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## Book Reviews

Ray McKenzie, with research by Dianne King and Tracy Smith, **Public Sculpture of Edinburgh, two vols, 1: The Old Town and South Edinburgh; 2: The New Town, Leith and the Outer Suburbs**. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press for the Public Monuments and Sculpture Association, 2018, 506 + xxxi and 549 + xxiii pp., Paperback, £25; Hardback £50 per volume; Vol 1 Paperback ISBN 978-1-78-69411-07 Hardback ISBN 978-1-7-86-94109-1; Vol 2 Paperback ISBN 978-1-7-694155-8 Hardback ISBN 978-1-78-694154-1.

In 2002 I had the pleasure and privilege of reviewing, at some length and in another place, Ray McKenzie's superb *Glasgow* volume in the magisterial *Public Sculpture of Britain* series. That pleasure and privilege are now not only renewed but doubled. In turning attention to these new *Edinburgh* volumes one cannot but recall the advertising slogan which used to say, with a sly nudge at the capital city, 'Glasgow's miles better'. Well, it isn't. We rate two volumes! *Glasgow* weighed in at 538 pages. Together the *Edinburgh* set totals 1,055, with a further 54 pages of introductory text. And they are brilliant.

The appearance of this magnificent pair of volumes, so long awaited, is to be welcomed with more than ordinary satisfaction by readers of *BOEC*. The Old Edinburgh Club helped to make publication – specifically, some of the research underlying the publication – possible by awarding substantial grant-aid at a critical time in the compilation of the work. We can be very proud indeed of the result: surely no more significant contribution relating to the urban history and civic development, culture, art, townscape, and even to the collective biography and prosopography of Edinburgh, has appeared in recent years. This is a stupendous work of permanent and enduring value which must forever stand beside the Buildings of Scotland's *Edinburgh* volume (first published in 1984) as a vital resource for anyone interested in our city. In fact, I would argue that the PMSA's *Edinburgh* is perhaps even more significant, and that it is actually a much greater achievement. The Buildings of Scotland *Edinburgh* volume does

not cite sources and references; the PMSA Edinburgh volumes do, and – by Hephaestus, god of Sculpture! – those citations and references are beyond measure impressive.

*Public Sculpture of Edinburgh* is a truly exceptional work of scholarship. The meticulous research by Tracy Smith and Dianne King is first-rate. The writing throughout is excellent and frequently spellbinding. The description, at the very start, of the Old and New Towns and their different characters, is urban history at its very best. Sculpture as an art form – one too often taken for granted so that it is hardly noticed, because so familiar – is always treated here in its broader civic context. Pittendrigh Macgillivray is quoted with approval and to great effect: sculpture, he wrote in 1917, is for 'the jewelling of cities... Sculpture is the poetry in form of the emotions and ideals of the current peoples.' Ray McKenzie's own use of language is hardly less effective. Public sculpture is concisely defined, historically if not always so today, as 'figurative in form and deferential in nature'. His object, in this vast study, is to make what has long seemed to many in our current world 'irrelevant', *relevant* again – as indeed it can and should be. This transformation in public attitudes can be accomplished by the telling and teaching of the powerfully eloquent exponent that McKenzie shows himself once more to be.

This is a study of sculpture in society. The books are full of long and minutely detailed analyses of the commissioning of, and fund-raising activities associated with, individual monuments; and these substantial essays, preceded by the equally penetrating introductions to both volumes, are peppered with many wry comments. For example: '... the culture of the public subscription operated like the Victorian class system in miniature, offering a multitude of insights into the social values that underpinned the development of monument-raising practices generally.' The thorny question of the location of monuments opens up further channels of enquiry and, through McKenzie's shrewd and perceptive interpretation of the evidence, these allow us to eavesdrop (as it were) on long-forgotten and misunderstood public wrangles and private feuds: 'It is not entirely clear why the people of Edinburgh

in particular should have developed such a flair for inventing new ways of objecting to the placement of monuments in their streets and squares ... testing the patience of commissioners and public alike, and often adding years, if not decades, to the time taken for many projects to be completed.'

Many of the entries for individual works of sculpture, or for sculptural schemes, constitute major essays in research and interpretation, most of which go far beyond what might have been expected in a work of this kind. The equestrian statue of Charles II, attributed to Grinling Gibbons, is dealt with in 31 whole or part-columns, with six images. Sir John Steell's *Alexander and Bucephalus*, now in the courtyard of the City Chambers, rates 28 columns and four plates. Even little Greyfriars Bobby gets 19 columns extending over eight pages and with four illustrations. There are scores of such essays, large numbers of which – like that on the Scott Monument with its almost unbelievable concentration of difficult-to-see, or to understand, statuary, or the sculptural programme on the exterior of the National Portrait Gallery, or the unusual Royal Scots memorial in Princes Street Gardens – are of even greater length. They deal not just with the commissioning, making, siting and reception of statues but with the 'afterlives' of these works, post-erection. Some little works, isolated as the changing eddies of taste and society swirl around them, are highlighted: an example is the Lindsay Gumley drinking fountain at the corner of Waverley Bridge and Princes Street. Long non-functional, this now has 'a new role as an improvised ashtray for less than respectful tourists congregating at the pedestrian crossing'. That is sadly true: I have just been to look at its degradation. Who these days notices its elegant lettering?

Many entries contain much important architectural information and analysis: an example is that on the Mercat Cross. And who has ever wondered why there should be a bust of Archbishop Tait in the quadrangle of the old Medical School, and in the precise location there which it occupies? Answer: the site of his birthplace lay adjacent in 1811 in a row of houses long vanished. Or, did you know that the Usher Hall might have been in Charlotte Square? (A philistine City Council was happy to see Robert Adam's north side demolished.)

Very few examples indeed of individual entries can be selected for citation or even for discussion

here. The whole work is elegantly and tightly written, yet it boasts a text not short on pithy judgements, bracing opinions, happy phrases and flashes of wit and irony. Typical is the discussion on how Sir John Steell contrived to conceal, by means of a simple swathe of drapery, both the genitals of Alexander the Great and those of his horse, 'an important consideration in 1830s Edinburgh still in thrall to the moral precepts of John Knox'. The astonishing, so-called Craigentenny Marbles stand isolated in their 'sea of incongruous domesticity', this setting being well described and also well evoked in modern photographs of bungalows and bowling-greens. Innumerable fascinating and recondite facts teem on the pages. A learned and intriguing link is made between Callum Innes's Regent Bridge lighting installation and Alexander Stoddart's statue of James Clerk Maxwell. The *Caledonian Mercury* wanted to see Steell's *Alexander and Bucephalus* positioned in front of General Register House; instead, and in time, that same site got Steell's *Wellington*. The ultimate relocation of the Alexander group from St David's Street to the City Chambers was singularly appropriate: Alexander had made the horse face the sun as he tamed it lest it be frightened by its own moving shadow, and in the High Street site it faces south into the sun. Who knew that Heriot-Watt University holds a mould for casting, in resin, replacement dividers for its statue of James Watt, which students seem to like to remove? Alas there is no similar mould which would allow the 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Buccleuch (in Parliament Square) to recover the stag sadly lost from that most grandiloquent of all Edinburgh memorials.

