

THE DRUMMOND CIVIC ASSOCIATION

www.drummondplace.org

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND SOCIAL EVENT

Monday 2nd February 2015 at 7:00 P.M. - THE POLISH CLUB, 11 Drummond Place EH3 6PH.

Speaker: Sutherland Forsyth, Community Engagement Officer at the Botanic will speak on the rebuilding and recrudescence of the historic Botanic Cottage now underway in the Botanic.

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 Sutherland Forsyth

Note: We are particularly interested in new members with IT or Finance skills.



SUMMARY OF 2014

One of the most heartening pieces of news in Drummond Place this year has been the successful acquisition of 'our' police box by local resident and DCA stalwart Maidie Cahill. Maidie writes separately about her purchase and will be happy to discuss at the meeting above. Other members of the DCA committee are grateful to her for acting so civic-mindedly to safeguard the future of this good example of the distinctive 1930s police boxes that were designed to harmonise with Edinburgh's architectural heritage. DCAs own work during the year contributed to mixed results from lobbying in four thorny domains important for the peace and amenity of our neighbourhood – traffic speed, rubbish bins, beer garden opening hours and control of building conversions.

TRAFFIC

We backed Council draft proposals to limit traffic speeds to 20 miles an hour in and around Drummond Place as part of a wider, traffic-calming scheme. Following the consultation we have heard from the Council that the revised plans still include the zoning of Drummond Place and all roads leading to and from it, at 20mph; approval will be sought for that at a Committee on 13 Jan. We also asked for some additional traffic calming to limit volume and speed of traffic entering and exiting Drummond Place and help with safety concerns. We objected to the proposals to make George Street one way on the basis this would increase traffic in our area and on the basis of the aesthetics of the scheme in this World Heritage Site. As the George Street Scheme is temporary we made it clear proper monitoring of traffic volumes before and after the start of the scheme was important and asked for details of the monitoring by the Council. But we have been left in the dark about the results of promised Council monitoring of traffic volumes before and after the start of the Scheme, we continue to pursue that. The Scheme could inevitably put extra pressure on Queen Street and New Town residential areas lower down the hill, making it all the more important that faded road markings in Drummond Place are repainted, especially at busy junctions. We have asked the Council to attend to that repainting and will continue to chase for that.

BEER GARDEN

The management of the Cumberland Bar withdrew an application to extend the late opening rules for its beer garden that would have permitted a year-round closing time of 10 p.m. – this proposal having run into widespread community objections, including from DCA and individual members.

RUBBISH BINS

Our objections to the placing in Drummond Place of a communal rubbish container intended solely for residents of Nelson Street were rejected by the Council which said it must stay there for up to 12 months until a suitable spot in Nelson Street becomes available. The Council did not accept the argument that it is contradictory (as well as confusing) to install such a bin in Drummond Place whose own inhabitants are forbidden to use it and whose street is one of the few that were issued with gull-proof bags specifically to prevent the eyesore of container bins from defacing the finest New Town streetscapes. The Council, which gives the impression of tolerating GBPs through gritted teeth, now warns that ‘many’ local residents are not behaving as they should - a clear warning to GBP households not to dump rubbish in communal bins being rolled out to other nearby streets.

BUILDING CONVERSION

The developer who converted a property in the cul-de-sac off Scotland Street Lane East into an unauthorised studio successfully contested a demolition order after promising to reduce its height slightly and to make it a garage instead. DCA and individual members, including committee member Christine Ross, were among those who campaigned against this developer’s activities and who were shocked at the reversal of the demolition order.

Christine writes: The owner of the ‘garage’ was refused permission for ‘change of use’ to a studio/flat and also an office. An estimate to demolish the structure, under the terms of the Enforcement order, was accepted by the Council. The figure of £9000 to demolish the building was obtained through a Freedom of Information request. But a last minute meeting between the owner of the garage and a newly appointed Planning official resulted in ‘discretion’ being exercised, and the rescinding of the Enforcement order to demolish and only minor changes being made to the facade of the structure.

The building is ‘only’ to be used as a garage, but considering it still has a glass front door (hidden behind a roll-down shutter), kitchen and bathroom fittings it is hard to see this being a garage. Residents in Bellevue Crescent are hoping to take legal action regarding the height of the structure, and the matter has also been referred to the local authority Ombudsman – though he cannot change the decision – only comment on the planning process. Many thanks to all residents who have supported us. The saga continues. **SN**

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

The annual Drummond Civic Association Garden Party for 2014 was held on Midsummer Day, thus ensuring the maximum amount of daylight for merriment – and for music! This year, for the first time, we were lucky enough to have two lots of musical entertainment.

