

THE DRUMMOND CIVIC ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER 2016

www.drummondplace.org

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND SOCIAL EVENT

Thursday 4th February 2016 at 7:15 P.M. - THE POLISH CLUB, 11 Drummond Place EH3 6PH.

Speaker: Chris Collins – ‘A House for Mrs Scott’ – a talk on Drummond Place’s Bellevue House, how and why it was built, who lived there, what happened to it. The talk is based on archives in Edinburgh and Nottingham - new material not found in any published source.

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 Chris Collins



SUMMARY OF 2016: CRIES AND WHISPERS

The Association continued to work on a number of issues of civic interest in 2015. Here are some of the highlights.

ROYAL HIGH SCHOOL

Our Association joined in the 2015 campaign to prevent the old Royal High School building being turned into an exclusive hotel. As well as lodging DCA's own objection to this plan, we used our email membership list for the first time for the purpose of encouraging those so minded to make their own individual objections. This initiative received positive feedback from several members. The volume of objections matters greatly in a closely fought contest like this. The hotel plan was rejected by the narrowest of margins in a decisive City Council vote. SN



Printed with the assistance of Rettie & Co.

<http://www.rettie.co.uk/>



BUILDING CONVERSION REJECTED

The saga of the 'lock-up garage', cum 'office' cum 'studio' in the secluded lane off East Scotland Street Lane appears to have reached a conclusion. The owner Andrew Bennie Planning Ltd applied for a change of use from a garage to an 'office or dwelling'. A Government Reporter visited the site on 17th September 2015. Her extremely comprehensive final decision dismissed Bennie Planning's arguments, and their appeal for change of use was categorically rejected. (See Ref PPA: 230-2154 for details). Is this the end of the matter? DCA's sleuths remain on the case. **JRM**

TRAFFIC

Once more Drummond Civic Association has been busy responding to traffic and parking issues.

The year started with continuing concerns about the George Street Trial. We were pushing for proper traffic monitoring in Drummond Place, to enable us to respond to consultation about this and other matters which may impact on the level of traffic. The difficulty with monitoring is where to monitor due to the number of roads leading into and out of the Place. Despite lengthy correspondence the Council did not, as far as we know, monitor. This will be something we may revisit with them this year as it is a continuing concern particularly if new plans are published for George Street and with the plans for the St James Centre, which could have an impact on traffic in our part of the New Town.

The major piece of work this year related to the draft Parking Action Plan published by the Council in August. DCA responded to the consultation in October. This was a lengthy and complex proposal by the Council and, while supporting the aims of a clean, quiet and safe environment, we needed to focus on the main areas of interest for residents. We decided these were - the introduction of shared use places to increase flexibility; proposed evening, Saturday and Sunday parking controls and visitor permits. Space does not permit us to reproduce our full response but having made the point that existing provision for residents was inadequate, our main points were to:-

- welcome some local pay and display being changed to shared use so it could be used by residents at any time;
- make it clear we did not support the increase in restrictions to evening and weekends but if this were to be introduced, then an adequate amount of pay and display spaces would require to become shared use;
- make our most important point that we did not support the change of resident only parking to shared use - resident only parking must be retained or chaos will ensue; ask the Council to try and avoid a situation where complex visitor permits become a necessity and asking them to consult us in more detail if they were to be introduced; and ask that any proposals that were to be introduced were introduced on a temporary experimental basis followed by further consultation.

More generally we made the point that we were against any proposals (such as business permits) which increased the number of Zone 6 permits issued. We will continue to try and monitor and respond to developments here. We also achieved some success in getting the white lines which had faded at entrances and exits to Drummond Place repainted, which we hope increases safety.

Finally, we look forward to developments on the 20mph proposals which we fully supported. **EN**

WHEELIE BIN IN DRUMMOND PLACE

The Association kept pressing the council's waste department to shift the green communal bin for Nelson Street that has sat in supposedly bin-free Drummond Place since September 2014. The bin is intended exclusively for the use of Nelson Street residents and was meant to be in its present location for a few months only while awaiting transfer to a suitable location in Nelson Street. Latest information from an apologetic waste department is that the bin should be removed as soon as possible. **SN**

DRUMMOND PLACE GARDEN

2015 has been a good year for the garden despite the variable weather and strong winds. We did lose a whitebeam at the start of the year, a lovely tree in the north east of the Garden. Bill Giles, our chairman for 13 years decided to retire at the AGM in May and we asked him to choose a tree to replace this. Bill has decided that it would be rather appropriate to plant an acer drummondii or Drummond's maple. The variety name of this species is named for Thomas Drummond (ca. 1790-1835) naturalist, born in Scotland, around 1790. We hope to plant this close to where the whitebeam was. The new Garden Committee is pleased that Bill has also agreed to continue to be active in the garden as our Tree Manager. The Committee has also engaged Whitelaw Wells (who also manage the Moray Place Gardens) to deal with the back office operations of subscriptions and accounts. Trees continue to be a strong focus for us and visitors remark on the quality and variety of our trees. Our annual tree survey was positive, though one of the ashes needs close monitoring. Some routine maintenance is required and the tree surgeon will be coming into the garden in the next couple of months to attend to this. It has also been recommended that the leaning cherry tree at the east end of the garden which is pulling its roots out is getting worse and should be removed. Bill Giles will fell this tree and the tree surgeons will then remove the stump.

