

THE DRUMMOND CIVIC ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER 2017

www.drummondplace.org

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND SOCIAL EVENT

Thursday 19th January 2017 at 7:15 P.M. - THE POLISH CLUB, 11 Drummond Place EH3 6PH.

Speaker: Magnus Linklater - former editor of the Scotsman, current columnist for the Times and former resident of Drummond Place. Magnus will be speak on a topic of interest to us all.

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: Mr Magnus Linklater



The Association continued to work on a number of issues of civic interest in 2016.

ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND SITE

Readers will be aware that planning permission has just been sought for a massive new development on the site of the RBS office and car park bordering Dundas Street, Fettes Row, Royal Crescent and Eyre Place. The DCA has been working hard to raise objections to this development which would have a disastrous impact on our local environment and would dominate the adjacent A-listed structures in the World Heritage Site. In order to create maximum impact **your assistance is critical**. Please visit our website www.drummondplace.org and look out for a leaflet through your door.



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TRAFFIC/PARKING

The main focus this year has been on parking and speed limits.

After DCA and other Community Organisations commented on the Council's Draft Parking Action Plan, the Council decided to introduce more shared parking in our area but not to introduce parking restrictions at weekends.

Shared parking means metered parking where residents can park for free. At the moment, the aim is, as we hoped, to increase the amount of parking available to residents during the hours when the parking restrictions operate. The Council will consider a report next year on this and it is likely that DCA and other community organisations will be further consulted on the detail of where the shared parking should be, before that report is drawn up. However, because of the amount of work involved in implementing this, it is unlikely to be in place until 2018 and there is an election between now and then.

Weekend parking restrictions might be difficult for residents as many of us rely on the metered spaces at weekends just now. Issues may arise if there is a knock-on effect of restrictions introduced in neighbouring areas or because of the closure of the John Lewis car park. In that case, we can ask the Council to revisit the idea of weekend restrictions. Meanwhile, the 20mph speed limit in our area, which DCA supported, is soon to be implemented with the Council currently planning to have this in place in Feb 17. **EN**

ROYAL HIGH SCHOOL

The developers pushing for an international luxury hotel to be built on the site of the old Royal High School rejigged their plans in the light of the City Council's narrow rejection of their original proposals. The height of a cylinder-shaped accommodation block on the western side of the site has notably been reduced, but alternative ideas for a new home for St Mary's Music School are still waiting in the wings, widely preferred by Edinburgh's heritage lobby, including Drummond Civic Association.

The first hotel plan is still subject to appeal, and the two versions of this might both end up going to a reporter appointed by the Scottish government. **SN**

GARAGES

In some exasperation we make further reference to DCA's last Newsletter concerning the rebuilt "garage" facing the entrance to Drummond Tennis Club. It now appears that the site is occupied and tenanted. This is unauthorised as the "garage" does not have planning permission to be either an office or a pied-a-terre. A breach of planning has been reported to the relevant C.E.C. officer and Cllr Joanna Mowat and MSP Ruth Davidson have been informed. This issue of local concern has been ongoing for more than two years and we still await a resolution. We will keep DCA subscribers informed.

WHEELIE BIN IN DRUMMOND PLACE



Efforts continue to remove Nelson Street's green bin from Drummond Place where it has been since September 2014 pending the slow process of finding a home for it in the street it is intended to serve. The Council has received some objections (details not yet published) to its proposed new location in lower Nelson Street and those will take yet more time to process. However, when the bin is eventually moved (unblocking a fine view down Great King Street from the bench seat beside it), the threat of more bins may be looming on the horizon. The Council's transport and environment committee is due to debate in January a 65-point action plan on the waste service which includes possible action to consider further containerisation of streets now served by gull-proof rubbish bags. **SN**

DRUMMOND PLACE GARDEN

2016 has been a good year for the garden and it is looking very good. The introduction of a gardener to deal with the borders rather than just depend on volunteers has resulted in a much tidier garden. We have also been able to introduce more plants and much more colour. However, damage to the surrounding hedges by intruders continues to be a problem.

