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Book Reviews

Connie Byrom, **The Edinburgh New Town Gardens: 'Blessings as Well as Beauties'**. *Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2005, pp. xxiii + 439, illus. Hardback, £30, 1-84158-402-9.*

This is a magnificent book, which had been on the point of publication for so long that its eventual appearance came as something of a surprise. It was worth waiting for. Connie Byrom has written a fascinating and comprehensive account of the planning, formation and history of 36 gardens in Edinburgh's New Town, from 1769 to the present day. The gardens stretch from Magdala Crescent in the west to Regent, Royal and Carlton Terraces in the east. They range in size from West Princes Street gardens (32 acres) to Coates Crescent and Rothesay Terrace gardens (each 0.3 acre).

Dr Byrom tracked down the minute books of most of the gardens' committees. Some of them are now lodged in libraries, while many are in the possession of the secretaries of the various committees. Some are missing, possibly lost when management was transferred from one party to another. She cites one incident of documents which were 'nearly lost in a skip'. Hand-written early minute books are valuable social, historical and botanical records and should not be at risk of being lost to sight.

Often, the planning of gardens was inextricably linked to adjacent house building, but sometimes it was independent. Queen Street gardens were, at first, sold as garden plots to individual purchasers, not necessarily residents. Baron Robert Ord built a tunnel under Queen Street to join the basement of his house at number 8 to his extensive garden opposite. Some plots remained uncultivated; cows and pigs were kept in others. Some were used as washing greens, but there was a request in 1822 'to prevent any clothes from being hung up during His Majesty's visit to the city'.

Financing the gardens was problematic in the early years. In 1877, nineteen 'Lady Patronesses, nearly all with titles', put on a three-day bazaar in the Freemasons' Hall, George Street, to raise funds for the Dean gardens. Royal Circus gardens have never been tied to neighbouring properties but have remained independent. The collection of dues there was often haphazard. Probably to save trouble, the clerk to the committee paid the gardener's wages out of his own pocket for 23 years.

Naughty boys appeared now and then. A police officer patrolling gardens in the Moray feu had the

right to retain the hats of any boys who infringed the rules and refused to give their names. Edinburgh Town Council even threatened seven years' transportation for the worst offenders. We are treated to a delightful story of two boys who, in 1905, played with a garden roller in Douglas Crescent gardens and let it run to the bottom of the hill, where it lay hidden for many years.

Dr Byrom names varieties of trees and shrubs planted in most gardens. Many hundreds of references are meticulously listed; a bibliography would have been valuable in drawing them together. The book is profusely illustrated in black and white and in colour, and there are many interesting maps and plans. But, for a book of this importance, there are too many typographical errors in the text, the captions and the illustrations (for instance, D. O. Hill's colour view of East (not West) Princes Street gardens has been printed back to front).

This will long remain an essential reference book. Furthermore, the narrative is so well written that we can imagine ourselves watching the growth of the gardens. It should find a place on everyone's bookshelf.

ANN MITCHELL

The Diary of Mary Anne Gibb. *Aberdour: Mrs Jean Mitchell, 1 Home Park, Aberdour, Burntisland, Fife KY3 0XA, 2004, pp. 20. Paperback, £3.75, no ISBN number.*

This little booklet gives the text of a diary kept by Mary Anne Gibb, age 32, from London, during a visit to Scotland between 5 May and 8 July 1847, made primarily to attend a family wedding (her sister's?). With her mother and brother she stayed at 31 Howard Place — 'pleasantly situated about a mile from the Town' — with Mrs Andrew of Craighend, presumably a relation. Mary Anne later married but was childless and the diary passed down through the family. Unfortunately, there is no editorial explanation of the links between the many people logged as coming and going in the diary, and this reader could not disentangle the family tree or the network of friends, or even be certain of the bridegroom's name.

However, there are pleasant glimpses of Edinburgh social life in the summer of 1847, with dinner guests and musical evenings, promenades in the Caledonian Society Gardens and the Botanic Gardens across

Inverleith Row, and trips by noddie (a two wheeled hackney carriage) to the shops and sights of the town. The wedding itself was held in the drawing room in Howard Place, with tables set for 32 guests and five children, and the ceremony conducted by the Rev. William Glover of Greenside Church.

Sundays offered a choice of preachers and services, Church of Scotland or the new Free Church. Dr Thomas Chalmers died suddenly during their stay, on 31 May, and the great sense of loss in the town is described. Mary Anne records the crowds heading for the funeral procession, and the overflowing memorial services at the Tanfield Hall the following Sunday. 'Never in my remembrance did the death even of Royalty ever cause so much real grief as did the sudden departure of this esteemed Minister.'

There were the obligatory visits to Holyrood, for Queen Mary's bedchamber, and the Castle, and two trips to Roslin (taking in a carpet factory at Lasswade), and an idyllic picnic in the Pentlands with recitations from *The Gentle Shepherd*. There was a visit to the camera obscura in Short's Observatory on Calton Hill, with women laying out their linen to bleach on the hillside and refreshments from the pastry cook's shop at the foot of Nelson's Column. Some comments remind us of the great changes in Edinburgh at the time, with mentions of Trinity and Granton piers and the lack of planting beside the new railway through Princes Street Gardens.

Perhaps most striking are the descriptions of travelling arrangements and the new possibilities opened up by steamships and railways. The cramped sleeping conditions on the Liverpool to Glasgow steamer on the journey north are graphically described, and the new railway from Glasgow to Edinburgh is much praised. They used coach and carriage to explore the Trossachs from Stirling ('tedious after the railway'), but enjoyed a splendid day trip round Loch Lomond by the well-established steamship. The party travelled through to the west, visiting friends and relations, and there are mentions of steamer and railway expeditions to Glasgow, Gourock and the Clyde, Falkirk, Stirling, back down the Forth to Granton, and even a ferry trip to Burntisland. The diary is not great literature but it gives an agreeable reflection of the rapidly increasing possibilities during a summer visit to Scotland.

