W. Forbes Gray, ‘St. John Street: An Early Civic Improvement’,
Book of the Old Edinburgh Club, Original Series 28 (1953), pp. 59–75.

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before the kirk annuals passed from the possession of the chapter. Those in Scots, being in a rather later hand, may have been added after Queen Mary's charter donated the kirk lands and revenues to the Town. Unfortunately few of the notes throw much light on the position of properties in the Town. The land of John of St. Michael under the Castle wall on the south side of the High Street has the note '*et nunc est terra domini de Innerleyth*'—that is High Riggs, much later acquired by the Town. The land of John Dee in Booth Row is described as '*terra uxoris Lytill*' and later as 'William Littells land quher his hous is,' thus dating the note at or near the time when William Little, provost of Edinburgh, lived. George Lauder's land is described as 'the land abone the entres of the flesche mercat.' Among the endowments of the Virgin's altar the land of Christian Maltmaker is noted as James Brown's in the cunzie nuik—that is at the head of the Cowgate opposite the Greyfriars. The land of the successive Alexander Napiers, provosts, was, we learn, situated 'at the bow heid.'

Before all the pages of the book were used, its usefulness had ceased. The last entry records the Council's assumption of their new acquisition: '25 July 1579 the quhilk day at command of the Counsall this buke of annuellis contening twenty four writtin lewis deliverit to John Johnsoun collectour (signed) J. Guthrye.' Why the Council had waited for ten years after the granting of their charter of the Kirklands remains a matter unsolved. Possibly they had to wait for the death of the last prebendary.

MARGUERITE WOOD.

ST. JOHN STREET: AN EARLY CIVIC IMPROVEMENT *

ST. JOHN STREET, which takes its name from the ancient Cross which stood in the Canongate, is distinctively associated with an early attempt at civic improvement, an effort of a group of enterprising citizens to depart from the time-honoured rule of having their habitations amid the squalor, inconvenience and lack of privacy of the Royal Mile, and to find new homes where domestic life could be cultivated with a sense of decency and refinement. Yet St. John Street was hardly a palliative from the congested state of the Old Town. 'Long after the Canongate had been deserted by its courtly occupants,' writes Charles Cowan in his *Reminiscences*, 'St. John Street was tenanted by not a few both of the rural and city aristocracy. From its being a private street—"No thoroughfare"—it was a quiet, cheerful locality, and was guarded by an ancient seneschal in faded uniform who . . . barred all entrance to carriages and carts, except for the use of the residents.' The Street Porter, of whom much will be said later on, lived at No. 1, a 'common stair,' says Cowan but the Minute Book of the proprietors make it clear that there was last century a Porter's Lodge. It was a building apart, as there is an entry about repairing the roof.

While James Brown was rearing the north side of George Square, a row of substantial, heavy-looking tenements was being erected on the east side of St. John Street. This was in 1768, that date appearing on a lintel at a rear entrance.

* This Paper by Mr. Forbes Gray was the last contribution from his pen, sent to me less than a week before his death on 12th May 1950.—ED.

eminently their concern. Families of this sort controlled the property and insisted upon refinement and gentlemanlike bearing as indispensable passports to their social class.

Yet, setting aside the commercially-minded and the aristocratic, the professional class was predominant. Two eminent judges found St. John Street an attractive suburb, and settled there—Lords Monboddo and Eskgrove, two personages who adorned the Bench of the Court of Session (see the writer's *Some Old Scots Judges*). Monboddo, whose family name was Burnet, was a forerunner of Darwin, and proclaimed in the eighteenth century that the monkey was our common ancestor. When the colonel in *Guy Mannering* informs Pleydell that the supper-hour will be anticipated, the latter gaily expresses his delight, and remarks 'I am of counsel with my old friend Burnet. I love the *cœna*, the supper of the Ancients.' The allusion is to Monboddo's custom of entertaining his friends to what he called 'learned suppers.' These took place fortnightly in St. John Street. Here of an evening would gather as choice a company of intelligentsia as could be found anywhere. The supper had all the variety and abundance of the chief meal of the day. The table was strewn with roses, in imitation of Horace at his beautiful home among the Sabine Hills. Similarly the master of the feast would garland his flasks of excellent Bordeaux. And as the sumptuous feast proceeded he would unbend to a select and admiring company and discourse with wit and vivacity on some of his pet theories. The colloquial fare was as substantial as the repast.

