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## Book Reviews

Lisa Rosner, **Medical Education in the Age of Improvement: Edinburgh Students and Apprentices, 1760-1826**. *Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991, pp. 273. £30.00, 0-7486-0245-3.*

Between 1760 and 1826 nearly 17,000 medical students matriculated at Edinburgh University and Lisa Rosner has written a book about them. More precisely, she has studied their course choices recorded in surviving registers held in the Special Collections Department of the University Library. Each year students were required to pay a fee, sign the roll and indicate which classes they proposed to study. Matriculants went on to purchase their class tickets from individual professors, usually at a cost of three guineas for a winter course lasting from November to May.

Rosner created a database to manage the information contained in matriculation registers and her research is in keeping with modern computer-based treatments of historical records. One immediate and useful result of her preferred approach is the first reliable calculation of how big the medical matriculant population actually was during the period many still regard as the University's halcyon days. It is significantly smaller than claims made in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries because compilers failed to allow for multiple enrolments by the same individuals over different years of study. The same problem affects figures provided by Alexander Morgan in the 1930s which, hitherto, have been accepted by researchers.

Rosner has also thrown considerable light on another long-standing problem. By no means all of the students who attended classes actually went to the trouble and expense of matriculating, and there has been considerable debate about precisely how many did not. By comparing matriculation rolls with other attendance records available from 1791 to 1811, she found around 50% of those attending medical classes were non-matriculants. In 1811, when non-matriculants finally began to outnumber matriculants, the University tightened up its regulations; thereafter, the former fell sharply. Unfortunately, no equivalent comparisons can be made before 1791, but it very much looks as if the figure of 17,000 needs upward revision by at least 30-40% to convey the true size of the medical student population.

Another innovation in the book is the use of

quantitative analyses based on the academic rather than calendar year. Thus when Rosner gives figures for the cohort 1763, it means students matriculating in November of that year but whose courses stretched into the spring and, in some cases, even into the summer of 1764. Up to now researchers have tended to use annual figures, but the advantages of this curriculum-orientated approach are obvious, and this is a further area where her work will become the new standard. It underlies Rosner's own investigations into the patterns of course attendance followed by different groups of medical students, which takes up the first and by far the larger part of her book.

Taken together, the findings confirm the well known fact that Edinburgh was an international centre of medical learning, a vast marketplace for medical education which sucked in demanding consumers and eager suppliers alike. During this period, there was considerable debate about the quantity versus the quality of Edinburgh medical education, usually stirred up either by conflict between the University and the Town Council or by disputes between individual professors. An anonymous author in a paper submitted to the Scottish University Commissioners and eventually printed in their volume of *Edinburgh Evidence* (1837) went for the jugular on this very issue: 'The number of students that flock to [a professor] for instruction, is no more a test of the value of [his] lectures than the resort of young couples to Gretna Green is a proof of the piety of the blacksmith who gives them his nuptial benediction' (*Appendix*, p. 145).

*Mutatis mutandis*, although Rosner's figures and percentages are impressive, it is equally important to ask what her analysis has actually added to our broader qualitative or thematic understanding of medical education at Edinburgh during the period. Rosner's principal claim here is to have identified particular groups of matriculants, each of which had a different pattern of course attendance which varied considerably from the formal requirements necessary to graduate. The 'gentlemen physicians' who took the MD degree came nearest to following the complete curriculum on offer in Edinburgh, although some could shorten their attendance by presenting evidence of courses taken at other universities. However, from 1763 to 1826, they made up less than 20% of the matriculants. Another group, the 'industrious apprentices', were formally indentured to the Edinburgh Incorporation of Surgeons, or Royal

College as it became in 1778. By far the biggest, the third group were the 'occasional auditors'. They made up a massive 64% of the matriculated student population. These were men who did not graduate and were not apprentices to Edinburgh surgeons.

The course choices of each group are analysed in separate chapters. One surprising finding is that the industrious apprentices tended to take university courses throughout their apprenticeships, rather like the graduates who studied at Edinburgh for three years, although they were more selective in their choice of courses. The aptly named occasional auditors, on the other hand, tended to stay for a shorter time (70% for only one year) and showed preferences for anatomy, chemistry, medical practice and clinical lectures at the Royal Infirmary. Using information from other published records, Rosner divides the latter group into further sub-categories such as American students, Oxbridge students and Fellows of the London College of Physicians, and looks for further differences in their course choices. She also shows that as the nineteenth century drew on, the percentage of these occasional auditors diminished as more students began fulfilling course requirements for formal qualifications.

There is much more detail to be had but, basically, what it all shows is that non-graduating medical matriculants tended to 'pick and mix' from a bag of educational goodies on offer to them, much as commentators from Adam Smith to J. B. Morrell have always said they did. Also, that the demand for formal qualification gained at the University or the College of Surgeons increased, which is also a well documented fact. It is important also to note, however, that a great deal of other material has been sacrificed for what is ultimately a quantitative confirmation of the known. Rosner explicitly excludes discussion of the nature of eighteenth-century medical knowledge, the content of courses, the social backgrounds of students, the history of relevant institutions such as the University, the College of Surgeons and the Infirmary, as well as the wider cultural milieu of the age of improvement itself. All these omissions are justified on the grounds that her analysis is a 'student's eye view', and she relies heavily on two further sources to extend this perspective on medical education beyond the mere recitation of numbers.

