



Broughton Tolbooth 1582–1829

BROUGHTON HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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The Dow family and Broughton Point Farm

Back in 2006 we carried a short item about the dairy farm at Broughton Point (where Broughton Road and East Claremont Street meet) – here Alex Dow tells the story of his family's connections with the Farm and with Broughton in general



5 Graham Street, Leith – so not far away. The Tants of the late 19th century were mainly fleshers and bakers, whilst the principal Ross connection was a tanner.

My Great-Grandfather (ALSD1) had two wives. The first, Barbara Young, died aged 31 in 1874 at Bristo Street, after having 5 children including my Grandfather (ALSD3) – the earlier ALS2 had died in infancy.

ALSD1's second marriage was to May Robertson of Kinghorn, in 1876, followed by the birth of the only child of that marriage, (John) Alan Dow. He is the only child recorded in the 1891 Census as living in Broughton Point Farm, the children of the first marriage being adults by then. The 1901 Census lists the same three occupants plus 'Sarah Louise Cox, Dairymaid', who later married the son, John Alan Dow.

My Father (ALSD4), born in 1900, was my main source of information about Broughton Point Dairy Farm, probably covering the period 1904 to 1914, given his age.

Continued overleaf

My Great-Grandfather Alexander Lockhart Simpson Dow (ALSD1) moved in to Broughton Point Farm sometime between the censuses of 1881 and 1891, his occupation changing from baker to dairyman in the process. He was born in 1839, dying in 1914 from "Old age, Congestion of the Lungs – 10 days". His full name was handed down through the generations, with the present writer being ALS5.

This direct connection with the area of about a century terminated in 1987 with the sale of my parents' house at 51 Bellevue Road, due to my mother's admission to Bangour Village Hospital. Her full name was almost a family history in itself, Elizabeth Law Flockhart Ross Tant. Other Dow relatives of those generations had left the area by then.

The Tants also had some connections with the Broughton area; and the Rosses were mainly at

Inside

The M'Dougall Fire of 1941

by Alice Lauder 3

The 1790 Census of St Cuthbert's Parish

by Jessie Denholm 4

They lived in Broughton

by John Ross Maclean 6

The Vantie

by Jim Suddon and Gavin MacGregor 7

Broughton in Literature

by John Dickie

Ideas or contributions for our next edition?

Phone editor John Dickie on 0131-556 0903
or e-mail john.dickie@blueyonder.co.uk

He was born at 40 Hay Terrace (subsumed into Broughton Road around 1912). He helped on the farm as part of the family, and could remember helping to drive the cows up and down East Claremont Street, to grazings in the Claremont Bank area; and there was some in-bye grazing alongside the farm stading, now occupied by the 1930s Miller houses and the 1960s ones below them – facing on to the brae of Broughton Road. Until the latter were built, he could still identify parts of the farm walls etc. in the wall down that stretch.

Another relative who could remember my Great-Grandfather Dow (ALSD1), described him as ‘a dapper little man’. Unfortunately his photo (on page one) is the only one I have of that generation; although there is supposed to be a commercial/ advertising postcard of the farm, from which someone produced an oil painting now elsewhere in the family.

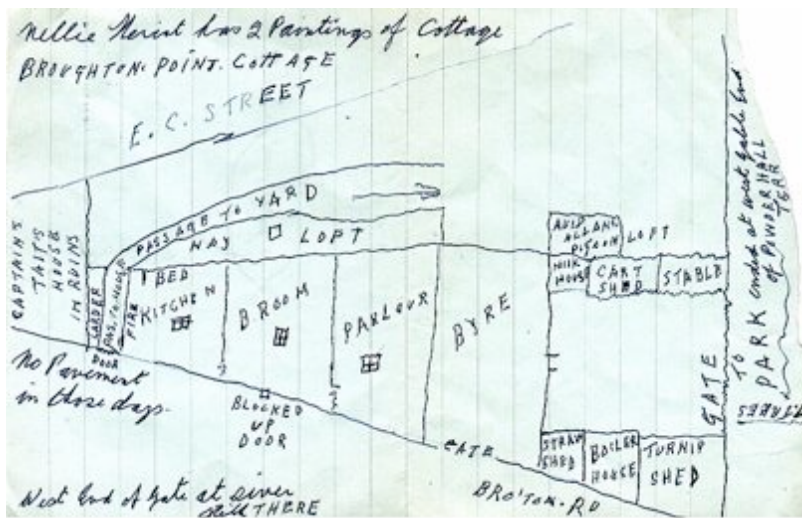
John Alan Dow helped with the Dairy and also for a period had the sweet shop on the opposite side of Broughton Road where, by repute, he would cut sweets in two to get a more precise weight.



