

# THE BOOK OF THE OLD EDINBURGH CLUB

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# ROSEBERY AND THE BIRTH OF THE OLD EDINBURGH CLUB

OWEN DUDLEY EDWARDS

THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE of the Old Edinburgh Club (OEC) was the interests and necessities of William J. Hay (1863–1955), a bookseller and publisher to trade, who started a business in 1902 under what he proclaimed as John Knox’s House in the Netherbow, High Street (fig. 1).

In 1903 he became the House’s custodian. Whether it was the house in which Knox lived was by then sufficiently controversial, and the defenders of its domiciliary authenticity were content for the most part to take their stand on him having died there (his birthdate has varied across a near-decade during the



Fig. 1. John Knox’s House when W. J. Hay initiated the Club (with his name above the door). Drawn by Hanslip Fletcher, from James Bone, *Edinburgh Revisited* (London 1911).

past century but his deathdate is firmly fixed at 1572). Hay's self-establishment as the man in possession of the Knox House followed ten years of learned warfare on its credentials. The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland had seen its *Proceedings* become a dark and bloody ground of historiographical recrimination of a vehemence entirely appropriate to its subject, in 1891, 1893, and 1899, when first Peter Miller and then Robert Miller held that it was not, Charles Guthrie QC (1849–1920) held that it was, and Professor Sir Daniel Wilson of Toronto (1816–1892) allegedly held both views.<sup>1</sup> Beleaguered by such envenomed expertise, Hay seems to have concluded that the House's fortunes required ringfencing by another learned society whose initial members would reflect more practical scholarship (and less sceptical Knoxians) than the Antiquaries.

What practical steps Hay may have taken before 1907 are as yet unknown. In 1960 the Club discovered what looks like its conception, admittedly by the unusual means of announcing the decease of all its founder members, thus prompting Mr John A. Barrie to assure it that the report of his death, like that of Mark Twain, was an exaggeration. Mr Barrie was not only present at the inaugural meeting on 29 January 1908 (and thus a founding member), he had attended:<sup>2</sup>

the meeting in John Knox's House in June 1907 when it was decided to form the Old Edinburgh Club ... Mr Barrie remembers sitting beside Harry A. Cockburn (grandson of Lord Cockburn) and walking home to the South Side with him afterwards.

No mention is made of this meeting in subsequent Club minutes and press publicity, both of which date the meeting taking the decision to found the Club as on 3 December 1907. But its formal conduct, and its participants' obvious sense of what they were about, means that there must have been preliminary gatherings, and Barrie evidently remembered the key gathering. However shaky the value of Barrie's memory for events of fifty years' distance, he was not thinking of December meetings: his charming detail of strolling back with the Cockburn grandson to the South Side (Barrie lived at 114 Viewforth) assumes weather as clement as an Edinburgh summer could make it. Moreover Cockburn was not present on 3 December, though Barrie was. And Cockburn's initial presence was important.

Harry A. Cockburn joined the Club when it was formally founded on 29 January 1908, successfully offered a paper to it in 1909–10, and remained a member until 1943, although living in London.<sup>3</sup> He might be taken to have at least moral influence on the [Henry] Cockburn Association, honouring his paternal grandfather, whose zeal in the conservation of his town was as great as that for its celebration in his memoirs. Andrew E. Murray WS of 43 Castle Street, joint Secretary of the Cockburn Association, was also a founder member of the Old Edinburgh Club. In the years before the First World War the Club would provide scholarly bases for causes for conservation undertaken by the Cockburn Association. In particular the two bodies championed a cause William Hay would have had in mind from the first: the conservation and restoration of the building next door to the Knox House, Moubray House, the two now being, in Donald Smith's words, 'isolated survivals from the medieval burgh', specifically early sixteenth century (fig. 2).<sup>4</sup> On 17 December 1910 the Old Edinburgh Club would visit Moubray House, inspect it, and hold a meeting in the adjoining 'Moray-Knox' Church (subsequently demolished), at which Hay would read a paper on Moubray House's history, and Murray show cause for the Cockburn Association to take steps to preserve it. Already £442 would have been raised on appeal but £600–700 would be needed to complete its purchase and make it ready for use as an exhibition hall.<sup>5</sup> Several Cockburnians not members of the OEC would be present, including Lord Salvesen, and the future MP for Perth A. F. Whyte: also present would be Cockburnians drawn into the OEC such as Charles Guthrie (now on the judicial bench as Lord Guthrie).<sup>6</sup> Guthrie would agree to act as a trustee, as would Councillor William Fraser Dobie (one of the Old Edinburgh's seven founder-member Town Councillors), together with other 'representatives of the Old Edinburgh Club, the Social Union, and the Cockburn Association'. But the Cockburn Association alone would make the purchase.<sup>7</sup>

Donald Smith relates the sequel:<sup>8</sup>

Hay set up his 'Old Edinburgh Arts and Crafts' business in the ground floors of John Knox House and Moubray House in 1911, connecting the two premises with a gallery at the rear. This was no souvenir shop but an enterprising artistic venture based on a



Fig. 2. Moubray House and Knox's House in the days of Gladstone's Edinburgh. Drawn by George Straton Ferrier, from a booklet *Edinburgh Illustrated*, 'printed in the International Exhibition, Edinburgh, 1886, and presented by the Scottish Accident Insurance Company'.

discerning appreciation of Scottish crafts — the Royal Mile's first craft centre ... Unfortunately, as with so many succeeding craft centres of quality, Edinburgh's public showed itself unwilling to back Hay's artistic tastes and the venture was wound up due to the economic pressures of the First World War.

Denouncing the pusillanimity of the Edimbourgeoisie is as much of an artistic duty as is the anti-clericalism of modern Irish intellectuals, but it seems hardly to the purpose here. Were it not for the generosity of the townsfolk Moubray House would have been neither available nor ready for Hay to move into; and the ultimate failure of that enterprise can surely be comfortably assigned to World War I without exhuming the ancient citizenry at whom to throw stones. Besides, we got an Old Edinburgh Club out of it.

What does emerge from the record of these early years was that the Old Edinburgh Club was evidently intended to authenticate proposals for cultural and environmental conservation, and to do so hand in

hand with accomplished professionals whose aesthetic appreciation was matched by their commercial consideration (much the same outlook was evident in the rebuilding of San Francisco after its earthquake in 1906). The contemporary influence of OEC Associate Member Patrick Geddes (1854–1932) may well have been a factor, although for want of data on the intellectual resources of founder members it is not possible to be specific.

To see the founders' vision realised, we may return to the embarrassed 'Note' appended in amendment of the 52nd Annual Meeting's premature holocaust of its founder members, ending thus:<sup>9</sup>

Business took Mr Barrie out of town a great deal during the early days of the Club, but he well remembers outings to houses in the area, particularly those under the guidance of Dr Ross, and also a garden party given to members by Dr Moir Bryce at his home in Blackford Road. Mr Barrie's love of Edinburgh and his illustrated lectures on the subject gained him the name of 'Old Edinburgh' in Dalkeith, where his business interests lay.



More may be gleaned from this than gratification for the Club's belated remembrance of 'Old Edinburgh' (who died shortly thereafter). Dr Ross was Dr Thomas Ross LLD (1839–1930) of MacGibbon & Ross, architect and Club founder member.<sup>10</sup> At the Club's Third Annual Meeting (30 January 1911) Professor Gerard Baldwin Brown (1849–1932), Watson Gordon Professor of Fine Art at the University of Edinburgh, 1880–1930, also a founder member, sighted a target:<sup>11</sup>

The three-gabled house, near Holyrood ... threatened with destruction in what was known as the King Edward Memorial scheme. The house, he said, was described by Messrs. MacGibbon & Ross as a very good example of the domestic architecture of the period. It had literary associations of a kind. It was also connected with the buildings of Holyrood. It occupied part of the ground which was covered by the old Abbot's house, and immediately abutted on the site where once stood the old gateway into the precincts of Holyrood. It was quite clear that the removal of this house was not an essential part of the Holyrood memorial to King Edward [VII, died 6 May 1910], and he thought a scheme could be devised which would preserve that charming little bit of domestic architecture as part of the composition ... He moved that they remit the matter to the [Club] Council, with powers to take any action in the future which they thought fit ... Mr A. E. Murray WS, Secretary of the Cockburn Association, seconded, and the motion was adopted.

The early sixteenth (or perhaps late fifteenth) century house on Abbey Strand was duly restored by Thomas Ross in 1916. The Club in fact acted as an aesthetic, architectural, conservationist lobby with an excellent eye for vandalism liable to be perpetrated at short notice in the name of martyred kings or any other excuse.<sup>12</sup> In so doing, the economic interests of the civic-minded received their reward in due time. Outings to houses could be educational in more ways than one.

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Whatever the limits of Hay's ultimate success, he showed himself a master of publicity when first moving the idea of the Club under the public eye. The London *Athenaeum*, then the best British journalistic (weekly) source of literary data, noted on 7 December 1907:<sup>13</sup>

A preliminary meeting of gentlemen interested in the formation of a society for gathering and preserving in a permanent form the lore of Old Edinburgh, written, oral and traditional, was held in John Knox's House, High Street, Edinburgh, on Tuesday night.

Mr William J. Hay explained the objects of the society, and a committee was formed.

More detailed reports had appeared on 4 December in the *Scotsman*, the *Glasgow Herald*, the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, and at least one other newspaper. It might be wondered whether Hay had summoned a public meeting or a press conference: in fact only the *Scotsman* had a reporter present. But the other reports, while tolerably long (the *Glasgow Herald* outdistancing the rest at over 400 words), included identical wording in almost all their summaries of Hay's opening speech: we infer that Hay supplied the *Scotsman's* rivals with a press release in advance, and that it carried the words 'A committee was appointed to meet again and draw up rules for the club', regardless of itself being prepared and issued before the meeting. When it came to publicity there was nothing 'Old' about the methods by which the Old Edinburgh Club was brought to birth.

The first pay-off was that the name of John Knox's House would be carried by the daily press and the leading London literary weekly in a scholarly but contemporary context (fig. 3). And that would seem to have been that, at one blow. Any future protests against the Knoxian nomenclature were relegated to antiquarian obscurity. The Club had fulfilled its founder's leading object before it had even been founded. Ironically, Hay's unease regarding scholarly activity on Edinburgh architectural history reflected itself in the prominence his press release had given to oral evidence and its preservation, a vital matter indeed, but not one that became a priority in the Club itself. The *Dispatch* actually captioned its story 'Preservation of Old Edinburgh's Folklore – Proposed Society', and led:

In John Knox's House, Edinburgh, last night, a proposal completely in harmony with its surroundings was mooted. The proposal was for the formation of a society for gathering and preserving in permanent form the lore of Old Edinburgh and its haunts and folk traditions.

The last 17 words appeared in all stories save the *Scotsman*, whose reporter showed his independence with 'a society for the ingathering and preserving in some permanent form the lore of Old Edinburgh, its traditions, folk and buildings'. His printer let him



Fig. 3. Moubray House before McLeod's (formerly Knox's) Temperance Hotel was sold to make way for Hay's Arts and Crafts. Photograph by F. M. Chrystal from Robert T. Skinner, *From the Castle to Holyrood, 'The Royal Mile'* (Edinburgh 1920).

down, though, by rendering Hay's society for 'the preservation of information regarding Edinburgh life in pre-railway days' as a society 'to preserve material in regard to Edinburgh in pro-railway days' (fig. 4). We may blame a gremlin, or a capitalist conspiracy, as we choose.

The best printed record of the objects as outlined by Hay is, therefore, that press release written before the meeting whose fullest text was in the *Glasgow Herald*:<sup>14</sup>

#### PROPOSED REEKIANA CLUB

A preliminary meeting of gentlemen interested in the forming of a society for the gathering and preserving in permanent form the lore of Old Edinburgh, its haunts and folk traditions, was held in John

Knox's House, High Street, Edinburgh, last night. A letter was read from Lord Rosebery sympathising with the aims of the proposed club, but objecting to the name 'Reekiana'. Mr Hay in his statement said that during the five and a half years he had been in business at John Knox's House he had felt the growing necessity of having some authentic source of information in local matters to which ready reference could be made and this had been the experience of all the students of local history. Questions were continually being asked, as, for instance, when the gate of the White House was taken down, or the position of the White House in White House Loan. After research the date of 1786 was found in Alison Hay Dunlop's 'Anent Old Edinburgh', recording the demolition of the White House gate. Further research over local periodicals of that date did not furnish any proof of this. Now, such a club as this should be able to verify all data. The records of craftsmen and merchants were lying in private hands, and from these extracts might be made. They wanted first hand impressions regarding the fleeting past from old people as well. The Burgh Records Society and the Scottish History Society were good examples of how the work should be done. A committee was appointed to meet again and draw up rules for the club. Monthly meetings from October to May, with a half-guinea subscription, were suggested, and the publication in transactions or volumes, under an Editorial Committee, of any matter worthy of preservation. One member suggested that Lord Guthrie might make a good honorary president, as he was greatly interested in local antiquities. Mr Carbarns, Mr Alan Reid, Mr Adam Smaill, Mr R. Cochrane, and others expressed their views on the matter. Lord Kingsburgh; Mr William Mitchell, secretary of the Cockburn Society; and Mr Bruce Home, author of an illustrated work on Old Edinburgh, were said to be in sympathy with their aims. Mr Hay intimated that he had a store of MSS. of Old Edinburgh, which he could place at the service of the society.

The *Herald* 'report' makes it clear that Hay had orchestrated the meeting impressively in advance, with a number of persons given parts to play in supposedly spontaneous speeches from the floor.

Minutes were taken by Adam Smail which tell a somewhat different story, necessarily more authentic than either the press release in the *Herald* or the mechanical reportage in the *Scotsman*:<sup>15</sup>

John Knox's House,  
Edinburgh, December 3 1907

A meeting was held here this evening at 8 o'clock of gentlemen interested in formation of a Reekiana Club for the preservation of the Old Edinburgh lore in some permanent form. Present Messrs J. A. Barrie, Hugh Carbarns, Robert Cochrane, Andrew Edie, W. J. Hay, John W. Stewart, J. S. Kay, Junr., L. A. MacRitchie, A. P. Profit, Alan Reid, J. C. Robbie, A. W. Sinclair and Adam Smail. A reporter from the *Scotsman* was also present.

On the motion of Mr Alan Reid, Mr W. J. Hay was asked to preside and Mr Smail was elected interim secretary.

Mr Hay explained his reason for calling this meeting and



Fig. 4. The Old Town as William Hay remembered it from his youth. Photograph by A. Burns from R. M. Ballantyne, *Photographs of Edinburgh* (Glasgow [1868?]).

thanked those who had responded to his invitation. Apologies for absence were intimated from the Lord Provost, Lord Rosebery, Lord Guthrie, Messrs J. S. Barbour, Rev. K. M. Berry, P. A. Blair, D. S. Cormack, William Cowan, Parish Councillor Fisher, Bruce J. Home, J. H. Macgregor, William Mitchell S.S.C., Andrew E. Murray W.S., James Oliver, Kenneth Sanderson W.S., James Sinton.

Mr Hay stated that he had felt the growing necessity for a Society having for its object the preservation of information regarding life in the pre-railway days. Many changes had been effected since then, buildings had disappeared and traditions were vanishing. Lord Rosebery had written to him advising that before starting a new Society his lordship 'would suggest that you confer with the Scottish History Society so as to make sure that there will be no overlapping ... I confess the name 'Reekiana' Club does not commend itself to me, but that, of course, is a matter of detail.' To this letter Mr Hay has replied stating that any overlapping of the work of existing Societies he would do all in his power to prevent and he saw no difficulty in the Councils of these Societies conferring together regarding the matter. With reference to the name of the Society he believed that Sir Walter Scott coined the term 'Reekiana' to describe a contemplated work on the minor antiquities of Edinburgh but relinquished it in favour of Robert

Chambers, who issued a volume in 1833 under this title, which formed a precedent for our proposed name.

Hay, as we shall see, had good reasons to keep the offensive 'Reekiana' in prospect: in fact Walter Scott may merely have used it as an amusing private working title, much as his friend Byron liked to call his own *Don Juan* 'Donny Johnny'.<sup>16</sup>

A large amount of material exists either unprinted or which has appeared only in an ephemeral form in newspapers and elsewhere. The Trades and Guilds Incorporation records and the Town Council Minutes between 1589 and ['1877' deleted] 1875 are only accessible in manuscript. Broadly speaking, therefore, the scope of this Club we are proposing to form will be that of collecting material which has as its first appeal the perfecting of our local knowledge.

In the course of his remarks, Mr Hay gave several examples of the inaccuracy of writers on Edinburgh and of the trouble thus entailed on private individuals in search of reliable information. These defects, he hoped, the Club would be able to remedy.

Mr Hay then asked for remarks on the subject and Messrs Smail, Cochrane, Alan Reid and Profit all concurred in their opinion as to the value of the proposed society.

Mr Profit objected to the word Club as it has become associated with institutions far removed from our aim.

Profit had not been one of the names prematurely credited by the press release with constructive contribution to the ensuing discussion, although the *Scotsman*, being actually present, dutifully noted him among the floor speakers without indicating the nature of his or their comments: it made him 'Proffit', admittedly. Mr Profit was undoubtedly interested. He was the only one of the group who would attend all five of the preliminary meetings without being given a place on the subsequently formed Club's Council. He would notwithstanding be the first person on the list of members (Hay being second and Smail third).<sup>17</sup> His objection to the word 'Club' may have been kin to Groucho Marx's subsequent insistence that he would refuse to join any Club that would have him, and also kin to the fox who found grapes out of his reach sour. Mr Profit was in trade: so, of course, was William Hay, but trade of so scholarly a kind as to win him friends, or at least acquaintances, among the inhabitants of Clubland. Mr Profit, builder and sanitary engineer, had no such professional enhancement. Whatever its ambitions, the Old Edinburgh Club had started from the depths.<sup>18</sup>

Undeterred by considerations of Profit, Mr Reid said his piece as planned, followed by his fellow choristers:

Mr Reid suggested that the title might be the Auld Reekie Club and its publications 'Reekiana' [Mr Profit at least had made no claims on that subject].

Mr Carbarns then moved that an Association be formed to carry out the ideas expressed by the Chairman and others. Mr Reid seconded the motion and there being no counter-motion the Chairman called for a show of hands and the motion was carried unanimously.

After some further conversation on the subject the meeting was resolved into a provisional Committee to draft a Constitution which would be submitted to prospective members for consideration, Mr Hay to act as Convener.

The meeting was therefore adjourned to meet at a date to be afterwards fixed for the purpose of dealing with these matters and anything bearing on the objects of the Club.

Adam Smail, interim Secretary.

And so began the public gestation of the Old Edinburgh Club. Smail can hardly be blamed for

omitting the fact that Cochrane and himself had produced the supportive floor remarks as pre-reported: it was the presumably unanticipated intervention of Profit against a Club that needed a minuted allusion, since its omission could well mean a demand for its insertion at next meeting and its inclusion now might make it easier to have it subsequently and silently dropped, as indeed happened with no further mention. The name of the Club rather than the fact of the Club became the focal point of controversy, and from Lord Rosebery's support qualified by objection to the proposed name being noted in the newspapers not represented, it seems likely that the publicity-adept Hay (or Smail) had realised Rosebery's characteristic sensitivity was better proof of his interest than the mere courteous apology for absence implied by the *Scotsman* would have been. It was also shrewd not to capitulate over 'Reekiana' at the preliminary meeting: it kept Rosebery in play, and ensured that Hay's inevitable surrender, at the next meeting, made a greater gesture, thereby implicating Rosebery to a greater degree.