The birds continue to be a focus for us and we continue to provide bird feeders (funded by a generous benefactor) to supplement their natural feed, particularly during the winter. Unfortunately the squirrel-proof feeders have failed to deter the squirrels so we will have to replace them with something more effective. Other generous donations this year were of a load of topsoil and a selection of plants and shrubs which were surplus to requirements in neighbourhood gardens. A major change this year was to introduce a dog register and Code of Practice for dogs. This has so far proved very effective in managing the dog usage in the garden. Not everybody likes dogs and disposing of their 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 pleasant environment for all users. Drummond Place Garden Committee – AS

Thrillingly, the notes of a mistle thrush, which is much less abundant than the song thrush, were identified in Drummond Place Garden last month. They consist of a harsh 'churr' and a sharp 'chick' – a short phrase constantly repeated. The 'mistle' derives from mistletoe, to whose berries this thrush is partial. The bird is also known as the 'storm cock', from the way it will perch on a tree and sing into the teeth of a gale. **JRM – Spurtle, May 2015**



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

BELLEVUE REVISITED AT THE GARDEN PARTY



The 'Garden Ensemble' in full swing

This year, (2015) saw the 200th anniversary of Waterloo, ending Georgian Britain's very own twenty year "War on Terror" and liberating powerful historical forces across the country.

For much of the war, cash was short and the economic cycle more than normally vicious for rackets businesses like construction. Large parts of the New Town looked no better than an abandoned building site, because that is what they *were*, and had been for years on end, with squalid results. Many folk made homes among the half-completed classical buildings, a sad population mixing the desperate and the dodgy. The smoke of their camp fires stained the Craighleith stone, while Charlotte Square - randomly missing chunks of its palace frontage - looked like a duchess with rotted teeth.

Standing in the middle of the mess, in what is now the garden of Drummond Place, was a classical Adam mansion built in 1775-76. This was Bellevue House, once the centre of a fine parkland which had been sold to the city early in the war and unsentimentally reduced to tinder. At the war's end a legion of navvies – as many as 10,000 – were working to landscape the steep northern slopes, creating the wide East-West terraces on which the grander buildings of the newest New Town were to stand.

DCA decided last year to focus on this moment in the city's history as its contribution to the year of Waterloo and particularly to find out the story of the house, which has something of a mythical status. At the garden party on the 27th of June we taped on the grass the outline of Bellevue House as a kind of architectural crime scene, using the plans Robert Adam drew up for his clients in the summer of 1775 which provide exact dimensions, if not quite a precise location (though ground-penetrating radar could probably settle that matter). A group from the Stockbridge and New Town Community Orchestra played the music of the time in what was once the drawing room of the house, a fine oval-shaped room looking out to Fife. CC

After DCA business at the AGM in February Chris will relate something of the story of the house, and of the family for whom it was built.

The Garden Party itself was mercifully free from monsoon conditions, and was attended by a record throng of guests and friends. As ever, the tables were a Babette's feast of donated delights, and extra wine had to be hurriedly fetched from Villeneuve Wines, our excellent suppliers in Broughton Street. Many thanks to all of DCA's generous contributors. **JRM**