There is an astonishing level of detailed information on, for example, how certain more recent monuments came into being: the statue of Robert Fergusson, say; or the Robert Louis Stevenson memorial; or the Wojtek the Bear monument; or the David Hume statue – even if the entry on the latter omits mention (unlike that for Fergusson, and for some other recent commissions) of the protagonists on the appropriate committee. I myself was one of these unacknowledged stalwarts!

The volumes are handsome and well bound, though the paper is noticeably thinner than that of the *Glasgow* book 16 years ago: the pages crease easily and this is unfortunate in a work that will be constantly referred to and subject to heavy use. There are copious

illustrations, with many images of individual works and details thereof, and of larger sculptural schemes in their wider architectural context. Photographs are pin-sharp and highly effective; many are taken with long lenses enabling one to see details high on buildings that are easily missed by the casual observer. The volumes are more than copiously referenced, too. A mere glance at the notes at the end of any entry will indicate the extraordinary depth of research which underpins the project: research in archival sources, in committee minutes, in contemporary press notices and newspaper reports – *vast* numbers of such things! – and also more general research in the secondary literature. It is astonishing to consider the labour involved and the herculean task of making sense (and extremely readable sense, too) of the evidence accumulated.

The dense three-column format should not put the reader off, for this is a very human and companionable work. It is full of really good stories of every conceivable kind, excellently told and replete with anecdote and allusion. These volumes could even be guest-room bedside books, albeit of the most refined and learned kind! But to attempt to read (or even skim) the whole in one go, over a few days, as I have tried to do, is well-nigh impossible. Indeed the feat would best be tackled in small doses – perhaps an individual sculpture or even an entire complex scheme at a time. Or one could read up on a street's-worth of sculptures. Or just indulge in the heraldic disquisitions. But however one approaches this great work the result will be one of huge reward. It really is impossible to do justice to its riches or to over-praise the achievement of its author and associates. If you see people standing at street corners or even in roadways with this book and binoculars in hand, do not be surprised. I have made bus journeys in the period during which I was reading this work, craning my neck to see details I had never before noticed, or even been aware of the fact that this or that decorative sculpture existed. I can only hope that not too many OEC members are run over by passing traffic or jostled to the ground by less appreciate or sensitive members of the public as they gawp and goggle works on high.

Who notices a rather unusual sculpture suspended (as it were) with five others on the façade of St Andrew's House? This, a figure by Sir William Reid Dick and Alexander Carrick emblematic of 'Statecraft', is placed so high up that one does not

easily see its features. It is a term-figure in the dress of (I think) a Privy Councillor or perhaps a colonial governor or old-school diplomat. But with its tousled hair (as uncontrolled as that of Boris Johnson, and very surprising to find in a work of this kind or of this period) it must surely be inspired by, or modelled on, an actual individual. Who does it really represent? I have checked the images of some likely 1930s contemporaries, but am none the wiser.

As a diligent reviewer I should, I suppose, attempt to find something to criticise. Alas that is well-nigh impossible because practically everything about these volumes, their research and their writing is so superbly done! To say the work is comprehensive and detailed is an understatement. However, a very few omissions or perhaps 'oversights' – pardonable, given the scale of the brief of this 'National Recording Project' – there are. Some are comparatively trifling; but the fact that other works find no place is perhaps a little more regrettable. In a careful leaf-through I concluded that there are some seven minor sculptural works known to me which could have been included. It is a pity not to see noted and described the Lauder heraldic griffin crest on its isolated gate-pier in Grange Loan; likewise the carved bas-relief artist's palette on the façade of Sir Henry Raeburn's house and studio in York Place. By my reckoning, three carved or sculptured coats of arms appear to have been overlooked, one of these achievements being the arms of the United States: this is on the former Scottish American Mortgage Company in Castle Street, where the stars, stripes and bald eagle keep company with a Scottish lion rampant. Omitted, too, is the interesting sculptural relief of the stern of the Spanish warship *San Josef*, captured by Horatio Nelson at the battle of Cape St Vincent, which (with other allusive naval inscriptions) ornaments the frontispiece of the Nelson Monument on Calton Hill. I understand, however, that the decision was made to exclude Calton Hill from this survey of Edinburgh sculpture, perverse as this choice may have been. But the very 'modern' (i.e. 1960s) sculptured figures ornamenting the window recesses of a former travel agency at the corner of Hanover and George Streets (now a branch of Starbucks) – these works being symbolic of travel on the seven continents of the globe – seems a surprising omission. In a twist of fate, one new public memorial was unveiled but six days before the launch of these books: the Scottish War Poets monument in Makars'

Court, with its effective symbolism of a sword of which the point is a pen-nib.

If the author has a fault at all, it is in such pedantic matters as the understanding and description of the intricacies of military uniform and robes of chivalry. The ‘Grand Old’ Duke of York on the Castle Esplanade certainly sports the actual Garter on his left leg. But his mantle, star, chain and pendant badge are not those of that Order (as is stated here) but rather those of a Knight Grand Cross of the Bath. The Sir Francis Chantrey statue of Lord Melville in Parliament Hall is not clad in an ‘ermine-trimmed judicial robe’ but in the Parliamentary robe of a viscount. Some of the most spectacular of the city’s war-memorials are not quite as described: there are some slight errors, misconceptions and contestable assumptions to be found in the commentaries on the three great Birnie Rhind monuments in the city centre: the Black Watch on the Mound, the King’s Own Scottish Borderers memorial on North Bridge and the Royal Scots Greys statue on Princes Street. The last figure, for instance, is shown in the full-dress ‘review order’ of the regiment at the time of the second South African War, which is certainly not (as McKenzie supposes) the khaki field-service uniform it actually wore in action on the veldt. I have always felt it more likely that the KOSB figure-group is supposed to be set in the wild landscape of the North-West Frontier or Afghanistan than, as McKenzie imagines, in South Africa. The Black Watch figure wears not ‘the regiment’s distinctively asymmetrical bearskin headgear’ (sic) but just the regular feather bonnet headdress of the Highland soldier. However it is a pity that a telling detail here goes unobserved: the presence on the figure’s chest of the two Boer War campaign medals (the Queen’s and King’s South Africa). Over at Fettes College, Rhind’s fine war-memorial, with its touching legend ‘Carry On’, shows a mortally wounded subaltern. He does not hold ‘a ceremonial officer’s baton which would not under normal circumstances have been carried on the field of battle’. Look: it’s just his stick – which he might well have carried in action, and probably did. Unnoticed is the figure’s revolver, on its (now broken) lanyard, which lies beside him on the ground. But, more to the point is the fact that the Classical sources for the sculpture, which have recently been explained by Patricia Andrew, appear not to be discussed. There are other military misconceptions and slight mistakes here and there. This is, however, a specialist genre;

and McKenzie’s (so to speak) awkwardness on parade, in this respect only, can surely be pardoned without recourse to ‘jankers’.