One is the *Guide for Gentlemen Studying Medicine at the University of Edinburgh* (1792); the other

is the well known student diaries and letters by Silas Neville, Thomas Ismay, Alexander Lesassier and a small number of others, which tell us what it actually felt like to study medicine in Edinburgh. Yet it is precisely the wider historical, social and political considerations which must be kept firmly in mind to make sense not only of contemporary sources such as the guides, diaries, letters and wider public debate about the value of an Edinburgh medical education, but also of Rosner's own findings. For example, she takes the *Guide* at face value, and uses its course descriptions and reasons why students should or should not attend to analyse the motives of different groups of students. However, instead of being a sort of Edinburgh medical Baedeker, the *Guide* is actually a highly politicised work, and very probably written by one of the University professors. Currently, we know nothing about how widely it was read, or whether it actually influenced student choice.

Throughout her book Rosner is adamant that the primary motive for all medical students who came to Edinburgh was to educate themselves in order to acquire practice. In an early chapter devoted to this theme, she notes that the trappings of learning, politeness and manners could be just as important as the acquisition of medical knowledge *per se*. Nevertheless, the general assumption is of a broad analogy with twentieth-century arrangements. But in an age of non-registration – freedom to practice without formal qualifications – where there was widespread scepticism about the efficacy of medicine, why should anyone have believed medical education at Edinburgh University would help them to acquire practice?

Most commentators at the time endorsed the view that more medical skill led to more practice, but many doubted whether the kind of courses on offer at Edinburgh (including the clinical lectures) actually increased that skill. Professors such as James Gregory and extramural teachers like John Bell both felt that attendance at Edinburgh University could even retard the prospect of obtaining practice. How can any putative relationship between medical education and practice, substantial or superficial, be asserted without actually following up at least some individual cases? Even a handful of the 17,000 individuals picked up early and followed through after studying at Edinburgh, would have given some grounds for assessing whether attendance at Edinburgh had an effect upon practice. It would

also have made the book more interesting to the general reader. This is also important because the evidence of the much quoted diarists and letter writers is inconclusive or even goes against her thesis. Ismay died at the end of his first year and Neville does not seem to have practised, despite taking an Edinburgh MD.

In part two of her book the roles of the University, the College of Surgeons and the Royal Commission of 1826 are examined in relation to changes in the form of nineteenth-century Edinburgh medical education. Her discussion goes some way in accommodating the complex historical context in which student choices were beginning to change, but Rosner is far less comfortable dealing with the broader picture. Future scholars will be grateful for her painstakingly accurate work but, in the end, it is the data which does the talking in this book and therein lies its limitation as well as its strength.

MIKE BARFOOT, *Medical Archive Centre, Edinburgh University Library*

Sam McKinstry, **Rowand Anderson, 'The Premier Architect of Scotland'**. *Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991, pp. 223, illus. £35.00, 0-7486-0252-6.*

Robert Rowand Anderson is a crucial figure in Scottish Victorian and Edwardian architecture. In a remarkable career spanning over fifty years, he made an enormous contribution to Scottish architecture and to the Scottish architectural profession. In his extensive practice, Anderson was involved in the design of everything from small houses to major educational buildings. He quickly established a formidable reputation as a church architect. Not only was he responsible for some of the major Scottish ecclesiastical commissions from the mid 1860s onwards, but his immense knowledge of historic church architecture also made him a natural choice for some of the most important restoration projects undertaken in Scotland, including Iona, Paisley, Dunblane, Sweetheart and Jedburgh. These ecclesiastical interests, already evident during his three years at the Trustees' Academy in Edinburgh, must have been greatly encouraged when he entered the office of Sir George Gilbert Scott in 1857. During the next three years he worked as assistant in the office of Britain's most prolific and successful Gothic revivalist. His ex-

perience with Scott was very important. Not only did it increase his knowledge of Gothic architecture, it gave him his professional training in a very large practice, handling prestigious commissions. It also placed him at the very centre of the architectural debate in Britain; Anderson joined Scott just at the height of the Foreign Office controversy. All of this was to have great significance in the future development of his career and the formation of his views on architecture.

His importance lay not only in the example of his work, but also in his great contribution to the education of architects and the organisation of the architectural profession in Scotland. In connection with the latter, his efforts were rewarded by his election as first President of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland in 1916.

The enormous scope of his activities is examined in great detail in this admirable book by Dr McKinstry. Anderson, in common with most architects of this period, has been eclipsed in the literature by Charles Rennie Mackintosh and, to a lesser extent, by his own gifted pupil Robert Lorimer. In this he has suffered the fate of most High Victorian architects (and certainly all Scottish High Victorians) whose work does not qualify them as one of Pevsner's 'Pioneers of Modern Design'. This book is to be welcomed as the first attempt at the rehabilitation of one of the foremost of Scotland's Victorian architects.

