

THE DRUMMOND CIVIC ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER 2018
www.drummondplace.org

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND SOCIAL EVENT

Thursday 01st February 2018 at 7:15 P.M. in the Garden Room of Broughton St Mary's Parish Church, Bellevue Crescent.

Jean Findlay, CEO and founder of the Scotland Street Press will talk about Scotland Street and its Genius Loci. She will also discuss the life and work of her great-great uncle C.K Scott Moncrieff, the celebrated translator of Marcel Proust: her biography of Moncrieff, 'Chasing Lost Time', was published to acclaim in 2014. There will be anecdotes about literary people, including Moncrieff's fellow-writer and spy Compton Mackenzie, and much else.

Residents of Drummond Place and adjoining streets are cordially invited to this annual meeting at which issues affecting the neighbourhood will be discussed. Please see agenda below. We particularly welcome new residents who we hope will join the Association.

AGM - AGENDA

- 1. Minutes of the previous meeting**
- 2. Summary of the year**
- 3. Financial Statement**
- 4. Questions**
- 5. Election/Constitution**
- 6. AOB**
- 7. Speaker: Jean Findlay, CEO of Scotland Street Press**



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| 4. Wheelie Bin Update | 9. Castle in the Air | 14. Nooks and Crannies |
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TRAFFIC/PARKING

Drummond Civic Association supported the introduction of the 20mph limit for Drummond Place and roads adjoining it. However, in its comments to the Council DCA made it clear that it may require other measures in addition to the new speed limit, to calm the traffic in Drummond Place.

The introduction of the new limit while welcome appears to have made little difference. Cars are still racing round, into and out of Drummond Place in all directions. There is also a concern that there will be an increase in heavy commercial traffic with the building work at St James. The width of the road with the confusing number of junctions make it difficult for pedestrians to cross safely and tricky for cyclists. Drummond Place is part of National Cycle Route number 75 and so should be more cycle friendly. DCA has concluded it needs to push for additional traffic calming measures and Councillors Mowat and Miller have kindly started to help DCA look at possibilities.

Councillor Mowat along with an official from the Roads Department of the Council met with representatives of DCA Committee in mid-November. On a chilly dark evening they walked round Drummond Place to look at the issues. Getting traffic calming measures in place is likely to be a lengthy process. It was agreed that the Roads Department would send details of their latest traffic monitoring and the Councillors are looking the possibilities for increasing cycle safety.

It seems obvious to DCA that there are safety issues but the Council would like evidence. To help with this anyone seeing an accident or near miss should report that to DCA who can let the Council know. The email address for doing that is [].

EN

RBS SITE ON FETTES ROW

A major concern for local people during the past year has been the application for outline permission to redevelop the RBS data processing centre on Dundas Street and Fettes Row. While few of us extend great love to the existing structures - sundry Ziggurats and sheds, set in a car park - there is natural concern that whatever comes next might be no better, or worse. No developer is yet in place. Rather, RBS has appointed some architects as agents to secure outline permission for development, which if/when granted in some form, will greatly lift the value of the site. At that point a developer would buy it and make a full proposal, constrained by the outline permission but free to innovate within it, in dialogue with planning officials. As taxpaying donors to the biggest banking bail-out in history - anywhere, any time, RBS's failure was that bad

- most of us probably agree that RBS needs to get a good price for its assets, even if as residents we have different concerns.

Very considerable opposition showed itself to the first plans submitted, including a powerful set of objections to the scale of the structure on the New Town side from Historic Environment Scotland (HES), probably the weightiest of official bodies required to examine the plans. The RBS agents submitted revised plans in December. These take account of the HES objections, improving the protection of the long view down Dundonald Street, reducing the height of the new structures below the eye-line from Royal Crescent, providing better screening by trees and significantly reducing the number of residential units proposed. Undoubtedly these are steps in the right direction, although there is plenty more argument left in the issue, for certain. Comments can be made until 5 January through the usual planning portal. It is well worth taking the opportunity, if you have something to say on the topic. Detail on the plans can also be found on the portal, in abundance. **CRC**

'GARAGE' SAGA CONTINUED

Early in 2017 it became apparent that the 'garage' in the lane opposite Drummond Tennis Club's pavilion, had been rented out. The legal firm, McEwan Fraser, which had advertised the property, seemed unaware that it only had planning permission for a garage and not a residential property.

