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David Cowley and James Crawford, **Above Scotland. The National Collection of Aerial Photography.** *Edinburgh: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 2009, pp. 224, illus. Hardback, £25, 978-1-902419-62-6; Rebecca M. Bailey, James Crawford and Alan Williams,* **Above Scotland – Cities. The National Collection of Aerial Photography.** *Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 2010, pp. 224, illus. Hardback, £25, 978-1-902419-65-7; James Crawford, Lesley Ferguson and Kristina Watson,* **Victorian Scotland.** *Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 2010, pp. 224, illus. Hardback, £30, 978-1-902419-64-0.*

It should be said at the outset that these superb volumes are very much more than the picture-books as which they first appear. Photographs they contain, and in plenty: that is their prime purpose. But there are picture books and picture books. These fall into the select group of those that are not simply beautiful but which are important contributions to our understanding of national history and development. The connecting narratives and the excellent and informative captions accompanying the images themselves make them works of enduring value, and they all, in their different ways, constitute significant works of historical analysis.

In 2009 the Royal Commission offered us, as it were, a taster package in the form of *Above Scotland. The National Collection of Aerial Photography*, in which David Cowley and James Crawford set the pattern which the two later books follow. This pattern is of sectional treatment, well and thoughtfully considered, with concise but effective introductory essays packed with information and ideas (on topics such as – in the first book – 'Enlightenment', which undoubtedly benefits from such unusual visual treatment) and substantial and stylishly written captions to the individual images in those thematic sections. One of the most unusual Edinburgh images must be that on pp. 54–55 showing the West End with its confluence of streets with attendant churches, the Caledonian Hotel, and 'Maule's Corner'. Horse-drawn transport still shares the roadways with trams. But the focus of the caption is on the churches and their significance at such cross-roads, either urban (as here) or rural.

In *Above Scotland – Cities* the vision is restricted, as the title suggests, to the urban landscape and landform. Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, Inverness and Stirling are the centres of attention (as it might be supposed would be the case, for obvious reasons). There is also a section entitled 'Three Dimensional Cities' which brings together a handful of 3-D images of these major urban centres. Edinburgh features prominently but by no means disproportionately so.

The introduction to the *Cities* volume sets out the ethos of the book, clearly, memorably and eloquently. Le Corbusier is enlisted as advocate for the relevance, indeed power of the aerial view, 'the airplane eye': 'The airplane carries our hearts above mediocre things, enabling human beings to glance down like Gods upon the worlds they have made'. No more evocative statement in support of the utility and emotive impact of aerial photography has surely ever been made, though the present authors run the Frenchman close when they write, only slightly more prosaically: 'From the air, you can read a city. Urban stories are patterns and codes, puzzles best cracked by obtaining distance and height'. The role of Patrick Geddes, the hero of the Outlook Tower on Castlehill, is stressed in his role as liberator of minds constrained at street level.

The Edinburgh section of *Cities*, to which we must confine ourselves here, opens with a statement highlighting the complex relationship between the capital's natural and built forms. The Edinburgh introduction contains what is, so far as I can determine, the sole error of fact or opinion in the entire section under review. When commenting on the social structure of the Old Town, which with the coming of the New became 'fossilised . . . as a slum city', the authors suggest that the wealthier classes of society lived at the top of high-rise tenements. This is, I think, to misunderstand the social hierarchy of such buildings. The better and middling sort lived on the first or second floors, with their poorer neighbours or social inferiors dwelling on upper floors (whither they had to ascend by an increasingly fetid common stair) or in dark, damp and dingy basement storeys.

I shall run through the plates and the excellent and evocative commentaries upon them, offering some observations which are not made or otherwise highlighted in the book. In a photograph taken in 2009 (p. 11) we see the burned-out shell of the pub and disco complex in Victoria Street; images taken in 2010 (pp. 20–21) show re-roofing in progress. The RAF image of 1947 on p. 13 shows the girder-girt outline of the uncompleted National Library to be, a structure left unfinished since 1939. Immediately to its north is the large book-stack block built by George Washington Browne for the Faculty of Advocates in 1896 and still to be demolished for the National Library's expansion.

RCAHMS photographs of 2010 (pp. 20–21, 24) include such transient, ephemeral details as the same blue plastic builders' rubbish sacks on the roof of Parliament Hall. But more interesting is the view (p. 24) of the 'sawn-off' top of the old stair tower in the re-entrant angle of the old Parliament House, hidden from view when Robert Reid's 'ponderous Adamesque wallpaper' was wrapped round the original seventeenth-century structure. More permanent than refuse sacks are the strays from the 'cow parade' grazing contentedly and amusingly, if oddly, on the grass roofs of the new Council offices (p. 35).

Aerial 'windows' offer countless interesting perspectives. How enticing are the inner courts and grassed roof terraces of the new buildings fronting the Picardy Place roundabout and on the Calton Hill side of Leith Street (pp. 27, 43); how sinuous is the bridge to the St James's Centre (p. 43); how big are the mews houses behind India Street on its west side (p. 31); how strange (and thankfully concealed) is the modern block behind Alva Street and Melville Place (p. 30); how vast seem the 'fins of property sharks' (as they were called at the time of unveiling) on the roof of the Waverley Market shopping mall when seen casting their huge shadows in raking sunlight (p. 34).

The caption on p. 18 is particularly good: it expounds on those buildings, the 'cornerstones of society' standing clear of the cloud and smoke wreathing the city of 1949, still very much recognisable as the Auld Reekie of old. There are the structures of 'power and influence', of the military, religion and government – kirk and cathedral steeples, the castle, and St Andrew's House.

Modern RCAHMS photographs show well recent urban developments. The quality of design and materials in the University's new Dugald Stewart Informatics building contrast with the architectural rubbish near at hand, though at least we are spared an aerial view of the Appleton Tower (p. 45). The juxtaposition of old with new is well demonstrated in the Quartermile development at the old Royal Infirmary: David Bryce meets Norman Foster (p. 44). Enric Miralles's Parliament building has never looked so fine as in these images (pp. 46–47): the building shows at its best from above or, alternatively, when seen from the slopes of Arthur's Seat. Its long, difficult and above all expensive gestation is captured in *Above Scotland* (p. 207), its surrounding landforms (with that of the Dynamic Earth forecourt) on p. 204 of the first book. Leith waits for development on pp. 208–209 of *Above Scotland*, with the decommissioned HMY *Britannia* already alongside Ocean Terminal, itself resembling (as one can see only from the air) some sort of much larger vessel. Buildings under construction in 2005 and seen in *Above Scotland* are photographed, completed and with cars in their car-parks, in 2010 in *Above Scotland – Cities*. The demolition in 2007 of the unloved monstrosity that was the Council buildings in Melbourne Place, George IV Bridge, so that the Missoni Hotel might occupy the crucial site, is recorded in *Above Scotland* on pp. 108–109.