In the preface Dr McKinstry identifies one of the problems facing the writer of the architectural monograph – whether to adopt a chronological or thematic approach. We might add that there is also a tension between the descriptive and biographical approach on the one hand, and the analytical and theoretical on the other. On the whole the author performs this balancing act rather well and the book is a major success in two main areas. Firstly, it provides an account of Anderson's life and career which, unless any major new archival material is discovered, is unlikely to be surpassed. Secondly, although there is certainly room for debate, the author has nevertheless provided an extremely stimulating and genuinely important discussion of Anderson's theoretical position.

As a biography the main problem is that the surviving material does not give a deep insight into the personal life of Anderson. The result is therefore very much a portrait of Anderson as a professional. There

is far more information, for example, on Anderson's relationship with patrons like Lord Bute, than on his wife and family. He married Mary Ross in 1863 but she rarely appears in the book again until the end when her supportive role and formidable reputation among the people of Colinton are commented on. Whilst personal details are scarce, however, Dr McKinstry makes excellent use of what does exist and in places there are very detailed descriptions of surviving material, ranging from the curriculum and even the menu at George Watson's School, which Anderson attended in the 1840s, to the genuinely moving account of the tear-stained letter he sent to the Rev. William Duke of St Vigean's telling of the death of his daughter, Annie Ross Anderson, at the age of eight.

In dealing with the theoretical context of Anderson's work, Dr McKinstry considers at length the guiding principles behind Anderson's architecture. Essentially, he rejected the picturesque Baronial of the Burn/Bryce school. His aim was to create a new, modern and specifically Scottish architecture that was more archaeologically accurate than that of the first phase of the Baronial revival. There is a strong emphasis on functionalism and practicality and this aspect of his work, which is given great prominence by the author, is very much in the High Victorian tradition. The contrast between the Anderson approach and that of the earlier Scots Baronialists is one made by Anderson himself in a passage (quoted by Dr McKinstry) in his preface to the 1901 edition of Billings' *Baronial and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Scotland*:

The builders of our Scottish houses and castles ... never troubled themselves about picturesqueness or the composition of designs to suit sites. They did what suited their purposes and wants ... and the result was ... buildings that show an adaptation of means to an end, functional truth, with resulting intelligence, expression and picturesqueness.

The clear exposition of Anderson's theoretical position is set not only in the general context of British High Victorian architectural theory, but specifically in a Scottish context. The author identifies a number of lectures attended by Anderson as a student at the Trustees' Academy as well as articles that would have been available to him which must have helped to mould his outlook.

One minor quibble here is that throughout the book there is an assumption of a fair amount of knowledge on the part of the reader on matters

such as picturesque theory, Victorian revivalism and functionalism and the ecclesiological movement. It was really unnecessary to tell such a readership, therefore, that (in connection with Anderson's membership of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1871) 'in these days antiquarianism and architecture walked hand in hand: since architects still used the stylistic syntax of bygone ages in their designs for buildings' (p. 58). Given the level of sophistication of the rest of the discussion this seems a little obvious and didactic.

This small complaint, however, should not detract from the importance of Dr McKinstry's analysis of Anderson's theoretical position. In effect he has identified Anderson as the creator of a second Baronial revival in Scotland, one which was based not on the picturesque aesthetic but on the solid Victorian principles of functionalism. It is a pity, however, that the scope of the book did not allow the author to explore the relationship between the first and second Baronial revivals more fully. While it is true that the first can be seen in the context of an essentially eighteenth-century aesthetic and the second was very much the product of the nineteenth century, it would be an over-simplification and an injustice to the architects concerned to say that Anderson was interested only in the way a building worked and Burn or Bryce were concerned only with the way a building looked. Dr McKinstry is clearly aware that the earlier architects were also influenced by more practical matters when he writes that 'the Baronial specialists, particularly Bryce, had in any event always been conscious of the need to plan new country houses sensibly even if, externally, they were gorged with historical details' (p. 16). We might put this a little stronger and say that the functioning of the country house was of enormous importance to both Burn and Bryce.

All of this discussion of theoretical matters is fascinating and stimulating and will surely form the basis for further study. Despite this, however, there are two areas in which the book is a disappointment. The first is that the excellence of the theoretical discussion is not carried through into the analysis of the buildings themselves. Much is made of Anderson's Functionalist approach but planning is surely a crucial element of such an approach and yet there is very little discussion of the planning of the buildings. It is significant that of the 94 plates in the book only in the case of the Edinburgh Medical

School does a plan appear, and then only incidentally as a vignette on a perspective drawing.

The main problem with the book, however, is one that was outwith the control of the author. The publishers, Edinburgh University Press, have produced a book which is visually inept. The plates, even allowing for the fact that many of them are based on amateur photographs, are simply awful. Plates which deserved a full page have been given a half page or less and some photographs have been cropped so that the buildings are presented with no indication of their context. Perhaps worst of all, the book has been printed on a dirty yellowish paper that looks as if it has been lying around in the printer's storeroom for the past fifty years. This does a great disservice to the often stunning architecture of Rowand Anderson and to the efforts of the author. Indeed it is greatly to his credit that the book remains so readable despite its unappealing appearance.