As I observed in the course of my review of the *Glasgow* PMSA volume, that city’s inhabitants have traditionally held their statues in no great respect. *Glasgow* includes a photograph of the Marochetti equestrian statue of the Duke of Wellington, complete with not one but with *two* parking-cones: one for the Duke’s head and one for his mount Copenhagen’s. Edinburgh’s *Wellington* statue by Sir John Steell has its plinth regularly adorned with the banners of the Scottish Socialist Party – the most unlikely alliance imaginable between political message and physical support – but at least the statue itself stands rather too high for revellers to deck it with cones. I worry that, if they were to do so with any regularity, the city authorities might see this childishness as some kind of democratisation of the sculptural heritage of the past and adopt the intrusive object (as is the case in Glasgow) as a sort of ‘people’s art’ to feature in advertisements, postcards, etc., for the foreseeable future. A mindless jape is now valued more than the original, serious message in the sculpture, or than its quality as an often excellent work of art, or than its intended original message of deference, admiration and example. Thus today we frequently have a cone on Sandy Stoddart’s David Hume; there is always a little sticker adorning the book in the philosopher’s hand; and we also see his toe being worn away by human touch as if it were some holy relic visited and adored by the faithful – whereas it is actually being used merely as an accessory in ‘selfie’ shots. The remarkable sculptural heritage of our city, so marvellously explained in this outstanding work of scholarship, is surely too important and too beautiful to be treated in these ways. We have so much to cherish and admire. There is so much from which we can learn all manner of things. And that heritage is all around us, in our streets and on our buildings: a free resource because this is *public* sculpture made for public enjoyment, public instruction, public inspiration. Parking cones don’t really meet these needs. Sculpture is for everyone to enjoy and to respect. Now, at last, we have the definitive work of reference to teach us its history, meaning, style and context. We are fortunate indeed.

*Iain Gordon Brown*



Charles K. Bradbury and Henry S. Fotheringham, **The Incorporated Trades of Edinburgh**, Warsaw: Braykc Publishing, 2018. 280 pp + numerous colour illus. Hardback £35.00. ISBN 978-0-99-266242-4.

Despite the significance of craftwork in Scotland's capital city and its strong coverage in the nineteenth century historiography, the twentieth century saw precious little historical research done on the institutions which sought to regulate work within the town. While notable exceptions can be found as part of wider works on urban societies and economies, as with the work of Isabel F. Grant, or Michael Lynch, very few monographs were published exclusively on the subject of Incorporated Trades themselves. John Smith's 1906 book on the Hammermen of Edinburgh and J. D. Marwick's 1909 book, *Edinburgh Guilds and Crafts* were not joined by another such study of an Edinburgh incorporation until the later part of the century, when Dalgleish and Maxwell published their 1987 booklet on the Goldsmiths, *The Lovable Craft*. Eight years later Helen Dingwall wrote about the Surgeons in *Physicians, Surgeons and Apothecaries Medical Practice in Seventeenth-Century Edinburgh*. While there were several excellent article-length studies published in the *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, including Angus's 1913 article on the Skinners, and Gray's 1930 piece on the Candlemakers, the lack of book-length studies is a clear problem for those with an interest of the socio-economic development of this European capital and UNESCO World Heritage Site. While these few works continue to be important, there simply were not enough of them published.

The twenty-first century has gone some way towards redressing this historiographical imbalance, as the first two decades alone have seen at least six new books and numerous journal articles dealing with the Edinburgh Incorporated Trades. To this number we can now add this beautifully-produced work by Bradbury and Fotheringham, *The Incorporated Trades of Edinburgh*. It will, no doubt, prove to be a staple introductory text for anyone seeking to study craftwork in the capital from this point forward.

Bradbury and Fotheringham's book is produced in

a large coffee-table format, with every single page lavishly illustrated with several colour images. The book is divided up into 23 chapters, with the first three focusing on the origins and early history of the incorporated trades. Included are a brief account of the complex legal jargon of incorporation, laying out the meaning of such stock terms as 'burgess' and 'guild', as well as synopses of crucial themes, such as the traditional rivalry between merchants and the craftsmen; the Reformation; or the 1583 arbitration which led to the revised burgh constitution, or 'Sett'.

Chapters four to twenty look at individual incorporations and unincorporated societies, beginning with the Surgeons and finishing with the Society of Barbers.<sup>1</sup> Each of these chapters gives an account of the formation and progress of the particular trade, as well as information on notable members. For example, the Surgeons' chapter includes *inter alia* the Jacobean surgeon Gilbert Primrose (p. 54); the Victorian surgeon Sir Henry Duncan Littlejohn (p. 50); and the first woman paediatric surgeon in Scotland, Gertrude Herzfeld (p. 62). Other trades' biographies include not only the famous, but also the infamous, as with the notorious wright, Deacon William Brodie (p. 136). While the Incorporations included many important individuals, several lesser-known personalities are also included, making for an interesting contribution to the social history of the town.

The final three chapters deal with the later history and heritage of the Edinburgh Incorporated Trades. Political and economic topics such as the 1707 Union of Parliaments and the Darien disaster are covered, as are the Enlightenment and industrialisation. Support for education, as well as contributions to the culture of the modern Scottish capital bring the book to a close, whilst simultaneously pointing to the continued role of the Incorporations in municipal matters. Finally, an index and select 'references and credits' come before an exquisite fold-out coloured map of the Queen Anne view of Edinburgh with the armorial shields of each of the crafts ('The North Prospect of the City of Edinburgh during the Reign of Queen Anne Dedicated by the Conventory of Trades to the Rt Hon Lord Provost of Edinburgh, 2018').

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<sup>1</sup> The chapter titles include: Surgeons; Goldsmiths; Skinners; Furriers; Hammermen; Mary's Chapel; Wrights; Masons; Tailors; Baxters; Fleshers; Cordiners; Websters; Waulkers; Bonnetmakers & Dyers; Candlemakers; and Society of Barbers.

In summary, the authors have produced a wonderful book on an important part of Edinburgh's history. This beautifully-illustrated volume is not only an introduction to the topic, but is also a wonderful source book for images from both Edinburgh's and Scotland's past. Indeed, those who are well acquainted with the extant images of early modern Edinburgh will be pleasantly surprised by the more obscure images brought in, such as Hogarth's engraving of the inside of Mary's Chapel in Niddry's Wynd (p. 129), or Howie's depiction of a seal showing the brazen cooking pot from which 'Potterrow' derives its name (p. 42). For those with more academic interests in history, the sparse use of citations might be a slight problem, though clearly their intention was to make the book accessible to a broader audience.

