



Broughton Tolbooth 1582-1829

BROUGHTON HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Editorial

One Saturday morning in November Patrick Tyler and I took up an invitation from Morningside Heritage Association to join them in a Conversation about heritage. 'Heritage' has become quite an in-word, often referring to multi-million pound projects to save historic buildings – with a heritage industry of training courses and professionals to match.

What we were discussing was how small organisations like our own can best explore and conserve our local history, share it with a wider audience, and pass it on to the next generation. Not just buildings, but stories, music, song and poetry too.

Why bother? Well, there's the thrill of discovery, piecing the story together; and the undoubted pleasure many people find in seeing and hearing about life in their own streets in years gone by – witness the success of our exhibitions. Beyond that? I remember a conversation from a dozen years ago, during a coffee break at a local history class. I was chatting to one of the students, who felt that the sense of community in Broughton was weakening over the years. Then a thought struck her: maybe now that we were studying the area's history, that might help strengthen the sense of belonging.

At the meeting in Morningside we went on to talk about how local societies in Edinburgh might co-operate more in sharing ideas, and in seeking resources. Another, bigger meeting is planned for three months hence. More frequent contact between individual societies would be good too. We have had some: at Morningside two of their members told me how much they'd enjoyed coming on our

history walk a few years ago. But I'm sure there's scope for much more.

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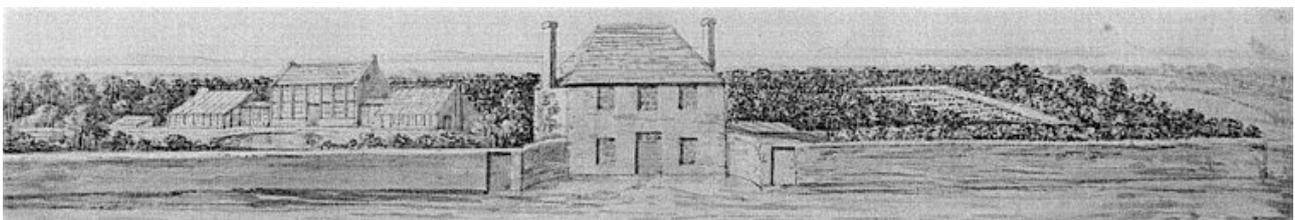
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New contributors welcome

It could be anything from a full-blown article to a couple of sentences! Phone me on 556 0903, or e-mail to john.dickie@blueyonder.co.uk

John Dickie



In the 1760s a Botanic Garden was established here in Broughton. In this eighteenth-century illustration the Principal Gardener's house is in the centre, set into the garden wall which faced onto Leith Walk. There is an article about the house on page 3.

McDonald Road Church

Alex Dow was born and brought up in Bellevue Road, but now lives in Fife.
Here he responds to Diane Chisholm's article in our last edition

I understand that the church remained privately owned by the congregation and that there was a restrictive covenant should it cease to be a church, leading to difficulties in disposing of it in 1974. The Ukrainian congregation using the Dean Bridge Church had been interested, but pulled out due to the covenant. [The church was then demolished in 1977 – editor.]

My Great-Grandfather (1839-1914) moved into Broughton Point Farm [described in Newsletter No.20] probably in the 1890s. His son lived in a part of Broughton Road known as Hay Terrace at that time; followed by my father in the same area and subsequently from about 1928 in Bellevue Road, initially No.59 but mainly No.51. I suspect that my Great-Grandfather Dow was one of the contributors for the building of the church back in the early 1900s; we had a family pew in the front row.

My late brother Ian was a very keen photographer and camera enthusiast: his daughter Megan, in



Wisconsin, e-mailed me this scanned photo of a wedding, which I readily identified as being of Edith Donaldson, 59 Bellevue Road.

[We've now been in contact with Edith's younger brother, Alastair Donaldson, and from him know that the wedding took place on 22nd September, 1956. The groom was Leslie Richmond. Alastair is second from the left; his and Edith's father Willie Donaldson just behind him, wearing spectacles; and their mother on Edith's right.]

Feedback

Readers' responses to articles in our summer edition

Margaret McLachlan's tuck shop



We asked readers which shop in Broughton Road was Margaret McLachlan's. The replies were unanimous: the middle, dark-coloured one in the photo. That's No.153, now Doggie

Style. And Alice Lauder provided the documentary confirmation from the Valuation Rolls for 1969/70:

'No.153 Broughton Road – SHOP

Proprietor: Miss Margaret MacLachlan
Tobacconist and Confectioner'

[Spelling variations: Margaret's death certificate reads 'Maclachlan (formerly McLachlan)!']

