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Book Reviews

Sara Stevenson, **Hill and Adamson's The Fishermen and Women of the Firth of Forth.** *Edinburgh: Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1991, pp. 120 + index, bibliography, 36 figs + 60 plates. Hardback, £15.95, 0-903598-15-9.*

Often histories are written in some sort of isolation: railway history, history of ideas, business history, all have produced examples which are the proverbial 'closed book' to the outsider. They have been written with such tunnel vision in their execution and writing that the resulting publication can have no interest whatsoever to the non-specialist reader. This can be the case with histories of photography, where either the technicalities or the warring personalities result in a fascination for detail by the author to the total exclusion of the broader picture.

The exhibition catalogue, *Hill and Adamson's The Fishermen and Women of the Firth of Forth*, is an exemplar of photographic history at its best. Not only does it throw new light on a series of early photographs of Newhaven life in the 1840s, but it places this within its greater social, economic and local history contexts. There is something of interest here for almost everyone. This is all the more praiseworthy when the volume under review is compared

with the only other recent attempt to deal with the significance of these images, Ralph L. Harley's paper 'A Relative Chronology of 135 Newhaven Fisherfolk: Photographs by D.O. Hill and Robert Adamson', a masterly two-page essay of 'so what?' historical writing.¹

Sara Stevenson, curator of the Scottish Photography Archive at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, has specialised knowledge of the work of D. O. Hill (1802-1870) and Robert Adamson (1821-1848), the early Edinburgh photographers who used the calotype process, with its paper negatives, to great and acclaimed effect. Although their partnership lasted only for five years, the Portrait Gallery has some 5000 images made by them in its collections, which Miss Stevenson catalogued in the late 1970s.² With subsequent additions, principally from the Riddell Collection and the Edinburgh Photographic Society, and borrowing a number of negatives from Glasgow University Library and prints from elsewhere, Miss Stevenson was able to reconstruct and examine this body of Hill and Adamson's work. It had been destined to be a publication (which because of Adamson's illness and subsequent death never came to fruition) and was intended, at a time of industrial expansion but



View along Newhaven Beach, calotype by D. O. Hill and Robert Adamson, 1843-44. (*Scottish National Portrait Gallery, J. Irvine Smith Album, PGPHA 314.*)

perceived moral depression, as a tribute to a self-sufficient, hardworking fishing community, known and respected in the capital from their womenfolk in distinctive costume, with their street-cry of 'Caller haddie!'

The photographs themselves, reproduced to the National Galleries of Scotland's customary high standard, give the reader direct insight into the harsh realities of the tight-knit east-coast fishing communities. It is, of course, a vanished world, but Hill and Adamson's mastery of the technicalities of the calotype and artistry of photography mean that even a modern audience, saturated with photo-journalism, may be surprised at the freshness of this glimpse into the past. The careful juxtaposition of Newhaven pictures by other, lesser, photographers, reminds us that Hill and Adamson were in a class of their own. It is, as Miss Stevenson points out, part of the proof of Hill and Adamson's brilliance, for to contemporaries this was pioneering stuff. Her well-researched commentary on the images provides the reader with an in-depth understanding of the arrival of photography in Scotland, the stormy nature of church politics, the opinion of influential art critics and amateurs of the new art, life in Newhaven and other east-coast fishing communities, the overlapping areas in literature, nationalism and folksong, and the place of these images in Romanticism and art. For an essay of only some forty pages or so, copiously illustrated to reinforce the points made, this exhibition catalogue stands as an admirable and thoughtful model, continuing the high standards of erudition, clarity and scholarship which the National Galleries maintain. For anyone interested in Edinburgh and its environs during the 1840s, this book is a must.

A. D. MORRISON-LOW, *National Museums of Scotland*

REFERENCES

- 1 This appeared in Michael Hallett (ed.), *Rewriting Photographic History* (Birmingham 1991), pp. 11-18.
- 2 Sara Stevenson, *David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson: Catalogue of their Calotypes taken between 1843 and 1847 in the Collection of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery* (Edinburgh 1981).

Charles McKean, **Edinburgh: An Illustrated Architectural Guide**. *Edinburgh: Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, 1992, pp. 237, illus. Paperback, £9.95, 0-9501462-4-2.*

The RIAS guides are now established as *the* pocket illustrated guides to the architecture of Scotland, gradually covering the country in volumes loosely related to district boundaries. Listing his works on the back of this volume, the author modestly added that he was also Secretary and Treasurer of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland; one wonders where he found the time for mere bureaucracy. His new professional responsibilities are probably less onerous.

This edition of the Edinburgh volume, which is twice the length of the 1982 version, is a fortunate spin-off from the European Council of Ministers meeting in Edinburgh in 1992, as this was the catalyst for generous sponsorship from the City of Edinburgh District Council and Lothian and Edinburgh Enterprise Ltd, which enabled the enlarged edition, now containing 32 pages of superb colour photographs, to be published at a reasonable price. The new edition, however, is not just for new readers, or for the kind of people who bought a colour television set when their black and white one was working perfectly well. It includes many more buildings, and corrects defects, such as the remarkable omission of the Second New Town from the previous edition.

Before commenting on the content of the book, a word about its format is needed. Within its soft-back octavo covers, its pages are vertically divided into a wide inner column, and a narrow outer one. The main text, about individual buildings and streets, occupies the former, while the latter is used for captions to the 600 illustrations and for subsidiary information, including relevant quotations and history. The colour plates are dispersed, four pages at a time, between signatures, while the black and white ones, arranged in both columns, relate so well to the text that it is hardly ever necessary to turn a page to follow an item.

The illustrations themselves, though many of them are only postage-stamp size, are comprehensive, fascinating, and nearly always of good quality. As well as photographs of existing buildings, there are numerous old engravings and photographs of lost buildings, including a remarkable one of the actual demolition of William Adam's Royal Infirmary in

1879; pictures of existing buildings in earlier times (but why choose Bryce's British Linen Bank covered in grime?); and illustrations of unbuilt projects which engender regret (a classical arch across the west end of Princes Street in 1816, which would have prevented any traffic problem) or relief (R. F. Jordan's Glass Age Princes Street of 1938). Drawings of the conference centre and the new Scottish Office, and photographs of models of the Festival Theatre and Museum of Scotland, under construction, ensure that the guide will not date too rapidly. There is a clever illustrated glossary which needs more space, but the maps – always a problem in guide books – are so small as to be nearly useless. Perhaps a reference system using the co-ordinates shown on Bartholomew's excellent city plan would have been the solution.

Before all this there is a masterly introduction by Colin McWilliam, carried forward from the previous edition, which makes sense of the development of the whole city on a single page as only he could do. Another half page brings this up to date, with tales of filled holes, and the promise of schemes to come. The author's plea for a continued distinction between high-density urban living, and real countryside beyond the suburbs, is a welcome one. Then, before we get to grips with individual buildings, there is an excellent chapter on understanding the Old Town; the physical and historical context which is so essential for the appreciation of any building.