ANDREW FRASER

Mary Cosh, **Edinburgh: The Golden Age** *Edinburgh: John Donald, 2003, pp. x + 1105, illus. Hardback, £20, 0-85976-571-7.*

This is a splendid book. However, it took this reviewer a considerable time to decide exactly what type of book it was. What designation should encompass this compendium of the life of the city of Edinburgh in what was indeed the golden era of its title? It is part urban and social history, part gazetteer, part literary review, the whole being studded with anecdote and story from those who were its residents and its visitors. Mary Cosh, the Oxford-educated historian of Islington and of Inveraray and the Dukes of Argyll, has lovingly set out, from a galaxy of sources, the rising, the noonday and the waning of the third Enlightenment in which Scotland's capital followed Periclean Athens and the Florence of the high renaissance. She has chosen an interesting timescale, her golden age running roughly from the inception of the New Town in the mid 1760s to the Reform Act of 1832. This contrasts with the Age of Enlightenment c. 1750-90 proposed by the late David Daiches and the School of Advanced Studies in the Humanities, but allows the Romantic era to be included, and in fact matches almost exactly the lifetime of Walter Scott.

The context is well rehearsed, showing how the ending of the religious wars of the 17th century, the political failure of Jacobitism, the departure of the Court to London, and the humanistic spirit of enquiry into the nature of man all combined to create a firmament for intellectual stars. And all the stars are here in their full and sometimes eccentric blaze. Here is Hutton enraging the Church by insisting that, in the structure of the earth, he can find no vestige of a beginning — and no prospect of an end. Here is Hume stoking further righteous fury by demanding that, for acceptance, a biblical miracle must come with evidence that the natural event, for example that the dead remain dead, is inherently less likely. Here is Black producing carbon dioxide, Ferguson inaugurating sociology, and the lyrics of Burns reaching the innermost labyrinth of the human heart.

And above all, here is the city herself. Here is Edina, as the poet called her, in all her noisy, smelly, raucous, piled-up magnificence reaching up to the castle and down to the palace and, at last, bridging northward to the New Town. Mary Cosh is remarkably

non-intrusive in all of this organised bedlam. Rarely do we hear her opine. She lets her sources speak, powerfully, for themselves. We hear from residents such as the orator Blair, the polymath Smellie and the poet-larrikin Fergusson. We watch the young Walter Scott progress across three genres, balladry, poetry and novelty — becoming a bestseller in all of them. We hear also from visitors from the south headed by the Ursa Major walking arm in arm up the Lawnmarket with his biographer Boswell, and from romantic meteors such as Shelley and Keats. Edina is lauded for her beauty and intellectual life while, for her public sanitation, she is as showered with excrement as were those who passed beneath her windows.

Mary Cosh has utilised a very wide range of sources over what must have been decades of collection to generate this work. From biographies, letters, newspapers and journals, from public reports and private observations her streams of evidence coalesce into — well what? This reviewer finally decided, as he put the book onto his 'Edinburgh' shelf — forever — that it wasn't a gazetteer or a dictionary or an encyclopaedia. It was in fact biography. It was the long-awaited biography of Edina's age of wonder.

DAVID PURDIE

Matthew H. Kaufman, **Medical Teaching in Edinburgh during the 18th and 19th Centuries.** *Edinburgh: Royal College of Surgeons, 2003, pp. 210, illus. Paperback, £25, 0-9503620-8-5.*

Matthew H. Kaufman, **The Regius Chair of Military Surgery in the University of Edinburgh, 1806–55.** *Amsterdam and New York, Editions Rodopi, Wellcome Series in the History of Medicine, Clio Medica 69, 2003, pp. 361, illus. Hardback, € 80, 90-420-1248-X; paperback, € 37, 90-420-1238-2.*

Matthew Kaufman has published extensively on the history of anatomy and medicine in Edinburgh during the 19th century, and members of the Old Edinburgh Club will remember two articles in recent issues of *BOEC*, on the halls of the Royal Medical Society and the museums of the Edinburgh Phrenological Society. Each of these

bodies at one time had premises in Surgeon Square, which developed during the late 18th century in front of Old Surgeons Hall at High School Yards. By the early years of the 19th century several of the buildings had become lecture theatres and museums for a variety of 'extra-academical' (i.e. non-university) teachers, giving classes and demonstrations on anatomy, surgery and other subjects. Students attending university classes often also attended these extramural classes. At the time many did not follow the full university MD course, but would take a mixture of university and non-university classes as they pleased, some accumulating credits towards the licentiate qualification of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, and others moving on to complete their studies in London or elsewhere.

The combination in Edinburgh of a prestigious university, a large teaching hospital, and the professional bodies of the Royal Colleges of Physicians and of Surgeons was unique in Britain, and underlay the great fame of the Medical School in the 18th and early 19th centuries — a fame that was boosted by the availability of the rival extramural classes and demonstrations. It is hard now to envisage the buildings involved or to appreciate how closely clustered most of them were. University classes were given in a mixture of old and new classrooms where Old College is today. Clinical teaching was in the old Royal Infirmary, opened in 1741, which stood just over South Bridge, on the south side of Infirmary Street, until it was demolished in the 1880s. At the foot of Infirmary Street was the old Royal High School, absorbed into the Infirmary as a separate Surgical Hospital in the 1830s. And behind this lay Old Surgeons Hall and Surgeon Square, in the angle of the City Wall, centre of the extramural teaching. Surgeon Square survives as a small open space tucked away amidst various University buildings, but almost unrecognisable today.

The title of *Medical Teaching in Edinburgh during the 18th and 19th Centuries* is perhaps cast a little too generally — his stated aim is to produce 'a text that specifically concentrates on the role of the *Extra-academical* teachers in Edinburgh ... and indicates where most of their careers were spent'. There was great overlap, with many professors having previously been free-lance extramural

teachers. Much has already been written about the most famous of these men, but Kaufman is concerned to flesh out the biographies (and bibliographies) of the less well known, and to relate them to the specific buildings where they lectured. However, a large number of them taught in different places at different times, and it must be confessed that this book, although an invaluable quarry for information on long vanished buildings and forgotten surgeons and anatomists, will not be an easy read for those not already well immersed in the subject. After a general introduction, most chapters explore the story building by building, with frequent digressions and cross references as the same names appear and reappear at different stages of their careers. It is useful to be referred to previous mentions, but there is a risk of repetition.

The situation is further complicated in the 1820s to 1840s as other extramural medical classes sprang up at other sites nearby, in various buildings in Argyle and Brown Squares, both of which disappeared in the 1870s to make way for Chambers Street and the National Museum, and there was a short lived private hospital run by James Syme in old Minto House. These too are covered in their own chapter, as are the fortunes and buildings of the Royal Medical Society and the Phrenological Society. The expansion of the old Infirmary and the emergence of medical specialties such as a separate Burns Hospital, and early provision for obstetrics and fevers and venereal diseases are also traced. A further chapter discusses the buildings at the far west end of Chambers Street, the remnants of Brown Square which eventually came to house the Dental Hospital and School from the late 19th century.

