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# RICHARD COOPER SENIOR (c.1696–1764) AND HIS PROPERTIES IN EDINBURGH

JOE ROCK

**B**ETWEEN 1736 AND 1742 Sir Robert Strange (1721–1792) was apprenticed to the engraver Richard Cooper senior and lived in his house in the Canongate of Edinburgh. As the editor of Strange's memoirs in 1855, Robert Dennistoun described the house in a lengthy footnote:<sup>1</sup>

The elder Cooper built for himself a house of more pretension than was generally occupied by the gentry of Edinburgh, which, sharing the common lot of their dwellings, is now sadly degraded, and has become a hat manufactory. It is situated on the east side of St John Street; has three stories, each with three well-proportioned rooms, and, connected by a spacious stair, ornamented with a handsome balustrade. Rumour speaks of compositions in oil on the ceilings; but alas! whitewash alone remains to tell a tale of decorations barbarously defaced. On the wall, however, of the adjoining dining room, there is still a landscape in the classical taste, about 5½ by 9 feet, which, from the tendency of mural paintings to darken, and from accumulated smoke, is scarcely discernible. The house afterwards belonged to the Earl of Wemyss, and within the last thirty years looked upon a private garden tastefully kept up.

New research has revealed that Cooper owned other houses in Edinburgh and in Restalrig village and that the house in St John Street stood on the west of the street, not the east. He also owned a theatre and developed other properties with members of his family. This article will set out a brief biography of Cooper senior and for the first time look at his properties in the city.

Cooper was born in London, possibly into an important family of book and print sellers and auctioneers, and he had a sister Elizabeth, who is mentioned in his testament of 1757.<sup>2</sup> As a boy he appears to have attended Merchant Taylors' School, leaving in 1711–12, and Robert Strange suggests he then studied under the engraver John Pine (1690–1756).<sup>3</sup> Nothing is yet known about the considerable inheritance from his father, also mentioned by Strange, and the dates of his Grand Tour, said to have been funded by this inheritance, remain stubbornly elusive. It can now be suggested that Cooper had some contact with the French artist

Louis Cheron (1660–1725) at the first St Martin's Lane Academy in London. As evidence, and in a tradition practised by artist members of the Rose and Crown Club, he had his portrait taken by a member of the Academy, George Englehart Schröder (1684–1750), who returned to Sweden in 1725 (fig. 1).<sup>4</sup> Cooper can thus be associated with a very influential academy whose membership included a largely unremarked but active group of Scottish artists and patrons.<sup>5</sup>

Cooper seems to have left London shortly after 1725 for Edinburgh but until 1735 his address in the



Fig. 1. 'Ricardus Cooper Pictor', mezzotint (plate mark 34.3 x 24.5 cm) by Richard Cooper senior(?) after George Englehart Schröder. (British Museum, Cheylesmore Collection, 1902.10.11.6996.)

city is unknown. He was soon involved in the artistic and publishing life of the Scottish capital, engraving the plates for William Adam's *Vitruvius Scoticus* and Allan Ramsay's *Collection of Scots Songs*, a commission that led him to engrave almost all of the music published in Scotland for the next thirty years.<sup>6</sup> On the feast day of St Luke, 18 October 1729, Cooper signed an indenture establishing the Edinburgh School of St Luke, the earliest academy of artists in Scotland, and it is significant, but previously unnoticed, that the membership included a substantial number of Jacobite supporters.<sup>7</sup> The prominent members were: the poet Allan Ramsay (1684–1758); John Alexander (1686–c.1766) painter and engraver; William Adam (1689–1748) architect; James Norie senior (1684–1736) interior decorator; Andrew Hay (1690–1754) painter and art dealer; and Roderick Chalmers (c.1685–1746) heraldic painter, and Ross Herald 1724–46. There were a number of legal and aristocratic supporters: Gilbert Elliot, Lord Minto (1693–1766); Alexander, Lord Garlies, later 6th Earl of Galloway (c.1694–1786); and Charles, Lord Linton, later 5th Earl of Traquair (c.1694–1764). Members could assign their places in the drawing classes to worthy pupils, often their own children — the painter Alan Ramsay junior (1713–1784) and Robert Norie (d. 1766) being the most notable. The President was the still life and portrait painter George Marshall, and Cooper was Treasurer. He was also the drawing master and it now seems likely that his engagement with academic staff in the University before 1728, including Alexander Monro *primus* (1698–1767), professor of Anatomy, was one of the contributing factors that led to the formation of the Academy.<sup>8</sup>

The academy is known to have occupied rooms in the University buildings between 1731 and 1733 and it was almost certainly the same 'winter academy' that Robert Strange attended between 1736 and 1742.<sup>9</sup> With so many Jacobite members, activities were probably curtailed by 1745 and seem unlikely to have survived the bad feeling generated when Cooper began to emerge as a theatrical impresario in 1747 — the University, Church and City fathers were all loud in their objections to the corrupting influence of stage plays.<sup>10</sup> By 1748 leading members of the Academy such as William Adam, James Norie and Roderick Chalmers had died. Cooper was teaching again by

1754 under the auspices of the Select Society in the Edinburgh Infirmary, where Monro *primus* was one of the managers, and had become more active there following his semi-retirement from University teaching that year. Cooper's pupils, including his son Richard (1740–1814), placed their work on display in the Infirmary and were awarded premiums by an offshoot of the Society, the Edinburgh Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Science, Manufactures and Commerce. It may be significant that the premiums ceased in 1764, the year of Cooper senior's death.<sup>11</sup>

In 1738 Cooper married Ann Lind (1708–1775), daughter of George Lind of Gorgie (d. 1722), a wealthy Edinburgh merchant and landowner.<sup>12</sup> Ann was the youngest daughter and probably brought a substantial dowry, but more importantly, the marriage brought kinship with several of the most influential aristocratic families in Scotland, and members of this extended family appear among Cooper's patrons. Ann's mother, Jean Montgomery, was related to the Earls of Eglinton in a line that reached back to their common ancestor, the second Lord Montgomery, in the fifteenth century. The beautiful Susanna, Countess of Eglinton, widow of Alexander 9th Earl (d. 1729), was the doyenne of Scottish artistic society. According to Chambers she had a portrait of Prince Charles Edward in her bedroom, 'so situated as to be the first object which met her sight on awaking in the morning'.<sup>13</sup> She was a patron of the poets Allan Ramsay and Samuel Boyse, and Cooper stylishly engraved her arms as part of the dedication page to Boyse's *Translations and Poems* in 1731. Of her sons, Alexander 10th Earl (1723–1769) was a Lord of the Bedchamber to George III, and Archibald (d. 1796), later 11th Earl, was equerry to the Queen from 1761. As an example of the influence such connections gave Cooper, when Alexander was elected Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Scotland in 1750, Cooper was appointed Grand Steward — the only office he held with the Grand Lodge. It can be assumed that these family connections, as much as his formidable skill with the pencil, secured for Cooper's son Richard the post of drawing master at Eton College and a similar position with Queen Charlotte and Princess Elizabeth.<sup>14</sup>

