

Broughton Tolbooth 1582–1829

BROUGHTON HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

New Series Number 2

Spring/Summer 2020

Welcome to the second newsletter of the current series, highlighting reports on recent talks to the society. You may have noticed that we have not met since early March and might be missing our monthly talks. I certainly am and have missed the opportunity to bring you up to date on future talks and plans for Spring and Summer outings this year. These have all had to be postponed, along with most other activities we all used to undertake. The committee has agreed to stay on for another year as we will not be able to hold our AGM and Members Meeting this week. And, because we cannot yet meet in each other's houses, we will be conducting an online committee meeting soon, in order to plan for next year's talks and other events. Please be patient with us until we know whether Drummond School will allow us to hold meetings as usual come September.

Meantime I hope you have all managed to avoid the virus during the last three months and that you are not getting too stir crazy. Maybe you've been catching up on reading about interesting historical subjects or doing your own research, which I know has been some people's way of passing the time during lockdown. I look forward to seeing all or some of you again as soon as is possible.

Richard Love BHS Chair

Creating the Museum of Scotland by Ian Hooper January 13 2020

In 1989 Ian became Deputy Director of the National Museums of Scotland (NMS), where the creation of the new Museum of Scotland became one of his key responsibilities. In a fascinating and well-presented talk, he began by asking the questions 'Why is it there and why do we need it?' It is on a historic site in Chambers Street and the original museum was begun in the 1860s as the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art, later known as the Royal Museum. Its architect, Francis Fowke, also designed the Royal Albert Hall.

The first part completed was only about a third of the length of the present (original) museum and housed exhibits drawn from the Kensington collection and Edinburgh University, mainly so that visitors could learn from objects relating to science and geology. Eventually the large gallery, as we now recognise it, was filled with objects and casts from around the world. The Museum of Antiquities, originally housed in the RSA or Royal Institution, contained historical artefacts and archaeological specimens,

originally for study rather than for general visitors. These included a horde of Bronze Age objects and Rob Roy's sporran protector, acquired in 1783, which prevented theft by some kind of explosive bolt. Eventually a further museum was built on Queen Street in 1895, now the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, which originally shared space as the Museum of Antiquities (MA) and Portrait Gallery.

In the 1970s there had been plans to develop the Chambers St. site to the west of the Royal Museum for displays relating to antiquities, science and technology, which didn't happen. However in 1981 the Williams Committee recommended the creation of a new 'Museum of Scotland' and by 1985 it was decided that this new museum would merge the Royal Museum and the MA, which had never got on with one another. The Marquess of Bute led a campaign to create the new museum and an exhibition in 1989 brought this idea to a wider audience, with the Prince of Wales agreeing to be its Patron.

In 1990 an architectural competition was announced and a year later 371 entries had been received, whittled down to a smaller number including two from Scottish based architects, one of which, by Benson and Forsyth, won. The PoW resigned as Patron ('...and all the architects lived happily ever after' according to one cartoon of the time) and in 1992 Mark Jones took over as the NMS Director.

Initially there was discussion as to whether the new museum should have its own entrance, the argument eventually being won, and in 1995 development work was carried out on the adjacent buildings before construction of the new one could begin. There were concerns during its construction about the chosen facing stone (Clashach, a hard sandstone from Moray) possibly running out, as Scottish Widows were also using this stone on one of their buildings. Some of the

exterior was finished in a high grade polished concrete. Two years before its opening, scheduled for St Andrews Day 1998, a large railway locomotive and a beam engine had to be installed before the roof went on. Inside the building the idea of Old Town closes was incorporated into larger spaces to create smaller, more intimate spaces while the Corbusier idea of introducing space and light from different angles helped prevent it feeling enclosed.

Various artists, such as Kate Whiteford, Eduardo Paolozzi and Andy Goldsworthy were commissioned to produce installations before the opening. One of the ideas for the 'locomotive' gallery was to incorporate lots of steel coated in red oxide paint to remind us of the Forth Bridge, an icon of Scottish engineering. One pleasing juxtaposition was that the gates designed by Robert Lorimer, when viewed from within the gallery, led the eye to the castle with its Scottish National War Memorial also designed by him.

The new Museum of Scotland did indeed open as scheduled on St Andrew's Day 1998 with HM the Queen in attendance. Some of us, who had seen the project emerge and come to fruition over many years, were immediately caught by the clever use of space, light and interior design to which helped add a new 'must see' destination to Edinburgh's already proud lexicon of buildings – 'Scotland presented proud to the world'.

Richard Love



Capital Brewing by John Martin 3 February 2020

John Martin has worked 'in beer' for more than 40 years, mostly with Scottish and Newcastle Breweries, and in Portugal, France and Finland. Though his work was in the finance area, his interest and expertise in beer and the brewing process is clear from this excellent exposition of the history of beer throughout the ages, from the slaves of Egypt who were fed on it to the present-day websites which give details of current events, record stories for future generations and provide information for researchers. There were four main parts of the talk

- the origins of beer
- what IS beer?
- the history of brewing in Scotland and in Edinburgh
- social history of beer

There is evidence in the hieroglyphs of the Pyramids that the slaves who built them were fed a type of beer, 'liquid bread', which while not recognisable as modern day beer, was nutritious and enjoyable. Indeed 'Tutankhamen' ale was reproduced in the late 20th century and sold for £50 a bottle in Harrods. That's not to say that the taste was faithfully reproduced, however, and it had to be drunk through a straw to avoid ingesting the detritus that remained in the liquid. Mmmm, maybe not.