The meeting of 18 December 1907 resolved on the name 'Old Edinburgh Club', its other business being discussion of a draft Constitution, suitably amended from the floor and promised a further outing, which duly followed on 11 January 1908.<sup>19</sup> Further discussion ensued on that occasion, the main amendment adopted being for the Club Council to be increased to nine members in number (twelve by the inaugural meeting), three to retire each year with the option of a further year if re-elected. The Constitution ratified by the inaugural meeting made this 'Four members of Council shall retire annually in rotation, and not be eligible for re-election for one year'. Hay's views on this are unknown, but the floor's preemptive strike against a self-perpetuating oligarchy ensured he would not dominate it beyond the paediatric stage (in the event he would be elected to Council for the minimum term, possibly by his wish, possibly not). The Constitution was then adopted, subject to the wishes of the inaugural meeting.

The next Provisional Committee meeting, on 16 January, read and (with slight alterations) approved Hay's draft circular letter which he presented at printer's proof stage. The circular itself when published was dated four days later, and was headed with the City's coat of arms (fig. 5):<sup>20</sup>



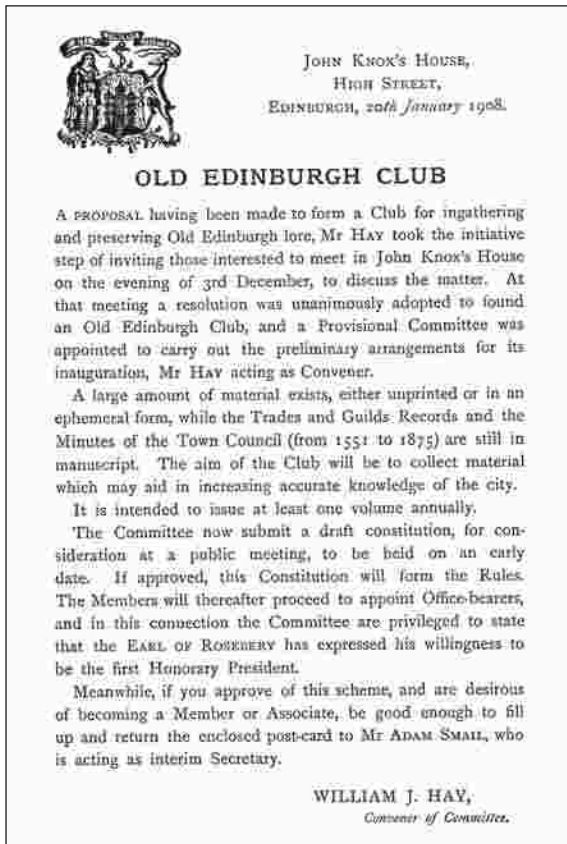


Fig. 5. Hay informs the world of the Club, and the Club of Rosebery. The circular of 20 January 1908.

JOHN KNOX'S HOUSE,  
HIGH STREET,  
EDINBURGH, 20th January 1908.

#### OLD EDINBURGH CLUB

A proposal having been made to form a Club for ingathering and preserving Old Edinburgh lore, Mr Hay took the initiative step of inviting those interested to meet in John Knox's House on the evening of 3rd December, to discuss the matter. At that meeting a resolution was unanimously adopted to found an Old Edinburgh Club, and a Provisional Committee was appointed to carry out the preliminary arrangements for its inauguration, Mr Hay acting as Convener.

A large amount of material exists, either unprinted or in an ephemeral form, while the Trades and Guilds records and the Minutes of the Town Council (from 1551 to 1875) are still in manuscript. The aim of the Club will be to collect material which

may aid in increasing accurate knowledge of the city.

It is intended to issue at least one volume annually.

The Committee now submit a draft constitution, for consideration at a public meeting, to be held on an early date. If approved, this Constitution will form the Rules. The Members will thereafter proceed to appoint Office-bearers, and in this connection the Committee are privileged to state that the EARL of ROSEBERY has expressed his willingness to be the first Honorary President.

Meanwhile, if you approve of this scheme, and are desirous of becoming a Member or Associate, be good enough to fill up and return the enclosed post-card to Mr ADAM SMAIL, who is acting as interim Secretary.

WILLIAM J. HAY,  
Convener of Committee.

20 January 1908 fell on Monday, which explains the interval between proof and publication dates, Hay (or Smail) being unable to return proof till after the Friday evening meeting. The decision to publish a volume a year may have been concluded at proof stage. But the information that Rosebery was agreeable to being the first 'Honorary President' was certainly assimilated no earlier than proof stage. The Constitution bore no mention of an Honorary President, nor when ratified would it do so for the next eighty years. It must, therefore, have arisen between the Constitution's adoption by the Provisional Committee and the proof of circular, unless Hay, with or without Smail, had altered the circular after committee acceptance.

Smail on 16 January produced the depressing news that he had offered the (non-Honorary) Presidency to John Harrison, the City Treasurer, who had given no answer as yet. He would refuse it before the next Provisional Committee meeting, on 27 January. Harrison may well have felt the offer raised a conflict of interest, that the Provisional Committee should have realised that, and that possibly they had and hoped to make the most of it. Presumably the President would preside at the inaugural meeting. In evident despair of Harrison, the Provisional Committee meeting on 16 January had resolved to ask Lord Guthrie to chair the inaugural. Guthrie had been mentioned from the floor for the Honorary Presidency at the first Provisional Committee meeting and might have some such title should he preside. Guthrie was after all committed to championing the authenticity of John Knox's House as receptacle of the last breath of the great Reformer,

which (as nobody was saying) was the basic reason for the proposed Club's existence. He had sent regrets for absence from the first Provisional Committee meeting, but those might have been genuine rather than diplomatic. In fact, Guthrie on the bench was less likely to revisit the scholarly and pious controversies of his extra-mural but nonetheless potentially profitable days when at the bar. He would not join the Club till 1910, having waited long enough to see how successfully the cat might jump. The Provisional Committee on 16 January, losing sight of Guthrie's immediate relevance, had decreed that failing Guthrie's presence for their inaugural, his fellow judges Lords Ardwell and Kingsburgh should be asked, in that order.<sup>21</sup> Smail's minute of the meeting concluded with a revealing obscurity: 'An informal talk then took place with reference to the parties most suitable to fill the various offices, and a number of likely names were suggested'. Presumably the office of President exercised minds and chins, and with Harrison blocking the way, an Honorary Presidency may have been mooted.

The likeliest name of all was certainly Rosebery's, and with the Club's deference to him in the matter of Reekiana, a deputation may have been deemed advisable. He would not have the time to accept the Presidency, as he would have told them, if asked. Rosebery was then at outs with his own Liberal party, but particularly with its Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman (1836–1908), now dying, and absent from duty with a heart attack since 13 November 1907. His successor would probably be (and was) H. H. Asquith (1852–1928), a former Rosebery disciple. But an Honorary Presidency would need no more than an occasional descent from Olympus. At the same time Rosebery's name would open many doors. Activity on 17 January must have been heavy, for on Saturday 18 January the *Weekly Scotsman* and the *Glasgow Herald* announced Rosebery as Honorary President of the Club-to-be, while Professor John Chiene, survivor from the days when Edinburgh had the most illustrious medical school in the world, was 'also willing to take office'. Given Lord Guthrie's and Treasurer Harrison's delays the office could not be specified, but there could only be one, and the proximity and narrowness in time suggest that directly or indirectly Rosebery or

a friend of his suggested and perhaps invited Chiene to accept the actual Presidency. It also seems likely that the recent Scottish invention of the telephone was pressed into service to win the appropriate refusals and acceptances, however crudely modern it must have appeared to dedicated custodians of Edinburgh antiquity.

The telephone must also account for the circular's use of the city arms, whose annexation without permission would have brought the wrath of the City Fathers and the Lord Lyon King of Arms Sir James Balfour Paul (1846–1931) jointly and severally down on the Club's unbaptised head, with fatal consequences. Far the most likely explanation for so many doors flying open must be Rosebery's goodwill, prevailing on the future MP Sir James Puckering Gibson, Bart, now the Liberal Lord Provost (1906–09), the Lyon who enjoyed Rosebery's hospitality, and the local bureaucrats agreeably deferring to the Honorary President-in-waiting.<sup>22</sup>

The Club, named in conformity with Rosebery's prohibitions, told the *Herald* (which seems directly involved this time), that in addition to the Trades Records, Guilds Records and Town Council Minutes 'pointed out ... some time ago [when] we chronicled the advent of an Old Edinburgh Club':<sup>23</sup>

there are many other by-ways of usefulness suggested, such as gleaning traditions and recollections from old inhabitants, or from documents existing in ancient families which, it was felt, would not be trenching upon the ground occupied with such ability and usefulness by the Scottish History Society, Scottish Text Society, and Scottish Record Society. Many influential people have been appealed to, not in vain, in particular Lord Rosebery ...

The *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* (then stable-mate of the *Scotsman*) responded on 22 January to the circular, with its intimation of Rosebery's 'willingness to be the first honorary president of the club'. None of these reports had a date for the first public meeting but all faithfully mentioned 'its headquarters, fittingly enough, John Knox's House', as the *Weekly Scotsman* phrased it.

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Rosebery's name accounted for these and subsequent blasts of publicity, probably including the first

notices, but once Harrison had been hastened to his candidacy's end, and Guthrie quietly dropped, even the *Athenaeum* wanted it known that it had heard of Professor John Chiene CB, FRCSE (1843–1923), a second edition of whose *Looking Back, 1907–1860* (Edinburgh 1908) had just been issued 'containing recollections of friends and associates at Edinburgh University and elsewhere'. This would appear on 1 February 1908, Chiene having duly taken the chair at the Club's inaugural meeting and been elected its President, in that order, on 28 January 1908. On 25 January, a mere week before its notice in the *Athenaeum*, Chiene dated an Appendix to his book, which found it:

very pleasant to note that we are to have an 'Old Edinburgh Club' born in John Knox's House, with Lord Rosebery as our Honorary President ... I do hope that we will have many medico members to keep fresh the old Edinburgh heroes and their canny clubable ways. We need them badly.

Chiene's own profession, the medical, was the extreme height of Edinburgh's intellectual achievement over the previous century and a half,

yet its presence in the Old Edinburgh Club would be spare. Chiene's own branch, the surgical, had many triumphs to show in the theatre (lecture or operating, or both, and well named in all cases), with results in the most learned journals, but Edinburgh pre-eminence in anatomy had been achieved by all too much knowledge of the Old Town, its graveyards, stews, howffs and wynds. Victorian respectability and Edwardian ostentation left few doctors anxious to encourage further researches in the footsteps of Burke (1792–1829) and Hare, not to speak of the late Robert Louis Stevenson's sources for his all too authentic 'The Body Snatcher' (apart from its conclusion where a murdered and long-dissected corpse steals the body-snatching doctors' carriage).

Yet if anyone could have reconciled the surgeons and physicians to the Old Edinburgh Club it should have been Chiene (fig. 6). He was known as 'Honest John', an appendage almost invariably denoting its opposite when bestowed on a lawyer or politician, but a firm accolade for a surgeon, whose honesty is vital. He had been born from parents in trade, the son of an Edinburgh chartered accountant, and learned



Fig. 6. 'Honest John' Chiene in age and youth (the ladies unknown). From John Chiene, *Looking Back, 1907–1860* (Edinburgh 1908).

his surgical trade from such giants as John Goodsir (1814–1867), James Syme (1799–1870), Sir William Turner (1832–1916) and Joseph first Baron Lister (1827–1912). That is to say, he matured in the sunset over the longest-lived branch of the Scottish Enlightenment, and if posterity does not rank him with his teachers, it knows him for one of the best teachers they bred. His charm and humour transformed the teaching of surgery at the University of Edinburgh whose chair he won in 1882 in succession to ‘Dismal Jimmie’ Spence. Chiene served as Surgeon Consultant during the South African War, giving him common ground with Rosebery, who though out of office had backed the war effort in the teeth of his party’s hostility to it. He would retire in 1909, aged 66, and his subsequent years added nothing to his public name. He had something else in common with Rosebery: he was revered by the many young men who learned so much from him.

The last meeting of the Provisional Committee, on finally hearing of Harrison’s refusal of the unborn Club’s Presidency, voted unanimously that Chiene ‘be asked’, its unanimity doubtless strengthened by the knowledge that he had already accepted. Attendance had diminished from meeting to meeting — 13 (plus the *Scotsman* reporter), 12, 9, 9 — and now numbered 7: Hay, Smail, Hugh Carbarns, Lewis A. MacRitchie, Robert Cochrane (who had missed one meeting), A. W. Sinclair (who had missed all save the first), and, of course, Profit. They were widely distributed around old Edinburgh, provided the ‘old’ included the New Town as well as Old. At no point in the nebular stages of the Club’s formation was anyone known to have suggested it should not, although in the early years pedantry occasionally queried the meaning of antiquity. That final meeting on 27 January determined that MacRitchie, 25 East Claremont Street, would be elected Secretary at the launch meeting, with Carbarns, 25 Braidburn Crescent, treasurer. This brought north New Town into conjunction with Morningside, while Chiene, in 26 Charlotte Square, was New Town proper, as well as New Town professional.<sup>24</sup>

Good surgery cannot brook needless hesitation, and Chiene brought proceedings in the Old Council Chamber, City Chambers, into legality on 29 January 1908 by a rapid start, heartfelt thanks at the Club’s

name being what was now stated with no smirch of Reekiana, recitation of its objects and aims, and chairman’s motion (seconded by Hay) that the Club be formed and its constitution approved. The Club’s aims, Chiene pointed out, had been defined in the circular to ‘clear up many of the doubtful historical and other points regarding the city they all loved so well’. He must have delighted Hay by apparently removing one point firmly from the ranks of doubt: ‘As the Club was started in John Knox’s House he thought there was a good future for it. (Applause.)’. Hay, in seconding Chiene’s motion stressed the need to document the memories of persons of longevity still amongst them, which was unlikely to raise further doubts about the House’s authenticity.

Thus the *Scotsman*, on the following morning, 30 January. But the *Evening News* (then still a rival concern), carried a fuller report on the evening of 29 January, the Club having been brought to birth in the afternoon. The *Scotsman* would note apologies from Lord Rosebery and Lord Provost Gibson; but the *News* noted the presence of Sir James Balfour Paul, Lyon King of Arms, thereby justifying the Club’s appropriation of the City Arms. The *News* also quoted Chiene in more informative detail:

I have only one qualification for taking the chair, an intense love of ‘Auld Reekie’. When my friend, Mr Hay, talked about this Old Edinburgh, his first idea was that it should be called the ‘Auld Reekie’ Club, but for very good reasons, it was changed to Old Edinburgh Club; and I have had one or two interesting talks with him, and I am satisfied that when he was fortunate to obtain Lord Rosebery as hon. President, and it was started in John Knox’s House, there is a future for the Club.

So the allusion to the Knox House had been a pleasant softening of Chiene’s revelation that Rosebery’s name had determined his own acceptance.

I have long taken an interest in this grand old town, and I intend to do what I can to make the Club a success. (Applause.) What appeals to me most in connection with the Club is that the work is to be done by a number of committees reporting to a grand central body. There is to be a Ministers Committee, a Lawyers Committee, and a Doctors Committee, and I would dearly like to be the chairman of that committee, because within the last few months it has been my desire to hunt up some of the old Edinburgh doctors. I want to know these gentlemen, and who were the first 14 men that started the Esculapian Club, in 1773, and where they lived. Through the help of Mr Hay and Mr Smail, and a directory of 1775, and Williamson’s Directory of 177[3], I have found where all these old warriors lived.



Probably the failure of the medics to enlist in large numbers put paid to that idea. The Aesculapian Club was founded by Alexander ('Lang Sandy') Wood (1725–1807), amongst others, and at least two of Chiene's contemporaries were notable members, his professorial colleague in Medical Jurisprudence Sir Douglas Maclagan (1812–1900), and the father of Scottish dental education John Smith (1825–1910). Chiene does not seem to have pursued his interests to publication.

I picked up the other day a book called the 'Critical Club'. I never knew before that there was a namesake of my own of the name of Chiene, a printer in Edinburgh, and I think there should be a Printers Committee. The only objection I have heard in regard to this Club is that the work has already been done. That statement I at once meet with a decided negative. There is much needing to be done, and I sincerely trust that this large and influential meeting will set to work and clear up many things about the city we all love so well. I move that the Old Edinburgh Club be formed, and that the draft constitution be adopted.

Hay, in seconding, said that he had received 82 names as members of the society (fig. 7). He might have seemed to lower them to a more mundane level in his detail that there would be Ordinary Members paying ten shillings and six pence (or half a guinea: the professions distinguished themselves from the vulgarity of trade by charging in guineas). But they would also have Associate Members paying two shillings and six pence (half a crown, and thus divisible from the humble pound, not the golden

guinea). In fact the detail was still in the dream. The *Glasgow Herald* picked up his explanation:<sup>25</sup>

There are many people who, we hope, will come to our meetings and give their recollections of old buildings, and old ways, people who very often would not be able to afford ten shillings and six pence but who for a small sum would like to be associated with the club in some form, and be able to say that they went there of right, and not simply as invited guests to be pumped. It is a curious coincidence that the club should be christened on the very spot from which the throb of our modern city life took its rise in the year 1750, when the Royal Exchange took the place of the old buildings. The time is swiftly passing in which we can gather up the reminiscences of those people who can still remember Edinburgh before the days of the railways.

The associates who first subscribed were not in fact all shy but proud paupers awaiting their summons to reminisce. They were headed by D. F. Lowe LLD, Headmaster of Heriot's, until he was shamed into paying the full subscription by being elected to membership of the Club Council at this inaugural meeting, by which stage 70 full members had joined during the preliminaries. The second associate, now renumbered as the first, was A. Francis Steuart, advocate and editor of *The Trial of Mary Queen of Scots* for the Hodge's Notable Scottish Trials (later Notable British Trials) series. Since associate membership deprived him of the annual *Book of the Club*, and he may well have had more books in his home at 79 Great King Street than was convenient, his reason may not have been merely economic: but he remained an associate member,

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby agree to become\* a Member of the  
an Associate of the  
**OLD EDINBURGH CLUB.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\* Please delete the words not required.

**OLD EDINBURGH CLUB**

JOHN KNOX'S HOUSE, HIGH STREET,  
EDINBURGH, January 1908.

DEAR SIR,

I beg to inform you that your Subscription for the current year is now due. Payment may be made to me at the above address.

Yours faithfully,

Subscription 10/6

*H. Carbars*  
Hed. Treasurer.

Fig. 7. Application form for Club membership, with the demand for subscription it would prompt, addressed from John Knox's House.

albeit briefly. Several more of the 14 pre-inaugural associates became members at the meeting, all of them with addresses of repute: James H. Jameson of 54 Bruntsfield Gardens; Bailie D. D. Martin of 27 Wester Coates Avenue; the Rev. John Kerr MA of the Manse, Dirleton; the Rev. W. Burnett BD of Restalrig Manse, Lismore Crescent. This left nine pre-inaugural associates signed up by Smail, and six more seem to have joined at the meeting itself or shortly thereafter.

