

THE BOOK
OF THE
OLD EDINBURGH
CLUB

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1871

THE BOOK
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NEW SERIES
Volume 4

1997

COVER

North Bridge and Calton Hill

*Drawn by William Bell Scott, and engraved and printed by Robert Scott,
for W. B. Scott's Scenery of Edinburgh & Midlothian, 1838*

Robert Scott (1777–1841) was one of the best Edinburgh engravers of his time. He had made his reputation with a series of topographical views of Edinburgh published in the 1790s and he regularly engraved plates for the *Scots Magazine* and other periodicals and books. Among his more ambitious projects was the first large geographical globe to be produced in Scotland, launched in 1804 in association with his father, also Robert Scott (d. 1806), who was a teacher of mathematics and astronomy in Musselburgh, and with the cartographer Robert Kirkwood.

Scott's extensive workshops were in Parliament Square and then Princes Street, and from 1807 he lived with his large family in the house known as 'Hermits and Termites' in St Leonards. From the upper windows of this house, his young son William Bell Scott (1811–1890) recalled seeing the sky lit up by the disastrous fire which destroyed much of Parliament Square in 1824, and with it the premises of both his father and the Kirkwoods.

After training as an artist at the Trustees' Academy, William assisted his father before departing for the south in 1837. This unusual view of the North Bridge from Market Street is one of a series of accomplished scenes of Edinburgh and its surroundings which Robert engraved and printed for his son, who was then struggling to make a living in London. William subsequently became the master of the government school of design in Newcastle. He became a close friend of D. G. Rossetti and was known for his poetry and writings, and for his historical and allegorical painting, notably at Wallington Hall, Northumberland, and at Penkill Castle, Perthshire.

A. D. C. S.

Private collection

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1. Authors are invited to send a preliminary letter outlining the proposed contribution to Dr Fraser at the above address. An early indication of the illustrations envisaged would be helpful.
2. Copy should be submitted in typescript, double spaced, on one side of A4 paper, with wide margins. It is helpful if finished copy is also supplied on disc when the contribution is produced by word processor.
3. Notes and references should follow the text, with arabic numerals inserted consecutively at the appropriate places in the text.
4. References to printed sources should be set out as in the following examples:
Sir Daniel Wilson, *Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Edinburgh 1891) II, p. 59.
J. B. Morrell, 'Medicine and Science in the Eighteenth Century', in Gordon Donaldson (ed.), *Four Centuries: Edinburgh University Life, 1583-1983* (Edinburgh 1983), pp. 38-52.
R. K. Hannay and G. P. H. Watson, 'The Building of the Parliament House', *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, 13 (1924), pp. 1-78.
5. References to manuscript sources should be in accordance with the practice of the repository in which the documents are housed. Examples are:
Edinburgh City Archives (ECA), Town Council Minutes, 12 August 1752.
National Library of Scotland (NLS), MS. 638, ff. 9-10.

NOTE ON PREDECIMAL CURRENCY

Before the present decimal currency was introduced in 1971 the system of currency in Great Britain divided the pound into 20 shillings and the shilling into 12 pennies. This was expressed as £ s d, or pounds, shillings and pence (from Latin *librae, solidi, denarii*). Conventions varied but amounts were usually expressed thus: £5 13s 11d, or £5. 13. 11, i.e. five pounds, thirteen shillings and eleven pence. Shillings could be expressed as e.g. 5s or 5/-, and shillings and pence as e.g. 5s 6d or 5/6. The penny was further subdivided into two halfpennies or four farthings. One guinea was 21 shillings, or £1. 1. 0. A crown was five shillings and a florin two shillings.

The pound Scots was originally the same as the English pound (pound sterling), but by the seventeenth century had declined in value to one-twelfth of the pound sterling. The Scots merk or mark was 13s 4d Scots. Scots money was abolished by the Act of Union in 1707 but calculations in pounds Scots remained current in Scotland till late in the eighteenth century.

Information on pre-decimal currency, and on pre-metric systems of weights and measures, is given in Colin R. Chapman, *How Heavy, How Much and How Long? Weights, Money and other Measures used by our Ancestors* (Lochin Publishing 1995). For the separate system of Scottish weights and measures see A. D. C. Simpson and R. D. Connor, 'Interpreting Scots Measurement Units', in Glen L. Pryde, *Dictionary of Scottish Building* (Edinburgh 1996), pp. 104-105.

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