



The Old Edinburgh Club

Minute of the 115th Annual General Meeting

held at the City Chambers on 21 September 2022 at 7pm

1. Welcome

The meeting was opened by the Right Honourable Robert Aldridge, the Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh and Honorary Patron of The Old Edinburgh Club (OEC).

The Lord Provost congratulated the Club on reaching a remarkable 115th AGM and the 52nd publication of the Book of the Old Edinburgh Club. He gave thanks on behalf of the Edinburgh community for the Club's work in promoting the city's history and for the commitment and devotion of members. He welcomed the increased efforts to promote the Club and noted with interest the Club's regular 'on this day' feature on Facebook.

The Lord Provost observed that the city has largely returned to normal after the advent of COVID-19, though it is now a bit different: fairer, greener and more inclusive. It is important to sustain this.

He commented on the good fortune of the Club to have received legacies and offered his personal support. We are invited to contact him if there are ways in which he can assist us in taking advantage of this funding.

Our President, Peter Graham, thanked the Lord Provost for his welcome and words of praise and suggested that there is a great deal that can be learnt from the past in further making Edinburgh "fairer, greener and more inclusive". He also expressed the Club's appreciation of the dignity with which the Lord Provost carried out his various duties recently as the representative of our city following the death of HM Queen Elizabeth.

2. Attendance

The following members (39) were present at the AGM: Patricia Andrew, Fiona Alexander, Caroline Allan, George Allan, Alan Baillie, John Beaton, Eleanor Black, Iain Gordon Brown, Bill Buchan, James Burnet, Joanne Chapman, Margaret Collingwood, Sheila Collins, Margaret Cowan, Desmond Dooley, Gillian Ferguson, Elizabeth Hilary Fleming, Neil Fraser, Gina Gainey, Peter Graham, Sarah Hunt, Derrick Johnstone, Susan Johnstone, Pat Jones, John McAleese, Janet Macdonald, Maurice McIlwrick, Martin McMenigall, Alison Moodie, Jerry Ozaniec, Fraser Paterson, Steven Robb, Richard Rodger, Elizabeth Simpson, Murray Simpson, Wilson Smith, Maggie Wilson, Gabriel Chapman York, Fay Young.

Apologies (42) were received from: Alan Borthwick, Helen Borthwick, Andrew Boyd, Lorraine Briggs, Fiona Brownlee, Kenneth Cameron, Graeme Cruickshank, Alan Dickson, Ruby Dickson, Anne Donnelly, Tom and Ann Drake, Ted Duvall, Harold Martin Farquharson, Frances and Douglas Fettes, Dale and Niall Finlayson, Ian Fitzgerald, Catherine Hanley, Mike Harrison, Anne King, Diana Leat, Alison Macdonald, John Macdonald, Neil McGillivray, Ian McHaffie, Beryl and Alan McKinlay, Eric Melvin, Bob Morris, Hilary Mounfield, Anne Norman, Fraser

Paterson, Nancy Purves, Margaret Reay, Elizabeth Roads, Chris Stewart, Pat Storey, Essie Tough, Ian Tough, Rosemary Wake, Helen Williams.

3. Minute of the AGM held on 22 September 2021

Approved as an accurate record.

4. Items for inclusion under Other Competent Business

There were no additional items.

5. Annual Report and President's Review

OEC President Peter Graham opened by placing on record his thanks to the Club Council and the contributions its members have made to the governance and administration of the Club. With no changes in trustees since last year there has been a real sense of continuity in our discussions and decision-making.

Peter remarked that it has been heartening to resume monthly lectures in Augustine United Church, and at the same time to have members join online. However, there have been gaps in our audiences, particularly last autumn. He rued the missed opportunities for us all to become better acquainted. Similarly, our trustee meetings on Zoom have limited the number of possibilities for face-to-face conversations before and after the formal business.

Peter formally thanked the Secretary, Treasurer and Editor following their individual reports later in the agenda. In his review he complimented several other trustees for their considerable contributions to the smooth running of the Club.

