



# BROUGHTON HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Broughton Tolbooth 1582–1829

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New Series Number 8

June 2021

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Fellow members

Now we have had our AGM and shortened members' meeting this month, it is time for another newsletter to let you know what is being planned for the next year. As you will realise, things will probably not be back to normal enough to allow us to guarantee face to meetings in the immediate future. However, we are exploring the possibilities of either going back to Drummond, once the school is happy to host us again, or to an alternative venue, as long as the cost is reasonable.

My thanks once more to Jenny for managing to compile a programme of speakers for our 2021/22 season. You will see from the programme below, that we have a good mix of topics for your interest, education and amusement. All these speakers have agreed to deliver their talks by Zoom but, if conditions are right, we hope that some of them will be in person once again.

Let's hope for the best and thanks for your support and patience. I look forward to seeing you, in person or on screen, in September.

**Richard Love : Chair**

## Broughton History Society 2021 Programme

**Monday 6th September 2021:** 7.30pm

Professor Sir Geoff Palmer - Scotland's links with the Slave Trade.

**Monday 4th October 2021:** 7.30pm

Professor David Purdie - The Enlightenment

**Monday 1st November 2021:** 7.30pm

Peter Yeoman - Health care in early Medieval Scotland.

**Monday 6th December** will hopefully be our Christmas Party, dependent on restrictions otherwise a Zoom get together and quiz.

**Jenny Bruce**

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*Abbotsford House—the principal reason for Scott's financial state*

### **The Financial Ruin of Sir Walter Scott.**

**Ray Perman, 12 April 2021**

Ray Perman was a journalist in London and Edinburgh for 30 years and is the author of several books. His talk drew on research for *The Rise and Fall of the City of Money* (2019), his volume about Edinburgh. After explaining that Scott's life and work were intimately connected with his finances and that what he had to tell us was not just about Scott's ruin, but also about how he escaped from it, Ray began by sketching in major aspects of Scott's biography. His position as Principal Clerk to the High Courts involved writing précis of the evidence submitted by and about all kinds of people -- good preparation for his work as a novelist -- while his appointment as part-time Sheriff of Selkirk took him to rural Scotland and afforded ample time for writing. His discovery in 1818 of The Honours of Scotland, the Scottish crown jewels, in a locked trunk in Edinburgh Castle gained him a title in gratitude from George IV, whose visit to Scotland Scott famously orchestrated. He was prostrated for two weeks afterwards as a result of the eating and drinking involved. It was a challenge even for the great trencherman and bon viveur that Scott was. He was, we learned, a man of great appetites, energy, extravagance and generosity.

Scott the writer is familiar to most, even if his novels

are little-read these days, but Ray Perman introduced us to Scott the businessman, who had his finger in many financial pies, including insurance companies such as the Wool Stapling Co. which lent money to sheep farmers. He invested in oil and gas concerns and his dealings with publishers were less than transparent. We were shown what was very much a man's world, with the only woman mentioned the poet and letter-writer Anna Seward, whose work Scott published, together with a memoir, in 1811 -- not a financially successful gambit.

Perman highlighted Scott's deviousness in covering his financial activities and also his profligacy in spending as key factors in the developments that saw him ruined in 1826 when there was a financial crash and the Bank of England stopped lending to fringe banks. He explained with remarkable clarity the complexities of the financial climate and the context in which fraud was common and borrowing and lending on trust were engines of cash-raising in unpredictable times (What other kinds of times are there one might wonder, from a present-day perspective?).

In 1826 Scott's debts amounted to £121,000, and he vowed to work to pay them all off. He was able to do this, as Perman explained, by using his good connections to set up a trust, with all his assets removed

from him. The Trustees, however, allowed Scott to stay on at Abbotsford, as they reckoned he'd be more productive there and more money would be recouped. He'd already given the house to his eldest son and was living there on a life rent. Scott set to, writing his way out of debt with a £10,500 advance for a biography of Napoleon and a £6,000 advance for his novel, *Woodstock*. Despite his situation, he didn't stop spending and went on travels to France and Italy. In 1832, when he died, half the debt had been paid and by 1848, through book sales and copyright revenue, it was completely cleared. Although Scott paid his debtors, the other bankrupted publishers involved, such as Ballantyne, didn't recover. Unlike them

Scott had an astute recovery package predicated on the huge popularity of his books.

