

DRUMMOND NEWS
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DRUMMOND CIVIC
ASSOCIATION 2009-2010
www.drummondplace.org

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND SOCIAL EVENT
Wednesday 8th December at 7:30 P.M. at COLUMBA HOUSE 16 Drummond Place
Speaker DOROTHY WALSH

Residents of Drummond Place, Dundonald Street and other members are cordially invited to this annual meeting at which issues affecting the neighbourhood will be discussed. Please see agenda below. We particularly welcome new residents who we hope will join the association. The second part of the meeting is a social and informal one, at which wine will be served.

Speaker

This year we welcome Dorothy Walsh, conservation officer at the city's Museums Collection Centre located in Broughton Market at the west end of Barony Street. The remarkable centre carries out a meticulous conservation service for several city-owned museums, many of whose artifacts and objects are of national importance. Tonight, Dorothy will open a door on this amazing depository, its thousands of holdings, and the work of the conservators.

Welcome

It is a great pleasure to welcome the distinguished poet and Edinburgh's first Poet Laureate, Stewart Conn to these pages again. His richly variegated volume of verse, *The Breakfast Room* was published this year. We are indebted to Stewart and to Bloodaxe Books Ltd for permission to include two very special poems from the collection herein.



AGENDA

- 1- Speaker: Dorothy Walsh
- 2- Minutes of the previous meeting
- 3- Matters arising
- 4- Summary of the year
- 5- Financial Statement
- 6- Questions
- 7- Election of new Committee
- 8- AOB



SKIPS, BINS, GULLS inter alia

Would you like a rubbish skip permanently parked outside your front door to save the Council some cash? Would you give up a parking space to accommodate it - and another 300+ besides? Do you mind if the Council exempts itself from planning law, while enforcing it in full rigour on everyone else?

These are questions you won't be asked, of course, but it is the policy to which the City is groping and prodding their way once again, only five years after a £250,000 trial concluded that "the containerisation of the majority of the World Heritage Site will be unacceptable and would undermine the Council's commitment to UNESCO". 'Containerisation of waste' has been city-wide policy for more than a decade and officials have long wanted to push it into the World Heritage Site because it is cheaper. The Liberal-SNP administration plans to privatize waste management across the city as a whole and the big commercial firms who would tender for the contract are pressing them to adopt a single, low-cost system.

Gulls as ever are the pretext. Officials innocently profess to be motivated by nothing more than a desire to keep the streets clean. Split bags in breeding season outrage everyone, and the problem has been made much worse this year by the binmen's work to rule, which has often left bags on the streets for six hours or more. Although the New Town has been around two hundred years - and gulls they say a good deal longer - we are now told with a straight face that there is simply no alternative to stationing skips every 50 metres or so along the pavement. Those making this unhistorical case also ignore the fact that things are done differently in other cities - as I can testify from living in Cambridge where

there are no skips outside King's College Chapel, or anywhere else in the centre. And they turn a big blind eye to the fact that in those parts of Edinburgh where skips are already used, they become dumping zones for all manner of rubbish, battered, graffitied and all too often surrounded - in gull season - by split black bags. So much for clean streets.

But thankfully the argument is being reshaped in a way that could solve the gull problem in a better way. The Scottish Government is requiring the introduction of food waste recycling across the country by 2013 and the Council has already decided that it should be introduced first in the City Centre, using boxes (with sealing lids) similar in size to the existing red and blue collection. Gulls attack the bags for food, obviously enough. And apparently as much as 40 per cent of what is thrown away in black bags is food waste, so the size of the bag collection should also fall.

In truth containerisation is yesterday's solution. When it was first introduced people were encouraged to believe they could throw away as much as they wanted whenever they felt like it. That era has past. In the age of landfill tax and recycling targets carrying big penalties if missed the goal of policy should be to clean up and compress the black bag collection. Street associations are pressing that this approach should be given proper trial and following a letter to Jenny Dawe officials have grudgingly agreed to meet us. Hopefully we can avoid a rerun of the old argument.

You will be able shortly to read more about this on our website (www.drummondplace.org), including some Council documents extracted from them under freedom of information. (CC)

PARKING

The Council had been planning to make some large changes to parking in Zone 6, increasing the total number of spaces and introducing dual use-bays, so that residents could park in pay and display using permits alone. But the plans have been put on hold due to the terrible financial situation the city now finds itself in. Without a shred of irony we are told in fact that they will be implemented only when the necessary £650,000 has been amassed from parking fines.

This decision greatly affects the argument about rubbish collection in the City Centre. If bins/skips are introduced we stand to lose at least 300 parking places, on the council's own conservative figures, and probably many more (the figure of 300 excludes on street recycling for example, but this would likely follow).