Alex's Grandfather Dow (left), the two Ross sisters, and his Grandfather Tant – circa 1896

My Tant and Dow lines have closer links than usual, in that my Grandmother Dow was Helen Tod Ross and my Grandmother Tant was Margaret Ross, sisters, and daughters of William Ross and his wife Elizabeth Flockhart. The latter couple celebrated their Golden Wedding in 1922: with the complication for me that my many relatives amongst the guests in the photos of that event are generally doubly related to me.

How did this doubled relationship come about? My Grandfather Dow (ALSD3), became a (horse-drawn) van contractor. Somewhere I have his business card, and I recollect a newspaper photo around 1912, of him and several other contractors with horses, posed at the east end of Palmerston Place with a huge boiler as the load. My Grandfather Tant was a flesher, who for a time



Alex's father made this sketch map of Broughton Point Farm in 1970. Broughton Road is at the bottom, East Claremont Street at the top. The neighbouring Cottage (top left) was occupied by William Seton, minister of the Catholic Apostolic Church, in 1881; and by the Stephen family by 1891.

worked in a shop in Broughton Road, close to Logie Green Road.

I think the two marriages stem from the possible disposal of the cows at the end of their milk-production lives from Broughton Point Farm to the flesher's shop where my Grandfather Tant worked. After slaughtering, the skins were probably sold to the tannery at Bonnington where my Great-Grandfather Ross worked.

It seems likely that my Grandfather Dow provided the horse and cart, whilst my Grandfather Tant probably accompanied him, to receive payment for the hides. On such visits, they may have met up with the Ross sisters, leading to engagement and marriage – see the photo of all my grandparents in their finery.

To complete the story, my parents married in 1934, as first cousins. The photo below of myself (on left) with my lady-wife Margaret Thomas, my parents and brother Ian, was taken in the back garden of No.51 Bellevue Road in the summer of 1960, when Margaret as my fiancée from Wales met my parents for the first time.



Sources: 1881 and 1891 Censuses. Father's sketch and oral reminiscences. Dow family photos and memories.

The M'Dougall fire of 1941

Alice Lauder tells the story of the local fire that cost an educational publishing firm £200,000

In Newsletter No.12 (Winter 2002/3) we published an aerial view of Edinburgh (with the kind permission of Mr. John A. Jones from his book *Old Edinburgh - views from above*), after which we had many enquiries about the large buildings which fronted on to East Claremont Street on the site of today's Claremont Court, alongside Broughton Primary School.

In 1913 the firm of M'Dougall's Educational Company Limited, a company of scholastic publishers well known throughout the UK, had acquired the buildings and started to reconstruct the premises. The group of buildings had a three-storeyed frontage in East Claremont Street and covered many acres of ground between that Street and Bellevue Road, including the area on which had stood Mackenzie's Biscuit Factory from 1896. In 1941 M'Dougall's occupied the greater part of the main building, whilst the remainder was in the hands of two associated companies – the book-binding firms of Orrock & Son Ltd., and G. Duncan & Son Ltd.

In June 1941, a serious fire broke out in the above buildings. This was during the Second World War and all premises had fire-watching teams on duty round the clock. Shortly after four o'clock a worker in a neighbouring garage spotted the blaze and alerted the fire-watchers and fire brigade. The whole building was soon ablaze and tongues of fire shot out at many points. Window panes of the dwelling houses on the other side of East Claremont Street became quite hot. The roof, doors and many walls of the buildings collapsed though the firemen fought long and hard to contain the fire.