Ray Perman's meaty talk was well-illustrated with contemporary cartoons, graphics and diagrams that navigated the listeners skillfully through a maze of often unfamiliar information. It wasn't always a comfortable listen but certainly a fascinating and instructive one.

The questions that followed touched on Scott's anti-Semitism and clarified aspects of the trust.

**Helen Rorrison**

### Muriel Spark and Puddocky

The subject and location of 'Puddocky' has been aired recently in this newsletter.

Although Muriel Spark is well-known as an Edinburgh-born writer, I had not previously associated her with this side of Edinburgh,

but then I saw an Anthology 'Poetry of Today' published 1946 with two of her poems in it, the second one called Three Thoughts in Africa, dated October 1943, which contains:

This is October: Scotland will be cold.  
The Autumn rains will settle the dry leaves,  
(Dry leaves will deeply lie upon the the old  
sodden road to Puddocky.)

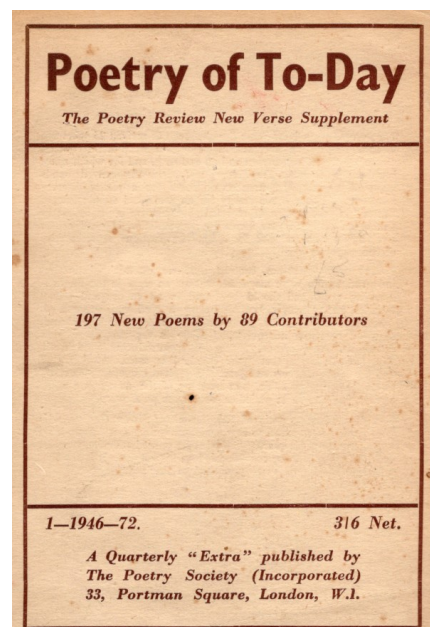
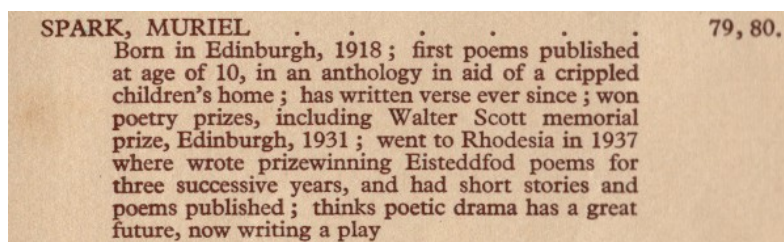
She later writes in her autobiography about her walks with a friend called Frances Niven who lived in Howard Place

At weekends we roamed in the botanical gardens or went for walks at Puddocky (a puddock is a frog), beside the Water of Leith, then home to tea.

And then in The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie we have

"It all happens in a flash," Jenny said. "It happened to Teenie when she was out walking at Puddocky with her boy friend. Then they had to get married."