- Membership Secretary, Jerry Ozaniec who looks after our membership lists and event registration, and makes a daily OEC contribution on Facebook.
- Council Member, Alison Macdonald who maintains the Club's Twitter account as well as leading on promotion of the Bibliography of Edinburgh History.
- Programme Secretary, Richard Rodger who each year succeeds in arranging an interesting and varied series of speakers.
- Publicity Officer, Pat Jones, who has provided promotional material for our lecture programme and looked after arrangements for live streaming of talks.
- Vice-President, Dr Ted Duvall, who has been leading a group from the Club's Council looking at ways of promoting the Club. We recognise the importance of word-of-mouth and encourage our members to let others know of the Club's activities.

The major development this year has been the receipt of two bequests, unusual in the Club's history. Not only has the Club received monies from the late Miss Jean Butchart (anticipated at last year's AGM) but also a further £133,000 from another former member of the Club, Miss Jean Guild. Miss Butchart had been generous to the Club in the past, helping to pay for the digitisation of the first series of the Book of the Old Edinburgh Club.

There are no restrictions on the use of these legacies. A small sub-committee has been considering how best to use this considerable sum of money in furthering the objectives of the Club. It has met twice and we invite members to contribute to our thinking this evening.

Peter concluded by commending the Annual Report, which will now be submitted to the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator. The [Report](#) can be downloaded from the Club's website.

Please see Appendix 1 for the President's review.

6. Secretary's Report

Honorary Secretary, Derrick Johnstone reported on the near-full restoration of Club activities with the added bonus of live streaming of our talks, to the benefit those who are not able to come in person, whether living in Edinburgh or further afield. The Club is very grateful to the Augustine United Church for making this possible.

Highlights of the 2021-22 lecture programme included Roger Jeffery on 'India in Edinburgh: 1750s to the Present'; Nicholas Uglow with 'Meet me at Binns', the history of the store at the West End and its conversion to become the Johnnie Walker Experience; and Dr Rebecca Mason with her delve into the lives of widows and their finances in early modern Scotland. Summer visits are also back and featured the bicentenaries of King George IV's visit and the opening the Union Canal, and an Old Town trail through Edinburgh's printing heritage. As ever, we are very grateful to our lecturers and our walk leaders.

Circumstances prevented us from running our Member's Evening in December and apologise to those members who had prepared a short talk.

During the year we updated the OEC Bibliography of Edinburgh History, accessible via our website. This serves as the 'go to' place to explore the wealth of what's been written about the history of Edinburgh. We have put effort into promoting the Bibliography and seen its use increase significantly.

We continue to support the Edinburgh Southside Graveyard Project in restoring headstones which have been laid flat for safety reasons. It works with the City of Edinburgh Council by providing constructive opportunities to participants on the Community Payback Programme. Progress was stalled by COVID and we now await the appointment of a Community Payback manager by the Council. Derrick acknowledged the remarkable contribution of Alan McKinney who led this project and his earlier role as Treasurer of the Club. Alan died early in the year and is much missed.

The OEC Prize at the University of Edinburgh open to Master's students was not awarded this year, with no nomination made by the University.

Membership of the Club has dropped slightly (4.5%), with 357 members at the year-end. We want to turn round what has been a gradual, long-term trend, and have a working group leading on this. We have built the numbers of our followers on Facebook and Twitter, with nearly 2,400 followers on Facebook and over 1,500 on Twitter.

We have improved the OEC website, introducing an online membership form and making it easier to identify sources to find out more about the history of Edinburgh. We recently added content about the history of the Club and a blog about one of summer walks, written by John McAleese, Council Member. We very much welcome contributions from members to this new blog section. These could

include, for instance, reflections or reviews of our lectures and visits, or short articles on your own research or topics of interest.

Derrick closed by saying thank you to members for supporting the club and to his fellow Council members for helping in various ways behind the scenes. He also encouraged members to put themselves forward to join the Council in future. With the legacy funds, it is an exciting time for the Club and there is much to do in carrying the Club forward.

Please see Appendix 2 for the Secretary's report.

7. Treasurer's Report

Unfortunately our Treasurer, Mike Harrison was unable to attend give his report to the meeting in person. Secretary Derrick Johnstone stood in and made the following remarks on the Club's accounts contained in the Annual Report:

- The Club's finances are very healthy given our recent legacies.
- We are now up-to-date in recouping Gift Aid from the Inland Revenue and interest on our savings account (£28.83 over three years!). We have also obtained £739 through the Publishers Licensing Services scheme (Copyright Licensing Agency).