The property was then advertised on the AirB&B website as 'The Den' – one-bedroomed accommodation, and had several short-term occupants.

In March, residents made the Enforcement Department aware of the situation, and a further enforcement order was made, which both the owner and leasee appealed. They lost their appeal to the DPEA (Planning and Environmental Appeals Division of the Scottish Government) in April, and were given three months to vacate the premises and make changes to the frontage by removing the glass door and reinstating the roller shutter.

By late August no changes had been made.

The Enforcement Department have given an assurance that 'direct action' will now take place, by which they mean that Edinburgh Council will have to undertake the work. Will it, or will we go on waiting for Godot. **CR**

WHEELIE BIN IN DRUMMOND PLACE

Nelson Street's green bin has at long last been removed from Drummond Place where it has been since September 2014 despite our long-standing objections. We continue to keep a watching eye on such guerrilla tactics presumably designed to have us surrender in exasperation. (See page 6)

DRUMMOND PLACE GARDEN

2017 has been a mixed year for the Garden though it continues to be a delightful space in the heart of the city.

Our team of gardeners have been putting a lot of work in, cutting back overgrown borders, shaping shrubs and bushes and putting in more plants to add further colour and contrast into the Garden. This autumn they have been planting hundreds of bulbs, such as crocuses, narcissi and tulips so that there should be even more colour next Spring.



The Norway Maple in autumn leaf

The trimming-back of some of the overgrown shrubs has opened up some lovely plants, including a fine camellia which have been hidden for some years adding even more to the colour and variety of our borders. You may also have noticed the grand sunflowers at the west gateway. The birds seem to have been less conspicuous this year, though the bird-feeders continue to empty at an alarming rate. They are supposed to be squirrel-proof but who knows. There are still plenty of cheeky squirrels about. We have had to engage in major tree-works this year with significant and costly cutting back all over the garden. As well as generating better shapes for the trees

such work also lets more light into the borders for the benefit of the shrubs there. It also ensures that they do not become a danger to anybody. Unfortunately it has also opened up areas by the fence against some of the trees with no hedges to deter intruders. We have had some issues with intruders this year, leaving nasty rubbish and causing some (fortunately minor) damage. We also understand that other Edinburgh gardens have more trouble than we do so we are grateful for this. However, we must work on trying to improve the boundaries to avoid opportunistic intruders, though determined individuals will find a weakness with no concern about damaging hedges or plants.

Next Spring will see us planting more borders, where there are some bare patches. Opening these up to more light will also help.

The Dog Register continues to help us manage the dog population (and the corresponding waste removal). Our most recent volunteer did a great job but has now moved away.

Fortunately three of the dog-owners have stepped forward and are now sharing this rather unpleasant task between them.



A wonderful tree sculpture (one of the ash trees)

Finally, a reminder that the Garden web-site drummondplacegarden.co.uk has information about access to the Garden and some general information and photographs.

The Drummond Place Garden Committee

A LAND GIRL'S TALE...

It is a pleasure to welcome the latest publication of the Scotland Street Press. 'A Land Girl's Tale' by Mona Macleod is the thirteenth title on the catalogue of this exciting publishing house which was founded in 2014 by Jean Findlay, the great-great-niece of C. K. Scott Moncrieff, the celebrated translator of Proust. Her biography of Scott Moncrieff, 'Chasing lost Time', was received with acclaim in 2014. The Press is committed to promoting Scotland as 'a distinctive creative voice and in highlighting women's voices' which Jean Findlay feels are 'under-represented in literature as a whole in Scotland. Hitherto, the catalogue includes 9 out of 13 titles by women.

Mona Macleod's absorbing memoir of her experience employed a Land Girl in Kirkcudbrightshire during the Second World War is a riveting account of the extraordinary but often unsung contribution by the Women's Land Army to winning the war in Britain.

The author dispels any notion that the Women's Land Army operated in some sort of charming rural idyll. On the contrary, the land girls had literally to turn their hand to most aspects of agricultural work including laborious field work, care of livestock, forestry, and even blocking up of rat holes. They were often cold and hungry, and were paid risible wages. Despite facing immense challenges, their contribution in keeping the country fed and the home fires burning should never be underestimated.