Ann Lind's brother, the advocate Alexander (1695–1756), was married to Helen Allardice, a granddaughter of James, 3rd Earl of Findlater

(c.1689–1764) and, as an indication of Cooper's new connections, the baptism of Alexander's son Charles was witnessed by Charles, 6th Earl of Lauderdale, in 1738.<sup>15</sup> Alexander was a man of his time, experimenting with peat-fired furnaces and with the production of porcelain on his estate at Gorgie. He was Chamberlain to Alexander, 12th Baron Saltoun (1684–1748), and was briefly appointed Sheriff Deputy of Edinburgh but lost the post in 1746 for his over-zealous support of

Viscountess Strathallan, whose husband fell at Culloden leading the Prince's army.<sup>16</sup>

In May 1735 Richard Cooper purchased a tenement and land on the south side of the Canongate from John Grierson, Deputy Clerk of the Burgh, which included a brewery and a garden stretching 457 feet southwards to the Cowgate.<sup>17</sup> From the description in the sasine his house stood behind the tenement fronting the street and ran at right angles to it, and this building, occupied today by the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, is all that remains of Cooper's purchase (see fig. 2, no. 2). In 1729 Grierson's house had been valued for insurance purposes at £333 sterling (c. £27,000 at year 2000 prices). This amount may be compared with the value of the houses of Roderick Chalmers, opposite Skinner's Close (£70), James Norie, opposite Blackfriars Wynd (£200), Alexander Guthrie, limner, High Street, opposite the Tolbooth (£330), William Aikman, painter, three properties in the High Street (£633), George Marshall, in Borthwick's Close (£725), and Joseph Cave, engraver to the Mint, in Robertson's Close (£833).<sup>18</sup> Cooper was obviously a man of ready means, well connected and fully aware of his place in society. At some time after 1735 he built himself a splendid new house that faced south, with a rear (north) wall, abutting and interconnecting with the tenement he purchased from Grierson. His architect was almost certainly William Adam.<sup>19</sup> This substantial house, where Robert Strange served his apprenticeship, had magnificent views over a garden towards Salisbury Crag, from a row of five large windows on the first floor and it is clearly visible in a fine view attributed to Thomas Sandby, of around 1752.<sup>20</sup> In drawings submitted to the Dean of Guild Court in 1820, when the surrounding buildings were turned into a hat manufactory for Messrs Grieve and Scott, the house is shown to measure 35 by 47 feet, but unfortunately no internal arrangements are indicated.<sup>21</sup> It had a single storey brewery attached to its western gable and brewery buildings in the yard to the south, suggesting Cooper may have dabbled in brewing, as did his contemporary, the engraver Joseph Cave.<sup>22</sup>

Cooper was deeply involved in the construction of the building immediately to the north of the tenement he purchased — the Canongate Kilwinning Masonic Lodge, which was built in 1736. The Lodge

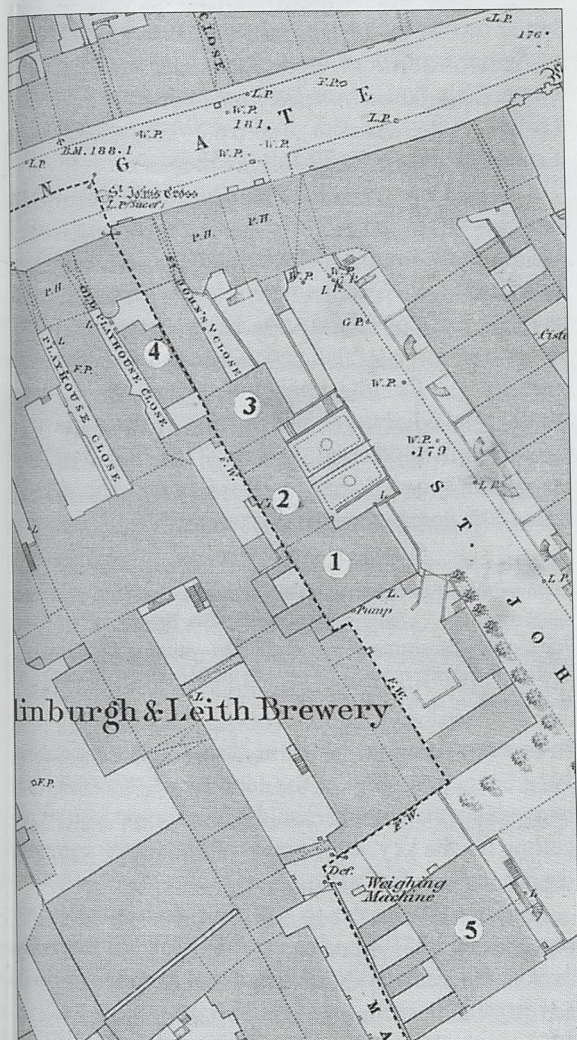


Fig. 2. Plan of the area at the head of St John Street, Ordnance Survey, sheet 36, revised 1877. (1) Cooper's new house, c. 1735. (2) House purchased in 1735. (3) Canongate Kilwinning Lodge. (4) Canongate Concert Hall (Playhouse). (5) Two houses built by Francis Charteris, c. 1767.

had existed from 1677 but was dormant by the time of its revival as a speculative lodge in 1735, and Cooper played a leading role in its revival.<sup>23</sup> The first minute of the adjourned Lodge was taken on 13 February 1735 and is signed by the Master, Thomas Trotter (1686-1767), a highly respected grocer who supplied foodstuffs and delicacies to the aristocracy.<sup>24</sup> On 6 March the minutes record for the first time the members present: Richard Cooper is listed as a Master Mason, suggesting he had taken all three of his degrees before that date. He acted as Junior and later Senior Warden and was appointed to various committees, including the one on 15 November 1736 to consider the election of a Grand Master for Scotland, a post eventually filled by Sir William St Clair of Roslin (d. 1778). Some members of the Lodge — David Clelland, James Norie, William Adam, William Robertson, Andrew Hay and Thomas Trotter — were also members of the Academy of St Luke, and in 1748-49 Robertson, Hay and Cooper held all three of the main offices in the Lodge.