Burns resorted to Monboddo's house, the attraction being the senator's daughter upon whom he heaped superlative praise in the 'Address to Edinburgh':

> Fair Burnet strikes th' adoring eye,
> Heaven's beauties on my fancy shine,
> I see the Sire of Love on high,
> And own his work indeed divine.

Miss Burnet's early death at the Braid farm impelled Burns to try something more ambitious, and after several months' 'hammering,' he produced a fine elegy of seven stanzas. Even 'Clarinda' was forced to acknowledge the bewitching beauty of Monboddo's daughter. To 'our Sylvander' (*i.e.* Burns) she wrote: 'Miss Burnet sat just behind me. What an angelic girl! What felicity to witness her "speak softly and sweetly smile. . . ."'

The other juridical representative, Lord Eskgrove, lived during the later years in St. John Street and died there. At times he seemed to rival Monboddo in eccentricity. Lord Cockburn, who knew him in old age, describes him as of medium height but bent and withered and walking with a slow stealthy step—something between a walk and a hirple. 'The voice was low and mumbling, and on the Bench was generally inaudible for some time after the movement of the lips showed that he had begun speaking.' 'It is unfortunate,' adds Cockburn, 'that without an idea of his voice and manner, mere narration cannot describe his sayings and doings graphically.' Cockburn's sketch, not wholly unprejudiced, tends to show that a queerer or more ungainly person never sat upon the Scottish Bench. Eskgrove (or Sir David Rae, as he was then) died in 1804. A few months before his death George III, curiously enough, created him a baronet. Eskgrove had no relish for 'learned suppers' and was as innocent of metaphysics and theology as he was of good government. One slender link bound him to letters. He edited the poems of William Hamilton of Bangour, whom he had intimately known. It was a task beyond his powers but he sheltered himself behind the appraisement of the *Caledonian Mercury*, which, with marked extravagance, proclaimed Hamilton 'in language, sentiment, and numbers a poet little, if at all, inferior to a Dryden, an Addison, or a Pope.'

At the beginning of the nineteenth century St. John Street was still the abode of fashionable and illustrious people.

Apart from Lord Wemyss, the superior, who dwelt in a large, roomy mansion, there was living at No. 3 the Rev. Dr. Brunton who, in the glorious days of pluralities, held both a pastoral and an academic office. He was minister of Old Greyfriars and then of the Tron Church, combining this with the Hebrew professorship in Edinburgh University. The author of a Persian Grammar, he died so late as 1854. He was the husband of Mary Brunton (1778-1819), novelist, who resorted to this vocation as the best means of procuring 'admission for the religion of a sound mind and of the Bible where it cannot find access in any other form.' Her first novel *Self-Control* was published anonymously in 1811, with a dedication to Joanna Baillie. One of the readers of *Self-Control*, Jane Austen, was critical and not without justification, for while the novel displays keen discernment and a gift for delineation the plot is loosely constructed and the style formal. Still, *Self-Control* was a success; the first edition was sold within a month. In 1814 there emanated from 3 St. John Street another novel entitled *Discipline* and Mrs. Brunton was writing a third when she became ill of fever, from which she did not recover. *Emmeline*, the unfinished book, was to have been the first of a series of domestic tales. A biography, accompanied by her two novels and the fragmentary one, together with a selection from her letters, was published by her husband.

At No. 4 resided Mr. Phillips, one of the Commissioners of Customs in Scotland. He may have been a colleague of Adam Smith, who would pass the top of St. John Street on his way from his house in Brown's Close to his office in the High Street. Alexander Cowan, the father of Charles, author of the delightful *Reminiscences* of St. John Street, lived at No. 5. He was the founder of the paper-making firm at Valleyfield, Penicuik. His house was the favourite rendezvous for the many distinguished people Edinburgh then contained, not least Sir Walter Scott and sundry members of the Ballantyne family.

Several interesting stories are told of the 'Great Unknown,' and passages from the unpublished *Waverley Novels* were read by James Ballantyne, whose printing works were at the top of the Canongate. A rubber at whist between Ballantyne and his wife, 'a clever, lively little woman,' and the Cowans was a frequent evening amusement. The Ballantynes were in St. John Street in force. There was his brother John, and his nephew Alexander, who resided at No. 14. The latter, says the author of the *Reminiscences*, 'had the talent to discourse most exquisite music from a penny whistle.' He was the father of John Ballantyne who became an artist in London, and of the better known R. M. Ballantyne, who wrote books of travel and adventure for boys, mostly dealing with his experiences when employed by the Hudson Bay Company.