Although the Queen recognised the achievement of the WLA at the end of the war in signed letters to individuals, shamefully it was not until 2000 that they were invited to lay a wreath at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Day. The only concrete commemoration of the work of

the Land Army is a sculpture near Buckie, unveiled by Prince Charles in 2012. As Mona Macleod rightly observes, this is a deceptively jolly image of life as a land girl which this book seeks to correct. She does so triumphantly. In this respect, the story of the WLA echoes that of the Bevin Boys who were conscripted to work in the coal mines in dreadful circumstances and whose sterling achievement was only acknowledged as recently as 2008.



This is an immensely significant contribution both to the annals of Scottish social history and to the advancement of Women's Rights in Britain. It is also immensely readable, and a typically stylish SSP production with delightful illustrations. **JRM**

PICARDY PLACE

Some of you may be aware that the only design being put forward by Edinburgh District Council for the redevelopment of Picardy Place is to put a gyratory system in the middle of the area and relocate the York Place tram stop. Many feel that this plan eats significantly into our public space and that the introduction of a central island area is inappropriate for this significant gateway to the World Heritage Site. The closing date for responses to this was the 15th December but you may wish to follow events on twitter @picardygroup or via the Council website.

2017 GARDEN PARTY

Another midsummer, another fête champêtre! The weather gods were beneficent. As ever, the tables were laden with a delicious repast kindly donated by our guests. Again we were royally entertained by Mr Peter Verity's delightful ensemble. And so with Virginia Woolf we all went to heaven and Van Dyck (was) of the company.

CARILLON FOR A CASTLE IN THE AIR

The belltower above Broughton St Mary's Church in Bellevue Crescent is a Mozartian aria in stone. How else to describe this architectural tour de force with its ascending order of Greek pillars, its dome, and its crowning symbol? Many who are familiar with this magnificent building have assumed that its crown is a conventional weathervane, probably in the form of a rooster – St Peter's emblem for watchfulness and humility, established in the 9th century for Christian churches. However, this is no ordinary weathervane.



During recent restoration it has been revealed as an anchor surmounted on a shield of a 3-towered castle elevated upon an orb. Carved steps lead up to the castle. A lightning-rod of recent origin is attached to the whole. The triple-towered castle is Edinburgh's assay hallmark, while the armorial device of the anchor above a castle shield, granted by the Lord Lyon for the royal burgh of Edinburgh in 1732, remains the City of Edinburgh Council's coat of arms. This reflects the building's status as the last burgh church built in the capital, its baptismal silver vessels bearing the same symbol. Edinburgh archives confirm the weathervane's commission by the city in 1825, and the shield itself has the greenish sheen of weathered bronze. In 2009, perhaps due to the fixture of the lightning-rod, Bellevue's anchor and castle permanently face south to the castle and north to the Firth of Forth, a striking symbol of endurance and hope which this most elegant and flamboyant of churches has embodied for 183 years. **JRM** (Reprinted with permission from the Spurtle).

STEWART CONN

This year we are again privileged to print a poem by **Stewart Conn**, Edinburgh's first makar, distinguished man of letters, and our near neighbour. This is the first publication of this poem.



SNOWDROP WALK

Skirting Inverleith pond on what promises to be the first day of Spring I pass a pair of Canada geese, black with patches of white on throat and tail, protecting their young; and later in the Botanic (the geriatrics, myself among them, and the electric buggies out in force) see on a bench overlooking the snowdrop walk two figures, their white headgear and dresses, and capacious black cloaks, clearly the vesture of some order.

My tentative "afternoon" receives a cheery "hello", rich brown faces breaking into luminous smiles though their eyes are invisible behind sun-glasses. Perambulating towards the gates I glimpse them admiring a silver lime, their heads tilted as if in meditation, revealing slivers of white. Then they move on, leaving me wondering if my journey will lead to darkness or light, where they are heading, and who will be blessed by their soothing?

Stewart Conn



STREET FURNITURE

DCA has recently begun discussions with Edinburgh District Council (EDC) in relation to the 'pay and display' signs that are scattered around Drummond Place. These very small signs are sat atop numerous ugly poles around the square. The proposal would be to move these signs onto the railings of the surrounding houses and have the poles removed. There is a recent precedent for this at Royal and Regent Terraces where the vista has been considerably improved. You can also see the signs on railings in many parts of the New Town nearby, notably on Royal Crescent. Clearly we would need to seek the permission of those households involved and note that the recent addition of small 20 mph signs on some poles may also represent a challenge. Please let us know what you think by emailing David.watt10@yahoo.com.