There are four components necessary in its modern manufacture – barley, water, yeast and hops. Malt, from barley, is the main ingredient, and it's boiled up with hot water, called 'liquor', which then becomes 'wort'. Now the hops are added, for flavour, bitterness and aroma, and it's reboiled. Liquid is cooled and taken to fermentation vessels, where yeast is added. This yeast will 'eat up' the sugar content and make alcohol – maybe

taking a week. There are many variations of beer – including ale, lager and stout. The 'shilling' system was introduced to give an idea of the strength of the beer. Initially the invoiced price – sixty shilling was light, seventy was heavy, eighty shilling was export, then 90 shilling was strong ale – the higher the number the higher the strength. Although in latter years whisky became the national drink of Scotland, this is quite a modern notion and beer is much older, brought here by the monks at Holyrood Abbey and other abbeys such as Banff, Melrose, Newbattle etc. The first public brewery was at Blackford, where beer was bought by James I on his way to Scone to be crowned. The Society of Brewers had their brewery on the site of the new Museum of Scotland. But most brewing was done at home, by women, known as 'brewsters', to provide a safe drink, as water was not safe to drink as it was tainted by sewage. Beer however involved boiling water which rendered it a safe drink and it was given to children as well as adults. Edinburgh had over 40 breweries at one time, with more in Leith. Why? A combination of good quality water underground, barley from the Lothians, good transport links, with the railways and the port of Leith. By the 16th century beer was being sold by stalls in the Canongate by the monks from the Abbey. The Treaty of Union in 1707, article 13, states that Scotland will NOT be charged duty on beer, unlike in England. In 1835 John Muir was the first to brew lager beer, and finally in 1931 Youngers and McEwans formed Scottish Brewers, which on 1960 became Scottish and Newcastle Brewers.

John gave a very interesting and easy to follow explanation of how and why brewing became so important in Edinburgh, and his talk was much appreciated by the audience.

Maggie McClure

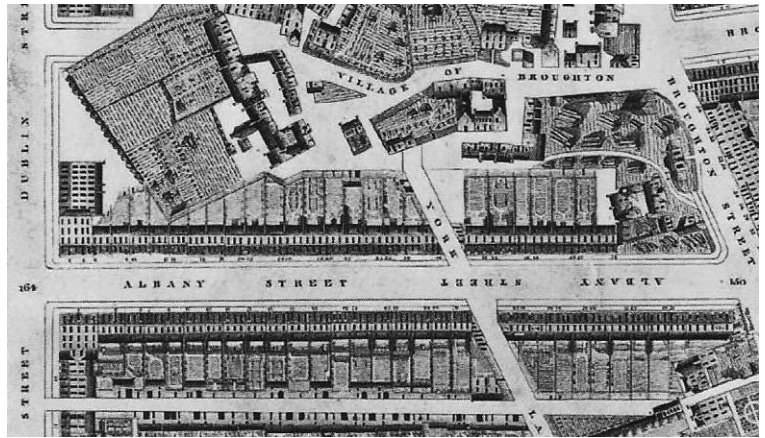
A Variety of Accomplishments the 19th Century Inhabitants of Albany Street by Barclay Price 2 March 2020

Barclay has lived in Albany Street for 20 years and has become an expert on its history and inhabitants. His fascinating talk was restricted to the 19th century, with one notable exception.

It was built during the second phase of the New Town development and was almost complete by the time of the 1819 Kirkwood map (pictured), the north-east corner was then still a quarry. The residents included many lawyers, fewer doctors, and a variety of others. Professor John Playfair the mathematician lived at no 10, with his nephew, the architect William, architect of Old College, who designed the Playfair Monument on Calton Hill in honour of his uncle.

Another architect (no. 34) was James Gillespie Graham (Moray Estate) and in one of Barclay's best stories we heard how the young Augustus Pugin, later a very famous architect, was shipwrecked and landed at Leith knowing only that Graham lived in Edinburgh. He turned up, presumably wet and with no possessions, at his doorstep and Graham helped him out. They talked architecture, which Pugin had been thinking of giving up, but was dissuaded. Graham presented him with his compasses on parting, which can be seen in Pugin's portrait in the Houses of Parliament.

There are several literary associations – the young Robert Louis Stevenson often visited no 44 where his friend lived. Charles Dickens' future wife Catherine Hogarth lived in no 19, her father being one of the many lawyers. Another writer was Mary Brunton nee Balfour, the only daughter of a wealthy



Orcadian family, who had a youthful romance with Rev. Alexander Brunton when he was still a student. Her family disapproved and packed her off to one of the smaller Orcadian islands from where, remarkably, Alexander eloped with her by rowing boat. They lived at no. 35, and she became a successful novelist, writing *Self-Control* and *Discipline*. She became pregnant at 40 and was convinced that she would not survive the birth. Sadly, she was correct. Another female novelist who later died at no. 38 was Susan Ferrier, the author of *Marriage* and two others.

The renowned Dr James Young Simpson lived at no. 22, which he operated as a private maternity unit. As a midwife this writer was particularly interested in him. The first birth ever by means of chloroform took place at no 19. It was vehemently opposed not only by many doctors, and churchmen too, who quoted Genesis "in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children" Only after Queen Victoria used it when in labour with her 8th child, Prince Leopold, that it was generally accepted.

Barclay concluded by telling the story of the 20th century visit of the God Pan to no 28 Albany St in the company of Robert Crombie, after meeting near the Mound.

Barclay's book is 'A Brief History of Albany Street' and his comprehensive website is <https://sites.google.com/site/albanystreetedinburgh/home>

Pippy Tyler