It would be simply wrong, however, to finish this review on a negative note. Nothing should obscure the genuine achievement of the author in rehabilitating a great figure in Scottish architecture and at the same time casting light on a fascinating and inventive period of Scottish architecture. If at the end we are left wondering about the nature of the Baronial revivals or the extent of Anderson's influence on the next generation (which the author rightly concludes is outside the scope of his book), that only shows the extent to which Dr McKinstry has been able to hint at issues beyond the confines of his own, fairly short, monograph and shows how much more work needs to be done on this period. We must conclude that this book marks an excellent first step.

JOHN LOWREY, *Centre for Architectural History and Theory, University of Edinburgh*

Ian Gow, **The Scottish Interior: Georgian and Victorian Decor.** *Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992, pp. 174, illus. £25.00, 0-7486-0220-8.*

This book, on an aspect of architectural and social history not treated often enough, is well produced and, although written in a scholarly style, the language is simple – almost conversational – and a pleasure to read. No book on the subject of Scottish interiors could hope to cover the complete period from the prehistoric site at Skara Brae, Orkney, to the elegant house and studio near Galashiels designed

in 1950 and 1972 by Peter Womersley for Bernat Klein. This book covers the mid-eighteenth century to the present day, using material principally from the collections of the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS).

The text is concerned with the interiors in which our forebears lived or spent part of their time eating and drinking. In describing these the author introduces us to the manner in which houses were planned and used, to the craftsmen associated with their creation, and above all to the harmony which must exist between patron, architect, decorator and furniture maker, so necessary to the complete success of, for example, Robert Adam's interior designs. The contemporary publication of source books and catalogues illustrated architectural styles, decorative methods and furnishing samples, reflecting changing taste in interiors and resulting in a continuous development of architectural style. Patterns of living and technical achievements soon led to the mass production of materials.

The text and illustrations provide a chronological survey ranging from the plate of William Adam's design of 1726 for the library at Arniston in *Vitruvius Scoticus*, to a series of lively ink drawings of a Scottish Home of the 1980s designed for Christmas cards. The delightful pencil drawing of c. 1800 by Alexander Nasmyth of his two daughters in his workshop catches our attention. The subtle use of pencil can bring a scene to life and often conveys the setting of an interior more vividly than a finished watercolour drawing (were these two precious daughters really allowed to play in a room with those lethal-looking weapons on the wall?). The early nineteenth-century drawings of three cottage interiors by Sir David Wilkie, Walter Geikie and Sir William Allan are the earliest examples of authentic rooms in vernacular cottages. The illustration of Mary Queen of Scots' bedchamber, 1838, is our first introduction in the book to the constant development of the interior of Holyrood under succeeding monarchs. By the Victorian period we have the record through the new invention of photography, a wonderful tool in both professional and amateur hands.

Ian Gow's approach was not to compile a large-size coffee-table book which purports to turn dreams into reality and from which a period style might be chosen. He gives a large measure of recognition to the historic background and to the personalities and new ideas of a number of influential craftsmen. His

writing elegantly introduces the reader – often with wit – to the pioneering work of the nineteenth-century decorator D. R. Hay, and the firms of Scott Morton, woodworkers, and Whytock and Reid, cabinetmakers (the latter still carrying on business in Edinburgh). Identification, dating and attribution will be the researcher's bread and butter in pursuit of the history of the Scottish interior for some time to come, vitally important to the ongoing work of preservation and conservation by such bodies as the National Trust for Scotland and Historic Scotland. Researchers still need an equivalent work on decorators and craftsmen to stand alongside Howard Colvin's *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600-1840* (1978) and Francis Bamford's *Dictionary of Edinburgh Wrights and Furniture Makers, 1660-1840* (1983).

Many views in the book are of demolished houses. Some of the saddest are those of Montgomerie House, Ayrshire, showing the drawing room in 1895 and again after 1930, defrocked of its Victorian decorative treatment, but all lost when demolished in 1969. This survey should make readers aware of the great importance of their own drawings and photographs of family houses and help them recognise what it is worth keeping for historical reasons, making sure that their local archive or the NMRS makes or receives a copy.

The book is a visual delight but a real lack is an index to the plates, or even a list of the contents. Failure to relate some of the plate numbers to the interiors mentioned in the text is irritating, especially with the seven plates of Holyrood in 1863. Despite these criticisms, and while one wishes for footnotes or references to locate all the learned information in the text which sheds so much new light on our appreciation of the subject, one is very grateful for this spirited view of Scottish interiors.

KITTY CRUFT

Monica Clough, **Two Houses: New Tarbat, Easter Ross; Royston House, Edinburgh.** *Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1990, pp. xiv + 172, 25 illus., 4 maps. Paperback £9.95, 0-08-040909-1.*

For a house that could justifiably be placed for architectural interest among the top ten mansion-houses of late seventeenth-century Scotland, the bibliography of Caroline Park, Edinburgh, has not been large. We have the late Colin MacWilliam's

excellent account of the building in the Penguin Buildings of Scotland *Edinburgh* volume and, much earlier, the commercial firm that then tenanted the house produced a handsome illustrated 'souvenir' volume. Thus Monica Clough's account of aspects of the history of Caroline Park is exceptionally welcome.