The guide begins with the Castle, and ends with Trinity House, Kirkgate; via the Old Town, Tollcross, South Side, New Town, then following an anti-clockwise double spiral from Stockbridge round the inner, then outer suburbs and rural settlements until Portobello, where the logic breaks down, and we jump Leith to Trinity. After the New Town, the background information sometimes gets a bit thin, and there is a strong bias towards the selection of buildings which are atypical of the area. Thus in Dalry Road we jump 200 years from Easter Dalry House to Murieston Crescent, without a hint of the artisan tenements which are the predominant building type of the area. But this is not snobbishness for, apart from a school and a couple of houses by Pilkington, a reader would think that the Grange, whose origin is not properly explained, consisted of buildings by Robert Matthew, William Kininmonth and Roland Wedgwood. Oh yes, and John Kinross's houses in Mortonhall Road get a mention, with the snide com-

ment that they lack Lorimer's proportion and softness. Of course they do – our finest arts and crafts architect was designing suburban villas, not country cottages. Ravelston, apart from the old mansion-house, seems to consist entirely of innovative buildings of the 1930s and 1960s. Other suburbs are treated in the same way; the historic gems, and recent buildings by paid-up members of the RIAS, are picked out, while the dominant presence of decent Victorian houses or inter-war Miller bungalows is ignored. Such biased selectivity would not matter if there was a general reference to an area as a sprawling suburb of mainly boring buildings, but McKean has a reluctance to face the true horrors of outer suburbia, except in the great Corporation housing schemes, which were Architecture. Thus Pilton gets 30 lines while only two 1980s houses in nearby Barnton get a mention. The selectivity gets even more perverse when we get to George Watson's school, where Michael Laird's little music school is included, while James Dunn's main building is not even mentioned; would a restaurant reviewer include a delicious pudding, without a word about the stodgy main course?

However, there is little to quarrel with as far as the entries themselves are concerned; succinct factual information with occasional wit. Errors seem few, but are nonetheless annoying. A few buildings are in the wrong street; the Roman Catholic cathedral in Picardy Place rather than Broughton Street, and Bob Anderson's TSB extension in Corstorphine High Street ('a major traffic artery!') rather than St John's Road. This is more serious for lack of contextual understanding than for finding the buildings. If Michael Laird's Stockbridge flats had been listed under India Place, rather than Saunders Street, John Hope's projected development of the opposite side of this former street would not have been misplaced. More seriously, McKean has put Glenfinlas Street, with Covell Matthews' sparkling new building (maddeningly not given a street number – an occasional nuisance throughout) in the section on Charlotte Square, when the whole architectural point of this office building is that it was a successful attempt to complete an unfinished part of James Gillespie Graham's Moray estate, which comes in a later section.

The red sandstone building in Dewar Place was Edinburgh's first electric generating station, so it is rather demeaning to call it a Scottish Power showroom without mention of this. Nor is the origin of

Haymarket Station as a terminus explained. These buildings do not make sense without this knowledge. But the West End often gets thin treatment; the Walker Estate and St Mary's Cathedral are covered without reference to the Walker family. If McKean had been inside Palmerston Place church it would have rated more than four words in brackets.

A few hoary old mistakes are put in, presumably for the sake of nostalgia. But McKean should know what a hammer-beam roof is, and that he will not find one in Parliament Hall or the Tron Kirk. These magnificent examples of the work of seventeenth-century Scots wrights have no hammers (brackets to reduce the span) and might more properly be described as arched-braced truss roofs. Nor was the Usher Hall built by a brewer, but by Andrew Usher & Co, distillers, and the first adulterers of malt whisky with grain. The educational purpose of the guide is further compromised by the continued use of the word 'restored' to mean nothing of the kind; the worst example being at 109–112 Princes Street where the Caledonian Club was butchered to create Debenham's store.

In a book so stuffed with facts, mistakes are bound to creep in, but the next edition of this excellent guide must avoid these obvious ones, and justify its suburban selectivity by reference to the context in which the architectural gems are to be found. There is plenty of space in the narrow column to do this.

OLIVER BARRATT

Peter B. Freshwater, **Sons of Scotia Raise Your Voice**. *Edinburgh: The Friends of Edinburgh University Library, Drummond Books No. 4, 1991, pp. ix + 142, illus. Hardback, £10.00, 0-905152-04-2.*

We are reminded afresh that satire and sentiment in verse and music have deep roots in Scottish popular culture by Peter Freshwater's fascinating selection from a collection of early nineteenth-century Edinburgh broadsides in the University Library. Politics, pestilence, murder and robbery, and more traditional ballads and lyrics, all reflect a rich, sometimes raw, texture of Edinburgh life.

The anthology is divided into three sections: political squibs, topical ballads (some also political), and traditional and literary ballads. Elections of the time were not for the faint-hearted – perhaps they never are – and squibs forged to wound the opposi-

tion were weapons in the ferocious tripartite political battle in the city between old establishment Tories, the new establishment Whigs – often stigmatised as 'the Clique' – and Radicals, ostensibly allied with the latter in the Liberal party, but aspiring to supplant both. As the author's selection makes clear, attacks *ad hominem* were the rule rather than the exception. 'The Tyrant's Fall' (p. 118), looking forward to hanging the Duke of Wellington, accurately reflects the near-revolutionary spirit of 1832. Nearer home, assaults were less homicidal but equally personal as the rubicund member for Leith, Sir John Archibald Murray, discovered when he was ribbed unmercifully as 'Bottom ... fed from the Pipe' (p. 23) and 'a Pippin of most preternatural size' (p. 35). The Pipe jibe was a hit at his family sinecure office as Clerk of the Pipe.

Broadsides in this collection, and others in the National Library, introduce a range of regular, mostly Whig, targets, notably 'Frank the Barber', alias Francis Jeffrey, whose grandfather had plied that trade and whose penchant for flirting with the ladies did not escape notice; and 'auld Goliah in tap boots', Sir James Gibson Craig of Riccarton, seen as the godfather of Edinburgh Whiggism and 'member-maker general' of Scotland. On the other side of the coin praise could be equally extravagant, testified by the paean for the champion of Reform, Earl Grey (p. 75).

