



Broughton Tolbooth 1582-1829

# BROUGHTON HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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**Regrettably, we did not manage the second, Summer, edition for 2016. And now the first, Winter, edition for 2017 is a bit late – we aim to do it in January and February each year.**

#### **Ideas or contributions for our next edition?**

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Renewed thanks to Eileen Dickie for doing the Desktop Publishing, to Alan McIntosh for proof-reading – and to them both for their advice.

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## **Ian Newlands**

**Society member Ian Newlands died suddenly on 26th May 2016.**

**His funeral took place at Warriston Crematorium and included a tribute by the minister of his church in Davidson's Mains, Daniel Robertson.**

'Ian was born in Edinburgh on the 15th of March 1932 to Betty and John', said Daniel. 'He was older brother to Alistair, who sadly passed away before him.'

'Ian as you will know was fond of telling stories – some more than once! One story he liked to joke about was his and Dorothy's birth. Dorothy was born two days after Ian: he liked to pretend that they had met and been next to each other at the hospital!'

'Ian began life in Davidson's Mains, at the Green. The family later moved to Cramond, nextdoor to Ian's grandmother; then back to Davidson's Mains, this time to Vivian Terrace. Ian attended Davidson's Mains Primary; and then Trinity Academy – jumping on the train that ran behind the house, knowing it was time to go when the whistle blew.'

'Ian and Alistair's dad John was the groundskeeper at the Bruntsfield Golf Club for over 50 years. I was told Ian was put off golf when he whacked Alistair in the head when their dad was teaching the boys to play – and was immediately sent home.'

'Ian loved the outdoors. He began working on the farm at Silverknowes at the age of 14. He put his hand to everything. He was proud of his hay bale lifting strength, he enjoyed the driving, he looked after the pigs.' Since the funeral, Dorothy Newlands has given us a more detailed account: 'Davidson's Mains was



very much a village when Ian was a boy, and most of the local lads spent a lot of time on Silverknowes Farm. (The farm was on the right-hand side of Silverknowes Road going towards the sea, where there are now 100's of houses.) Ian's father rented a small piggery on the farm, which started as a hobby, but grew somewhat. Ian and Alistair helped with the piggery (including going round houses collecting food waste). Ian had many stories about the piggery and pigs. One was a pet piglet called Samuel who latterly became a bit of a nuisance.'

Dorothy continued: 'During the war, families were encouraged to keep hens in their gardens. This the Newlands family did, and Alistair had his pet hen called Von Dottle. It was a very hot day and Ian came home from school, saw the hens trying to keep cool, and thought he would do them a kindness and hose them down. Unfortunately Von Dottle caught pneumonia and died. When Alistair discovered that Von Dottle was the Sunday roast he was so upset and couldn't eat his dinner.'

After leaving school, Ian worked for the Parks Department, then he worked for Ferranti's; and ultimately British Airways for 30 years before he retired.

'Early on in Ian's working career,' said Daniel, 'he decided to get some dancing lessons at the Victor Sylvester Dance School. Dorothy went to these lessons too.' Later Dorothy told us: 'The Victor Sylvester Ballroom Dance Studio was in the New Victoria Cinema, South Clerk Street, later the Odeon and now sadly empty.' Daniel: 'A mutual friend introduced them and Dorothy told me that Ian "persevered" and they started going out. Their first date was to the cinema to see *South Pacific*. The date went well and Ian and Dorothy fell in love. When Ian plucked up the courage to ask Dorothy's father for her hand in marriage the response he got from Father was... "I'll have to think about it." Fortunately for Ian, Dorothy and her father said "Yes" and they were married on the 28th January 1961 at Broughton Place Church.'

Dorothy: 'We had bought a flat at 58 Broughton Street and lived there for 9 years before moving to Vivian Terrace, the Newlands family home at Davidson's Mains – in 1970, after the death of Ian's father. Both Alan and Graeme were born in Broughton Street. Alan went to London Street School until the age of 7 and Graeme started his schooling at Davidson's Mains Primary.'