Indeed, such accessibility is to be commended, as the incorporated trades are such an important part of Edinburgh's story, and will continue to be important for many years to come. The year 1846 may have seen the abolition of the exclusive privileges over work first granted to the Trades in the mid-fifteenth century, but this book makes very clear that the Incorporations continue to play a crucial role in the civic life and ceremonies of Scotland's ancient capital. This book takes the story of Edinburgh's corporatism from the earliest known medieval statutes relating to work up until the present day. It demonstrates the resurgence of their role in urban culture in the twenty-first century, not only through the civic processions, like the 'Riding of the Marches', but also through this most-welcome addition to the history of such an important capital city. For anyone with an interest in the development of Edinburgh, this book is therefore an excellent place to start your research.

*Aaron Allen*

David Hume, **My Own Life**, edited from the original manuscript and with an introductory essay, notes and commentary by Iain Gordon Brown, *Second, revised and expanded ed.*, *The Royal Society of Edinburgh, 2017. 115 pp; illus.; £20; ISBN 978 0 902198 77 7.*

**D**avid Hume (1711-76), a son of Edinburgh, was the foremost thinker in what today is known as the Scottish Enlightenment. Widely recognised

as one of the greatest philosophers of all time, he was a quintessential eighteenth-century man of letters and a celebrated, if divisive, historian and essayist. His rather eventful life was chronicled by Ernest Campbell Mossner in 1954 in a book which held the field for more than half a century until it was recently overshadowed by James Harris's *David Hume: An Intellectual Biography* (2015). The latter book concentrates on Hume's intellectual endeavours and less on his private life, which was the approach ostensibly taken by Hume himself when he penned a concise but brilliant autobiography in April 1776, just over four months before his death from stomach cancer. Hume began 'My Own Life' by stressing that 'this narrative shall contain little more than the history of my writings – as, indeed, almost all my life has been spent in literary pursuits and occupations.' In fact, Hume's memoir contains much more, even if many details are naturally left out, notably his rejection from the chairs of Ethics and Pneumatical Philosophy at Edinburgh University in 1744 and Logic at Glasgow in 1752, the attempt by the General Assembly of the Kirk to excommunicate him for infidelity later in the 1750s, and his public quarrel with Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the 1760s. Also excluded are many of the more positive events in Hume's life, for instance his royal pension, and it is one of the key contentions of Harris that Hume misrepresented his rather comfortable life and tended to exaggerate some of his early failures, in order to tell a more dramatic 'rags to riches' story as well as enhance his independent credentials.

Hume's brief masterpiece – just six pages in its modern printed form – has now been published in a standalone volume, edited by Iain Gordon Brown, originally published in 2014 and in a revised and expanded edition in 2017. Like Hume said of his first published work, the *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40), Brown admits in the preface that he went to the press too early with the first edition. The second edition is of great interest to anyone interested in Enlightenment culture, particularly of Edinburgh, where Hume was born, went to university, spent a considerable time of his life, and finally died – even though he also resided in Ninewells (his family home in Berwickshire), Bristol, La Flèche, London, Vienna, Turin, and Paris. In 1752, he succeeded the Jacobite and classical scholar Thomas Ruddiman as Keeper of the Advocates Library in Edinburgh,

a position he held until he was succeeded by his friend Adam Ferguson, who later became professor in moral philosophy at Edinburgh University. As Hume points out in ‘My Own Life’, even though the position of librarian was not well-paid, it gave him access to one of the largest book collections in Europe, which enabled him to write the *History of England*, published in six volumes between 1754 and 1762. This work eventually made Hume an affluent man, despite (or perhaps thanks to) its contentious content. As a historian, Hume was eager to explode the ideological centrepiece of English eighteenth-century Whiggism: ancient constitutionalism. ‘It is ridiculous to consider the English Constitution before [the Stuart] period as a regular plan of Liberty’, Hume wrote in ‘My Own Life’.

Brown’s volume contains an extensive introduction, which is predominantly a comprehensive review of the literature on Hume’s biography and death, a modernised version of ‘My Own Life’ with extensive annotations, a transcription of the text, and – most importantly – a facsimile of the original manuscript (owned by the Royal Society of Edinburgh and held by the National Library of Scotland). There is only one flaw worth mentioning about Brown’s beautifully presented volume, and this is the absence of Adam Smith’s *Letter to Strahan*, which Brown discusses at length in the introduction. As Brown points out, ‘My Own Life’ and Smith’s essay were originally published together as a pamphlet in 1777, and they usually appear together in modern publications. Smith’s text describes the last days of Hume’s life and also offers a eulogy of his older friend, describing the notorious sceptic as ‘approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man, as perhaps the nature of human frailty will permit.’ Since Hume had many enemies, particularly among the devout in Presbyterian Scotland as well as Anglican England (he mentions William Warburton and his circle in ‘My Own Life’), Smith was criticised for the writing and said it ‘brought upon me ten times more abuse than the very violent attack I had made upon the whole commercial system of Great Britain’. The latter was a reference to Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*, published in the same year as Hume’s death and, like so much of the intellectual output in eighteenth-century Scotland, was inconceivable without the prior achievements of Hume.

*Dr Max Skjönsberg*

John Byrom, **The Care and Conservation of Shared Georgian Gardens**. *Edinburgh: The Word Bank in association with Edinburgh World Heritage Trust, 2018. 224. Illus. £30. ISBN-13: 978-0-9-930544-3.*

This is a long-awaited, richly illustrated handbook providing detailed guidance on the planning and maintenance of Edinburgh’s Shared Georgian gardens. There are around 50 of these gardens, set in circuses, squares, crescents and other less formally-designed spaces, which together comprise a major element of the New Town and the City’s UNESCO World Heritage Site. The book is intended for garden management committees and their professionally-employed staff, and also a wider academic and general readership.

The buildings of Edinburgh’s New Town have received significant attention from architectural historians over the past decades, so it is important that the gardens are now receiving their due as the New Town celebrated, in 2017, the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding. Many of the gardens – and certainly their design and planting – were afterthoughts to the street layouts and buildings, but they now comprise an integral element of the whole townscape as a World Heritage Site.

As Adam Wilkinson, Director of Edinburgh World Heritage, says in his Prefatory note, this book is intended as a companion to *The Care and Conservation of Georgian Houses: a maintenance manual for the New Town of Edinburgh*, first published in 1978 by the then Edinburgh New Town Conservation Committee, with further editions in 1980, 1986 and 1995. Despite its title, this was and remains relevant to Georgian houses across Britain. The book under review here is likewise relevant to Georgian gardens across Britain in its coverage of design and its various comparisons, though its horticultural recommendations are rather more specific to Scotland. It is a substantial volume, and its handsome physical appearance, thick and square, seems at first sight to contradict its own description as a ‘handbook’. The content, however, together with its generous illustrations, really does provide very detailed guidance for both garden creation and maintenance.