**Jim Eunson**





## Members Queries: East London Street Numbering

The initial query was from Ros

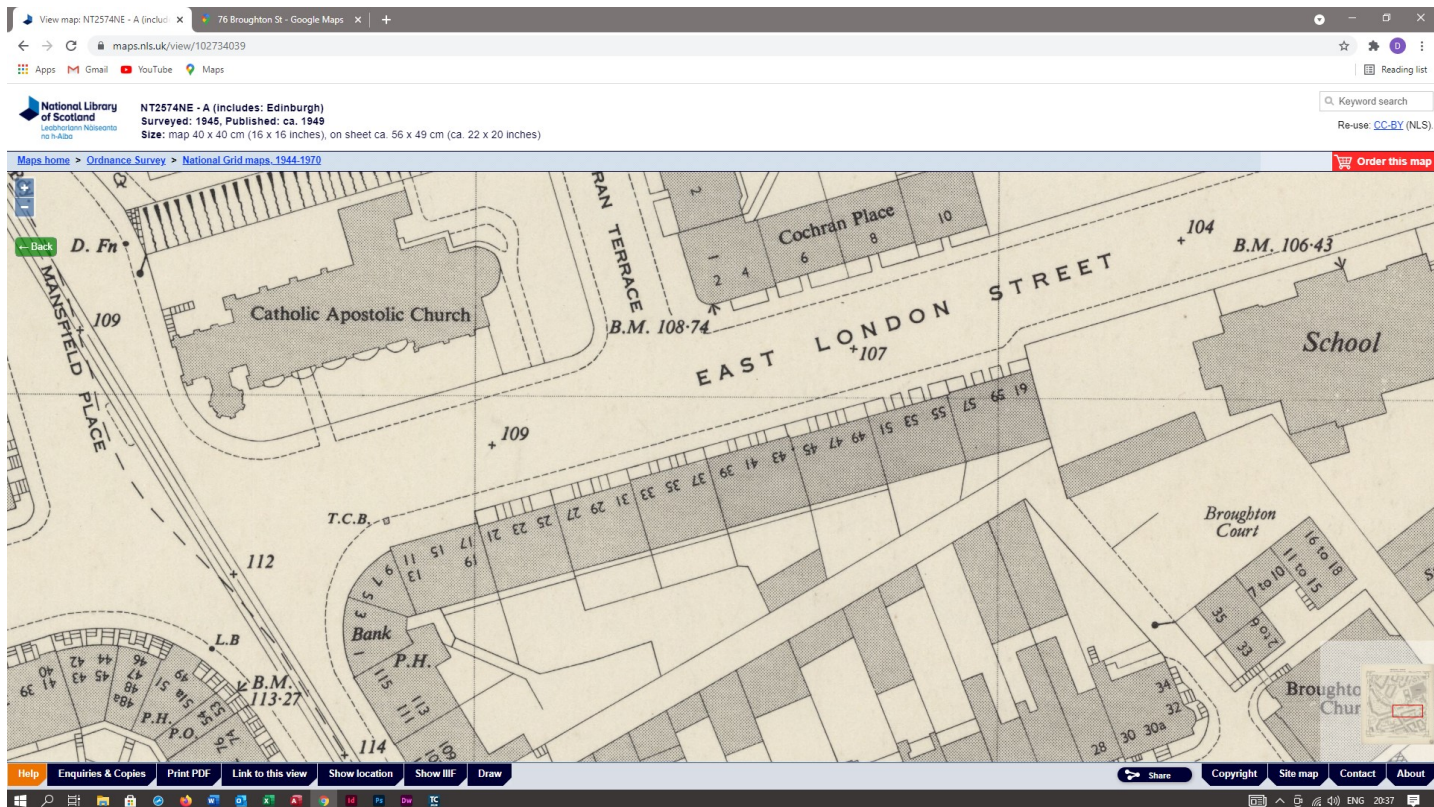
'Would any of your members know why East London St begins at 7 on one side next to the Cask and Barrel and 2 on the other side ? Many Thanks'

Here are the replies to the query. Many thanks to Terry Cox, David King and Pauline Cowan who contributed them.



The above photo comes from Terry who writes:

"After a bit more rooting about, I've found out a bit more about that corner. It seems that The Cask and Barrel was originally 3 properties. The right hand one is in Broughton St, No 115, which is the address the pub uses. The next door was in East London St, No 1, and was the Post Office, and there was another door, No 3, between the leftmost 2 windows of the pub, which was a baker, Peter Dunbar. You can see the door in the attached photo, from Capital Collections, from 1911. Unfortunately, the picture doesn't go right round the corner to show the other properties. No 3 doesn't seem to be listed in the directories after about 1916, which doesn't mean it wasn't there, just that it wasn't listed, but it may be that the Post Office had expanded into the premises. By 1946 the Post Office had become the Commercial Bank, and by the mid 1960s there is no listing for Nos 1 or 3, but 115 Broughton St is listed as The Claremont Bar, so I assume that it was around then that the 3 properties became one. It was a bit of fun looking all that up!"



This map section (taken from the NLS website) comes from Dave who writes:

Number 1 is or was the curved part of the Cask and Barrel, previously a bank. The narrow part of the Cask and Barrel with the flat front is 115 Broughton Street. The other side isn't as straightforward as it looks. No. 2 East London Street was previously No. 2 Cochran Place but got renamed at some stage (perhaps in the late 1960s when there was a lot of re-naming)."