Associate membership seems to have been dropped at the close of the Great War. At preceding count six remained, four from the inaugural, one from the second year, and one pre-inaugural who was, in fact, the great Professor Patrick Geddes of the Outlook Tower on Castlehill. There is an irony in Geddes's place as the most illustrious of the doomed associates. Their passing would seem to have disposed of Hay's hopes of oral history projects. The post-Victorian intelligentsia worried about folklore being fundamentally obscene, and one could not be sure where half-crown members might take their audience once on their legs. There were ladies among the members (including half a dozen of the associates, one pre-inaugural, which significantly tells us that the Club from the first raised no question of gender exclusion, unlike other such bodies). Rosebery opposed the category of associate membership once he came to preside in person, and he had good reason to discourage oral reminiscences. It was Geddes's fate to have been in so many things a true prophet without honour in his own country, and his place in Hay's lost ideal of folk experience preservation is grimly apposite.

The motion to form the Club was adopted. The Old Edinburgh Club was born. Chiene was promptly rewarded for his obstetrical achievement by the legitimisation of his chairmanship in election to the Presidency, followed by that of Andrew Murray WS (Murray, Beith and Murray WS) of the Cockburn Association as Vice-President, firmly fastening that vital link. Harrison the City Treasurer followed him, being ready to accept an empty office once the City Chambers, the Lord Lyon and the Lord Provost sanctified it (the Lord Provost was Murray's law partner).<sup>26</sup> J. B. Sutherland SSC (Beveridge, Sutherland and Smith SSC) became the third Vice-President, doubtless to inspire future legal

membership and actually to presage the Club's future harbour for solicitors but not for advocates.

But it seems that before this *troika* was sped on its idle way, the Club had initially made its choices for offices unmentioned in the Constitution (fig. 8). Alas the formula by which Chiene legalised the embodiment of the invisible has not come down to us, but with the oratorical skills he had so far displayed we need not doubt the felicity he showed in justifying Rosebery's elevation to so cloudy a kingdom. The meeting was certainly ready tacitly to recognise that if it had not been for the absentee ex-premier their Club might never have existed, or if existing, would have squealed its origin into far less glittering gynaecological delivery room and attendants. Rosebery's written agreement to serve as

Old Edinburgh Club	
1908	
<i>Honorary Patrons</i>	
THE LORD PROVOST, MAGISTRATES, AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EDINBURGH.	
<i>Honorary President</i>	
THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF ROSEBERY, K.G., K.T.	
<i>Honorary Vice-Presidents</i>	
The Right Hon. THE LORD PROVOST OF EDINBURGH. SIR THOMAS D. GIBSON CARMICHAEL, Bart. SIR JAMES BALFOUR PAUL, LL.D., Lyon King of Arms. Professor P. HUME BROWN, LL.D.	
<i>President</i>	
Professor JOHN CHIENE, C.B.	
<i>Vice-Presidents</i>	
JOHN HARRISON, Treasurer of the City of Edinburgh. JAMES B. SUTHERLAND, S.S.C. ANDREW E. MURRAY, W.S.	
<i>Secretary</i>	
LEWIS A. MACRITCHIE, 40 Princes Street.	
<i>Treasurer</i>	
HUGH CARBARN, 25 Braidburn Crescent.	
<i>Council</i>	
HIPPOLYTE J. BLANC, R.S.A., F.R.I.B.A., 25 Rutland Square. WILLIAM J. HAY, John Knox's House. Professor G. BALDWIN BROWN, 50 George Square. WALTER B. BLAIKIE, 11 Thistle Street. ROBERT COCHRANE, 47 Morningside Drive. BRUCE J. HOME, 5 Upper Gray Street. J. CAMERON ROBBIE, 22 York Place. ROBERT T. SKINNER, M.A., Donaldson's Hospital. D. F. LOWE, LL.D., George Heriot's Hospital. JAMES OLIVER, 11 Claremont Terrace. ADAM SMAIL, 35 Lauriston Gardens. THOMAS ROSS, Architect, 14 Saxe-Cobourg Place.	

Fig. 8. Office Bearers and Council of the Club in 1908. From *BOEC*, Original Series 1 (1908).

Honorary President symbolically coupled its absence from the Constitution with his own absence from the meeting by hoping the ‘duties’ were ‘not onerous (Laughter)’. He was followed in his elevation by Honorary Vice-Presidents, who like their less honorary counterparts were to do nothing, but to be something, in this case something more magnificently inactive. The Lord Provost was one, and the Lord Lyon another. The third would certainly never have been chosen but for instructions from Rosebery. Sir Thomas Gibson Carmichael (1859–1926) was undoubtedly eminent and undoubtedly another grandee of local as well as national distinction: he was now Governor of the Australian state of Victoria, and had been MP for Edinburghshire from 1895 to 1900. But his relevance as an honorable absentee was that he had been a devoted disciple of Rosebery for the past quarter-century and beyond. The fourth Honorary Vice-President, like Chiene, symbolised Edinburgh’s pride in being the ‘toun of the college’, far more so than Oxford or Cambridge (though not than Glasgow). Peter Hume Brown MA LLD (1849–1918) was the first Sir William Fraser Professor of Ancient (i.e. Scottish) History and Palaeography (elected 1901), living at 20 Corrennie Gardens, Morningside, completing his *History of Scotland* (1899–1909) and, of course, biographer of John Knox (1895).

For the rest, MacRitchie and Carbarns were duly (and, as would seem in all cases, unanimously) made respective Secretary and Treasurer, the only gilt off their gingerbread being the *Evening News*’s tactless rendition of the latter as ‘Barbarns’. The more active members of the Club would inevitably be names less notable than the honorary. The Council elected showed a comparable mix of leaders and workers. Carbarns described himself as ‘writer’, but no list of Writers to the Signet or comparable bodies legal or financial included him in 1908, so in default of other evidence we may take him for a clerk with a reputation for probity and accuracy. MacRitchie, while living in 25 East Claremont Street with a Mrs MacRitchie (hence presumably mother, wife, daughter in law or sister in law) and a J. W. MacRitchie (son, brother, father or kinsman), had a business address at 40 Princes Street which he gave out for Club business. The premises were in fact used by three firms, two being Sun Insurance, the third Messrs Kirk, Mackie

and Elliot SSC. A firm of solicitors might find it useful to have their address receiving communications from a range of townsfolk. An insurance broker might not, unless MacRitchie could have been made to enclose insurance blandishments, which the Club would hardly have tolerated. And the presence of Councillor S. D. Elliot, of the aforesaid Kirk, Mackie and Elliot, at the inaugural meeting was reported in both *News* and *Scotsman*.<sup>27</sup>

The Club Council itself reached intellectual heights with Gerard Baldwin Brown of 50 George Square, first Professor of Fine Art at the University. Among his other services he had chaired the committee to complete the dome on Old College, thus ending a century’s work, and in so doing revealed his aesthetic credentials by consulting the artist Walter Crane, then engaged in illustrating Oscar Wilde’s *The Happy Prince* (1888), to whose eponymous hero the Golden Boy on the dome (Youth passing on the Torch of Knowledge) showed a marked kindred, apart from Old College Youth’s nudity.<sup>28</sup> The Club also proudly elected the Headmaster of Heriot’s, Dr D. F. Lowe (who exemplified his regard for Edinburgh antiquity by signing himself from Heriot’s Hospital). There was Hippolyte J. Blanc RSA FRIBA (1844–1917), contributor of a major paper on Heriot’s to the *Transactions* of the Edinburgh Architectural Association in 1892, residing at 25 Rutland Square, who had designed the panels at the north-east of John Knox’s House (‘fluted Doric pilasters with rosettes at the entablature’), a clear Hay choice if ever there was one.<sup>29</sup> Blanc had a great though controversial name by now, having been denounced for excessive neo-Palladianism, not to say rank Popery (he was Protestant) particularly for his fresco of Leonardo da Vinci’s Last Supper in St Cuthbert’s Church (da Vinci was a Roman Catholic, as readers of recent best-sellers may need reminding).

Also on Council was Robert T. Skinner FRSE (1867–1946), House Governor of Donaldson’s Hospital, specialising in the teaching of deaf children in West Coates, west New Town, a distinguished Edinburgh topographer with probably the closest links to Edinburgh’s working class of all the office-bearers (when coal miners were rescued from ten days in a sealed mine, Skinner proudly hailed one of them as a former ‘hearing’ boy at Donaldson’s).<sup>30</sup> At the celebrations of his twenty-fifth year in office,

in 1924, he would quote Rosebery (not present but a visitor to Donaldson's in times past) from a prize-giving speech in 1914 at faraway Epsom school: he clearly was a votary of the Rosebery cult.<sup>31</sup> There was his fellow topographer Robert Cochrane, of 47 Morningside Drive, future author of *Pentland Walks* (Edinburgh 1920) and of *Edinburgh Castle, the Royal Mile and Holyrood* (Edinburgh n.d.) which would cautiously limit itself to noting Guthrie in favour of Knox occupying 'his' house, R. Miller against, but that 'it has been called the only perfect example of Domestic pre-Reformation architecture. It may be seen daily from 10 to 4, admission sixpence.' Other Club office-bearers would show equal caution, though initially not Skinner: 'Knox died here on 24th November 1572, and the funeral procession started from the house.'<sup>32</sup> Skinner was but a forty year old and evidence of subsequent achievement suggests that the OEC had a pulling power among youth. J. Cameron Robbie of the Council (and 22 York Place) was nearly twenty years away from completion of his most substantial work, the *Chronicle of the Royal Burgess Golfing Society of Edinburgh, 1735–1935* (Edinburgh 1936) whose publication carried what would prove to be a rarity of a frontispiece of King Edward VIII, captain for 1936 (and never again). Rosebery would be the Royal Burgess's guest of honour in its 1910 celebrations, but had opened its new clubhouse and been made an honorary member in 1897: as far as performance went he would also have been an honorary player.

Thomas Ross, of 14 Saxe-Cobourgh Place, the architect whose Club subscription and Council service would prove so useful an investment for his firm, had been born in 1839. He and his partner David MacGibbon had already shown themselves formidable architectural historians of Scotland from the twelfth to the eighteenth centuries from castellated (1887–92) to ecclesiastical (1896) structures. He would be on the team of the National Architectural Survey of Scotland whose volumes appeared from 1921 to 1932. James Oliver, of 28 Queen Street, was a young solicitor apparently still living with his parents in 11 Claremont Terrace, but his proposers had known their business, as was shown when the meeting electing them all was closed by a welcome to the Club from Oliver on behalf of the Edinburgh Photographic Association, of which he

was Secretary. Appropriately he was followed by a welcome from Andrew Murray, from the Cockburn Association. Bruce J. Home (1830–1912), of 5 Upper Gray Street, Newington, might be felt to symbolise the older arts of cartography and lithography, having been working on the remaining old houses of Edinburgh since 1902, with provisional lists in 1905 and 1907, and what would prove the OEC's first major achievement, Home's 'Map showing the Old Houses remaining in the High Street & the Canongate of Edinburgh', executed in March 1908 and published with the Club's first volume. The accompanying text simply listed Knox's House as Knox's House.<sup>33</sup> He also produced in 1905–07 a splendid folio volume of drawings of *Old Houses of Edinburgh*, many dating from the 1880s and 1890s, with the proud claim on the title page that it was 'published at John Knox's House by William J. Hay': the letterpress here claims that 'there is very strong ground for the belief' that Knox died there. Walter B. Blaikie we meet later: suffice it to say that he had shown himself a skilled historian of primary sources on Bonnie Prince Charlie and the '45, to the gratification of the Scottish History Society, who published his work, and of its President, Rosebery. But the other Council member elected, the outgoing temporary Secretary Adam Smail, 35 Lauriston Gardens, had made his contribution there also: his *Side Lights on the 'Forty-five and its Heroes* (Edinburgh 1903, published by William J. Hay, John Knox's House) was a modest but useful collection of relevant documents, if anything Hanoverian in sympathy, and he was following this up by pursuit of two of the most *outré* objects of the neo-Jacobite cult, the Sobieski Stuarts. Smail invites us to pause for a moment before he vanishes: he may have been absolutely pivotal in his partnership with Hay to found the Club. It is possible that his was the needful attention to nuts and bolts which made possible the edifice arising in the dreams of Hay.

At least Hay and Smail had common ground with Rosebery in one respect: the Scottish History Society (SHS), against overlap with which the Society's noble President had warned them. By 1910–11 the Scottish History Society's membership lists included Hay and Smail as well as Lowe: Sutherland, Hume Brown and Blaikie were on the Society's Council. The SHS had 401 members at that point; the OEC



had limited itself to 300. They had about 48 members in common, which is to say one sixth of the Club, one eighth of the Society. Apart from the common Council members Messrs Ralph Richardson WS, of the Town Council Office, 2 Parliament Square, and Charles S. Romanes CA, of 3 Abbotsford Crescent, were SHS Council members and foundation members of the OEC. Richardson in particular would seem a recruit to both bodies probably intending vigilance for the interests of his employers. But by that point the entire first OEC Council had demitted office (like the United States Senate, in instalments of one third, save that most US Senators seek re-election and the Club wanted an interval). The first year concluded with Chiene demitting office as President, to become Vice-President, ousting Treasurer Harrison. Blaikie replaced Chiene, and Blanc became Vice-President in succession to Andrew Murray. Hay and Baldwin Brown demitted membership of Council. But they are unlikely to have regretted their Council membership. Chiene entertained the Council, with or without its Vice-Presidents, ordinary or honorary, in March 1908. MacRitchie despatched standard printed notices calling a Council meeting, addressed from John Knox's House, but crossing out 'here' as place of meeting and substituting Chiene's residence in Charlotte Square.<sup>34</sup> The time of the meeting was 8.30 pm as usual, but under the heading 'BUSINESS' was an equilateral triangle, whose left side had 'Pipes' superscribed, its right side 'Coffee', its base 'Tobacco' and its interior 'The Cratur' — 'R.S.V.P. to Prof Chiene, 26 Charlotte Sq.' (fig. 9). It is gratifying to deduce, from the use of the word 'cratur', that the all too frequently neglected Gaelic antecedents of Edinburgh speech were honoured in the Old Edinburgh Club Council.

But before taking leave of the foundation of the Old Edinburgh Club we must take some account of the curious incident of the Glasgow precedent. It is, in fact, analogous to that other curious incident, the one diagnosed by Sherlock Holmes in the Edinburgh author A. Conan Doyle's 'Silver Blaze', first case in *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, the curious incident of the dog in the night-time. The dog did nothing in the night-time: that was the curious incident. Therefore the race-horse Silver Blaze was taken from the stable by someone the dog knew.

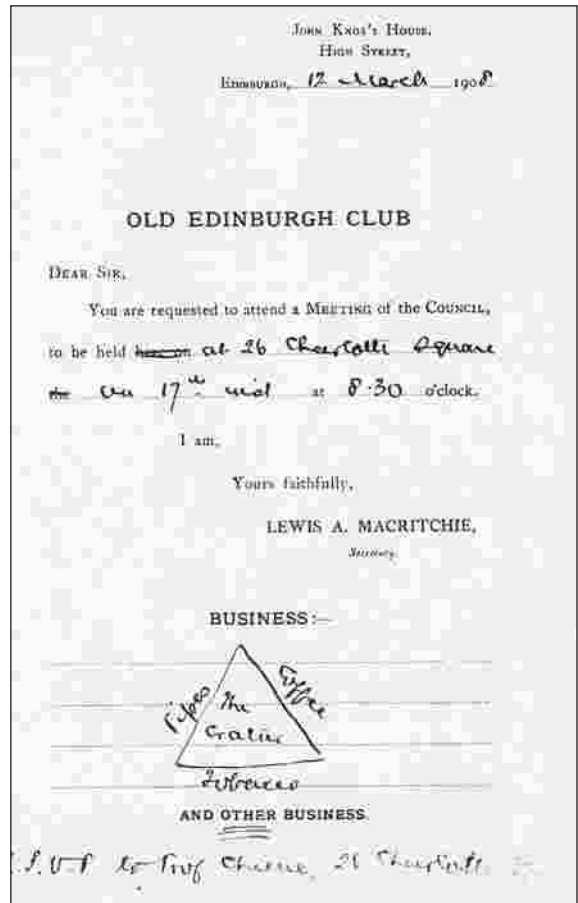


Fig. 9. Chiene humanises Old Edinburgh Club Council meetings.

The Old Glasgow Club had been founded in 1900 following an 'intimation' in the *Glasgow Evening Citizen* on 2 July 1900, headed 'Old Glasgow Club Wanted' and stating:

Sir, will you allow me, to express what I have often felt as a want in our city, that is a club or society of citizens who have reached the age of 60 years, who might associate themselves in some corporate capacity. Such an association could meet and discuss municipal, and other questions, exchange notes and opinions, on social and commercial life, hear reminiscences, all bearing on the past history of Glasgow. I am quite sure there are many who would take an interest in such a society, as a source of information, worthy of permanent record for future historians.

William Liddell

The signatory was a 73-year-old retired shipbroker, born in 1827. The first point to note: the Old Glasgow Club was conceived, and apparently named, with the

emphasis on the first word. It was to be an 'Old' club in all senses, playing the part now played by 'PROBUS' organisations, although with more of a sense of its potential value to posterity as well as to its members. It was to have the oral history concomitant for which Hay would later contrive in vain, and some of the results over the next hundred years survive, whether professional Glasgow historians have utilised them thoroughly or no. Initially letters flowed back to Liddell (was Hay's first gathering of potentially interested parties in summer 1907 entirely composed of appropriate acquaintances or had he published some comparable letter?).

One who replied let them use his office for a first gathering, on Friday 9 November 1900, which decided on an inaugural meeting on Monday 17 December. A variety of persons were invited, by missive dated 12 December 1900, to attend that meeting, to take place in the Athenaeum, St George's Place, at 8.00 pm, when the Club was formed, and with typical Glasgow pragmatism and impatience with ceremonial, got down to business at once with a paper from Charles Taylor on 'The Passing of Old Glasgow', presumably with comparable reflections to those later uttered by Hay in the preliminaries to the birth of his Edinburgh brainchild. A President was chosen: like Chiene a doctor, but one with much more modest credentials, Dr James Erskine MA MB. He served until 1905, and his successors were for the most part Justices of the Peace but seldom higher. Charles Taylor agreed to be the first Secretary, serving till 1903. William Liddell was Vice-President from 1901 to 1906, which shows Glasgow's Old Club considerably more appreciative of its founder than Edinburgh's would be. Liddell was then made a life member, dying in 1908, the very year his Club's ungrateful emulator was born. Liddell was in fact asked to become Honorary President and refused, whence the practice developed of asking the Lord Provost, beginning with Sir Samuel Chisholm and followed by 26 successive Lord Provosts. Glasgow being Glasgow preferred accessibility and familiarity for its meeting places, and one favoured haunt was the Saracen's Head (better known in Glasgow as 'the Sarry Heid' and in Edinburgh, unfortunately, as 'the Sorry Head').