'Incidentally, both boys attended the Barony Toddlers in Barony Street Playground, where we met up with Heather Fry and her son, Martin. Alan was here roughly years 1965-67, Graeme 1968-70. Mrs Dudgeon was in charge then along with Mrs Betty Glancy, who later took over.'

'Another point of interest. Prior to school I went to the same site to attend the Kindergarten as it was called then, run by a Mrs Stevenson – in the 1930s.'

Daniel said: 'Alan and Graeme spoke of their dad's love for food. He was the soup king. There was his mushroom soup, his tomato soup (at Christmas because he had a large frozen supply) and his signature Lentil soup – a soup that the grandchildren enjoyed very much. The boys told me that Dad liked cooking and being in the kitchen. Dorothy said, "Aye, he liked coming in and taking over!"'

'Ian loved planting and growing vegetables. He spent many a happy hour pottering in the garden.'

'He enjoyed holidays abroad with Dorothy, making the most of his BA perks. He was a big speedway fan, and converted Dorothy early on. They made many a visit to Meadowbank, Powderhall, Armadale (West Lothian) – and latterly Berwick-upon-Tweed, making a day of it and enjoying the fact that there were seats.' Dorothy has since added: 'Ian was an Edinburgh Monarchs Speedway fan from the time it took up at Meadowbank in 1946/47. He introduced me to the sport in 1957 and we continued following the Monarchs until his death.'

Daniel: 'Ian enjoyed his history group. He enjoyed his cribbage on a Monday night and dominoes on a Tuesday night. One of his cribbage buddies told me the Maitland Club would never be the same.' Dorothy explained: 'Cribbage was played in the "off season" at the Maitland Bowling Club in Davidson's Mains.'

Daniel: 'Ian and Dorothy made Davidson's Main's their home church – giving so much and enjoying the friendship and support of others. Ian was a good neighbour. Next-door Anne described you, Dorothy and Ian, as the perfect neighbours.'

'Ian enjoyed shopping and a good deal. I think it was son Graeme that said Ian was doing what price comparison websites do, years before the internet was invented. Ian also loved Costco – he didn't even need to buy anything.'

'Ian was funny, had a great sense of humour and could come out with a good quip. Like when he was asked what he was buying in Sainsbury's and he replied. "Something we don't need!" Ian was positive, had a good outlook on life, he could also express his opinion.'



*Barony Playgroup, 3-5 year-olds, 1959.  
Photo lent to our Society by Betty Glancy to copy.  
Her son is in the back row, far right – with his arms in the air!*

Dearest to Ian was his family, of whom he was very proud. He loved his boys and his daughters-in-law. I was told he thought the world of his grandchildren and so enjoyed laughing and playing with them. He loved his wife Dorothy. Dorothy has described Ian as her devoted husband and best pal. Graeme said that Dad felt the same.'

### Ian and the History Society

Ian and Dorothy moved away to Davidson's Mains in 1970; the Society was not founded until June 1996.

Dorothy: 'After we moved to Davidson's Mains we still kept in touch with Broughton. My parents lived in London Street until, I think, 1980 when my mother moved to a smaller house, my father having died in 1977. I don't know quite when we joined the Society. It was when it had an exhibition in St Paul's and St George's Church, York Place. The pair of us alighted in York Place, noticed the Exhibition and went to have a look. I recognised quite a few of the photographs, having been born and brought up in Barony Street and London Street. The result was we joined the Society.' *That exhibition took place in August 1999.*

A couple of years later Ian and Dorothy were back at St Paul's and St George's, this time on the rota of volunteers staffing the 2002 Exhibition – along with Heather Fry, they filled a 3-hour slot. Fast-forward to the 2006 Exhibition and minutes of a meeting record Ian as a member of the Exhibition Working Group. Then he and Dorothy were on the rota for the first week of the Exhibition – along with Kate Love, they filled a 3-hour slot; and again in the second week, this time with Alice Lauder. Meanwhile, and thereafter, Ian was a regular and well-kent face at our Monday meetings.