With no permanent meeting place, the Lodge met in Cooper's house on 15 October 1735, and by early 1736 unsuccessful efforts were being made to rent a hall from the Incorporation of Shoemakers of the Canongate. In August that year work began on building a new Lodge to the north of Cooper's house and the first meeting was held in the new building on 27 December, the feast day of St John the Evangelist. The original title deeds to the Lodge were lost at an early date but the minutes for 1 August 1739 record that 'the Treasurer reported that he had paid Isobel Grierson the sum of £4 4s for a piece of ground upon which part of this Lodge Room was built'. In 1741 Cooper extended his property holdings to the west, purchasing a piece of land roughly 200 by 50 feet, behind a tenement fronting the Canongate. The sasine, registered on 1 May 1741, refers to the new purchase having 'the Ingurium Calmentarium [i.e. mason's lodge] and the house and garden formerly belonging to [blank — in fact, John Grierson] and now belonging to Richard Cooper on the east'.<sup>25</sup> The language is not clear but it suggests that Cooper may have owned some of the land on which the Lodge was built.

Taking advantage of his family connections, on 23 January 1745 Cooper purchased a one third share in a further, much larger area of land

immediately to the east of his house, between it and the great town house and garden of the Earl of Moray.<sup>26</sup> The purchase was a joint one with a slater, James Syme, and Cooper's brother-in-law, the cabinetmaker and wright Robert Moubray of Castlelaw (d. 1746), 'His Majesty's Master Carpenter in Scotland'.<sup>27</sup> The property comprised about eight small houses and barns fronting the High Street with gardens that stretched beside Cooper's own, down to the Cowgate. In February 1749 Cooper bought out the other two shares in this property and, for reasons that will be suggested below, sold the new house he had built to the advocate George Middleton of Seton, nephew of the London banker of the same name. This house was sold on to Francis Charteris (1723-1808, later 6th Earl of Wemyss) by Lady Diana Middleton on 22 July 1752.<sup>28</sup>

It was Charteris who began to develop the site as St John Street, possibly beginning with two houses on the west immediately behind the house he had purchased from Middleton, but facing east with small gardens in front (fig. 2, no. 5). In January 1768 he advertised for sale 'that new house in Mr. Charteris's area of the Canongate, belonging to Mr. Rattray, surgeon in Edinburgh' and in May of the same year he offered a second house. This did not sell immediately and he had to offer it at a public roup in June. The description is fascinating:<sup>29</sup>

That new built lodging all within itself from top to bottom, lying in Mr. Charter's [sic] area in the Canongate, immediately to the northward and adjoining to the house belonging to Lord Monbodo. Consisting of a genteel lobby with a handsome dining room and drawing room, done up with marble chimney pieces, five bed chambers with closets to each.

In re-advertising the house in June, Charteris added a very interesting clue to the identity of the architect, suggesting that parties could view the property 'by calling for the key at the house of Mr. Charles Butter, wright in Carruber's Close'.

Charteris went on to sell feus and develop the eastern side of St John Street from 1768 but for some reason the remainder of the development was not advertised in the press.<sup>30</sup> The purchasers were predominantly gentry or members of the aristocracy, including Charles, Earl of Aboyne, Lady Balcarres, Dr John Steedman, Lady Prestongrange, Sir Robert Henderson, Charles St Clair of Herdmanston and Charteris' son, Francis Wemyss of Wemyss.<sup>31</sup>

The relevant sasines reveal that the architect George Paterson (d. 1789) built all of these with the exception of the Earl of Aboyne's house, which was originally feued to the wright John Young (d. 1801) and built by him.<sup>32</sup> The Cooper family is not mentioned in the sasines but presumably there must have been some arrangement between them and Francis Charteris as the entire area with the houses was sold to him in 1775, on the death of Mrs Cooper.<sup>33</sup> It is often assumed that the Canongate Kilwinning Lodge was built on Wemyss property when in fact the charter of July 1775 specifically leaves the ownership of the lodge blank.<sup>34</sup> There can be little doubt that the Cooper family transactions with George Middleton, a member of a Jacobite family, and with Charteris, whose elder brother David was attainted for his part in the Rebellion, represent a small part of the elaborate means by which Jacobite families protected their property interests after 1745. In 1748, Charteris had provided Cooper with a bond for £1000 sterling (£81,500 at year 2000 prices) that made it possible for him to purchase another property, to be considered later, further down the street towards Holyrood Palace. By the 1970s, much of the area between the Canongate and Cowgate previously owned by the Cooper family had been developed by the Governors of Moray House College of Education. Cooper's great house was demolished in 1964 by their architects Gordon & Dey.<sup>35</sup>

On 15 July 1747 Richard Cooper applied to the Edinburgh Dean of Guild Court to build 'a house in a garden opposite to St John's Cross, Canongate, wholly belonging to himself in property'. This was to be on part of the property he had purchased to the west of his house in 1741. No drawings accompanied the petition and it is necessary to digress for a moment to understand the extraordinary significance of what he proposed.

As noted previously, one of Cooper's earliest friends in Scotland was the poet Allan Ramsay, who between 1732 and 1735 managed the Edinburgh Company of Comedians, who performed in the Tailors' Hall in the Cowgate, and he did much to improve their standing. New scenery was made for a performance of *The Tempest* ('an entire new sea scene', possibly by Cooper) and a special performance of *Henry IV* was arranged for the Freemasons, who processed to the theatre 'with

aprons and white gloves, attended with flambeaux'.<sup>36</sup> Encouraged by this success, in 1736 Ramsay rented premises in a tenement in Carrubbers Close from the wright and builder, Charles Butter, and paid him to fit the space out for theatrical performances. It opened in November with Dryden's *The Recruiting Officer* and Farquhar's *The Virgin Unmasked*, and the *Caledonian Mercury* reported that 'the new theatre is thought by all judges to be as complete and finished with as good a taste as any one of its size in the three Kingdoms'.<sup>37</sup> But the venture met with stiff opposition from the Church and Edinburgh Town Council, who employed the Licensing Act of June 1737, forbidding all stage plays outside Westminster, to close him down. After a brief reopening on 5 January 1739 municipal officers attempted to arrest members of the cast on the 23rd and the enterprise collapsed.<sup>38</sup>

Charles Butter, Ramsay's builder, had begun his career as a shipwright and, with his son William, was later responsible for building and decorating Gayfield House.<sup>39</sup> It now seems that his work for Ramsay survived into the era of photography and was published in *These Fifty Years: The Story of The Carrubbers Close Mission* in 1909 (fig. 3). The Church liked nothing more than to dance on the grave of a theatre and Butter's hall appears to have been used as a chapel for most of the rest of its existence, the Carrubbers Close Mission taking up residence in 1858. They moved out shortly before the tenement was demolished in 1872 to make way for Jeffrey Street. The photograph shows their 'old hall' with slender Palladian Ionic columns supporting a gallery, apparently on three sides of the room. The choice of order is interesting as Butter was required to carve 'one whole entablature on the head of the Ionic order after Paladio' as his essay for entry to the Incorporation of Mary's Chapel in 1727 and this is the order that appears in the chapel and at the entrance to Gayfield House.<sup>40</sup> The room used by the theatre was almost certainly the one extended upwards by an additional story that according to the biographical sketch of William Butter in *Kay's Portraits*, was 'added to his dwelling house in Carrubber's Close without taking down the roof. This he accomplished by means of screws'.<sup>41</sup> In effect Butter raised the roof, creating an upper story with clerestory windows on two sides and it seems