Club policy is to maintain £15,000 in reserves, a level more than capable of meeting the printing and distribution costs of the Book of the Old Edinburgh Club.

The Club Constitution requires us to state our policy on subscriptions. We do not propose any change at the moment, although we need to keep this policy under review in light of our work in promoting membership and in meeting rising running costs.

8. Re-election of our Independent Examiner, Stuart Lockhart

Approved

9. Editor's Report

The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club Editor, Dr Wilson Smith celebrated the distinctiveness of the latest issue, Volume 17 (New Series) in providing a variety of approaches to writing about the history of Edinburgh. Its eight articles feature:

- biographical content on the irascible Orientalist John Borthwick Gilchrist by Antonia Simpson and Roger Jeffery, and Diana Leat's portrait of the philanthropist and author Catherine Sinclair.
- institutional perspectives with accounts of the Royal Botanic Garden by its director Simon Milne, 19th century Treasury funding of the University of Edinburgh by Ian Levitt, and Maximilian Knight's article on the British Linen Company and its involvement in slavery, adapted from his BSc thesis which was awarded the 2021 Old Edinburgh Club Prize
- plus a mix of local and cultural history, in Douglas Baugh's meticulous reconstruction of the early history of Morningside, Gillian Raab's examination of Edinburgh's Jewish communities, and Patricia Andrew's account of the career of the John Thomson painting Edinburgh from Hillside.

As last year, copies of the Book were distributed by post. This has proved an efficient method for a small additional outlay. The OEC Council will keep this under review.

Wilson heartily thanked this year's authors and the Book's Advisory Board. He invited Club members to provide feedback, suggestions and contributions in future.

Please see Appendix 3 for the Editor's Report.

10. Constitutional amendment

Minor changes were proposed to item 6 of the OEC Constitution, with the addition of 'Web Manager' to the list of office-bearers and a reduction in the maximum number of Ordinary Members from nine to eight. This amendment was approved and item 6 of the Constitution now reads,

"The affairs of the Club shall be managed by a Council of paid-up members of the Club, consisting of the following Office-bearers: the President, Vice President(s), Secretary, Treasurer, Programme Secretary, Membership Secretary, Editor, Publicity Officer, Minutes Secretary, Web Manager and up to eight Ordinary Members."

11. Election of Office Bearers and Council

11.1 Office Bearers

Members approved the following new nominations for Council officer bearers:

- Dr Iain Gordon Brown as a second Honorary Vice President
- Dr Ted Duvall as President in succession to Rev W Peter Graham who has completed his three-year term
- Ms Alison Macdonald as a second Vice President

Dr Gordon Brown deeply appreciated his appointment, having previously been a President of the Club.

The following office-bearers continue in their current roles:

Honorary President:	Lord Cullen of Whitekirk
Honorary Vice President:	Professor Robert J Morris
Vice President:	Steven Robb
Hon. Treasurer:	Mike Harrison
Hon. Secretary & Minutes Secretary:	Derrick Johnstone
Editor:	Dr Wilson Smith
Membership Secretary:	Jerry Ozaniec
Programme Secretary:	Prof Richard Rodger
Publicity Officer:	Mrs Pat Jones

11.2 Appointment of Council members

The President reminded the AGM that Council members other than the office-bearers are elected for a term of three years. He thanked Dr Diana Leat and Dr Neil MacGillivray for their contribution over the past three years since their appointment in September 2019.

Members approved the nomination of Andrew Boyd, WS as a Council member, joining our other remaining Council member, Dr John McAleese who was co-opted in November 2020.

No additional for nominations were made before or at this point in the meeting.

12. Closing remarks

The President closed the meeting by thanking all members participating and looked forward to another successful year in the life of the Club.

This was followed by a vote of thanks from the floor by Prof Richard Rodger who congratulated Peter for his conduct as President, leading renewed vitality in Club affairs.