The book is structured in four sections. Part One introduces the subject in general, discussing



cultural and geographical contexts and the ‘family likeness’ of the Edinburgh gardens. Part Two, dealing with conservation, gives advice on the shape and character of trees, hedges and shrubbery, lawns and borders, street frontages, basements, pavements and ironwork, using an imaginary – but typical - garden as a ‘composite’ example. Part Three examines the conservation guidelines of bodies such as UNESCO, with advice on how to improve and maintain biodiversity and natural recycling. Part Four charts the development of a typical garden over a century, using the information of the earlier sections. A map of Edinburgh, showing all the gardens with a numbered legend, is helpfully placed on the endpapers; this includes lost as well as current gardens (nos. 1-3 are Argyll, Adam and Brown Squares).

John Byrom’s connection with the Georgian gardens of Edinburgh’s New Town is a long one, and this book has been in the making for many years. As a landscape architect, and former head of the landscape architecture programme at the University of Edinburgh, he has been examining and advising on Edinburgh’s Georgian gardens for some decades, and he writes with a detailed knowledge and understanding of developments undertaken during this period. His late wife, Connie Byrom, wrote a history of the gardens entitled *The Edinburgh New Town Gardens*, published in 1995; this is very much a technical companion to that study, looking to the future. Yet despite the book’s long gestation (or perhaps because of it?) a few errors have unfortunately crept in, such as the aerial view of the New Town on p.21, which is printed in reverse (a variant appears, correctly orientated, on p.201). Rather more misleading is the book’s title, which fails to state that its subject is principally the gardens of Edinburgh, rather than shared Georgian gardens in general.

The illustrations are plentiful and helpful, especially the detailed design plans, the flowers and trees popular in the Georgian period, and the drawings of the ‘Seven Ages’ of a typical garden. Some of the content shows its origins in a university course. There is a useful glossary, and Appendices that cover basic biology and ecology, record routines and inventories for garden management, climate data and the Beaufort windforce scale. The fifth and last Appendix, with its all-too brief comments on private back greens and gardens, is very pertinent to the future of the ecology of the city. It is a pity that this specific

subject lies outwith the scope of the book, for in total area ‘these small private gardens occupy more than twice that of the handbook’s shared gardens’, yet they contribute a great deal to the sustainability of so much of the city’s fauna and flora. There are, however, very helpful pages on street frontage planting (window boxes and balconies) and on ‘airies’, the Georgian front-of-house basements.

The production of the book is of interest in itself. Published by Edinburgh Old Town Development Trust’s *Word Bank* (a registered charity) in association with Edinburgh World Heritage Trust, it was funded by contributions from the Edinburgh Decorative and Fine Arts Society, the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust, Historic Environment Scotland and the F.E Cleary Heritage Fund. It was also crowdfunded, with the website ([www.crowdfunder.co.uk](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk)) posting the notice ‘We did it! On 10th Nov 2017 we successfully raised £1,230 with 43 supporters in 56 days’ – an interesting pointer for future authors! Not on general retail sale, the book can be purchased online from the *Word Bank*, or by cheque made out to ‘EOTDT’ at The Word Bank, 14 Johnston Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2PW.

*Patricia R. Andrew*

Brian Rice, Alexander Corrigan, Enrique González-Velasco (eds.) **The Life and Works of John Napier**. Springer, 2017. *Xviii + 994 p. Illus., bibliography. ISBN 978-3-31-953281-3*

John Napier of Merchiston (1550-1617), the inventor of logarithms and transformer of the means by which complex arithmetical calculations were made, was Scotland’s greatest mathematician and a man whose achievements bracket him alongside the likes of Lord Kelvin, Joseph Lister and Alexander Fleming. In 1914, the tercentenary of his invention was marked by an international conference of scholars in Edinburgh and the publication of a string of finely-produced commemorative works that retain their value a century later. This was despite the loss of almost every significant Napier manuscript in a tragic fire in 1801. Two centuries after that disaster, with computers and electronic calculators having internalised logarithms and removing them from everyday view, there was a danger of Napier’s

quadracentenary becoming a relatively muted affair. By the turn of the present century both the published works and scholarship of this remarkable Scotsman had become hard to come by, with a paucity of editions either in print or widely available. The early death of the author of Napier's entry in the 2004 *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, George Molland, tragically symbolised the issues facing Napier studies in modern times. It is these problems that this work seeks to address. A publication of this kind is always a major event; the circumstances surrounding its publication have made its importance all the clearer.

The editors' aims have been to commemorate Napier's quadracentenary by providing a new edition of each of his five works - one theological, four mathematical - translated into English and in a single volume for the first time. The works are: *A Plaine Discovery of the Whole Revelation of St. John* (1593); the *Descriptio (A Description of the Admirable Table of Logarithms)* of 1614; *Rabdologiae (Rabdology, or calculation with rods)* of 1617; the *Constructio (The Construction of the Wonderful Canon of Logarithms)* of 1619; and *De Arte Logistica* (this last not published until the Maitland Club edition of 1839). The works are prefaced by Brian Rice's sixty-page biography of Napier, and supplemented by an introduction to the mathematical texts by Enrique Gonzalez-Velasco. The *Plaine Discovery*, which perhaps presents the greatest interpretative difficulties for the modern reader, is introduced by a thirty-page explanatory essay by Alexander Corrigan. Each individual work carries a further introductory paragraph. Individual items of Napier material related to or drawn from the works which could not reasonably be included alongside the full texts are added in a series of appendices, and the work is wrapped up by an excellent (and generous) bibliographical essay. The editorial texts are characterised by precision but also by panache: this is scholarly writing of the highest order.

This is a long book, and considerations of space have prevented the inclusion of Napier's texts in their original Latin where this would have been relevant. This is stylishly compensated for by the inclusion as plates of Napier's Latin title pages, and by the decision to employ the earliest possible translations in each case. Although most of these are relatively modern, for the *Descriptio* the editors have employed the Edward Wright translation authorised by Napier

himself and published in 1616 with Napier's own introduction. In this edition, Wright abbreviated the logarithmic values in the tables, and therefore the editors have used the full tables as presented in the first Latin edition. *Rabdologiae* is present in William Frank Richardson's translation of 1990, the *Constructio* in that of William Rae Macdonald of 1889 and *De Arte Logistica* in the translation of William Francis Hawkins of 1982. Minor changes have been made by the current editors in each instance.

It is particularly notable that intelligent use of the appendices has meant that the full content of all the editions of the *Plaine Discovery* published during the author's lifetime are now available to scholars in single volume. It is intended that the various essays and introductions be capable of standing alone, and the editors warn that this leads to a certain degree of repetition. This reviewer did not find this to be an issue. The sole weakness of the editorial structure is the placing of the superb bibliographical essay at the rear of the volume where it is apt to be ignored - which would be a shame, as it makes clear that the publishing history around Napier has much to add both to knowledge of the man and to understanding his legend. The essay is followed by a conventional bibliography of Napier's works which is in part a reprint of *Aldus*. Although this really needs a key to its abbreviations, again one suspects that this is not an omission so much as a concession to the demands of space.