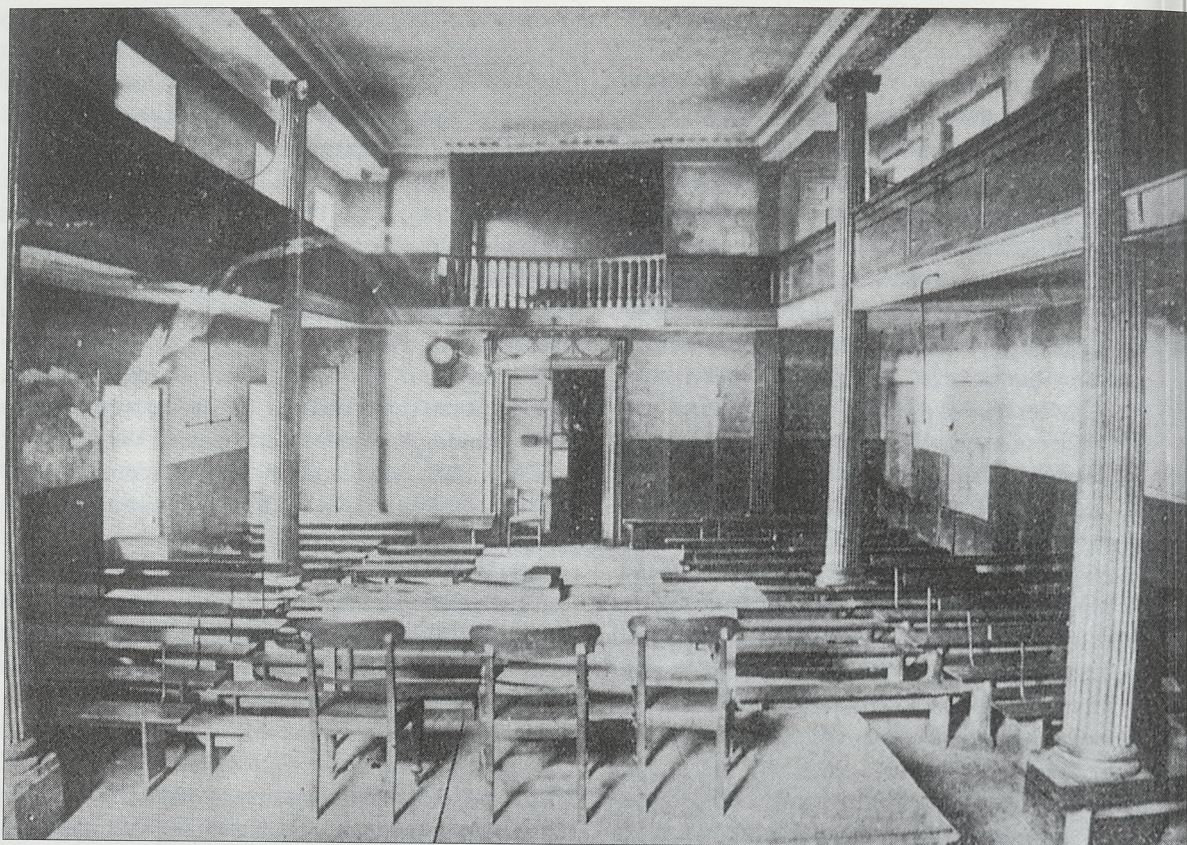


Fig. 3. 'Interior Old Hall', photograph published in *These Fifty Years: The Story of the Carrubber's Close Mission, 1858-1909* (Edinburgh 1909), opposite p. 18. (*Edinburgh City Libraries*.)

very likely that this elegant room was Allan Ramsay's theatre.

This had been the first attempt to design a public theatre in Scotland and Ramsay deserves great credit for his determination, although the choice of the top floor in a tenement did little to ensure success. However, Richard Cooper was to have more luck, although at the time he could not have imagined the trouble it would cause him. In August 1747, the actor Lacy Ryan came from London to lay the foundation stone of the 'house' Cooper proposed to build in his garden and on 2 September 1747 the engraver signed a 25 year lease with the Edinburgh Company of Comedians for its use.<sup>42</sup> The Canongate Concert Hall opened on Monday 16 November 1747, with *Hamlet*, performed as part of a musical concert to circumvent the hostile legislation, and the venture continued, strictly speaking outside the law, until the opening of

the first legal theatre in Shakespeare Square at the east end of Princes Street in 1767. Cooper made a regular income, drawing for example £51. 2. 6 (£4,130 at 2000 prices) from the Company in January 1748.<sup>43</sup> It ran performances of all the important plays, and in December 1756 the ground breaking tragedy *Douglas*, written by the Rev. John Home. What is surprising is that none of the literature on Scottish theatre or art history recognises Cooper's part in this important contribution to Scottish culture.

Until now, the exact size and location of the Canongate Concert Hall was unknown. But using the description given in Cooper's lease and comparing this with architectural drawings made by Frank C. Mears in 1911 and by John Alexander McWilliam in 1927 for the extension of the Canongate Kilwinning Lodge, a plan of the building has been recovered. McWilliam indicated the shape of the Concert Hall

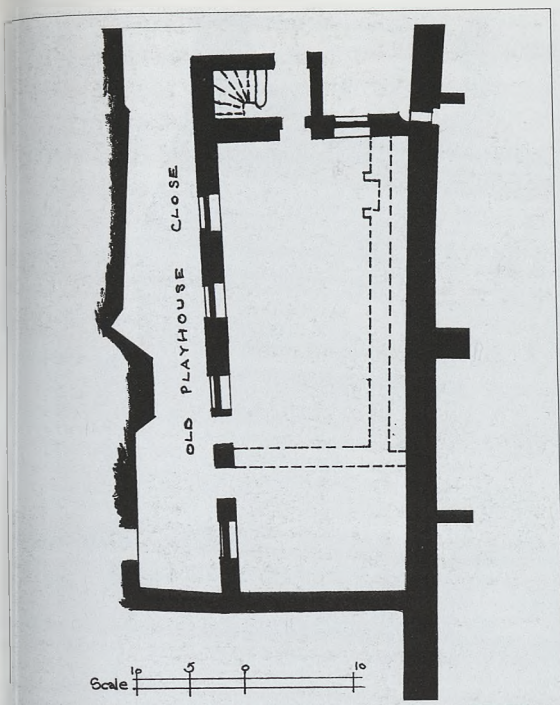


Fig. 4. Restored plan of the Canongate Concert Hall after John Alexander McWilliam (north=top). The dotted lines (in red on McWilliam's plan) indicate the original Concert Hall walls removed in 1927. Note the gap between the Hall and the Lodge buildings to the right.

he altered, on his plans and surprisingly most of it still exists, incorporated into the rear of the Lodge in 1927 as a bar, and now housing a modern staircase (fig. 4).<sup>44</sup> The Concert Hall was remarkably small, measuring 30 feet, by 15 feet at its widest end as the plan indicates. The accompanying elevations and nineteenth century photographs of the exterior suggest that it had two floors, with access to the upper by an outside stair on the north, although the upper floor may have been a gallery on three sides. The doorway shown here in the centre of the north wall is probably a later insertion and the original entrance to the ground floor may have been the small door at the south-western corner, enlarged in 1927. The extension to the south was added before 1911. What is fascinating is that two institutions, a theatre and a lodge, that employed the skills of ritual, movement and memory in learning should have stood back to back, albeit separated by a three-foot gap, insisted upon by Cooper in his lease, as a means of reducing noise.