Older images are interspersed with the bang-up-to-date. On pp. 32–33 (an Aerofilms image of 1972, but somehow seeming further distant from our own days, so much has changed in the urban fabric in prospect) we see the cleared land of the former Caledonian railway station and sidings, ready to receive its overburden of roads, bridges, office blocks, hotels, conference centres, and the rest that we know and which have created a wholly new urban landscape, itself seen well in the view of 2008 on pp. 98–99 of *Above Scotland*. On p. 40 of *Cities* (an RAF image of 1951) the main streets of Newington and Mayfield appear still as a garden suburb from which the private house front gardens have since largely been allowed to vanish with the influx of guest houses with parking-grounds. A real working tram appears in the Haymarket image on p. 36 (of only 1951, but seeming much older): a sad reminder that such things were once here and travelling east and west, to and from the direction of the airport. Will their modern-day successors ever do so? We can see the chaotic preparatory works for the modern tram system, as they affected Princes and Hanover Streets in 2009, commemorated for ever on p. 11.

All these striking images come from the vast and invaluable national collection of aerial photography held by RCAHMS, and available for all to study and enjoy. *Above Scotland* and *Above Scotland – Cities* provide a splendid and very compulsively readable and browsable 'taster'. This huge assemblage of images comprises the Aerofilms archive, bought in 2008, which runs from 1919 to the 21st century; the photographs taken in wartime (with a largely military purpose) and immediately post-war (in support of peacetime civilian causes such as redevelopment) by the combat-experienced aircrew of the RAF; the Ordnance Survey collection of images generated to further the task of map-making; and the photographs taken by RCAHMS itself as part of its systematic survey programme of the built environment. Scotland is fortunate indeed to have such a matchless resource at its service.

Victorian Scotland naturally comprehends Edinburgh, as mother city of the nation. But it is of course Glasgow which is the prime Scottish exemplar of the Victorian metropolis and, on another level, 'second city of the Empire'. Some major collections of photographic images in the collections of RCAHMS have been harvested for this book. The work of several significant photographers, professional and amateur (though the distinctions were somewhat blurred in the earlier days of photography) is represented. The Edinburgh images which fall to be considered in this review are many and varied. Some of the most interesting are interiors of shops and institutions. But, photographs apart, what really impresses in this volume is the elegant, stimulating, thoughtful and intelligent text, distinguished both in content and expression. The importance of the medium of photography is constantly and eloquently expressed. It is difficult to praise the content, structure and form of this book, like those of its fellows, too highly.

Curiosity sets in as soon as a page is turned and another compelling Victorian image appears before our eyes. Take one of the very first (p. 8). Look at the two men chatting in the middle of Princes Street! Even a hansom cab or a horse-drawn omnibus might have knocked them down; or indeed the tricyclist who passes them. And what happened to the two pairs of magnificent lamp standards (of quite different design) on the pavement's edge? Presumably the more ornamental pair was a twentieth-century casualty along with the splendid Venetian Baroque Life Association building behind. The others stood sentinel before the New Club palazzo, also demolished. Poor, poor Princes Street! What happened to the oddly isolated Corinthian column lamp standard (apparently without a lamp) on South St David's Street, near the side door of Jenner's (p. 191)? When was it replaced by the equally oddly isolated (and plain odd, and barely noticed) Gothic erection that still remains today? Note the buildings on the site prior to the northwards expansion of the giant shop. Then turn the page and see the interior views, by that master of the photographic image of this and other temples of trade, commerce and finance, H. Bedford Lemere. (We are already prepared by the image on pp. 184–185.) What strikes one most is the huge number of chairs for the comfort of female customers as they received the kind of Jenner's service that the carriage trade expected. How memorable is this caption: 'Almost church-like in its grandeur, the sales floor of Jenner's . . . waits with hushed readiness for its eager consumer congregation. In late Victorian society the passionate worshippers of goods and possessions sought out the department store as the high temple of the new shopping religion.' But the chairs . . . They are set out in a way uncannily similar to those in the new National Portrait Gallery, shown on p. 180.

The contrast between this Princes Street elegance and blatant prosperity and the appalling slums of the boarded-up College Wynd, awaiting near-contemporary demotion (pp. 11 and 16), is starkly impressive. The profusion of what would now be called 'signage' on the front and the side elevations of the city's buildings is also very striking. Even the railings of steps up to the plats of former houses are sacrificed to advertising in the form of sailcloth hoardings (pp. 26–27). The power of advertising also shows well in enamelled notices festooning the carriage-ramp to Waverley Station in the 1890s (p. 107). Interesting is the attempt at a 'roof-garden' (i.e. potted plants) on the porch of the Hanover Hotel (p. 27), something that stands out in a streetscape otherwise devoid of self-consciously *rus in urbe* vegetation. Note the medallion bust of Scott, poking out from the heavy, florid, console-bracketed entablature of the banking hall of the British Linen's head office in St Andrew Square (p. 37). In another age he would descend, so to speak, to adorn the Bank of Scotland's notes. Steel pens lie ready on blotters beside large ink-wells on the counter above the Minton-tiled floor. (Sadly the counter is now gone and the floor is carpeted; but this splendid Lemere image preserves the memory of both.) See the gasolier lighting arrangements in St Cuthbert's Church in 1895 – as also those in Bruntsfield Primary School's swimming bath and classroom (pp. 88–89 and 152–153). The slates in their slots in the new folding desks (neat – or 'cool' in today's parlance!) appear to be ready for an art class, with still-life objects to be drawn ranged on the table next to the teacher's desk.

The view of Portobello beach and promenade (pp. 138–139) offers a charming glimpse into the lost world of Victorian popular pleasure, but the factory chimney belching smoke reminds us where duty and prosperity lay. Progress in medicine and its teaching is exemplified by the images of the destruction of William Adam's Royal Infirmary in 1884 (how sad that, of this fine façade, only the 'Drummond Scrolls' and the 'Covenanters' Monument' at Dreghorn survive) and by the slightly later construction of the new buildings of the University Medical School in Teviot Place about 1889 (p. 148). The pattern of granite setts existing outside the McEwan Hall in 1897 (visible on p. 162) would certainly have stopped the skateboarding that habitually takes place in contravention of regulations in the same area today.

One remembers from childhood (things had not yet changed) the overpowering 'instruction' of the crowded display in the Royal Scottish Museum (pp. 166–167) and the Museum of Antiquities (p. 181), neither institution now recognisable today, even as their very names are consigned to history. Is that a replica of a human cadaver in process of dissection, cut off at the extreme left of the image of the anatomy museum of the University Medical School? It surely is. Dr Monro takes it all in his stride, quite at ease beneath and beside his skeletal whale, elephant and hippopotamus companions – though one does feel that his skull, rather than his sculpted effigy, should so preside.