When a boy at the High School, Charles Cowan remembers a group of friends, not more than fifteen, meeting on successive evenings at his father's house. The members of this company included Duncan Cowan and his wife from Moray House. Cowan is referred to in the imaginary conversation between Scott and Captain Clutterbuck in the Introductory Epistle to the *Fortunes of Nigel* as 'honest Duncan.'

And in St. John Street towards the beginning of last century Hay Donaldson, W.S., Scott's attached friend, resided. He had a grey pony, named Dumple, out of respect for Dandie Dinmont. A native of Haddington, where he lived in an ancient house with a roundel in Sidegate, he was the son of Donaldson the Town Clerk, while his mother was a daughter of a man who was both Provost and Postmaster of Haddington. In 1802 Hay Donaldson became a Writer to the Signet. He was the confidential solicitor of Sir Walter Scott, who describes him as 'a sound and true Pithite' (politics), 'and though a very gentlemanlike and indeed accomplished man, goes little into society, is extremely temperate, and dedicates his time almost entirely to his

business.' When Scott's brother died in 1816 Donaldson, at Scott's request, looked over his papers to see if there was any testamentary provision, but found none. Donaldson also legally managed the affairs of the Buccleuch family. On the occasion of the death of William Erskine, Lord Kinnedder, Donaldson (Lockhart tells us) wrote an 'affecting sketch,' which was supplemented by Sir Walter and printed for private circulation. Six weeks later, 30 September 1822, Donaldson also passed away and Scott conveyed the mournful news to Daniel Terry. 'Now, Hay Donaldson has followed him' (Lord Kinnedder), 'an excellent man, who long managed my family affairs with the greatest accuracy and kindness.'

St. John Street had some remarkable denizens during the Scott period. A list covering the years 1812 to 1818 is given by Charles Cowan. At No. 6 lived Andrew Bogle, Secretary of the Royal Bank. Next door dwelt Mrs. McLeod, widow of the chieftain of St. Kilda. At No. 8 the Countess of Hyndford, a venerable and rather eccentric lady, rich in recollections, for she was ninety when she died. The Ballantynes, of course, were at No. 10, while a second batch occupied No. 14. Nor must we omit the name of Richard Cooper, the line engraver, who taught many apprentices their trade, not least Sir Robert Strange, at the mention of whose name a whole world of Jacobite recollections crowds in upon one. Strange doubtless had many opportunities of seeing Prince Charles Edward, for whose cause he diligently worked, professionally as well as in other respects. In 1745 Strange produced a coloured engraving of the Prince which is reproduced in Vol. II of our publications and is accounted a fairly accurate presentation of the Prince in his halcyon days. Moreover, it is said to be the only authentic portrait of the Pretender done in Scotland.

After the collapse of his School of St. Luke, Richard Cooper opened what he called a 'Winter's Academy,' which proved most serviceable to young artists, cheap at any rate, the fee being half a guinea. Cooper built for himself a rather

pretentious house in St. John Street, consisting of three storeys, and reckoned one of the earliest buildings to be erected there. Cooper and Strange's workmanship can also be seen in the first edition of the *Edinburgh Medical Essays* (1733) and in some of the Ruddiman publications. Cooper's memory is preserved by 'Cooper's Entry' in the Canongate. Here his art school was situated. Strange's studio was in Stewart's Close.

A later list of occupants states that No. 1, the tenement immediately behind the Canongate, was the home of Sir Charles Preston, Bart., of Valleyfield; renowned for his gallant defence against the American general, Montgomery, when Major of the Cameronians. In No. 3, formerly Professor Brunton's house, resided Lord Blantyre, whose estate of Lethington (now Lennoxlove) near Haddington was factored by Gilbert Burns, the younger brother of the poet. No. 5 was the town house of the Earl of Dalhousie, who was Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland for five successive years. In No. 8 resided Andrew Carmichael, the last Earl of Hyndford, and No. 10 was still the home of James Ballantyne where the hospitable printer read, says Lockhart, 'snatches of the forthcoming (*Waverley*) novel and whetted, while he seemed to gratify, their curiosity (*i.e.*, of his listeners) by many a shrewd wink and mysterious hint of confidential insight into the literary riddle of the age.' Lockhart graphically describes these gatherings at which Lord Kinnedder, Sir William Allan, President of the Royal Scottish Academy, and George Hogarth, W.S., the father-in-law of Charles Dickens, were usually present. In this house Mrs. Ballantyne died in 1829.