The ratio of permits to spaces in Zone 6 is already well-above the 1.3:1 level officials themselves to be the maximum before the system becomes unworkable. But the resulting fines will take care of the problem, won't they? All we need is to rack up £650,000 worth. (CC)

EWH Library

EWH has an extensive collection of books and publications on Edinburgh's built heritage, conservation and architecture. The library is located on the ground floor in the office at Charlotte Square. There are maps of the city and slides depicting the Heritage Site as well as diverse leaflets explaining work and services provided by EWH. The



library is open during office hours and can be visited by appointment. Please email info@ewht.org.uk, or phone 0131 220 7720 to make arrangements.

Examples of publications (also available on line) are as follows:-

- Living in the world Heritage Site: A property owners guide.
 - o Advice and support for owners of historic homes relating to the maintenance of their buildings
 - o Information on energy efficiency
 - o Maintenance tips and useful contacts
- Historic Home Guide: External Paintwork.
- Historic Home Guide: Ironmongery.
- House Histories.
- Green Map of the World Heritage Site.

Scotland Street Tunnel Update

The first phase of rejuvenating the area around the Scotland Street Tunnel and the adjacent King George V Park began in early February. Local Councillors, residents, police and Council officers have developed the proposal in collaboration with architect Andrew McRae of Simon Laird Associates.

Elph, a local graffiti artist famed throughout Europe, was invited late last autumn to collaborate with young people from the area and create artwork for the wall blocking the northern entrance to the tunnel.

Judy Conn, secretary of the Friends of King George V Park who were involved in the development of the scheme, came to witness the first works which inaugurated a long anticipated regeneration of the park.

A part of the painted brickwork, and an autographed photograph of the complete artwork, will be given as a token for any donations to the project, on the initiative of Callum McLeod, part of the Inverleith Community Learning and Development Team based at Broughton High School. If you are interested in supporting this cause, please contact Callum or his colleague Anne Brown, 0131 3326316.

Callum McLeod said: "I think it's really great to have this sort of project happening in a community. It is really obvious that there is a lot of support to judge by the number of people offering to help. It is also great to watch young people's eyes lighting up when they realise that it's actually happening. It's a perfect example of the type of project in which Community Learning & Development can get involved and can unite a whole community". Iron materials from the wall will also be recycled, in which case the efforts of the Council Community Service by Offenders projects can then profit local charities.

When initial work is completed, there are plans for a covered space with seating and lighting to give young people and other visitors to the park a place to socialise in a safe environment. It is also hoped that there will be a terraced performance space and sports facilities in future. (MC)

Early Call

*There are days when the fear of death
is as ubiquitous as light ...*

TED KOOSER

Hearing the phone I am loath to answer, preferring to be closeted from the world's ills. But when an upstairs neighbour says there's a woodpecker on our seed-feeder we speed to the window in time to catch its black and white stripes and crimson nape-patch before it flies off: a few more rings, we'd have missed it. Now all seems back to normal ... unless the small birds' shrillness signals the sparrowhawk's return.

Stewart Conn

World Heritage Lighting Strategy

A groundbreaking lighting strategy for the World Heritage Site is currently being drafted as a joint project between EWH and the City of Edinburgh Council. As part of the strategy, a pilot project will be carried out in Scotland Street to establish standards for lighting in the New Town.



Original historic lamps are sparse in the New Towns today, but there is evidence of 19th century lighting on many streets. Two square indents, about six inches apart on the base stone can be seen by the railings in the New Town. These can indicate the location of the original lamp posts, or in some cases boot-scrapers when near a door. It is likely that there were plans to light those streets that lack these traces. The design details and patterns for New Town lighting also had subtle differences from one street to the next, adding diversity to the architecture.

The new lighting strategy will offer guidelines for the replacement of modern street lighting that falls into disrepair in the New Town. It will give advice on a more historically considerate approach but also allow for new design where appropriate. Wrought iron oil lanterns can still be found on Charlotte Square and York Place. Some cast-iron standards that were put up privately still exist on Heriot Row, Queen Street, Ann Street, Howard Place and Northumberland Street.

The committee of Commissioners of Police of the Lighting Department commissioned rail mounted street lights with public funding in 1819. There are surviving examples on George Street, Stafford Street, in the Advocates Library and York Place. Most oil lamps were taken down in the 1820s to give way for new gas lights that were mounted on the pavements. These however, echoed the design of the oil lamps.

Edinburgh's street lanterns were powered by whale or train oils in the late 18th and early 19th centuries giving a rather sparse light, which was only provided in the winter. Sir John Carr reported that one July night he had to feel his way from George Square over North Bridge to St Andrew Square. The oil was also very valuable and versatile; causing Russian sailors to climb the light posts and make off with the oil for use in cooking, and resulting in a dark street.