A Constitution was apparently accepted within weeks of the first meeting, a committee was elected,

and a syllabus of monthly meetings set out. Membership was forty by the end of May 1901, and when the Old Edinburgh Club began the Old Glasgow Club had a library of 109 titles, including some pictures. In 1908, too, ladies were permitted to join the Old Glasgow Club for the first time. This looks like a case of Glasgow quickly following an Edinburgh precedent, but with reciprocal refusal to breathe a word of acknowledgement for the inspiration. The *Transactions* began to appear in 1904: for once in its life Edinburgh showed itself less pretentious than Glasgow in opting for the simpler yet prouder 'Book'. If so, it was probably the last such reversal of roles. The Old Glasgow Club duly celebrated its centenary in 1900, publishing brief histories of itself in 1975 and 2000.<sup>35</sup>

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It was not until the First Annual Meeting of the Old Edinburgh Club that Rosebery, the magnetic force drawing the founders together, entered the machine visibly:<sup>36</sup>

The First Annual Meeting of the Club was held in the Old Council Room, City Chambers, on the afternoon of Friday, 29th January 1909, at 4 o'clock.

The Right Honourable the EARL OF ROSEBERY, K.G., K.T., Honorary President of the Club, presided. There was a large attendance of ladies and gentlemen.

Before Rosebery commences his duties, the present writer has a story to tell.

It is a third of a century since I lectured to an evening class in East Lothian, about Irish Home Rule, and question time produced an old gentleman remembering an Edinburgh meeting, Home Rule politicians there, but not a Home Rule meeting — a rally for Volunteers early in the Great War. Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith gave a good speech. It was in the Usher Hall (the more memorable since very recently built). The date (I learned later) was 18 September 1914. The old man had been brought by his father, he being still a boy. He was an old man, but as he continued, he grew younger. For he had now reached what he really wanted to tell us. It had been seen that Lord Rosebery was in the hall, and calls for him came from all parts of the audience (fig. 10). His protests were overborne (the old man's



Fig. 10. F. Carruthers Gould views Rosebery replacing Gladstone as Prime Minister, *Picture Politics*, 15 March 1894.

vocabulary was recharging from memories of the next day's newspaper reports, evidently eagerly devoured). Rosebery spoke from where he was (the old man made it sound like a box, but it was in the front of the Grand Tier or Dress Circle, the first and perhaps the only time the Usher Hall has been commanded thence, the ideal strategic location for a pre-planned impromptu). As the old man remembered, the pleasant functional surroundings of the Gullane school melted, and we looked through the eyes of a schoolboy at the great crowd in the hall, silent save for its explosions of cheers and laughter. Asquith and any other platform speakers were hardly even memories (save for Rosebery's judicious allusions sufficiently mixed in motive).<sup>37</sup> Rosebery's old age fell away, and despite all realities we were hearing a boy thrilling to the call of a young man. 'I would have followed him anywhere, if he had given the signal!' Even the Great War itself, to whose slaughterhouse Rosebery was summoning youthful listeners, diminished. So enthralled was the boy by the orator, that the orator's actual plea lost pre-eminence.<sup>38</sup> It was as though we were hearing a

memory of Demosthenes in full cry against Philip of Macedon, of the elder Pitt sounding the tocsin of Empire, of the aged Gladstone in his Midlothian campaigns of 1879–80, of Lord Randolph Churchill before syphilis devoured him.

'No one reads old speeches any more than old sermons', Rosebery had written in 1906 in his *Lord Randolph Churchill* (London 1906), as autobiographical a work as he ever permitted himself (concealing much, including his knowledge that Scots in his day did read old sermons):<sup>39</sup>

The industrious historian is compelled to explore them for the purposes of political history, but it is a dreary and reluctant pilgrimage. The more brilliant and telling they were at the time, the more dolorous the quest. The lights are extinguished, the flowers are faded; the voice seems cracked across the empty space of years, it sounds like a message from a remote telephone. One wonders if that can really be the scene that fascinated and inspired. Was this the passage we thought so thrilling, this the epigram that seemed to tingle, this the peroration that provoked such a storm of cheers? It all seems as flat as decanted champagne.

Yet for one moment an old man reliving a sixty-year-old memory enchanted me in the magic which once was Rosebery.

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All this lay in the future, through the mind of a boy to whom Rosebery's name seemed to mean little or nothing until he heard him. But some of the magic had operated in the minds of many, especially in Edinburgh. Rosebery was no longer identified with a definite policy — by now he was much more conspicuously against things than for them — but his name meant magic, if not directly of the quality the old man had so clearly recalled. If Rosebery's was still a name to be conjured with, it had an Edinburgh meaning in 1907–09 on which to stage the conjuration.

Archibald Philip Primrose, fifth Earl of Rosebery, was born in 1847, succeeding his grandfather as Earl in 1868, inheriting estates on the borders of Edinburgh, and ultimately marrying a Jewish heiress, Hannah de Rothschild in 1878 (she died in 1890).<sup>40</sup> Rosebery (1847–1929) had no degree, having departed without one from Oxford when the authorities required him to choose between his university and his racehorses, but he was elected Rector of the Universities of Aberdeen (1878), Edinburgh (1880),



Fig. 11. The Mercat Cross, given by Gladstone at Rosebery's suggestion, with the City Chambers, where the Club was inaugurated. Photograph by Chrystal in Skinner, *Royal Mile* (1920).

Glasgow (1899) and St Andrews (1911). His racehorses won the Derby three times but Oxford refused nevertheless to elect him as its Chancellor, though London did so. These honours and dishonours were transient, save that the Scottish Rectorships helped one another.

But Rosebery had made himself master of political Edinburgh when he brought Gladstone (1809–1898) out of retirement, masterminded in 1879–80 the most intense mass electoral campaign Britain had seen up to then, and beaten the Tory Duke of Buccleuch from control of the Midlothian seat he had been accustomed to treat as his pocket borough. Rosebery was barred forever from election to the Commons, but he had shown himself kingmaker, and had given Edinburgh and Midlothian the fame of battleground on which he had won the seat for the man who would then form three more administrations. Rosebery continued to urge Scottish issues on Gladstone, rather obviously inviting comparisons with another youthful aristocratic leader, Charles Stewart Parnell (1846–1891), and his demands for Ireland. On 21 July 1883 Rosebery was made an Honorary Burgess and given the Freedom of the City of Edinburgh 'in recognition of his position and services to Scotland as a statesman, and also of

his Lordship's warm interest and valuable aid in furthering the welfare of the City'.<sup>41</sup> Gladstone seemed not to like the implication that he could not have made a political comeback without Rosebery, and certainly obstructed Rosebery's hopes of Scottish leadership. He did take Rosebery's opinion on a suitable memorial of his gratitude to the electors of Midlothian (who would continue to elect him until his positively last retirement aged 85, in 1895). As the *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club* would point out after Rosebery's death in 1929, they decided on a complete restoration of the Mercat Cross, which Gladstone handed over to the city in the midst of his next General Election, on Monday 23 November 1885, with speeches in the City Chambers by both, suitably hymned by the *Scotsman* (fig. 11):<sup>42</sup>

When the year 1885 shall become a date in bygone history, and the career of Mr Gladstone shall be studied by Scotsmen of other centuries, it may be that the restoration of the Market Cross of Edinburgh, and the first proclamation made from it in the presence of its restorer, may be regarded as not the least memorable of the great events in Scottish annals.

It was a classic 'non-political' meeting in mid election, although as ready to claim Scottish canonisation for Gladstone as had his Saturday



election meeting in Dalkeith, which piped him in with 'Up an' waur them a', Willie', after 'See the Conquering Hero Comes'. Dalkeith's vote of thanks to Gladstone had been proposed by Thomas Gibson Carmichael. The *Scotsman's* editor in 1885, Charles Cooper (1829–1916), was also a Rosebery intimate (although they drifted apart when the paper broke from Gladstone on Irish Home Rule next year) and, editorially, it followed Rosebery's evangelisation of greater Scottish significance so far as to proclaim a Scottish institution in Gladstone himself:<sup>43</sup>

a loyal and patriotic Scotsman, proud to acknowledge that from Scotland he draws every drop of his blood, and that for Scottish tradition and nationality he cherishes a profound reverence and affection ... the most distinguished living Scotsman ... [But] it is an additional satisfaction to the national sentiment that both in suggesting the restoration of the Cross and in carrying out the political measures which will place the control of Scottish affairs more completely in the hands of Scotsmen than they have been since the Union, another distinguished Scottish name — that of Lord Rosebery — will be for ever linked with Mr Gladstone's.



Fig. 12. Were Londoners hostile to a Scottish premier? 'The Rosebery Sword-Dance', *Punch*, 1 April 1903.

This proved all too true, as Rosebery, after a spell as Foreign Secretary, became Gladstone's lack-lustre successor, serving out his last term and meeting defeat at the next election (fig. 12). (It seems a law for British politics since Palmerston that a premier, however hitherto promising, who enters office to serve out a spectacular predecessor's term, meets disaster.) But when Rosebery resigned the Liberal party leadership on 8 October 1896, after a year in opposition following electoral defeat, he spoke at the Edinburgh Empire Theatre the following day to conclude with the thought that his early succession to his Earldom had prevented his ever being a Member of Parliament with constituents — 'But you, the people of Edinburgh, are my constituents!'. ('He is sentimental also which is dear to the Scotch' commented a listening Margot Asquith.)<sup>44</sup>

In 1898 he presided over a public meeting after the death of Gladstone when it was resolved to co-operate with the National Committee to bring about statues of Gladstone in London, Edinburgh and Dublin and in 1902 he unveiled the one in Glasgow.<sup>45</sup> On a practical level he had purchased Lady Stair's House in 1895, restored it, and presented it to the City as a Museum in 1907. The Primrose family were descended from Sir William Gray of Pittendrum, the original builder of the house in 1622, and it was Patrick Geddes (Associate Founding Member of the OEC) who suggested to Rosebery that he should take it on in conjunction with the City's Improvement Scheme at Wardrop's Court.<sup>46</sup>

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Rosebery in the chair of the Old Edinburgh Club's meeting on 29 January 1909 had less urgent business in hand, but of all speakers he knew the need for light touches in opening to throw his subsequent grandeur into relief. (Even at the Usher Hall he made game of the continued delays in its opening: 'The first thing I have to say, then, is one entirely of congratulation to myself that I have, contrary to my expectation, lived to sit in the Usher Hall', thus gliding over the obvious basis for self-congratulation in the insistence of an audience to hear a premier of twenty years ago dwarfing their demand for his long-strayed disciple, the premier of the day.) He affirmed this to be the First Annual Meeting of the Club, 'which by a

strange accident or a far-seeing design falls exactly on the anniversary of the foundation meeting that was held last year'. Quandaries as to chance or destiny played pleasantly into Scots self-imagery. Scots sensitivity as to excessively anglicised speakers would be eased with a cheery reminder of Scots cultural preoccupations, all the better from the man who had respectabilised those chequered masters of puritanism embattled with romanticism, Robert Burns (1759–1796) and Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894).<sup>47</sup> He moved at once to salute 'Mr Hay, of John Knox's House, for the first idea of the club'.<sup>48</sup> The Club's report and promised first volume of publications were the best reason for its existence, although 'most of us' must be surprised and regretful that it had not existed previously (Edinburgh relished antiquity: this formula virtually supplied instant antiquity). He advised interested parties to join the Club at once, 175 of a possible 300 having already joined:

I remember when we founded the Scottish History Society some years ago, I, in a similar manner, and perhaps less publicly, warned my friends that they had better lose no time in belonging to it. The result has been that some, like the foolish virgins, neglected my advice, and they, like the foolish virgins, are left lamenting at this moment.

There is no flat champagne here to discourage the industrious historian. He flung his credential as patron of Scottish History into a commercial as brazen as it was captivating. He finessed his Biblically-minded hearers by the aptness of his conscription of Jesus's parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Matthew xxv, 1–13), and simultaneously titillated the ribald whose associations with foolish virgins were of a less elevated character. He continued to orchestrate levity and gravity. He might safely predict 'from the specimen [proof copy] of the volume which lies before me' that 'our annual volume' would 'be of inestimable value to every citizen of Edinburgh who cherishes the traditions of his native city' but 'will not put it in the dismal category of those books which no gentleman's library would be without', which might cool the eagerness to join the Club. He was sure the books will be 'almost necessary to those who desire to live in Edinburgh enjoyably ... by enjoying the traditions as well as the climate of our ancient

city'. Small wonder he appealed to schoolboys: he peppered his own remarks with schoolboy mockery.

But he used his evangelisation of the book's contents to tie the Club's current hosts and its members into a conservation crusade. The Honorary Patrons of the Club (like the Honorary President and Honorary Vice-Presidents an innovation after the Constitution was adopted) being the City's Lord Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of the City of Edinburgh will, so far as lies in their power, always respect the ancient monuments of this city:

I think that is not merely an important countenance for the club to receive, but it also indicates something in the nature of a pledge, which in view of the past is not wholly unnecessary, that the Lord Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of the City of Edinburgh will, so far as lies in their power, always respect the ancient monuments of this city.

Rosebery now pointed to the draft volume which started with Bruce J. Home's article 'Provisional List of Old Houses remaining in High Street and Canongate of Edinburgh', epigraphed from Sir Walter Scott's *Marmion*:

Mine own romantic town ...  
O, be his tomb as lead to lead  
Upon it's [*sic*] dull destroyer's head.

And beginning: 'It may be safely affirmed that, since 1860, two-thirds of the ancient buildings in the Old Town of Edinburgh have been demolished'. Rosebery described that sentence as 'the most sinister and dismal in the whole book', meaning that in their lifetimes 'crumbling old houses which formed so distinguished and historical a feature, have been swept away. Was that necessary?' The Club — and its honorary patrons — must fight for the remaining one-third to 'receive all the respect that is possible'. Rosebery with characteristic acumen had made the Club a platform for the listing of historic buildings.<sup>49</sup>

Rosebery went over the rest of the volume showing the remarkable gifts for social history he had developed from the study of Scott, using an article on the Pantheon, 'an old Edinburgh debating society', to show how all such old clubs had vanished from the city due to the licensing regulations, and, having quietly thrown down a real challenge to the city fathers, pretended now to be afraid of starting a row over licensing ('I see the Town Clerk has his eye fixed upon me with some sternness and severity').<sup>50</sup> But he returned to conservation over sculptured

stones in the Dean village, commended the volume's readiness to expand the meaning of 'Old Edinburgh' beyond traditional assumptions, and exhorted his new troops:

It will be the task of the Old Edinburgh Club in season and out of season to bear testimony on behalf of antiquity where it is threatened by an unnecessary development of utility. Necessity was one thing — utilitarianism was another. We should recollect — I hope we all recollect — that Edinburgh's face is its fortune.

The *Daily Record* for 30 January 1909 headlined its report 'Face her Fortune'. Once again Rosebery mixed his grounds of appeal to his audience, the Protestant self-definition 'to bear testimony' and the folksong *motif* of pretty maids whose face is their fortune. He bluntly said he knew 'in the Council Chamber here they have recently been urging claims for converting Edinburgh into a manufacturing city, and at the same time preserving the fortune of its face. These objects are not very easy to combine', and he instanced the uglification of Sheffield and Newcastle. He ended on a ringing note:

Let us take care at any rate that as trustees for posterity we preserve the ancient historical metropolis as untouched as possible. You may have a new Edinburgh, but by no conceivable hypothesis will you have an Edinburgh more beautiful.

Sir James Balfour Paul, Lord Lyon King of Arms (and now one of the brand new Honorary Vice-Presidents), moved, and the Lord Provost (another judiciously seconded, a vote of thanks to Rosebery, who promptly took exception to the Lord Lyon's referring to him as 'almost an Edinburgh man': 'I will venture to remind you that I am not almost, but quite, an Edinburgh citizen of very ancient standing'. It could be seen as Rosebery's characteristic vulnerability of skin, which had embittered more political relationships for him than an entire Parliament might rupture amongst all its members. But he knew what he was about in this protest.<sup>51</sup>

Rosebery was not present at the second Annual Meeting, held on 28 January 1910, when the new Lord Provost William Slater Brown (1845–1917) presided, accepting Rosebery's claim that the city fathers as patrons of:

that Club might be taken as something in the nature of a pledge that they would, so far as lay in their power, always respect the ancient monuments of the city ... As to the objects of the Club, if

it was better known — and he was glad to think that it was becoming better known every day — it would hold a high place as one of the most useful organisations in the city. He assured them that so long as the present Town Council existed, they would be only too willing to embrace every opportunity for the furtherance of the objects for which the Club existed.

Otherwise, he entered an elaborate dissent from Bruce Home's estimate and Rosebery's strictures, as regards the numbers of old houses demolished and assured them that 'No one regretted it more than the members of the Town Council that many of the houses had had to be removed': in other words, it hadn't happened, and they were sorry that it had.<sup>52</sup>

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But was Rosebery's Club *coup* simply what it appeared to be, together with such reflections on the Atlantic socio-political *Zeitgeist* as the historian may choose to supply? Or, to put it in Keats's language, to what green altar did this mysterious priest lead yon heifer lowing to the skies? For the British political landscape in 1909 was shaping up for what seemed a volcanic future, in which Rosebery might well emerge as Prime Minister once more (fig. 13). Or so certain people seemed to think. It was true that the



Fig. 13. Rosebery, perhaps during his premiership, 1894–95, by Max Beerbohm.

existing Government was provided by his former political party, with whose present chiefs — once his closest followers in high politics — he was now on the worst of terms. But the next election might lead to a ‘hung’ Parliament when the King would be justified in asking someone other than Asquith to form a Government. Rosebery might be personally popular, particularly with a Scottish crowd in front of him, but the question was, would the King, still Edward VII (1841–1910), send for him in the event of political stalemate? Demonstrations of personal popularity on well reported acceptance of distinguished non-political offices might help, more particularly as they kept Rosebery in the public eye.