A recurring background theme is the teaching of surgery in the University. At the founding of the Medical Faculty in 1726 Alexander Monro *primus* was qualified in, and taught, both anatomy and surgery, and his son Alexander Monro *secundus*, although a physician, insisted on retaining the formal teaching of surgery too. Monro *primus* and *secundus* were both skilful anatomists and good teachers, but the grandson Alexander Monro *tertius* was much less popular by the start of the 19th century. This contributed to the success of the rival extramural classes given in Surgeon Square by gifted anatomists such as John Barclay and Robert Knox. It also led to attempts to

found a dedicated university chair of Surgery, which were initially unsuccessful, although the City did make appointments to an extramural chair of Surgery in the College of Surgeons. The training of surgeons became more urgent during the French Wars, and a new discipline of military surgery was developed. John Thomson, after a period as surgeon to the Royal Infirmary and extramural lecturer on surgery, was appointed College Professor of Surgery in 1804, which proved an excellent base from which to take up the newly founded Regius Chair of Military Surgery in the University in 1806. He held both posts until resigning in the early 1820s, when he reverted to extramural teaching, abandoning surgery and realigning his interests until he was appointed first holder of the university chair of Pathology in 1831. In the meantime James Russell was appointed to a new Regius Chair of Clinical Surgery in 1803. Thomson's successor in the College Chair of Surgery in 1821 was John William Turner, until he was appointed to the new Regius Chair of Systematic Surgery in 1831. All of these had formerly been extramural lecturers, and as a result end up in many of Kaufman's chapters. If it sounds complicated — it is!

Kaufman's monograph on *The Chair of Military Surgery* also grapples with these attempts to rationalise the teaching of surgery. John Thomson's career is outlined above, and he was followed by George Ballingall from 1822 to 1855. The careers of the two men are analysed in detail, including their (rather different) practical experience in both general and military surgery, and the topics covered in their lectures are reconstructed from surviving publications, student notes and museum catalogues. An attempt is made to assess the numbers of students and their future careers and influence. Although military surgery was clearly a specialised field, with a need for control of infections and rapid treatment of wounds at rapidly moving battlefronts, it was always difficult to avoid overlap with the more general teachings of the other chairs of Clinical and Systematic Surgery. But the need for this as a special university course was lessening as the Army moved towards the development of its own Army Medical School, and the chair of Military Surgery was abolished when Ballingall died. This monograph, too, will be of particular value mainly to a specialised audience.

ANDREW FRASER

Brian Edwards and Paul Jenkins (eds), **Edinburgh: The Making of a Capital City.** *Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005, pp. xiii + 251, illus. Paperback, £19.99, 0-7486-1868-6.*

The editors of this most welcome book inform us that it is designed for a readership of 'students, teachers, urban developers, professionals, local government and voluntary bodies' in order to stimulate and develop new ideas for the city.

It is thus more than a collection of essays on the development and making of Edinburgh, as a capital city, since it is intended to introduce new ideas to the study both of the more distant past, whose design and buildings still surround the city centre, and of the developments of the last 150 years, more particularly those of the last 50 years. Much of the latter has never been documented before, and certainly not in such an accessible form.

The eleven essays, with the introduction and conclusion, set the development of Edinburgh in the context both of the long-term history of the city, and of its European contemporaries, showing that in many ways Edinburgh has been uniquely fortunate. It has always been conscious of being a capital city, set within a 'Scottish Historical Landscape'.

The book is divided into four chronological parts, though there is some overlap, such as the development of the tenement, and the interest in conservation. Part 1 takes the long historical perspective up to about 1800, much of it familiar, but with some new insights, as in the reconstruction of the Earl of Mar's design for a baroque city on the site of the later First New Town. Charles McKean points out in his essay that the improved Old Town did not attract the professional classes, who flocked to the New Town, which was originally intended not for them, but for the aristocrats who never came to inhabit it. Stuart-Murray's essay on 'Landscape, Topography and Hydrology' takes a full sweep from several hundred million years ago to the flood of April 2000.

The main focus of Part 2 is the nineteenth century city, looking at the various forces that found expression in the countless streets of tenements, the pockets of industry, the new institutions and the areas of housing constructed by the railway companies and working men's co-operatives. The suggestion is made

that Edinburgh was an industrial city, but unusually the industry was closely integrated with the residential areas. The development of the city was the result of enlightened private patronage, and partnership between public bodies and trusts, but in particular the new powers vested in the municipality.

Part 3 shows the emerging and growing role of the state in managing urban growth and development through the action of the municipality. The long process of regeneration of the Old Town to reclaim it from being a slum started with the 1867 Improvement Scheme, while Patrick Geddes' 'conservative surgery' approached the problem in a different manner. His pupil, Sir Frank Mears, foresaw a 'business mile' (the New Town), the royal mile, and a 'college mile', east of Nicolson Street, an area where the Council were also replacing slums with tenements in a Scottish idiom, affirming through townscape a civic and/or national identity. This leads to the era of the 1960s, when the public became enraged at the proposals for the development of the city, particularly as it encroached on the city centre.

The final part is termed 'The City in the Post-industrial and Post-modern Age'. The editors state that they do not necessarily agree with these terms being used in relation to Edinburgh, but 'these are the intellectual context for much debate about cities and urban built form in this period. Our concern is in fact to challenge these concepts.' The essays in this part are of a slightly different nature, taking a general analytical view of the development of the built environment from the 1960s. They are more concerned with trends in the development of the built environment in the city and the underlying forces that affect this. They show the move away from post-war grand designs in planning, and away from urban management to entrepreneurial action, the rise of 'conservation' and the manner in which Edinburgh has become a part of a wider regeneration of the Lothians, and further afield in Scotland.

The essays in these last two parts are useful for the manner in which, where they do touch on the historical development of the city, they give dates and references for the events and topics covered. Some of the evaluations and ideas will no doubt need to be re-interpreted by historians of the future.