*Members of the History Society were invited to the Friends of Hopetoun Crescent Garden's 2015 Party. Amongst those who came were Ian & Dorothy Newlands. © Eileen Dickie*

Mrs Bell's 97th Birthday, Broughton Lunch Club, 1970  
Photo lent to us to copy by Betty Glancy (see page 2) – that's her standing behind the flowers.

**If any readers can identify others in the photo, please let us know.**



# Bill Purves

**Society member Bill Purves died peacefully on 6th October 2016. His funeral took place at Portobello Cemetery on 27th October, followed by a celebration of his life at Newhailes House, Musselburgh.**

Sandra Purves felt the tribute to Bill given by Tim Maguire at the Newhailes House celebration would be a good, reliable source of information for our article – Tim was the Humanist Celebrant who conducted the funeral. It certainly turned out to be: much of what follows is based on what he said. As I read the text it dawned on me that this was someone who had known Bill personally for quite some time: Sandra confirmed that Tim had been their neighbour for about 20 years.

Bill was born in Edinburgh on the 4th of February 1934, the only child of William and Edith Purves who lived in Seaview Terrace in Joppa. Bill's father was an actuary, and after Bill attended Melville College he got him a job in insurance with Guardian Exchange. Tim said: 'Bill hated the world of insurance and everything about it, so it's hardly surprising that he didn't do as well as his father had hoped. But the one good thing about being there was that he could do his work quickly and then spend the rest of his time at the Lane Sales or reading books. He took the early lunch hour that no one else wanted so that having gulped down a bite to eat he would be round to the auctions, buying furniture, both to resell and to furnish the house. He had the gift of seeing the beauty of things that others missed, and he enjoyed restoring his finds himself.'



*Bill's motorbike, July 1956: 'his mode of transport before he obtained Belinda' says Sandra. 'It was known as The Heap – I don't think, by the time he owned it, it was quite as it left the factory.'*

Bill's time in insurance was broken in two by a two-year spell of National Service in the Naval Intelligence Section when he was posted to Germany to listen in on Russian radio traffic at the height of the Cold War – 'he had to learn Russian and of course German too.'



*Photo taken in June 2016, at Louth Castle – on the way home from a car club rally.*

Bill met his first wife Marion Pringle in 1955; four years later they married and bought a flat at No.1 Scotland Street. They had two daughters: Caroline (1960) and Catherine (1962). Tim again: 'By this time, Bill's love of classic cars was already evident, as he and Marion had bought their first car, a 1934 Jowett which his father named Belinda. Every summer the family packed Belinda up to the gunnels and spent July and August at Largo, in Fife. As you might expect, it was no ordinary tent. Bill designed the tent himself and commissioned Blacks of Greenock to manufacture it for his family. And in summer of 1965, they remember waving together from the sand dunes at the flower-decked train that was the last on the East of Fife railway line to Elie and beyond before the Beeching cuts.'

'Bill continued to work at Guardian Royal Exchange until that year, when he took advantage of the chance to attend the Courtauld Institute in London as a mature student – where he served a term as president of the Students' Union. He studied art and architectural history, and as part of his course one year he travelled to the north of Italy in his beloved Belinda to study architecture.'

Tim said: 'Bill loved the freedom of London: it was the swinging 60s after all. Both girls remember that he always loved bright clothes, and he wore beautiful jewel-coloured shirts with his velvet jacket. Sandra told me that he actually designed some of his own clothes and some of his ideas were made up for him on Carnaby Street, the grooviest street in what was at that time the world's most fashionable city. And later, when the girls were 10 and 8, Bill took them to Carnaby Street to buy them hotpants, the height of fashion in 1970.'