Edward Duvall
President, The Old Edinburgh Club

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## Legacy Funds

**At the close of the formal business OEC Secretary, Derrick Johnstone introduced initial proposals from the OEC Council for a grants programme as one means of making good use of our legacy funds.**

Derrick explained the current thinking of the OEC Council in seeking to use the legacy funds wisely, focusing on a possible ‘Jean Ritchie Grants’ programme, which would embody wider principles for other uses of the funds. This is not an entirely new activity for the Club, having in the past helped to fund projects in the past such as the Southside Graveyards Project, the Dean of Guild plans database and research for the ‘Public Sculpture of Edinburgh’ publication. The Club will acknowledge Jean Butchart’s generosity in some other way.

The programme, to be run as a pilot, would address the aims of the Club: *“The study and support of all aspects of the history of Edinburgh, and the promotion and encouragement of interest in Edinburgh by means of lectures, visits, publications and appropriate activities for public benefit.”* Proposed objectives would be to:

- support original research
- make records more accessible and promote their use
- present existing research and knowledge to attract new audiences
- involve Edinburgh residents in history projects

There would also be an expectation that the funds would one way or another strengthen the Club itself, in helping to raise the Club’s profile, attract new members and enhance what the Club offers existing members. The funds will be invested to attract a good return while the capital is gradually deployed in pursuit of Club objectives.



It would be open to:

- independent researchers, postgraduate students and early career academics
- local history groups and organisations, schools and colleges

There could be two strands:

- *Research, dissemination and access* (involving, eg, print and online publications; transcribed and/ or digitised records and databases; finding aids)
- *Bringing history to life* (through, eg, exhibitions, interpretation boards, subject guides and trails)

Suggestions from the floor for the programme and the wider use of the Legacy Funds included:

- further digitisation of the Book of the Old Edinburgh Club
- cataloguing and indexing City Archives and Central Library collections, and digitising finding aids
- promoting the Club itself (by, eg, sponsoring a building on Doors Open Day; building a Club presence on Wikipedia)
- ensuring widespread promotion to attract diverse applicants for the grants programme
- extending outreach to schools and possibly running a schools competition

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Appendix 1 President's Report to OEC AGM

In submitting the Annual Report for 2021-2022 I wish to place on record my thanks to the Club Council and the contributions its members have made to the governance and administration of the Club. The team has remained unchanged since last year and this has provided a real sense of continuity in our discussions and decision-making.

The Council has continued to hold its meetings on Zoom. While eliminating the need for any of us to leave the comfort of our homes, particularly on a cold winter's evening, in many ways I have missed the opportunity to meet with my fellow Trustees face-to-face and to engage in conversation with them before and after our formal business.

While it was good to be able to resume our monthly lecture series in Augustine United Church, and at the same time to have members joining us online, I was aware of the gaps in our audiences, particularly in the autumn of last year. Again, I regret the missed opportunities for all of us to become better acquainted.

I shall take the opportunity after each of their Reports to thank on your behalf the Secretary, Treasurer, and Editor.

As I said last year, it is always invidious to single out some for praise while seemingly ignoring others. However, since some office bearers do not report directly to the AGM, I mention four of them:

- Jerry Ozaniec who looks after our membership lists, invites us to sign up for meetings and visits, and ensures that there is a daily contribution from the Club on Facebook.
- Although not an office bearer, Alison Macdonald should be mentioned at this point, since it is she who looks after the Club's Twitter account as well as leading on promotion of the Bibliography of Edinburgh History. Although I am (not yet) a regular user of Twitter or Facebook, I recognise the great potential of the social media for reaching a far wider audience than we will ever attract to lectures or visits or who will read the contents of the Book. Social media can make people aware of some aspects of our City's rich past, not least some of the significant events, people and buildings figuring in its history. This is surely one highly effective way of pursuing our purpose of promoting interest in the history of Edinburgh in all its aspects.
- Each year our Programme Secretary, Richard Rodger, succeeds in arranging for the Club an interesting and varied series of speakers. In the past year we had a full programme of Lectures, albeit without the planned Members' Evening in December. And in three weeks' time our next series of Lectures begins with a presentation on Going to the Pictures. Not for the first time we shall realise that history is a continuum, that we ourselves are part of it, that as we nostalgically reminisce about our experiences, we are living the story.
- Our Publicity Officer, Pat Jones, has been busy throughout the lecture programme setting up and dismantling the equipment necessary not only for the benefit of those present in person but also for those viewing remotely. With her we are always ways of publicising our programme and promoting the Club's activities. We have decided for the time being not to have a printed leaflet but to rely much more on social media and, what is still the most effective method of recruitment of new members, word of mouth and personal invitation.
- And there is our Vice-President, Dr Ted Duvall, who has been leading a group from the Club's Council looking at ways of promoting the Club.