From 1815 the oil standard was beginning to give way to gas pipes. This was considered a great wonder, 'most beautiful and brilliant' as expressed by George Combe. 'What folly, to have a diamond necklace or a Correggio, and not to light your house with gas', thought Sydney Smith in 1820.

GARDEN NOTES

The event of the year in Drummond Place Garden was a performance given on 21 August by the Representative Band of the Border Guards of the Polish Republic, who were in Edinburgh to take part in the Tattoo. Their visit to the Garden was arranged by the Polish Consul General, Dr Tomasz Trafas, through the Polish Ex-Combatants Association at 11 Drummond Place. Regrettably, the Garden Committee had little opportunity to give the event wide publicity beforehand, but it was nevertheless fairly well attended and the precision and virtuosity of the Band were much enjoyed by those who came.

On a sadder note, the Garden Committee will this year lose the services of Professor Gerry Collee,

27a Drummond Place, who has not only been a stalwart member of the Committee for some 10 years but has also, as Convener of the "Border Revivers", done an immense amount of work in rejuvenating the shrubbery and generally improving the appearance of the Garden. He will be greatly missed, particularly by the small band of volunteers who have worked with him.

It will continue to be the aim of the Committee to deal with the thickets of holly which remain, mostly now at the east end of the garden, and to progress with minor improvements in other respects. Happily, as proof of this intention, a number of new benches have been acquired – including a rather magnificent Coalbrookdale cast iron bench – which will add a new touch of elegance when they are set in place.

(Bill Giles)

This youthful guest and a dog were not alone in enjoying the evening garden party on 26 June. Thankfully, on this occasion we were blessed with beneficent weather. The tables overflowed with a splendid array of foods donated by members and friends of the garden. We were especially grateful for the service provided by Villeneuve Wines. Not a drop of the Norte Chico was wasted, and proposals of *santé* continued long after the gates were reluctantly closed.



DRUMMOND TENNIS CLUB AND THE GIRAFFE

Highlights of the Drummond Tennis Club's year chiefly featured its Junior Members. There is now a programme of tuition and coaching for children aged 5 to 11. This takes place on Friday afternoons under the aegis of LTA Accredited Coaches. As many as 40 children have been introduced to the sport this year. Who among them might be a Murray of the future?

The Junior star of the Club, Lloyd Greatorex Watson, 15, has continued to shine. Amongst many attainments this year, he won 3 significant titles at open tournaments in age groups up to 18 in Dunfermline, North Berwick and Ilkley, Sheffield. He is currently ranked 3rd for both under-16s and 18s in the East of Scotland region. A welcome player at Drummond was Reuben Henry, 14, the 2010 Scottish National Under-14 Champion. His hotly contested matches with Lloyd were a joy

to behold. Alastair Stiven is another rising star. He trains with Lloyd and they are proving to be a considerable force as doubles partners. This summer Alastair won the under-14 accolade at the Linlithgow Open.

This writer's Giraffe garden, adjoining the tennis club, also had a fecund season. It was remarkably free of pests due to the splendid glacial winter. The sole victim was one of the two ancient rosemary bushes, but the angels of the garden granted compensations. The berry orchard, particularly the exquisite redcurrant, was a treasury of delights. But the *crème-de-la crème* was provided by the young Sauvignon vine in the little glass-house. There were 37 (don't mention Heinz) clusters of the noble grape, each worthy of a sonnet by Keats himself. Provided he does not outstay his welcome, Jack Frost will be welcome back this winter. *(JRM)*



Here it is, another dream for the winds. How could a sunflower seed blown by the wind or dropped by a bird upon the slightest of crannies not only survive but germinate and blaze into flower in October? It emerged from a garden wall behind Drummond Place and continued to shine as the Chilean miners emerged into the light on 13–14 October. We salute it and them. (*JRM*)

Peter Pan – the Great King Street connection

2010 is the 150th anniversary of the dramatist J.M. Barrie's birth. After an unhappy and often grief-stricken childhood in Kirriemuir, the shy, sensitive Barrie matriculated at Edinburgh University, studying for a general MA degree. He described himself at this time as



'thin as a pencil but not so long'. Initially he lodged in Cumberland Street in accommodation provided by the wife of Rev. Alexander Whyte, minister of St George's West Church. The Minister, also from Kirriemuir, kept a protective eye on the fragile young student. He shared the lodging with another student, named Harrison, who died a year later, probably of an illness exacerbated by malnutrition. It was not then unusual for students to die as a result of near destitution. Undoubtedly this clouded Barrie's years in Edinburgh, although he retained an abiding love for the city itself.