Ministers of the Kirk did not escape. The learned Dr (later Principal) John Lee, a horner and poulder in pursuit of his annuity tax, a local rate for the benefit of the Established Church detested by Dissenters, was ridiculed as 'The Horning Doctor' (p. 65). Lord Provosts were obvious aunt sallies for the street satirists. Sir James Spittal was a natural 'Lick-Spittle' and Adam Black, the publisher, was mocked as 'Orthodox Adam'. Most unfortunate of all were the hapless Sir James Forrest and his Council, lampooned without quarter in 1842 for a comedy of errors that led them to be late to greet the young Queen Victoria on her first visit to Edinburgh. Duncan MacLaren – 'King Duncan' or 'Tuncan' (a sneer at his Highland origins) – successively Lord Provost and Radical MP for the city, attracted vitriolic attention and was stung into fighting a libel case with Alexander Russel of the *Scotsman* over a jibing reference to him as 'snake, the draper'. Politicians on the make could expect a hot reception. The Anglo-Scot, Sir John Campbell, later Lord Chancellor, aspiring to succeed Lord Jeffrey as city member in

1834, was greeted with a ballad that snorted:

A Scotsman! Haith, ye're bauld to own't

Ye've fyled your nest, and then ye've flown't

(NLS pamphlets 7.33).

Traditional airs provided catchy and sometimes apposite vehicles to carry the verses. 'Hey Johnny Cope' was adapted to laugh at Jamie Forrest, and the lampoon against the Fife-born Campbell quoted above was set to 'Wae betide the Whigs o' Fife'. Peter Freshwater has used his interest and expertise in traditional music to marry many tunes to his verses. Detective work, particularly in the literary ballads section, has identified several poets and printers of the broadsides, and the collection's version of Lady Nairne's 'The Laird o' Cockpen' was found to have six extra verses (pp. 110–111). There are useful lists of personalities featured in the verses and of printers, a select bibliography, glossary of Scots words and index of titles and first lines, and the book is enlivened by well-chosen vignettes and portraits of personalities, some from Crombie's *Modern Athenians*. Typography and layout are practical and easy on the eye.

The Friends of Edinburgh University Library are to be congratulated for their sponsorship of another interesting and stimulating addition to their Drummond series, which seeks to make available material from the rich collections of the Library.

IAIN F. MACIVER, *Department of Manuscripts, National Library of Scotland*

William Zachs, **Without Regard to Good Manners: A Biography of Gilbert Stuart, 1743–1786**. *Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992, pp. xiv + 226. Hardback, £25.00, 0-7846-0319-9.*

Gilbert Stuart is among the most psychologically complex of the Scottish intellectuals of the eighteenth century, yet until Dr Zachs' book, there had been no full-length studies of his life or writings. Zachs provides us with an immense amount of information about Stuart, who is best known for his *History of Scotland* and his contributions to the *Edinburgh Magazine and Review* both as partner and reviewer. His attack on Lord Monboddo in a series of pieces in the *Magazine and Review* ultimately led to the publication's demise; even those readers who found Monboddo's science suspect were appalled at

Stuart's *ad hominem* assault and cancelled their subscriptions. Legal action was taken against the *Magazine and Review* as a result.

Zachs has looked deeply into the literary career of Gilbert Stuart with a historian's and a bookman's eye; much of what is most valuable about his own book is the number of new attributions and reattributions it makes to Stuart and the suggestive and detailed exploration and analysis of Stuart's relationship with publishing in Edinburgh and London. In that regard, two sections of the book are of particularly high value: the examination of Stuart's involvement with the *Magazine and Review* and the discussion of Stuart's friendship with his London publisher John Murray. In both areas Zachs has uncovered much previously unknown material and amasses facts, references, and allusions which have a significance for scholars of both the Scottish Enlightenment and Edinburgh publishing that far exceeds the narrative Zachs elicits from his research. The history of Murray's career as a journalist in Edinburgh, however short-lived, gives valuable insight into the peculiar dynamics of burgh politics, and especially the protected and nepotic environment of politics and publishing in Edinburgh, where most writers held positions with the church, the courts, or the university. Certainly Stuart's partners in the *Magazine and Review*, William Smellie, William Creech and Charles Elliot, attempted to play out the necessary political games and alliances that accompanied the book trade and publishing in Edinburgh – Creech and Elliot in particular. But Stuart proved almost psychotically confrontational and abusive of the accepted manner of doing business in the literary world of Scotland. As Zachs' book demonstrates in its sections on Stuart's London career, this self-destructive well-born Scot was no more able to survive in even that much larger publishing world in the South. He was unable to follow the best advice of his successful friend Murray, who was adapting so extremely well to the freedoms and opportunities provided in London. In fact, as Zachs recounts, Stuart's way of life very nearly killed the Scots publisher: Murray suffered a stroke after only a fortnight of attempting to keep up with Stuart's prodigious capacities as a drinker. In Stuart we have another of the figures from the dark side of the Scottish Enlightenment so ably described by Pat Rogers in his review article on Robert Burns in the *Times Literary Supplement* special issue on Scottish literature (1 January 1993).

In examining with astuteness and particularity Gilbert Stuart's professional and personal relationship with John Murray, Zachs offers the reader a vivid and historically enlightening account of the differences and parallel developments in English and Scottish publishing during the 1770s and 1780s. Zachs' book also presents some new information and directs light from a different source upon Henry Dundas through its examination of Stuart's work on the *Political Herald*, a new periodical in pamphlet form started by Pitt's primary opposition, Fox, Burke and Sheridan. Stuart's efforts were as sensational and confrontational as ever when he declared in 1786 that Scottish factions would unite once again 'in their antient alliance with France'. William Godwin would replace Gilbert Stuart, who died early in his editorship of the *Political Herald*. Zachs gives us in his study of Stuart a precise account of a major voice of political opposition in eighteenth-century Edinburgh whose pamphlets and journalism were among the most controversial on both local and national political issues.

Zachs' book cannot be faulted for the wealth of information it offers the reader about Edinburgh politics and publishing during two crucial decades of the eighteenth century. In stimulating new interest in Gilbert Stuart, Zachs also reminds us that Stuart is only one of many compelling figures in Enlightenment Edinburgh who have never been fully discussed in their own right but who come to be known to us only in bits and pieces in the biographies of the greater men of the age like Hume, Smith and Dundas. But Zachs' work is weak in two related aspects. Although he provides many new facts and insights he does not give to his material as much critical shape as one might like to see; in that regard, the book reads rather more like a thesis than a mature scholarly study. There is a lot of material here that needs more complete digestion. Perhaps related to this weakness, is the book's failure to become the biography that its title page promises. When we finish Zachs' book, we have learned a great many new things about Gilbert Stuart and his Edinburgh, but we cannot help but feel that what was most interesting about Stuart, the personality of obsession, intellectual brilliance, anger and self-implosion, has not emerged into the portrait of a real life. Many fascinating pieces of Gilbert Stuart are here, but not the man.

STEPHEN BROWN, *Trent University, Ontario, Canada*

David Patterson and Joe Rock, **Thomas Begbie's Edinburgh: A Mid-Victorian Portrait**, *Edinburgh: John Donald, 1992, pp. 189, 178 illus. Hardback, £32.00, 0-85976-337-4.*

In October 1950 Councillor J. Stanley Cavaye collected 450 glass plate negatives from a second-floor flat at 13 St James's Square, Edinburgh. The collection, by the photographer Thomas Vernon Begbie (1840-1915), was later presented to the City of Edinburgh Art Centre. Some 150 have been reproduced here to illustrate mid-Victorian Edinburgh and the talents of one of Edinburgh's neglected social commentators.