Monica Clough is an academic, a historian who has had unfettered access to the family papers of the Earls of Cromartie, and it is on this material, and after the most patient research, that she has produced *Two Houses*. The houses are New Tarbat in Easter Ross and 'Royston House' in Midlothian, or – as we would have it today – Caroline Park in Edinburgh. The link between these two coeval mansions is that they were both put up by the same man, George Mackenzie, Viscount Tarbat and eventually 1st Earl of Cromartie. In line with her earlier *Cromartie: Highland Life, 1650-1914*, Monica Clough's *Two Houses* is in essence an excursion into social and economic history. Its text is, as she puts it herself, 'a scrapbook of the affairs of two great houses', and so the chapters tend to be thematic – the family, the children, the servants, buildings, furnishings, gardens, the library, and so on. With whatever aspect is being handled, we are given ample quotations from contemporary manuscript records and careful assessment of the evidence, and the whole is supported not only by a glossary but also, most valuably, by a quick reference conversion table from pounds Scots to pounds sterling and back again.

For Caroline Park therefore, we are transported back to the springtime of its life when it faced directly to the open sea and looked out across its terraced gardens to its own paddocks and orchards; no sign then of the 'winter of its discontent' with neighbouring gasometers and the ghastliness of shore-line development. Not only are we thus transported, but we are able to meet and to understand the family and its supporters who occupied the house, and from the pages of *Two Houses* they step, almost as speaking personalities.

The lion's share goes with justice to Lord Tarbat himself. He emerges as a most likeable, scholarly and family man although one who, in the course of a long life of over eighty years, endured more than his fair share of public office. His personal foibles led him never to travel anywhere without his small copper coffee pot and his pair of swansdown slippers – which surely indicates a pleasantly eccentric sense of

comfort. Lord Tarbat's estates were huge, scattered across the north of Scotland from Cromarty in the east to the enormous barony of Coigach in the west. But it was official duty that brought him to Edinburgh. Tarbat was appointed a Lord of Session in 1661 following the Restoration, Lord Justice General of Scotland in 1676 and Lord Clerk Register in 1681; in addition he served twice as Secretary of State for Scotland. It must have seemed inappropriate, even in seventeenth-century Edinburgh eyes, for such a great man to have his local seat in tenanted property down Schoolhouse Wynd. Admittedly from 1681 he was, as Lord Clerk Register, entitled to rooms in Holyroodhouse (and Monica Clough includes an inventory relating to his occupancy there), but the apartment in the Palace cannot have been extensive. Thus in 1684 Lord Tarbat, looking round for a country seat not too far from town, made purchase of Royston estate with an existing L-plan sixteenth-century tower-house and proceeded to create for himself a grand 'house of convenience'.

While Monica Clough's examination of the papers has not been able to help us with the architect (and Sir William Bruce remains a candidate), she can nevertheless document the workmen – Alexander Eizat, wright, who thus re-emerges between his known presence at Holyrood in the 1670s and his employment at Hopetoun in the 1700s, Jackson the plumber, Melville the painter and others; and with great interest for us, early room-use and dispositions are established and to some extent refurnished from the inventories. The gardens at Royston and New Tarbat seem to have been planted up and developed at the same time and there is a constant exchange of plants and cuttings, as also plant and bulb consignments from London: 'If your Lordship would ask from the Bishop of London a sett of the Tulip Tree of which he has several it might be put in a pot and sent by sea, it is a great curiosity.'

Domestically we are taken into the butler's pantry and into the kitchen. A hogshead of wine was bought in 1700 for £14 sterling and presumably went to fill the 24 dozen green bottles sent along by the Leith Glass Company in which Lord Tarbat had a stake. We meet Nicholas Montgomery the cook, and indeed, if so inclined, we can from these pages follow through his recipes for 'A Set Up Custard' or for puff pastry. In short, in this book a whole vanished household comes again to life.

The Mackenzie occupancy of Royston Park was a

matter of only two generations of the family. It was built by the 1st Earl of Cromartie and was occupied after his death in 1714 by his son Sir James Mackenzie, a Lord of Session with the title of Lord Royston. He died in 1744; but five years earlier the estate had passed out of his ownership into that of the old rival of the Mackenzies, the Duke of Argyll. It was he who renamed the property Caroline Park, either after his Queen or after his daughter or after both. There is something uniquely satisfying about a book that has such a clearly demarcated start-line and finishing post, and – to continue the metaphor – as books go this one is a winner. *BASIL SKINNER*

John Wilkinson, **The Coogate Doctors: A History of the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society, 1841-1991.** *Edinburgh: Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society, 1991, pp. 86, illus. £5.00, 0-9518677-0-9/1-7.*

Foreign mission work developed late in Scotland; as late as 1796 the General Assembly could argue that its teaching responsibility was a purely domestic one, in spite of the recent establishment of Missionary Societies in both Edinburgh and Glasgow. Such societies saw their responsibility as purely pastoral, but there was a growing realisation among workers in the field that bodies as well as souls could be saved.

In 1841 a distinguished group of Edinburgh clerics, lawyers and doctors set up what was to become the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society, with the aims of spreading interest and information about existing medical missions abroad and to assist these by the training of men to serve as doctors, initially in Ireland, China, Syria and India. Parallel with the training scheme, a separate Medical Mission Dispensary was opened in the West Port in 1853 with the aim of helping the sick poor of the Irish community in the Grassmarket area. This soon outgrew its original accommodation and in 1858 became established in No. 39 Cowgate, next to the Magdalen Chapel. The students of the Edinburgh Medical Mission, many of whom worked with the Dispensary, asked that the two organisations should be combined and in 1861 this was done. The Mission flourished; the Grassmarket work expanded fivefold and by the 1870s was in such urgent need of larger premises that the decision was taken to build new dispensary accommodation on the Cowgate site. In 1878 the Livingstone Memorial Dispensary was inaugurated.