Three weeks before the London premises and warehouses of M'Dougall's had been destroyed by enemy action. Much of the machinery lost in the 1941 fire in Edinburgh was irreplaceable in wartime. The stock of printing plates and electros was however, stored elsewhere, and by a happy



Today's Claremont Court stands on the site once occupied by M'Dougall's

chance the management of M'Dougall's, as a result of the danger from bombing, had recently consigned to the vaults a copy of every book published by the firm. This came as a disappointment to the many children who were hoping lessons would be suspended because of the lack of printed books! I remember my husband and his brother saying that they were hanging out of the window of their top floor flat in East Claremont Street watching the fire and chuckling at the thought of disrupted classes because of a shortage of books.

When I came to live in Bellevue Gardens in 1956 the burnt-out building was just as it had been after the fire. A few years later rumour had it that we were to have a multi-storey block of flats towering over us and this was a disappointment to everyone nearby. However, to our relief it was found that many layers of golden sand ruled out a tall building and the present-day Claremont Court was erected in the 1960s.

Sources: The Scotsman, Monday, June 16th, 1941, YTH 9448 "Fires" Vol. 2, Edinburgh Room, Central Library, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh. Local memories.

Local place nicknames

Two items posted on the Edinphoto web site

'The Allotments were waste ground between Beaverbank Place, Broughton Road and Logie Green Road. It was a great playground for kids, and I always remember a great big bonfire on Guy Fawkes Night which took weeks to gather – all kinds of debris and wood that would burn.'

Jim Calender, Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada: June 17, 2010

Antaygi Street

Strictly speaking, more of a local pronunciation than a nickname, I suppose, referring to Antigua

Street (Leith Walk between Union Street and Gayfield Square). Kim Traynor:

'When I grew up, Edinburgh folk didn't seem too keen on words ending in "ua" or "ue". Hence the pronunciations "Antaygi Street" and "Montaygi Street".'

In his *Place Names of Edinburgh*, Stuart Harris says Antigua Street is shown on Ainslie's map of 1804, and is listed in Campbell's Directory of the same year. 'No doubt it was named for the island, which like others in the West Indies was frequently in the news of the naval war with the French.'

The 1790 Census of St Cuthbert's Parish

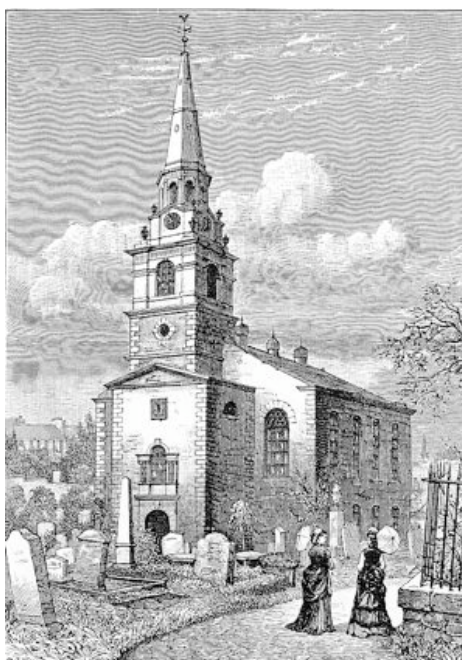
Jessie Denholm has been studying local history for many years, most recently concentrating on research on the Granton and Trinity areas in conjunction with the Granton History Group. She has also joined our own history society. Her interest in the census of the Parish of St Cuthbert's arose from a project undertaken for the Scottish Geneological Society. Here she explains how the census can be used to learn more about Broughton and the people who lived here in 1790.

This article is based on the talk that I gave to the Society on 10th May 2010. It covers the circumstances in which St Cuthbert's Parish came to have a 'Census' in 1790 and the sort of material it contains, particularly with regards to the Broughton area. It then goes on to consider how we as local historians can use this sort of material and how we can expand it by linkage with other records of the same period.

Some readers who were not present at the talk may at this stage be wondering what the connection was between Broughton and the Parish of St Cuthbert's. The answer is that in 1790 Broughton and much of the area covered by present-day Edinburgh was in St Cuthbert's Parish. A narrow strip of the parish went down to the sea at Wardie where it ran between Cramond and North Leith Parishes. Its outer boundaries were with Corstorphine, Colinton, Liberton, Duddingston and South Leith Parishes. In the centre of the area, everywhere that was not within the eight Old Town parishes, Canongate or St Andrew's was in St Cuthbert's Parish. If you want to examine the precise boundaries of St Cuthbert's Parish, I would suggest that you go to the National Library of Scotland website www.nls.uk/maps/counties and view Gellatly's "New Map of the Country 12 Miles Around Edinburgh" (1834).