Alex Dow added an amusing family anecdote: 'My Great-Grandfather Dow's first wife died after having several children. He remarried and had one son by his second wife, John Allan Dow. Back around the early 1900s, family lore is that "Old Allan" had a sweet shop in one of those shops; and that he used to cut sweets in two to get the exact

weight requested. Before my time, of course; but I do recollect his asking my mother how many peas she put in Scotch Broth: "A handful" – "Don't you count them, Lizzie?" So cutting the sweets would have been in character.'

The photo puzzle

Can you place the view in this photo from our Broughton 2000 Archive, we asked. It's a cluster of old buildings and vehicle workshops, down a nameless wee lane off East Claremont Street. The building in the background is the clue: it's the rear of Claremont Court.



We're still looking for photographers to help record local changes as they take place – old buildings disappearing, new ones going up.)

Botanic Cottage

John Dickie of Hopetoun Crescent looks at a wee eighteenth-century building on Haddington Place whose future has been in the news recently

We're lucky enough to have a small public garden on the opposite side of our street, a small remnant of what was Edinburgh's botanic garden before it moved down to Inverleith.

In the middle of the eighteenth century Edinburgh's 'physick garden' was situated where Waverley Station is now. But the search was on for a new home for the garden, away from the city's growing pollution: the King's Botanist, Sir John Hope, chose a site off Leith Walk, and the move was made in 1763. There the new Botanic Garden flourished, until by the 1820s a bigger site was needed to allow for expansion: the major project of transferring trees and plants down the road to Inverleith began.

John Hope's garden was five acres enclosed by a wall, with a gateway facing towards Leith Walk. A small house was set into the wall, sometimes called 'the gatehouse'; 'Mr Williamson's House' on a plan drawn in 1777; and 'Botanic Cottage' on the Ordnance Survey map of 1852 (some years after the garden itself had moved away). John Williamson was the Principal Gardener responsible for laying out the botanic garden; he also produced specimens for Sir John's lectures, carried out experiments and prepared museum exhibits. Hope showed his gratitude by having a stone plaque in his memory placed in the garden: 'no lefs respected for the good qualities suited to his station in life, than esteemed for eminent skill in his profefsion'. (This monument was later moved to Inverleith, where it can still be seen.)



The last gardener in charge of Hope's garden was William McNab. But by his time Hope had died and been succeeded by Walter Scott's uncle, Dr Daniel Rutherford: 'Though usually mild and kindly, he was subject to fits of temper, and would take it out on his highly qualified head gardener M'Nab, who acted as his

demonstrator.* It was McNab who later master-minded the move to Inverleith – inventing a tree transplanter so that mature specimens did not have to be left behind.

Apart from its importance in the history of the Botanic Garden, the building is also a reminder of Leith Walk's history. Along the top of old seventeenth-century defensive earthworks built against Cromwell's army, a raised 'Walk' developed for pedestrians only, with a track for all other traffic running alongside at a lower level – the gardener's house being built at that level. The raised walk was considerably flattened out and widened at a later date: what's now the house's front door at street level was originally a first-floor window.



The years did not treat the former gardener's house kindly. It ended up sandwiched between a tenement on one side (losing a slice off one of its wings in the process); and eventually a

filling station on the other. I remember it as the family home of friends 20-odd years ago; since then it's been used as offices, then lain derelict. More recently local organisations lobbied Historic Scotland to protect its future, but to no avail; and more than one planning application involving its demolition has been accepted by the local authority. Now a group of organisations have come up with a new plan. On their behalf the Friends of Hopetoun Crescent Garden last month applied for a Heritage Lottery grant, to commission an urgent and detailed examination, recording and interpretation of the building's exterior and interior. Beyond that there is the possibility of seeking further, more substantial funding to dismantle the house and re-erect it at the Royal Botanic Garden, Inverleith.

*Sources: *Mary Cosh, Edinburgh: the Golden Age, 2003, pp.509-10; (2) A. G. Morton, John Hope 1725-1786: Scottish Botanist, 1986.*

'Penny Plain, Twopence Coloured

Alice Lauder of Hopetoun Street writes about a Broughton shop that fascinated R. L. Stevenson

How many people have heard this phrase? Our October talk by Joyce Caplan about Robert Louis Stevenson brought this back to me.