The value of old images is demonstrated in different ways by inspection of that on pages 30–31. Now I know why the display of ornamental urns suddenly (and prodigally: the building apparently cannot be let in totality, and so is producing for its developer below expected income from tenants) appeared some years ago along the rooftop balustrade of the so-called Waverleygate shopping centre. In the 1890s urns of similar style liberally ornamented the GPO buildings, these having been called for by Prince Albert to add dignity to the building he had opened. This anyone may notice. So might the sharp-eyed spot Ramsay Garden under construction in the misty distance. But fewer are those who would notice one tiny detail at the very centre of this same townscape view. Just visible above the urn-filled niche on Adam's David Hume mausoleum in the Old Calton Burying Ground is the cross and the bracket added to the masonry drum specifically to support this symbol of Christianity. The cross had been appended to the Great Infidel's monument by a later, embarrassed generation of a pious family. Very few records of this addition to the pagan mausoleum survive; and the intrusive cross has itself long vanished, though the now purposeless bracket survives to puzzle the curious and please the whimsically observant.

IAIN GORDON BROWN

Bill Scott, **The Buttercup: The Remarkable Story of Andrew Ewing and the Buttercup Dairy Company** *Alnwick, Leghorn Books, 2011, pp. 126, illus. Paperback, £9.95, 978-0-9569206-0-7.*

This is an oddly compelling story of the rise and fall of a little empire, the Buttercup Dairy Company, which flourished across Scotland from 1904 until its decline after the Second World War. Some of its few traces are the fragmentary remains of its shop fronts around Scotland. Most are reduced to the mosaic letters 'BDCo' on doorsteps, but at 48 Warrender Park Road, Marchmont, the company's standard wall tiles also survive: the company's initials, garlanded with buttercups, over an oval panel depicting a girl holding a buttercup flower beneath the chin of a placid cow. The motif suggested freshness and wholesomeness, and as Bill Scott points out in this nicely told history, the whole design projected an image of hygiene and cleanliness in the Buttercup shops, which the owner rigidly enforced.

At its height the company boasted some 250 shops in Scotland, mainly in the central belt. Edinburgh had thirty-two to Glasgow's twenty-four, as well as the company's headquarters and distribution centre. In 1894 the founder, Andrew Ewing, set up as grocer in Dundee, then ventured to establish his own chain of shops in emulation of the larger grocery multiples such as Liptons, selling only eggs, butter, margarine, cream, tea, cooking fats and condensed milk. By 1914 he had over one hundred shops, and in 1915 moved into his expanded headquarters at the bottom of Easter Road. The premises included a shop which later offered customers pioneering access to self-service shopping, and a massive cold storage facility that was to prove a lifeline when the company fell on evil times. It was bought over and used by Christian Salvesen, who later sold the site for housing in 1973.

Equally interesting is the detailed account of the poultry farm which Ewing established on farmland that the company acquired in 1922 at Clermiston Mains, off Clermiston Road (ground that was also destined for housing). Some eggs had been produced in Easter Road, but at Clermiston Ewing began egg production on a scale large enough to supply his whole chain. In its heyday 'Hen City' had 200,000 egg-laying inhabitants, but here the author's reliance on promotional material and press reports tends to paint a rosy picture of industrial food production on the American model. He has also gathered information from former employees and their families to depict working conditions both on the farm and in the shops. These recollections are invaluable for filling the gaps left by the loss of the company's records. However, despite the author's skill in creating a coherent story from the fragmentary evidence, the sources are not always used critically. For example, we are told that Ewing notably employed only women in his shops, as managers as well as assistants, 'in order to enhance the image of freshness', but was there not also financial advantage in having to pay lower wages than to men?

Nevertheless Scott presents a convincing picture of a paternalist businessman concerned for his employees' welfare, who imposed his religious and moral values on his company. A devout Baptist who was determined not to die a wealthy man, Ewing not only yielded the tithe, or tenth, expected for the support of his chapel, but donated to good causes all the Buttercup eggs laid on Sundays. His remarkable generosity, his entangling of his own and the company's finances, and his deteriorating business sense contributed to the near-collapse of the company after the war. This short history arose from the author's curiosity about his family connection to the Buttercup company. Although the firm's history may not be as significant as he claims, this is a welcome and valuable history of a retail company with a strong link to Edinburgh's story.

TRISTRAM CLARKE

Elizabeth Roads (ed.), **The Thistle Chapel within St Giles' Cathedral Edinburgh** *Edinburgh: Order of the Thistle, 2009, pp. 96, illus. Hardback, £25, 978-0-9562407-0-5.*

One of the Club's summer visits in 2010 was to the Thistle Chapel. This was no mere arbitrary choice of destination: it was selected because the Chapel was completed in 1910, the work having been done to an amazingly short timescale in under a year from the date of the laying of the foundation stone in November 1909. The Chapel was to have been opened on St Andrew's Day 1910 but the death of Edward VII that year led to a postponed inauguration, by George V, in July 1911. What the new king and the then Knights of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle saw on that occasion has fascinated and delighted visitors in the century since. For the sovereign and his Knights of the Thistle entered an architecturally tiny building but one that can truly be likened to an exquisite jewel box, rich in craftsmanship and decorative design of the highest quality.

A. J. Youngson, in his *Companion Guide to Edinburgh and the Border Country* (1993), assesses the Thistle Chapel acidly and uncharitably. It is a building which clearly and inexplicably he detests. 'It was enormously admired in its day, but as that day recedes the visitor is more and more likely to see it as absurd archaic extravagance. The twenty-two stalls are over-carved, the roof is over-bossed, and the whole thing is overdone. In any case, it is totally historicist. The Thistle Chapel makes no contribution to either religion or art, for it was dead when it was built.' Lest such sour thoughts be perpetuated among more open-minded and perceptive visitors and Edinburgh residents, and as a corrective to such absurdly prejudiced views, the present book is greatly to be welcomed.

Elegant and beautifully produced, this is a worthy tribute to one of the architectural gems of Edinburgh and one of the most glorious amalgams of craftsmanship in the whole of Scotland. Even as the Thistle Chapel is tucked away and not readily apparent to the casual glance or the uninformed visitor to the city, so is this book a hidden treasure. Published by the Order of the Thistle it is not available in your ordinary bookshop but rather is to be obtained, almost by petition, from the Court of the Lord Lyon at HM New Register House. A splendid flier advertised the book in advance of publication and those who subscribed will not have been disappointed despite the relatively steep price of something comparatively brief in extent. It is a fine piece of book-making, bearing the distinctive and desirable characteristics of something designed by Dalrymple: the dark green cloth of the binding and the attractive and imaginative use of green ink for titles, headings and plate references throughout evokes the 'Green Mantle' and livery colour of the Order. Paper, printing and colour reproduction are of equally high quality.