Confirming the new evidence for the size of the Concert Hall, William Delacour (1710–1766) revealed in a letter to the press in 1763 that he never received 'above £7 7s for the front scenes, such as towns, chambers, forests &c. of 15 feet square each' and one guinea 'for the wings'. He had provided scenery for Home's *Douglas*, *The Tempest* and *Twelfth Night* in 1756 and for Voltaire's *Orphan of China* in 1759.<sup>45</sup> It may be reasonably assumed that Cooper was involved in the production of scenery in the years before the arrival of Delacour in 1756 and that his students benefited from the study of perspective and framing in his theatre. Cooper's theatre and his subversive attitudes and friendships should now be recognised as the source for John Runciman's remarkable Shakespearean subjects, for John Brown's tense and melodramatic drawings and for Jacob More's otherwise precocious debut in designing scenery at the Theatre Royal in 1767.<sup>46</sup> But Cooper's attempt to prevent disagreements over noise (an argument commonly used to close theatres) was not successful. In April 1749 a group of soldiers in the audience requested that the musicians play 'Culloden', to which a large Jacobite contingency took exception. A riot ensued and the theatre and furniture were badly damaged. The only window of the Lodge on the western side, facing the theatre, was plastered over shortly afterwards and a few months later Cooper moved house.<sup>47</sup>

In a complex financial arrangement mentioned earlier, involving a bond for £1000 sterling granted to him by Francis Charteris on 23 November 1748, Richard Cooper was able to purchase a large property further down the Canongate towards Holyrood Palace, in September 1749.<sup>48</sup> The property was extensive and historic, consisting of a number of buildings that had been granted to the Incorporation of Tailors in the Canongate by Robert Logan of Restalrig and the Abbot of Holyrood in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Without the support of royal patronage after the Union of the Crowns, the Canongate Tailors had struggled to survive and were declared bankrupt in 1747. Cooper lived initially in a large tenement fronting the street and in the 1753 window tax records he is listed with 25 windows, a number which fell to 19 the following year when he moved into the house at the rear of Wilson's Court.<sup>49</sup> This house can be seen in the Sandby panorama,





Fig. 5. Cooper's house at the rear of Wilson's Court, Canongate, photograph c. 1890, demolished 1961. (*Edinburgh City Libraries, pYDA 2000 C77 8733.*)

standing immediately to the right of Acheson's House, with two dormer windows and a narrow walled garden stretching down to the Cowgate (see fig. 5 for a late nineteenth century photograph).<sup>50</sup> Cooper extended the house upwards by one floor, creating a central Venetian window (blocked up by the time of the photograph) and he converted the entire first floor into an engraving workshop.<sup>51</sup> He then leased his 25-window house on the Canongate to the Countess of Traquair and there, with Cooper's servants in attendance, her son-in-law, the Duke of Perth, and his Duchess, entertained the Duke of Gordon in 1757 with great merriment and music.<sup>52</sup> Cooper's group of properties included a great timber-frame tenement of seven stories fronting the Canongate that he sold to his sitting tenant, the brewer James Gentle in 1753.<sup>53</sup> In 1758 he sold a flat on the second floor of his 25-window tenement to Janet, widow of Lt Col Robert Brown of General Gooch's Regiment and the tax records suggest he had

closed his engraving workshop by 1760 when he was charged for only 14 windows in his own house. His granddaughter Margaret Cooper (Mrs John Baines) still had an interest in the property in 1840 but the tall house, standing in splendid isolation with uninterrupted views across to Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crags was demolished in 1961. It was known in his family as the 'Tower of Babel' because of the number of foreign artists he entertained there.<sup>54</sup>

In one final purchase in January 1751, Cooper acquired another historic property, the Dean's House in Restalrig village, then outside the City.<sup>55</sup> The church at Restalrig had been a collegiate chapel from 1487, and as an indication of the antiquity of the surrounding buildings, the Abbot of Holyrood on his appointment in 1386 was designated as 'formerly Dean of Leith'.<sup>56</sup> The instrument of sasine describes Cooper's purchase as 'that great house, commonly called the Deans House, also cellars, lofts, garden, dovecote, well and office houses'.<sup>57</sup> While the

language is formal, the extent and rambling nature of the property is evident. Some of the buildings were probably ruinous but in seeking out such a house Cooper was in the forefront of picturesque taste for the Gothic and this is confirmed by the discovery of two watercolour drawings by his son, Richard junior, with the Society of Antiquaries of London. Presented to the Society in 1766 by the Earl of Buchan they show 'Holyrood Abbey', before the collapse of the roof, and 'Melrose Abbey'. From the naive style the drawings were probably made in the late 1750s, making the one of Melrose possibly the earliest topographical view of that building by a native artist.<sup>58</sup>

In an album of drawings compiled by Cooper's great-granddaughter, Margaret Eularia Baines, she annotated a view of Restalrig etched by Andrew Robertson before 1791 (fig. 6). Like a postcard from

the past, the lower inscription reads 'The Pigeon house [the tall tower marked with a cross] & the white house next to it; my Room & the Gate next to it.' Between the ruins of the church and the white house she has written 'Castle' above a clump of trees.<sup>59</sup> The scale of the dovecote and castle (both now gone) and the pair of massive fifteenth century gate piers that still survive in the village, suggest these were the remnants of Sir Robert Logan's castle, demolished by Edinburgh Town Council as a punishment for some misdemeanour around 1586.<sup>60</sup> Richard Cooper junior eventually sold the Dean's House to the French teacher, Louis Cauvin, in May 1812.<sup>61</sup>

In 1757 Cooper may have suffered ill health and he made out his testament, leaving his stock in trade to his son Richard.<sup>62</sup> In that year he also retreated



Fig. 6. 'Restalrig', etching by Alexander Robertson after F. Dick, before 1791, with manuscript annotations by Margaret Eularia Baines. (Private collection.)

from a development he had undertaken with another of his relatives, the wright John Moubray. The site was on the south side of the High Street at the head of Assembly Close and between it and Borthwick's Close. Cooper sold his share of the development for £313 (c. £22,500) at the point where a 'large new fore tenement' had been erected, 'the whole mason work' of which was complete.