It still stands, dingy and neglected, on the corner of the Cowgate and Candlemaker Row; yet for 74 years the Cowgate Dispensary, staffed by its medical missionary students, cared for the sick poor of the area, running clinics, Bible classes, evangelistic meetings, evening classes, and youth groups of all kinds. It was not until 1952 that the decision was taken, in the light of the development of the National Health Service and the rehousing of Grassmarket families, to close down the Mission.

Dr Wilkinson's account of the Edinburgh Medical Mission, produced in celebration of its 150th anniversary, is admirably researched and presented. The Edinburgh section is fascinating reading, but is only a small part of a wider study of the Mission's chief areas of activity, the medical missions in Syria, Palestine, India, China and Japan. It is good to see the Society still flourishing, still training its students, maintaining its Nazareth Hospital and promoting the spirit of its founders, 'giving intelligible proofs of the spirit of love ... which we desire to see diffused among all nations'. *LYDIA SKINNER*

Robert Bartholomew (ed.), **The Grange: A History in Maps**. *Edinburgh: The Grange Association, 1991, pp. 38, maps. £10.*

'Geography', wrote Professor Finberg, 'is about maps, history is about chaps'; but he went on to remark that the two disciplines interlock dramatically in the field of local history.

The Grange Association has produced not only an admirable demonstration of this valuable academic marriage, but also a model publication that could well be copied by other Edinburgh associations – those of the Dean, of Cramond or of Corstorphine for example. The idea is simple: to select a chronological sequence of map illustrations of the neighbourhood, to reproduce them in readable scale on A4 sheets, and to publish them in the form of a ring-bound, hard-backed folder with the briefest of introductions. The maps, as one might well suppose, speak for themselves.

The idea stemmed, we are told, from an address on 'The Maps of South Edinburgh' given to the Grange Association by Robert Bartholomew, who has made the present selection and provided the foreword, and indeed whose map-making family have long been connected with the area. The volume begins with small-scale maps like those of Blaeu,

Adair, Laurie and Armstrong which serve to put the Grange in its perspective in the rural periphery of the older Edinburgh. There then follows the meat of the feast – the series of maps by Kirkwood, Lancefield, Bartholomew and the Ordnance Survey.

With Kirkwood, 1816 and 1817, we move into a scale that can show amazing detail; we have hedgerows and fields, orchards and garden-grounds, and villas – the precursors of one of the great concentrations of Edinburgh's nineteenth-century villadom. But still the roads are narrow, winding country affairs. Next come the feuing plans of 1851 and 1864, with all their harshly clinical geometricisation of the landscape. Thus, by the time of Lancefield's detailed map of 1861 there is a picture of regular streets lined with regular hatched squares that mark the new-built houses. But still in that year the Grange continues to show more open space than built-on space.

It is a shock to turn forward to the Ordnance Survey map of 1877 for here is the ultimate and remorseless picture of shoulder-to-shoulder development, the first image of the Grange streets as we know them today. Forward the sequence continues, through the OS maps of 1931 and 1988-89, showing the results of terminal infill. But the last map in the volume contains a glimmer of hope, for in it is demarcated the extent of the present Grange Conservation Area.

It is the scale of the mid-nineteenth-century maps that is so astonishing, enabling a wealth of minute, almost domestic, detail to be incorporated. Lord Macaulay spoke of the historian as rummaging in his ancestors' cupboards. With this book we may go rummaging in their gardens. *BASIL SKINNER*

Charles J. Smith, **Morningside**. *Edinburgh: John Donald, 1992, pp. x + 208, illus. Paperback £9.95, 0-85976-344-4.*

For some years past we have been able to enjoy and benefit from a new flow of historical studies of the constituent parts of Edinburgh. These books, variously published, are scholarly, well researched histories of different communities within the city and have by their nature added very considerably to our knowledge of the districts with which they deal. The most detailed, though perhaps not the most readable, have been the studies by Malcolm Cant

of the residential streets of Marchmont, Warrender, Sciennes and that neighbourhood. Joyce Wallace has published a well based account of the Trinity district, and of course Charles Smith in the first two volumes of *Historic South Edinburgh*, published by Charles Skilton in 1978 and 1979, gave us what for long must be the last word on Edinburgh from the Burgh Muir to the hills (two further volumes in 1986 and 1988 give biographies of distinguished residents).

Charles Smith's *magnum opus* was eminently successful. The two volumes, the result of years of painstaking research on the author's part, supported by excellent photography by his brother, gave the reader a complete and very readable account of a part of Edinburgh that had been somewhat neglected apart from papers published by the Old Edinburgh Club. It would be trite to say that these volumes 'filled a long-felt want' but that is precisely what they did. The two books are a delight to use – either to read consistently or dip into, chapter by chapter, taking Newington, Greenhill, Mortonhall, Oxgangs, or any other sub-station along the line. They are profusely and admirably illustrated and very well supplied with that essential source for the local historian – maps.