And he was the product of Royal choice. Certainly his master-minding the Midlothian campaign in 1879–80 had shown him a man for the politics of the future in Scotland, as another patrician, Charles Stewart Parnell, was doing in Ireland. But Gladstone had seemed as uneasy with his ally Rosebery as Scots leader as he was with his enemy Parnell as leader of the Irish. It was in fact the Tories who had taken the logical step of naming a Secretary for Scotland (Charles Henry Gordon-Lennox, 1818–1903, sixth Duke of Richmond and first Duke of Gordon) earlier in 1885, following Gladstone’s meagre efforts to put Scottish affairs in a sub-department of the Home Office. And in handing over the Mercat Cross Gladstone omitted to credit his current host for suggesting it, until crowd applause for Rosebery brought him apologetically back for an addendum.<sup>53</sup>

Consciously or subconsciously this may once again have reflected reluctance to admit further obligations to Rosebery, incurred when Gladstone’s second administration was reeling under its worst wound, the fall of Khartoum, crowned by the killing of General Charles George Gordon (1833–1885). Rosebery, who had irritably resigned his minor Home Office post in June 1883, entered the cabinet as Lord Privy Seal on 5 March 1885, throwing his considerable personal popularity into the scales on behalf of Gladstone, for whose Scottish blood the public (headed very audibly by Queen Victoria) was thirsting. Gladstone’s declaration for Irish Home Rule after the elections of November 1885 drove man after man from his potential cabinet, yet even then he only offered the Foreign Office to Rosebery when

Victoria ‘insisted on’ him: her demand was wildly unconstitutional — at best she was entitled to a veto, sparingly used — but Rosebery’s friends and enemies alike saw him as the obvious choice. The episode is of importance: historians have been apt to see Victoria’s interventions as dictated by political, not personal, bias, but her affection for Rosebery evidently induced her insistence on him and him alone. She certainly identified him with cross-party consensus in foreign policy, and made sure he was as acceptable as a Liberal could be to Lord Salisbury (1830–1903), Foreign Secretary as well as Prime Minister in the preceding Tory administration. She was much more within her rights, if not within the bounds of courtesy, in declining to ask Gladstone’s views on his successor as Liberal Prime Minister in February–March 1894 when he retired for the last time. Rosebery was her choice, in which she was fully supported by her son and successor.<sup>54</sup>

Rosebery was thus a Court favourite, a prerequisite for many a minister under Elizabeth I or James VI and I, but for Victoria what she would have called a much more wholesome relationship. More, he was her first Prime Minister young enough to be her son and yet — after 1890 — needing her comfort in his widowhood, and getting it. Rosebery’s familial status with Victoria was shown by his eldest son being given the first name ‘Albert’ (1882–1974), the name Victoria required all her male descendants born in her lifetime to bear, after her husband’s death: and her eldest son Albert Edward, the future Edward VII, was the boy’s godfather. Victoria’s love for her lost Albert (1819–1861) was actually her most ennobling quality, and she genuinely shared in the extremity of Rosebery’s grief for his Hannah (1851–1890). There were common links not to be spoken but silently known: Albert had been despised for being a German, Hannah for being a Jew. Rosebery would say that Victoria was one of the only two people who frightened him (Bismarck was the other, but Bismarck’s knees knocked when about to meet Victoria): it was not fear of an unknown but of an otherwise well loved matriarch. Her manner in thanking him for a Golden Jubilee present, for instance, is highly familial: she speaks to her imagined clansman if not kinsman and her fellow Scot (having put on her Scotticism with Albert, and advanced it with John Brown):<sup>55</sup>



Yesterday afternoon, I was most agreeably surprised by your kind and most valuable present, accompanied by such flattering words. It is the beautiful little miniature [of Elizabeth I] in its quaint setting which you once sent for me to see, and which I shall greatly value, though I fear I have no sympathy with my great predecessor, descended as I am from her rival Queen, whom she so cruelly sacrificed.

Rosebery's family was Whig and his history firmly Protestant ('the crimes of Mary Stuart' was a phrase falling naturally from his lips) but he evidently indulged Victoria with a little eighteenth century Jacobitism when its romance was unmingled with any taint of religious repression.<sup>56</sup> His own politics were likewise too Liberal for her but her affection outshone any transient reproaches she might administer. When his Government fell she wrote mournfully to her eldest daughter, the German Empress Victoria:<sup>57</sup>

The change of Government was not a source of such satisfaction as perhaps it might have been for I lose some people I am very fond of and who were very able ... *personally* I am very fond of Lord Rosebery and prefer him [in] certain [respects] to Lord Salisbury. He is much attached to me personally ...

Her instinct may have been unusually sound here. Rosebery's perceptions were in some respects quite remarkable. He saw that the reckless Toryism of the House of Lords if left unreformed would some day lead to a constitutional crisis, and a collapse of public confidence in politics; he saw that the removal of a second chamber's checks and balances could lead to a parliamentary dictatorship exercised from the House of Commons without restraint after a landslide election; he saw that Irish Home Rule, forced through to retain Irish parliamentary votes and in opposition to majority voter feeling in England, could lead to civil war; he saw that Home Rule All Round, giving powers of self-government to Ireland, Scotland and Wales was the road to a just equipoise; he saw that the government of London must be given a chance of civic reform in the light of new social thought; he saw that whatever one's views on the Boer War, a chance of peace existed in December 1901, which he managed to force on the Salisbury government by his Chesterfield speech; he saw that the future for Empire lay in acknowledging a Commonwealth of Nations, coining the term in Australia in January 1884; he saw that the ideal necessity for British attitudes to the USA was to study its institutions,

impressing the young Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924) by his readiness to compare Lords and Senate; he saw that the Entente Cordiale with France would some day lead to a ghastly European conflict.<sup>58</sup> In short he had far too many good ideas to be a good politician.

But he did want to win at least one decisive success in politics, preferably when some wild hour needed to produce its man. Victoria might have called on him had the election of 1900 been a stalemate: his Liberal Imperialism could have given him enough common ground with enough Tories to form a government in the political centre. As her son's reign moved along its decade, was there such a chance for Rosebery? Although he had only to raise a finger to win cabinet office, he kept aloof from the victorious Liberals of 1906, even preventing his son from symbolic linkage with the government.<sup>59</sup> His somewhat abrasive exchanges with successive Liberal Lord Provosts at the Old Edinburgh Club reflected the same ruthless independence from his former party. It was a decided possibility — and it would become a reality — that the next election after 1906 would produce a Parliament in potential stalemate, no party holding an overall majority (with Labour as well as the Irish Nationalists now winning seats in significant numbers). And Edward had worked to mobilise Rosebery in politics as his mother's envoy in 1892, when Rosebery's recent widowhood (as she well understood) soured him against returning to the cabinet. Politically, Edward's friendship was worth less than Victoria's, especially when the monarch felt threatened by political questions on which Rosebery might take the other side, but as the Liberal government went forward in progressive politics as far as House of Lords emasculation of its programme would permit, Edward had more common ground with Rosebery's doubts than with the Liberal measures. As early as October 1906 Rosebery was writing to the King:<sup>60</sup>

I am most grateful for Your Majesty's confidence ... on political matters I find it difficult to speak freely, as my position is so strange and so exceptional that I think it best to be altogether silent; unless at least I can praise, when there can be no harm in speaking. I do not care to dilate on this difficult and delicate subject! I hope I have not done wrong in yielding to the impulse to write to Your Majesty. But I cannot bear to think that Your Majesty should misunderstand me.

Balfour had contemptuously remarked to his sister that 'a curious trait of Rosebery's character was his taste for the society of his intellectual inferiors': at least it fitted him to hold the regard of the King (as well as that of the Old Edinburgh Club, not all of whose members would have been his intellectual superiors). The King replied: 'Indeed our friendship extends over forty years, and I can assure you nothing gives me greater pleasure than to be in your society — whether we discuss politics or social matters'.<sup>61</sup> Edward's maintenance of a special place for Rosebery seems to have continued throughout his reign. A Royal aide telegraphed Rosebery on 7 November 1908, for instance: 'The King says that you are always welcome and that you are to bring your guns or not and shoot or not exactly as you please'.

And Edward certainly confided in Rosebery as the Lords and the Government reached the high point of their vendetta when the Lords for the first time in history rejected the budget, whose creation was the oldest and most sacred of the Commons' duties: 'I confess that the political crisis is occupying all my thoughts and only hope that it may pass off satisfactorily though I see great difficulties ahead!'<sup>62</sup> Rosebery still headed the list of dinner-party names for 5 March 1910, two months before the King's death.<sup>63</sup>

The crisis turned on whether the King would agree to threaten the Lords with the creation of 500 new peers to pass the bill ending their power of veto. On 21 February 1910 the former Tory Chief Secretary for Ireland George Wyndham (1863–1913) told Wilfrid Scawen Blunt (1840–1922):<sup>64</sup>

Balfour did not intend to take office if Asquith resigned. Certainly he, George, would refuse office, though he knew a high one would be offered him. He thinks there would then be no way out of the deadlock except by Rosebery being invited to form an Administration of a stop-gap kind, which he could do with Milner, Cromer, George Curzon, [Lord] Hugh Cecil, and Lord Durham. It would be supported by the Tories till after another General Election.

The assumption was that Rosebery would reconquer the loyalties of enough of his old Liberal followers to get a Commons majority. Certainly some Liberals still saw themselves as his followers, his son Neil (1882–1916) and the Hon. Thomas Agar-Robartes (1880–1915) being two who enraged the Liberal Whips by preferring Rosebery's leadership to

Asquith's.<sup>65</sup> In such a case he might have the chance to carry out his own lifelong ambitions of reforming the Lords while retaining some power in the Second Chamber. Rosebery had detested his time in power in 1894–95: he had done little, partly immobilised by the rancour of his rival Sir William Harcourt (1827–1904) who was also his Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the poisonous sniping of Harcourt's devoted son, Lewis ('Loulou') Harcourt (1863–1922), and ultimately traumatised by the danger of implication in the Wilde scandal.<sup>66</sup> His one real hope had been to save the potency of the Second Chamber by its judicious reform which he intended to prove a prophylactic over future radical demands for its loss of veto. Macaulay (1800–1859) had been his favourite historian, whose *History of England* preached the lesson that Britain was saved from a violent revolution in 1688 by having experienced a very minor constitutional change in 1688, and whose life argued that another minor constitutional change in the Reform Act of 1832 had immunised Britain against some further revolutionary danger in the foreseeable future. Rosebery had not liked the House of Lords, where he had wasted pearls of Liberal oratory on an enormous and indifferent majority of Tory swine, but his fears of dictatorship from a Parliament with but one chamber of power have been echoed by modern political theorists such as Neal Ascherson and Tom Nairn. But it was impossible to bring home to the normally inert mass of Lords how dangerous to their future their somnolent refusal to relinquish any power might be, and he was firmly reprimanded by his revered but short-sighted Victoria. He tried in 1884, in 1888, and in his own administration, wanting to make it the leading plank in his party's electoral platform in the election of 1895. But his fellow leaders of the Liberals refused to make it their common cause, the more radical preferring to hope for the unreformed Lords inducing their ultimate destruction, the less radical such as the Harcourts taking pleasure in isolating their chieftain. And now with the revolution on their noble thresholds, the House of Lords and their Tory masters Arthur James Balfour (1848–1930, still party leader and still in the Commons) and Henry Charles Keith Petty-Fitzmaurice, fifth Marquess of Lansdowne (1845–1927) seemed to determine their duties as death before dishonour, or whatever version of the

diet prescribed by Rosebery they gave to their logic.<sup>67</sup> But Balfour did at last confer with Rosebery on 27 February 1910, Rosebery driving it home that Scotland insisted on curbing the Lords' power. And Balfour also had a Scottish estate whence he could observe Rosebery's obvious presidential links to non-political custodians of public opinion, such as the Old Edinburgh Club.

Balfour was brought round to the prospect of Rosebery forming a Government, chiefly because he suspected inevitable humiliation if Edward VII refused to create 500 peers, and if Asquith resigned and Balfour, obliged to seek an electoral mandate, found he could not get it (in fact when George V insisted on a fresh election in December 1910 on the issue of the Lords' veto, the country returned the same verdict as it had in January 1910). Converted, Balfour told mutinous followers: 'What other alternative is there but a neutral Government? Rosebery and a government of efficiency to do the necessary business, and then dissolve? I suppose Asquith and I should have to find him colleagues and promise him support.'<sup>68</sup>

Rosebery outlined a scheme by which the Lords would be changed to a selection of peers made by themselves and by the Crown, plus others chosen by appropriate bodies such as County Councils (remembering his beloved London County Council). He explained his conviction that Scotland insisted on Lords Reform by Scots having neither forgiven nor forgotten the Lords' opposition to the Reform Bill of 1832, which certainly suggests sources with the historical preoccupations of the Old Edinburgh Club. He refrained from pointing out the obvious, which was that Scots were far less likely to respect the integrity of a House of Lords where English peers sat at will and Scots by election from among their total number, unless Scots peers were given additional English peerages (as he himself had been). Rosebery still had hopes for support for Lords reform from some of his former personal followers such as Sir Edward Grey (1862–1933) the Foreign Secretary and Richard Burdon Haldane (1856–1928) the Secretary for War, while Balfour hoped for electoral gains in Scotland once Lords Reform had been sufficiently identified with the Tories.

And then the King died, leaving it doubtful whether he would indeed have dismissed Asquith to

send for Rosebery, or would have sent for Rosebery if Asquith resigned, or would have simply accepted the advice of his present Government, perhaps after an election, as his son George V was to do. For while George V greatly deferred to Rosebery — who was now old enough to have been his monarch's father, a rapid change from his situation under Victoria — he proved a supremely dutiful ruler, to be singled out by A. J. P. Taylor as the most constitutional in British history.<sup>69</sup> So on 10 August 1911 the Lords' veto was duly abolished in the Parliament Act, in a cliffhanger vote in the House of Lords itself, with an embittered Rosebery voting for the veto sooner than succumb to the absurdity of the fearful 500, and declaring that he would never enter the Lords again (which he fulfilled after solemnly registering a formal protest in the appropriate book the next day). It was in fact George V who had persuaded Rosebery to save the state from contempt by voting in favour of the measure he abominated.<sup>70</sup>

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Rosebery never returned to the Old Edinburgh Club after that date either. But he remained its Honorary President until his death in 1929, badly disabled by a stroke at the end of the Great War, but able to return 'cordial thanks' for the Club's greetings on his eightieth birthday in 1927, hailing the Club as 'a precious institution'.<sup>71</sup> He meant neither a satirical implication of artificiality, nor an obsession such as the Ring became to Gollum in Tolkien's epic, but a possession he treasured highly among his holdings however remote its initial significance for him might now be. He died two years later, on 21 May 1929, aged 82 years and a fortnight.

Was the Club simply a useful platform whence to remind people of his representative status, civic concern and public repute? He had known, none better, how to make stepping stones of honorific posts, from the moment he was elected Rector of the University of Aberdeen in 1878, turned its proof of his popularity to account while honeycombing Midlothian with support for Gladstone, and then delivered his rectorial address at Aberdeen (on Scottish history) on 5 November 1880, to be reported in the *Scotsman* in full the following day, on which the students of the University of Edinburgh would

vote him in as Rector. It was not Rosebery's fault if Gladstone responded less warmly to this last proof of his value than might reasonably have been expected by the youthful benefactor. But having won these honours, Rosebery proved exceptional in his refusal merely to accept them, celebrate them, and then ignore them. When the present Prime Minister, Dr Gordon Brown, was elected Rector of the University of Edinburgh while enrolled for the PhD he later won, his critics abused him for chairing the University Court, claiming it had never been the practice until the student unrest of the late 1960s. But an earlier Rector also destined to become Prime Minister had certainly anticipated him: Rosebery emphatically and repeatedly chaired the Court of the University of Edinburgh and any other body choosing him for such authority, nominal or actual. It may be added that his chairmanship annoyed many people who resented his unquenchable humour and lightness of touch. Even at the most intense disputes between the Asquith Government and himself over the Lords he enjoyed himself. The Government leader in the Lords was Rosebery's own son-in-law the Earl of Crewe (1858–1945), who alluded to him as 'my noble friend', the common usage in speaking of a member of one's party. But by then Rosebery claimed he was no longer a Liberal, had resigned the Presidency of his own creation, the Liberal League, in September 1909, and happily asserted his political divergence from Crewe by terming him 'my noble relative'.

There are some links between the Club, its agenda for the preservation of Edinburgh antiquities, and any hopes still entertained of a political future for Rosebery. In 1907 William Forbes Gray (1874–1950) was assistant editor of the *Scottish Review*, whose editor was John Buchan (1875–1940). Buchan was an eager admirer of Rosebery (a Scottish literary imperialist aristocrat seems a recipe to Buchan order) and had placed him gracefully among the imperial thinkers of his *A Lodge in the Wilderness* (1906) as Lord Appin (adding a dash of Balfour's or Haldane's philosophising, enlivened by Rosebery epigram).<sup>72</sup> On 5 March 1908 the *Scottish Review* carried a Buchan essay on Rosebery which began:<sup>73</sup>

About a year ago, after a temporary alienation from current politics, Lord Rosebery returned to the strife. The manner of his return was characteristic. It was a Scottish question which aroused

his indignation [probably Liberal proposals of land reform], and on this Scottish question he delivered ... one of the most effective debating speeches of his life ...

Of all the eminent men of Scottish blood now alive, Lord Rosebery is, politically, the most Scottish ... he is identified as no other man is with the politics of Scotland, regarded as a separate unit in our federated Britain. He knows and loves her traditions; he is jealous of her old ways and customs; he would welcome a distinctively Scottish civilization, with Edinburgh as its centre ...

Can we imagine Mr Balfour speaking of Burns with Lord Rosebery's serious passion, or Mr Haldane — or even Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman — fighting the cause of Auld Brigs with the same fervour? As assuredly as Mr Joseph Chamberlain is the man from Birmingham, so Lord Rosebery is the statesman from Scotland. It is a great achievement that the public man of the widest European reputation and the most cosmopolitan culture of the day should also nurse most assiduously the flame of a sane nationalism. Lord Rosebery can argue with truth that the wider patriotism of Empire need not exclude the affection for the smaller country of origin.

Lord Rosebery's manifold distinction is a romantic element in our business-like modern politics ... He has been Prime Minister; he is without doubt the greatest living orator; there are few better masters of the English tongue; and in addition, he is, and will continue to be, the 'mystery man' of public life — a personality at once baffling and attractive ... as a popular leader, Lord Rosebery had the gift both of rousing enthusiasm and stimulating affection ... He is a romanticist, who asks too much from politics, and therefore he can never be a great asset to a party ...

He is the only man living who has the true golden gift of speech. His marvellous voice is a large part of it, but the intellectual side of the art is equally significant. He is master of the whole range of oratory, and there is no chord which he cannot touch with precision and success ... He has that cardinal gift of the great orator — his thoughts seem to be born with an appropriate garb of words ... [His] is not studied wit — that is common enough; it is pure fun, bubbling up spontaneously and taking the perfect form which only a wide culture can give. It is the surest proof of intellectual vitality ...

The critic of temperament who has the historic sense and the gift of style is so rare that we can only hope that what this critic is denying to a party he is preparing for the edification of mankind.

Buchan wrote his editorial pieces for the *Scottish Review* in London, and Forbes Gray in Edinburgh edited them, proofed them and saw them through the press. Gray would reprint the essay in 1940, shortly after Buchan's death. He himself was fascinated by the omnipresence of Edinburgh history, would join the Club in 1909, become a member of its Council in 1917, was editor of its publications from 1924 to 1936, and was the author of several valuable volumes of *Ediniana*. We have to imagine the effect of Buchan's heady prose on its sub-editor, and the dawn of the Old Edinburgh Club with the prospect of





Fig. 14. Rosebery in the public eye when first chairing the Old Edinburgh Club, *Edinburgh Magazine*, 6 February 1909.

involvement of this godlike figure Rosebery. We cannot say what part Forbes Gray may have played in bringing Rosebery to the Honorary Presidency, if any, though it is clear that his own membership was taken out once Rosebery was firmly in command. Moreover, the *Scottish Review* was published by Buchan's employers, Thomas Nelson, as a weekly costing one penny, thus presumably reaching a large audience of Edinburgh literati in particular, thus making Buchan a best-seller long before *The Thirty-Nine Steps* sold a million copies in its first fifty years. Forbes Gray certainly shared Buchan's adulation for Rosebery. His *Books That Count* (1912) would describe Rosebery's *Chatham* as 'a brilliant study' and his *Pitt* as 'the best short life'. One of Buchan's last essays before Nelson's closed the *Scottish Review* was a whole-hearted endorsement of Rosebery's campaign for 'the Reform of the Upper Chamber', and did so in Rosebery's own watchword reflecting the transatlantic Progressive Era, a demand for 'efficiency'.<sup>74</sup> But far deeper than the regard for Rosebery's zeal for efficiency was his romantic appeal whirling in its wake the *Scottish Review* and the Old Edinburgh Club.