Away from the bustle of the Canongate and the occasional attacks by the anti-Jacobite mob who took advantage of any disorder to smash a few windows, Cooper found peace and contentment in Restalrig. The collegiate chapel built there for James II had been demolished in 1560 and some of the stones removed to repair the Netherbow Port in 1571, leaving the magnificent chapel of St Triduana under a protective mound of earth. In the same way that the Chapel Royal at Holyrood became a favoured burial place for Jacobite families (including the Duke and Duchess of Perth), Restalrig became another focus for Stuart supporters. It was the Dean of Restalrig who married Mary Queen of Scots and Darnley in the chapel at Holyrood Palace in 1565. Cooper's neighbouring landowners were John Hay of Restalrig (d. 1784), Writer to the Signet and

Treasurer to Prince Charles, and Margaret Chalmers (1709–1765) widow of Lord Balmerino, executed for his part in the 1745 Rebellion. In January 1764 Richard Cooper was buried in a family aisle that abutted St Triduana's Chapel on the south west, joining a son William who had died in infancy and followed by his wife in 1775 and son George the following year.<sup>63</sup> A drawing of the burial aisle survives but the structure itself, which had probably fallen into disrepair with the migration of Cooper's children Richard and Ann to London, was swept away in the restoration of the chapel in 1907–08.<sup>64</sup>

It is not surprising that in one of the earliest attempts to record Edinburgh's vanishing past, John Runciman, who was probably taught etching by Cooper, recorded in a fine print the demolition of the Netherbow Port in 1764, a few months after Cooper's death.<sup>65</sup> The gatehouse had become an obstacle to traffic but in demolishing it the City fathers did much to remove the sense of difference — political, religious and cultural — that had characterised this lower half of the City and had so attracted Richard Cooper senior in 1735.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 Robert Dennistoun, *The Memoirs of Sir Robert Strange* (London 1855), pp. 21–39, 242: Strange himself became a celebrated engraver. See also John C. Guy, 'Edinburgh Engravers', *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club (BOEC)*, 9 (1916), pp. 79–113.
- 2 National Archives of Scotland (NAS), Testament of Richard Cooper senior in B22/8/128, probate 26 January 1764.
- 3 E. P. Hart, *Merchant Taylors' School Register, 1561–1934* (London 1936), vol. 1. A fellow pupil, leaving in the same year, was Henry Fletcher, who may be the H. Fletcher who engraved a frontispiece illustration after Cooper's design that was published in *The Vineyard*, by the anonymous 'S. J.' (London 1727): see Blanche Henrey, *British Botanical and Horticultural Literature before 1800* (London 1975), pp. 674–675, fig. 132.
- 4 Tessa Murdoch (ed.), *The Quiet Conquest: The Huguenots 1685–1985* (Museum of London 1985), p. 194.
- 5 Ilaria Bignamini, 'Art Institutions in London, 1689–1768: A Study of Clubs and Academies', in *Walpole Society*, 54 (1988): for the Rose and Crown Club, see pp. 44–61, and for the first St Martin's Lane Academy, 1720–24, pp. 83–95.
- 6 Frank Kidson, *British Music Publishers, Printers and Engravers* (London 1900), p. 182.
- 7 Robert Brydall, 'Art in Scotland, its Origin and Progress' (Edinburgh 1889), pp. 110–111, MS in Royal Scottish Academy Library.
- 8 Joe Rock, 'An Important Scottish Anatomical Publication Rediscovered', *The Book Collector*, 49 (2000), pp. 27–60.
- 9 Edinburgh City Archives (ECA), Town Council Minutes, vol. 53, p. 270, 6 January 1731. 'The Academy for Painting' is included in a report to the Town Council dated 19 December 1733: Sir Alexander Grant, *The Story of the University of Edinburgh*, 2 vols (Edinburgh 1884), II, pp. 191–192. See also Dennistoun, *Memoirs of Sir Robert Strange* (note 1), p. 26.
- 10 Lord Glenorchy was a supporter of Allan Ramsay's pioneering efforts and he presented a bill to Parliament for a playhouse in Edinburgh in 1739. It was defeated on the basis of responses sought from Edinburgh Town Council, the Dean of Guild and the University. See NAS, RH15/10/41, letters from Glenorchy to John Murray (Glenorchy's man of business), 3 May 1738, 17 January, 29 March and 12 April 1739; and RH15/10/42, letter from John Ware to Murray, 28 October 1740. Also NAS, GD45/14/437, letter from Allan Ramsay senior to Glenorchy, 7 April 1739. See also pamphlets by Rev. George Anderson, Minister of the Tron