Pauline Cowan comments more generally on numbering:

"...there are many anomalies in Edinburgh street numbering. I once tried to find a numbered property on the Bridges and beyond and realised that every time the road changed names, the odd and even numbers swap sides. Someone I know lives near me at the first house in the street, lives at no 6 but there were no gap sites. Similarly for friends who moved to no 18 on a street nearby but the first house is no 8. Probably lots more."

Helen Rorrison

**The Incorporated Trades of Edinburgh**  
**Gordon Wyllie 3rd May 2021**



Mr Gordon Wyllie, a former Deacon Convener of the Trades, is an acknowledged expert on the Guilds or Trades of Old Edinburgh and of where some of them are today, gave a fascinating and detailed talk, the main points of which were as follows.

King David 1 founded the Scottish Burghs, Edinburgh was founded between 1124 and 1127 and in 1128, he founded the Augustinian Abbey of Holyrood (and endowed it with the Barony of Broughton). Later the separate Burgh of Canongate was established. After the Reformation Broughton came into the hands of Canongate via the Bothwell and Bellenden family. Later John Murray of Broughton was the Jacobite Secretary of State to Bonnie Prince Charlie. He and his wife were there to hear the

proclamation of the Old Pretender as King James VIII on 17 September 1745. "Beside the mercat cross was the beautiful Mrs Murray of Broughton, a drawn sword in her hand distributing white cockades to those who rallied to the cause."

The advantage for the Crown in having Burghs was that it got more tax, one of the advantages in being a Burgess (someone who lived in a Burgh) was that you could practise a Trade. Each of these Trades formed an association, with a Deacon chosen as the head. These Deacons served on the Town Council, which was all-powerful in those days. Every craftsman (and it was restricted to men in the vast majority of cases) had to be a Burgess and a member of a Guild.

Each Trade was granted a Seal of Cause which gave them their legal authority, as follows.

The oldest is the Incorporation of Cordiners. (shoemakers) whose Association was founded in 1449. It still survives and although the oldest, they are the smallest, having only two members. The rules for admission to the trade still include the making of a shoe, and since both of these are in their eighties, succession planning is not ideal.

The next was the Skinners in 1450, (Skinners made gloves and other leather items, and vellum). Then the Masons and Wrights were granted their Charter in 1475. This Trade provided the most famous Deacon of them all, William Brodie, Deacon of the Wrights, 1781-83 and 1785-87, respectable Deacon and town councillor by day and despicable thief by night. The Weavers came along in 1475/76, the Hammermen in 1482/3, they were the original custodians of the famous flag called the 'Blue Blanket', pictured opposite, presented by King James III in recognition of their assistance in getting him out of imprisonment in Edinburgh Castle. They owned the Magdalen Chapel in the Cowgate until 1858.

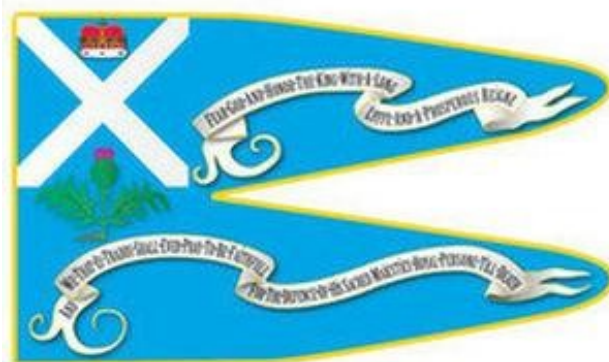


From about 1477 until the early 1490s the Goldsmiths, Silversmiths and Jewellers in Edinburgh were part of the Hammermen. They split away in 1490/2 to form their own Incorporation of Goldsmiths. A Royal Charter in 1687 gave them assay rights throughout the kingdom, and the Edinburgh Assay Office in Broughton Street still operates to this day.