Origins of the 1790 census

So how did it come about that St Cuthbert's Parish had a census in 1790? This was instigated by Sir John Sinclair, the MP for Caithness. He was interested in various new ideas that were springing up in the late eighteenth century. While travelling in Germany he came across the idea of 'statistics' which then meant 'information useful to the State'. He, however, gave it a wider meaning so that it covered all information concerned with the measurement of the happiness of the people. He aimed to gather such information and build up a detailed picture of Scotland, parish by parish. In May 1790 he asked the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to agree to him writing to the



This drawing of St Cuthbert's Church is from a later period (Victorian costume!), but it has the tower as transformed just a year before the census (unlike the earlier, more familiar drawing used as the frontispiece to Old and New Edinburgh).

ministers of all 938 parishes in Scotland asking for information. This was agreed and the eventual end product was the work known as The (Old) Statistical Account (OSA). It and its successor, The New Statistical Account (NSA), which was prepared in the 1830s, comprise a valuable resource for both family and local historians and can be consulted online at www.edina.ac.uk/stat-acc-scot. They can also be read in book form in the Central Library on George IV Bridge – in the Scottish Library.

One of the questions which Sir John asked was about the population of the parish. In Edinburgh the ministers and elders of the Edinburgh parishes plus St Cuthbert's, Canongate, North Leith and South Leith decided to make an 'enumeration' of their respective parishes. This involved a count of the number of families (households), and the

numbers of males and females in them. St Cuthbert's Parish embarked upon a rather more elaborate enumeration. They collected the names of the heads of household and for each household the numbers of parents, children, lodgers and servants. The numbers of males and females within each of these categories was also recorded. The information gathered was recorded in tabular form on four hundred and eleven pages. The layout is remarkably like that of a modern spreadsheet with headings, rows and columns. There is a copy in the National Archives of Scotland among the Kirk Session records for St Cuthbert's. I myself became interested in this document and its contents when I undertook to make a transcription of it for the Scottish Genealogy Society – it is intended that this will be published in due course, probably as a CD. Because of the tabular form in which the original was presented, it could be transcribed directly on to an Excel spreadsheet.

Using the census alongside other sources

What have I as a local historian been able to do with this material and what will others be able to do with it once it is published? Anyone who has already studied a particular area within the parish may find it useful as an additional source of

information about the stage that urban development had reached by 1790 and the population density. This may require review of the material from the census alongside various maps from the National Library of Scotland map website – from the Town Plans category or, in the case of the outlying rural areas, the County Maps category. The social status of the area can sometimes be deduced from the numbers of servants kept and the use of ‘Mr’ instead of just giving the Christian name of the head of household. Many well known people are listed and we can view details of their households.

Anyone who has used the later official Censuses that were taken from 1841 onwards will know how useful it is to have information about the occupations of the people concerned. This sort of information is not given in the 1790 St Cuthbert’s Census but we can in some cases get it by linking these records with other contemporary records. There are two useful and easily accessible sources of additional information – the Edinburgh & Leith Directories for 1790 and 1791 and the Old Parish Records. These can both be consulted, on micro-film, at the Edinburgh Room in the Central Library.

Edinburgh has a series of **directories** running from 1773 to 1975. In 1790 the Directory consisted of an alphabetical list of residents with their addresses and, where appropriate, their occupations. For some people no occupation was shown – in most cases because the people concerned were ‘gentry’ and did not need to work. Most of the women in the Directory come into this category but there are a few who were shown as dressmakers, milliners and similar occupations. One woman in Crosscausway earned her living as a gingerbread baker. The Directories also give us street numbers for some areas – these seem to have been a fairly new feature in Edinburgh in 1790.

The **Baptism records** show the names of the parents, the area of the parish in which they lived and the occupation of the father. Baptisms had to be witnessed and until the mid-1780s the normal practice in St Cuthbert’s Parish was to record the names of two individual witnesses. The practice then changed so that where the child was baptised in church, the witnesses were stated to be the congregation of the church in which the baptism took place. Interestingly this was not always the parish church (St Cuthbert’s, then normally known as the West Kirk) or the Chapel of Ease (later Buccleuch Parish Church).