Recent cleaning and restoration allow us to appreciate the Chapel as if it were new-built. It had become very be-grimed due to the location below it of the cathedral's boilers which pumped not only hot air but soot into the fabric of the place. Newly commissioned colour photography, especially of high-up or inaccessible parts of the fabric, such as Knights' crests, helms, symbolic swords, etc., allows us to appreciate details not easily visible from ground level (or, I dare say, from under the brim of a Thistle bonnet or beneath the weight of a Thistle mantle). It is sobering to learn that the chapel's architect, the great (Sir) Robert Lorimer, making an inspection visit to St George's Chapel, Windsor, in preparation for his Edinburgh work, and when seeking inspiration from that building, had not been allowed either to have Garter crests and mantling taken down for inspection or to observe such details from close up and on high, the Dean of Windsor merely suggesting that he employ good opera glasses! The new colour photographs are set off by some contemporary black and white images which show elements of the chapel's furnishings in woodcarver's workshop or blacksmith's forge. James Grieve, 'Master of Works' for the project, recorded that a full-size model of the Chapel was constructed in the joiner's workshop so that the carpentry and carved elements could be trialled and fitted together months before the stone 'carcass' was completed. Two most interesting images (nos 49 and 50) show the interior of the carpenter's workshop of Messrs Nathaniel Grieve: one a veritable hive of industry as the carvings are prepared, the other showing stalls and sections of linenfold panelling 'in situ'.

As befits a detailed study of an arts-and-crafts building, the motto of 'truth to materials' is foremost in the planning of the book. There are individual sections (the work of Louise Boreham and Elizabeth Cumming) on stone; stained glass; wood; enamelwork; iron, lead and embroidery; and bronze and fine metals. These lie between the broader, scene-setting treatments accorded to the chapel itself (by Louise Boreham) and the heraldic artists who produced the glorious display of armorial art in the many different forms in which we can appreciate it in the Chapel. This is by Elizabeth Roads. A succinct account of the architect (by Elizabeth Cumming) precedes all these individual short essays. Preceding this again is Charles Burnett's account of the genesis of the Chapel we know and admire: this opens with the ill-fated creation of a chapel royal in the ruin of the abbey church of Holyrood by James VII and II in 1687–88. The Edinburgh mob soon saw to it that Sir William Bruce's popish handiwork was destroyed in the interest of reformed religion. Particularly interesting is Burnett's account of the tides of taste and sentiment that might have had a Thistle Chapel in the body of the High Kirk of St Giles or once again at Holyrood Abbey (this last scheme dating from the earliest years of the twentieth century and from the drawing board of Thomas Ross) before the present site for a newly-built, tiny Chapel, akin to a cub clinging to a mother animal, was thought of and approved.

A detailed listing of all the heraldry in the Chapel, by Burnett – quite a study in itself – and a short note on the heraldic executive of Scotland and Her Majesty's Officers of Arms by Elizabeth Roads, Lyon Clerk and Snawdoun Herald, bring the book to a conclusion. Appendices usefully list the Knights and Ladies of the Thistle, the name of our Honorary Vice-President, Lord Cullen of Whitekirk, being the penultimate one on the roll), and the officers of the Order. A reproduction of the order for the Ceremonial at the inauguration of the Chapel in

1911 captures the levée dress splendour of a lost world before the Great War changed everything. The conflict claimed the later middle-aged lives of both Sir Schomberg McDonnell (spelled correctly by Boreham and incorrectly by Burnett), sometime Secretary to the Office of Works, who had commissioned Lorimer and who paid the bills for the construction and decoration of the Chapel, and of Joseph Heyes (for whom Boreham gives dates of death 1915 *and* 1916), the principal stone carver and architectural sculptor. Neither seems to be commemorated in any way in the Chapel; but Wren's epitaph would surely apply.

IAIN GORDON BROWN

David Torrance, **Inside Edinburgh. Discovering the Classic Interiors of Edinburgh**. Photographs by Steven Richmond. *Edinburgh, Birlinn, 2010, pp. 224, illus. Paperback, 978-1-84158-787-5.*

This book claims to get behind the well-known public facades of a wide selection of public and private buildings, from shops, public houses, schools and banks to museums, private houses, government buildings and societies. Indeed, it is remarkably comprehensive in its range, from a barber's shop in Stockbridge to the privileged and rarefied atmosphere of the candlelit Speculative Society; from the mediaeval St Triduana's chapel to the faux traditional interior of one of Ian Mellis's cheese shops; Bute House, the official residence of the First Minister, to Drumsheugh Baths. Alongside photographs of rather too many boardrooms it is good to see Adam's great classical rotunda at General Register House and the surprisingly ornate interior of the presbytery hall of the Free Church College.

Inevitably, however, with a relatively small selection of seventy-six properties (Edinburgh University has a generous allocation of ten), numerous prominent omissions come to mind, for example Holyrood Palace, Jenners, Edinburgh College of Art, The Hub, Castle Antiques, Mortonhall Crematorium, the Royal and City Observatories, Bank of Scotland headquarters, and the King's Theatre. Yet space is found for the relatively pedestrian interior of Adam & Company and nowhere is the concept of 'classic' interiors defined. While the brief 'captions' to the photographs are generally well-informed and to the point, the Matheson rotunda, which was built in 1871 as an extension to General Register House for the storage of land registers, is wrongly identified as forming part of New Register House. In its informed popularism, it is redolent of the polite middle-ranking tourist guides to Edinburgh that proliferated in the first half of the nineteenth century and have continued ever since.

Like the author, the reviewer was also dragged round stately homes as a child by his mother, with lasting effect. One strongly suspects that a significant proportion of the selection arises from the author's professional interests, social life and personal connections, although this observation implies no criticism. Anyone interested in what are, with some notable exceptions, the largely bourgeois interiors of an aspirant capital city would like to have this book.

JOHN McLINTOCK

David Brandon and Alan Brooke, **Edinburgh Murders and Misdemeanours.** *Stroud, Amberley Publishing, 2010, pp. 124, illus. Paperback, £12.99, 978-1-84868-173-6.*

An entertaining romp through Edinburgh's plentiful catalogue of crime and disorder, this is unashamedly a work of popular history. Depending on its readers' expectations, it will be enjoyed as a light-hearted retelling of stories of murder, riot and fraud, or leave the reader frustrated by the kind of book which gives 'popular' history a bad name. We are introduced to the deaths of Darnley and Rizzio, the Porteous Riots, the Stockbridge 'baby farm' murders, Burke and Hare of course, and less familiar 'oddities'. An account of Mary King's Close adopts a suitably sceptical tone regarding stories of recent goings-on. While the stories are told with verve, the text is frequently slack. For example, despite acknowledging that Burke and Hare's novelty lay in obtaining corpses by murder, the authors persist in calling them body-snatchers, and believe that 'burking' meant body-snatching, rather than the method of suffocation or strangulation the pair favoured. The authors hail from Peterborough, and use the term 'borough' for 'burgh', which gives rise

to a recurring irritant: the coining of 'Edinborians' to describe the capital's citizens. One can only hope that this does not catch on. It is also disappointing not to find any acknowledgement of the published sources from which this book is drawn, or to which the curious reader could turn next.
TRISTRAM CLARKE

Richard Rodger, **Edinburgh's Colonies: Housing the Workers.** *Glendaruel: Argyll Publishing, 2011, pp. 160, illus. Paperback, £11.99, 978-1-906134-78-5.*

Professor Rodger is the acknowledged authority on housing in Edinburgh in the nineteenth century, with his book *The Transformation of Edinburgh: Land, Property and Trust in the Nineteenth Century*, published in 2001 (reviewed in *BOEC* NS vol. 5). In the present book he concentrates on the fortunes of one building company, the Edinburgh Cooperative Building Company (ECBC), a pioneering self-help attempt to provide decent housing for Edinburgh building workers. The present book builds on the author's previous booklet *Housing the People: The Colonies of Edinburgh* (1999).