We can do no more than infer Forbes Gray as part of the literary journalist pack (now an almost extinct profession). The anonymous author of the *Edinburgh Magazine's* profile (with front cover portrait) of Rosebery on 6 February 1909, hence eight days after Rosebery's chairing the OEC's First Annual Meeting, may have been Forbes Gray (fig. 14). (The same issue's attack on George Bernard Shaw suggests a smart, self-righteous literary vendor, characteristic of Buchan and Buchanites.) But if someone else it simply adds further evidence for prevailing hopes that Rosebery's new visibility as Old Edinburgh Clubmaster might play its part in his political Renaissance. Rosebery was of course prominent for belief in the Anglo-Scottish union, but his public life had started with an aura of Scottish Nationalism not noticeably brushed away, and here once more his re-emergence through the OEC won him the *Edinburgh Magazine's*:

the proud possession of the Scottish people, as the leading orator of our day. His pronouncements are waited on with bated breath in every part of the Empire, and his name will go down to posterity in connection with all that is good and true in the history of our country ... Lord Rosebery had the misfortune (for a Scot) to be

educated in England at Christchurch [*sic*], Oxford, but he has not lost any of his nationality on that account. He is a strong supporter of Scottish rights ... while only the other evening his remarks on the passing away of Edinburgh's ancient buildings went home to the hearts of many who cannot see Old Edinburgh vanish without anxious thoughts as to the results of the many rapid changes that are prevalent at the present day.

Chiene's departure from the OEC Presidency and his replacement by Walter Biggar Blaikie indicates another probable activist in Rosebery's elevation, or at least his epiphany. Blaikie would serve for four years. He was certainly distinguished, if not to Chiene's extent: he was Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce 1903–06. His father, the Rev. William Garden Blaikie (1820–1899) seceded from the Church of Scotland in 1843 with the Great Disruption, and thereafter served the Free Church unremittingly. Walter Blaikie, manager of the printers T. and A. Constable, rose to Edinburgh literary eminence. He was distantly related to Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894), who succeeded him as nursing to the inspirational 'Cummy': he became one of the formidable group of Stevenson's associates who founded the hard-hitting *Scots Observer* in 1889, the rough-tongued editor, W. E. Henley (1849–1903) thinking so well of him as to award him the dedication of *Lyra Heroica* (1891).<sup>75</sup> An obituarist would remember him as:<sup>76</sup>

an all-round, well-informed individual with a fund of nervous energy who was quite irrepressible ... He did not like contradiction, especially by people who were, or perhaps only thought themselves, as competent to speak on certain subjects as himself. Then in a moment he would flare up and become very hot indeed.

He had a curious similarity to Rosebery in some ways. Another valediction acknowledged that 'all his life he had a way of being immediately and easily on terms of equality and affectionate intimacy with others ... he was happiest among young people'.<sup>77</sup>

Rosebery himself supplied the main clue to Blaikie's being the main agent of his Old Edinburgh elevation, or at least of his decision to adorn it himself, when at the first Annual Meeting he alluded to 'when we founded the Scottish History Society some years ago'. The 'we' was anything but egregious. On 3 February 1886 the *Scotsman* printed a letter from Rosebery (who had only just agreed to become Foreign Secretary):<sup>78</sup>

We should have a Society in Scotland for printing the manuscript materials for Scottish history, especially social history, which are believed to exist in such abundance among us. I do not allude to charters, which gratify but few. I am thinking rather of letters or diaries of the seventeenth, eighteenth, or early nineteenth centuries. There is, I believe, a vast collection of these in existence; but every day brings peril to them of some kind or another, from the too negligent or too scrupulous custodian. If these were printed they would not only be preserved from these risks, but would form a collection which would almost raise the wistful shade of Sir Walter himself.

Why should we, then, not start such a Scottish Manuscript Society? It would preserve the perishable; it would form a collection valuable to the literature of the whole world, but profoundly attractive to Scotsmen; and it would raise a national monument, even more consistent and durable than those spectral and embarrassed columns which perplex the tourist on the Calton Hill.

The Society was formally constituted on 21 April 1886, and Rosebery (whom the Society described after his death as ‘in 1886 ... the most famous and popular man in Scotland’) became ‘an ideal President’ while up to his neck in the Greek crisis of that Spring which he dissolved with masterly multinational efficiency. In 1889 he gave the Society the list of alleged rebels in the ‘45 prepared by Government officials, and contributed a preface to its publication (1890) as the Society’s eighth volume: the preface is a masterly miniature of the ‘45, simultaneously thrilling and thoughtful, and Macaulay would not have been ashamed of it, nor were the printers, T. and A. Constable. The Society’s historian, W. K. Dickson, declaimed:<sup>79</sup>

An invaluable recruit was Walter Biggar Blaikie, head of the printing firm of T. & A. Constable. He was not only a keen and competent historical worker, but it was said of him with justice that he had brought to his trade ‘the skill of an engineer, the eye of an artist, and the taste of a scholar’. The Society’s books were from the beginning printed by Messrs Constable. Blaikie took endless personal trouble about them, with the result that every volume is a beautiful example of the printer’s craft.

T. and A. Constable would be the printers of the *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club* from the beginning, and Rosebery’s access to the proof copy of the first volume was certainly in keeping with the mutual co-operation of President and printer at the Scottish History Society. But Blaikie was much more than printer. The invaluable anthology of materials on the ‘45, *The Lyon in Mourning*, was edited in three volumes by Henry Paton (1854–1942), Rosebery

observing that if the Society had done nothing else ‘it would have fully justified its existence’, and in 1897 Blaikie followed with his *Itinerary of Prince Charles Edward Stuart* following Charles from first sailing to final departure. Rosebery speaking at the eleventh Annual Meeting the same year happily asserted: ‘I very much doubt if anyone can find any serious fault with anything that the Society has done or with any publication that the Society has put forward, and I venture to ask you of what other society known to you can so much be said?’<sup>80</sup> And, free once more after over a year as Prime Minister and nearly three as Liberal party leader, he knew what he meant by serious fault-finding. But Rosebery’s vision of the Society’s work had every relevance for the future Old Edinburgh Club:

The humble and unobtrusive task of letting every man know, in every degree of life, so far as in us lies, and so far as documentary evidence exists, how our forbears lived and worked and carried on the business of their country in separate spheres.

Blaikie was a founder member of the Old Edinburgh Club, and one who by his professional associations must have made a considerable difference to founders’ hopes of the perpetuity of the Club in solid print. So was Henry Paton, now a clergyman, at 184 Mayfield Road, and so was his son, Henry Macleod Paton (1882–1958), of 16 Comiston Terrace, who would join the Scottish History Society in 1921, be a member of its Council in 1941, and Vice-President of the Old Edinburgh Club by 1956, after editorship of its publications from 1939 to 1955. The younger Paton is something of a mystery in 1908–09, and may have been educated primarily by his father: he would not enter Register House until 1925, graduating from clerk to chief clerk in 1933, and then to Curator in 1936, retiring in 1946. But if he was working with Blaikie and with his father to ensure their inspirational President of the Scottish History Society could be somehow put at the helm of the Old Edinburgh Club, he was of an age to undertake any needful leg-work, and also of an age to share the cultural ecstasies of Buchan and Forbes Gray. What we do not know is whether the decision to activate the Honorary Presidency was made solely by Rosebery, whether it was intended to offset the Liberal Government in the interest of romantic but resolute Tories (of whom Blaikie, with his *Scots Observer* investment and

connections, was presumably one, and Buchan and Forbes Gray others), and whether it was intended to do so at the cost of Chiene's Presidency or, if not, how that came to be a casualty of the process. Equally, Rosebery's reasons could well have been simply cultural and locally patriotic, or there may have been a thought it might assist a premier-in-waiting.

It is unclear whether John Chiene was alienated by Rosebery's politics or by his personality (or indeed if he was alienated at all). He had served his term well and hospitably, and may have felt he had bestowed quite enough of 'the cratur' on the OEC Council. If Rosebery was the greatest Scottish political luminary of his time (unless we follow the *Scotsman's* ascription of Gladstone's national status to his unadulterated blood), Scottish medicine was the country's intellectual zenith in the preceding century, but their relations were ill-starred. In 1880 Rosebery had won his Edinburgh Rectorship in a narrow victory over Sir Robert Christison (1797–1882), fifty years his senior, recently retired after 55 years as an Edinburgh University professor, and the foremost toxicologist of his day. In Chiene's case there was not even a visible contest. But we may contrast the Old Edinburgh Club brought into fruition under Rosebery's auspices in 1909, and that announced by Chiene, one exact solar year before: 'There are, I understand, to be a number of committees, and they are to do their work and report to a great central body. There will be a ministers' committee, a lawyers' committee, and a doctors' committee.'<sup>81</sup> A year later there was nothing of any of this. Rosebery in fact deplored the disappearance of supper clubs and their records, in response to which a paper was duly produced on the Wagering Club, an institution savouring of Rosebery as fully as the Aesculapian harmonised with Chiene.<sup>82</sup> The committees vanished with no perceptible aftercry. Rosebery had private religious beliefs of which he spoke little: he disliked theological controversies and wanted the bitter feelings between the Church of Scotland and the Free Kirk to erode rather than explode, and a ministers' committee in a club inspired by doubtful claims on the whereabouts of John Knox's decease was hardly likely to be noted for peaceable ecumenism. As for doctors, Rosebery had no objection to presenting Edinburgh's Royal College of Surgeons with the medical equipment of a

surgical ancestor, but his very knowledge of the wealth and housing of doctors in their corporate entities made him less willing to see another club settling for what the doctor ordered. As for the lawyers, the entirety of the Club's pursuit of land titles and former owners would receive their close scrutiny.

The most conspicuous effect of the new regime appeared in the first year of Blaikie's Presidency, when he delivered a talk and produced a paper long in preparation arising out of his work for the Scottish History Society on Charles's itinerary.<sup>83</sup> He gave it in March 1909, a few weeks after Rosebery's installation in the Honorary Presidency at the first Annual Meeting. Rosebery, once more in the chair at the Third Annual Meeting, on 30 January 1911, responded to it, using the occasion to dismiss his own chairmanship (which indicates his belief in the importance of his appearance at the First Annual Meeting):<sup>84</sup>

But there is one [article in the second volume] of which I must make special mention, and it is for that reason that I am in the chair to-day. An Honorary President should never be here at all. People who exercise honorary functions are not disposed to discharge them. But the actual President (Mr. W. B. Blaikie), who is by my side, could not say what I have to say, and therefore I thought it better to come and say it for him. I must say, ladies and gentlemen, and I think you will agree with me, that the crown of this admirable volume is in the exquisite and living monograph written by our President on the residence of Charles Edward at Holyrood. I do not know any monograph of the kind that I have read with so deep an interest as I have that extraordinarily picturesque and vivid narrative.

To much of his audience, this was simple justice: to some, perhaps, it was also a delicately implicit word of gratitude for Blaikie's part in his Honorary Presidency, and to a few, it may be, an even more delicate reminder of Blaikie's debt to Rosebery that Blaikie was where he was on that day. But few would have wanted to ponder Rosebery's text for deeper meanings, as he happily progressed to show how Blaikie's accuracy would never be able to conquer the errors immortalised by Scott's *Waverley*. Blaikie had shown 'Charles Edward never danced at all; and yet, in spite of Mr Blaikie, Charles Edward will lead Flora MacIvor out to the dance for centuries to come'.<sup>85</sup> Rosebery could play with Scottish literary fantasy with the expertise of a J. M. Barrie (1860–1937) when he liked.<sup>86</sup> But in approaching 'as much as Mr Blaikie's modesty will allow on the subject of his most



admirable paper', Rosebery played with a counterfactual moment of another kind, *viz.* Charles Edward in London, had he made the dash from Derby, and his words may be his own verdict on his own non-return to 10 Downing Street, doomed forever by the rectitude of the King and the intransigence of almost everyone else:<sup>87</sup>

How long he would have remained there I cannot tell – I think not long; but, at any rate, he preferred, and we cannot criticise or disparage him for doing so, he preferred to reign six weeks for certain in Edinburgh to the possibility of reigning a much longer time in London.

Rosebery was a Hamlet far beyond Hamlet's powers of indecision; and historians, vulgarly committed to the need for action in order to progress their books,

hold Hamlets in low regard. Yet many of us may agree with his reflection in 1899: 'There are two supreme pleasures in life. One is ideal, the other real. The ideal is when a man receives the seals of office from his Sovereign. The real pleasure comes when he hands them back.'<sup>88</sup>

He was, in effect, handing the Honorary Presidency back when leaving the chair after the Third Annual Meeting, although he would theoretically hold office for eighteen more years. But he was also saying that however much he yearned for one crowded hour of glorious life as Prime Minister to show he could succeed at it, he was far happier in his own city, amongst his fellow scholars, establishing the Old Edinburgh Club.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

As always it is a privilege to thank the unstinting help of the Library of the University of Edinburgh (where Rosebery ruled as Rector 1880–83), the Edinburgh Central Library (which he opened) and above all from the entire staff of my heart of Midlothian, the National Library of Scotland (which came into existence following Rosebery's demand that it be born of the Advocates' Library). I also thank Ms Caroline Cullen for her ready help in converting my laboured manuscript into digital form, and I am deeply grateful to my former colleagues on the Old Edinburgh Club Council, to its then President Ms Catherine Cruft, to her predecessor Dr Tristram Clarke, and to her successor Dr Iain Gordon Brown; and to my much-enduring editor, Dr Andrew Fraser, who has saved me from innumerable errors. For any that remain, I am, as usual, irresponsible.

The standard source for the early history of the Old Edinburgh Club is the series of Annual Reports published in the appendices to the volumes of the original series of the *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club* (BOEC) and paginated separately from the main text. In addition the original Minute Book of the Club is deposited in the Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Libraries (ECL): Old Edinburgh Club Minute Book 1 (3/12/1907–19/7/1909) DA 1824. In addition to the MS minutes of early meetings it contains a very useful collection of newspaper cuttings and other printed ephemera. I am grateful to Ms Catherine Cruft for drawing it to my attention.

- 1 Peter Miller, 'John Knox and his Manse', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, XXV (1890–91), pp. 138–154; Sir Daniel Wilson, 'John Knox's House, Netherbow, Edinburgh', *ibid.*, pp. 154–162; Charles Guthrie, 'John Knox's House: Is It Entitled to the Name?', *ibid.*, pp. 333–348; Peter Miller, 'Supplementary Notes on John Knox's House', *ibid.*, XXVII (1892–93), pp. 406–411; Robert Miller, 'When Did John Knox Live in Edinburgh?', *ibid.*, XXXIII (1899), pp. 80–97, and 'The Legend of John Knox's

House', *ibid.*, pp. 97–115; Guthrie, 'The Traditional Belief in John Knox's House at the Netherbow Vindicated', *ibid.*, pp. 249–273. Robert Miller also published *John Knox and the Town Council of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1898). Guthrie produced *John Knox and John Knox's House* (Edinburgh 1898) and is less happily remembered for presiding at the mistrial of Oscar Slater (1872–1948), wrongly convicted of murder at the High Court in Edinburgh in 1909. For Daniel Wilson, see Kitty Cruft, 'Daniel Wilson, 1816–1892', *BOEC*, New Series 7 (2008), pp. 153–159. Professor Jane Dawson of New College, Edinburgh, author of the forthcoming biography of Knox likely to be definitive for our time, accepts the Netherbow house in her 'Knox, John (c.1514–1572)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (ODNB) (Oxford 2004), vol. 32, p. 23.

- 2 *BOEC*, 31 (1962), p. 202. Harry Cockburn's longevity, attested by the Club's membership lists, prevents his being the eponymous Consul-General in Korea (1859–1927), also grandson of Henry Lord Cockburn (1779–1854), and father of the famous journalist (Francis) Claud Cockburn (1904–1981).
- 3 Harry A Cockburn, 'An Account of the Friday Club, written by Lord Cockburn, together with Notes on certain other social Clubs in Edinburgh', *BOEC*, Original Series 3 (1910), pp. 105–178; also 'Cockpen House, Castlehill', *BOEC*, 17 (1930), pp. 17–21.
- 4 Donald Smith, *John Knox House* (Edinburgh 1996), p. 48.
- 5 *BOEC*, OS 3 (1910), Appendix, pp. 11–12.
- 6 For Guthrie see note 1. Rt. Hon. Edward Theodore Salvesen (1857–1942), Tory Solicitor General for Scotland 1905, Judge of the Court of Session 1905–22, son of the Leith shipowner. Alexander Frederick Whyte (1883–1970), son of the Rev. Alexander Whyte DD, Principal of New College, Edinburgh, studied at Jena, first in Modern Languages (Edinburgh) 1904, Lecturer at Sorbonne 1905, Warden Edinburgh University Settlement 1907–08, MP 1910–18, Parliamentary Private