The supply and inspection of food was an early concern of our lawmakers. So the Freeman Fleshers (what we now call butchers, but of course they slaughtered their animals too) of Edinburgh got their charter in 1488. At one time their abattoir was next to the Nor' Loch, not far from where the Skinners washed their wool and skins. In the 1690s the Skinners complained that the Fleshers were polluting it by "rinsing their tripes" so that when wool was dipped in the loch it came out ten times dirtier than when it went in. The solution was to move the Skinners to the Water of Leith in order to obtain a ready supply of fresh running water. The Fleshers continued to use the Nor' Loch as their dumping ground for offal, blood and entrails.

The Candlemakers got their Seal about 1517, and Candlemakers' Hall (built in 1722) still stands at the head of Candlemaker Row. It is the last remaining old Incorporation Hall to survive in Edinburgh in its more or less original form. Although it no longer belongs to the Incorporation, the freemen members are permitted by the current owners to continue holding their meetings and social gatherings there. Waulkers (who prepared and made felt hats) came along in 1500, and soon after, the Incorporation of Tailors. Their hall in the Cowgate now houses the Three Sisters pub.

In 1505 a group of surgeons and barbers in Edinburgh jointly received a Seal of Cause as the Incorporation of Surgeons and Barbers of Edinburgh. The Barbers left in 1772 and a few years later the Surgeons of Edinburgh became a Royal College, which is very much still in operation today.



*Modern representation of Blue Blanket*

Bakers (or Baxters) got their seal in 1522 but are referred to earlier than that. Baxters were not only bakers, but also owned their own mills, mostly situated along the Water of Leith, near the Skinners in the Dean Village.

The Bonnetmakers were granted their Seal of Cause and in 1684 they were joined by the Litsters or Dyers. Their arms (pictured left) show the Bonnetmakers on the left and the Dyers on the right and the crest above the shield, being the Golden Fleece, with the incorporation's punning motto "We dye to live".

Mr Wyllie concluded by looking at the future for these Trade Associations, most of which now operate as charitable bodies. This is a brief summary of Mr Wyllie's talk. Some of the names of the old trades are familiar as surnames, others not so much. Personally I have always wondered what the interior of the Pre-Reformation St Giles Cathedral looked like, where each Trade maintained its own altar dedicated to their patron saint. Mr Wyllie confirmed that there were no illustrations of this, we have to look to cathedrals in Europe to get some idea of this.

**Jim Eunson**

## CHEMIST AT 105 BROUGHTON STREET, EDINBURGH

(continued from previous issues)

This chemist has been at 105 Broughton Street at least since the 1940's. My late husband, Martin Lauder lived in this area all his life and could probably have told you more. I have a copy of the Edinburgh and Leith Post Office Directory for 1970 which gives the owner of the shop as Mr. Douglas Moncur, Pharmaceutical Chemist, at 105 Broughton Street. This business was a manufacturing chemist (this info was painted on the wall for many years) and supplied many chemists all over Edinburgh.

Sometime about 1990 – 2000 I was doing some research for the Broughton History Society and spoke to a lady who then lived in Barony Street. She told me that during the 2nd War when she was young she worked in the chemist at the foot of Broughton Street. She had an elderly gentleman who was a regular customer called Mr Hind. This gentleman had a business in Barony Street, started when he was a young man about 1900. He had a horse and cart and undertook deliveries in the town, plus any other odd jobs he could pick up. By the time of the 2nd World War he was retired and his sons ran the family business. The young lady in the chemists was explaining that they were having problems with delivering medicines because of petrol rationing. Mr. Hind's business had converted over the years to vans and lorries. He promptly offered to get his old horse and cart to help out and thereafter till the end of the war he helped out, trotting all over the city delivering the necessary medication - all for the cost of a bag of hay!

At the end of the War the young chemist's assistant was getting married when her fiancé came home. She asked Mr. Hind if he had heard of any flats for rent. Mr. Hind came to the rescue as he had bought several houses in Barony Street and could offer her a flat to rent. There she was, by this time widowed but still living in the same house when I met her.

PS The above Mr. Hind was the gentleman who had lost a son in the 1st World War and the Broughton History Society replaced his Rowan tree which he had planted in the little garden space in front of the council houses at the end of Barony Street - but that's another story.

### **Alice Lauder**

Alice sent in the above story a few weeks ago but I omitted it before for which I apologise to Alice.

Jim Eunson