Firstly, arrivals at the party were welcomed by the stirring sound of bagpipes – beautifully played by Angus Hawkins of Drummond Place.



Later in the evening, guests were charmed by the singing and playing of a merry band of wandering minstrels – Klezmer Kollektiv - led by Peter Verity of Scotland Street. It was generally agreed that they contributed to making this one of the most successful parties ever, despite the slightly cloudy skies. The rain held off, however, and we welcomed close to a hundred guests including a number of local MPs and Councillors. There were even a few canine guests, appreciative as ever of the odd dropped canapé – but, as yet, there have been no reported sightings of Bottom, Titania, et al...

The gardens, as always, looked beautiful and, as usual, we were overwhelmed by the quality and huge quantity of food contributions – although, somehow, there were very few leftovers by the end of the night! AG

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 Friend of EWH with a suggested donation of £25 p.a. 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

DRUMMOND PLACE GARDEN

At last a good summer, and so far an incredibly mild winter. Good from the point of view of those who use the garden, but hard work for our gardener, Alan Georgeson, as everything - especially the grass, just keeps on growing. This is also confusing for the wild-life as evidenced by the constantly active squirrels. With some regret, we have given up the ornate wrought iron gates which are reputed to have come from Warriston House many years ago and were set up as a trellis just in from the West gate. They were deteriorating badly and needed more attention and future maintenance than we were likely to provide, so they have been handed over to Historic Scotland to be preserved as a small but significant piece of architectural heritage. A more conventional trellis is to be put in the same place.

Another loss has been the departure of Maureen Boyd, our Secretary/Treasurer, who with husband John has put an immense amount of work into both the administration and the development of the garden. Her successors are Dr Caroline Hahn and Richard Neville-Towle, who will shortly be taking up residence in number 7. **Bill Giles**



WARRISTON GATES

Above is a relatively early (judging by the lack of plants in front of the gates) photograph of the *gates in situ* in Drummond Place Garden from the online digital heritage and culture resource SCRAN. The associated text notes that they were removed from their original setting during World War II, but, almost certainly erroneously, states that they come from East Warriston House. (© Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. Licensors www.scran.ac.uk)

Another account (probably the correct one) appears at page 115 of Joyce Wallace's *Canonmills and Inverleith* (John Donald, 1994) and states that they come from West Warriston House (which stood near the end of the present-day Eildon Terrace). Wallace refers to their being put in to storage during the war to prevent their being taken for the manufacture of munitions, and being subsequently placed in Drummond Place Garden. And bearing in mind that West Warriston House was demolished in 1966, this agrees well with the belief that they came here in the 1960s. Wallace also includes an extract from a book by Rosaline Masson, entitled *Scotia's Darling Seat*, dealing with the work of the Cockburn Association from 1875 to 1925. The text of this extract suggests that the gates might be those through which Robert Louis Stevenson would gaze as a child when out for a walk. **Jim Adams**
(If anyone has any further information relating to the gates please get in touch so that we can update in future issues). Editor

DRUMMOND PLACE'S OWN TIME TRAVELLER.....

As previously mentioned, the distinctive blue police box in Drummond Place has been purchased by DCA's own Maidie Cahill.



(Photo by Alan McIntosh, Spurtle).

Maidie intends using the box as a library/resource centre for Drummond Place and for the sale of DCA merchandise such as cards and notelets. She is currently in discussions with other owners on all police box matters. One idea is to hold a police box festival - perhaps on Doors Open Day. Work on the internal and external restoration of the box (external paintwork will be a very similar colour) will commence in the spring and will include installation of an armchair and other soft furnishings as well as a wine cooler and glasses for passing visitors.

DRUMMOND TENNIS CLUB

Drummond Tennis Club is a great tennis club just off Bellevue Crescent – it may be small, comprising only two beautifully maintained blaise courts, but it is the most welcoming, friendly club in town.

I have run the coaching programme at Drummond for over 5 years and have thoroughly enjoyed seeing it grow from strength to strength. During 2014 we have coached more than 100 children and 50 adults which is a huge accolade for a small club. I now have a wonderful team of coaches who assist me with all the sessions from adult cardio to children's lessons and summer camps.



One of these coaches is Alistair Stiven who is in the process of qualifying as a level 2 coach. Although just 18, Alistair has not only helped with both the adult and children's programme but has also successfully captained the Drummond Men's First Team, gaining a promotion to Div 3. The ladies' teams have also performed well this year with the second team having some exciting matches and the Ladies' First Team being promoted to Division 1 for the first time in the club's history!