It is necessary to say all this partly because there was no opportunity, when Charles Smith's books first came out, to review them for the Old Edinburgh Club, paying due tribute to them then; but partly because the criticism about *Morningside* that follows must be seen against a considerable degree of admiration for the earlier achievement.

From the point of view of many purchasers *Morningside* may be thought a waste of money. We are told on the back cover that 'this new account of selected areas of the district ... presents much thoroughly researched new material'. This is simply not the case, and those who are already possessors of the author's *Historic South Edinburgh* and who have rushed to buy *Morningside* in the expectation of something new will be sadly disappointed. An examination of the three volumes immediately reveals that chapters 1 to 8 of *Morningside* are reprinted virtually word for word (with a very few minor adjustments) from *Historic South Edinburgh*. The only substantial new material now presented to us in *Morningside* is in the last two chapters, 'Morningside Today' and 'Morningside's Changing Face'. Both are useful: the first gives us a *Third Statistical Account* type of survey of the suburb in the 1990s, and the

second is a quite fascinating collection of 'Then and Now' photographs.

In his Introduction Charles Smith makes an implied acknowledgement of the situation: 'In this new presentation much revision and updating has been carried out. Illustrations of places and people by now familiar have been replaced by others.' Three comments may be made. First, one cannot accept that 'much' revision has taken place; secondly, there is no explicit statement that this is a reprinting of material that has already been published; and thirdly, the change of illustrations has not always been to the benefit of the historian or indeed the general reader, in that many of the maps and illustrations in *Historic South Edinburgh* were there because they were a key to the matters discussed and simply are not there in this new publication. To make life harder, John Donald does not appear to be keen on providing a 'List of Illustrations'.

Who will benefit from this 'new' publication? Certainly all who have not already encountered Charles Smith's delightful and comfortable pen; and certainly many Morningsiders who do not already possess copies of the 1978 and 1979 publications.

BASIL SKINNER

Alexandrina S. Cowper, **Historic Corstorphine and Roundabout: Part 1, Church and Parish Life.** *Edinburgh: published by the Author in association with Corstorphine Publishing Company, Corstorphine High Street, EH12 7SY, 1991, pp. 107, illus. Paperback, £5.45 inc. postage.* **Part 2, West of Edinburgh Toun, and Part 3, Lords and Lairds.** *Edinburgh: published by the Author, 32 Balgreen Avenue, Edinburgh EH12 5SU, 1992. Paperback, £4.95 each plus postage.*

These volumes contain masses of information culled from innumerable documents and printed materials about an area of Scotland very near the capital and directly affected by national events. Corstorphine is very dear to Miss Cowper. She belongs to a family long connected with the area and she has made available the research of many years, inspired by the historic church and district.

The first volume tells of the church, which began as a chapel of St Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, and was created a parish church in the late twelfth century. It was made collegiate in 1492 by Forrester of

Corstorphine and, though much altered since, has continued to be a real spiritual centre of a vibrant community. Readers will find very much of interest in the story of its life through the years.

Volume two deals with different areas of the ancient parish as it changed, in time, to be a suburb of Edinburgh while yet remaining distinctively Corstorphine. Coltbridge, Roseburn, Murrayfield and Ravelston all receive separate attention, and farms, dairies, everything that has a history attached to it, especially if that local history has national significance.

Volume three treats of the families who lived in the mansions of the district – the Forresters, the Dicks, the Watsons and many others. In this and in the other parts, Miss Cowper has accumulated a mass of information, all so interesting, all so relevant for students of local history, but impossible to refer to here in detail. It is to be regretted that the costs of printing have prevented the provision of an index, which would have been invaluable.

Part four is promised. It will deal with Corstorphine 1841-1920, Gogar, Stenhouse, Saughtonhall, etc. We congratulate Miss Cowper and thank her for these useful volumes. A. I. DUNLOP

Charles McKean, **Edinburgh: Portrait of a City**. London: Century, 1991, pp. 247, illus. Cased, £16.99, 0-7126-3867-9; paperback, £9.99, 0-7126-4958-1.

Of the making of books about Edinburgh, it would seem, there is no end. Yet this book has a freshness and excitement about it as if its author had a tale to tell about an extraordinary event that had not been told before. The event is Edinburgh, first extraordinary in its site – ‘In the beginning was the Winged Camp. One of only three rock-girt citadels within the British Isles ...’ so Charles McKean begins; and finally, ‘it remains fortunate to survive where it does’. Chapter 1 is headed ‘The Mad God’s Dream’ (the quotation from a poem by Hugh MacDiarmid). Are we in for, it might be thought, an extravaganza? But no, the extravagance is in the geology which perched the castle atop a volcano. It was Ptolemy who, seeing the fortified crag, christened it the Winged Camp in AD 160. Admittedly the author has not the detachment nor the deliberate procedure of the professional historian, but then he is as much concerned with the sensation of

the fact as with the fact, nor is this his end for it is a presentation and interpretation of significant events, and these, he reminds us, almost throughout, profoundly affected by the physical economy.