WARRISTON GATES: An update

Having had the opportunity to consult the Drummond Place Garden Management Committee minutes held in the Edinburgh City Archives, and having talked to Bill Purves, the secretary during the relevant period, I can confirm that the gates came to Drummond Place from (West) Warriston House, not East Warriston House as stated in the online digital resource SCRAN. I also benefitted from the childhood recollections of Diarmad Campbell whose father was on the Management Committee at the time; these add detail to the 'official' record. At the Annual General Meeting of Garden Proprietors on 31st March 1964, the chairman announced that Mr Best, who was moving from Warriston House to 9 Drummond Place, had offered a large quantity of plants to the Garden, and asked for volunteers to help with the uplifting, transporting and replanting. A number immediately offered to help, and by the time the Management Committee met on 29th April, the task was effectively complete, a manifestation of the enthusiasm with which adults, and some children, responded. Some two months later, Mr & Mrs Best had also moved to Drummond Place, and on 25th June 1964, Mr Ian Fyfe 'suggested that the Committee send a dozen roses to Mrs Best as a token of welcome to Drummond Place & this was agreed, the Committee members meeting the expense themselves.' The minutes of the 25th June meeting also record that 'the Committee discussed the erection of the wrought iron gate panels obtained from Warriston House & agreed to do the majority of the work themselves' — bringing the gates to Drummond Place on a flatbed truck, according to Diarmad Campbell, and again with several Drummond Place residents giving a hand. And it may well have been Ian Fyfe (an architect who lived at 8 Drummond Place and served on the Garden Committee) who convinced Mr Best and the Committee that the gate panels, apparently at risk of being scrapped in the wake of the housing development at Warriston, be saved and put up in Drummond Place Garden. Some time elapsed before the gates were eventually erected, either late in 1965 or early in 1966, against the lawn by the west gate (where they remained until 2014 when they were handed over to Historic Scotland), and as late as 27 April 1967 Mr Best 'expressed the desire to see the Ornamental Gates painted', while 'Mr Fyfe said that he had undertaken to paint these and hoped to do so now that good weather was here' — a delay perhaps indicative of the fact that not only had a suitable foundation to be prepared, but also that the gates were not in the best condition when first gifted. Finally, it is just possible that the gates came to (West) Warriston House from East Warriston House in the 1920s. Although Mr Best (who ran the public works contractors business, John Best (Edinburgh) Ltd) was not, at least on the basis of a list in The Scotsman of 1st October 1929, involved in the alterations of East Warriston House to form the (as then named) Edinburgh Crematorium, it is just possible that, being 'in the trade', he was able to acquire the gates. I am currently exploring this possibility. **Jim Adams**

TRIPLE TRIUMPH AT DRUMMOND TENNIS CLUB

Drummond Tennis Club held its annual tournament over six weeks between the start of August and the middle of September. Mark Fergie talks us through some remarkable results.

Alistair Stiven (right) took on the current club champion Calum Friar in the singles and after losing the first set he fought back and took the title for the first time on a championship tiebreak.

Later on he won the doubles with Calum, defeating Foxwell and Johnston.

There was only one remaining challenge and that came in the mixed doubles with Fiona Shivas.

This was another final that went the distance, and with a partisan crowd loving the tennis, Alistair and Fiona came out on top against a stubborn Blake and Hawthorne. Other titles went to Valerie McKenzie as ladies singles champion, with Sophie Blake and Deborah Hood taking the ladies doubles title. Lucy Harvey and John Foxwell won the handicap mixed doubles.

The Drummond Championships involved over 80 matches being played, and it is a great credit to the tournament committee that it all went so smoothly. Thanks go to them for all their hard work and effort.



This article first appeared online in the Broughton Spurtle (29.9.15). Reproduced with permission

POLICE BOX FESTIVAL



Edinburgh's first police box festival took place on the 4th & 5th of July 2015 with 10 police boxes being turned into festival venues.

The Festival provided a great opportunity for the public to see inside the boxes (many of which retain their original fittings) and find out how they are being used by a new generation of owners. These once-neglected structures have been given a new lease of life as a florist, an art gallery, a tool library and a costume making studio amongst other uses. A wonderful hand-drawn logo and map were designed by Andrew Redmond Barr to help promote the festival.

Maidie Cahill, the owner of the Drummond Place police box invited the charity 'Who Cares? Scotland' to take over her box for the festival (above). They are a voluntary organisation working with and for children and young people in care.

Over the course of the weekend, they engaged with the public through unique video installations and interactive discussions, with 'looked after' young people, police Scotland and members of the public to help bring the conversation regarding care in Scotland into the heart of the community.

Speaking on behalf of 'Who Cares? Scotland', Ambassador Shilla Zwizwai said:

"I'm really excited about being part of the Police Box Festival. As corporate parents, the Police play a huge role in the lives of young people in care in Scotland, often removing children from situations where they are not being cared for properly. We want to let people from all walks of life, whether corporate parents or not, know more about what they can do to help shape a better future for young people in care."

Unique to Edinburgh, the police boxes were designed by Ebenezer James MacRae and manufactured in cast iron at the Carron Company near Falkirk. **MC**

We are privileged again to print another poem by Stewart Conn, particularly since this is its first printed appearance. It will be published in 'Against the Light' by Mariscat Press, due to be launched on 9th Feb 2016.