The use of Whitelaw Wells (who also manage the Moray Place Gardens) to deal with the back-office operations of keys, subscriptions and accounts has been very successful.

Trees continue to be a strong focus for us and the tree surgeon only had to be called to deal with a few damaged branches in the middle of the year. The leaning cherry tree at the east end of the garden which had its roots pulled out of the ground was removed. The scar left behind was reseeded once it had settled and visitors would have noticed the patch with its protective barrier. Unfortunately, dogs don't understand barriers and they have been knocked down a few times but the grass there is now growing well.

Meanwhile, the branches removed make wonderful chipping for paths. Apologies to all residents round the square for the noise of the chipper.

The birds continue to be a focus for us and we have replaced the bird feeders with something more effective against the squirrels. It is also a pretty thing in the central area (pictured).



The dog register and Code of Practice for dogs have so far proved very effective in managing the dog usage in the garden, though unfortunately not all dog owners adhere fully to the Code. Unfortunately, people like to chat or are otherwise distracted and do not keep their eye fully on their dog. Disposing of the dog waste continues to be a major challenge. With the dog register supported by a small annual fee we have been able to provide dog poo bags and dispensers as well as the dog waste bins. This should result in a better environment for all users.

Finally, we are constantly being asked about access to the garden. This is now explained on the new web site, drummondplacegarden.org.uk together with some general information about the garden.

Drummond Place Garden Committee

2016 GARDEN PARTY



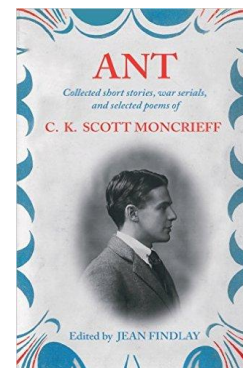
Some of the younger key holders imbibe furtively at the illicit lemonade stall as their dealer looks on.

The baleful weather gods spared us their wrath this year at the party in our wonderful garden. So it was a pleasure to welcome another happy throng of people, old and new. As ever, there was a phenomenal cornucopia of food and drink, generously donated by our guests and supporters. Surrounding trees were garlanded with bunting in celebration of HM the Queen's 90th birthday. Thanks are particularly due to the Garden Committee for permission to use the garden and for the new focal point that is the splendid bird feeder.

JRM

SCOTLAND STREET PRESS

It is a special pleasure to welcome an exciting new venture to our locality. The Press was set up to publish "ANT". After 8 years research on Chasing Lost Time, the life of CK Scott Moncrieff, soldier, spy, translator of Proust, (published by Chatto and Windus and Vintage here in the UK and by Farrar Straus and Giroux in the US), Jean Findlay, the author was left with masses of material. The creative works of CK Scott Moncrieff had never been collected and here they all were waiting to go to press. Being naturally impatient, she decided, like the Little Red Hen, to do it herself. Hence the birth of Scotland Street Press.



The Press will go on to publish literary fiction, memoir and travel in book form and can be found here www.scotlandstreetpress.com.

DRUMMOND TENNIS CLUB

2016 has been another successful year in the Scotland St. Lane oasis. There has been a phenomenal increase in numbers of junior players for coach Sophie Blake's sessions. They continued into November! Other highlights of the year included the unveiling of the Andy Murray 2016 bench to sit alongside the 2012 one in recognition of Andy's remarkable gold medal triumphs at the London and Rio Olympics. And the club now has a new outdoor table-tennis facility. This is situated by the junior court behind the clubhouse. It was constructed by Dominic Hawthorne, a long-term member of the club.



New members are always welcome.

www.drummondtennisclub.co.uk

Mark Fergie DLTC

YOUR LITTLE FREE LIBRARY



On 28 October, Maria Wakely of 37 Scotland St. established this delightful Little Free Library outside her home. It was built to specification by Chris Hellawell and an apprentice from the Edinburgh Tool Library and formally opened by the author Eleanor Updale. Here, passers-by are welcome to borrow and donate books of their choice. The Little Library phenomenon and its ethos to promote literacy, love of printed books, and community involvement originated in the USA. Circa 40,000 have sprung up around the world in a myriad locations. Already, our own Little Free library has attracted fecund exchanges and widespread approval. Well done Maria!