ALLAN MACLEAN

Alan Fyfe, **In the Spirit of B-P: The Story of the Thirty-ninth Haymarket (St John's Church, Edinburgh) Scout Group.** *Ratho: Alan Fyfe, 3 Hillview Cottages, Ratho, EH28 8RF, 2004, pp. xi + 196, illus. Paperback, £8, 0-9548764-0-7.*

The 39th Haymarket Scout Group was attached to St John's Episcopal Church, Princes Street, Edinburgh, and existed for 65 years from 1914 to 1979. It considered itself to be one of Edinburgh's foremost Scout Groups. This book is a very full account of every particular and event during its existence, which the author has culled from the Scout Group's archives, reminiscences and his own memories. The book in itself is something of an 'archive' as it contains every possible detail of people, activities and camps.

The Group was attached to St John's Church. At the start the senior clergy were involved in its running, and later it was part of the assistant curate's job. The author is probably hiding deeper feelings when he says that by 1977 'the clergy seemed to have become more inward-looking and to be losing sight of the wider community'.

The book gives a vivid picture of the importance of Scouting, and its life and ethos in the 20th century. The number involved and the opportunities given for fellowship and outdoor activities, particularly the annual camps, show what a significant part it was of Edinburgh life. In 1924 there were 83 boys in the group, in 1953 there were so many cubs that the group had to be split in two, and in the 1960s there was a great revival.

This account would have been enriched, however, if the author had compared the 39th with the other groups in the city, as well as the wider field of Scouting. It would be interesting to compare the sudden rise, and equally dramatic demise, with what was happening elsewhere.

ALLAN MACLEAN

Augustine United Church; the Challenge of our Heritage. *Edinburgh: Augustine United Church, 2005, pp. xx + 148. Paperback, £6, no ISBN number.*

The Augustine United Church on George IV Bridge is a familiar landmark, but the design of the tower has been criticised from the time of its completion in 1861, 'incorporating as it does elements from all known

architectural styles and none'. Professor Blackie ridiculed it as a 'bridescake'. Since then, it has been the subject of various restoration schemes, the most recent just completed.

The building itself has also had its problems, and it began to collapse before the roof was ever built, David Bryce being called in to stabilise the Hay of Liverpool design. Over the years the interior arrangements have been much adapted, and it is now, as a 'Church Centre', used by many organisations, not least for our own Old Edinburgh Club's monthly meetings.

The present congregation is the successor, through various unions and mergers, of several Edinburgh congregations, all of which were of an 'independent' origin, in the Congregational, Baptist, Evangelical and Churches of Christ traditions. This book brings together three existing monographs about the history of the congregation, along with an introduction that is a précis of the details in the main part of the book.

The origins of this congregation lie with John Aikman, a devotee and supporter of the Haldane brothers, who collected a congregation in North College Street in 1802. The great minister was Dr Lindsay Alexander, and it was in his time that the present building was erected. The large congregation was mostly drawn from the populous area of the Old Town where it was sited, but also from university students. A notable statistic is that the surrounding resident population from 1877 to 1977 declined from 22,000 to 1,200. In the last 30 years the congregation has worked closely with other denominations in the area.

ALLAN MACLEAN

Alan Bell (ed.), **Lord Cockburn: Selected Letters.** *Edinburgh: John Donald, 2005, pp. 282. Hardback, £25, 0-85976-630-6.*

For anyone who knows Cockburn's *Memorials of His Time, Journal or Circuit Journeys*, this book will be like renewing an old acquaintance. For the reader meeting Cockburn for the first time the effect will probably resemble the delight and amazement of a first-time visitor to Edinburgh, encountering a different world in all its beauty and idiosyncrasy. Henry Cockburn (1779-1854), was an advocate, raised to the Scottish bench in 1834, who fortunately combined the impulse to record his impressions of his life and times with a highly personal and playful prose

style. There are several reasons why his letters make entertaining and fascinating reading.

First, they open a delightful window on the mind and spirit of one of Edinburgh's most remarkable citizens. We are treated to lively descriptions of family life: the raising, education and coming-of-age of his children, the joys of births and marriages, and the grief of loss. After 1813 Cockburn spent as much time as possible at his idyllic retreat, Bonaly (rhymed with 'daily', as he pointed out), with his wife Elizabeth and their family. His carriage, he wrote, 'is crammed each time with children, processes, lamb legs, women — and all sorts of domestic accommodation or incumbrance'. Seeking advice concerning a suitable horse to pull the carriage, he made a typical joke about his own legal fraternity: 'I should suppose the proper thing was a strong, broad, sensible, punchy beast — like Lord Craigie, but somewhat more active'. His letters are full of such vivid observation, and an idiom all his own.

At Bonaly he balanced his love of entertaining with vigorous walks in the nearby Pentlands, often in the company of friends. Perhaps the most striking feature of this book is its celebration of friendship, for which Cockburn had an unsurpassed gift. As a student he fell in with a talented group of lawyers and maintained friendships with them for the rest of their lives. That they included some of the luminaries of the Enlightenment twilight is doubly fortunate. Most of the letters bear witness to the closeness of Cockburn's circle, but those written after the death of Francis Jeffrey in 1850 are an especially moving testament to Cockburn's love of his friends. His letters also show that he comfortably enjoyed the friendship of women. Some of the funniest, wisest and most cordial letters were written to Sophia Rutherford, wife of Andrew, the Lord Advocate, and Elizabeth, wife of a parliamentary solicitor, John Richardson.

Those to their husbands, two of his oldest friends, were naturally more concerned with public affairs, but even when being serious Cockburn could hardly be solemn. This means that the ever-changing scenes of Scottish legal affairs, and of political life, including the momentous events leading to the Reform Act and the Disruption, are seen through the prism of Cockburn's observant eye for character and motive. He was a Whig, a mixture of radical and conservative, so there is much lively invective against entrenched interests and Toryism, and sympathy for the Free Church. His legal career and political interests are examined in Alan Bell's introduction, which nicely weighs

them against his personal life and his civic interests. During a political crisis in 1833 Jeffrey, the Lord Advocate, indicated that there were more important considerations than a threat to Salisbury Craggs. Bell quotes Cockburn's answer: 'No! What was any ministry, even this one, to the preservation of Salisbury Craggs?'