The company was formed after a dispute with employers in 1861, when unemployed building workers banded together to build little 'colonies' of houses for sale or rent at reasonable prices. The best known, and earliest, development was at what is now Glenogle Road (Water Lane at the time) near Stockbridge, where the newly founded company was able to buy successive parcels of land from James Haig's Canonmills whisky distillery. The basic design of the parallel stone-built terraces was very distinctive, with smaller ground floor houses entered from their own little gardens on one side of the terrace, and the larger upper storey houses entered by an outside stair on the other side of the block. By placing the stairs at right angles to the building – a shared stair for each pair of houses – the upstairs houses also had their own small private gardens. The land was not expensive, the houses were built solidly but economically, and the ECBC made mortgages available to help employed workers eventually buy their homes.

All this was in marked contrast to the housing situation in the Old Town of Edinburgh, which had some of the worst slums in Europe. From the middle of the nineteenth century books, pamphlets and newspaper campaigns exposed the terrible unhygienic crowded conditions of the poor in their filthy decaying tenements. Various model housing schemes were proposed but proved quite inadequate against the scale of the problem. Indeed Rodger explains that even the relatively successful ECBC could only help working people to escape from these dreadful conditions: there was no solution to the problems of unemployed poverty.

The ECBC flourished in the 1860s, and started building on other sites, usually at the periphery of the developing city, sometimes in pockets of land bordering the new railways, with access to transport and employment. By 1872 the company employed some 250 workmen, had built nearly 1000 houses, and successfully sold 96% of them. Other 'colonies' were developed at Abbeyhill, Dalry, Restalrig Park, North Merchiston and other sites but by the 1870s building land was becoming too expensive and the scale of operations had to be cut back. Roger analyses the financial challenges that limited the growth of the company, and traces the gradual changes in strategy, drawn from original sources and the company's annual reports. Increasingly they had to rent out properties, unable to sell. Designs gradually changed to appeal more to the petty bourgeoisie rather than the original workers. They reverted to conventional houses in an unsuccessful experiment at Barnton Terrace, Craigleith, and elsewhere abandoned the outside stairs and central spinal road, adopting instead paired doors in a conventional terrace front.

By the twentieth century the ECBC was in clear decline. 'Whatever its statements about co-operation, rather than becoming an independent agency for the provision of working class housing, the ECBC became another market-driven building firm . . . Rather than a radical alternative to the way the economics of housebuilding operated, the ECBC became an instrument of that system.' It struggled on through two world wars but was eventually wound up in the 1950s.

Rodger follows the fortunes of the ECBC right to the end and provides interesting analyses of the changing composition of both the shareholders in the company and the actual occupants of the houses. But the houses they built survive (Rodger notes that none have ever been demolished) and they remain

much loved and sought after. The quality of the workmanship still appeals and their compact design produces communities that thrive. This attractive and well illustrated book explains the intriguing story of how they came to be built and brings to life the people involved in this idealistic experiment.
ANDREW FRASER

Joanne Lamb, **Dalrymple Crescent: A Snapshot of Victorian Edinburgh.** *Edinburgh, T & J Lamb, 2011, pp. 286, illus. Paperback, £15.99, 978-0-9566713-0-1.*

Dalrymple Crescent is a curved street lined with the substantial stone houses that were built in the 1860s and 1870s after the south-east corner of the Grange estate began to be feued off in 1862. It stands north of Grange Loan, between Lauder Road and Findhorn Place, and was named after Lady Anne Dalrymple, daughter of the Earl of Stair and wife of Sir John Dick Lauder, proprietor of the Grange. Joanne Lamb's study examines not only the construction of these villas and cottages, but also traces the personal stories of almost everyone who developed, built and owned them, and those who lived, worked and died in the Crescent up to the end of Victoria's reign.

From the start the Crescent attracted a cross-section of Edinburgh's upper middle class: ministers, doctors, university professors, and substantial businessmen and manufacturers, as well as people of private means, but few lawyers and no artists. Many of these early residents were moving away from more crowded streets in the south of the city. The professional men included Donald Mackinnon, first Professor of Celtic at the University, who like his wife hailed from Colonsay. The clergy included Rev. James Stuart, who rented No. 22 in 1877–78 during the building of the nearby Mayfield Free Church, of which he was the first minister. Among the medical men the most eminent was John Sibbald, who lived at No. 16, 1871–74; he served on the Board of Lunacy, and was later knighted.

Several of the businesses run by families who moved to Dalrymple Crescent were clustered on the Bridges. For example the Cownies were clothiers on the South Bridge, and the Crouches traded as jewellers on the North Bridge, near John Simpson and Robert Dick, who both worked for Duncan Flockhart & Co. Other business families came to live just far enough away from their premises: the Bertrams from their machinery plant in Sciennes, the Banks from their printing works in Causewayside, and the Middlemasses from their biscuit factory (which for many will conjure up memories of delectable smells), also in Causewayside, on a site now occupied by the National Library of Scotland.

What the residents had in common was sufficient wealth to live in new houses on a salubrious street. Robert Middlemass, who bought No. 12 in 1863, and lived there with his family until his death in 1904, was by far the Crescent's longest resident. Most families only stayed for a few years before flitting, usually to elsewhere in the southern suburbs. Some may have moved for economy's sake, but the Hunters seem to have been the only family who were obliged to leave because of bankruptcy. Robert Hunter, one of the builders who speculatively developed parts of the Crescent, had also just lost his wife and daughter, murdered by his insane son in 1865. A scandal in 1886, involving a member of the Crouch family and a cattle-drover, paled by comparison. Life in the Crescent seems generally to have been less exciting. Indeed the author identifies a pattern of people apparently moving there to die, as eleven did so within two years of moving in; she suggests this was down to ailing people moving to a healthy spot near good medical facilities. We are told about the nine infant deaths in addition to 36 births in the period to 1901, but not how this mortality rate compares to other parts of the city.

Much of the book's information is arranged under each address in the Crescent, starting with a summary of the owners and occupiers, followed by biographical and genealogical accounts of each successive occupier and the household. As they are laced with snippets from the *Scotsman* and other sources, there is a lot that is interesting and entertaining in the personal and professional lives of these middle-class Victorians. More editing would have helped shape the frequently overwhelming detail and inconsequential quotations from primary sources. Oddly, a later section includes a more concise and accessible re-telling of the Crescent's history decade by decade, written as if by a resident.

The later chapters begin to draw out some of the patterns concerning the families and their servants. They include a few case studies and a useful summary of the relative numbers of family members and servants in each census year, 1871–1901. Most households had one live-in servant, and many also employed a cook. All the servants were female and almost all left their employment within ten years. More research would confirm whether this was owing to pregnancy, marriage, dispute, or simply obtaining a better situation. Of the 112 servants recorded in this period, 12.5% were Edinburgh-born, while over 80% originated in other Scottish counties. For example, three sisters from Mull assisted in the running of a tiny boarding school, while others came from the far north, including at least one from Caithness. Among house owners from outside the capital, three were also Caithnessians, and evidently had disposable wealth. The possible reasons for these contrasting examples of migration, which represent wider movements crucial to Edinburgh's growth, go unexplored.

This ambitious study stitches together details from several standard sources, including the censuses, post office directories, sasines, valuation rolls, the *Scotsman* and family history websites, as well as documents in private hands. Good use is made of the physical descriptions of the houses contained in the little-known field books of the Inland Revenue surveyors working in the period before the First World War (in the National Records of Scotland). These reveal details of the uses and fittings of rooms, which in the case of kitchens and sculleries etc, will mostly have long disappeared. Plentiful photographs of the outsides of the houses give an idea of their varying scale and appearance, while others show the residents.

In a useful final chapter the author describes her investigation of the sources, by no means all of which are cited in the endnotes. The principal people who are the subject of the book, the owners, tenants, architects and builders, and their servants are omitted from the index. Instead they are all (except the servants) listed in a separate appendix, along with the dates of their association with the street, but without relevant page references. Another appendix lists other street names mentioned in the text, with references to a map that is rather small for legibility. Despite these drawbacks and a few typographical slips, this self-published book has been produced to an exceptionally good standard. A related website offers further information about the Crescent.

Joanne Lamb's study does not concern itself with issues which have always exercised residents in general, such as sewers and drains, street lighting and policing. Nor is there any comparison between the Crescent and other streets in the Grange or anywhere else. Nevertheless her book will be a helpful reference point for future studies that might either focus on a particular street or district, or attempt a broader view. *Dalrymple Crescent* is subtitled *A Snapshot of Victorian Edinburgh*, but much of it resembles an album of such snapshots: miscellaneous information, photographs and newspaper cuttings, industriously gathered and carefully arranged. While its exhaustive detail will probably appeal most to the Crescent's present residents, and the descendants of their Victorian predecessors, this book is a very welcome and useful addition to the published record of Edinburgh's history.

TRISTRAM CLARKE

John & Winifred MacQueen, eds and trans, **Archibald Pitcairne: The Latin Poems.** *Assen & Temple: Royal Van Gorcum & Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2009, pp. 504, illus. Hardback,* €64.50, 978-90-232-4599-5.

This important book brings to life a phase of Scottish culture that is increasingly remote from us: the culture of the pre-Enlightenment expressed in Latin verse. Archibald Pitcairne was born into an Edinburgh merchant family in 1652, and after attending the University soon abandoned his law studies. Instead he turned to mathematics, studied medicine in Paris, and in 1680 graduated MD in Rheims. Moving in the progressive Newtonian scientific circles in the Scotland of the 1680s, Pitcairne showed real talent in several fields, but his politics and religious faith were conservative. Loyal to the Stewarts and episcopalian in his church allegiance, he was increasingly out of joint with the world after the Revolution of 1689 removed both king and bishops. After briefly becoming Professor of Medicine at Leiden in 1692-93, he returned to Edinburgh, remarried and resumed his medical practice. His pamphleteering on medicine and mathematics caused quarrels with the Royal College of Physicians, which led to his literal expulsion. Having penned satires against the ascendant presbyterians in the early 1690s, in 1700 he was imprisoned for writing anti-government polemics concerning Darien. He rejoiced in King William's passing and was more comfortable with a Stewart once more on the throne, hoping that Anne would be succeeded by her half-brother James (the Old Pretender).

Pitcairne died in 1713 before witnessing what he would have seen as the calamity of the Hanoverian succession. All his life he had recorded his reaction to public events by writing Latin verse. His models were Virgil, Martial and other classical masters, and 127 of his generally short poems are printed side-by-side in the original Latin and in lucid translation. A helpful introduction and copious notes explain the layers of meaning and allusion in these pithy, epigrammatic poems. They range from bitter political laments at the passing of Jacobite heroes such as John Graham, Bonnie Dundee, to tender commemorations of the births and deaths of his own children, as well as epitaphs for many friends. Frequently the personal is linked to the political by the coincidence of the subject's birth or death with anniversaries such as the execution of Charles I or the Old Pretender's birthday. This edition of a selection of the poems provides a fascinating window into the turbulent life of a man whose brilliant mind found solace and expression in fine Latin verse.

TRISTRAM CLARKE

Jim Johnson and Lou Rosenberg, **Renewing Old Edinburgh: The Enduring Legacy of Patrick Geddes.** *Glendaruel: Argyll Publishing, 2010, pp. 287, illus. Paperback, £14.99, 978-1-906134-495.*

This book traces the nineteenth and twentieth century attempts to improve both the communications between the Old Town and the new centres of housing, commerce and industry to the north and south, and to alleviate the overcrowding and consequent ill-heath of the residual Old Town population. Admirably researched and fully illustrated, it provides full accounts of the various improvements, housing and planning acts which have contributed to the development of the Old Town and of the organizations, official and voluntary, which have championed or helped carry out improvements.

The first nineteenth-century act, the Edinburgh Improvement Act of 1827, produced new southern and western lines of approach to the west end of the Royal Mile by the construction of Johnston Terrace and George IV Bridge linking the Old Town to the new-built and intended developments along Lauriston Place and at Tollcross. Although not mentioned in this book, the act stipulated that the new buildings along George IV Bridge be in the 'old Flemish style', a clear attempt to ensure a fitting introduction to the historic character of the Old Town. There followed the formation of Cockburn Street as a vehicular access from the railway stations in the valley of the Nor' Loch up to the Royal Mile and South Bridge. The street's new buildings, designed by Peddie & Kinnear, were not 'old Flemish' but Scottish Baronial, a style now thought appropriate 'to preserve as far as possible the architectural style and antique character of the Buildings of this Part of the Old Town.' Also of Scottish Baronial character were the new tenements built along the new or widened streets (Jeffrey Street, Blackfriars Street and St Mary Street) formed a few years later under the 1867 Edinburgh Improvement Act.

The 1867 act provided both improved communications and, for the first time, slum clearance schemes. As a result, over 3,000 derelict properties were removed, a loss of nearly a third of Old Town housing, a substantial part of the displaced population moving to other properties in the Old Town, these in turn becoming overcrowded slums. What new housing was built, a not insignificant amount, was intended for skilled artisans able to pay substantial rents.

In the 1880s a number of voluntary organizations, all described by Johnson and Rosenberg, were begun to campaign for improved housing conditions and, in some cases, to undertake schemes themselves, such as the improvement and management of properties in James Court and Whitehorse Close by the Edinburgh Social Union. At the same time Patrick Geddes was remodelling several buildings in or near the Lawnmarket as halls of residence for university students, preserving much of their existing architectural character but using 'conservative surgery' to admit light and air to the closes and courts where they stood. Rather different was the largest and most prominent of the Geddes schemes, Ramsay Garden, partly a remodelling of existing buildings as another hall of residence, but chiefly the erection of a great block of flats at the top of the Royal Mile, the housing intended for well-heeled professionals of progressive inclination, Geddes and his family among them. Geddes' other schemes accepted the domestic character of the buildings, from the late sixteenth century to the eighteenth century, chosen for adaptation and, where new buildings were erected, they were in a free seventeenth-century domestic manner, far removed from the hard-edged Scottish Baronial style of the mid-nineteenth-century Old Town improvement schemes. The examples given by the Edinburgh Social Union and Patrick Geddes of relatively small-scale 'incremental improvement' influenced the City of Edinburgh's own works carried out in the Old Town under the Edinburgh (Housing of the Working Classes) Improvement Scheme begun in 1893, replacing slum properties with generously planned and airy courtyards, the upper flats reached from balconies, the architectural style of seventeenth-century domestic inspiration.

Between the two World Wars of the twentieth century, housing improvement in Edinburgh was largely outwith the Old Town although it did enable much of its population to be decanted to the new suburban housing schemes. However, some work did take place in the Old Town, mostly along Canongate and the Grassmarket. The notable restorations of the large sixteenth- and seventeenth-century tenements of Gladstone's Land and Huntly House, and of Acheson House, a 1633 town house, were carried out. Some redevelopment of scattered and small sites was undertaken by the City Architect, E.J. MacRae, either rebuilds in much modified form of seventeenth-century tenements or new buildings whose designs were in a style inspired by seventeenth-century work, all with hungry-jointed rubble walling which marks them out from earlier buildings in the Old Town. Rather than Geddes, MacRae, lauded especially for his work in the South Side (outside the Old Town Town itself), is the hero of this book and certainly he eschewed large-scale redevelopment schemes in the Old Town. However, he conserved little of the original fabric of the buildings he adapted to 20th-century housing standards. Like those engaged in the nineteenth-century redevelopments of the Old Town, MacRae sought to impose on it his own ideas of how it should look with little reference to the reality of its appearance.

In the 1950s considerable redevelopment of the Canongate, largely designed by Robert Hurd & Partners, took place. In contrast to MacRae's work, this is colourful, the fronts clad in a variety of finishes (rubble, timber, painted render and harling). Much either restored or replicated earlier buildings on the sites, occasionally of buildings on nearby sites, although several reduced in height so as to obviate the need for the provision of lifts to serve the upper flats. Since 1980 further work has taken place, including the construction of a large hotel on the corner of Niddry Street and High Street, and the Scottish Parliament, its scale, granite walling and relationship to the street contemptuous of its surroundings. Too polite to criticize these buildings, the authors nevertheless express concerns about the size and form of what may come on the 'Caltongate' site, a large comprehensive development which they contrast with the more varied reconstruction of the area at the east end of Holyrood Road.

The authors' research is exemplary but they have been reluctant to leave any discovery unmentioned and the accounts of twentieth-century suburban housing developments rather detract from their examination of the impact of improvement schemes on the Old Town itself. Some discussion of how the architectural and historic character of the Old Town was seen at different points in the last two centuries might also have been undertaken with profit. But all in all this is a work to be welcomed and will be indispensable to any student of the history of the Old Town.

JOHN GIFFORD

Iain Gordon Brown, **Rax Me That Buik: Highlights from the Collections of the National Library of Scotland**. *London: Scala, 2010, pp. 144, illus. Paperback, £16.95, 978-1-85759-638-0.*

This book is a culmination of the author's career in the National Library, a nosegay of fascinating glimpses into its rich holdings, told with panache, insight, wit and learning. The book, the author stresses, contains selected highlights from its collections rather than the treasures: the last letter of Mary Queen of Scots and the Murthly Hours, for example, make an appearance in the informative introduction outlining the collecting history of the Advocates' Library and, since 1925, the National Library, rather than in the main body of the work. But treasures abound and while Scott and Burns nestle in many of its pages, we are introduced to some real gems beyond the over-familiar and well known.

Rax Me That Buik is divided into chapters thematically covering the topographical, the state and law, religion, war, Scotland and the New World, exploration, taste and antiquity, music, art and architecture, science and engineering, literature, publishing and the Gaelic world. Each chapter is richly illustrated with letters, engravings, watercolours, plans and bindings drawn from the Library's collections of printed books, manuscripts, maps, music and ephemera.

But where to begin! With the small leather-bound 'girdle book', a fifteenth century doctor's vade mecum containing religious and medical texts used by the Beaton family; the photograph of a piper, in full highland dress, entertaining a penguin, from a publication recording the 1902 Scottish National Antarctic Expedition; a contemporary English printed account of Flodden; a 1754 trade card for the Scottish gardener, Henry Scott, advertising his nursery in Weybridge, Surrey. Particular Edinburgh highlights are an 1830 peepshow showing Edinburgh Castle from the Grassmarket, a watercolour of men numbering stones in Trinity Chapel prior to its dismantling and Sir Walter Scott's paean to his native city in Marmion.

A particular pleasure are the many illustrations from letters, journals and sketchbooks: the coal miner Hiram Sturdy's illustration of a football match in the village of Newarthill before the First World War; the diary of honeymooners from Ireland in 1849 showing the wife paddling in a spring; a drawing of a visiting 'literary lion' to the house of Thomas Carlyle in Chelsea being shown a pair of his hero's trousers while the author himself smokes a pipe in his garden; or a letter from the artist David Wilkie in Genoa to the collector Andrew Wilson, decorated with thumbnail size copies of Van Dyke portraits that Wilson might like to buy.

This is a book to dip into, savour and enjoy.

ALISON ROSIE

Alasdair Roberts, **Ties that Bind: Boys' Schools of Edinburgh.** *London: Steve Savage Publishers, 2009, pp. 224, illus. Hardback, £19.50,* 978-1904246-29-9.

To a person not even remotely connected with education it seems odd that, while there used to be a wide variety of schools in Edinburgh charging varying fees and providing for people of even moderate means who preferred to educate their children outside the Corporation system, matters have been changed, apparently in the interests of greater equality, so that there is now a stark choice between going to the council school or paying substantial fees. Inflation has made fee levels difficult to compare, but sixty years ago it was quite common for parents to send their children once a term with the fees in notes in an envelope – not something that would be done now. Private schools have played a significant role in Edinburgh life. There have been histories of individual schools, but up until now no over-arching history. This gap has now been filled by Alasdair Roberts, who has followed his book on girls' schools, *Crème de la Crème* (2007, reviewed in *BOEC*, NS vol. 7), with this work on the education of their brothers.

The book must have involved a considerable amount of research and will itself now be a source of information for all interested in the subject. It gives us a comprehensive overview of all aspects. It covers school buildings, uniforms, discipline, schoolwork, games and other activities and has a chapter on what is described as the FP phenomenon. It finishes by bringing matters up to date by discussing the advent of girls to the boys' schools, which has of course been one of the main factors affecting the girls' schools, an aspect dealt with by Roberts in his earlier book. The part that deals with the contribution made by young men from these schools to the First World War is genuinely moving. It is commonplace to talk about the horrors of that conflict, but Alasdair Roberts brings home the scale of the sacrifice made by boys just out of school. It is the finest part of the book.

The book will be of great interest to anyone who has been at one these schools, but beyond that will fill a gap in works of sociological history of Edinburgh. Fee-paying schools have had an enormous influence on Edinburgh life. They may continue to do so, although increasing geographical, as opposed to social, mobility may make their influence less. When the Edinburgh professions, businesses and public service were mostly staffed by men brought up in Edinburgh, the question 'What school did you go to?' was more significant.

This book is a pleasure to read. It is well produced and well illustrated. It is good to see a hardback book produced at a reasonable price. It is elegantly written. Alasdair Roberts belongs to a generation taught to write carefully, succinctly and without cliché or affectation.

The natural style is no doubt helped by the lack of references. It is, however, sometimes frustrating not to have a note to tell you the source of some fascinating quotation. It is possible to work out some of the sources if you have a reasonable knowledge of Edinburgh. The Lord Justice Clerk who wrote of his time at Edinburgh Academy, for instance, is obviously J. H. A. Macdonald in his *Life Jottings*. Henry Cockburn is identified as the source of certain somewhat jaundiced comments about the late eighteenth century High School, but there are many other quotations that I should have liked to be able to link with the person who made them. There is also a certain inconsistency about dating photographs. In the case of many of them you can work out the approximate date, but it would have been helpful to have had more dates.

More fundamentally, it would have been good to have had more about the staff, predominantly masters, in the various schools. We have a few references to outstanding figures, but I am sure that could have been elaborated. It is the teaching staff that makes the character of a school and to the knowledge of many of us all these institutions have had fine and sometimes eccentric, characters.

It is customary for a reviewer to point out errors in a book he is reviewing, no doubt to prove he has read it. There are a couple of occasions where the name of the great Almond of Loretto has been rendered by an educational Freudian slip as 'Arnold.' I am fairly sure that the name of the long serving rector of the High School who wrote the School Song was John, and not James, Marshall. Apart from that, I can find nothing.

ANDREW BELL

A. W. Bates, **The Anatomy of Robert Knox: Murder, Mad Science and Medical Regulation in Nineteenth-Century Edinburgh**. *Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2010, pp. x + 228, illus. Hardback, £39.95, 978-1-84519-381-2.*

Lydia Syson, **Doctor of Love: James Graham and his Celestial Bed**. *London: Alma Books, 2008, pp. iv + 331, illus. Hardback, £20, 978-1-84688-054-4.*

James Graham (1745-1749) and Robert Knox (1792–1862) had much in common, and so do these two biographies. Both men were born in Edinburgh, Graham in Veitch's Land in the West Bow, Knox in North Richmond Street, close to Surgeons' Square and the Infirmary. They were educated at the High School and studied medicine at the University, and had notable but unorthodox medical careers with periods in London; at times, each of them was a species of showman. Both died after suffering a cerebral haemorrhage, Graham in Buccleuch Street and Knox in London. The two books have the same aim, to re-assess the curious careers of the two men without going to exhaustive lengths, and to make sense of their lives by placing them in their historical context. This has been a challenge: they were both difficult and inconsistent characters.

Graham began as an orthodox physician. After emigrating to America he developed a taste for publicising himself in the newspapers, both by advertising and by writing praise of himself as though it was someone else enthusing. Back in Britain, he went through waves of ecstatic commitment to the use of electricity in medicine, then to sex, to religion, and finally to the spiritual and physical benefits of contact with earth. In this last phase he slept with slabs of turf bound onto his chest and back, and was clearly mad: one of the difficulties in understanding Graham is that it seems impossible to judge at what point he lost his reason.

Graham was a showman who courted the aristocracy. Like a circus proprietor he knew that although his principal audience was in London, he could also promote his reputation and make money by performing in the other cities. Edinburgh was not as tolerant of his excesses and in 1783 he was jailed, according to the Tolbooth records, for ‘publishing Lascivious and Indecent Advertisements & delivering wanton and Improper lectures within the city’ (Syson, p. 234).

Syson, unlike some of Graham’s contemporaries, takes him seriously, but does not produce a clear understanding of him. Perhaps this is impossible: he spent much of his life manipulating public opinion and in addition it is not at all clear how well he understood himself. He said that his work on sex education was so important to the production of healthy babies, and so to the future of the British people, that his statue would be placed in every town.

Knox’s feet were closer to the ground. As an ambitious young graduate, he went to Paris where he learned not only the latest advances and methods in anatomy, but was also introduced to ‘philosophical’ or ‘transcendental anatomy’, the science which purported to explain not only the differences and similarities between species, but also, according to some of its adherents, the whole of human history and politics. Returning to Edinburgh in 1822, he worked on comparative anatomy in the University’s museum until he accepted a partnership in John Barclay’s anatomy school, and began his brilliantly successful teaching.

Bates clarifies some important aspects of Knox’s career, particularly the place in it of the West Port murders. The immediate effect was to increase the number of his pupils. Indirectly, however, Burke and Hare led him to his downfall. In the tightening up of the supply of corpses to the medical schools, Knox did not conform with the system of supervision, and with too few bodies to dissect, his teaching was ineffective. After he had moved to London, a similar disregard for authority led him to sign a certificate saying that an individual had attended his classes when in fact he had not, and Knox lost his licence to teach.

His activity now moved into another area, for in his mind philosophical anatomy had metamorphosed into the belief that race explained variations in human behaviour and culture, as well as physical characteristics like skin colour and the shape of the skull. He set out his ideas in the six hundred pages of *The Races of Men: a Fragment* (1850), and part of his income came from public lectures on race.

Showmen produce visual effects, and the visual was intensely important to Knox as an anatomist. It is ironic, therefore, that both of these books are poorly illustrated. Graham is treated to eleven small pictures in which it is hardly possible to see the detail which makes them meaningful, and Knox is allowed eight in the book and four more on the cover. One is a plan of Edinburgh which might have been a worthwhile aid to understanding the topography of anatomical teaching, had it been reproduced rather larger than 42 by 35 mm. Both books contain sufficiently large bibliographies and are adequately referenced, and both are welcome. Bates’s work is so thorough that another biography of Knox will not be needed for some time; Graham, however, deserves more immediate reassessment.

JOHN BURNETT