Other residents of St. John Street in this resplendent time were Dr. Gregory, who became illustrious through his famous Mixture; Sir John Dalrymple, whose relations with Dr. Samuel Johnson are recorded in the history of George Square; and Sir John Stewart of Allanbank.

On the west side, having a gable to the street and a pleasant garden on the south, stood, as already mentioned, the residence of Lord Wemyss, the superior. His brother, Lord Elcho, was attainted after Culloden. Lady Betty Charteris, of this family, occupied another house further south, on the same side. She had a romantic if melancholy history. Being thwarted in an affair of the heart, she lay in bed for six-and-twenty years, till removed by death. Another well-born lady of St. John Street was Dame Margaret Sinclair of Dunbeath. Born in 1794 she was old enough to have seen and known many who followed the Prince in the Forty-Five. 'Old maiden ladies,' she declared, 'were the last real Jacobites in Edinburgh.' Lady Sinclair was a regular worshipper at the Episcopal chapel in the Cowgate (St. Patrick's), and as the last representative of the Jacobite ladies never failed to close her prayer book and stand erect, in silent protest, when the prayer for the Hanoverian king was read. Early in life Lady Sinclair removed to Picardy Place and an adventure which she used to relate evinces the difference of social customs, then and now. Once, when she was returning from a dance, the bearers of her sedan chair had their bonnets blown off and were obliged to run after them: whereupon the Duke of Argyll and Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, who escorted her, seized the spokes of the sedan chair, and carried her home. 'Gentlemen were gentlemen in those days,' she was heard to remark, somewhat irrelevantly. In 1821 she married Sir John Sinclair, Bart., of Dunbeath and for fifty years thereafter her home was at the House of Barrock in Caithness, where her good offices to the poor were gratefully remembered. After her husband's death, Lady Sinclair returned to Edinburgh. 'I am the last leaf in the outmost bough and want to fall where I was born,' she was wont to say. She had her wish—interment in the Chapel Royal at Holyrood.

II

The earliest recorded meeting of the 'Gentlemen Proprietors and Occupiers' was presided over by Alexander Henderson, who was Lord Provost of Edinburgh from 1823 to 1825. A shrewd, business-like man, Henderson lived in St. John Street, and his dominating personality soon placed him at the head of affairs. Consequently he is prominent in the Minutes, and his premature death was a great loss to the body of proprietors. Much space is taken up with reference to a bleaching green that extended a considerable way on the west side, between the mansion of Lord Wemyss and the Holyrood Road. The site is now partly covered by the premises of the Old Kirk, recently taken over by the Teachers' Training College.

Provost Henderson proposed that it would conduce to the comfort of the inhabitants if it were enclosed with an iron fence and equipped with a water supply. His idea was that each family residing in St. John Street should contribute to the upkeep of the green, which had been presented by Lord Wemyss, each proprietor having a key so constructed as to open also the water pipe. An 'invisible iron fence' would cost about £20 which could be erected at an additional cost of £11. Henderson's proposal was agreed to, each proprietor promising to contribute his share, which was three guineas. Any absent proprietor refusing to contribute would receive no key and be excluded from the use of the green.

Various meetings were subsequently held at which the management of the green was discussed, while very definite instructions were issued to the Street Porter. The instructions were approved, and as printed copies accompanied the Minute Book they are here reproduced. The Green Regulations, dated April 1827, are as follows:—

The privilege of enclosing and using St. John Street being held only during Lord Wemyss's pleasure, and the right of it being given

by his Lordship to the Feuars of St. John Street, but only to those who contribute their share of the expense of the enclosure, a committee of the Contributors has been named, and they have made the following Regulations:

1. Each proprietor inhabiting a house in the Street shall pay three guineas for a key of the Green with the number of his house on it, and every tenant inhabiting a house there shall pay half a guinea until his landlord shall pay three guineas, when the tenants' annual payment shall cease.
2. No person shall be allowed to enter the Green with these keys, except the contributors and their Families and Servants.
3. No person shall leave either of the doors unlocked in going out or in.
4. No carpets shall be beat before 8 o'clock in the evening except Saturdays till ten o'clock forenoon, and at no other place but on the south-east corner of the Green within the line that shall be drawn.
5. Servants, when in the Green, always carry keys as their passport respectively, and shew them to the Porter, or any other Servant, when he or she demands them.
6. The Porter of the Street shall be entitled to demand a sight of the keys, and look after all intruders who have no right.
7. The Porter is to be under the management of the Committee, and if he does not enforce the Regulations, he is liable for the penalties himself.
8. Whoever transgresses any of these Regulations, whether Contributors or their Servants, shall pay 2/6 for every instance of breaking through these Rules, and that sum shall be paid to the Porter, and brought by him to the Secretary of the Committee.
9. A new Committee shall be appointed annually from the Proprietors, with full powers to enforce the above Regulations.
10. Every person who receives a key is to subscribe a copy of the Regulations held by the Committee, and to unite with them in enforcing the Regulations held by the Committee, and particularly explain them to their children and servants, making them aware that the penalty will be exacted, and children and others going over the fence are to pay double penalties.

And to show that the Street Porter was not an unimportant

person, special rules were drawn up for him, dated 6 July 1827:

That the Porter shall on no account leave the Street for the purpose of carrying Messages, but be in constant attendance from 6 o'clock in the morning to 9 at night in Summer, and from 8 o'clock morning to 4 evening in Winter.

That he shall sweep the Street at least once every day, and when not so employed he shall be generally walking up and down in it to prevent Children and Idlers from lounging on the Stairs, destroying the Fence, and in any way annoying the Inhabitants, and also for the purpose of preventing Carts, Carriages, etc. from passing through the Street, except those to the Proprietors' houses.

That he shall particularly enforce the Bleaching Green Regulations. The Committee have also thought it right to order that only Children under ten years of age shall have access to the Green, as it is found that the Games introduced by the older ones, such as Bows and Arrows, Clubs, and Wrestling render the Green useless for the purpose for which it was originally intended, and is attended with considerable danger to the younger Children. The Committee hope that this last Regulation will be particularly explained by Parents to their Children, and the young ones cautioned against doing injury to the Green, otherwise they will also have to be excluded.

As is evident from the Minute Book, the green played an important, one might almost say a central part in the affairs of St. John Street. The Regulations were stringently enforced, while the movements of the Street Porter were persistently watched and his duties towards defaulters punctiliously discharged. He had certainly a very long and tiresome day. A continuous oversight of St. John Street—cleaning and watching—for fifteen hours was an ordeal of uncommon severity at which officials of the present day would stand aghast if not openly rebel.

Another point brought out by the Regulations is the strict privacy of St. John Street. No carts and carriages, other than those of the proprietors, were to pass through it. St. John Street was not a public thoroughfare; the dignity and

respectability of the street and the quietude of the inhabitants were of primary importance. Indeed St. John Street was so select that there seem to have been at one time gates at either end. For many years the feuars and tenants had contributed so that the street might be cleansed, good order preserved, and vehicular traffic reduced to a minimum.

If the Committee decreed long hours for the Porter, during which he must not leave the street, they generously conceded that on Sunday forenoons he might worship in the Canongate Church. This decision was arrived at on 4 May 1829; and at a meeting in June 1830 there was another concession —this time to Mr. Walker, surgeon, who was allowed to pass along the street with his gig, *on payment of* 10/6*d. per annum.* Furthermore women were not allowed 'to go into the areas' to wash clothes.

At another meeting, a fortnight later, several letters were read from Mr. Trotter (no connection of the Mortonhall family) relative to the use of the green. Despite the trivial nature of the complaints, Trotter insisted that the Regulations should be altered. After examining the correspondence, the meeting decided that there had been no 'abuses' and they saw no reason for altering the Regulations, except that referring to the beating of carpets. Consideration was then given to an infringement by Joseph Spence, coach wright. He had erected workshops, vents, etc. which rendered necessary an immediate interference of Lord Wemyss to prevent disagreeable measures on the part of the proprietors who were 'annoyed by the said nuisance.'

The Street Porter seems never to have been far from the thoughts of the proprietors, who bountifully presented him with what was termed a watch coat, so that he might be sworn as a day policeman.

Trotter appears to have been a nuisance, and regret was expressed that Lord Wemyss should be troubled periodically with complaints 'exceedingly frivolous,' besides not being

according to fact. 'Mr. Trotter is literally alone and singular in his opinion among all the inhabitants and strangers who have seen the street.' And the meeting was more surprised at Trotter's complaints, seeing he refused to contribute towards the upkeep of the street and green.