I would also like to thank Dr Diana Leat and Dr Neil McGillivray for their very helpful contributions to the work of the Council over the past three years as OEC Council Members. They come to the end of their terms of office, as do I, and are not immediately eligible for re-election.

Traditionally, Annual Meetings look back over the past twelve months. What the Club has achieved in that time is described in the Annual Report and the Secretary will be referring to these achievements and the various ongoing projects initiated by the Club. However, this Annual Report has an item which I have not seen in recent annual reports. To be honest I have not checked all the Statements of Accounts since 1908, but I am confident that in its 115 years of existence the Club has never received not one, but two generous legacies in close succession.

A year ago, I was able to inform you that the Club had received a legacy of £10,000 from the estate of the late Miss Jean Butchart, who died on 1 April 2020 aged 100. Her father, Robert Butchart, was Edinburgh City Librarian from 1942 until 1953, and had a considerable collection of prints and drawings of Edinburgh. He wrote about these for volume 25 of the Book under the title 'Drawings of Old Edinburgh'. In October 1982, Miss Butchart presented her father's personal collection to

Edinburgh Central Library. The Club is grateful to her for her support over the years, not least for a gift originally intended to assist with the editing of the Index for Volumes 22 to 35 of the original Series but eventually used, with her permission, to assist with the digitisation of the whole series.

Your Council had not discussed in detail how best to use Miss Butchart's bequest when we received word of a further legacy, from Miss Jean Guild, a former member of the Club. To say that we were all amazed when we discovered the extent of her generosity is an understatement. The initial payment amounted to £115,000 and a final settlement has been made of over £18,000.

There are no restrictions on the use of this legacy. A small sub-committee has been considering how best to use the considerable sum of money now available to further the objectives of the Club. It has met twice and later this evening you will all have an opportunity to contribute to the Council's thinking and planning.

With these remarks I have pleasure in submitting the Annual Report for 2021-2022 and inviting you to receive it.

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## **Appendix 2      Secretary's Report**

COVID-19 may not be over but we have restored our activities, with a well-attended programme of visits this summer and most of our lectures in person at the Augustine United Church. Plus we now offer the bonus of live streaming of our talks, to the benefit those who are not able to come in person, whether living in Edinburgh or further afield. We're very grateful to AUC for investing in the technology and to Graham Rule for supporting us in its use.

Wilson Smith will shortly report on progress with the Book of the Old Edinburgh Club, while I now run through our other activities.

I'll briefly touch on four aspects: events, projects, promotion and the Club itself.

### **Events**

In 2021-22 we returned nearly to normal with our events programme, with six lectures and eight walks and visits. Talks notably included those by Professor Roger Jeffery, drawing on his research for his book, *India in Edinburgh: 1750s to the Present*; Nicholas Uglow, titled *Meet me at Binns*, on the history of the store at the West End and its conversion to become the Johnnie Walker Experience; and a delve into the lives of widows and their finances in early modern Scotland with Dr Rebecca Mason.

The coming year's programme kicks off on 12 October with Trevor Griffiths on what should be a fascinating topic of *Going to the Pictures in Edinburgh*. Dates and topics of talks through to March 2023 are on our website.

Two sets of our summer walks celebrated Edinburgh bicentenaries, those of King George IV's visit and the opening the Union Canal. The Old Town trail on Edinburgh's printing heritage also proved popular, and you can read about this in a blog post by Council member, John McAleese, on our website.

We were not, however, able to run our Member's Evening in December and apologise to those members who had prepared a short talk. We shall again hold such an evening this December on a theme to be announced. These have been popular events in the past, providing opportunities for members to contribute and mix.