This is a hugely important new edition of the works of Scotland's greatest mathematician, and deserves the warmest of welcomes.

*James Hamilton*

Lisa Sibbald, **A-Z of Edinburgh Places – People – History**, *Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2018. 96 pp; 100 illus. Pbk £14.99. ISBN 978-1-4456-7975-4.*

Liz Hanson, **Edinburgh History Tour**, *Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2018. 96 pp; 50 illus. Pbk. £7.99. ISBN 978-1-4456-5607-6.*

Jan Bondeson, **Phillimore's Edinburgh**, *Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2018. 96 pp; 100 illus. Pbk. £14.99. ISBN 978-1-4456-7831-3.*

These three short books from Amberley Publishing both overlap and complement one another. Each is well illustrated: *Phillimore's Edinburgh* reproduces all of the 95 Edinburgh postcards painted by Reginald P Phillimore; Lisa Sibbald has an illustration for nearly all of her 78 entries; and Liz Hanson's little book has double page photographs of many of its scenes. Apart from portraits of historical figures, Lisa Sibbald's illustrations are all contemporary, whereas Liz Hanson concentrates on historic photographs, with fewer than 10 contemporary scenes. By its very nature *Phillimore's Edinburgh* contains nothing but vintage views.

Lisa Sibbald gives the reader an interesting selection of information about various aspects of Edinburgh life. Inevitably any reader will be intrigued to see how she coped with Q, X and Z. Under Q Lisa Sibbald opted for *Queen Mary's Bath House*. Perhaps Queen Victoria could have been included, presiding over the inauguration of the Prince Albert Memorial in Charlotte Square. Or Queen Charlotte? Or some may wish to know about the origin of Quarryholes. Ingeniously, Lisa Sibbald fills the most challenging gap with *Xmas*. The only other possibility that comes to mind is Edinburgh's twinning with Xi'an. And while *Zoo* was the obvious choice for Z, it was good to have also a description of the *Zeppelin Air Raid* on Edinburgh in 1916. The number of entries under each letter varies from one up to seven (C: six places and one person) and nine (S: seven places and two people). Unsurprisingly, the author has included *Sibbald Walk*, off the Canongate. In such a well-illustrated book it is a pity there is no photograph of Eric Liddell or a plan of the New Town, but these are minor criticisms of this book. And of course every reader will have her or his own list of suggestions to expand this book: this reader would have welcomed more examples of people commemorated by statues.

A disadvantage is that there is no map to assist those wishing to visit some of the locations described. Perhaps it has to be read in conjunction with the more familiar A-Z guide which many used to consult before the widespread use of sat-nav!

In common with her more extensive 2012 publication *Edinburgh Through Time*, Liz Hanson's latest compilation takes the reader on a visual tour not only of the Old and New Towns but also to visitor attractions and destinations such as the Royal Botanic Gardens, Craigmillar Castle, Newhaven and Leith. In *Edinburgh Through Time* contemporary photographs are juxtaposed with older illustrations of the same location. In her new book Liz Hanson has selected at least one Victorian or Edwardian illustration for each of the 45 double page spreads, with rarely more than ten or twelve lines of descriptive text. It is helpful to have a map clearly indicating the location of the places described (with the exception of Craigmillar Castle).

Both Lisa Sibbald's and Liz Hanson's books would be of interest to visitors to the city and residents alike. From what the author of *Phillimore's Edinburgh* has to say about tourists — they are variously described as appearing in hordes, frantic, clumsy and unfit — one suspects that Jan Bondeson intends his book for a different readership. A prolific writer, Bondeson has published many articles in his specialised field of rheumatology, but has also written more accessible works on a range of medical and historical subjects, including what has been described as 'a thorough biography of Greyfriars Bobby'. (Bondeson is not afraid to reinterpret the story of Edinburgh's most famous dog in the light of the pan-European myth of the 'Dog on the Master's Grave'.)

The subject of his latest book, Reginald P Phillimore (1855-1941), was one of Britain's leading postcard artists. After inheriting some land in England and two houses in North Berwick, Phillimore was able to give up a poorly paid post as an assistant schoolmaster in England to move to Scotland. From the early 1900s through to the 1920s (a period described as 'The Golden Age of Postcards') Phillimore produced at least 643 different cards. He developed a distinctive style, basing his scenes sometimes on what he had visited and sketched, sometimes on old prints of buildings already demolished. As well as the main subject, the Edinburgh cards would include historical notes of the building, close or street depicted, and often smaller sketches.

The majority of Phillimore's ninety-five Edinburgh cards have as their subject properties on the Royal Mile. Jan Bondeson groups the cards more or less geographically, taking the reader from the Castle through the Lawnmarket and Canongate to the Palace of Holyroodhouse. There is a short diversion to the New Town to Sir Walter Scott's house in Castle Street and to Scott's (sic) Monument as well as to Jeanie Deans Cottage. From Holyrood the reader is led back to the Cowgate and the Grassmarket before being taken on 'Some Excursions to the Provinces'. These comprise Calton Hill (!), St Anthony's Chapel, Duddingston loch, Craigmillar Castle and a thatched cottage at Swanston village.

*Phillimore's Edinburgh* brings together in one volume the artist's delightful and often anachronistic drawings and paintings. This book will be of interest to all who wish to see how an Edwardian artist saw Edinburgh through his own eyes and through those of an earlier generation on whose works he used as a basis for some of his cards.

There are some irksome errors. The very first illustration is erroneously captioned: the view of the Castle is undoubtedly from the Grassmarket. George V did not make a proclamation at the Mercat Cross in 1910. (In *Edinburgh Through Time* there is a photograph of King George V being proclaimed by Lord Provost Brown on 10 May 1910.) The Netherbow and Victoria Terrace are too far apart to have been merged. However, these must not detract from what is an enjoyable, detailed and well-researched account of Reginald Phillimore's Edinburgh postcards.

*Peter Graham*

Malcolm Fife, **Edinburgh at work: people and industries through the years.** *Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2018, pp.96, illus. Paperback, £14.99, ISBN 978-1-4456-7066-9.*

*Edinburgh at Work* is part of a substantial series from local history specialists Amberley Publishing that looks at the working lives, industrial development and commercial history of major UK towns and cities. As with much modern local history publishing, it makes the most of modern low-cost printing technology and interest from an already-developed local market to enable publication of titles

whose low print runs and focussed appeal would once have been either impossible or dependent upon a healthy list of subscribers.

With a background such as this, the book is clearly going to be built around a predetermined format, which in this instance is the combination of a series of short essays about Edinburgh's working life and industrial history, each followed by pages of illustrations. Fife chooses the obvious period subdivisions, pre-1500, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Georgians, the Victorians, the twentieth century, concluding with a chapter on the twenty-first century up to 2017. The focus in each chapter is very much on industrial history, and read in sequence they build into a clear and comprehensible chronology of Edinburgh's industrial history from the earliest times until the present day.