The **Marriage records** also show the name and occupation of the bridegroom and the name and parish of the bride’s father. **Burial records** are similarly informative but are different in style to the elegant baptism and marriage records and indeed the 1790 census. They use the old Scottish forms of both surnames and place names. For instance the 1790 Census lists ninety-two householders with the surname ‘Brown’. Any of them who died in the next 30 years and who were buried in St Cuthbert’s

Kirkyard, would in most cases have been recorded under the name ‘Broun’.

To link these records to the names on the 1790 Census for the whole of the parish, which had over 5300 households and 32,947 people, would obviously be a considerable task. I have, however, started to match the Directory and Baptism records to the Census records for three places in our area – namely Picardy, Broughton and Canonmills. This task is by no means complete but the results obtained so far have convinced me that this is a worthwhile technique which can tell us quite a lot about these areas and the people who lived in them in 1790.

Names	Parents		Children		Lodgers		Servants		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
<i>John Henderson</i>	1	1	4	1	1	2	1		11
<i>Jas Chartoto</i>	1	1	3	1	2	2	4	1	15
<i>Mr Ananias</i>	1	1	1		1	1	2	1	8
<i>Mr Cartier</i>	1	1	1		2	5			10
<i>Mr Lounston</i>	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	11
<i>Despard Flemine</i>	1	1	3	2			1	1	9
<i>John Cartier</i>	1	1	5				7	1	15
<i>John Cartier</i>	1	1	3	4	1	1	6	1	14
<i>John Cartier</i>	1	1	2		1	1		1	7
<i>John Cartier</i>	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	4	12
<i>Mr Whinn</i>		1	2	2					5
<i>Mr Lounston</i>	1	1	1	1			2	4	10
<i>West. Hall</i>		1	1	2	3		2		7
	3926 3817		4179 4283		1574 1659		1442 2245		12733

'Picardy' in the census – by 1790 there were still some French-sounding names to be listed for Picardy residents – Jas Chartoto, Despard Flemine and John Cartier.

Picardy

Picardy was built in 1729 to accommodate some French cambric weavers who were brought over to establish this industry in Scotland. The 1790 Census gives us the names of twenty-three householders, some of whose names have a distinctly French flavour. There were apparently 287 people in these households. Eighty-two of them were categorised as 'male servants'. This was not the sort of area where people would have had male domestic servants so I presume that they were apprentices and workers employed by the householders in their weaving businesses. It is open to question whether all of these servants actually lived in Picardy. If they did not but were listed in their own households elsewhere in the parish, there may have been some element of over-counting.

Continued overleaf

Broughton and Broughton Hall

Moving on to 'Broughton and Broughton Hall' (the name of the Elder's Bounds) we find a rather different type of community where 1020 people lived in 130 households. The first person listed was 'Mr Donaldson', and I am grateful to Alice Lauder for telling me that he was the proprietor of Broughton Hall and the founder of Donaldson's Hospital. He was obviously a fairly wealthy man and he had one male servant and two female servants. This makes it all the more noticeable that a weaver called Mr Fairly (identified from the Directory) had seven male servants and raises the same question as with Picardy – did they all live there? Of those householders traced so far, four were weavers. Some were connected with the building trade – masons, a glazier, a plasterer and a painter, some were smiths and wrights. There were three 'gentleman's servants' and a coachman who probably worked for wealthy people in the New Town. There were some with more middle-class occupations such as a writer (lawyer), a teacher, an Excise Officer and a seed merchant.

The Baptism records give us some insight into the church-going habits of the people of Broughton. By 1790 the days had long since passed when it was compulsory to attend the parish church. Of the twenty-six householders traced through the Baptism records, four had apparently left the Church of Scotland as their children were baptised in several different secession churches. Only eleven of the others had their children baptised in the parish church. The others used various Church of Scotland congregations, in South Leith or in Edinburgh.