(Interestingly the Edinburgh Tool Library operates from the Leith Walk Police Box on Croall Place, and is open every Saturday, from 9am -1pm).

JRM

STEWART CONN

This year we are privileged to print 2 poems by **Stewart Conn**. These are published in 'Estuary' by Mariscat Press, 2012. www.mariscatpress.com

STRENGTHS

*On our garden bench is a bird's nest,
unblemished, no clue whether cast
by the wind or placed there by hand,*

*the survival of so fragile-looking
an interlacing of twigs and grasses
a warning not to go by appearances:*

*in the face of life's frailties
up to ourselves to bear witness,
as best we can, to love's persistence.*



RESOLVE

*All I know is, there must come
times more wondrous, which will
set white horses dancing, in our
nostrils the fragrance of far islands.*



ASSOCIATION VACANCY

Our treasurer Stephen Nisbet has decided to resign from the DCA after many years' service. He and his wife are off on some Australasian travel and intend spending some of their time at their new seaside residence at Granton harbour. They will also remain happy residents on the corner of Drummond Place and Great King Street. We wish them well. **DW**

BELEVUE HOUSE

Twice in the last two years the ancient outlines of Robert Adam's Bellevue House have appeared on the lawns of Drummond Place Gardens. The house stood from 1775 till 1846, the first structure built in this part of the New Town and for many years the dominating feature.

The first reappearance was for our garden party in July 2015, which took as a theme the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the renewal of the vast enterprise of building the second New Town. The original drawings survive in the Soane Museum and using them, we marked out in tape the precise shape. Strings played once again in the fine oval drawing room with views to Fife. But where exactly had the house stood? It was certainly at the eastern end of the gardens, because construction of the Scotland Street railway necessitated its demolition. Yet the maps available at the time were imprecise.

Then there was a breakthrough. Suddenly there came to hand a new document at the National Archives on Princes Street, a building also built by Adam, in fact at the very same time as Bellevue House. He will have supervised the one, while doing the other, wandering down Gabriel's Lane past the newly-built Dundas House.

The new document showed a surveyor's drawing of what must have been a planning tunnel dug for the Scotland Street underground. Bellevue House was marked in detail, even the paths in the garden, and location moved beyond conjecture because we could align it to the corner pavilions of Scotland and London Street. Cue the university's archaeological department, which in October 2016 brought along students and equipment to survey and mark with much greater accuracy. The house stood far closer to the end of the gardens than we had thought, around 5 degrees off the East/West line of London Street and Great King Street. Almost certainly some of the cellars survive on the Eastern end, because they will surely have been filled with rubble rather than laboriously dug out. The archaeologists mounted a camera on a huge pole and photographed the outline.

A composite image will be produced from this elevation, and hopefully a 3D model too. They examined too as well the fine rosette stones at the western end of the garden which probably once sat over the main doorway of Bellevue House, as shown in a quick sketch in Adam's own hand. It is a fair guess that someone local saved them from the pile of rubble to which Bellevue House was reduced, distinctive ornaments. You can see similar on the Adam building that flanks the north of Dundas House. CC

For another chance to hear Chris Collin's talk on the house go along to Broughton History Society on 9th Jan.

GABY 60 GRACE NIL!

Miss Grace Barnes Macfarlane was born on the morning of the 30th Nov weighing in at 7lbs 11½oz. Parents Lesley-Anne and Ross of 2 Drummond Place were kind enough to send us this lovely photograph.



At the other end of the scale Gaby Holden who has lived on the corner of Drummond Place and Scotland street since 1956. Is perhaps our longest term resident. She has decided to retire from the Drummond Civic Association after 26 years' service. A veteran of both 'bin wars' Gaby is an inspiration to us all and we wish her all the best for the future. Perhaps Grace will beat Gaby's records in the years to come. DW



OBITUARY: BILL PURVES

Bill Purves was a kenspeckle figure, well-known to Scotland St. and Stockbridge. Perhaps best known as the owner of the Mr Purves lamp emporium in St Stephen St, he had many other interests. In the 1960s and 70s, he was instrumental in restoring several New Town buildings to their pristine Georgian order. He was a member of The Georgian Society and was also involved with the D.C.A. and Drummond Place Garden.