- Kirk, regarding stage plays in 1733: British Library (BL) 1347.e.43, 1343.m.28(3) and 4474.b.111(7).
- 11 *Scots Magazine*, premiums for 1755 (January 1756, vol. 18, pp. 48–49), 1756 (January 1757, vol. 19, pp. 49–52), 1757 (January 1758, vol. 20, pp. 43–46), 1758 (April 1759, vol. 21, pp. 214–215), and 1763 — ‘The number of contributions diminishing and many have neglected their subscriptions’ — (April 1764, vol. 26, pp. 229–230). Also *Caledonian Mercury*, premiums for 1761 (12 April 1762, p. 1b), 1762 (27 April 1763, p. 1b), 1763 (9 April 1764, p. 1a–b).
  - 12 Rev. H. Paton (ed.), *The Register of Marriages for the Parish of Edinburgh, 1701–1750* (Edinburgh 1908), p. 117. See also Sir Robert Douglas, *The Genealogy of the Family of Lind and the Montgomeries of Smithton* (Windsor 1795), privately published by J. L. [James Lind MD FRS]: copies in National Library of Scotland (NLS) and BL.
  - 13 Robert Chambers, *Traditions of Edinburgh*, new edn (Edinburgh 1868), p. 218.
  - 14 Jane Roberts, *Royal Artists* (London 1987), p. 71.
  - 15 General Register Office for Scotland (GROS), Old Parochial Registers (OPR), Edinburgh, 685.3/15, Marriages 1719–1790.
  - 16 Alexander Lind, ‘Of the Analysis and Uses of Peat’, in *Essays and Observations Physical and Literary* (Edinburgh 1756), vol. II, pp. 226–242. See also Joe Rock, ‘The ‘A’ Marked Porcelain: Further Evidence for the Scottish Option’, in *Transactions of the English Ceramic Circle*, vol. 17, part 1 (1999), pp. 69–78. See NLS, Saltoun Papers, 16628/157, 161 (loss of post), 163 (petition to Duke of Cumberland for reinstatement, possibly never sent); 16660/204; 16671/133; 16675/160, 163; 16696/107, 131; also CS271/53601, action by Lind in favour of Lord Saltoun.
  - 17 NAS, RS27/115, f. 345v–347v.
  - 18 NAS, B22/18/11, Edinburgh Friendly Insurance Company Records. All of these recorded in 1728–29 and converted from Scots pounds. By 1739 Roderick Chalmers had moved to property in Bell’s Wynd, valued at £918 sterling (pp. 67v and 232v).
  - 19 ECA, MS Charter of Resignation in favour of the Hon. Francis Charteris, of St John Street in the Canongate, dated 22 February 1775, pp. 222–223.
  - 20 Panorama of Edinburgh, attributed to Thomas Sandby, c. 1752, in the collections of the National Galleries of Scotland (D 3306).
  - 21 ECA, Dean of Guild Court, petition by Grieve & Scott, hat manufacturers, lodged 20 May 1820, warrant granted 6 April 1822, plans and elevations for alternative schemes, possibly by Thomas Hamilton junior. The Earl of Wemyss sold the house to the bookseller William Laing before 24 April 1799, when the latter was stopped by the Dean of Guild Court from making alterations to the house without a warrant. He stated that he had sold on parts of the property to the Rev. Fitzsimonds, an Episcopal clergyman, but that the house was in such a state of disrepair that he had begun the necessary works. He was allowed to continue without producing plans. See ECA, Dean of Guild Court, petition of William Laing, 25 April 1799.
  - 22 Athol L. Murray, ‘Engravers to the Mint of Scotland: James Clerk and Joseph Cave, 1686–1756’ in *Review of Scottish Culture*, 12 (1999–2000), pp. 23–34.
  - 23 Much of the information here is taken from Allan Mackenzie, *History of the Lodge Canongate Kilwinning No. 2* (Edinburgh 1888). The minutes of the Lodge are in a private collection and I would like to thank Mr David Currie for providing me with much unpublished information.
  - 24 This Thomas Trotter was father of the upholsterer, also Thomas (1724–1804), and grandfather of William, the furniture maker and Lord Provost in 1825–27. See Stephen Jackson, ‘William Trotter, Cabinet Maker, Entrepreneur and Lord Provost, 1772–1833’, *BOEC*, New Series 6 (2005), pp. 73–90.
  - 25 NAS, B22/2/65 ff. 67v–68v: I am grateful to Margaret Bigwood and her husband for transcribing this document from the Latin. There appear to have been two houses or tenements fronting the Canongate, both still belonging to William Hunter at this date but previously belonging to James Inglis and (blank) Dallas and it appears that Cooper simply bought their back gardens. A piece of the land was ‘for the moment possessed by William Cockburn, gardener in the Pleasance’ and the remainder described as ‘these two pieces of land ... are parts and particles of the great tenement of land, malt barn, brewery, kiln, cobble [i.e. malting vat], brew house and back yard on the southern side of the top of the Canongate which once belonged to [blank] ... and lately to the late John Inglis, painter’.
  - 26 ECA, Charter of Resignation (note 19), f. 224.
  - 27 NAS, RS27/135/57, Sasine dated December 1748, in favour of Katherine Lind, described as widow of Robert Moubray. He had married Elizabeth Skugle on 28 June 1702: Paton, *Register of Marriages* (note 12), p. 396. The son of Robert Moubray of Cockairnie, he was apprenticed to William Scott, venter, in 1688, and became a burgher of Edinburgh in 1697 and of the Canongate in 1710. He was made Deacon of the Wrights, Deacon Convenor of the Trades and Guildbrother by an Act of Council dated 14 September 1709 ‘which grants him and his successors the seat in the College Kirk [Trinity College Church], lately built by him, rent free for 21 years’. His commission as ‘His Majesties principal wright and plasterer’ is dated 19 January 1714–15: NAS, GD220/6/1745/19; Edinburgh University Library (EUL), Special Collections, MSS Laing II, 88, Accounts for Repairs to Holyrood Palace, 1733. In 1745, while acting as cautioner to the probate of John Hay (1681–1743), brother of Andrew Hay, he described himself as ‘his majesty’s wright’: NAS, CC8/8/110, testament of John Hay, merchant in Edinburgh. See also the relevant published lists. Cooper’s marriage to Ann Lind in 1738 may have brought kinship with the Adam family, who claimed descent from Katherine Moubray, daughter of a Northumbrian knight: see John Fleming, *Robert Adam and his Circle in Edinburgh and Rome* (London 1962), p. 2.
  - 28 ECA, Charter of Resignation (note 19), p. 226. This document is difficult to understand because it refers back in time using descriptions derived from the original documents of sale. It has to be treated with care but it explains exactly what Francis Charteris purchased in 1775.
  - 29 *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 30 January 1768, p. 3(a), 7 May,