ICE AGE

*Baltic this morning in Edinburgh declares
an early caller to Radio 5 Live, the temperature
down to minus four, and the pavements slippery,
so watch your footing if you're out. I warn my wife,*

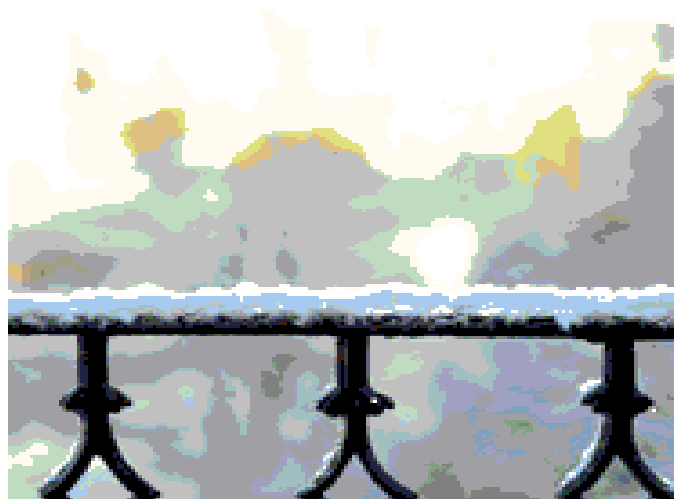
*about to top up the birdseed; thinking how
shortly after coming here we'd a winter so hard
that for weeks crowds of skiers and tobogganers
hurtled unimpeded down Dundas Street;*

*old-timers recalling how back in '63
basement-dwellers had to dig themselves
out, their grandparents in turn no doubt
claiming it was even more severe in their day;*

*while much further into the past, a woolly
mammoth's tusk found by workmen digging
the Union Canal, supposedly used to clear
the snow to find food. Another reminder*

*of the great encroachment of ice, millennia ago:
the lion couchant of Arthur's Seat and the Salisbury
Crags scoured and shaped by glaciers into what
constitutes today's imperious backdrop to the city.*

Stewart Conn

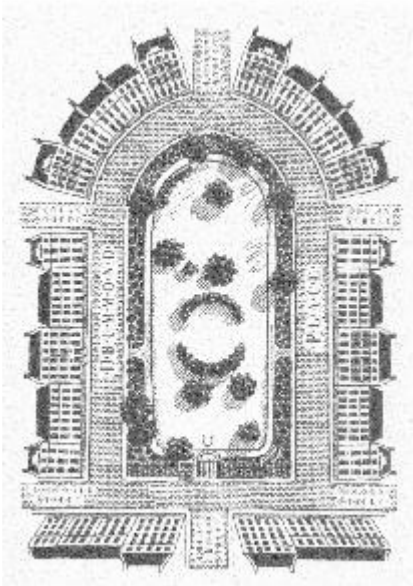




OBITUARY: Donald Fraser, better known to many of us as **Boris**, passed away on 27th June 2015. Originally from Inverness, he resided at 27 Drummond Place with his partner the late Annie Dale from 1984 until his untimely death. Boris, who was 70, was a kenspeckle figure around the neighbourhood and was known for his enthusiasm for motor vehicles and aeroplanes. He and Annie will be remembered for the many parties which they hosted at no. 27.

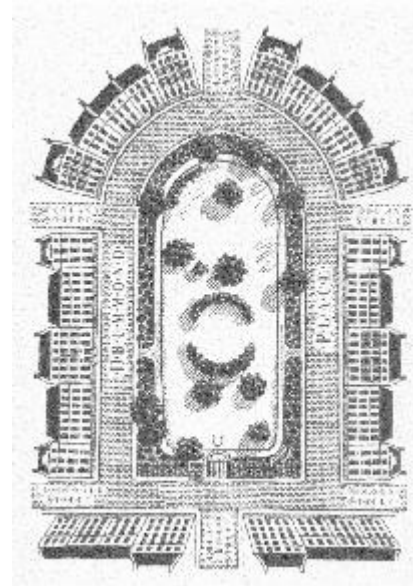


ST STEPHENS CHURCH: We received the following from our colleagues at the Heriot Row East Association and thought it would be of interest to DCA News readers. You may already have caught up with this new website for the former St Stephens Church, now owned by the Benzies Trust - <http://saintstephensstockbridge.com>. It would be great to see it develop as a local community and cultural centre, so please spread the word about the facilities there and contribute any ideas you may have. All the best for Christmas and New Year. - **Nicky Munro**



MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE 2015-2016

Maidie Cahill (Secretary)
Christopher Collins (Chair)
Lorna Willocks
Gaby Holden
John Ross Maclean
Elizabeth Napier
Stephen Nisbet (Treasurer)
Christine Ross
David Watt



SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions will be collected at the AGM - £7 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.



Printed with the assistance of Rettie & Co.
<http://www.rettie.co.uk/>