## Projects

During the year we updated the OEC Bibliography of Edinburgh History, accessible via our website. This serves as the 'go to' place to explore the wealth of what's been written about the history of Edinburgh. We have put effort into promoting the Bibliography through social media and direct contact with history and heritage organisations, and seen use of the Bibliography increase significantly. A further update of the Bibliography has been commissioned from Dr Malcom Noble, to be available in 2024.

We continue to support the Edinburgh Southside Graveyard Project in restoring headstones which have been laid flat for safety reasons. It works with the City of Edinburgh Council by providing constructive opportunities to participants on the Community Payback Programme. The project has been in abeyance thanks to COVID-19 working restrictions and now awaits the appointment of a new Community Payback manager in the Council. We have £2,100 in reserved funds for the project, to be used in conjunction with the Grange Association or other local groups. Sadly Alan McKinney who led this project died during the year. Alan was a past Treasurer of the OEC and he is much missed.

The OEC Prize at the University of Edinburgh open to Master's students was not awarded this year, with no nomination made by the University. The University has still to confirm how they wish to determine the award; however, we expect a nomination for the 2022-23 Prize to be made early next year.

## Membership and Promoting the Club

Membership has dropped slightly (4.5%), with 357 members at the year-end. We want to turn round what has been a gradual, long-term trend, and have a working group leading on this.

We have built the numbers of our followers on Facebook and Twitter, with nearly 2,400 followers on Facebook and over 1,500 on Twitter. We use these to promote events (our own and those of other organisations) along with topical historical news and stories of local interest.

We have improved the website, introducing an online membership form and making it easier to identify sources to find out more about the history of Edinburgh. We recently added content about the history of the Club and a blog about one of summer walks.

We want to publish short pieces in a new blog section, and welcome contributions from members. These could be, for instance, reflections or reviews of our lectures and visits, or short articles on your own research or topics of interest.

## Management of the Club

The Club is managed by a Council (see agenda item 10) drawn from our membership under Peter's leadership as President. We serve as charity trustees,



responsible for steering the Club, overseeing its finances and maintaining the governance standards expected by the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator.

In the past year our Council met six times, reviewing finance, membership, events and publicity, and developing new ideas. Recent attention has focused on the use of our legacy monies, reported by our President.

I would like to close by saying thank you to all of you for supporting the club and to my fellow Council members for helping me in various ways behind the scenes.

Finally, please do think about putting yourself forward to join the Council in future. With our legacy funds, it is an exciting time for the Club, there's much to do in carrying the Club forward and we welcome new ideas.

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Appendix 3 Editor's Report, Book of the Old Edinburgh Club

The seventeenth volume of the new series of the Book of the Old Edinburgh Club was distributed to Club members in March of this year. Distribution was once again by mail, direct from our printers McAllisters in Glasgow. Originally undertaken as an expedient during Covid restrictions, direct mailing continues to offer an efficient service at a relatively small additional outlay; although this will no doubt be kept under review by OEC Council in future years.

This year's volume includes eight substantive articles which demonstrate the variety of approaches to writing Edinburgh's history which distinguishes the BOEC.

From a biographical point of view we have Antonia Simpson and Roger Jeffery on the irascible Orientalist John Borthwick Gilchrist, and Diana Leat's portrait of the philanthropist and author Catherine Sinclair.

The institutional perspective gives us an account of Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Garden by its director Simon Milne; an examination of nineteenth-century Treasury funding of the University of Edinburgh by Ian Levitt, continuing his series on this theme; and Maximilian Knight's article on the British Linen Company and its involvement in slavery, adapted from his BSc thesis which was awarded the 2021 Old Edinburgh Club Prize.

For local history we have Douglas Baugh's meticulous reconstruction of the early history of Morningside; for cultural, Gillian Raab's examination of Edinburgh's Jewish communities; and for the history of art and art collecting, Patricia Andrew's account of the career of the John Thomson painting Edinburgh from Hillside.

Our congratulations and thanks go to all these authors – without their contribution, and that of our book reviewers, this latest volume of the Book would plainly not have been possible. Thanks also for the continuing support of OEC Council members, and the Book's Advisory Board. And, to you, the Club members, a reminder that comments, suggestions, and further contributions are always welcome. With your support the Book of the Old Edinburgh Club can continue to thrive.