In 1965, he studied art history and architecture at the Courtauld Institute in London. His tutor was the distinguished historian and infamous spy Anthony Blunt. In 1974 he was instrumental in rescuing and restoring the famous paddle-steamer The Waverley. By 1978, it was shipshape and sailed as far afield as the Thames and the Kyles of Bute. Bill also had a passion for vintage cars. He and his second wife Sandra acquired a 1934 Jowett which was christened Belinda. From 2006, he set about rehabilitating classic cars together with fellow devotees in his premises in Scotland St.

Bill was an original dresser. His sartorial attire ranged from a faded blue boiler-suit to A-line kilted skirts and medium heeled court shoes. As one of the New Town's authentic originals, he will be much missed. **JRM**



Our condolences to his widow Sandra, and his daughters Caroline and Catherine and their families.

THE SHINING SYCAMORE

Many users of East Scotland Street Lane, and householders overlooking the open area to its north, have long admired the dominant tree at the heart of the allotments.

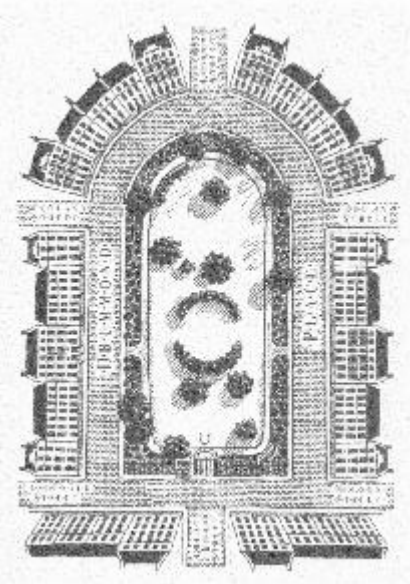


Few, though, may be aware of its identity.

I recently chanced upon a smaller specimen near the John Hope Gateway in the Botanic. It is a species of maple, in Scotland usually called the plane-tree. It is an *Acer pseudoplatanus corstorphinense* or the Corstorphine sycamore.

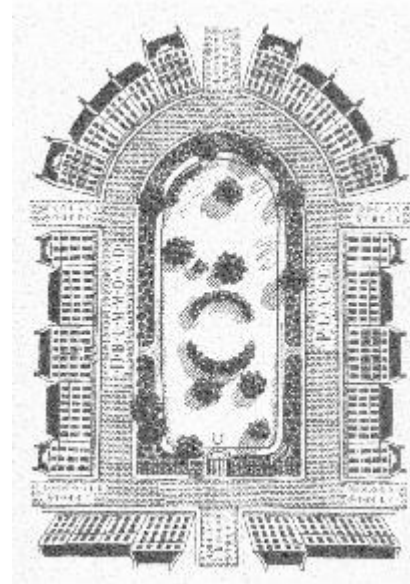
The Corstorphine version originated in the 15th century and was reputed to be the largest sycamore in Scotland. It blew down in 1998 but was replaced with a cutting which has now matured in the grounds of Corstorphine Kirk. Perhaps the most celebrated sycamore was the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Tree in Dorset, under which the six agricultural workers founded the famous early trade union in 1834. That sycamore, aged 334 years, is still extant. Coincidentally, a local 'sibling' of the Corstorphine sycamore, an *Acer drummondii*, replaced a stricken whitebeam tree in Drummond Place Garden this spring. This maple was named after the distinguished Scottish plant collector Thomas Drummond (1793–1835). Meanwhile, 'our' sycamore shines yet again, and extends a welcome to all.—**JRM**

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MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE 2015-2016

Maidie Cahill (Secretary)
Christopher Collins (Chair)
John Ross Maclean
Elizabeth Napier
Christine Ross
David Watt
Lorna Willocks
Treasurer TBC at AGM



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.

If we have your e-mail address, 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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