When we were children we spent many hours drawing and cutting out paper dolls, cutting out

clothes, hats, shoes, etc., to dress our paper dolls. We simply required sheets of paper, pencils and colouring pencils or water colour paints. Also, with my brothers we would put on impromptu shows (very amateurish) to entertain our parents during

the long winter evenings of black-outs, air raids and news bulletins of the 1940s. There was no television and visits to the cinema were only once per week, if we were lucky.



R.L.Stevenson wrote of his childhood when he and his friends, perhaps on their way to see the ships at Leith, haunted the bookshop at No.1 Antigua Street run by Mr John L.Smith who also had a

circulating library and was a stamp distributor. In the shop window was a most interesting cardboard theatre, with various backdrops to create scenes for a show. Between the footlights and the backdrop was the stage with horizontal slots for the cardboard characters to be manipulated to enact the story. Alongside this theatre was a collection of sheets, with characters and scenery for various plays ready to cut out. The boys used to feast their eyes on this collection in the shop window, pockets empty, but when they were in funds, would buy a SKELT Juvenile Drama. The stories were stirring tales of adventure on the high seas, robbers lurking in caves, damsels in distress in the forest, battles and heroic deeds.

The play sheets were one penny for plain or twopence for coloured. The young RLS did not realise but he was storing up ideas for creating his own stories, to be written later for the delight of boys and girls of future generations.

Source: Article written by RLS in The Magazine of Art, April, 1884. Held in the Fine Arts Department of the Central Public Library.

Broughton Court

This article was first published in the current edition of the Scottish Local History journal, as part of their 'A walk round an old photograph' series

John Dickie explains how members of the Broughton History Society, Edinburgh used a 1912 photo combined with other sources to reconstruct the image of a building that disappeared from their area 40 years ago



Broughton Court is no more. Built in the 1820s, and demolished in the early 1960s, it was once home to up to 100 local residents. We first heard of the Court from Society member Ella Brodie, who was brought up there herself in the 1920s and then lived there with her own young family in the 1940s and '50s. With nothing to see on the ground, who knows when we would have found out about

Broughton Court had it not been for Ella's reminiscences, first recorded by another Broughton resident, Jean Bell and then later at greater length by myself.

The Court stood just north of the church at the east end of Broughton Place, at a lower level because of the slope of the land. The builders bought the site in 1825, just a handful of years after build-

ing the church itself (1). As yet we do not have an exact date for construction: the records of the Dean of Guild Court did not come up with the answer – developers were not legally obliged to apply for building warrants in the 1820s; the City Archivist advised that further searching of the records could prove time-consuming and quite possibly fruitless, so that task has been postponed (2). An 1826 GPO map shows a building on the right site; not the right shape, but this was pre-Ordnance Survey cartography. Broughton Court is first listed in the Edinburgh and Leith Post Office Directory in 1839. And a large-scale edition (1:1056) of the first OS map of Edinburgh (1852) shows the Court's ultimate shape in place, and its dimensions. There it stood until demolition in the early 1960s, the cleared site being transferred to the Education Authority in 1964 to be incorporated in an extension to the playground of the primary school in East London Street (3).

The 1852 OS map shows a three-sided building with the fourth, open side of the square facing towards the adjacent church. Ella Brodie explained that there were two storeys, with a small cobbled courtyard in the middle. She then went on to describe the layout of the individual houses within the Court in her day, with shared water closets and wash basins in the communal lobbies. The houses on the upper floor of one side of the Court faced out towards Broughton Place, at its level, and were known as 'the cottages': their front doors opened to the Place, rather than down into the Court. (4)

Amongst Ella's family snapshots two gave glimpses of the central courtyard, and another of the external back wall. Then we found the 1912 photo shown here, part of a collection donated to the Edinburgh Central Library by Edinburgh Photographic Society (5). Peter Stubbs of the Society told me: 'They were taken by many different members of the EPS Survey Group. Occasionally, there are initials and/or comments written on the back of these photos, but in the absence of these, I don't know of any way to discover more about the photographers or the photos.' (6) The Broughton Court photo shows 'the cottages' described by Ella, their front doors on Broughton Place; the street lamp at the top of the steps down to the Court; a corner of the church building to the right; and the primary school (opened in 1889) in the background. This was our first wider photographic view of Broughton Court. It remains our only one except for a 1959 photo of almost exactly the same view, showing little change in the intervening years (7). We would welcome any other photos of the Court, whether in family collections or spotted elsewhere!