This was Cockburn's typical posture, passionately appreciative of the city's beauty and amenities, and ever ready to defend them against what he decried as an obsession with utility at the expense of all else. He blamed both the city fathers and apathetic citizens equally. In the 1840s we find him upbraiding the Provost about the proposed incursions of the railway into Princes Street gardens, and railing against the officially sanctioned use of Calton Hill as a drying green. Although his fights were sometimes rearguard actions against utilitarian and commercial progress, they inspired the posthumous creation in 1875 of the Cockburn Association, 'for preserving and increasing the attractions of the city and its neighbourhood'. As Edinburgh's civic society 'the Cockburn' still campaigns actively. A generation later the Old Edinburgh Club was formed to undertake the complementary work of investigating and recording the city's past. Cockburn's opinion of a body which placed itself under the patronage of the Provost and Council would probably have made uncomfortable, if invigorating, reading. Instead, in the shape of this superb edition of his letters, we have the pleasure of Cockburn's critical, and mostly affectionate, gaze being cast about the Edinburgh of his day.

TRISTRAM CLARKE

Andrew Lownie, **The Edinburgh Literary Companion**. *Edinburgh: Polygon, 2005, pp. viii + 184. Paperback, £9.99, 1-904598-61-7.*

Ralph Lownie, **Auld Reekie: An Edinburgh Anthology**. *London: Timewell, 2004, pp. 335. Hardback, £12.99, 1-85725-204-7.*

Andrew Lownie's *Literary Companion* was first published in 1992 as the *Edinburgh Literary Guide*. It remains essential to any collection of books on the city's history. Its updating brings information on the lives, writing and sites associated with present-day authors such as Christopher Brookmyre, Joyce Holmes, Quintin Jardine, Paul Johnston, Alanna

Knight, Frederic Lindsay and Ian Rankin, who have been particularly active in the last 14 years.

The bulk of the book is composed of an area-by-area guide to the city and the authors who lived in or took as their subjects its various zones. There are then three useful reference lists: of Edinburgh literary figures, of Edinburgh novels, and of other relevant books, mostly biographical or topographical. Last comes an excellent index which covers the names of both streets and individuals.

One might compare it with Moira Burgess's *The Glasgow Novel* (1972) which recounts the plots of every novel set in Glasgow. She had to deal with a much smaller number of books and authors than Mr Lownie does. In addition, she does not make the link with Glasgow's topography, and this would be difficult because many of the places featured in the fiction of the Dear Green Place have disappeared before the hammer of demolition. Edinburgh lives on, far less changed.

Andrew Lownie's style is descriptive, anecdotal, concise and sensible. He eschews the role of literary critic, and does not impose his own tastes. From time to time he allows himself a well chosen quotation, such as this splendid one from Joan Lingard's *The Prevailing Wind* (1964):

Let us contemplate the street of the Princes, the home of the shortbread kings and the Baronets of Bombazine. It is a fine street, is it not, despite its vulgar moments? It has width and colour, gardens and a bandstand, a gallery of art with another tucked behind, and a big ugly hotel at either end. What more could a street want.

The *Literary Guide's* list of Edinburgh novels contains over five hundred titles, a sign that Mr Lownie is writing about a significant subject, and that he has treated it thoroughly. Nevertheless, there are still one or two gaps. For example, David Pae, who is misprinted as Pat (p. 167), wrote the melodramatic *Jessie Melville* (c. 1860), which contrasts life in the Old and New Towns. There are also a few judgements which might be reconsidered. Lewis Spence is mentioned as a poet and journalist, but his distinction as a student of the occult is missing. It is hardly fair to John Galt to say that his novels 'tended to trade on the Scottish nostalgia boom created by Scott' (p. 157), for Galt is at his best dealing with the present and the recent past, moving around the regions of cynicism, irony, and satire. Sidney Goodsir Smith's *Carotid Cornucopius* (1947) is surely more than a 'linguistic romp' (p. 86) even if it is not quite the Scottish *Ulysses* that Hugh MacDiarmid said it was. It is one of the few examples of literary Modernism in Scotland.

A point to which Mr Lownie repeatedly returns is

the way in which a wide range of novelists have played with the contrast between *douce*, respectable, establishment Edinburgh and the disrespectful poverty of the Victorian Canongate and the Elizabethan housing scheme. These writers use the contrasts of the Edinburghs of Mr Hyde and Dr Jekyll, to enjoy deceit, hypocrisy and concealment in this braw hie-heapit town. And of course Edinburgh can boast of Irvine Welsh, who revels in unemployment, run-down housing, and drug culture – and who, as Mr Lownie points out, has an MBA.

Auld Reekie: An Edinburgh Anthology has been prepared by the father of the author of the *Literary Companion*. His approach is historical rather than literary, though the selected material is often writing of high quality. The anthology is arranged in ten sections, labelled Introduction, First Impressions, Places, People, Visitors, Everyday Life, In Adversity, And Joy, Pillars of the City and A Final Tribute. It thus takes a more holistic approach to Edinburgh than the pack of novelists who make the simplistic division between sunlight and shadow. Ralph Lownie's materials are the most perceptive passages from the multitude of historians of the city, with a little literary material added. Typical of the writers he has assembled is Alexander Smith, who had been raised in poverty in Paisley and was such an effective autodidact that he became Secretary to the University of Edinburgh. Professional advancement did not lessen his human sympathy:

The Cowgate is the Irish portion of the city. Edinburgh leaps over it with bridges; its inhabitants are morally and geographically the lower orders. They keep to their own quarters, and seldom come up for the light of day. Many an Edinburgh man has never set foot in the street; the condition of the inhabitants is as little known to respectable Edinburgh as are the habits of moles, earthworms, and the mining population.

JOHN BURNETT

John Pink, **The Edinburgh Beer Duty Fraud 1926–1933: The Full Story.** *Surbiton: JRP, 6 Anns Court, Grove Road, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 4BE, pp. 44 + 78, illus. Paperback, £7 plus £2 postage and packing, from the publisher, 1-902959-05-1.*

Many people will know that the University of Edinburgh's Centre for Sport and Exercise on the Pleasance was once Bell's Brewery. Fewer know that this was the scene of an audacious crime between the wars, when Edinburgh United Breweries (EUB)

defrauded HM Customs and Excise (C&E) of an estimated £31,000 of beer duty — worth over £1 million in today's money. Unlike sensational murders, or even embezzlements with recognisable victims, this fraud, where C&E was the victim, has faded from public consciousness. EUB was the third largest brewing company in Scotland, but it was over-capitalised, and financial pressures on it were increased by the depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s. The temptation to keep the company afloat by cooking the books was great.