The format allows for five pages of pure text for each chapter. Within that much has been achieved for what is a criminally neglected area of Edinburgh historiography. Malcolm Fife knows the subject intimately, as his excellent recent work on Leith Docks has already demonstrated. Here, no significant industry has been omitted, and every major actor and enterprise is mentioned to some degree, allowing the book to succeed in its main aim of providing a concise and manageable introduction to the subject. Most Edinburgh works that claim to cover the whole of the city's history fade badly in their discussion of the twentieth century, let alone anything more recent, but no fading happens here. Nor are the final chapters unsophisticated tales of decline and fall: the growth and flourishing of Edinburgh's new industries is covered to counterpoint the distressing cull in manufacturing. Laudably, the Edinburgh of the book is geographically wider than is often the case, with Leith treated as an equal and important centre, and out-of-town industries such as coal mining and paper milling given proper billing. It is worth adding that the illustrations are superbly selected, and although they are let down somewhat by the quality of the printing, this does not detract from their very considerable interest.

The book's drawbacks stem almost entirely from the limits of the format and the means of production. Fife has managed to cram in a great deal of information into a very short space, and at times this shows through in awkward phrasing or sudden, unexpected changes in topic. A paragraph that



begins by introducing the Royal College of Surgeons switches without warning onto the links between science, commerce and Edinburgh's four universities. That's an editing issue, not an authorial one. There is relatively little room for interpretation, and at times the text devolves into a pure chronology or series of driven facts. There are no footnotes or endnotes, and as not all sources are named, this will be a difficult book to move on from. Before 1939, we are told, six firms employed 800 people in the manufacture of gas meters – but we are not told who these are. There are no suggestions for further reading, and a final page which might have been turned over to this is taken up by a somewhat unnecessary list of modern employment by sector.

Of course, for recommendations for further reading to be present, that further reading has to exist in the first place. Edinburgh's historiography suffers from the city's obsession with everything pre-1832, and what little does exist to cover subsequent events accords with the opinion put forward by Lord Rosebury at the first meeting of the Old Edinburgh Club, that Edinburgh had no industry. For all the limitations imposed by its length and format, Malcolm Fife's book is the first reasonably accessible work of its kind. There is still a real need for a proper history of Edinburgh's nineteenth and twentieth centuries, one told outwith the perspective of Morningside or Heriot Row, but in the absence of that *Edinburgh at Work* breaks the ground, and for that we should be grateful.

*James Hamilton*

Jack Gillon and Fraser Parkinson, **Leith History Tour**. *Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2018, pp 96, illus., paperback, £6.99, ISBN 978-1-4456-7807-8.*

*Leith History Tour* is the latest product of the prolific local history team of Jack Gillon and Fraser Parkinson, and sees both back on home turf with this pocket guide to the history of the ancient port and trading centre. It's a robust little paperback intended to fit a coat pocket and put up with a certain amount of bad weather as the reader follows it on a tour of the centre of Leith. It is very much a guidebook rather than a history – it begins with a

map and key, and the whole makes rather more sense on the ground than in an armchair. The Leith of the tour forms a rough triangle bordered by Commercial Street in the north, Great Junction Street in the west and Constitution Street in the east; there is a final veering off onto Leith Links and Easter Road at the end. Each of the forty or so points of interest en route is given an illustrated double page and an explanatory paragraph. A three page historical introduction ties the whole book together.

Although many walking tour guides exist of Edinburgh writ large, this is the first of the genre to devote itself entirely to Leith, and it draws upon 2014's *Leith Through Time* by the same authors. That work, like much of the team's output, has taken the form of captioned photobooks, and that experience is used here to good effect in the brief, well-composed paragraphs accompanying each point of interest. Anyone following the book in sequence from its starting point at the Foot of the Walk will, in the space of a couple of hours, come away with a reasonable grasp of the basics of Leith's history and will have seen a large proportion of its most important buildings and sites. Some of these sites have undergone such change over the last century as to make it difficult to orientate on the ground – the Kirkgate being the prime example - and here the authors have included helpful then-and-now images to fill the gap. Some of their stop-off points will be new even to those already engaged in the history of the area, and they have avoided any obvious errors in facts, dates etc.

This is very much a book for the outdoors, and the reader is intended to be able to see a particular point of interest when reading about it in the guide. Nevertheless, it is a real shame that the publisher has opted for a stylish but frustrating blurred effect on many of the illustrations, especially those taken from old prints or photographs. It is really not clear what was to have been achieved by this. The tour itself is well chosen, but it completely ignores Leith west of the public library, and Leith's beautiful suburb of Trinity and the Georgian elegance of Madeira and Prince Regent Streets are missed out. This is a particular shame for the generally-neglected Trinity, but in the guide's defence, there is no obvious way to get the reader to and from it whilst sustaining interest.

*Leith History Tour* provides a thoroughly interesting and informative guide to a place undergoing a renaissance of pride and self-awareness,



written by excellent local historians and sold at a very reasonable price. It provides an ideal and enjoyable introduction to a fascinating port, suitable for both locals and visitors alike and makes for a welcome addition to the scene.

*James Hamilton*

Jan-Andrew Henderson, **Edinburgh New Town: A Comprehensive Guide**, Amberley, 2018 96 pp. Paperback £14.99. 2018 ISBN 978-1-44-567412-4.

Reading about the history of the New Town has been a gap in my education since I moved to that part of Edinburgh nearly 10 years ago, when in a burst of enthusiasm, I happily walked around the streets at leisure, taking in the architecture and history and being curious about some of the street names or statues. Had I taken this book with me on my amblings I am sure quite a few of my questions would have been answered, and the walk made even more enjoyable.

Indeed the book has been written by someone who spent more than 20 years working as a tour guide and the book has been presented as historical vignettes of numerous streets, buildings, landmarks and the more notable residents of the New Town, although no particular routes have been marked out to allow the reader the freedom to see more of the streets. Numerous books have been written about the New Town in recent years and this book purports to be different in that it gives a more comprehensive overview of the well-known streets as well as some of the lesser known streets. The introduction argues that much emphasis is placed on the Old Town for history and architecture, and the New Town is often neglected as being less interesting than the Old. However, the New Town has its original buildings which are mostly older than those in the Old Town which have largely been renovated and rebuilt over the years. There is also the negative association of the Old Town with invasions from England, deplorable living conditions and political intrigue, whereas the New Town was a hotbed for the Scottish Enlightenment and arguably an architectural achievement.

The book commences with an overview of the history of the New Town, including the feuing

system where people could buy plots of land and build on them so long as they didn't detract from the original vision and style of architecture. As the New Town expanded over the years, so does the geographic area encompassed in the book from the original New Town between Charlotte Square and St. Andrew's Square; the Second (Northern) New Town stretching from Heriot Row to Mansfield Place; the Eastern Expansion covering Picardy and Gayfield; the Western Expansion that covers the Moray estate; the Western New Town that covers Queensferry Street to Palmerston Place; the Eastern New Town which extends from Leith Street to the Royal Terrace and there is also a section on 'The Fringes' which covers area such as Canonmills, the Dean Estate and Stockbridge.