Canonmills

If we then go to Canonmills we find a rather different sort of community where 767 people lived in 104 households. Most of those traced so far worked in various processing industries – there were skinners and tanners, millers and mill workers, carters and labourers and one yarn boiler. Also mentioned is a place referred to as 'Dysters Factory' where there were sixteen male servants and ten

female servants – again I wonder whether they actually lived there. A spirit dealer and a cowfeeder (dairyman) catered for various needs of this community. Again we get a glimpse of their church-going habits. As with the people of Broughton, some had their children baptised in the parish church, some in Edinburgh or South Leith parish churches and two in secession churches. None of these churches were particularly convenient for people from Canonmills and it must have required a great deal of commitment to make the long uphill journey to attend the secession church in Bristo Street!



Old houses at Canonmills, by Daniel Wilson.

I must emphasise that my efforts to link the 1790 Census information with other records have only just begun and there is a lot more work still to be done. I hope that ultimately I will be able to present to you a fuller report about the Broughton area in 1790.

Sources: Jessie gives references for her sources throughout the article. The drawing of St Cuthbert's Church is from James Grant's Old and New Edinburgh, Volume II, p.137 (1889, London, Cassell, Galpin and Co.). The drawing of houses at Canonmills is from Daniel Wilson's Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time, Edinburgh, T. C. Jack (1848; 1891).

They lived in Broughton

Over the last few years our local community paper *Spurtle* has published articles about interesting characters who've been local residents in the past. We think them well worth a second airing. Here's one by John Ross Maclean, from their December 2007 edition.

Robert Garioch belongs to the glittering pantheon of 20th-century Scots vernacular poets which includes Hugh MacDiarmid, William Soutar and Sidney Goodsir Smith. Best known for his humorous and satirical poems which



Robert Garioch 1909-81

both excoriated and celebrated his beloved Embro's high and low lives, he was also a brilliant translator of the 19th-century Italian poet Giuseppe Belli, and of Hesiod and Pindar.

It is perhaps less well known that Garioch was a son of Broughton, being born at 109 Bellevue Road. His father was a painter-decorator: examples of his skill are still seen in the gold-leaf house numbers on fanlights in Bellevue Road. Both his

parents were musically gifted. His mother taught the piano as well as the mandolin, and she was also the 'pianny wumman' at Saturday matinées in the Picturedrome in Easter Road.

In the 1930s, Garioch himself was one of the last picture-house pianists in the Lyric in Nicolson Street. He recorded how he sat beside Houdini in the balcony and 'even shook hands with him, which took some courage because we believed he could squeeze the juice out of a golf ball.'

Garioch attended St James's Episcopal School at 103 Broughton Street, now the Stafford Centre, before proceeding to the Royal High School and university. He wrote: 'I was brought up as a Scottish Episcopalian maybe because my mother went not for the doctrine but the music, and a very good reason too.'



He is commemorated by a plaque at his adult home in Nelson Street, in the painting *Poets' Pub* in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, and by an engraved, paved quotation at Makars' Court outside the Writers' Museum.

Accompanying the 'Broughton boy' on his peregrinations across 'Embroidery to the play' will always be a truly uplifting and scintillating experience.

The Vantie

Memories of a Broughton sweetie-shop

Jim Suddon posted this on the EdinPhoto web site:

'The confectionery shop in East London Street was known as "The Vantie". It had a machine on the counter which was for the purpose of making Vantas drinks. I never had one myself, but we used to buy Vantas cubes which we sucked.'

We consulted Society member **Gavin MacGregor**, who has lived in East London Street all his life:

'The sweetie shop was to the left again of the stair where the extension to Bond Accountant's now is (No.17). When I was very young it was "Elliot's". I'm guessing pre-school or thereabouts was when I used to get two pennies and two ha'pennies on a Saturday to spend there, and I have distinct recollections of the shop and what was available for such a sum.

Still early on in my lifetime it was taken over as "McDonalds" (Dave and Kathleen) and was a long-established institution fondly remembered locally, only given up when both were well into retirement age. After that it was an Asian-cum-takeaway shop for some years with, I think, periods of vacancy; until Bond's absorbed the premises into their previously established business next-door



at No.19 (which had been a plumbers before then!).'

As to "the Vantie" the name is not one I ever knew or used – which, of course, is not to say that others didn't. Certainly it had a Vantas drinks machine of which I was just a bit envious as my father was rather disapproving on the grounds, I guess, of the junk nature of the product.

This, I'm fairly certain, was in the "Elliot's" phase. The McDonalds established a much more family/sweetie shop from early on, while also being the tuck shop for Bellevue/Drummond schools.