'It was in 1968 that he met the woman who was to become the love of his life at a party in Marylebone. Sandra Whitlam was an engineer, and they soon found themselves madly in love. Their first pad was at No.1 Windmill Street in North Soho, where they met lots of people from the world of television; and watched the Moon-landing in 1969. Soho was an interesting place in those days; it was the centre of London's sex and crime worlds, and Bill had many stories about the Turkish and Greek-Cypriot gangsters who ran the place.'

When Bill graduated, he and Sandra came back to Edinburgh together. Marion and the girls stayed at No.1 Scotland Street, while Sandra and Bill moved into No.4 along with Bill's father, who'd had a stroke; he lived with them until he died in March 1978.

Tim again: 'During the late 60s and early 70s Bill started to restore buildings all around the New Town, putting back the original features and adding huge value to other people's properties but typically not charging anything like enough for doing so. He was passionate about the area in which he lived. He campaigned to have the New Town properly restored, and became a member of the Georgian Society. He was involved with the Drummond Civic Association and Drummond Place Gardens and was instrumental in getting their railings restored – when the girls had been growing up there had been none around the garden, because they had been taken away and melted down as part of "The War Effort".'

'Bill had a passion for the past. He loved raking through skips and junk shops as well as auctions for interesting things to restore. Books were very important to him, and the house is filled with technical books as well as tomes on architecture, lighting and cars, steamers and canals.'

'It was in the early 70s that Bill started his lighting business on St Stephen Street. Mr Purves's Lamp Emporium at No.59 didn't keep regular hours. Bill tried to get people to sit in for him but that didn't really work. He still had to look after his father, who by then was in a wheelchair, and that meant that sometimes he simply had to drop everything and run. The only reason he could do this was that Sandra had a real job as a professional civil engineer, mostly in Glasgow, where she commuted every day, although she later joined Lothian Region.'



*Bill in front of his Lamp Emporium on St Stephen Street.  
Photo taken by Peter Stubbs, 26th January 1991  
© Peter Stubbs, Edinburgh, [www.edinphoto.org.uk](http://www.edinphoto.org.uk)*

Tim: 'Looking after the shop and his father took up most of his time but he also got involved in the restoration of the *Waverley*. Now there's quite a story attached to this, so sit back and make yourself comfortable.' We can only give a short summary here. It starts with a young Bill's parents taking him "Doon the Watter" on the *Waverley*; refers back to the ship being sunk during the evacuation of Dunkirk; how Bill came to have a holiday on board the "new" *Waverley*; Cal Mac's 1974 decision to sell the ship; Sandra and Bill's involvement in the Preservation Society that bought it and then raised funds to run it from Anderson Quay all the way down the Clyde for several years; how the ship then sailed farther afield, eventually to the Thames. **'It was there, on board the paddle steamer that had meant so much to both of them, that Bill and Sandra had their wedding breakfast on 28th April 1978.'**



*Bill, Sandra and the Waverley on the day they had their wedding breakfast aboard. (A Glasgow Herald photo)*

As Tim said: 'Engineering was a profession for Sandra, but an all-consuming hobby for Bill. He knew about car engines and architectural structures, but he was entirely self-taught. After the *Waverley* was up and running, he and Sandra got involved with the Edinburgh Canal Society which at that time had nowhere to live; and once again he was a prime mover, responsible for building its base and its boathouse at Harrison Park, and becoming its Boatman. In typically Bill fashion, he found a collection of motor boats abandoned in a shed: they were of the kind he remembered from his childhood on the Clyde, so he brought them to Edinburgh, restored them and housed them at Harrison Park and that was the nucleus of their fleet. He remained very much involved for many years and he was very much a part of the campaign to reopen the canal, which eventually happened thanks to the Millennium Funding.'

'Bill began to have problems with his health after the turn of the millennium when he and Sandra were involved in a nasty car crash en route to the Auto Jumble at Beaulieu in Hampshire. Sandra was thrown out of the vehicle and landed on her feet: her glasses had flown off her head, and she had a cracked bone in her wrist, but otherwise, she was OK. Bill on the other hand was not so lucky. He was taken to hospital with a head injury, and it seems likely that the crash may have caused the brain damage with which he lived for the rest of his life. He immediately became less independent, but otherwise was very much the Bill we all knew and loved.'