Begbie probably got his early training from Alexander McGlashen, a former partner of David Octavius Hill, and many of his photographs, e.g. Jeanie Deans' cottage (pl. 76), were taken from the late 1850s as stereo cards for the tourist market. These stereo cards used a new stereoscopic technique whereby twin pictures created a startling illusion of depth, and reality could be enjoyed from the comfort of the armchair at home. Beyond the tourist views, Begbie's Edinburgh portraits show the glaring social extremes between Old and New Towns, from the quintessential view of Edinburgh encompassing Register House, the Royal Scottish Academy, the National Gallery, the Scott Monument and the Castle all in one (pl. 156) to St Mary's Wynd (pl. 67) in the Old Town where half the city's population lived in squalor.

Beyond Edinburgh Begbie offers us photographs from Leith to Rosslyn, which represent important social documents detailing working practices and everyday customs, e.g. sailing ships in Leith c. 1858 (pl. 92) or the superb sharp image of a dredger at Granton Harbour (pl. 12).

Begbie was also employed by architects to record their work, e.g. William Playfair's Old College (pl. 131) and David Rhind's controversial Life Association of Scotland building in Princes Street (pl. 152). Other photographs record a rare view of the Old Royal Infirmary and the fine wrought iron work in the New Calton Burying Ground and Greyfriars Churchyard, taken away during World War Two. Begbie also recorded the destruction of large parts of Edinburgh, e.g. Jenny Ha's Changehouse (pl. 136), and left valuable illustrations of early building sites such as the New Register House under construction (pl. 148) and Craigleith Quarry (pl. 50). The abun-

dance of photographs of the Waverley Station area may well indicate a keen personal interest in train spotting.

While the Cavaye collection cannot rival the 40,000 photographic negatives dating from 1880 to 1910 in the Lawrence Collection at the National Library in Dublin, it is nonetheless a unique and valuable record of life in mid-Victorian Edinburgh. Despite some missing page numbers and no listing of the plates, David Patterson and Joe Rock have given us a fine tribute to one of the city's unsung heroes. One wonders whether Begbie, like John Kay, the Edinburgh barber, caricaturist and social commentator, lies in an unmarked grave.

SHEILA DEVLIN-THORP

Stewart Cruden, **Bruntsfield Links Golfing Society: A Short History**. *Edinburgh: The Bruntsfield Links Golfing Society in association with John Donald Publishers, 1992, pp. 100, illus. £15.00, 0-85976-358-7.*

There have been a number of centenary golf club histories in recent years, since many clubs were founded towards the end of last century when the game became more popular. Almost all are dull, even to members, since their authors have had only old club minutes telling what happened, but not why; beyond the memory of the oldest member everything is lifeless. Stewart Cruden, however, has had much more to work from and the result is an essay which illuminates the social history of the Society and of the city and is therefore relevant to our *Book*.

The Society has been in existence from 1761, if not earlier, and has played its part in the golfing history of East Lothian, about which much has been written. There is also a book of reminiscences of the Society compiled more than a century ago. The recent fortunate discovery of 'three or four black, tin, deed boxes of a lawman's kind' has been of great value to the author; the documents therein begin in the early 1800s and contain material of general golfing history interest as well as details of how the Society was run. A set of rules for play at Bruntsfield Links of c. 1819 are fascinating, if not always easy to understand, while other papers record dealings with some of the best known club and ball makers. The main theme, however, of this short book (almost half of its pages are devoted to lists of trophy winners) is not the game but the Society itself, in particular their

reluctant move away from Bruntsfield Links to Musselburgh as the city encroached on their course, and the subsequent return at the very end of last century to Barnton, for a similar reason. It is interesting that the availability of transport, by rail, played a part in both moves.

We owe the survival of Bruntsfield Links as an open space, and what remains of the village of Wrights Houses, to the tenacious fight put up by the golf clubs that used the links. Aided by photographs, Cruden has been able to elucidate the history of what we know as the Golf Tavern; and he directs our attention to the survivals at that corner of Musselburgh where the race-course begins, where not only Bruntsfield but also the Royal Burgess Society built club houses.

The social side of golf clubs has been a feature since their beginning, and developments over the years are indicated. One wonders whether the members of an Edinburgh club of today would be as able and willing to burst into song as their mid-nineteenth-century predecessors were. The fishwife golfers of Musselburgh are mentioned but otherwise women appear only as housekeepers at Wrights Houses and Musselburgh. As with all interesting stories, the reader would like further information – what was the social standing of members over the two and a half centuries? And could not Cruden be persuaded to expand the brief mention of an intriguing attempt by the Society to lay out a course in Holyrood Park?

STUART MAXWELL

Margaret Sanderson, **Robert Adam and Scotland: Portrait of an Architect**. *Edinburgh: HMSO/ Scottish Record Office, 1992, pp. 135, illus. Paperback, £9.95, 0-11-494205-6.*

So much has been written about Robert Adam that anyone who is not an Adam devotee must wonder if there is anything left to be said. But the truth is that Adam was such a multi-faceted and fascinating person that there is always something to add. One conspicuous gap in the literature to date has been the lack of a really authoritative biography. Certainly John Fleming's 1962 *Robert Adam and his Circle in Edinburgh and Rome* provided an invaluable account of the early years, but only Doreen Yarwood's 1970 *Robert Adam* covered his entire career, and that book relied chiefly on existing information – and some disinformation – to 'tell the story simply in six chapters'.

Margaret Sanderson sets out to 'give an all-round picture of Adam's career [focusing] on his relationship with his native Scotland'. She covers the entire Robert Adam story, starting with the world of his father William and ending with the death of his youngest brother, another William. The rather slender volume and the lack of an index create an impression of modesty, almost as though this is an interim biography which should help anyone – perhaps even the author – to do a more thorough job later. But this modesty is quite misplaced since the book is a fascinating, scholarly and well illustrated account. Indeed, the lack of an index is the book's only significant defect. The story is substantiated and illuminated by copious references to contemporary documents which create an incontrovertible authority and atmosphere. The reader is left in awe at the hours which the author must have spent in order to produce apposite references from sources such as the Marchmont Muniments, the Ross of Balnagowan Muniments, the Dalhousie Muniments and countless others.