- Secretary to Winston Churchill 1910–15, Director of the American division, Ministry of Information 1939–40. Salvesen and Whyte were, like Rosebery, members of the Athenaeum Club.
- 7 See e.g. Scottish Executive, Development Department, Inquiry Reporters Unit to Cockburn Conservation Trust, 27 July 2006, p. 2.
  - 8 Smith, *John Knox House*, p. 48. Hay died in office as custodian.
  - 9 *BOEC*, 31 (1962), p. 202.
  - 10 The list of 257 members, and 12 associate members, in 1908 is given in *BOEC*, OS 1 (1908), Appendix pp. 13–20 (dated 1908 but actually issued March 1909). In the lists of members from *BOEC* volumes 20 (1935) to 29 (1956) the dwindling numbers of surviving founder members are marked with an asterisk.
  - 11 ‘Report on the Third Annual Meeting of the Old Edinburgh Club’, *BOEC*, OS 3 (1910), Appendix, pp. 18–19.
  - 12 Many Tories maintained that the Asquith Government had actually killed the King by causing him so much anxiety over the passage of the Parliament Act to enable which the Government insisted he must create 500 new peers if necessary, about which (see below) he had grave anxieties and on which he may have died without reaching a final decision. A study of the King’s dietary and extra-marital sexual habits would have offered sufficient explanation. Nevertheless feeling ran far past the normal desire for mourning, and failure to mark the King’s death was taken as ingratitude for self-sacrifice.
  - 13 The following cuttings and minutes are taken from OEC Minute Book 1 deposited in the Edinburgh Room, ECL.
  - 14 *Glasgow Herald*, 4 December 1907.
  - 15 ECL, Edinburgh Room, OEC Minute Book 1.
  - 16 Scott and James Skene (1775–1864) of Rubislaw were thinking of an Edinburgh book with text by Scott (or possibly by the as yet still anonymous ‘Author of *Waverley*’) and etchings from original drawings by Skene, who later produced *A Series of Sketches of the existing Localities alluded to in the Waverley Novels* (Edinburgh 1829), among which John Knox’s House is particularly fine. Scott at first termed their project ‘Antiquitates Reekianae’, but this too could have been a light-hearted nickname for *Edinburgh Antiquities*, all the more so as it was beginning to seem a chore (Scott to Skene, 29 August 1820); in 1821 this dwindled into ‘Reekianae’, and in 1823 to ‘Reekiana’ (Scott to Skene, 4 April 1823): James Skene of Rubislaw, *Memories of Sir Walter Scott (The Skene Papers)* edited by Basil Thomson (a somewhat unreliable descendant), (London 1909), pp. 90–93; H. J. C. Grierson (ed.), *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott* (London 1934), VI, pp. 263 and n., 264, 323; VII, p. 365. See also ‘Skene Drawings of Old Edinburgh’, in R. Butchart, *Prints and Drawings of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1955), pp. 96–109. Robert Chambers (1802–1871), the Edinburgh publisher, had subsequent success with his *Traditions of Edinburgh*, 2 vols (Edinburgh 1825), and brought out a third volume *Minor Antiquities of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1833) with less success. Although it is thus titled on the title page (and in the British Library Catalogue) the spine reads ‘Reekiana’, as does the preliminary page preceding the title page. Chambers’s preface mentions Reekiana, ‘a title once contemplated for a similar work by Sir Walter Scott, and which he good-humouredly surrendered to me some years ago’. Scott was dead when the book appeared. He thought kindly of Chambers but found his scholarship careless and hasty: Scott, *Journal*, edited by W. E. K. Anderson (Oxford 1972), pp. 519–520, 15 February 1829.
  - 17 List of members, numbered up to 304 (deleted to account for deaths, etc., with 298 substituted, the list being in two hands which I take to be the temporary secretary Smail and the elected Secretary MacRitchie), at back of OEC Minute Book 1, ECL, Edinburgh Room. This list follows the list of libraries subscribing, viz. Harvard University Library; Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh (sometimes a platform for Rosebery); Edinburgh Free Library (i.e. ECL); University Library, Aberdeen; Bodleian Library, Oxford; University Club; Mitchell Library, Glasgow; Signet Library; Advocates Library; Society of Antiquaries of Scotland; Edinburgh Architectural Association; John Rylands Library, Manchester; Public Library of Toronto, Canada; Library of the Theological College of the Episcopal Church in Scotland; Public Library, Aberdeen. Other institutions (including Edinburgh University Library) must have subscribed well after the Club’s foundation but before the lapse of the first year so as to appear in alphabetical order in the appendix to the first *BOEC*.
  - 18 Information on Edinburgh citizens, save where otherwise stated, is from *Post Office Edinburgh and Leith Directory 1907–1908* (Edinburgh 1907). The early volumes of *BOEC* contain lists of office bearers and of members, including addresses.
  - 19 The name mirrored that of a similar Glasgow institution, the Old Glasgow Club — see the discussion on p. 18.
  - 20 A copy is included in OEC Minute Book 1, Edinburgh Room, ECL.
  - 21 Ardwell was Andrew Jameson (1845–1911); Kingsburgh was John Hay Athole Macdonald (1836–1919). Neither seems to have appeared at any meeting of the Club.
  - 22 Edinburgh had nearly 700 telephone subscribers in 1889. By 1911 ‘there were some 12,000 telephones in Edinburgh and Leith’; in 1891 the total population was 360,522, rising to 413,008 (1901), and 423,464 (1911): David Keir (ed.), *Third Statistical Account of Scotland: City of Edinburgh* (Glasgow 1966), pp. 255, 99.
  - 23 *Glasgow Herald*, 18 January 1909.
  - 24 In the *BOEC* 1908 list of members his address is given as the more rural Aithernie, Davidson’s Mains.
  - 25 *Glasgow Herald*, 30 January 1908, translated into direct speech by the author.
  - 26 Harrison was ‘trade’, being Harrison and Son, clothiers and outfitters, 8 St Andrew Square and 19 and 21 South St David Street, for all the gentility of his abode at Rockville, 3 Napier Road. (So, for all of his baronetcy, was the Lord Provost, who had started out as heir to the provision merchants R. and T. Gibson.) ‘Trade’ made hard Scots sense in a City Treasurer: the city had no wish to revisit bankruptcy. But choosing Harrison for OEC President had shown Hay’s inexperience: any future President in ‘trade’ would at least require a heavy scholarly aroma.
  - 27 MacRitchie remained Secretary, and at 35 East Claremont

- Street, until his death in 1936: *BOEC*, 22 (1938), Appendix, p. 8. Car barns, of 25 Braidburn Crescent, served as Treasurer till 1913.
- 28 The dome statue was by the sculptor John Hutchison (1833–1910) who also provided New College with its hortatory, heroic John Knox, in this case clothed.
- 29 *Edinburgh Architectural Association Transactions*, II, no. 1 (28 January 1892). See also Hippolyte J. Blanc, ‘George Heriot’s Hospital described from an Architectural Standpoint’, in Clement B. Gunn (ed.), *George Heriot’s Hospital* (Edinburgh [c. 1901]), pp. 147–174. For Blanc and his panels see John Gifford, Colin McWilliam and David Walker, *Buildings of Scotland: Edinburgh* (Harmondsworth 1984), p. 208, and for St Cuthbert’s p. 275. A teacher in an Edinburgh school recently asked a class who John Knox was, getting as the only answer ‘did he own that house in the High Street?’, which seems to vindicate Hay and, perhaps, the Old Edinburgh Club.
- 30 Robert T. Skinner, *From the Castle to Holyrood: ‘The Royal Mile’* (Edinburgh 1920, with later editions 1928 and 1947).
- 31 *Twenty-five Years at Donaldson’s Hospital, 1899–1924* (Edinburgh [1925]).
- 32 Skinner, ‘*Royal Mile*’ (1920), p. 30; the 1928 edition is less confident. And Hume Brown used a fine steel engraving of ‘John Knox’s House at the Netherbow, Edinburgh, 1843’ for the frontispiece to his *John Knox, a Biography* (London 1895).
- 33 Bruce J. Home, ‘Provisional List of Old Houses remaining in High Street and Canongate of Edinburgh’, *BOEC*, OS 1 (1908), pp. 1–30.
- 34 This invitation is amongst the miscellaneous ephemera included in the OEC Minute Book 1 deposited in the Edinburgh Room, ECL.
- 35 *Old Glasgow Club, 75th Anniversary*, ([1976]), pp. 2–6, including a note on the Club’s history from John R. Hedley, Honorary Secretary, 16 December 1975: Bob Dunlop, ‘The Old Glasgow Club Story’, in *Old Glasgow Club Centenary Handbook* ([2000?]), pp. 4–7.
- 36 ‘Report of the First Annual Meeting of the Old Edinburgh Club’, *BOEC*, OS 1 (1908, issued to members March 1909), Appendix, pp. 3–11.
- 37 *Times*, 19 September 1914, the meeting being on the 18th. The issue of 12 September announced the meeting ‘in the evening in the City Hall’, whatever it thought that was, while on 17 September it announced it for the Usher Hall (without correction of its previous intelligence) and stated: ‘It is understood that Lord Rosebery will be present, and may address the meeting. The final arrangements are to be settled to-day’. Naturally they were not, Rosebery disdaining to commit himself until it was clear that he was the people’s choice as speaker. The audience were estimated at about 3500 and an overflow meeting was hastily convened in the Synod Hall, to which Asquith departed having given his speech at the Usher (the *Times* may have rendered ‘Synod’ as ‘City’ on 12 September, sunk as it was in benighted London secularism). Rosebery’s war speeches were conveniently if somewhat sensationally assembled from *Glasgow Herald* texts and sold for a penny as *WAR! A Fight to the Finish: A Martial Call to the Scots* (Stirling, n.d., but probably late 1914). These speeches were spontaneous, Rosebery at Broxburn on 5 September (p. 11) having been interrupted for saying ‘England’ when he meant ‘Britain’ (the vulgar error of those times, nowadays reversed) replied magnificently: ‘I share your susceptibilities, but I rather wish you would not interrupt my sentence, because I do not remember now how it began’. The report of the Edinburgh meeting began (p. 13): ‘At the close of the meeting at Edinburgh, on the 18th September, addressed by the Prime Minister, there was a movement on the part of the audience to disperse, but when Lord Rosebery rose from his seat in the grand tier, and made his way up the gangway leading to the exit, he was greeted with loud cheers and cries of “Speech” from every part of the hall. His Lordship hesitated and turned at the exit, and the cries of the audience became even more insistent. Amid great cheering, Lord Rosebery descended the stairs again, and facing the audience, said: “I am not on the programme, and I advise you to keep to the programme and to go home to bed. I have no right to intrude on you at all to-night.” His Lordship again turned to leave, but not before the audience once more gave overwhelming proof of their desire by a renewed demonstration, in which members of the platform party enthusiastically joined. “Speech, speech”, resounded throughout the hall. “Well, gentlemen, I will”, announced Lord Rosebery, amid a storm of cheers, and he stepped down to the balcony rail and proceeded to address the meeting as follows ...’
- 38 At Broxburn, on 5 September 1914 (see previous note), Rosebery gave a clue to his internal emotions which he evidently transmitted in the Usher Hall on 18 September also: ‘But you may say “It is all very well. You are an elderly gentleman. You won’t be called out. You will sleep in your bed to-night. You will have your meals. It is easy for you to come and exhort us who are younger and are able to fight to go out to the war.” But I do not think after all the position of we elderly ones, who have to dwell among the sheepfolds and listen to the bleating of the flock while you go out to the war, is so much preferable to your own position. It is an indication, at any rate, that we are in the decline of vigour and in the sere and yellow leaf, and do you suppose that there is one single man of my age who would not gladly exchange for one of yours and go out to the front?’ He would have felt that even more when his son Neil was killed in 1917.
- 39 ‘Lord Randolph Churchill’, in John Buchan (ed.), *Rosebery, Miscellanies*, 2 vols (London 1921), I, p. 318. Adlai Stevenson, introducing John Kennedy for his first speech as the Democratic Presidential Convention’s nominee in 1960, likened his own speeches to those by Cicero which were admired, whereas Kennedy’s speeches recalled those of Demosthenes which made men say ‘Let us march’. Rosebery attributed Pitt’s final conquest of oratorical heights to his marriage: ‘Love seemed to have transformed him; always powerful and eloquent, he became sublime’ (*Lord Chatham: His Early Life and Connections*, London 1910, p. 356). On Randolph Churchill, Rosebery wrote: ‘In liveliness, in vigour, in sureness of touch in the power of holding an audience, he transcended, I suspect, not merely Disraeli, but every one in living memory except Mr Gladstone, Mr Bright,

- and Mr Chamberlain. His secret would have been worth knowing ... He was, in a word, supremely interesting': ('Lord Randolph Churchill', pp. 328–329).
- 40 John Davis, 'Primrose, Archibald Philip, fifth Earl of Rosebery and first Earl of Midlothian (1847–1929)', *ODNB*, vol. 45, pp. 370–383, is the best recent summation, but E. Charteris, 'Primrose, Archibald Philip, fifth earl of Rosebery (1847–1929)', *Dictionary of National Biography 1922–1930* (Oxford 1937), pp. 687–696, still merits study. Thomas F. G. Coates, *Rosebery*, 2 vols (London 1900), Jane T. Stoddart, *The Earl of Rosebery, K.G.* (London 1900), and J. Renwick, *Life and Work of Lord Rosebery* (London 1909) all repay investigation despite (and indeed because of) contemporaneity, and E. T. Raymond, *The Man of Promise, Lord Rosebery* (London 1923) merits reading in its own elegantly sardonic right. Despite universal reproach for its tedium, Robert, First Marquess of Crewe KG, *Lord Rosebery*, 2 vols (London 1931), the authorised biography, by Rosebery's much-enduring son-in-law and Liberal leader in the Lords in Rosebery's years of revolt, is much more helpful on Scotland than are its successor biographies, Robert Rhodes James, *Rosebery* (London 1963), and Leo McKinsty, *Rosebery* (London 2005), both bibliographically rich and analytically superficial (McKinsty's citations sometimes breaking off without page for book or date for MS, to the shame of his publisher John Murray). My graduate student Robert Akroyd produced an invaluable study in 'Lord Rosebery and Scottish Nationalism, 1868–1896' (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1996), the starting-point of all future research on Rosebery and Scotland. I am profoundly obliged to the National Library of Scotland, as always, where admirable donations and great MS collections from Rosebery are housed. I have not sought access to the papers still in family keeping at Dalmeny.
- 41 C. J. Cousland, *Honoured in Scotland's Capital* (Edinburgh 1946), pp. 64–66. The book records the awards of Freedom of the City of Edinburgh but omits Charles Stewart Parnell, the only modern Freeman later deprived of his award.
- 42 See 'The Market Cross', *BOEC*, 20 (1935), Appendix, pp. 10–19, from notes read on 13 November 1934 by W. Forbes Gray (see below), and concluding with the above quotation from *Scotsman*, 23 November 1885. The then Lord Lyon King of Arms, Francis J. Grant, was in the chair, Forbes Gray noting that Grant's father, John Grant, Marchmont Herald, had 'read the first proclamation from the restored cross' (which, all too appropriately, announced the dissolution of the previous Parliament). For a flavour of Gladstone's irritation with Rosebery in 1880–85 see Sir Charles Edward Malet, *Herbert Gladstone* (London 1932), p. 97, quoting Herbert to Henry Gladstone, December 1882: 'The People who bother him most at the moment more than all others are the Queen and Lord Rosebery' (see McKinsty, *Rosebery*, note 40, chapter 4 and — where possible — works therein cited). The origin of the office of Secretary for Scotland is neatly summarised in Ian Levitt, 'Scottish Sentiment, Administrative Devolution and Westminster, 1885–1964', in Michael Lynch (ed.), *Scotland 1850–1979* (London c. 1993), p. 35, apart from the minor detail that the well described Liberal groundwork created an office which the Tories were the first to fill (with a descendant of Charles II, which Salisbury may have thought appropriate).
- 43 *Scotsman*, 24 November 1885. For Gibson-Carmichael, MP for Edinburghshire 1895–1900, see Michael Stenton and Stephen Lees, *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament*, vol. II, 1886–1918 (Hassocks 1978), p. 135; and Mary Helen Elizabeth Carmichael, *Lord Carmichael of Skirling* (London 1929), pp. 73, 78–80, 95.
- 44 James, *Rosebery* (note 40), p. 396. McKinsty, *Rosebery*, p. 394, quoting Margot Asquith, Diary, 9 October 1896, presumably from MS (in Bodleian Library Oxford?), n.p.
- 45 W. M. Gilbert (ed.), *Edinburgh in the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh 1901), pp. 185–186. Controversy delayed the Edinburgh statue till 1917, the year before Rosebery's disabling stroke, but Skinner remembered that 'at the unveiling of the MacGillivray statue of Mr Gladstone thirty-seven years later, Lord Rosebery used these striking words — We who remember can see him as he spoke, his lyart haffits streaming in the wind, his words and spirit animating the whole multitude ... What a man in character, in conscience, in labour!': Robert T. Skinner, *Yesterday and Today* (Edinburgh 1929).
- 46 The house was formerly called Lady Gray's House after Gray's widow, but was purchased in 1719 by Elizabeth Countess of Stair: see Thomas B. Whitson, 'Lady Stair's House', *BOEC*, OS 3 (1910), pp. 243–252.
- 47 Philip Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations — Literary Life in Britain 1870–1918* (Oxford 2006), p. 243, throws fascinating light on Rosebery's work as literary evangelist, stressing his work in the survival of Stevenson in Scotland: 'Rosebery proved persuasive, but the question arises, why did Edinburgh's worthies require persuasion? Perhaps it was because of lingering memories of Stevenson's raffish and godless student days and his brushes with local tradesmen, or because his corpus of work was assessed as little better than boys' yarns. Again, his migratory life made tenuous his links with the city ... Stevenson's attitude to his native country always involved irreverence.' For Burns's death centenary Rosebery spoke at both Dumfries and Glasgow on the same day, 21 July 1896: 'The Scottish dialect, as Burns called it, was in danger of perishing. Burns seemed at this juncture to start to his feet and reassert Scotland's claim to national existence; his Scottish notes rang through the world, and he thus preserved the Scottish language for ever — for mankind will never allow to die that idiom in which his songs and poems are enshrined': *Miscellanies* (note 39), I. p. 5; also pp. 3–30; and for Stevenson, *ibid.*, II. pp. 22–29, speech on 10 December 1896.
- 48 *BOEC*, OS 1 (1908), Appendix, pp. 5–10. Rosebery had assured the students of the University of Aberdeen on 5 November 1880 how 'the student of human character will surely pause over the rugged features of Knox, "who never feared the face of man"': 'Scottish History', *Miscellanies*, II, p. 60. This was probably drawn from Carlyle's essay on the portraits of John Knox, apparently his last work (and within three months Carlyle would be dead). Hay brought out his *Old Edinburgh Portfolio* in 1912, containing three line drawings by Philip B. Whelpley:



- of the Old Playhouse Close, Canongate (south side, behind what is now 200 Canongate), with a well tentatively linked to the Knights of St John (and on land definitely consecrated in medieval times to St John the Baptist) formerly containing the playhouse where the Revd John Home (1722–1808) had his *Douglas* premiered in 1756; of Craigmillar Castle (where, Hay assured his purchasers, Mary Queen of Scots plotted the murder of Darnley — his version of her recuperation after witnessing the murder of Rizzio); and of ‘Queen Mary’s Bath’, on the northern entry to Holyrood Palace (Hay somewhat severely instructing his purchasers that the legend of her bathing in wine was without foundation). The war ended his idea of a series and the Advocates’ Library had to struggle to get their copyright copy in 1916.
- 49 *BOEC*, OS 1 (1908), Appendix, pp. 7–8. The Club impudently dated its first volume 1908 while correctly recording proceedings at its First Annual Meeting in 1909 (‘T & A Constable’ to ‘The Keeper of the Advocate’s [sic] Library’, 31 March 1909, the Advocates Library copy being duly stamped 7 April 1908, which tells us that for that time stamp-date rapidly follows actual date of acquisition: original letter now in The National Library of Scotland (NLS) Reading Room copy).
- 50 It might be argued that Rosebery’s taste for Scott was (perhaps appropriately) operatic, since in *Napoleon: The Last Phase* (later edn, n.d.), pp. 135, 139, he makes two allusions without titular citation to *The Bride of Lammermoor*, but they are apposite in criticism of Scott’s *Napoleon*, and Rosebery’s epiphany at the Club in 1911 gave ample indication of his artistic expertise in *Waverley*. Inevitably the *Scotsman*, the *Times*, and no doubt other newspapers, highlighted Rosebery’s remarks on vanished supper clubs and visible licensing custodians, drink presumably being to journalists of that day what sex is to them now (to judge by content). The Town Clerk was Thomas Hunter WS. He too was a founding member of the OEC.
- 51 Rosebery’s prickliness in reply to Paul may have been partly activated by Paul’s then editing the *Scots Peerage* (1904–14) and about to reach volume VII (Edinburgh 1910), pp. 212–229, which would include Rosebery. According to Paul, ‘A Lyon’s Tale’, *Blackwood’s Magazine*, vol. 317 (February 1974) Paul week-ended with Rosebery in Dalmeny in January 1909, where he noted and retained details such as a footstool said to have belonged to Mary Queen of Scots having cost Rosebery £200. Perhaps Rosebery’s irritation resulted from Paul’s trespass from interest to inquisitiveness.
- 52 *BOEC*, OS 2 (1909, issued to members July 1910), Appendix, pp. 10–11.
- 53 *Scotsman*, 24 November 1885.
- 54 Gladstone to Victoria, 9 February 1885; Victoria to Gladstone, 10 February 1885, in Philip Guedalla (ed.), *The Queen and Mr Gladstone 1880–1898* (London 1933), p. 331. Victoria to her daughter Victoria, Crown Princess of Germany, 17 February 1886, 30 November 1892, 1 July 1895, 5 November 1898, in Agatha Ramm (ed.), *Beloved and Darling Child — Last Letters between Queen Victoria and her eldest Daughter, 1886–1901* (Stroud [1990] 1998), pp. 29, 150, 178, 222. Victoria, Memorandum, 28 January 1886, Victoria to Rosebery, 13 February 1886, Victoria Journal, 8 June 1886; Victoria Journal 17 July 1892; Victoria to her son Albert Edward Prince of Wales, 13 August 1892; Victoria, Journal, 18 August 1892, 3 March 1894, 5 March 1894; Victoria to Rosebery, 11 March 1894, Memorandum, 22 June 1895, in Christopher Hibbert (ed.), *Queen Victoria in her Letters and Journals* (Stroud 2000), pp. 296, 297, 299, 307, 322, 323, 327, 328, 330. Lewis Harcourt, Journal, 27 January 1886, 2 and 3 February 1886, in Patrick Jackson (ed.), *Loulou — Selected Extracts from the Journals of Lewis Harcourt, 1880–1895* (Madison NJ 2006), pp. 125, 128. Frank Hardie, *Political Influence of the British Monarchy, 1868–1952* (London 1970), pp. 15, 18, 30, 52, 58, 68, 69, 82, 83–84. Michael Bentley, *Lord Salisbury’s World* (Cambridge 2001), p. 163.
- 55 Victoria to Rosebery, 21 July 1887, Hibbert, *Victoria Letters and Journals*, p. 307.
- 56 Rosebery, ‘Scottish History’, *Miscellanies* (note 39), II, pp. 54, 56.
- 57 Victoria to her daughter Victoria, 1 July 1895, Ramm, *Beloved and Darling Child*.
- 58 He did not, of course, see all of these things all the time, but they are consistent enough to permeate his major biographies, apart from Woodrow Wilson’s undocumented citation of Rosebery in his PhD thesis at Johns Hopkins, later published as *Congressional Government* (Boston, Mass, 1885), Rosebery (presumably quoted by US journalists during his 1874 – or much more likely – September–October 1883 US visit: Arthur S Link’s edition of the text in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (Princeton NJ) is as destitute of reference as the original) having called the United States Senate ‘the most powerful and efficient Second Chamber that exists’. Wilson was impressed by this ‘testimony from the oldest ... Second Chamber in the world’ but few Lords echoed Rosebery’s anxiety to draw lessons in Lords reform from the Senate.
- 59 Harry Lord Dalmeny (1882–1974), sixth Earl of Rosebery from 1929, also Honorary President of the OEC for his last twenty years or so, had been asked by the Campbell-Bannerman government of 1906 to second the Lords motion to thank the King (i.e. the Government) for his speech opening Parliament, a favour Rosebery himself had refused in 1871 and accepted in 1873, regarding it as a symbolic declaration of loyalty to the Government. Rosebery forbade Dalmeny to accept, on pain of paternal repudiation. On mature reflection it was not mere petulance: Rosebery wished to leave himself in the clear for possible royal commission to form an alternative government in which he would hardly seem an alternative to his former party if his son was manifestly rising in its ranks. His language was brutal but Dalmeny was not bright.
- 60 NLS, Rosebery MS 10016, Rosebery to the King (draft), 21 October 1906. The Lord Provost in the unenviable role of Aunt Sally when Rosebery chaired the First Annual Meeting was Sir James Puckering Gibson (1849–1912), given a baronetcy by the Asquith Government in 1909, whereafter he served as MP for Edinburgh East from April 1909 till death. W. Forbes Gray, prominent among his OEC constituents, recalled Rosebery’s ‘It is a great thing for a man to be chosen by the wishes of his fellow-citizens to be the first citizen of this ancient capital’ in a speech whose recipient might well

- feel a double edge to the compliment: *An Edinburgh Miscellany* (Edinburgh [1925]), p. 158.
- 61 Evelyn Strutt, Baroness Rayleigh, *Diary*, 7 March 1894, quoted in Max Egremont, *Balfour* (London 1980), p. 128. Balfour also complained about Rosebery's self-advertisement, which was pretty rich for the nephew of the Prime Minister Robert Marquess of Salisbury, who appointed him Secretary for Scotland in 1886, thereby making immortal the gag 'Bob's Your Uncle'. NLS, Rosebery MS 10016, Edward VII to Rosebery, 22 October 1906.
  - 62 *Ibid.*, Seymour Fortescue to Rosebery (telegram from Sandringham), Edward VII to Rosebery, 1 October 1909.
  - 63 [Anon., but presumably by Buchan or under his influence], Nelson's Library, *King Edward the Seventh* (London [1910]), pp. 258–259.
  - 64 Wilfred Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries: Being a Personal Narrative of Events 1888–1914* (London [1922]), II, pp. 290–291. There is a possibility that the conversation took place somewhat later.
  - 65 Cameron Hazelhurst (ed.), *Liberal Chronicle: Journals and Papers of J[oseph] A[lfred] Pease, 1st Baron Gainsford, 1908–1910* (London [1994]).
  - 66 Lord Francis Douglas (1846–1865) was killed on the Matterhorn with disastrous effects on the sanity of his brother, John Sholto Douglas (1844–1900), eighth Marquess of Queensberry, among whose probable delusions was his charge that Rosebery was the lover of Queensberry's eldest son, Francis Lord Drumlanrig (1867–1894), a charge he also made against Oscar Wilde in relation to his third son, Lord Alfred Douglas (1870–1945). Rosebery was probably completely innocent but the danger of Queensberry attempting to implicate him in the Wilde scandal may have near-paralysed him in the last months of his premiership. Rosebery's friend Sir Edward Hamilton noted that after the first jury in *Regina versus Wilde & Taylor* had disagreed, Rosebery in a speech a few days later suddenly dried up, forgetting what he meant to say (without having been interrupted). That was on 9 May; on 13 May Rosebery went on a cruise in the Government yacht *Enchantress*; on 20 May he returned, Hamilton noting reports that his cruise had done the Prime Minister much good; also on 20 May: 'The Oscar Wilde and Taylor cases have been brought forward again; and unless there is some cantankerous jurymen a verdict is confidently expected this time. A verdict of guilty would remove what appears to be a wide-felt impression that the Judge and Jury were on the last occasion got at, in order to shield others of a higher status in life.' And on 25 May: 'Oscar Wilde and Taylor had each got 2 years with hard labour. I am more glad than I can say about the verdict, for I never had a shadow of doubt about the guilt of the two beasts, and there was I am sure a very prevalent suspicion abroad that the Government were trying to hush up the case in order to screen certain people of high rank in life': Sir Edward Walter Hamilton, *The Destruction of Lord Rosebery, 1894–1895* (London [1987?]), pp. 247, 249–50. Rosebery is clearly the person of high rank and status most firmly in Hamilton's mind. On the other hand it seems unlikely that Rosebery himself would have discussed the matter with anyone. The Home Secretary, Asquith, insisted on a further trial of Wilde to protect the Government, while the ultimate leading Counsel for the Prosecution, Sir Frank Lockwood QC, the Solicitor-General, had his own interest to protect, a relative of his wife's being involved (and not prosecuted). Any notion of Rosebery having spoken to Asquith about personal fears would render their future relations very different from what they were.
  - 67 Victoria from time to time reprimanded Rosebery in her best maternal (or grand-maternal) manner, e.g. '17 March 1894. The House of Lords might possibly be improved, but it is part and parcel of the much vaunted and admired British Constitution and cannot be abolished. It is the only really independent House, for it is not bound as the House of Commons is, where they are constantly made to say what would not otherwise do by their constituents, whom they try to please in order to be elected.' And '9 April 1894. The Queen cannot but think that some day even Lord Rosebery may be thankful for the power and independence of the Peers. There are some who whisper that many Gladstonians thanked God that Home Rule was destroyed by the much-abused Peers. The Queen in conclusion would most earnestly and solemnly conjure her Prime Minister not to let her Ministers join in any attempt to excite the passions of the people on this important subject, but rather to strive to restrain them (if they really exist, which she doubts) for once a stone is set rolling they may not be able to stop it!': Hibbert, *Victoria, Letters and Journals* (note 54), p. 328. But she never lost her affection for him, and by the end she was drawing on him for advice instead of the Prime Minister, Salisbury, who (equally unconstitutionally) she had consulted behind Gladstone's official back. In particular she thought Salisbury concealed matters from her and felt he should not remain Foreign Secretary while Prime Minister (he relinquished the Foreign Office just before she died). She also enjoyed talking to Rosebery about Sir Walter Scott and Mrs Siddons, both of whom were alive in her first decade (this from Rosebery's friend at court, Reginald Viscount Esher: see James Lees-Milne, *Enigmatic Edwardian*, London 1986, pp. 94, 125). Robert Self, *Evolution of the British Party System, 1885–1940* (Harlow 2000), p. 37, holds that Rosebery in 1894–95 was seeking to make a great 'concentrating' issue out of the Lords' obstructionism, as Gladstone had with Irish Home Rule. It made perfect sense since the Lords had just vetoed Home Rule but the Liberals ran after several other issues such as Welsh Church disestablishment, or temperance, all of which would require curbs on the House of Lords to ensure appropriate legislation, and being himself in the Lords Rosebery proved unable to direct the Liberals seeking re-election to the Commons in 1895. For his speeches see Rosebery, *Reform of the House of Lords. Three Speeches delivered in that House on 20 June 1884, 19 March 1888, and 14 March 1910* (London 1910): 'In view of the allegation constantly made that the Reform of the House of Lords has only recently come under consideration of that body, it has been thought well to reprint these three speeches'.
  - 68 Austen Chamberlain to stepmother Mary to read to his paralysed father Joseph, 27 February 1910, in Austen Chamberlain, *Politics from Inside ... 1906–1914* (London 1936), pp. 207–209.

- 69 *Ibid.*, 24 March 1910, p. 236. Rosebery's basic demand was that hereditary peers should no longer automatically take their seats in the Lords (if English), and Asquith realised that, if carried, that would 'make a clean sweep of the Crown Prerogative to add to the peers': Herbert, Earl of Oxford and Asquith, *Fifty Years of Parliament*, 2 vols (London 1926), I, p. 85. Rosebery was certainly on Edward VII's mind as a possible choice to form a Government, although, very oddly, Sir Sidney Lee, *King Edward VII*, 2 vols (London 1927), II, pp. 712–713, thought that Edward ruled Rosebery out 'for reasons of health': presumably this was some confusion in Lee's mind relating to somebody else since the King knew perfectly well that Rosebery's health was good. A. J. P. Taylor, 'The Use of Monarchy', review in *London Tribune* of Harold Nicolson, *King George the Fifth: His Life and Reign* (London 1952), reprinted in Taylor, *Essays in English History* (Harmondsworth 1976), pp. 205–206.
- 70 McKinsty, *Rosebery* (note 40), p. 510, quotes Rosebery's Diary (presumably in Dalmeny, n.d.) on Edward VII's death: 'the most cruel blow the country could sustain at this moment', which seems to mean that he expected action — or refusal of action — from Edward he did not expect from George. This — perhaps not to be admitted, even to himself — would have had a summons to Rosebery to form a government as its best result, since Asquith would not have relinquished his proposed destruction of the Peers' veto in favour of Rosebery's Reforms of the Lords, and Balfour could not (in all probability) have formed a cabinet and survived the ensuing election. George V brought out the paternal side of Rosebery, perhaps reciprocating Victoria's maternalism to him, but he did not abuse his privilege by using the King's trust to feather his own nest. A political armistice was called after Edward's death and Rosebery wrote to George in September 1910 (quoted Nicolson, *George V*, pp. 140–141): 'The King has to start without the advantages of his father and with a clear slate; but with this great advantage, that he had served in the Navy, and that he knows the Empire and has expressed his interest in the Empire by innumerable words and deeds. But it is *now* that he has to give colour and stamp to his reign. *He will be judged by the next two years*. If he wishes to make his reign illustrious, he will have to give up the next two years to that task, and give himself up to that and nothing else, just as an ambitious and patriotic Minister would do. He must make himself felt all the time. He must make it clear to his subjects that he is in earnest and industrious, as indeed he is. That should be the stamp of his reign. He should show that he is willing to deny himself any pleasure to do his duty; more, that he is ready to do anything disagreeable to himself. This is a hard saying, but most truths are hard. There is something harder still. He must remember that every word of a King is treasured in this country as if it were God's; that he cannot speak without the chance of his words being noted, and carried, even by servants. To his intimate friends he can no doubt unbosom himself, but even this with precaution ... Besides devotion to duty and reticence there is something else to be noted, and that is the instinct of striking the imagination.' There was no Bolingbroke fuelling a 'patriot King' to defy what Government he may have inherited. Rosebery would have known that George, like Edward, disliked the removal of the Lords' veto, but Rosebery's very necessary advice to George not to follow his father's self-indulgence and pursuit of sexual pleasure in an increasingly press-dominated public life meant that he was also closing the door to Edward's possible readiness for constitutional independence for himself. And George was a literalist, not given to nuances even of the crude variety employed by his father. If Rosebery was telling George to be ready to do anything disagreeable to himself, that meant George not doing what he would have wanted to do in the case of the Lords and defy the government. (It also meant George doing what he did in the Navy, and obeying orders from the Captain commanding where the craft would go, however unwanted such orders might be.) Rosebery was right: Edward might have carried off a refusal to appoint 500 peers, an acceptance of Asquith's resignation, a summons to Rosebery to form anything from a caretaker government to a Centre party; George, neither in temperament nor in experience, could hope to do so. Rosebery was not present in the Liberal-Tory conference where the party chiefs writhed in vain for compromise in late 1910, and his attempts at Lords Reform were set aside for obstructionist proposals by Lansdowne. For Rosebery's instructions from George to vote for the veto, see McKinsty, *Rosebery*, p. 512, quoting Esher.
- 71 'Report of the Twentieth Annual Meeting of the Old Edinburgh Club', *BOEC*, 16 (1928), Appendix, p. 4.
- 72 One of the nicest cracks is what seems to be a joke at Buchan's expense. Lord Appin remarks that 'Hugh' (Buchan's self-portrait in *A Lodge in the Wilderness*) 'I think, is one of those peculiar people who go back to Kant and misunderstand that great man's meaning' (Edinburgh [1906] 1950), p. 52. It may repeat a moment in Buchan's conversations with Rosebery.
- 73 Buchan, 'Lord Rosebery', reprinted in John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir), *Comments and Characters* (London 1940), pp. 297–302. The book is mutilated by the snobbish anachronism of names of persons subsequently given peerages being rendered in their aristocratic form, although the editor, W. Forbes Gray, insisted on calling him 'John Buchan' in the introduction and takes this to be Buchan's own preference (p. vn) but (p. 3n) 'it has been thought desirable to refer' to subsequently ennobled persons 'as if that dignity had already been bestowed': Forbes Gray would seem to wash his hands of this ukase, possibly imposed by Buchan's widow, or by Nelson's, publishers of the book and proprietors of the *Scottish Review*.
- 74 For Forbes Gray, *Who Was Who 1941-1950* (London 1952), p. 463; Henry M. Paton, 'William Forbes Gray: An Appreciation', *BOEC*, 28 (1953), pp. 180–187, also 'Report of the Forty-Third Annual Meeting of the Old Edinburgh Club', Appendix, p. 6. W. Forbes Gray, *Books That Count* (London 1912), pp. 15–16, 47, 51, 54–55 (these numbers designate columns, not pages). Buchan, 'The Reform of the Upper Chamber', *Scottish Review*, 10 December 1908, reprinted in Buchan, *Comments and Characters*, pp. 32–35. Rosebery's 'efficiency' signature tune may be found in many of his works, e.g. his foreword to Alfred Stead, *Great Japan* (London 1906), pp. vii–xiii.

- 75 For Blaikie and his father see *ODNB*; for Blaikie himself 'Report of the Twenty-First Annual Meeting of the Old Edinburgh Club', *BOEC*, 17 (1929), Appendix, pp. 3–4, noting his Presidency 1909–14, and Honorary Vice-Presidency from 1919 until death. See also [D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson *et al.*], *Walter Biggar Blaikie, 1847–1928* (Edinburgh 1929). 'Cummy' was Alison Cunningham (1822–1913).
- 76 H. M. Cadell, in [Thomson *et al.*], *Blaikie*, p. 50.
- 77 Unsigned tribute in [Thompson *et al.*], *Blaikie*, p. 57.
- 78 Rosebery to *Scotsman*, reprinted in W. K. Dickson, 'Scottish History Society', in William Croft Dickinson, *The Court Book of the Barony of Carnwath 1523–1542* (SHS Publications, 3rd series, XXIX, 1937), pp. 3–4, at end (3 sets of pagination in this volume, with no preliminary indication).
- 79 Dickson, *ibid.*, pp. 5, 12. *A List of Persons concerned in the Rebellion transmitted to the Commissioners of Excise by the Several Supervisors in Scotland in Obedience to a General Letter of the 7th May 1746 and a Supplementary List with Evidences to Prove the Same* (SHS Publications, 1st series, VIII, 1890), with a preface by the Earl of Rosebery and annotations by the Rev. Walter Macleod.
- 80 Rosebery, address from the chair, in 'Report of the eleventh Annual Meeting of the Scottish History Society [23 November 1897], Appendix, p. 5, in A. H. Millar, *The Compt Buik of David Wedderburn, Merchant of Dundee, 1587–1630* (SHS vol. 28, 1898).
- 81 *Scotsman*, 30 January 1908.
- 82 James B. Sutherland, 'An Eighteenth-Century Survival: The Wagering Club, 1775', *BOEC*, OS 2 (1909), pp. 149–166. Sutherland was still one of the three Vice-Presidents.
- 83 The talk, 'Prince Charles in Edinburgh in 1745', given in March 1909 formed the basis for the subsequent paper 'Edinburgh at the time of the Occupation of Prince Charles', *BOEC*, OS 2 (1909), pp. 1–60.
- 84 *BOEC*, OS 3 (1910), Appendix, pp. 13–14. There are slight variants in *Times*, 31 January 1911.
- 85 *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.
- 86 We may return the compliment to Barrie by citing his charming essay on Rosebery opening *An Edinburgh Eleven* (New York n.d. [1889]), pp. 13, 14, 17–18, beginning with a direct if unspoken likening to Parnell: "The Uncrowned King of Scotland" is a title that has been made for Lord Rosebery, whose country had its faith in him from the beginning ... During the first Midlothian campaign Mr Gladstone and Lord Rosebery were the father and son of the Scottish people ... When he says agreeable things to Scotsmen about their country, there is a twinkle in his eye and in theirs to which English scribes cannot give a meaning ... In an unknown novel [presumably Barrie's] there is a character who says of himself that "he is not stupid enough ever to be a great man". I happen to know that this reflection was evolved by the author out of thinking over Lord Rosebery.'
- 87 *BOEC*, OS 3 (1910), Appendix, p. 15.
- 88 Dermot Englefield *et al.*, *Facts about the British Prime Ministers* (London 1995), p. 216 (an admirable work).