What makes this club so special is the people. It is full of personality with a wonderful social committee putting on innovative events and getting people together. Friends are made, tennis is enjoyed and fun is had by all.

If you would like to find out more about the club or the coaching please look at the websites.

www.drummondtennisclub.co.uk or for coaching www.tenniswithsophie.com **Sophie Blake**

We are privileged to print another poem by Stewart Conn.
This is from *The Touch of Time*, Bloodaxe Books, 2014.

ROOM OF ANGELS

Against an azure background in the Room
of Angels is a frieze of dancing putti, a procession
of chubby cherubs or cloned cupids whose wings

and willies, like their musical instruments,
are delicately gilded, the vivacity of their features
dismissive of the centuries. On our flight home

the cloud-banks' limitless expanse of gold-tinted
puff-balls, or meringues and cream, brings them
to mind; so that before the engines roar and our

descent to terrestrial gloom, they are restored
to their element and true domain; their pipings
and flutings one with the music of the spheres.



AN EXULTATION OF SWIFTS



Welcome back to the joyous swifts above the
north quadrant of Drummond Place and adjacent
streets! Every year they return to this vicinity. In
the evening, they swoop, wheel and scythe,
'screeing' in their rapturous possession of the air,
cavorting as well as feeding on the wing.

One of them has been observed at dizzying
speed and seemingly vanishing directly into the
roof of 1 Scotland Street. Local resident Gaby
Holden confirms that the birds have nested in the
eaves here for many decades. Once, she was
appalled to witness an entire nest of fledglings
plummet down to Sir Compton Mackenzie's
garden below. Alas, if some survived, they
would not have long withstood the riveted
attention of Sir Compton's Siamese cats.

While Mrs Holden continues to fear for the
vertiginous nests, the exultation in the evening
sky is unabated. We, who are privileged to
experience it, can only marvel at the continuing
magic of these exquisite birds and their rejoicing
in being. **JRM**

[First published in the Broughton Spurtle, Issue 231, July
2014.]



SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Use this form or a separate slip of paper to submit your subscription.

Annual Subscriptions - £5 per household payable at the AGM or send to
Stephen Nisbet at 15 Drummond Place.

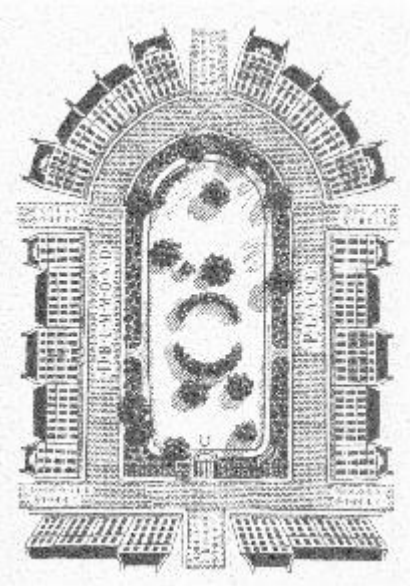
I(name).....

of.....(address).....

wish to support the Drummond Civic Association and enclose a subscription of £.....

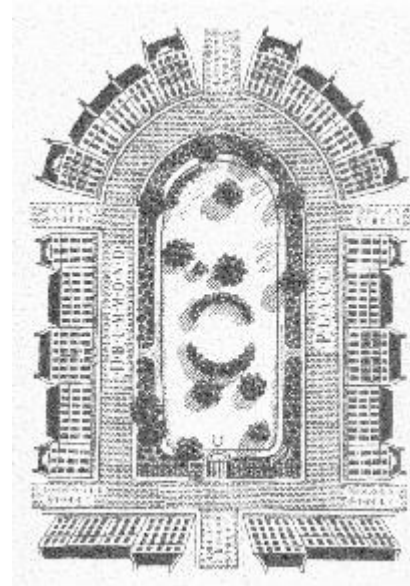
My e-mail address is as follows.....





**MEMBERS OF
THE COMMITTEE
2014-2015**

Maidie Cahill
Christopher Collins
Anna Girling
Gaby Holden
Elizabeth Napier
Stephen Nisbet
John Ross Maclean
Christine Ross



SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions will be collected at the AGM - £5 per household.
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 contact any committee member for details.

**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 Stephen Nisbet at stephen_nisbet@hotmail.com. If we have your e-mail address, we can also 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. DCA celebrates an annual midsummer garden party and also holds 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.