- p. 3(c) and 1 June, p. 1(b).
- 30 I have scanned the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* from 1768 to 1770.
- 31 For an account of later residents in St John Street see W. Forbes Gray, 'St. John Street: An Early Civic Development', *BOEC* 28 (1953), pp. 59–75.
- 32 NAS, RS27/183, Earl of Aboyne, 24 April 1769; RS27/185, Sir Robert Henderson, 31 August 1769; RS27/189, Charles St Clair, 5 September 1770.
- 33 ECA, Charter of Resignation (note 19), p. 223, states that 'on the north parts thereof fronting the High Street were erected a row of houses or tenements and also on the east part thereof from the said row of houses or High Street to the south back of Canongate were lately built & erected a street of houses called St. John Street'.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 218.
- 35 ECA, Dean of Guild Court warrants granted to the Governors of Moray House College of Education, 24 July and 7 August 1964. Card index reference only, both sets of petitions and drawings have been lost.
- 36 *Caledonian Mercury*, 4 November 1734, 2 January, 15 and 18 November 1735.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 8 November 1736.
- 38 Donald Campbell, *Playing for Scotland — A History of the Scottish Stage, 1715–1965* (Edinburgh 1996).
- 39 Kitty Cruft, 'Villas in Edinburgh: The Case of Gayfield House', in Deborah Mays (ed.), *The Architecture of Scottish Cities; Essays in Honour of David Walker* (East Linton 1997), pp. 103–114, particularly note 16.
- 40 ECA, SL34/1/6, p. 23, Papers of the Incorporation of Mary's Chapel. He was Freeman of the Incorporation, 10 February 1728, on payment of £107. 13. 4 Scots (c. £726 today).
- 41 John Kay, *Original Portraits and Caricature Etchings*, 2 vols (Edinburgh 1838), II, p. 32. See also NAS, RD4/228, Disposition by Charles Butter dated 8 May 1776, registered 2 August 1780.
- 42 NAS, B 22/20/101/B, with thanks to William Kay for drawing my attention to the lease. Cooper may have been involved much earlier. On 17 October 1728 the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* reported that: 'we hear a new set of comedians who have a patent from His Majesty, have taken a lease of a piece of ground in the Canongate and are there to erect a playhouse'. Nothing further is known of this venture. See also Norma Armstrong, 'The Edinburgh Stage, 1715–1820, A Bibliography', unpublished fellowship thesis for the Library Association, 3 vols, November 1968, Edinburgh City Libraries, Edinburgh Room.
- 43 NAS, RD2/165, Protest, Cooper versus Lyon, 23 March 1748, registered 12 January 1749. For other papers relating to the Concert Hall see EUL, Special Collections, Laing II, 451/1.
- 44 ECA, Dean of Guild Court, Application by Canongate Kilwinning Lodge, 7 December 1911 and 28 October 1927.
- 45 *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 18 January 1759. D. F. Fraser-Harris, 'William De la Cour, Painter, Engraver and Teacher of Drawing', *The Scottish Bookman*, vol. 1, no. 5 (1936), pp. 12–19. John Fleming, 'Enigma of a Rococo Artist', *Country Life*, vol. 131 (24 May 1962), pp. 1224–26. Victoria and Albert Museum, *Rococo Art and Design in Hogarth's England* (London 1984), D29d, p. 63. Murdoch, *The Quiet Conquest* (note 4), p. 166. T. Clifford, *Designs of Desire* (National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1999), cat. 95 and 102. Hilary Young, 'High Rococo Design Sources at Bow', *Transactions of the English Ceramic Circle*, vol. 17, part 2 (2000), pp. 178–186.
- 46 John Runciman's painting 'King Lear' (1767) in the National Galleries of Scotland may actually be a scene from *The Tempest*. The picture was probably 'Storm with Figures' by Runciman from Lord Eldin's collection that was offered at the sale of the widow of John Thomson of Duddingston, 3 March 1841: see Robert W. Napier, *John Thomson of Duddingston* (Edinburgh 1919), p. 521. Certainly *The Tempest* with its tale of Caliban the rightful king of the island, enslaved by Prospero, resonated in Jacobite circles.
- 47 Mackenzie, *History of the Lodge* (note 23), p. 70.
- 48 NAS, RD4/178, part 1, F, 310v–312r, Contract between Richard Cooper and Alex Goldie (Writer to the Signet, Dumfries), dated 16 March 1752, refers to earlier agreement between Cooper and William Wilson WS, 'Trustee for the Incorporation of Taylors of the Canongate and their creditors' dated 9 September 1749. The property had been valued at £965 sterling for insurance in 1730: NAS, B22/18/1, p. 166r.
- 49 The courtyard was named after William Wilson WS (see note 48).
- 50 For the Sandby panorama see note 20.
- 51 ECA, Dean of Guild Court. There is no petition for alterations by Cooper. Petition of William Younger & Co., 23 February 1888, plans and elevations by William C. Laidlaw. Also petition of Scottish & Newcastle Breweries, 16 June 1961, elevation from the north, shortly before demolition.
- 52 Joe Rock, 'Richard Cooper, Senior, and the Beginnings of Rococo Taste in Scotland: Documents from the Traquair Archives', *Scottish Archives*, 8 (2002), pp. 71–81.
- 53 NAS, RS27/143/139r–142r, Disposition between Richard Cooper and James Gentle dated 27 October 1753, with the consent of Ann Lind and witnessed by their son, George Cooper. It is sometimes assumed that Cooper built or lived in the timber tenement, but the disposition clearly states 'presently possessed by the said James Gentle': see Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network (SCRAN) website 030–864-C.
- 54 Cooper/Donaldson album in the Baines family collection, comment in an associated note by Margaret Baines, Cooper's great-granddaughter. See also Charles B. Boog Watson, 'Notes on the Names of the Closes and Wynds of Old Edinburgh', *BOEC*, 12 (1923), p. 118. Also NAS RS27/152 f. 264v–268r, Sasine for Janet Brown. James Cumming decorated both of Cooper's houses while apprenticed to 'Mr Norie' for 8 years: EUL, Special Collections, MSS Laing II, 82/1–3/18, (undated), Deposition by James Cumming to Mr Norie (my thanks to William Johnston for alerting me to this reference).
- 55 NAS, RS27/138 f, 168r–170r. Transaction may have taken place on 1 January (f.168v).
- 56 Iain MacIvor, 'The King's Chapel at Restalrig and St Triduana's Aisle: A hexagonal two-storied Chapel of the fifteenth Century', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 96 (1962–63), pp. 247–263. See James Scott

- Marshall, *The Church in the Midst, South Leith Parish Church through Five Centuries* (Edinburgh 1983): the parish church of South Leith was situated in the larger area of Restalrig.
- 57 When the property was offered for lease on Cooper's death in 1764 it was described as 'That large house at Restalrig with the garden, pigeon house, stable, coach house and other office houses ... NB. There is some grass ground, which will be let with or without the house': *Edinburgh Advertiser*, vol. I, no. 9 (31 January 1764), p. 71(b).
- 58 National Museums of Scotland, MSS SAS 582, vol. III, Robert Riddell scrapbooks, p. 182. Buchan added a marginal note: 'Edinr. Decr 1786. I gave a very fine and highly finished[!] drawing of the Church of Holyrood Abbey, which I had from Dr Lind of Gorgie, to the Society of Antiquaries at London, Anno 1765 when I was of ye Council, during the presidency of my worthy friend Littleton, Bishop of Carlisle. Buchan.' The gift was recorded in their minutes, 17 April 1766. With many thanks to Adrian James, Assistant Librarian to the Society in London, for his assistance.
- 59 The inscription at the top reads 'The Castle was taken down before this View was taken, it stood immediately behind the Great Window of this Church & the Road between both'. This conflicts slightly with the pencil inscription but clearly enough of the Castle remained for her to have seen it. The 'gate' appears in a drawing 'Remains of an old Fortress in Restalrig' by Alexander Archer of c.1834, in the Library of the National Museums of Scotland. See the SCRAN website, 606-875-C.
- 60 Royal Commission on the Ancient Monuments of Scotland, *An Inventory of the Ancient and Historical Monuments of the City of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1951), p. lxi.
- 61 NAS, RS27/701, f. 5. The house was initially sold to William Moffat in 1809 for £300, who paid a deposit of £100 shortly before becoming insolvent: see RS27/635, f. 91.
- 62 Testament of Richard Cooper senior (note 2).
- 63 GROS, OPR, Edinburgh, 685.3/8, Marriages 1719-1790: George was born 23 September 1750, christened 3 October. See William Burnett, 'The Society of Friendly Contributors of Restalrig', *BOEC*, 4 (1911), p. 181.
- 64 See SCRAN website, 098-863-C, for an image of the family aisle, attached to the left side of St Triduana's Well.
- 65 See SCRAN website, 606-854-C.