In *The Edinburgh Beer Duty Fraud* John Pink, a retired Customs & Excise officer, does not present a straight narrative, but allows the reader to glean the story from original C&E reports and the *Scotsman's* report of the trial, which form the bulk of his work. He sets the scene with a description of the brewing process and how beer duty was assessed and paid, followed by a who-was-who in the brewery and Excise office, then sited at 3 South Bridge (now the Bank Hotel). Rather than burden non-technical readers with all the details of the story, Pink has appended further extracts from the files, giving the aftermath of this remarkable fraud as the lives of the brewery employees, C&E officials and the EUB itself unravelled.

Between 1880 and 1993, beer duty was charged on the volume and strength of the sugar solution (wort) generated by brewing. To understand the fraud it is necessary to know that 24 hours' notice to brew had to be entered into the C&E Brewing Book kept on the brewery premises. The volume and strength of the collected wort had to be declared within 12 hours of the start of the brew and left undisturbed in the collecting vessel for a minimum of 12 hours for checking by the Excise Officer. Once 12 hours had passed, or earlier, if the collection had been checked by an Excise Officer, the worts would be run into the fermenting vessels.

The fraud started in a small way in 1926 when a portion of worts from brews was run into casks rather than into the collection vessel. The volume of each brew was therefore less than it should have been and duty was underpaid. The abstracted worts were reunited with the declared wort in the fermenting vessels, a poor practice that affects quality and increases the likelihood of infection by beer-spoiling bacteria and wild yeasts. Probably as a result of customers' complaints about the beer's quality, the EUB changed from abstraction of worts to completely undeclared brewing.

This fraud went undetected for so long because the C&E was stretched by staff cuts. Also its officers made predictable visits, which allowed time for any missing brew to be entered into the Brewing Book. It only came to light in 1933 when a dismissed cellarman gave a statement to the C&E. Officers mounted a watch and soon uncovered evidence that illegal brewing had taken place. Investigations estimated the amount of undeclared duty to be £31,291. As a result, EUB had been able to avoid trading losses for three years and to pay dividends of £17,894 to its shareholders, who included the Managing Director and Head Brewer. The trial reports printed here reveal that the whole brewery workforce was aware of the fraud, discussing it weekly as if it was the football, but none dared question the practices.

The Managing Director was imprisoned for 21 months. The Head Brewer was jailed for 12 months and forfeited his war pension (he had lost an arm in the Great War). The dilatory C&E officials suffered lost promotion, early retirement and reduced pension rights. Soon there was a nation-wide shake-up of procedures in HM Customs & Excise resulting in extra and more rigorous checks on breweries and, eventually, the establishment of an investigation branch. The whistle-blowing cellarman remained unemployed, 'largely owing to his association with this case', and he was recommended for a reward to start afresh elsewhere. In January 1934, the C&E demanded £51,901. 17. 3, being the duty due for December 1933 and the undeclared brews and abstracted worts. This the EUB could not pay and its brewing equipment, materials and movables were seized, including the Managing Director's wife's Rolls Royce, but 'to the embarrassment of the Department, this was not company property and had to be returned to her'. EUB went into liquidation in February 1934.

Brewing continued at the Pleasance until 1935, income being used to defray the unpaid duty. Brewing then ceased and the building was sold to Rankins Fruit Markets, its cellars being used as an air-raid shelter in World War II. Finally, it was gifted to the University of Edinburgh, which used it as the Psychology Department until its conversion into a sports centre. So, next time you pass the buildings of Bell's Brewery on the Pleasance, think not only of those fiddling with exercise machines today, but of those who diddled the Excise seventy years ago, vividly brought back to life in Mr Pink's illuminating account.

ROSEMARY MANN

Jack Alexander, **McCrae's Battalion: The Story of the 16th Royal Scots.** *Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2003, pp. 320, illus. Hardback, £15.99, 1-84018-707-7; paperback, £9.99, 1-84018-932-0.*

This book tells the story of a battalion of volunteer soldiers, recruited in Edinburgh and the Lothians, who fought in France during the First World War, but it is no ordinary military history, and deserves to be read by anyone interested in Edinburgh's history during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

In the first place there is the 16th Battalion's standing as the 'Heart of Midlothian Battalion', a misleading tag for a unit in which the professional footballers were far outnumbered by men from every other walk of life. However, the thirteen volunteers from Hearts, and the many others from other clubs, gave the battalion a sporting image which has persisted. Alexander opens with a fascinating account of how the rhetoric of populist politicians associated football with a reluctance to enlist, and gives sympathetic and well drawn portraits of many of the volunteer sportsmen and their coaches and managers. Indeed, one of the book's great strengths is to draw vivid little portraits of many of the men, and the families, homes and work which they left behind. Many of the the men are shown in the numerous photographs in the book. This makes for lively social history, and cumulatively for a poignant and moving account of the mounting losses which communities, especially Edinburgh and Leith, had to withstand during the course of the war.

The central figure is George McCrae, who rose from poor circumstances in Edinburgh to prosper as a hatter and to serve on the Town Council. His passion was the Volunteers, in which he earned steady promotions, and there is a fascinating section on their world, and the milieu of local and national Liberal politics in Edinburgh. McCrae was an Edinburgh MP, 1899-1909, before his appointment to head the Local Government Board for Scotland. On the outbreak of the war, McCrae decided to raise a battalion for The Royal Scots, the local regiment. The scenes of his recruitment drive in the Usher Hall in November 1914, and the tumultuous response from Edinburgh men of all classes, are stirringly told. In the account of the training that followed, during part of which the battalion was quartered in George Heriot's School, there is much of local historical and social interest, and some amusing episodes.

These episodes are the prelude to the main sections of Alexander's exceptionally well told narrative, the active service of McCrae's battalion in France, and the inspirational qualities of its commander, who was eventually invalided home. Having gone into the line in January 1916, the 16th's first major action was on the first day of the Somme, 1 July. The heroic advance to Contalmaison was made at the frightful cost in casualties of 12 officers and 573 men. Skilful use of the sources and a powerful narrative give Alexander's accounts of this and later battles in 1917 a gripping immediacy, allowing the reader both to see the wider picture and the infantryman's view of battle. Through the account of the long years of privation, danger and death, are woven the individual stories of men such as Sergeant Annan Ness, a talented footballer in peacetime, and D. M. Sutherland, the art college lecturer turned officer, whose amusing drawings enliven the book. A useful appendix lists the peacetime occupations of the men; the biggest category was the printing and allied trades. This diverse band of citizens formed a battalion with, as one of the last survivors put it, a 'legendary reputation among the fighting soldiers on the Western Front'.

