads to a pleasant platform overlooking the canal. Follow a canal side footpath, left, alongside railings. At its far end, turn left. A short flight of steps leads up to Dorset place. Turn right. Bear right again on reaching Merchiston Avenue and then, by old tenements, turn right again along Polwarth Crescent to re-cross the canal. Go left, where signs point to the canal. Follow the long sweep of Watson Crescent, with its late Victorian tenement

housing which backs onto the tow-path. At the junction with Ritchie Place [12] former curling ponds were built on to become a multi-windowed footwear factory, with arched entrance, which has recently been converted into flats. Merchiston Park is entered near a playground. Head diagonally across the park to exit up steps to Harrison Bridge. Turn left and cross to the far parapet. Note how the canal narrows: the protrusions mark the foundations of an original bridge. Cross the canal. On the corner at Polwarth Parish Church go left. Soon (100 m) cross at the Y-Junction and go right into Ettrick Road. On reaching the T-junction of Colinton Road cross (if the traffic is heavy use the pedestrian lights near the entrance to George Watson's College) turn left, and then turn right into Tipperlinn Road. Follow Tipperlinn into the grounds of the Hospital. Ahead, keep left, and pass to the left of the tall Kennedy Tower. Beyond, turn left to gain Morningside Terrace. Turn right along Morningside Park. Pass alongside Marks and Spencer's. At the main Morningside Road turn right. Next take Canaan Lane on the far side (use the nearby pedestrian crossing if necessary). Down Canaan Lane, by no. 41, note the square markers of the old city water pipes. Ahead, enter the grounds of Astley Ainslie. The neo-Georgian gate lodges are linked by curving walls with late 17thC-style gate piers and railings. Once through the gate pillars look for steps on the right, leading up to the lawns of Woodlands House [7]. Walk through the car parks to the right, and then around the back to reach an archway through a stone wall. Take the tarmac path leading down to the right. At the bottom, by a lonely cottage, pass to the right and then out to Egypt Mews. Square manhole covers mark the course of the culverted Jordan Burn. Keep right to swing up Cluny Place and right again up Cluny Avenue (alongside the suburban railway line). At the crossroads turn left along Braid Avenue. At the traffic lights, cross and keep ahead up Braid Avenue. Take the first left. A straight route back to the walk's start follows: Cluny Drive, Midmar Drive, the entrance gates to Blackford Park, a path to the pond and the gazebo.

Notes

[1] Astley Ainslie: A thousand years ago this area was the forest of Drumsheugh: a royal hunting forest that stretched from the present-day Tollcross to Craiglockhart in the west and across to Newington. The site became a hospital after David Ainslie died in 1900 and left £800,000 to establish a hospital or institution “for the relief and behoof of the convalescents of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh”. The bequest was used in 1921 to purchase the properties of Millbank, Canaan Park, Canaan House and Southbank, a total of 31 acres (Morelands and St Roques were added later).



[2] St Roque: The gardens of the present house of St Roque (a suburban villa dating from 1850) stand on the lands occupied in the fifteenth century by the Chapel of Saint Roque and the hospital attached which was used as a

quarantine area. Many Edinburgh townspeople suffering from plague were moved out to the Burgh Muir (now the Grange) and housed in huts. On their way to the Muir, they passed the Burgh Loch (now the Meadows) where their clothes were either boiled in cauldrons or burned. Fresh clothing was kept for them in the Chapel of St Roque. There were severe penalties for concealing anyone thought to be suffering from the plague.

[3] Trees: There are over 1,600 trees within the hospital grounds. A wide range (about 60 tree species) make up the most extensive and complete Victorian urban treescape left in

South Edinburgh. Between the South Oswald and Whitehouse entrances many notable trees are to be encountered on the walk. These include a silver (noble) fir in the open ground to the south of St Roque; to the right of the path a holm oak and then a Spanish chestnut (one of the oldest trees in the grounds, probably dating from the early 19th century); a single monkey-puzzle – close to the chestnut, but on the left of the path; cedars lining the road between St Roque and the roundabout; offset to the right a giant redwood (perhaps the most striking tree on the site, with a girth of 6 m); a single, very substantial Monterey cypress (immediately over the roundabout); two Indian cedars south of the Administration Block of Canaan House; a massive Bhutan pine (probably the largest one in the Lothians) in the lawn at the front of the Administration Block; also an adjacent, young Atlantic cedar with strikingly pale ('blue') foliage.

[4] Canaan Park: an Italianate villa. Although it looks quite attractive externally, it is not a listed building, following unsympathetic internal alterations.

[5] Canaan House: (now Admin Block) a substantial villa, dating from 1805, a classical square-plan with a largely intact 19thC interior, it is the earliest surviving building on the site and one of the earliest houses in the Grange. One of Scotland's most eminent scientific instrument makers, Alexander Adie, lived at Canaan Cottage (as it was then known). Adie was interested in the science of meteorology from an early date, and began a twice-daily meteorological register using a barometer, thermometer, and wind and rain gauge. His substantial, high-quality records began in 1795, those made at Canaan Cottage ran from 1821 to 1850.

[6] Bungalow: Consultants' Office (former Assistant Medical Superintendent's House) 1932. Distinctive roof, deep overhanging eaves and deeply recessed entrance door.

[7] Woodlands House: previously a nurses' home.

[8] Plague tomb garden: "*Death is sure, the hour is obscure.*" So reads the Latin inscription at 1 Chamberlain Road, Edinburgh. John Livingston contracted plague in 1645 - possibly spread by victims moved out of the city - and after his death was buried at this mausoleum built on his estate. Around this time, the Black Death was sweeping across Europe. The virulent nature of the plague meant that specific plague laws were introduced to manage its spread. One of the surest ways of protecting the population was to remove those diagnosed

with the illness and quarantine them in less populous areas. Burgh Muir was one area to which people were evacuated from the city, and where they were buried on death.

[8a] Edinburgh's Plague Laws: in November 1498, the city authorities in Edinburgh announced a sweeping new set of rules and regulations to protect residents of the city from the latest outbreak of plague. Specific measures included:

- Residents were forbidden from providing shelter to guests from outside the city without first receiving permission from the bailies. Anyone caught harbouring visitors illegally were not only banished from the city, but their goods and possessions seized by the authorities and redistributed for the greater good.
- Travel to Glasgow was forbidden, except by specific permission of the authorities. Travellers discovered to have visited Glasgow without permission would be refused re-entry to Edinburgh for forty days,
- No children were allowed to wander the streets or into Edinburgh's churches without adult accompaniment. Parents of unaccompanied children in the streets would be fined forty shillings (approximately £1,000 in modern currency) - children without parents were taken into custody.

[9] Lochrin Basin: was, with Port Hopetoun, an original, terminal basin for the Edinburgh and Glasgow Union Canal when it opened in 1822. Located, at first, on the edge of city, it closed in 1922. Detailed excavations (also maps from the 1800s) recorded the southern extent of the canal basin by exposing the quay wall and a mooring ring. At the W edge the original coping stones survived in situ. The old basin edge is now outlined by a metal strip.

[9a] Lochrin: broadly the area to the west of Tollcross, and south of Fountainbridge. Repeatedly redeveloped. Earliest historical references relate to the mid-12th century in the reign of David I, when the area was occupied by orchards, on the fringes of medieval Edinburgh. By the 18th century, the growing merchant classes were leaving the Old Town and creating country houses and mansions of various sizes. Later, the Lochrin Distillery was founded by John Haig c1780. During the 18th and 19th centuries this area was heavily dominated by brewers and distillers attracted by the plentiful pure water supply from the underlying geological fault. (The Colinton-Murieston fault is a substantial, 40 km-long, regional-scale, basin-bounding structure.) Bonded warehouses, paraffin oil works, slaughter

houses (opened 1852) all followed. A rope walk, ice pond (1900s), and more cooling ponds, all created a hub of industry. The Palais de Dance building was constructed 1909 on the site of the former Hopetoun Iron Foundry as a roller skating rink (the longest in Edinburgh) and also ice rink. The building was later converted to a cinema (the Coliseum) to eventually become a dance hall in 1920. Closed down as a dance hall in 1967. From the 1930s onwards it flourished as one of the most popular haunts in the city. Up to 900 people would cavort the night away on its enormous sprung dancefloor and novel hand-cranked revolving stage, which allowed bands to seamlessly swap over, without any interruption to the dancing. Sean Connery worked there as a bouncer, and even trained for a career as a bodybuilder in the backstage area. Other local uses: public wash house (1930s), large creamery, garages, ice making unit and cold store (1940s). The Lochrin area provides a good example of a city edge transition from rural agricultural land to a dynamic industrial development, through to today's inner-city, dense housing.

[10] Lifting bridge: A distinctive and unusual early 20th century lifting bridge with riveted steel framework. The control cabin is incorporated within the framework. When the bridge is lifted, pedestrians could still cross by the lattice girder footbridge. It was originally sited to carry the Fountainbridge road over the canal on its entrance into Port Hamilton.

[11] Stone bridges: over the 31-mile-long contour canal. These were numbered sequentially: original 1st bridge, Walker bridge (on the land of North Merchiston House estate of James Walker Esq (1790-1856) now Polwarth Cres. / Yeaman Place; 2nd bridge, old foundations remain as narrows in Harrison Park opposite the boat house.

[12] Ritchie Place: the Watson Cres. / Ritchie Place junction, was formerly a natural pond (Merchiston) used for curling (1809), becoming formalised ponds by 1830. Then, in 1895, a multi-windowed footwear factory, with arched entrance, was built. This has since been converted to flats (c.2003) with an additional attic level built in a sympathetic style.