

THE DRUMMOND CIVIC ASSOCIATION

www.drummondplace.org

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND SOCIAL EVENT
Thursday 30th January 2014 at 7:00 P.M. - THE POLISH CLUB, 11 Drummond Place.

Speakers: Paul McCauley - Conservator/Restorer, Museums Collection Centre, 5 Broughton Place and Angus Murdoch, Strategy and Recycling Officer, Waste Services, City of Edinburgh Council.

Residents of Drummond Place and adjoining streets 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. This year Angus Murdoch will be answering questions on waste disposal and eco-friendly recycling and Paul McCauley will talk on the restoration of the 'The 12 Monuments of Edinburgh'.



AGM - AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Speaker: Angus Murdoch
3. Speaker: Paul McCauley
4. Minutes of the previous meeting
5. Matters arising
6. Summary of the year
7. Financial Statement
8. Police Box
9. Questions
10. Election of new Committee members
11. AOB



PEACE IN OUR TIME? – Report from DCA Chair

We have a sort of halfway house ending to the Second Bin War, with gull proof bags (GPBs) in East/West streets and skips promised for North/South (or anywhere else Council officials can crowbar them in). In the absence of coherent Council information on the new system, DCA - in the person of Stephen Nisbet - circulated a letter in Drummond Place and surrounding streets, which probably contributed to the care and consideration people showed in putting out and taking the new bags at appropriate times. We are poster children for GPBs. I'm not sure any of us ever really wanted to be, but life is not always what you expect. Things could easily slip, and have a bit in London Street, but we are certainly doing better than some other streets, where GPBs ornament the railings on a permanent basis, getting rained on and worse, also filling with rubbish from passers-by which the Council refuses to collect because it is not in bin bags.

There are then two key points about GPBs:

- put them out/take them in at the right times, and
- fill them only with rubbish in bin bags.

Oh, and don't let them blow away! Maybe mark them with your house number. Stephen has an excellent marker pen and provides a wonderful free service.

That's it on GPBs.

Tram work has reached such an advanced stage that someone I know recently met someone who had been talking to a person who had actually seen one in St Andrews Sq, or said they had. The bad news about the trams is that they will cost £1.50 more than the bus for a return to an airport and take 10 minutes longer. The good news is that they are going to cost us less than a billion.

Traffic has not returned to previous patterns in the New Town despite the reopening of Queen Street. We have pressed the Council to address this, working with other associations. We have also urged the case against making big changes to streets in the first New Town, such as partial pedestrianizing of George Street, until the tram has bedded in and we know what impact it will have.

A local builder decided to increase the housing supply in our area by constructing a garage behind Bellevue Crescent in a form suspiciously similar to a tiny little house, then applying for planning permission to turn it into a tiny little house. We did our best to support residents in resisting this, lobbying officials, taking legal advice and drumming up as many objections as we could. Neighbouring associations were very helpful in this respect. The builder has now been told to demolish it. CC

LIVING IN A WORLD HERITAGE SITE



Edinburgh World Heritage provides advice and support for owners of historic homes pertaining to the maintenance of their buildings as well as a specific section on their website covering more detailed maintenance, check-lists and useful contacts. They have also produced a series of Historic Home Guides which can be downloaded at <http://www.ewht.org.uk> or collected in hard copy from EWH at 5 Bakehouse Close, Edinburgh.

The guides cover the following areas:

- **Ironmongery** - Fixtures and Fittings such as hinges, door handles and locks.
- **Exterior Paintwork** – Windows, doors, balconies, railings and common stairs.
- **Roofs** – slates, pantiles, dormers, cornices, gutters, cupolas, chimneys and balustrades. As well as describing the construction and materials, the guide also offers maintenance tips and highlights common roof problems.
- **Energy Efficiency** – reducing energy consumption, insulation, lighting, renewable energy and use of secondary glazing.

EWH also has a library located on the ground floor of the office at 5 Bakehouse Close. The library has a collection of over 1800 books and publications covering architecture, conservation and planning. The library is open during office hours and can be visited by telephoning 0131 220 7720 to make an appointment. MC

DRUMMOND PLACE GARDEN

Having complained bitterly about the weather for the previous 3 years, I should note that this year has been somewhat better! Let's hope that this is but the start of an upward trend.

Perhaps the most significant development in the garden this year has been a radical change in the way that we care for our trees. In past years, the mature trees were inspected annually (free of charge) by an official of the City of Edinburgh Council. That service was withdrawn and, on advice, we have had a full tree assessment carried out. This resulted in a full page of recommendations for dead-wooding, crown lifting, crown reduction etc. and 3 days of work by a team of tree surgeons to implement them. In future, trees classified as 'high risk' will continue to be assessed annually, with less frequent inspections for the remainder. The proprietors can now be confident that our duty of care is being fully discharged. However this does not mean that there is no

danger. Branches can sometimes fall even though there has been no previous sign of weakness, as exemplified recently by the large elm on the south side. This is something that needs to be borne in mind when one is walking around the garden or on the pavements, especially in a high wind. We were saddened by the death on 10th September of Professor Gerry Collee. As there is to be separate mention of this, I shall say only that we will always be grateful for the immense contribution that he made to the development of the garden and that we miss him very much.