In military historical terms the author has explained how and why this was so, while wearing his considerable knowledge lightly. His single-mindedness in shaping his story left this reader wanting to know more about the battalion's relationship with the 15th Battalion, also from Edinburgh, alongside which it fought. Although the 15th also deserves its historian, a study comparable to *McCrae's Battalion* is unlikely sixteen years after the project began. This is because Alexander not only undertook prodigious research in some difficult and diverse sources, but rescued many personal documents, photographs and objects in private hands from neglect and probable destruction. He has also salvaged and preserved the stories of many of the 1200 men he identified as having served in the battalion, some of them taken just in time before veterans died, but most from their families. Inevitably from 1916 onwards deaths and injuries, transfers and commissions gradually transformed the original battalion, and the unit was eventually disbanded in May 1918. The themes of dispersal and comradeship are poignantly continued after the war, as the survivors made their best way in life. The epilogue concerning the former battalion members is as moving as the accounts of the deaths of their friends in combat. It is

said that veterans do not want to be thanked so much as remembered. *McCrae's Battalion* is indeed an extraordinary act of remembrance.

TRISTRAM CLARKE

Graham Priestley, **The Water Mills of the Water of Leith**. *Edinburgh: The Water of Leith Conservation Trust, 2001, pp. 80, illus. Paperback, £6, 0-9540006-0-9.*

This slim volume provides a fascinating account of the uses of water power in and around Edinburgh during the last few centuries. Water mills are mostly now a relic of the past, and the author is an expert guide to how they became obsolete. He starts with a clear explanation of mill workings for the non-specialist. The next chapter on the physical remains of the mills is a well told exploration of traces of the industrial past along the 23 miles of the river's length from Leithhead to Leith. Weirs are often the most obvious sign of the site of former mills, while surviving buildings, such as the converted Bell's Mills granary at Belford and various buildings in the Dean Village, all attest to the commonest type of mill, the grain mill. Associated works such as lades may also be found along the Water of Leith. How many people know where to find traces of Edinburgh's Great Lade, which once drew part of the Water of Leith for almost two miles from the Dean past the grain mill at Stockbridge and eastwards?

Graham Priestley reminds us of the reliance on water power of several other industries: waulking and textiles, paper-making (active from 1590 in order to feed legal and literary Edinburgh's voracious appetite), snuff-milling (most famously by the philanthropist James Gillespie), and timber and wood-working. The gazetteer of surviving buildings, lades, weirs and other remains is indispensable for the explorer of local history, and for those wanting information about threatened structures. Those in search of working mills are directed elsewhere, for although 76 mills existed along the Water of Leith in 1791, no functioning examples survive of this environmentally friendly and sustainable form of harnessing power. The author and the Water of Leith Conservation Trust are to be congratulated on an excellent guide to this important and easily overlooked aspect of Edinburgh's heritage.

TRISTRAM CLARKE

Maurice Macrae (ed.), **Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh: History Supplement 2003**. *Edinburgh: The College, 2003, pp. iv + 71, £7.50 plus £2.50 postage and packing, from the Publications Dept, RCPE, 9 Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 1JQ. ISSN 0953-0932.*

Three of the nine papers in this volume are directly concerned with Edinburgh. Maurice Macrae writes on Professor Andrew Duncan (1744-1828), demonstrating his substantial influence on the history of public health. Rab Houston describes the care of the mentally ill in Edinburgh between the late 17th and early 19th centuries, and M. H. Kaufman gives the history of the library of the Royal Medical Society. Four more papers have some relation to the city. Madeleine Smith, who bought astonishing quantities of arsenic in Glasgow but was found not proven of murder at the High Court in Edinburgh, is the subject of a biography with a psychological commentary by J. R. Roy. Dugald Gardner draws attention to early contributions to vascular physiology by Robert Knox, while still a student at Edinburgh University, and by Joseph Lister, some time after he had left Edinburgh for Glasgow. Finally, W. J. MacLennan contributes two papers, one on medieval hospitals in Scotland and the other on the Knights Hospitaller and especially Torphichen Preceptory.

JOHN BURNETT

Robert D. Anderson, Michael Lynch and Nicholas Phillipson, **The University of Edinburgh: An Illustrated History**. *Edinburgh: University Press, 2003, pp. viii + 216, illus. Paperback, £14.99, 0-7486-1646-2.*

The most recent history of the University of Edinburgh was D. B. Horn's 1967 *Short History*, an excellent wide-ranging summary of major events and themes up till the late 19th century. The present volume is 'a modest attempt by three Edinburgh historians to view the university's history with modern eyes'. Rather than aiming to be comprehensive, the three essays reassess important phases in the University's development. The volume is enlivened by a generous selection of illustrations of people, places, documents and events (some black and white, some colour; some familiar, some less so). The text is easily read, uninterrupted by

references but with a basic bibliography at the end, and there are cheerful comparisons with present-day university problems of funding, buildings, workload and political pressures that help keep earlier struggles in context.

Michael Lynch reappraises the events leading up to the admission of the first students into Scotland's first civic post-Reformation college in 1583. He traces the political and religious strands in these turbulent years when the court became ever more influential and Edinburgh was developing into a real metropolis, including the tensions between the concept of a liberal arts education and the requirements of a Protestant seminary. The College ran on the regent system throughout the 17th century, with one regent taking the whole class through all four years of the arts course, and specialised postgraduate teaching being given in divinity. It is debateable when it becomes appropriate to use the term university rather than college, but Lynch shows that Edinburgh's course was not unusual when compared to similar institutions in Britain and Europe. By the end of the 17th century the University was holding its own against rival local professional bodies such as the Faculty of Advocates and the Royal College of Physicians.

Nicholas Phillipson tackles 'The Making of an Enlightened University'. After a shaky start with a purge of those who would not subscribe to the Presbyterian Confession of Faith in 1690, the University was modernised by Principal Carstares between 1703 and 1715. The curriculum was broadened and recast on the model established in Dutch universities, and specialist chairs were created after 1708. One aim was to make available a liberal education that would attract students from Scotland and further afield, who would previously have travelled, at considerable expense, to continental universities — producing savings to local families and profits to the city. Next the University established high quality professional training in law and medicine, particularly after the founding of the Medical Faculty in 1726. Phillipson gives due credit to the role of the city, particularly Lord Provost George Drummond, and the Scottish Whig political establishment, under the Earl of Ilay.