As a biography, the book has one limitation which is that the author's research concentrated on Scottish documents, so that relatively little is said about Adam's relationships with his English clients. But this limitation is less serious than it might seem for two reasons. First, the author shows us that many of Adam's English commissions were actually the result of efforts by Scottish patrons and friends. Secondly, Adam's finest architecture – as opposed to his finest decoration – was largely concentrated in Scotland, and the author mentions virtually all his Scottish commissions, especially those in Edinburgh. We are left to bemoan once again that so little came of his scheme for the South Bridge. We discover that Adam claimed that the executed variant was 'as ugly and as deformed a piece of work as ever disgraced a great City'. Many readers might wonder what he would have said if he could see some of the later works that have been erected in our cities!

The image of Robert Adam as almost ruthlessly ambitious has become something of a caricature, and it is fascinating to be given some correctives to this view. For instance, his brother William wrote about 'the influence that distressful situations have upon Bob's constitution' and how they 'render him incapable of business'. In 1786, when he was in serious financial trouble and so ill that he feared for his life, he gave his landscape paintings to his sisters 'to secure a property for them in case their future should

suffer by his affairs'. Many of his early friends were ordained: thus his sister Mary married the Rev. John Drysdale and lived in the manse at Kirkliston, his cousin William Robertson became minister of Gladsmuir, his friends Alexander Carlyle and Gilbert Elliot became ministers of Inveresk and Athelstaneford respectively, and his friend Adam Ferguson was also ordained. At his last Christmas in 1791 he gave 2s 6d to 'the letter man's Christmas Box'; he paid the taxes on his sister Mary's house and gave her four silver salt-cellars; he gave the daughters of another sister 10 guineas; and he presented a pair of boots to his clerk and 5 guineas to his draughtsman. Bearing in mind that each of the monetary gifts must be multiplied by around 100 to arrive at 1994 equivalents, we can see that Adam's generosity did little to help the financial difficulties which dogged him and his brothers.

The book is handsomely illustrated with pictures of people and places and architectural drawings. Many of Adam's works are shown in rare early views. It is hard to find fault with the text save for minor quibbles. One might, for instance, point out that a little more came of Adam's proposals for Barholm and Glasserton, and a little less of his proposals for Yester House and Lint House, than the text implies.

More interestingly, perhaps, one might raise a question mark about the well known quotation from a 1779 letter by Mrs Montagu that 'Mr Adam came at the head of a regiment of artificers' who included a painter 'who is painting my ceilings in various colours'. It is always assumed that the Mr Adam mentioned here was Robert, but was it? If it was a reference to him, why would she use the present tense and plural? The only work Robert is known to have done for her took place 13 years earlier and concerned a single room. The fact that only one room was involved is shown not only by an inspection of the house concerned – the present 31 Hill Street, London – but also by a letter Mrs Montagu wrote in 1767 when she said Robert Adam 'has made me a ceiling, and chimney-piece and doors which are pretty enough to make me a thousand enemies. Envy turns livid at the first glimpse of them'. In 1779 Mrs Montagu was actually having a wholly new house built to the designs of 'Athenian' Stuart.

From a Scottish perspective, one might query the author's suggestion that Adam had 'a lifelong love-hate relationship with his native Scotland'. There is

nothing in the text to suggest any hatred. The only reason for him moving to London was the thought that it was more likely to yield the opportunity of putting noble thoughts into practice. When he was in London, he apparently spent much of his time with other expatriate Scots. And as soon as his older brother John retired from the architectural scene, we find that Robert began to spend much of his time in Scotland. We also discover that most of the workmen he employed were 'Scotch'. His love for Scotland is reflected not only in his landscapes, which mostly have a Scottish air, but also in his letters. The author might have quoted a 1766 letter which he wrote to Mrs Montagu where he says he has been wandering from county to county and was most recently in Westmorland from where 'I could see the mountains of Scotland ... the sun shone on the Scottish hills'. Again, it is noteworthy that when the Duke of Northumberland asked Adam to design a monument to commemorate the spot where Malcolm III had died in battle near Alnwick in Northumberland, the monument turned out to be a tower from whose top it is possible – or would be if it were now safe to climb – to see Scotland on a clear day.

However, these trivial quibbles serve only to show how reliable this book is. Its reliability will make it essential for scholars while the fascinating story it unfolds will appeal to all lovers of Adam's work.

DAVID KING, *University of Stirling*

A. Doig, J. P. S. Ferguson, I. A. Milne and R. Passmore (eds), **William Cullen and the Eighteenth Century Medical World: A bicentenary exhibition and symposium arranged by the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh in 1990.** *Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993, pp. 256, illus. Hardback, £27.50, 0-7486-0302-6.*

William Cullen was appointed professor of medicine at Glasgow University in 1751, moving after four years to the University of Edinburgh, as professor, first of chemistry, then of the institutes of medicine, finally occupying the senior chair of medicine until he died in 1790. By then he was one of the leading physicians of Europe, consulted by the great, although often only by correspondence as part of his renowned and extensive 'mail-order consultations'. He made retention copies of his later letters on a

desk-top machine, invented by James Watt, which made a copy of ink script. Copy letters have provided a storehouse of information about his professional views in relation to private consultations and additionally we have insight into the way he handled patients who were sufficiently ill to be admitted to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary where, in contrast to private work, there were few social pressures to deflect his handling of disease itself. His hospital case histories come from student notes. Yet, despite the great reputation acquired by Cullen during his life, his acknowledged fame did not survive into posterity in the manner of Boerhaave of Leyden. The symposium which is the substance of this book set out to study such facts and to analyse William Cullen, socially, professionally, academically, in terms of philosophy, and through his works, not forgetting his involvement with agricultural productivity.

Although the 14 contributors provide different material there are several references to Cullen's much loved personality and his gift for communicating and lecturing, an art in which he excelled, kindling great enthusiasm in his students. There are many references to his competence as a practising physician, his personal kindness and, most important, his intellectual modesty, described by Barfoot as 'skeptical dogmatism'. He was no boaster. He sought to make sense out of the problems of clinical medicine of the eighteenth century before there were microscopes to explain the arrangement of body cells either in health or disease and before there was knowledge that bacteria even existed, when it must have been daunting even to try to make order out of such confusion. In terms of clinical management one feels, after reading the papers, that Cullen was a superb practitioner of what, in our own day, we might have called alternative medicine at its best, which was in fact the very best orthodox medicine of his day, for he had next to no science at his disposal with which to make diagnoses or cause cures. Cullen's peak period of importance covered almost exactly the 'Golden Age' in Scotland from 1760–1790.

O'Donnell, writing on his influence on American medicine, accepts that interest in Cullen's hitherto much discussed medical 'system' (or marshalling of related facts) disappeared shortly after he died. What did survive as a worthy memorial seemed to be less easy to define and then became largely forgotten because it was an approach to medicine which was brilliantly expounded at the time of its delivery yet

carried with it a sharply critical if not sceptical self-surveillance. Cullen believed that error was as instructive as apparent success and this general approach made his teaching malleable to the influences of further knowledge, later experience and new developments. It was this which provided his listeners with an enduring legacy to become part of their own heritage but perhaps has incidentally denied him some personal credit. Yet all six of the first professors of the oldest medical school in the United States (1765), part of the later University of Pennsylvania, were Edinburgh graduates and four of these had been Cullen's pupils, and six of the 12 senior founding fellows of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia (1787) had been students of Cullen, and the subsequent eminence of that College needs no statement.

