



NEWSLETTER

Saltire Society Edinburgh Branch

Dear Member,

There is something to be said for staying in Edinburgh during the summer months. It never gets too hot, the air is refreshing and one can attend one's own business without great discomfort. So what a relief to come back to our Capital city after a month of tropical heat in Italy! Admittedly I wasn't expecting the downpours we had in August! The climate is obviously changing under our own eyes and soon perhaps – perish the thought! - not even Scotland will be able to offer respite from heat and humidity!

*But back to our Branch news. Alas, we must start on a sad note again. Early in the Spring another two of the Society more respected and, until quite recently, active members have left us, former President **Paul Henderson Scott** and **Isabel Wilkie** (see page 4). Their passing, alongside with those of Margaret Hilton, Margaret Street and Moira Stratton in the Autumn of last year, truly mark the end of an era for the Society. They will all be remembered at the Society's AGM in Aberdeen on the 21 September.*

After a busier than ever Festival time in Edinburgh we look forward to our Autumn/Winter programme and the interesting variety of speakers and topics. Scottish Natural Heritage, the Declaration of Arbroath, and R B Cunningham Grahame are just but a few of the subjects covered. You will find details of all the events on page 4 of this newsletter.

*In addition to the lunches the Branch has arranged a special visit to **Trinity House in Leith on Thursday 14 November**. More about this on page 3.*

We hope you will enjoy reading this issue and that you will continue to support the Branch in all its activities.

Laura Scott
Editor

Report from Saltire Council

The meeting on 29th May heard about the loss, at least for now, of the **Saltire Civil Engineering Awards** because the Civil Engineering Contractors Association has excluded the Society from meetings. They have been selling tickets for their own Awards Event, which will be held on Thursday 19 September in North Queensferry.

The **Housing Design Awards** were presented on Tuesday 25 June at the Parliament, when the **Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association project at Kesson Court in Elgin made a clean sweep of the Accolades**.

During August Saltire HQ hosted a series of events celebrating the life and works of some of Scotland's finest poets, artists and musicians: *The Heretics, Old and New, Hugh MacDiarmid: A Celebration*, an evening to celebrate *Donald Campbell – the Person, the Poet, the Playwright*, a discussion on the *Gaelic nature poet Duncan Macintyre* and *The Folksong Flying*, a reenactment of the correspondence that Hamish Henderson and Hugh MacDiarmid had across the ages of the Scotsman in the 1960s. And all through August an exhibition entitled *Vivid Rebellion* celebrating the art of the painter Edward McLaughlan MBE.

At the following meeting on 14 August it was reported that a speaker was being sought for this year's Fletcher of Saltoun Lecture and that **John Scott Moncrieff** and **Dolina MacLennan** are the nominees for new **Convenor** and **Vice-Convenor**. Candidate for the Council includes **Susan Garnsworthy** and **Laura Scott**, while **Neville Singh** will succeed John Yellowlees as **Edinburgh Branch Representative**.

The Society AGM will be held at the Maritime Museum in Aberdeen on Saturday 21 September 2019 at 12 noon.

John Yellowlees, Branch Representative

MESSAGE FROM THE CONVENOR

Welcome to your autumn branch newsletter, put together with her customary excellence by Laura Scott. Thank you so much Laura for finding the space in your day to do all this amid the other calls on your time at present.

We hope that members have enjoyed this year's Festivals, including all the events at Saltire HQ, a mini-Fringe within the Fringe. If you have not yet seen it, the Victoria Crowe exhibition at the City Art Centre until 13 October is worth a look for her celebration of landscapes in the Pentlands and Venice and for the portraiture for which she is best known.

The Bridget Riley exhibition at the Royal Scottish Academy building until 22 September is an explosion of dazzling and compelling abstract painting that combines conscious intuition with a rigorous work ethic. Not for anybody prone to migraine, perhaps, but literally an eye-opener for everyone else!

Look forward to seeing you at our lunches.

John Yellowlees

Report from the Branch AGM on 17 May 2019

Only nine members were present at this year **Branch AGM on 17 May**. This was quite disappointing. The AGM is the only opportunity for members to learn about the activities and financial position of the Branch during the past year, to support the work of the Committee and make your voice heard! A good attendance is always appreciated. **So, please, note in your diaries the date for next year AGM on Thursday 14 May 2020!**

After this year AGM, **Pat Clark** delivered – to a small but very interested audience - the **Edinburgh Philosophical Institution Lecture** about the life and work of Edinburgh painter Charles H Mackie (1862-1920) who worked in watercolour, oil, tooled leatherwork, woodblock prints and sculpture at locations that included Kirkcudbright, Normandy and Venice.

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Branch events from the Spring/Summer

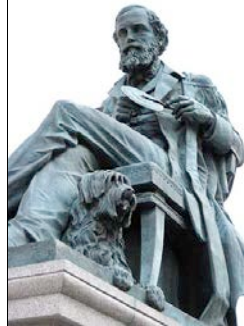
(John Yellowlees, Secretary)



At our March lunch architectural historian **Diane Watters** told us that the National Trust for Scotland's Little Houses in Scotland scheme had its roots in 1930s attempts to save the ordinary old homes of Scotland's small burghs which might otherwise have been lost to slum clearance, shifting after the war according to the political climate and the ever-increasing role of the state. In 1927 architect Frank Mears formed the Council for the Preservation of Rural Scotland which saw the small burghs as a symbol of a proud independent older community. Culross was the exploratory model where, having acquired properties and stabilised the Palace, NTS began restoration of its small houses in earnest using private architects and publishing extensively a record of its achievements. The Trust was at its most vocal when campaigning against generic modern types of construction like prefabs, but it always provided solutions. Architect Ian G Lindsay had created a national inventory, and his concern was for visual unity : he would rip out interiors while retaining slates, gables, lintels and windows. Advocacy of a changed approach was led by Jamie Stormonth Darling who introduced sale to the highest bidder instead of renting to members of the local community. Thus began the approach of a revolving fund to support the next project which is commonly used to this day by other historic buildings trusts, and the 1959 Housing Act helped by reducing from 20 to 3 years the time-limit for having to repay grants so that NTS could now complete its realignment away from landed gentry and towards the Scottish Development Department. When in 1965 NTS sought to restore old houses at Pan Ha' in Dysart, the change was evident as they pushed for profitability, cutting costs and seeking greater flexibility so as to be able to do more, with greater involvement by outside banks and individuals but a new LHiS staff structure with in-house restoration expertise initially headed by Colin McWilliam and masters of works taking on design roles. LHiS had broken through to more affluent purchasers, quickening the pace of Lindsay's one building per year to twenty-five in a decade (plus thirty-seven new dwellings), but with greater speed came a lowering in standards. Economic crisis shifted priorities again with more competition for available properties, and LHiS's focus moved elsewhere with 1990s schemes in the Gorbals and Glasgow's East End until finally NTS's own changing circumstances brought down the curtain on a programme which had helped give it a distinct identity.

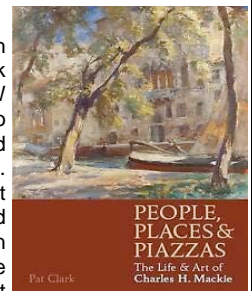


Chief executive **Mike Robinson** told our **April lunch** that the Royal Scottish Geographical Society was formed in 1884 by John George Bartholomew, of the Bartholomew map-making company in Edinburgh and the daughter of David Livingstone, Agnes Livingstone-Bruce. In 1904-5, its secretary was Sir Ernest Shackleton. Geography seeks to explain the links between different areas of research and interest relating to life on earth. And in Scotland, the RSGS aims to promote geographical understanding and joined-up approaches, whilst inspiring people, championing the best of Scotland and presenting the best examples of world practice. After 115 years in Edinburgh, the Society moved to Glasgow where accommodation at Strathclyde University proved inconspicuous and altogether not ideal – new Headquarters were therefore found in 2008 by refurbishing the Fair Maid's House in Perth, the geographical heart of the country. The RSGS has a sizeable and significant network, and has built partnerships with NGOs, governments, businesses and public bodies over the years. These include organisations such as SEPA, Outward Bound and the Royal Canadian Geographical Society. This positioning helps promote joined-up thinking and facilitates collective, co-ordinated responses to issues such as vacant and derelict land, narrowing of curricula, transport infrastructure, climate change plus much more.



At our Annual Dinner, Professor David Purdie told us that the Scottish Enlightenment was a flexibly-defined period extending over a hundred years to beyond the death of Walter Scott during which Edinburgh was the intellectual centre of Europe. Voltaire claimed that it was to Scotland that the world looked for all its ideas on the nature of civilisation, and the number of advances emanating from the city was certainly remarkable, extending to whole new disciplines. The regard with which Edinburgh was held would continue from the Enlightenment right up to the present day. Einstein hailed the genius of Clerk Maxwell for its influence on his own works, and a poll among scientists found the three greatest of all time to be Isaac Newton for the theory of gravity, Clerk Maxwell for that of electromagnetism and Einstein for relativity – while Watson-Watt should be remembered for the wartime role of radar in saving civilisation itself. One in four youngsters in today's Edinburgh is a student, and the University of Edinburgh is reckoned to be one of the sixteen greatest in the world, with only the USA and Israel rivaling Scotland for graduate output. The world has seen three Enlightenments – first ancient Athens, then renaissance Florence and finally on the verge of modern times our own Scottish one here in Edinburgh.

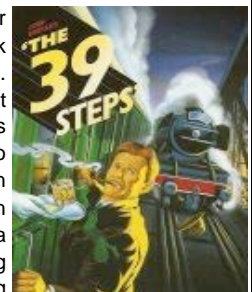
After our AGM, Pat Clark gave the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution lecture based on her book about the life and art of Charles H. Mackie RSA RSW (1862 – 1920) who worked in his Murrayfield studio on all aspects of his oeuvre - watercolour, oil, tooled leatherwork, woodblock prints and sculpture. Gauguin, Vuillard, Hornel were among the artists that he met, and places where he painted included Kirkcudbright, Normandy and Venice. An exhibition to mark the centenary of his death will be held at the City Art Centre from 16 May to 10 October next year.



For our **Summer Outing** seven of us took the X62 bus to **Peebles** where we visited the **John Buchan Story Museum** that commemorates one of Scotland's greatest writers - novelist, biographer, poet, historian, journalist, critic and publisher. Yet writing was just a part of Buchan's incredibly active life. He assumed many public roles, to which he brought enormous commitment and moral conviction - colonial administrator, military intelligence officer, politician and finally Governor General of Canada. Born in Perth and brought up at Kirkcaldy, Buchan was the son of a Free Church minister and a sheepfarmer's daughter from Broughton. A sister Anna wrote novels as O Douglas, while a brother Walter served as Town Clerk and Procurator Fiscal of Peebles for over fifty years.



A move to the Gorbals in 1888 led to education at Hutcheson's Grammar School and as a classicist at the University of Glasgow, but it was going up to Brasenose College Oxford that took him into a much wider social circle. He was recruited to help South African High Commissioner Lord Milner establish a civil service in the former Boer republics, resettling the former enemy after the war while encouraging new immigration, then joined the publisher Thomas Nelson while retaining links with the Scottish Borders through his adoption as a Conservative Parliamentary candidate for Peebles and holidaying often in the area when he fished (and usually poached) the Tweed and its tributaries. Appointed Director of Information under Lord Beaverbrook, after the war during his Oxford years he commuted to London where he became Deputy Chairman of Reuter's until in 1927 he was elected Conservative MP for the Scottish Universities. He served as Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1933 and 1934 before being appointed Governor-General of Canada by George V as Lord Tweedsmuir. Growing interest in Buchan's legacy led to establishment nearly forty years after his death of the John Buchan Society in 1979 and then four years later of a museum in his memory in an old church at Broughton. By 2009 it had become clear that the museum could not stay there, so with the support of an endowment fund the move was made to smaller but better-located premises at the Chambers Institution in the middle of Peebles where the Museum seeks to present his story by such means as ipads, events, an audio-trail, educational strategy and improved marketing.



News Digest



A new chapter for an old friend of the Branch

Many of you may have recently spotted in the papers the news that the charismatic building of the **Royal Over-Seas League**, so familiar to our members for having hosted Branch events for almost twenty years, is soon to become a luxury hotel. After extensive renovations the iconic structure at 100 Princes Street will reopen in 2020 as a Red Carnation Hotel, the chain's first property in Scotland.

Fame at last...!



It was good to see that the **Branch Annual Dinner on 4 May** made it to the social pages of **Edinburgh Life magazine** (incorrectly described as AGM!). It's always gratifying to get a mention in new circles and we are grateful to Professor David Purdie, our speaker for the event, who kindly arranged for the occasion to be recorded in pictures.

A well-deserved winner

The **2019 Saltire Society Housing Design Awards** held on 25 June and presented by Book Festival director Nick Barley and the Minister for Local Government and Housing, Kevin Stewart, saw Kesson Court in Elgin by ICOSIS Architects in partnership with Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association receive three awards. Winning the Saltire Housing Design Award, the CIOB Good Building Award and scooping the Saltire Medal, Kesson Court provides high quality, sustainable housing that replaces older flood-damaged properties. The Court comprises 18 flats and 3 wheelchair accessible cottages all energy efficient, fully accessible and with high levels of natural daylighting. The inclusion of a central garden area with planting beds and a communal garden room engenders a sense of community. On the Isle of Lewis, The Handmade House by Porteous Architecture LLP, was presented the Saltire Housing Award for a single dwelling. Built on a challenging budget, this takes inspiration from traditional island 'airidhs' (summer houses), found close by to it, and echoes the vibrant colour and creative spirit of these quirky buildings.



Membership News

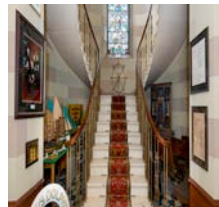
We send a warm welcome to two new members, **Alison Lyndsay** and **Bert Stevenson**. We look forward to meeting them at some of our future events.

We are sorry to report that **Kenneth Stewart**, our Treasurer and Events Coordinator is unwell and currently at the Western General Hospital, Ward 51. The Branch send him very best wishes and hope he will soon be able to return home.

AN EXTRA EVENT THIS AUTUMN!



The Branch has arranged a special visit - free of charge - to Trinity House in Leith, 99 Kirkgate, on Thursday 14 November, at 11am. We are grateful to Eric Wishart for suggesting this and happy that it is now happening.



Trinity House, is a category A listed building which was a guild hall, customs house, and centre for maritime administration and poor relief. In the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Era it also served as an almshouse and hospital. Now a maritime museum. We hope many of you can join us in this fascinating tour!

What they say about.....Scotland

Scotland, that marvellous country. so fertile in genius and chivalry, so fertile in madness and crime....where the vices were the vices of strength...

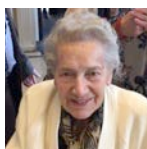
.James Anthony Froude (1818-1894): *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the defeat of the Spanish Armada* (New Ed.1873) , Vol IV, p2

Obituaries

Sadly, at the beginning of Spring, we lost another two outstanding members of the Society and the Branch, **Paul Scott** and **Isabel Wilkie**. We can truly say that with their passing a whole generation has come to an end and the Society will be all the poorer for it.



An Army officer and diplomat, whose posting included Havana during the Cuban missiles crisis, Paul Henderson Scott retired to Edinburgh in 1980, and through the Saltire Society of which he became President in 1996 he grew deeply engaged in bringing about a wide range of initiatives, including affordable reprints of classic works of Scottish literature, annual book award, the nomination of Edinburgh as the first World City of Literature, the appointment of the first Edinburgh Makar and a repudiation of the proposal that the National Portrait Gallery should be closed. Paul passed away peacefully at home on 16 March this year at the age of 98. A Celebration of his life will be held on 4 November at the New Club, 86 Princes Street, from 3pm to 6pm to which all are welcome. If you wish to attend, please contact Laura Scott.



Isobel passed away on 25 April 2019 aged 92 after a long spell in hospital. When Isobel and her late husband David received honorary membership in 2010, they were described as the "epitome of everything that is good about the Society".

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Branch Programme 2019-2020

For its **Autumn/Winter Programme** the Branch has arranged a superb collection of speakers who will address us on a variety of interesting topics. We do hope members will support it by attending in good numbers. The EPIL is free but lunches must be booked and paid in advance. **Do bring friends and guests with you, they are always welcome!**

NOTE: DUE TO KENNETH'S ILLNESS PLEASE RETURN THE ENCLOSED LUNCH BOOKING FORM TO LAURA SCOTT AT THE ADDRESS SHOWN BELOW

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|--------------------------|---|
| