

Bonnington: Highlights

- **Edinburgh's Best Kept Shopping Secret**

James Pringle Shopping Outlet, Leith Mills. Ladies' and Men's fashions, traditional Scottish Foods at discount prices, also free whisky tastings. Housed in former (early 1800s) tobacco warehouse.

- **Sugar & Bonnington Bond**

A magnificent former industrial complex of brick and rubble-built warehouses. Includes the largest bonded warehouse to survive in Edinburgh; also, a former sugar refinery (c1865 – closed in 1980s) which was a huge, large-scale, industrial operation producing over 250 tons of refined sugar weekly.

- **Railway Bridge Abutment (near Antony Gormley's life-sized figure V)**

Part of a veritable former 'spaghetti junction' of railway lines and railway flyovers. A reversing line led across the Water of Leith to the expansive Bonnington Goods Yard (1876-1960) which served several industries including the sugar bond, along with timber yards, foundries, boiler works, oatmeal and paper mills, corn and grain stores, a tannery and the whisky trade.

- **Bonnington Bridge**

The bridge was opened in 1903 when it replaced the narrow 1812 bridge. Originally a ford here was crossed by the Newhaven fishwives, using only stepping stones, as part of their 3-mile-long walk to Edinburgh's High Street with baskets of produce on their backs weighing 110 pounds or more.

- **Old Mill Complex and Mill Lade**

The Bonnington Mills area has been associated with milling since the C12th. Today a small group of C18th buildings remain, including a three-storey granary, an iron-framed corn mill, mill house and smiddy. A splendid undershot millwheel occupies the old mill lade.



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- **Tannery**

Former Bonnington Tannery. A fine example of a rare tannery building. Late C19th. The oldest part (which still survives) is a 3-storey block. The tanning of cattle hides was a hard, labour-intensive, and smelly activity. After all the hooves and horns had been chopped off, the animal skins were immersed in pits filled with dog dung or lime, scraped, and then sprinkled with urine and left to rot before soaking in a series of pits, with different concentrations of tannins (vegetable oak-bark acids) for a year to produce the leather.

A 1916 Zeppelin raid (Scotland's first ever air raid) damaged the Tannery roof, along with various manufacturing tanks. One of the greatest tragedies that fateful evening occurred nearby at 200 Bonnington Rd. – a high explosive bomb killed a baby boy who had been fast asleep in his cot.

Route map available at: <https://www.plotaroute.com/route/2561067>

Route devised by Roy Thompson, Feb 2024