The editors have chosen to begin the book with 83 very well illustrated pages devoted to an exhibition of Cullen memorabilia which were on concurrent display in the College. The decision to introduce the printed proceedings of a symposium with data from an exhibition might come as a gentle surprise to anyone who had been expecting to start with the symposium itself but when the extensive record of the exhibition is examined it is found to be full of scholarly and well researched vignettes about Cullen and the Edinburgh life of his time. The exhibition section is of independent interest and can stand by itself, but a way ought perhaps to have been found to link the two sections of the book in order to provide some cross-referencing while the text of the book is being read. There is a useful index.

A chapter on Cullen's dietetics provides a good mix of informed comment with original Cullen prose. We also learn there about 'Corstorphin cream', which was a whey.

Anyone who is already interested in the events of 1726 when the medical faculty of Edinburgh University was reorganised on Boerhaave lines will enjoy reading a version of events which flows in a way which is different from the simple concept of John Monro's vision in association with Provost Drummond's political punch. Emerson conjectures about events during the first quarter of the eighteenth century and presents them in terms of contemporary politics and patronage which results in an interesting and well argued, if complicated, picture. The two versions of the same event do not have to be mutually exclusive, though the simpler earlier belief about the birth of the medical school may be a part truth

rather than the whole truth.

It is possible to conclude from the symposium that Cullen has been much undervalued by posterity and that this can be explained because he introduced so little into medical practice which can still be recognised today as his personal contribution, other than the word 'neurosis' and his role in establishing neurology as a subject of study. When however Cullen is studied for the quality of his work when he was alive and when his brilliance as a teacher is recognised, the greatness of his influence may be seen to have been in the instructing of innumerable students in a habit of sound medical thinking which they retained as a result of his teaching and carried with them throughout the world. William Cullen appears to be worthy of greater appreciation than he has hitherto achieved.

HAROLD SWAN, Honorary Lecturer in the History of Medicine, University of Sheffield

Ann Mitchell, *The People of Calton Hill.* Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1993, pp. 136, 42 illus. Paperback, £8.95, 1-873644-18-3.

In his plan of 1819 for a New Town between Edinburgh and Leith, William Playfair sought a happy union of foliage and building. Although his plan was never completed, the Royal, Regent and Carlton Terraces around Calton Hill remain, in A. J. Youngson's words, 'splendid ornaments of the town'. However, as Ann Mitchell so rightly points out in her introduction, 'people breathe life into houses', and this book, full of fact and anecdote, concentrates on the characters who have brought life to the area around Calton Hill in the last two hundred years.

Although Playfair wished to attract 'a circle of fashionable and wealthy people' to his new scheme (perhaps an additional motive for the designation of 'royal' street names), the people of Calton Hill came from all walks of life, from Jessie the fruit-seller straddling the gutter of Calton Hill in her 'voluminous skirts' to the Duc d'Angouleme, son of the exiled Charles X, the last of the Bourbons, who resided at 22 Regent Terrace. Other noteworthy residents of Regent Terrace included Alan Stevenson at No. 25, uncle of Robert Louis and builder of the Skerryvore lighthouse; F. C. B. Cadell, the Scottish colourist, at No. 30; and George Waterston at No. 21, the ornithologist who bought Fair Isle and presented it to the National Trust for Scotland. Alongside the

whisky merchants of Royal Terrace were such illustrious characters as Charles Piazzi Smyth, Astronomer Royal and the first man to photograph the interior of the pyramids, and the bibliophile Professor Charles Sarolea who kept 250,000 books in his two houses, probably the largest private library in Europe. Carlton Terrace, shortest of the three, was home to Mary Barclay who funded what is now the Barclay-Bruntsfield Church, the sculptors Birnie and Massey Rhind, and the Rev. Charles Watson, grandfather of Charles B. Boog Watson. Prominent visitors are not forgotten either: literary figures such as W. B. Yeats and G. K. Chesterton, regal and public figures such as Charles de Gaulle, Queen Mary and Kathleen Ferrier.

Beyond the tales of the terraces there is ample detail on the Royal, Regent and Carlton Terrace Gardens and surrounding areas, which we are told might well have been ruined had three Railway Bills with plans to run tunnels under Calton Hill been passed in 1891. Calton Hill has been (and some would argue still is) the scene of famous and infamous events, from the preachings of John Wesley to the Celtic May Day Festival of Beltane, while at one time it was customary to hoist a flag on the Nelson Monument whenever a consignment of the latest London fashions had arrived in Leith harbour.

As a resident for forty years in Regent Terrace, Ann Mitchell has been well placed to research this book and praise is also due for the very useful index. For the local historian, genealogist and devotee of the Scottish capital, this is a book of gems and a gem of a book.

SHEILA DEVLIN-THORP

Keith Cavers, **A Vision of Scotland: The Nation Observed by John Slezer, 1671–1717.** HMSO/National Library of Scotland, 1993, pp. 109, illus. Hardback, £14.95, 0–11–494245–5.

This book celebrates the 300th anniversary of the publication of Captain John Slezer's *Theatrum Scotiae*, a panoramic record of many of Scotland's palaces, houses, burghs, castles and other antiquities, first published in 1693. It was produced as a 'tie-in' with the National Library of Scotland's 1993 summer exhibition 'Scotland First Portrayed'.

A Vision of Scotland is largely a pictorial study of the work of John Slezer. It is perhaps unfair to consider it otherwise. 'The Life and Work of John

Slezer', the introductory chapter of Cavers' book, presents a very brief examination of Slezer's military and artistic career as narrated largely in other sources. More seriously, Cavers seems largely unaware of recent research by Simpson,¹ Emerson² and others which clearly shows the relationship between Slezer and Sir Robert Sibbald of Kipps (1641–1722) to be far more complex than is suggested here. The *Theatrum* text, for example, had been supplied to Slezer by Sibbald under contract in 1691 and was envisaged as the first of a projected three-volume work (begun by Sibbald in the 1680s), referred to as the *Scotia Illustrata* or 'Ancient and present State of Scotland'.