'It was in the 90s that his style began to change. Some of you may remember Bill's propensity for wearing medium-heeled court shoes with his faded blue boiler suit, as well as with his A-line kilted skirts. He was always an original dresser.'

'And it was around then that I learned you engaged Bill in conversation at your peril, because he was a great one for fixing you like the Ancient Mariner and giving you a monologue on the pros and cons of double-flanged pin hinges. It didn't really matter if the subject didn't interest you, or if you were in a bit of a rush. Bill was interested, so you had to go with the flow and wait for him to stop. He was oblivious to this to the extent that if he and Sandra were at a party or any other social gathering, Sandra quickly learned that she had to give herself at least an hour to plan an exit before Bill would finally be ready to leave.'

'Bill was without doubt, a character. He was public spirited, he was nationalistic without being a party man, and he was much loved by all who knew him. Sandra really was the most important person in his life, and she managed him as nobody else could ever have done.'

Sandra told us: 'Bill got his Bradford van in 1979. It was sitting in the field nextdoor to Myreton Motor Museum (near Aberlady) and needed a bit of work done to it. It was 1982 when Bill got it back on the road as the Lighting Emporium's van.'





Bill with the Bradford van (July 2015) at the Strathmore Vintage Vehicle Rally, which took place at Glamis Castle. The car won the Light Commercial concours. Sandra explained: 'Concours is a competition among cars and other vehicles to see which are in best condition and sometimes also which are in the most original condition'.

Tim: 'Bill's health gradually declined over the last year, but he refused to give up or give in. He was taken to the acute stroke ward at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and he walked out of there twice – on two sticks, because he didn't like the Zimmer frame. He somehow managed to get onto a bus without any money or even a bus pass; and both times he was rescued by the police. After his stroke Bill's speech was unintelligible, so Sandra was never able to find out how he managed this. The second time, the police not only rescued him but they also very kindly gave him a lift home.'

'One of the nice things about his room at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary was that he could see Craigmillar Castle from his window. He always hoped that he and Sandra would go there together when he was released, but sadly they never did. But when the police realised it was an important place to Bill, they drove him past it en route to Scotland Street.'

In his closing words at the end of the ceremony, Tim Maguire included: 'Sandra and the family would especially like to thank Anne, Leanne, Emma, Jaqui, Charlotte and all the staff at Ward 14 of the Royal Edinburgh Hospital in Morningside, where Bill spent much of his last months, for the kindness and attention they gave him while he was in their care.'

### Bill told Sandra

**'When Bill first moved into Scotland Street in the late 1950s, he said, there were three brothels in the Street.'**

'There were also several shops:

- \* Mrs Hoy at the top of the street at 2a, on the west side, who ran a general store
- \* Further down on the same side at 2c was the Edinburgh & Dumfriesshire Dairy
- \* There was also another shop at number 3 run by Miss Todd; all have long since been turned into houses.
- \* Down in Scotland Street Lane West was John Wightman, Egg merchant and Macrae the Potato merchants'.

'His downstairs neighbour in Drummond Place was Sir Compton Mackenzie, and Bill would recount the evenings when "Monty" held parties and invited his neighbours as well as several well-known people. One of these was James Robertson Justice, [the actor] whom Bill related was just the same in real life as he was on the Screen.'

'His first car "Belinda" was for several years the only one in the street, which was probably just as well, as the most reliable method of starting was to park at the top of the street and hope he could bump start it before he got to the bottom.'



Bill with Belinda in Scotland Street (2008) – 'when she was on her first outing after many years of restoration', said Sandra

### Bill and the History Society

Sandra thinks she and Bill joined the Society about 2004. Certainly they are not on the rota of volunteers staffing the 2002 Exhibition; but are for the 2006 Exhibition – "Sandra or Bill Purves" in two 3-hour slots, one along with Olive Torrance and Tom Leonard, the other with Agnes Murray and Maisie Thomson.