From 1879–82 he lodged with a Mrs Edwards in a top flat at 3 Great King St, climbing the hill to the Old Quad with a heavy heart. He referred to his MA studies as 'Grind, grind, grind'. Of obligatory mathematics he observed, 'I had never a passion for knowing that when circles and triangles attempt impossibilities, it is absurd'.

He got some relief from his academic treadmill as a freelance

Carpe Diem

From my study window
I see you
below in the garden, a hand
here pruning
or leaning across to snip
a wayward shoot,

a daub of powder-blue in a
profusion of green;
then next moment, you are
no longer there -
only to re-appear, this time
perfectly framed

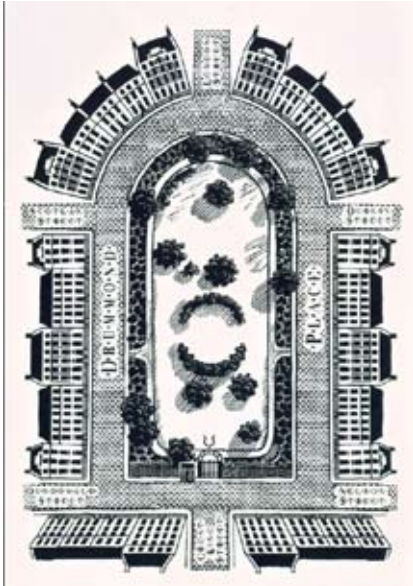
in dappling sunlight, with
an armful of ivy
you've trimmed, topped by
hyacinth blooms,
fragrant survivors of last
night's frost.

And my heart misses a beat
at love for you,
knowing a time will come
when you are
no longer there, nor I here
to watch you

on a day of such simplicity.
Meantime let us
make sure we clasp each
shared moment
in cupped hands, like water
we dare not spill.

Stewart Conn

drama critic for the *Edinburgh Courier*. His report on the pantomime *Ali Baba* is predictably joyous, though his reviews of other productions in Edinburgh and Glasgow are severe – 'twaddle is twaddle'. However, this early exposure to professional theatre certainly set the stage for what was to come. Despite being plagued by migraines and 'black dog' worries, he finally graduated, and so ended the haarish Edinburgh interlude and his escape into a kinder light. He could hardly have predicted the letter from Robert Louis Stevenson (another local) several years later: 'I am a capable artist, but it looks to me as if you are a man of genius'. *JRM (with special thanks to Lady Mary Davidson)*



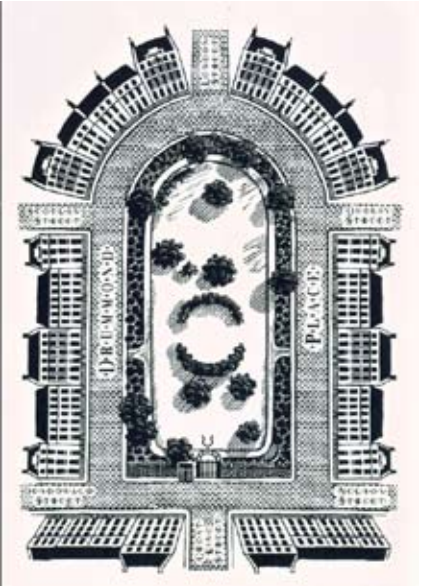
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Subscriptions will be collected at the AGM - £5 per household.

Your support is invaluable for the work we do on behalf of our community, and of our precious oasis in the New Town's eastern quarter.

MERCHANDISE

The DCA has a selection of notecards, with various images of Drummond Place (including some of those within these pages), along with Lettice Milne Rae's 'The Story of Drummond Place'. These items will be on sale at the AGM, or contact any committee member for details.

DRUMMOND CIVIC ASSOCIATION WEBSITE

Please take the time to visit our website. You can find out about the history of Drummond Place, purchase beautiful photographs and cards and be kept up-to-date with the bulletin board.

www.drummondplace.org

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

To save printing costs and to reduce the amount of paper posted through your letterbox, it would be helpful if you could send your e-mail address to the Secretary, Chris Collins, at crc123@blueyonder.co.uk. If we have your e-mail address, we can also alert you to developments throughout the year.

THE DRUMMOND CIVIC ASSOCIATION (DCA)

DCA has several meetings each year and serves the interests of Drummond Place and immediate environs. Major subjects include planning, traffic, environmental issues and The World Heritage Trust. One member, Kenny Lumsden, also sits on the New Town and Broughton Community Council. Maidie Cahill is on the Board of the World Heritage Trust.

Local residents are most welcome to join the DCA and report concerns or voice opinions which the Committee will make plain to the powers- that-be. DCA celebrates an annual midsummer garden party and also holds social events to which all members and friends are warmly invited.

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With thanks to all contributors