DRUMMOND PLACE POLICE BOX

Work has at last started on the police box at the West gate of the gardens. Blacksmith Mr Eric Lahmert, a veteran of many Edinburgh box repairs, has been engaged via Laings Foundry. He has already removed, repaired and replaced several of the damaged panels and will be returning in the early part of next year to fit glass and paint the box with the vandal proof paint so generously donated by the DCA. **MC**



Eric and colleague (hidden within) hard at work.

BINS AND WASTE

A few people, notably new residents, have been asking about the process of waste and recycling collection around the area. A little history will be useful. It has been the long-held view of the DCA that 'wheelie bins' are not appropriate for our needs and are inconsistent with the World Heritage status of the New Town. We have therefore been provided with 'gull-proof bags', (gpbs) which should be placed on the street at the time below. Please note that they will only collect landfill waste that has been placed in closed black bags within the gpbs that are in turn hung from the railings. (avoid sharp protuberances).

It would be helpful if we did not use the wheelie bins belonging to surrounding streets since this plays into the hands of those wishing to introduce them to our area. Red (mixed recycling) and Blue (glass and small electricals) recycling boxes are collected every second Friday.

Timings at time of writing as follows:-

Gull Proof Bags (From 11 Dec 2017)

Tuesday by 630am

Recycling Bins Red and Blue

Every fortnight 5th Jan 2018 and so on by 6am

The early start is far from ideal since most of us will be forced to put our bins out the night before but we continue to work with EDC to improve.

More details here:- [EDC Waste](#)

NOOKS AND CRANNIES

A surreptitious pleasure of ambling in the New Town is glancing at basement areas and discovering their inventive gardens and artworks, which range from the lush and exotic to the minimalist and arcane. In London St we are cheered in one by the sight of the most exuberant sunflowers, in another by a delightful bat's house on a wall. Outside No 18, many are intrigued by what appear to be rusty poles. In fact they form a serious and remarkable artwork by Andrea Geile which was commissioned by the owners. Geile, of German origin but now married to a Scot and living locally, is a specialist in art for gardens. Another example can be seen outside No 2 Drummond place where Jim and Betta Adams have another fine example of Geile's work. **JRM**



OBITUARIES

HAMISH ALEXANDER DRUMMOND MILES OBE Nov 19, 1925 – May 29, 2017

We lament the passing of Professor Hamish Miles of 31 Drummond Place who died aged 91 on May 29 2017. Following a notable academic career at Glasgow and Leicester Universities, Professor Miles was head of Fine Art at Birmingham University from 1970 to 1990.



Professor Hamish Miles, OBE

He was also the third Director of the University's Barber Institute which rivals London University's Courtauld Institute as one of Britain's smaller galleries of world-renown. His contribution to the Barber Institute's holdings which included major acquisitions of 20th century works by Matisse, Leger, Gwen John inter alia, greatly enriched the Barber as a mecca both for art historians and the public. His legacy in Scotland is of equal distinction. His exhaustive work on the art of Sir David Wilkie, stemming from his professorship at Leicester in 1966, became a passion lasting until the end of his life. As late as 2014 he authenticated a lost painting which is now enshrined in the National Gallery in London. His standing as a world authority on Wilkie is beyond dispute.

Born in Stanton St John, Oxfordshire Hamish Miles was of Scottish ancestry.

His grandfather, Alexander Miles, was a distinguished Edinburgh surgeon while his father, James, was an author and literary editor of note – and translator of the books of Andre Maurois - who had declined the opportunity to be the first translator in English of Marcel Proust's great novel (coincidentally mentioned elsewhere in these pages).

Hamish and his wife Jean, a classical scholar from America moved to Compton Mackenzie's residence at 31 Drummond Place in 1994. They and their family also enjoyed sojourns at Hamish's much-cherished inherited house in Perthshire.

Professor Hamish Miles was appointed OBE in 1987 for services to art. He is survived by his wife Jean, sons Alexander and James, daughters Helen and Rachel, and their families.