Through his interests in and knowledge of the prospects themselves, Cavers supplies us with an extremely useful section on the drawings, their composition or execution, and their (later) engraving and printing, which actually constituted the various editions of the *Theatrum Scotiae*. This chapter, the focus of over half the book, contains all the *Theatrum* illustrations. Rather inexplicably, Slezer's drawings of Dunottar Castle and other illustrations, such as a nineteenth-century plan of Dryburgh Abbey and a plan of Kelso which may not even be by Slezer, clutter the otherwise interesting series of notes accompanying the various engravings from the *Theatrum*. I liked, however, the enlargements of people, animals and various other interesting vignettes accompanying many of the pages, which make the reader study each illustration in detail to establish which prospects they are from. Strangely, nothing is said concerning Slezer's occasionally poor attempts at perspective, such as the rowing boat near the Bass Rock being considerably larger than the three-masted sailing ship much closer to hand.

The chapter entitled 'The Ancient and Present State of Scotland' again confuses the Sibbald–Slezer relationship, and omits much of the interesting debate before the Privy Council between Slezer and John Adair over the money raised by the Tonnage Act (1695), whereby Slezer was to share in the revenues originally intended for Adair. The drawings of Kinross House, included where Cavers digresses all too briefly to discuss Slezer's relationship with Scotland's architectural community, are almost certainly by Alexander Edward, the 'outed Jacobite minister' and architect.³

'The Slezer Drawings' brings together in a very workmanlike chapter a number of fine illustrations,

chiefly of Edinburgh, held by Edinburgh City Library, the National Gallery of Scotland and elsewhere, which are discussed in context.

To Cavers' credit, this book is the first publication to bring together so many reproductions of both Slezer's original drawings (many previously unpublished) and all the views from the various editions of the *Theatrum*. It is a pity that the opportunity afforded by the 300th anniversary of the *Theatrum* was not taken to provide the wider, in-depth examination of Slezer's career in the intellectual context of later seventeenth-century Scotland which is still so necessary.
PETER G. VASEY, Scottish Record Office

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D. L. G. Hunter, **Edinburgh's Transport: Volume 1, The Early Years**. *Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1992, pp. 208, illus. Paperback, £10.95, 1–873644–02–7.*

The photograph on the cover of the Mercat Press's handsome new edition of D. L. G. Hunter's history of Edinburgh's transport could hardly have been better chosen. A well-laden horse bus trudges up the North Bridge above Thin's, a trace horse assisting: a couple of well-placed horse vehicles in the background hide the fact that the familiar buildings have unfamiliar lower stories: the skyline is Old College and the lowering block to the South, and in the distance the end of Chambers Street. Time has stood still: only the horses and their bus have moved on.

Well, not quite. The street surface and the lamp standard have changed, and much else when the reader looks closely, but Mr Hunter's subject owes part of its charm to the permanence of Edinburgh's institutions, streets and architecture which make the history of the city's public transport – even its derelict suburban railway lines – recognisable without

difficulty today. Happily, motorways have not torn holes through the urban landscape which essentially was the product of the trunk tram routes; happily, while the internal combustion engine has removed almost all the subjects of this volume – the first of a projected two-part history – the city behind and the routes are unchanged. We seem on familiar territory.

Much of Edinburgh's transport history is unusual, and makes excellent reading in this densely-observed labour of many years' research. Mr Hunter's interests embrace buses as well as railways, cable cars as well as electric and horse cars. And just as well. Edinburgh's hilly topography encouraged the cable car system which was one of the world's largest, while the same topography discouraged the kind of railway development which could today have provided a suburban feeder service to relieve traffic congestion. The hills which produced the Scotland Street tunnel (and its cable haulage) and the Innocents' Railway tunnel (also with cable haulage) had to be expensively pierced to allow the lines to and from Waverley Station, and had to be expensively climbed from Leith to Princes Street, up the Mound, up the slopes to Liberton and the Braids.

And what variety Edinburgh offered: Leith had its electric cars while Edinburgh's cable trams fell into decrepitude, and Leith was not slow to make the comparison. Edinburgh had a few experimental electric cars long before the great switch-over (a major system had to be kept running, while its motive power was changed literally overnight), and it had a separate company from Port Seton meeting the cable cars, and later the city electric cars, at Joppa. It saw – inevitably – the hordes of unregulated buses which caused even more chaos in the 1920s and 1930s than they do now. It saw railway companies come and go, and the lightly-loaded branch lines face a future where they would wither and die, first demoted to freight then closed altogether.

Mr Hunter's earlier edition (1964) of the complete history gives us ample proof that the second half of the story will be as well-documented and as full of interest as this. The Mercat Press have given him, compared with 1964, more space and many more illustrations, removing the main impediments to his earlier history. It is very much to be hoped they can give him space to complete the story of a fascinating city transport network, whose development in the 1990s seems far from over.

IAN CAMPBELL, University of Edinburgh

Ted Ruddock (ed.), **Travels in the Colonies 1773–1775, described in the letters of William Mylne. Athens, Georgia, USA: University of Georgia Press, 1993, pp. 127, illus. \$25.00, 0-8203-1426-9.**

This modest well-informed book not only fills in the missing years in the background to the life of William Mylne, but to historians of Edinburgh the excellent annotated index offers well-researched potted biographies of fellow Scots and places of historic interest in the American colony and Scotland. William Mylne, a younger son of Deacon Thomas Mylne, and brother of the architect Robert Mylne, travelled with his brother in France and Italy, returning to Edinburgh in 1758, when he was admitted burgess of Edinburgh by right of his father, as mason and architect. He carried on his father's business, acting as principal mason at St Cecilia's Hall for his brother Robert, and he designed a number of bridges. From 1770–72 he was responsible for much work at Inveraray Castle for the 5th Duke of Argyll. In 1765 he successfully submitted a design for the North Bridge, Edinburgh, to link the site of the New Town to the old city. Unfortunately in 1769, during building, part of the south abutment of the bridge collapsed, killing five people. This proved a financial disaster for Mylne from which he could not extricate himself and in 1773 he escaped from his responsibilities to America to sort himself out. He distanced himself from 'his honour', and from his brother Robert, who 'had it in his power' to embarrass him, Robert being one of the guarantors in the North Bridge contract, and therefore one of his largest creditors.

His travels in America, accompanied by his lovable dog Mungo, are told through his surviving letters to his sister Anne, and occasionally to his brother. They vividly portray the hardships and pleasures of a planter's life in Georgia and South Carolina. Much as he would have liked to take up a planter's lifestyle it would have been too expensive, so early in 1775 he left his 'cabin' near New Richmond for New York, hoping to use his architectural skills as a designer in that burgeoning city, only to find that the agitation caused by intense revolutionary emotions had put a stop to building work. He was not prepared to 'turn undertaker' and commit himself to giving the plan of a building as well as contracting for it – his North Bridge experience was

enough for the time being. He returned to London in late 1775, and in 1777, on Robert Mylne's recommendation, he moved to Dublin where he successfully worked as an engineer to the Dublin Water Works until he died in 1790. During his years in America his remaining debts and affairs had been settled.