Another of our members, David Aitken, then took Ella Brodie's descriptions, her family snapshots

and this 1912 photo and tried to reconstruct Broughton Court in a drawing. Ella prompted amendments to his first draft, and approved the result reproduced below.

What of the people who lived in the Court? Ella had many reminiscences about individuals amongst her neighbours in the first half of the twentieth century, most of them positive. There were differences in economic circumstances – families without a wage coming in, skilled workers including slaters and miners, and actress Peggy Desmond who remained a resident in spite of her success. But Ella remembered a feeling of social equality – apart from residents of 'the cottages', who were perhaps sometimes a bit snooty! Once when I asked her if she had relations living nearby when she was growing up, she replied:

'Well everybody was your relation – you know, everybody knew everybody else. If you didn't have it, somebody else would have it. There was a lot of unemployment too. They would share. Nobody ever went hungry, or anything like that; it



was just – what would you say – neighbourly.' (8)

As part of an Open University course, I had a look at the earlier residents of the Court, using the Enumerators Books for the 1841 to 1891 Censuses as my main source (9). In the nineteenth century, most of the heads of household in Broughton Court were skilled workers – with blacksmiths, joiners and coachbuilders at the top of the list; although this was changing towards the end of the century. Nuclear families made up most of the population, with plenty of children under 15 years old. Some of the families lived in very crowded conditions. They seem to have been quite a permanent community: from 1851 to 1891 at least a quarter and sometimes over a third of the population had been there for ten years; two families were there for 3 censuses, three for 4 and one for 5. This must surely have given a sense of continuity in the Court and, together with other factors such as the physical layout of the building and the high proportion of families with children, a sense of community? (10)

Revisiting Broughton Court here has renewed my wish to pursue its story further. Meanwhile a new 'Broughton Court' has just appeared not far

away, on the former Brown Brothers site in Broughton Road. 'Exceptional apartments and penthouses': very different from the original!

References

- (1) London Street School – Inventory of Titles, in Inventories of Titles to Property belonging to the Authority: Education Inventory Volume 1, Edinburgh City Archives.
- (2) Index: Dean of Court Warrants 1762-1863, ledger, Edinburgh City Archives.
- (3) London Street School – Inventory of Titles, see (1) above.
- (4) Ella Brodie in conversation with John Dickie, 2000.
- (5) Corner of Broughton Place and Broughton Court 1912 (Edinburgh Photographic Society), Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh Central Library, Ref. YDA 2266 (13682).

(6) E-mail correspondence Peter Stubbs/John Dickie, August 2007.

(7) The photo of Broughton Place/Broughton Court dated October 1959 is in the collection of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS).

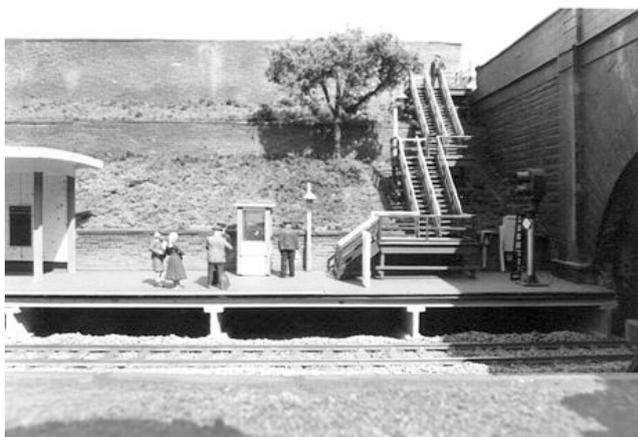
(8) Tape-recorded interviews with Ella Brodie, 9th and 16th August, 2001.

(9) Census Enumerators Books for 1841 to 1891, on microfilm, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh Central Library.

(10) The nineteenth century residents of Broughton Court, Edinburgh: who were they, and what kind of community did they live in?, John Dickie, final project report for Open University course Studying Family and Community History, 2000.