By and by the proprietors were perturbed by St. John Street being made a public thoroughfare, and it was recommended that exclusive use should be assigned all owners of property there. Accordingly the privilege of thoroughfare granted to the Edinburgh and Leith Building Company was discontinued, a move that was probably dictated by the street being 'much out of order' and needing thorough repair which would involve every proprietor paying three guineas annually instead of one.

The main business of the meeting in February 1851 was the Street Porter, who had not been attending to his duties. The 'universal feeling' was that if his services were not retained St. John Street would be reduced to even a lower grade than the Canongate. There was therefore impressed upon all the inhabitants the 'absolute necessity of keeping on a Street Porter.' His wages, however, would be 8/- instead of 9/- per week. But this sum was more than they could afford, and the matter was compounded by 'an immediate payment of 6/- from each occupant of the main doors and 3/- from common stairs.'

On 11 May 1855 a committee was appointed to ascertain from the Water Company 'the terms on which they would permit a water pipe to be placed in the Green for the convenience of servants watering clothes' and also 'to consider the propriety and necessity of having a chain placed at the end of the Street (Holyrood Road) to prevent carriages having no right to pass through the Street, and to disturb the inhabitants.'

In November 1858 a special meeting considered a breach of the Green Regulations by Dr. Middleton. He refused to

pay the penalty of 2/6d. but persisted in using the green. After Dr. Middleton had been heard in his defence, the meeting unanimously confirmed the Treasurer's action, and ordered the Regulations to be strictly enforced. Next month the Rev. Charles Teape, rector of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Holyrood Road, was made Treasurer.

By this time the Regulations of the Green were considered too strict, and after consulting the ladies, it was resolved to modify them. The time for carpet-beating was extended to twelve o'clock on Fridays and Saturdays, and for two weeks before the Servants' Term in May and November. During this limited period carpets might be beaten every day when there were no clothes on the green. Still, the dignity and respectability of St. John Street was maintained.

In 1859 a notice prohibiting carriages was affixed to boards at both entrances to the street, while the vacant ground on the west side was enclosed and planted. The attention of the proprietors was also directed to the sub-letting of houses, a matter which vitally affected the welfare of the locality. So important was this regarded that a committee was appointed to confer immediately with the inhabitants generally. It was also to consider the desirability of applying to the Moray Free Church for access to the bowling green on their property. Another transformation was hinted in a proposal by Sir John Cowan of Beeslack, who lived at No. 19. Sir John explained that the ground adjoining his house was long occupied by his father, Alexander Cowan, Valleyfield Paper Works, Penicuik, as a charity school. But the site had been appropriated by the Edinburgh and Leith Brewing Company, and the pupils had to relinquish their playground. He was therefore desirous of continuing the school, which had been a family care for many years, and requested the consent of proprietors, so that it might be continued on the west side. Lord Wemyss had signified that if this was unanimously obtained, he would approve. But the proposal would mean

the appropriation of a portion of the green, which would be adverse to the original feuing plan, and the request was not granted.

But there was more serious business ahead. A proposal submitted by Mr. Ford, the chairman, intimated that the Road Trust Board were willing to undertake the charge of St. John Street as a public thoroughfare, in accordance with the Act of Parliament, 1862. The Board's surveyor at the same time recommended that the carriage-way should be relaid, the neighbourhood having become so populous towards Dumbiedykes Road that the traffic was likely to be much increased.

Apart from the fact that the inhabitants would bear the cost, amounting to £318, the proposal was revolutionary inasmuch as the character of St. John Street would be entirely altered. What had been a strictly private thoroughfare with a Street Porter in charge would now become an ordinary channel of communication and the respectability would be swept away. Property in St. John Street would depreciate, while the noise would be disturbing.

The period, however, had arrived when St. John Street had to be modernised. The entrance from the Canongate was to be 13 feet wide and of sufficient height to allow carriages to pass, while the roadway was to be 40 feet broad. This astounding proposal led the committee to resolve upon immediate action. A deputation waited upon the Board and stated their objections. The Board promised to consider the matter. Nevertheless the re-causewaying and the opening up of St. John Street as a public thoroughfare went forward.

In face of an Act of Parliament the inhabitants could do nothing to avoid their fate. But they continued to administer the affairs of the street until 1869 when, on 23 December, what appears to have been the last meeting was held. At any rate there are no entries in the Minute Book subsequent to that date. Nor do we hear any more of the Street Porter.

W. Forbes Gray.