Bill Giles

DRUMMOND LAWN TENNIS CLUB

Drummond Tennis Club is a hidden gem in the heart of the New Town. Many of you will know it and are perhaps members there but others who have lived just around the corner are still unaware of its existence. The two blaise courts have been in fantastic condition this year with the members taking pride in their maintenance.

Drummond Tennis Club also boasts a comprehensive coaching programme for both children and adults. The adult programme consists of cardio tennis on Tuesdays and a technique and tactics-based lesson on Thursdays. Cardio tennis suits all abilities and incorporates both a healthy workout while improving tennis shots. Both classes have been well supported and have developed a loyal following. The children's programme has been a huge success with at least 80 children from the age of 4 up taking part in the lessons. It is fantastic to see so many children of varying abilities being so active, improving their skills and most importantly enjoying their tennis. At the end of each course of lessons there is an ever popular tournament with a very well received BBQ.

In addition to this, there are two summer camps which run from Monday to Friday at the start of the summer holidays. This year was particularly successful partly due to the glorious weather but also the fantastic enthusiasm of both the children and the coaches. The focus with all of the coaching at Drummond is about improvement while having fun. The better you become at tennis the more fun you will have! If you would like any further information about the coaching programme at Drummond please have a look on www.tenniswithsophie.com or the Drummond tennis club website.

Sophie Blake



AN EMBARKATION FOR DP'S OWN TIME TRAVELLER?

The distinctive blue police box in Drummond Place, one of about 20 in Edinburgh still owned by the constabulary although mainly disused, is likely to be sold off with most of the others in Spring 2014 as part of public sector belt-tightening. Boxes disposed of in previous sales have enjoyed varied and sometimes garish new lives, as for example a curry kitchen at Bruntsfield Links, a pink-coloured frozen yoghurt bar in Rose Street and a Brazilian pancake eatery at Lauriston Place with herbs grown on its roof.



As a listed building, 'our' police box near the western entrance to Drummond Place Gardens should hopefully retain a more sedate appearance in keeping with its New Town residential surroundings. However, many such boxes in non-commercial locations have sunk into graffiti-daubed neglect. It would be great if some local initiative could secure the future of this police box, at least to prevent it from becoming an eyesore. Perhaps it could even be developed as a mini-museum recalling the heyday of these structures which lasted until the advent of police radio in the 1960s began to diminish their usefulness.

The Drummond Place version is a good example of the design, in keeping with Edinburgh's classical architecture, that was chosen when the two-tonne cast-iron boxes were introduced to the capital in 1933 by Roderick Ross, Chief Constable of Edinburgh City Police from 1900 to 1935. According to a recent article in the Edinburgh Evening News, Ross died in 1943, just half a block away from 'our' police box, in a nursing home at 19 Great King Street that remained open until the early 1960s when it was turned into student hostel accommodation for Heriot-Watt University. This local link with Ross is another reason for not letting 'our' box decay.

Ross's great grandson Angus Self, who runs his own joinery business, has been busy renovating a police box on the approach to Braid Hills golf course for Gail Smith, a local resident who bought it in order to preserve it as a museum, complete with a police mannequin inside.

A similar makeover of the Drummond Place police box, allowing it to be opened occasionally to the public, could enhance our beautiful neighbourhood. A community notice board could be hung there, partly featuring information about six-times Lord Provost George Drummond, whose name graces our address in a New Town that owes so much to his vision. Although boxes put up for sale by the police are disposed of by Edinburgh City Council at blind auctions, officials say they look favourably on attempts by residents associations to acquire them for the common good – as happened, for example, in the case of the police box beside Rutland Square Gardens at the West End. SN

What do readers think? This will be discussed at the AGM or send us an e-mail.

**‘WE CAN SEE CLEARLY NOW THE
RAIN HAS GONE.’**



As in previous years, inclement weather effaced the Midsummer garden party. It was rescheduled for the 03rd August and happily the weather gods were kind. The children’s party had a small but appreciative attendance. The repast at the evening party was simply marvellous. Most generous and delicious finger foods were brought and not a scrap was left at the end. In addition, a record 48 bottles wine were imbibed. At the close, in the gloaming, we felt as Virginia Wolf did after the memorable Oxbridge lunch in ‘A Room of One’s Own’ – ‘We are all going to Heaven, and Van Dyck is of the company’.

JRM

A LAUREL FOR THE PROFESSOR

Gaby Holden conveyed hearty congratulations to Professor Emeritus Peter Higgs on the day his Nobel Laureateship was announced. Professor Higgs and his young family resided at 13 Drummond Place from 1961 to 1967. He briefly served on the Garden Committee and retains cherished memories of the garden and of Drummond Place. Happily he continues to live not far away in the New Town.



CELEBRANTS

The hitherto pent-up song-thrush
in our shrubbery relays the news
that mother and son are both well.