Scotland Street Station

Alan Rees describes how he came by a model of the Scotland Street railway yard and now seeks a new home for it



The railway line operated through the east end of the site between tunnels from Waverley to Granton from 1842 until 1868. Nearby the Royal Patent Gymnasium thrived for twenty years from 1865 and was followed by the St Bernard's football club (the 'Saints') which had fluctuating fortunes between 1889 and 1942. Finally, the King George V Memorial Park was established in 1946, and was refurbished along with the Scotland Yard area in 1986.

In the late 1980s I was involved in setting up what was then called the Scotland Yard Adventure Centre, now known as 'The Yard', which occupied part of the derelict site of the former Scotland Street railway yard. In 1992 I heard of the availability of the 'Scotland Street' layout of the yard including

rolling stock. I am not a railway model enthusiast but I was interested in the history of the area and my contacts assured me that it was something of a classic that should not be lost. So I bought it for £750 from its maker, David Elbourne, then living in Rugby, thinking that it should find a good home in Edinburgh where people could see and appreciate it, not least for its historical value.

Between 1992 and 2005 the model was kept by the EDLEC Model Railway Club at their Portobello premises. They took it to a number of model railway shows and it featured at the opening by the Princess Royal of the Scotland Yard Adventure Centre's play building in 1994. But when the Club had to move, the model could not go too and was packaged up for storage in my garage. A number of people have expressed interest but it has languished there ever since.

When assembled, the layout in four sections measures 10' x 5' and sits on stands 3' high. It contains realistic features such as tracks, platforms, huts, etc. and comes with 70 period bits and pieces including wagons, trucks, lorries and cars. It can be electrically operated, although this needs an overhaul.

I am still seeking a new home for it – ideally on sale but this is negotiable. If anyone is interested would they please contact me on 0131 332 7317 and it can be viewed.

Robert Louis Stevenson was here

'The tunnel to the Scotland Street Station, the sight of the train shooting out of its dark maw with the two guards upon the brake, the thought of its length and the many ponderous edifices and open thoroughfares above, were certainly things of paramount impressiveness to a young mind. It was a subterranean passage, although of a larger bore than we were accustomed to in Ainsworth's novels; and these two words, "subterranean passage", were in themselves an irresistible attraction, and seemed to bring us nearer in spirit to the heroes we loved and the black rascals we secretly aspired to imitate.'

(Stevenson's Edinburgh: Picturesque Notes, 1954, 1879, pages 70-71 in 1954 edition)

Stockbridge museum mystery

David Watt of Bellevue Place investigated some puzzling painted lettering on a tenement wall



In Hamilton Place, alongside the Water of Leith the Gents Toilet was originally a Fire Station. Opposite it on the first flat tenement wall one can barely make out the black painted letters 'MUSEUM', about two feet in size. For years I have been trying to find out more about the

Museum – the discovery in Stockbridge Library of a newspaper cuttings book gave the answer. An item from the *Edinburgh Evening News* of 1st September 1938 reads:

'A letter to the Editor the other day drew attention to a mystery museum in Stockbridge and asked if anyone could offer a solution. A reader has been good enough to supply some information which throws light on the matter. He is over 70 and has lived all his life in Stockbridge, and according to his knowledge of local lore the word "Museum" which puzzles strangers was painted along the first floor windows of the building in Hamilton Place by a taxidermist to direct public attention to his wares – stuffed birds, fish and animals. The pend which runs into St Stephen Street used to be the entrance to the old Stock Bridge market place which was a busy centre for traders. The enterprising taxidermist who, so far as we can discover, gave up his

"museum" fully 80 years ago, executed his sign so thoroughly that the paint has long outlived its original purpose, and now only serves to arouse curiosity.' [Not everyone read this explanation, of course: the museum mystery was raised again in 1945, in the *Evening Despatch*, and in 1954 in the *Scottish Daily Express*.]



Stockbridge Market was built by a Capt. Carnegie, who lived at No.7 Bellevue Crescent, and opened in April 1826; but much to the Captain's annoyance Broughton Market opened in the 1840s and Stockbridge Market could not resist the competition and withered away by the 1890s. All

that remains today is an impressive gateway inscribed "Butcher Meat, Fresh Fruit and Poultry". Why paint MUSEUM? He probably thought that few of his generation would know what a taxidermist was – anyway space was limited and Museum is only six letters, half of his own title. His venture was not a success as he left the market in the 1850s.

Source: Newspaper cuttings book in the reference section, Stockbridge Public Library.

Miscellany

Elma Birse unearthed three items in the Edinburgh Room at the Central Public Library

Gas lighting on its way out

– Scotsman, 29th October, 1954

Electricity is to be used to light all Edinburgh Streets. Edinburgh Corporation Works Committee approved in principle yesterday a scheme for the change-over from gas to electric lighting. Mr. Norman Wilson, Engineer and Manager of the Lighting and Cleansing Department was instructed to submit a programme for the different phases of the change-over.

Because the price of gas has risen by a halfpence per therm it will cost Edinburgh £1,510 more this year for street and stair lighting.

Source: Ref. YTK 4148, Edinburgh Room, Central Library.

Edinburgh to have 'snuff month'

– Scotsman, 3rd January, 1966

In Edinburgh the Society of Snuff Grinders & Purveyors is not so much breaking new ground as trying to revive an old addiction, for when snuff

became popular in Britain during the 17th century the Scots took to the habit with such enthusiasm and consumed such large quantities that a killed Highlander has been the traditional sign of the snuff seller ever since.

Bankers, lawyers and clergymen and other professional men and workers in industries where smoking is not allowed remain the chief snuff buyers, but a number of young people are beginning to acquire the habit.

In a handbook, specially prepared for Tobacconists, the Society says that 'the true artistic method' of taking snuff involves 12 separate operations.

Source: as above

Huntly House Tearoom

– opened 9th May, 1949 with accommodation for 30 people. It closed in 1965.

Anyone have any memories of this Tearoom?

Source: Ref. YAM 41H, Edinburgh Room, Central Library

Society Business

Notes from the Chair

Patrick Tyler writes about this year's programme of events
and about his hopes for the society's future – and how you can help shape it

We have had a good start to the year, excellently entertained with talks about the Smells of Edinburgh, Robert Louis Stevenson and the 18th Century Royal Mile.

An exciting syllabus has been arranged for the second half of the year with talks to come on the Prisoners of War in Edinburgh Castle, Eric Liddell, Roslyn Chapel and Moray House. As a reminder our next talk will be:

7th January
'Captured in Time'
Edinburgh Castle's Prisoners of War'

Two visits have been arranged:

Earl Haig Poppy Factory
Tuesday 29th January at 2pm
Lyon & Turnbull
March 2008

(The date is to be confirmed)

We will be asking for numbers for the Poppy Factory visit at our meeting on 7th January.

Many of our talks are now by power point presentation. Drummond School let the Society use their projector. The Society has now purchased a second-hand laptop which will be available for presentations and also for storing the Society's archives.

A Broughton History Society web-site is on the cards. Progress is slow, but we anticipate that it will be up and running soon.

Broughton History Society is doing well. We are attracting more members. All meetings this year have been well attended. I want to make certain that the History Society continues to thrive. I would

therefore welcome feedback from members on the future direction of our History Society:

What do you think of our History Society?

What do you think is or should be its purpose?

How might we develop in the future?

I will be canvassing your opinion.

Your committee will soon be discussing the content of next year's programme. It is always a challenge to get the programme complete. If you know of any possible speakers or have any ideas of subjects for talks please could you tell me or any of the committee?

We are always looking for volunteers for the committee, particularly as some of us will be standing down at the next AGM having completed the maximum four years allowed under the constitution as committee members. If you would be interested in committee work for the Broughton History Society please could you let me know.

I wish you all a Happy Christmas and New Year.



*In this photo from our **Broughton 2000 Archive** we are looking across from Logie Green Road to Beaverbank Place. The back of the tenement is brickwork, but round at the front it is stonework: can anyone tell us how this came about?*

Postscript

**David Watt wasn't sure if we'd think this true story suitable for our newsletter
but it's a wee snippet of Edinburgh's oral history it would be a pity to lose**

In the late 1920s there was extended argument in the City Council about the provision of Gents toilets in the Princes Gardens at the foot of the Mound, next to the Floral Clock. Some progressive councillors thought it would lower the tone of Princes Street – others that for health reasons the underground toilets should be provided.

After hours of discussion it was decided to go ahead, and arrangements were made for an official opening (shades of the film *Clochmerle?*). However on the big day the pavement and the entrance to

the new toilets were curtained off with sacking, behind which could be heard the sound of scrubbing.

What was being done was never made public. The workmen were trying to remove white paint lettering which read "The Sh*tty Chambers". Local students were blamed for the outrage, but nobody was prosecuted.

Source: My grandfather L L Ritchie, who held the City clock maintenance contract, was told off the record by an amused official.