Bill attended Society meetings regularly – 'and would often come up with questions for the speakers', says Sandra. 'The last meeting he attended was the AGM on 6th June 2016 – a week before he suffered his second stroke.'

While putting this article together, it became clear how much Bill himself is part of our local history.

# They lived in Broughton

This is the seventh in a series republishing articles first printed in our local community paper *Spurtle*. Following two pieces on writers Robert Garioch and Compton Mackenzie, entertainer Harold Lloyd, soldier/coachmaker Patrick Crichton, Mrs Charles Dickens and artist Anne Redpath, we now have Alan McIntosh's article about Robert Burn (1752–1815) (*Spurtle* 203, February 2012)

It is a humbling truth that fame in one century often decays into obscurity in another. Take the case of Robert Burn, once Broughton's brightest, now almost forgotten.

Born in Jessfield, Portobello in 1752, Burn first appears in the records 23 years later as he supervised masonry work at St Cuthbert's in Edinburgh. By 1782 he had become a city burghess, and was undertaking prestigious architectural projects such as the turreted and crenellated Hermitage of Braid (1785).

Between 1790 and 1800, he laid out 141–71 Leith Street (now gone), and his were the designs for the palace-fronted Picardy Place (1803–9), 1–12 Union Street, most of Forth Street (1804), and down to 41 Broughton Street (1804–10). He even lived here, his drawing academy at the top of the hill benefiting from good light through a bow window above what is now The Street.

His most famous structure was a folly: the Nelson Monument on Calton Hill (1807), preferred to an alternative design by Alexander Nasmyth. [...]

Interestingly, c.1791, he fell out with namesake Robert Burns over a memorial stone in Canongate Churchyard: 'Five pounds ten shillings per account, I owe Mr R. Burn, architect,' wrote the poet, 'for erecting the stone over the grave of poor Fergusson. He was two years in erecting it after I had commissioned him for it, and I have been two years in paying him after he sent me his account, so he and I are quits!'

Burn died in 1815 and was buried in a substantial monument in Old Calton Burial Ground. It records that he was survived by his wife and 12 children. A rare copy of his portrait is held at the RCAHM (Ref. FID/199/1).

***Sutherland Forsyth was appointed in December 2014 for three years by the RBGE to be the Botanic Cottage Community Engagement Co-ordinator. After these three hugely successful years – during which a pile of stones and timbers from the Botanic Cottage in the old Leith Walk Garden became both the newest and oldest building in RBGE, much used by many community groups and much loved by nearly all who have visited it – Sutherland moved on last December just a day after the Cottage was officially opened by Princess Anne. He is now the Head of Learning & Engagement for Auckland Castle, which is the historic bishop's palace in County Durham, and also the centre of a massive heritage-led regeneration project taking place in Bishop Auckland.***



***We wish him well in what promises to be nearly as exciting a post as that of Botanic Cottage Co-ordinator!***

**Latest Award for the Botanic Cottage:** The Botanic Cottage, Edinburgh, a project by architects Simpson and Brown for the Royal Botanic Garden, involved moving an 18th-century building, stone by stone, across Edinburgh and rebuilding in the Royal Botanic Garden with all the stones and timbers going back in the correct places. It looks as good as it did 250 years ago. The project is built to the highest possible standards and has quickly become a joyous community and education facility. (Taken from the Scottish Civic Trust Website).

John Pelan, Director of the Scottish Civic Trust said:

'This is a fantastic project which meets all the criteria and more for the My Place Awards. Passion, determination, quality, design, community engagement and civic pride are in abundance in this wonderful and surprising restoration project. Edinburgh has a new civic asset to be proud of.'

## 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 history groups. And copies go to libraries, schools and local doctors' and dentists' waiting rooms.

## Newsletter Online

We have a dedicated page of our own on the Broughton community paper's website ([www.broughtonspurtle.org.uk](http://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, details of meetings, the current edition and previous editions going back to Summer 2007.