CAROLINE WATSON

We also regret the untimely passing of Caroline Watson (nee Purves) of 38 Drummond Place on 22 October 2017. Our sincere condolences are extended to Neal, to Lucy and Charlie, and the extended family and friends.



HARRY JAMES STEVEN

We are also sad to report the recent death of Harry Steven a long-term resident at no 27 Drummond Place who was a great lover of our beautiful garden.

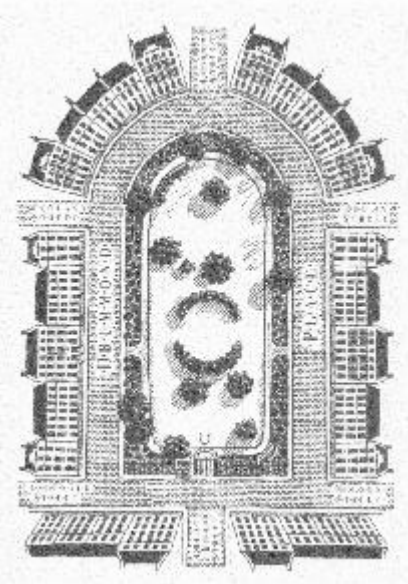
LIVING IN A WORLD HERITAGE SITE

EDINBURGH WORLD HERITAGE

Edinburgh World Heritage (EWH) works to promote, conserve and enhance the city's World Heritage site. It is dependent upon the generosity of donors and funders to deliver their projects, from the repair of historic buildings and monuments to delivering learning programmes for visitors and schools, and improving the streetscape.

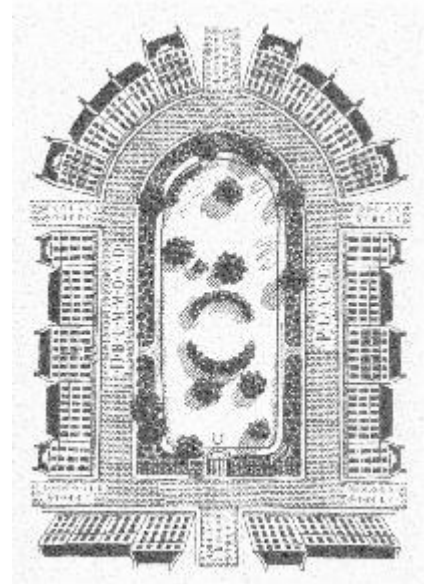


It is possible to become a Member of EWH for a fee of £30 p.a. (discounts available). Friends are kept up to date with the work of EWH and are invited to occasional events. Find out more by contacting EWH on 0131 220 7720 or email info@ewht.org.uk. MC



**MEMBERS OF THE
COMMITTEE
2016-2017**

Maidie Cahill (Secretary)
Christopher Collins (Chair)
Fraser Duff (Treasurer)
John Ross Maclean
Elizabeth Napier
Christine Ross
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Lorna Willocks



SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions will be collected at the AGM - £7 per household or can be paid at 21 Drummond Place for those who can't make it.
Your support is invaluable for the work we do on behalf of our community, and of our precious oasis in the New Town's eastern quarter.

MERCHANDISE

The DCA has a selection of notecards, with various images of Drummond Place (including some of those within these pages), along with Lettice Milne Rae's 'The Story of Drummond Place'. These items will be on sale at the AGM, or via our website.

DRUMMOND CIVIC ASSOCIATION WEBSITE

Please take the time to visit our website. You can find out about the history of Drummond Place, purchase beautiful photographs and cards and be kept up-to-date with the bulletin board.
www.drummondplace.org.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

To save printing costs and to reduce the amount of paper posted through your letterbox, it would be helpful if you could send your e-mail address to David.Watt10@yahoo.com so that we can alert you to developments throughout the year.

THE DRUMMOND CIVIC ASSOCIATION (DCA)

DCA has several meetings each year and serves the interests of Drummond Place and immediate environs. Major subjects include planning, traffic, environmental issues and The World Heritage Trust.

Local residents are most welcome to join the DCA and report concerns or voice opinions which the Committee will make plain to the powers-that-be. We also celebrate at an annual midsummer garden party and hold social events to which all members and friends are warmly invited.

Edited by John Ross Maclean and produced by David Watt with thanks to all contributors.



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