In his correspondence he describes his life as reclusive, spent in his cabin or 'Hermitage' secluded from the world, where he could put his thoughts together and regain his health. He begins to like his fellow men again through 'the humanity and politeness of the gentlemen of Augusta', and much to his sister Anne's delight he discovers how to cook. Many of his fellow settlers were of Scottish extraction and were to play leading parts on both sides in the overthrow of British rule. Mylne's comments on Revolutionary America are astute and informed, and gave a well-balanced impression to those at home.

This book is a very good read, immaculately edited, and accompanied by invaluable references about his family and friends in Scotland and his new acquaintances in the colony. The author's careful research in the southern states of America and with the Mylne family in England is well rewarded by this publication.

KITTY CRUFT

Edinburgh Review, Issue No. 88, Patrick Geddes. Edinburgh, Summer 1992, pp. 222. Paperback, £5.95, 0-7486-6132-8.

More than half of this issue of the *Edinburgh Review* is, as the cover indicates, devoted to aspects of the life, work and ideas of Sir Patrick Geddes (1854–1932). The issue was timed to appear in the centenary year of the foundation of the outlook tower on Castlehill, Edinburgh. Here, in 1892, Patrick Geddes set up a multi-educational centre to be a focus for social, artistic and educational work in the city, concentrating on the Old Town. Following the first exciting and productive years from the 1880s until 1910, interest in him has been sporadic. Recently it has increased as his main concerns have been seen to be close to, or even to prefigure, the concerns of our own time.

Although in this issue of the *Review* his work is presented under the headings 'Ecologist, Educator and Visual Thinker', it is clear that Geddes is, and always was, impossible to categorise. The obituary tributes of 1932 speak of him as a contributor to the

fields of economics, social reform, marine biology, civics, regional survey, planning, conservation and teaching. His work in the last five subjects was and is still extremely influential in America, India and Israel. The best known of his books, *Cities in Evolution*, though in need of re-publication, has been translated into several languages.

As an early advocate of 'de-schooling', interdisciplinary study and 'hands on' research, he was an all-round inspiration to all who came into contact with him. Unfortunately, all too often, the wider impact and effectiveness of his work was blocked, and sometimes by his own methods and style. Thus, both in his own time and nowadays, many people who profess to be Geddesians seem not to have understood his message.

His writings partly explain this. In the extracts reprinted from *The Evergreen*, the 'Northern Seasonal' of 1886, his literary style now seems tortuous and overblown. He modelled his writing on that of Ruskin and Carlyle, and in these articles the extra infusion of the Celtic revival and symbolism is so much of its own moment in time that we find it repelling. It is important to read him at his best, to seek out his books on biology in the 'Home Scientific Library' or the best of his Town Planning Surveys and Reports, where he is clear and straightforward. Where he felt deeply, he was clearly unable to be tactful and his trenchant statements lost him many potential allies. Although at the time he seems not to have regretted this, it is to be regretted now.

Another problem is posed by the reprint of 'The Notation of Life'. This is the extended version of his 'Thinking Machines', which he also called 'Idea Middens'. In these he developed Frederic Le Play's socio-geographical graph diagrams into a further exposition of a reworking of sociology, history and geography for reactive interdisciplinary synthesis. This scheme obviously worked reasonably well with their creator to explain them as he drew them up: without him they can perplex and repel. These diagrams, which he evolved in the first decade of the twentieth century are in essence very similar to the working out of systems analysis and artificial intelligence in this post-computer age, which shows yet another of the paradoxes in the work of this 'most unsettling person'. This also shows the conflict between his advanced thinking and his inability to transmit his ideas at the level of the readership that he wished to reach.

The *Review* offers a general introduction to Geddes' life, contacts and ideas and thereafter a very good survey of Dr Helen Meller's *Patrick Geddes: Social Evolutionist and City Planner* (1990). This book, up till now the best biography available, is a comprehensive chronological overview tracing the various strands in Geddes' life. In the specific context of Edinburgh, four articles are of especial interest. The first is Veronica Wallace's admirable piece of archival research which reinstates Anna Maria Short. She created the original Camera Obscura in the Outlook Tower, an early nineteenth-century woman active in science and its popularisation. Dr Elizabeth Cumming has written further on Phoebe Traquair, this time discussing her sumptuous edition of Dante illustrations, made in 1890 with Walter Blaikie. There are two further articles concerning architecture and planning. Anjam Khursheed discusses the impact of the Baha'i faith on Edinburgh and reprints Geddes on the subject. The schemes for the Baha'i Temple in Bombay, with which Geddes and his son in law Frank Mears were involved, are described. Finally Abha Sharma Rodrigues, using Geddes' survey method, links Jaipur and Edinburgh. This article would surely have rejoiced Geddes, as he had visited Jaipur and photographed the city at the start of his career as consultant town planner in India.

Here, then, we have a good tribute to the possessor of the finest 'contrary imagination' in Scotland in his lifetime, whose ideas have gone on to influence many people who have never heard of him. It should be an incentive for seeking out his best work, and coming into contact with a really perceptive and provocative mind. Whoever does this will find that he is as inspiring now as he was seventy years ago. The breadth of his European and Indian contacts allowed him to build on his initial concept of a study of the continuous interaction of human society in and with its environment. This was summed up in his triad (derived from Le Play) of Place-Folk-Life as the unifying idea that drove his work – the details he left to others. As a close friend said, 'He cast seed on many soils, and several of the crops that have grown therefrom, under the detailed care of others, are now connected with the sower'. In appraising the range and depth of his interests one can well agree with another friend, who quoted an epigram on Plato: 'Wherever I travel in my mind, I am apt to find Geddes coming back again'.

KITTY MICHAELSON

James S. Marshall, **North Leith Parish Church: The First Five Hundred Years.** *Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1993, pp. 208. £4.95.*

When North Leith Parish Church wished to have a volume of history in part celebration of half a millennium of life and worship, those responsible wisely turned to one who has earned the reputation of being the best authority on Leith's past. Dr James Marshall has already produced several volumes on Leith subjects – *The Life and Times of Leith, A History of Kirkgate Congregation, Leith*, of which Marshall was minister, and then *The Church in the Midst*, which tells the story of South Leith Church, with which Kirkgate was united. Dr Marshall was President of the Old Edinburgh Club in 1978–79.

Before the Reformation, Leith belonged to the Canons of Holyrood and was considered as within

the parish of Canongate. In 1493 the Abbot built a chapel, dedicated to St Ninian, on the north side of the Water of Leith, and this became the church of the parish in 1606. Part of this building still stands, but in 1814 a fine new building was erected in Madeira Street for 'North Leith'. The present congregation has been formed by the happy union of several congregations whose stories are each briefly told.

For Church history, this is easy and enjoyable reading, especially for those who know the area, and it is fascinating for those with a historic sense. It has been said that Scotland's story is the story of Scotland's Church, and Dr Marshall has shown that this is at least partially true for the district of North Leith. We heartily commend the volume.

IAN DUNLOP