By mid century the University was well established, and the Medical School growing strongly, but it was during the enlightened principalship of William Robertson, from 1767 till 1793, that Edinburgh became one of the greatest universities in

the western world. Regius chairs were endowed and the library and museum revitalised, and Robertson ensured that vacancies in all subjects were filled by professors of the highest ability. While Edinburgh was expanding to the north in the New Town, to the south the University's student numbers soared, but suitable buildings lagged behind. It was only after the new South Bridge opened that Robert Adam, Robertson's cousin, was asked to draw up plans for a complete new University. Work started with a flourish in 1789, but soon ground to a halt as funds dried up. For nearly 30 years only one corner of the new building was usable, and most teaching continued in a huddle of old buildings behind the shell of Adam's grand new façade. W. H. Playfair modified the plans, omitting Adam's chapel and professors' housing, and completed the building by 1830. The University maintained its reputation through the 1820s, but Phillipson outlines the increasing tensions that led to stalemate between city and senate in the 1830s, which dragged on until the formal separation of the two in 1858.

Robert Anderson deals with 'The Construction of a Modern University' in four short chapters, starting with the Universities (Scotland) Acts of 1858 and 1889. Overall the effects of the Acts were to secularise and standardise Scottish universities as British (though still distinctively Scottish) institutions, introducing assessments and entrance exams, strengthening professional training for the church, law and medicine, encouraging standard curricula and formal graduation, and broadening the recruitment of professors. Retention of Latin and Greek as basic entrance qualifications was fiercely debated and held to discriminate against the traditional 'lad o' pairts' from poor rural backgrounds. After 1858 the University Court took control, free from municipal and religious politics, and a General Council of graduates and a new student-elected Rector were introduced. Anderson traces these and other developments through the 19th century, with chairs in new scientific and other subjects gradually broadening the output of graduates beyond the traditional professions, to give wider opportunities in teaching, science and administration at home or throughout the Empire.

In the 1880s the Students Representative Council and the (independent) Men's Union were formed, and a new Medical School in Teviot Place opened in 1884. One important effect of the 1889 Act was the admission of women to the Scottish universities.

Student societies flourished, and sports facilities were slowly introduced, but the majority of students were still Edinburgh-based and attempts to introduce student residences had limited success before the mid 20th century. The basic patterns established by the end of the 1890s were still evident until the 1950s and 1960s. Research became more important but the balance remained with teaching, still carried out mainly by the professors themselves. Lectureships in new subjects expanded the choice of courses offered. There was a slow increase in practical classes and honours and postgraduate degrees, but Edinburgh's fame rested more on authoritative textbooks than innovative research. The numbers of women students increased though it was not until 1966 that the first female professor was appointed.

Historians cannot yet properly assess the dramatic changes of the post-war decades, but Anderson outlines a few of the factors that affected Edinburgh in the period from 1945 to 1999, such as the expanding numbers of both staff and students, the massive (and controversial) building programme of the 1960s, changing financial arrangements and links with the state, the transfer of science to Kings Buildings, the demise of the Edinburgh landlady and student digs, the changing role of the Rector, the increasingly international student population. Through all this (and even more dramatic organisational changes in the last few years) the University has prospered as one of the great teaching and research universities of the western world.

Altogether an attractive and stimulating read for anyone with any interest in the changing nature and fortunes of the University of Edinburgh. It is unfortunate that the University has not commissioned a full scale history of itself since Principal Grant's compendious *Story of the University* in 1884, but this will fill a gap very nicely in the meantime.

ANDREW FRASER

E. Patricia Dennison, **Holyrood and Canongate: A Thousand Years of History.** *Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2005, pp. xv + 207, illus. Paperback, £9.99, 1-84158-404-5.*

Sometimes one is inclined to think of the Canongate as merely an appendage to the Old Town of Edinburgh. This fine book shows that this is far from the truth. The burgh of Canongate has had a long and

distinguished independent history. It covers one thousand years, starting shortly before the founding by David I of Holyrood Abbey in 1128, although there are clear indications that the area had already been settled well before that time.

The founding of the Abbey and granting of burgh status led to healthy development of the settlement. The author uses local evidence combined with her extensive knowledge of Scottish town development in general to paint a vivid picture of what the burgh would have been like in medieval times. The narrative covers many aspects of life — the layout of the burgh, markets and trading, social life, care of the sick, law and order, and so on, all vividly described.

Dennison demonstrates how the kings of Scotland had an increasing presence at Holyrood over the years, initially using the Abbey and its accommodation to hold meetings of Parliament and for other royal occasions. As time went by, they built their own royal palace alongside the Abbey. The book traces the development and modification of the precinct, making effective but cautious use of cartographic evidence as well as written sources. The departure of the court at the Union of the Crowns must have had an effect on the Canongate, but the book examines a wide range of evidence to show that in fact the burgh continued to flourish, albeit as an expensive suburb of Edinburgh. The situation is exemplified by the number, size and quality of the many houses built in the 17th century.

Hard times came in the later 18th century, however, as the wealthy moved to the New Town. The large houses were put to other uses, and Holyrood found itself on the eastern fringe of an industrial development of breweries, glass manufacturers, and engineering works. Overcrowding and poverty were rife. The effort to improve the appalling conditions there gathered momentum in the second half of the 20th century and has continued in the present century. The topic is dealt with fully, without being moralistic. Housing, public health and education slowly improved. One of the costs was the dispersal of much of the community to outlying parts of the city, while most industrial activities moved elsewhere. The last fifty or so years have seen much restoration and rebuilding work, including the move of the Scottish Parliament to Holyrood. As the narrative ends, the Canongate seems set to enter another period of economic activity and national significance.

This book is well researched, while references are comprehensive and indexing is excellent.

ROBIN TAIT

Gordon Wright, **A Guide to the Royal Mile.** *London and Edinburgh: Steve Savage Publishers, 7th edn, 2005, pp. 63, illus. Paperback, £3.99, 1-904246-12-5.*

This handy booklet, first published in 1979, is the ideal pocket guide to the Royal Mile. The latest edition is fully up to date, including, for example, the new Parliament building at Holyrood. It is well illustrated

with colour photographs and presented in the correct order for a walk starting at North Bridge, proceeding down the north side of the Royal Mile to Holyrood, back up to the Castle on the other side, then completing the tour on returning to the Bridges. It provides clear concise information to the visitor as they follow the route. Not for the historian, but not intended to be so.

ROBIN TAIT