The ridge along which the town grew was its means of survival, yet, McKean writes, ‘siege, massacre and destruction afflicted the capital with a remorselessness unusual even by pan-European standards’. The violations of the city by English forces and by plague are enumerated. This we knew but to perceive the development of that mentality, through the retreats and concealments necessary for survival, which led to great intellectual achievement, is to present an interesting thesis. ‘It was’, he suggests, ‘the inescapable interaction between interests and classes of overcrowded old Edinburgh that was the impulse behind the Enlightenment.’ Certainly the condition and conditioning may be allowed as factors, but there were other historic factors which applied generally in Scotland, such as the persistent spread of education. However, an attraction of the book is its holding to a vision of a great city, a perception which, while taking account of the accidents and variables of history, sees the Enlightenment as the peak rising from its history.

The reader’s participation is sought: ‘Edinburgh can be appreciated only by the realisation that the Hie Gait (it went under many names) was no street, no road, and no Royal Mile. It was a huge downhill-sloping plaza, shaped like a fat egg-timer: immensely long, a hundred feet broad, and pinched at the top end by the Butter Tron (or Weigh House) and at the bottom end by the Netherbow Port.’ The city was made for contiguity and discourse. In the chapter ‘Cockpit of Scotland’, the reader is intimately present at the destructive rhetoric of John Knox and his follower Andrew Melville. Because we are in the heart of the affray, the view of recent historians on the Reformers is not taken account of. In his *History of the Scottish People, 1560-1830*, Christopher Smout writes: ‘Nevertheless, if we take the long view of Scottish history it does not become difficult to believe that Calvinism contributed certain things which could hardly help but favour the expansion of economic activity and the enrichment of cultural life. The Knoxian idea of education as an indispensable necessity for all was certainly one bequest of the utmost importance to posterity.’

Within the bounds of the telling of a tale it is hardly possible to give the full balance of the

account. The signing of the National Covenant, according to the author, among the tombstones in Greyfriars' kirkyard, was a symbolic event. Unfortunately its first signing was inside the kirk, though the populace signed outside on the following days. There is more to be said too on behalf of the Covenanters than space would allow. In any case these events are not central to the argument; nor were the Porteous Riots, though relative to the particular interest more might have been made of the fact that the citizens of Edinburgh, even in the act of hanging Porteous, never became a mob. Even here the leavening element of humanity was present, an element which permeated the society of the Enlightenment: 'Integral low life played an essential role in the development of a rounded perception of the human condition. The understanding of man was not to be achieved by contemplation from an isolated study, but by the seething proximity of all classes, answerable to nobody but themselves.'

There followed 'A Splendid and Magnificent City' – the New Town. One doubts if any other writer has described it with such sensitive appreciation, yet at its height McKean sees evidences of unhappy social developments: 'The baroque grandiloquence of the Moray estate, designed by James Gillespie Graham, is quite the grandest single piece of development in Edinburgh's history. With the railings and gates designed to exclude all inferiors, it offers the conclusive evidence, if evidence were needed, of the social divisions within newly dispersed Edinburgh.' The city was on its way to becoming the Athens of the North. 'But', writes McKean, 'in striking contrast to the Enlightenment Edinburgh snobbery appears to have become endemic in Athens.' Of Kemp's Scott Monument he writes: 'A beautifully antiquarian and picturesque monument [that] marks, barely yards from the greatest symbols of the Athens of the North, the fundamental shift which had taken place from the Enlightenment and Reason towards Romance and the Picturesque' – epithets which imply less worthy and more flimsy values. The outcome was a loss of self-

confidence. 'There was a paradox in the fact that Edinburgh citizens would send their own children away to school, away from the city with the greatest concentration of schools, to England, or north to Glenalmond (if not English, at least the next best thing – Episcopalian)'.

Once the conviction about values had gone, 'The March to Megalopolis' seemed inevitable. 'It is sobering', writes McKean in this chapter, 'that a city inheriting such a resplendent example of far-sighted town planning as the New Towns could have been so overwhelmed by the desire to get rich quickly as to jettison its values.' Written, and perceived, with such clarity this truth might lead to deep pessimism, but for the growing awareness of the hopeful developments described in the last chapters of the book: 'Leith Walk, indeed, is being transformed from a wide, dour grey canyon into something almost Parisian by the planting of an avenue of trees down its centre.' Or: 'There is an air of confidence within the Old Town: population has doubled in the last ten years and with some 7500 residents has returned to the level of 1960.' But there are dangers too: 'The principal danger faced by the Old Town has been a surrender to tourism and tat, and the more residents who live in it to balance the distortion of the visitors, the less abject the surrender will be.' And: 'Edinburgh cannot avoid being a modern city: but as such it is becoming an indifferent one ... The desire of its inhabitants for roads, parking, supermarkets, offices, hypermarkets, and palpably plastic neo-Tudor suburbs seems out of control. The divided soul of the city, in the absence of a commonly accepted vision for its future, is unable to counter the pressure.'

To those of us, and Charles McKean is one, who came to Edinburgh, there have been moments of astonishment at the prospects in the city, sensations reinforced by knowledge of its history. This impact is strongly felt in this book. Its author has warmed with affection to the place and communicated this to his readers. He also warns. *GEORGE BRUCE*