May you, assured of loving nurturing,
grasp in these amazingly tiny yet perfect
hands whatever the future may bring

and the world, no matter in what crazed
manner it may spin, do you no harm
but provide solace and protection.

Meantime in the family Bible the section
recording the passage of the generations
awaits your name’s neat inscription.

Stewart Conn (We are grateful to Stewart for this recent poem. It salutes the blessed arrival of the first Conn grandchild, to whom we say ‘ceud mile failte’)

GERRY COLLEE 1929-2013: An appreciation

With the death of Professor John Gerald (Gerry) Collee on 10th September 2013 not only did Scotland lose a distinguished medical microbiologist, but Drummond Place lost a friend who, during his relatively brief sojourn in our midst, enriched the lives of many.

Gerry was born in Bo'ness, West Lothian, in May 1929 and after graduating in Medicine at the University of Edinburgh in 1951, and gaining experience as a young doctor in both military and civilian roles, he was invited, in 1955, to become a Lecturer in his Alma Mater's Department of Bacteriology (as then entitled). A brilliant career ensued, with Gerry appointed to the Robert Irvine Chair of Bacteriology in 1979, and awarded the CBE in 1991, some months prior to his retirement.

Gerry's services to medicine were wide ranging, with Gerry making important contributions to, for example, the management of post-operative wound infections, and, towards the end of his career, helping protect the public against the potential transmission of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy to humans. But Gerry was more than a medical professor. He was a woodworker, a fiddler, a fisherman, a painter, a poet (with five published collections to his credit), a golfer, and a gardener, and his reputation as a gardener had preceded him when, following the death of his second wife, Professor Anne Ferguson, in 1998, he later moved to 27B Drummond Place. There, he readily agreed to serve on the Garden Committee, taking particular responsibility for the 'Border Revivers', those volunteers who tackle the tasks not covered by the part-time professional gardener's contract, and who, in particular, have recently replanted sections of the perimeter border.

Consequently, all who enjoy Drummond Place Garden greatly appreciate what was achieved under Gerry's guidance before he left Drummond Place in 2010. However, it is the Gerry who valued, and himself exemplified, the power of friendship and good fellowship, and who was the greatest of hosts, that we miss most,

and a number of his former Drummond Place neighbours were pleased to join Gerry's family and friends, and Doreen, his special friend and close companion of recent years, at a farewell and thanksgiving service on 25th September, and recall happier times. **BA & JA**



Photo courtesy of Scott Maxwell

ANNIE DALE 1948-2013

Alas, Annie died on a visit to London in January of this year. She seemed indestructible: her fine resonant voice conveyed that. Born in 1948 in Dunbar, she was brought up on the family farm in East Lothian. After school at St. Leonard's in St. Andrews she attended Edinburgh University where she studied Ecology. She subsequently taught Science and Mathematics in Edinburgh Schools. In 1984 she met a friend from University days, Donald Fraser, known to us as Boris. Neither was in good health at the time, but they moved in together to the flat at 27 Drummond Place, where they were happy for many years. Annie was very welcoming and Boris remembers many parties and the flat being full of people. Her gregarious and friendly manner will be remembered and missed by us all. **GH**

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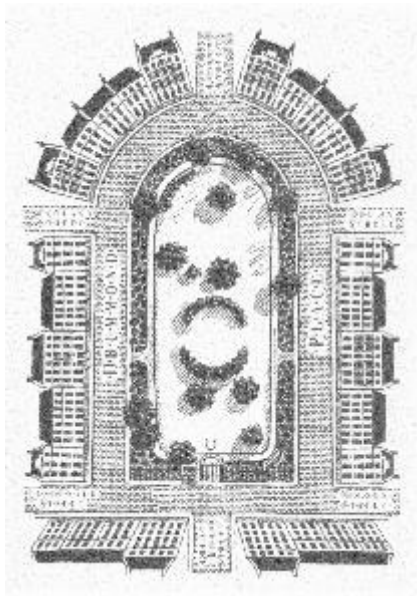
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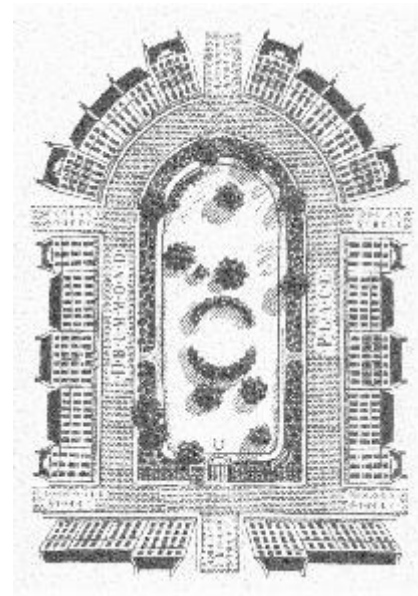
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Subscriptions will be collected at the AGM - £5 per household.

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 Stephen Nisbet at stephen_nisbet@hotmail.com. 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.

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.

Edited by John Ross Maclean and produced by David Watt
with thanks to all contributors.