Each street or area described is given an 'Interesting Rating' and (where applicable) a 'Haunting Rating' as a mark out of five to allow the reader to indicate the more interesting places to visit, although the criteria for the ranking is not always clear. The book is richly illustrated with photographs being taken from the vantage point of someone walking the streets which gives the impression you are looking up at a building or viewing a street as you read about it.

A brief history of the street or landmark is given along with any significant buildings or residents. The style of writing is informal and sardonic: for example, when describing an allegedly haunted house on India Street, it is stated, 'It only turned up for dinner parties or social occasions, which makes it a typical New Town resident'. Or on Hope Street Lane which has nothing to recommend it 'unless you are a connoisseur of fire exits and wheelie bins'.

The streets are brought to life with anecdotes about the residents, such as how James Young Simpson and his staff tested the effects of chloroform in his home before supper and all fell below the table, much to the consternation of his wife, and how he once seated a slave owner next to a freed slave at a dinner party. Or how Alexander Graham Bell found his invention of the telephone an intrusion on his main interest which was to research speech and hearing (his Mother and wife were both deaf) to the extent he refused to have a telephone in his study. The author wonders what he would have made of mobile phones today.

The dry historical and factual information is also alleviated with 'Fun Facts' such as the granite setts on Great King Street which enabled residents to step

into their sedan chairs or carriages without getting their feet dirty from the gutters, or how a second hand clothes shop called 'Madame Doubtfire' on South East Circus Place was the inspiration for Anne Fine's novel of the same name which would become the basis for the famous film 'Mrs. Doubtfire' starring Robbie Williams. A perhaps less than fun fact is how St. Andrew's House on Regent Road was built on the site of the former Calton Gaol and the bodies of several executed murderers still lie beneath the Western Car Park.

The book is light hearted and informative. It intentionally does not go into depth of the history of the streets but is a cheerful guide for exploring the New Town. It would however benefit from some maps to indicate the locations of the streets and landmarks it covers, and an index would be useful to help return to points of interest. The book is intended to be a companion piece to *The Royal Mile: A Comprehensive Guide*. All in all, it is an enjoyable book which has highlighted to me that I have yet more streets to tread in my local area.

*Asma Khan*

**Lisa Sibbald, A-Z Leith. People, Places and History, Stroud: Amberley Books, 2018, 98 pp + illustrations. Paperback £14.99. ISBN 978-1-44-568205-1.**

**H**aving lived at the border of Leith for some years now, I was keen to learn more about this area, which I knew to be rich in history and pivotal for the trade and commerce of Edinburgh, but apart from the Shore area and the Ocean Terminal as tourist attractions, and the rejuvenation of Leith Walk with its independent shops and ubiquitous cafes, the area receives less attention than other parts of Edinburgh. This book enlivens Leith through a brief history and anecdotes of famous historical buildings, businesses and residents.

As the title suggests, the book goes through these famous buildings and people in alphabetical order and although geographical cohesion isn't necessary when reading the historical descriptions, a map indicating the location of those landmarks still existing would have been useful in case the reader wanted to view the areas themselves.

The book is generously illustrated which helps evoke the history being described and is littered with quirky facts such as how the Boundary Bar (now known as 'City Limits') crossed the boundary between Leith and Edinburgh and had a metal demarcation line for the two cities. Up until 1920 when Leith and Edinburgh were amalgamated, when last orders were called in the Edinburgh side, customers could move to the Leith side for an extra half an hour's worth of drinking. Leith was famous for glass making, initially making bottles for wine as Leith was the main port of entry in Scotland for wine, and then expanding into medicine bottles. At its height the industry had seven furnaces operating in Leith. This enterprise eventually ceased to operate when increased taxes on glass bottles in the early 1800s made this line of business no longer viable. There are some surprising discoveries in the book, such as the existence of Leith Airport and how John Gibson, a cycle maintainer and builder, briefly turned his hand to building custom designed aircraft in the early 1900s. His business survived only a few years before he returned to cycle making.

There is of course maritime history aplenty and aside from the more familiar naval landmarks there are also descriptions of less well known historical sites such as the Leith Citadel. This was built instead of an original concept by Cromwell's men to fortify the whole city of Leith to increase its defences, a prospect which horrified the residents of Leith. The citadel has in turn served as a prison for Jacobite prisoners and later for industrial purposes but now only the ruins one gate (port) remain to be seen in Dock Street. There is also Leith Fort which was built after an attempt to capture Leith by John Paul Jones (the Scots born co founder of the American Navy). Leith's defences were inadequate at the time but the city was saved due to high winds forcing the navy out. Through the passage of time the Fort has been used to hold French prisoners during the Napoleonic wars and latterly as a training centre for the army. In 1861, as a solution to ships not being able to set their chronometers to the ball dropping in Nelson's column monument on Calton Hill in misty weather, a gun was taken from Leith to Edinburgh Castle was electronically connected to the ball, so that every day at one o'clock there was an audible signal for the ships. Following the conversion into housing, the building suffered from the effects of anti social

behaviour and was sadly demolished to make way for new affordable housing.

There is also a brief description of the Darien Scheme which was Scotland's attempt to establish colonies in an attempt to capitalise on lucrative trading in the late seventeenth century when the country was struggling financially. The scheme was a both a financial and humanitarian disaster with the majority of people sent to establish a colony dying from disease, lack of supplies and attacked en route by the Spaniards. The Darien scheme further weakened Scotland's economy which led to the 1707 political unification of Scotland and England.

The book touches on the tragic events of the Gretna Rail disaster in 1915 when over 200 Scottish troops were killed in a collision due to Signalmen error. It is a sobering thought to remember that the deceased were brought to Leith by train and interred at the Dalmeny Street Drill Hall before being buried. The Drill Hall is now used for creative activities and charitable works and has a more positive atmosphere.

The residents of Leith mentioned in the book range from Eric Melrose Brown who became the most decorated pilot in naval history and Dr. Thomas Latta who first developed the idea of using a saline solution

to counter the dehydration of the patient's blood when tackling an outbreak of cholera in 1832. Modern day residents include Dean Owens, an acclaimed Scottish singer/songwriter, and Irvine Welsh who found fame through his novel 'Trainspotting'.

We also learn the fate of places like the State Cinema with its distinctive art deco architecture, now in disuse and due to be developed into modern accommodation. The book touches on an important point that the efforts made to gentrify Leith has resulted in expensive housing which is beyond what local people can afford, and in trying to develop Leith as a tourist attraction, many of the traditional eateries have been replaced with high end restaurants and bars which are again not within the price range of the locals. A balance between expensive and affordable housing needs to be sought and the community and identity of Leith should not be lost to attracting tourism.

All in all, the book demonstrates that there is more to Leith than being the 'poor' neighbour and that there is a lot remains to be discovered.

*Asma Khan*