Newsletter circulation

We print 120 copies of each edition. Around half go to Society members. Eight non-members who have shown a special interest get it regularly; and for each edition one or two on a once-off basis. I'm currently posting it to ten other Edinburgh history groups. And copies also go to libraries, schools, and local doctors' and dentists' waiting rooms.

Newsletter online

We now have a dedicated page of our own on the Broughton community paper's web site (www.broughtonspurtle.org.uk). On their home page you'll see **Broughton History Society** in the left-hand column: click on that for general Society information, the syllabus for 2010/11, and back issues of the newsletter.

Broughton in Literature

Everything good and great is here,
Baith new and auld, in Broughton Street.

John Dickie found a poem – which prompted some research

How would you define ‘Literature’? Over the last two years we’ve quoted writing about Broughton by novelists Robert Louis Stevenson, James Robertson, Ian Rankin and Chris Brookmyre; by poet Robert Garioch; and by Victorian real-life crime writer James McLevy. Now we turn to an nineteenth-century poem: whatever you think of the quality, this local poet was inspired to sit down and write about Broughton Street.

A few years ago I picked up a copy of Mackay’s *History of the Barony of Broughton* (1867) in a second-hand bookshop. Pasted inside the back cover was a cutting of a poem, ‘Broughton Street’. There was no indication of date, or source, and the poem was simply initialled ‘L.D.’.

But staff at the Edinburgh Room of the Central Public Library managed to find the same cutting in a volume of press cuttings dated ‘1884-1890’. There is no date or source given for the Broughton cutting; but it is sandwiched between two others captioned as being from the *Scotsman*, 1886. Recently Edinburgh Room staff helped me search the *Scotsman* online archive for the poem: we drew a blank. So it seems almost certain that it was published in 1886 or, if not, within a year either way – cuttings are pasted into the book in chronological order, but occasionally there is one slightly out of sequence. As to where it was published, almost certainly elsewhere than the *Scotsman* – which perhaps is not surprising, given that the only poem I spotted published in the *Scotsman* during the 1880s was wholly in Latin.

BROUGHTON STREET

“Auld Reekie”, poets sing your praise,
And a’ your beauties oft repeat;
In humble rhyme my pen I raise
In favour o’ auld Broughton Street.

On Newington we had a screed,
Where small men live at great men’s feet;
Here on a level plain indeed
Are a’ the folks in Broughton Street.

The Calton Hill o’erlooks us here,
And Broughton Burn rins at our feet;
A place for circuses is near,
And shows put up in Broughton Street.

We had a market o’ our ain,
And shops and taverns clean and neat;
Druggists and doctors, when in pain,
Are ready aye in Broughton Street.

A Theatre-Royal us to cheer
With many a grand, delightful treat;
Everything good and great is here,
Baith new and auld, in Broughton Street.

Nine churches here of every size,
And halls where every sect can meet,
Whose spires with graceful taper rise,
Give dignity to Broughton Street.

Catholic, Episcopal – yes, every way
That makes religion pure and sweet,
Laid forth in earnest every day –
That’s the true life of Broughton Street.

Schools, too, of every kind are here –
Boys that could man the British fleet,
And girls who year after year
Will beauty add to Broughton Street.

We purpose the electric light;
When we get it, ‘twill be complete;
Then friends may come both day and night
And see our grand auld Broughton Street.

Long may her poets sing her praise,
Long life, with health and clothes and meat;
Long may her sons and daughters raise
A song, and sing of Broughton Street.

L.D.

Our local poet looked forward to the coming of electric street lighting to Broughton Street. It seems he/she had to wait some time for it. I haven’t found a date for its actual installation: but it wasn’t recommended by the relevant Council committee until January 1898!



George Heriot District School opened in 1855. Taken over by the School Board around the time the poem was written, it closed a couple of years later – pupils transferred to the new London Street School.

Sources: Press Cuttings 1884-1890, vol.1, p.14 (YDA 1816), Edinburgh Room, Central Public Library. Scotsman Archive online [<http://archive.scotsman.com/>]. Edinburgh Council minutes, Edinburgh Lighting Committee (SL50/1) 29 November 1895 to 4 February 1902 and Cleansing and Lighting Committee (SL46/1) 2 July 1894 to 19 March 1900.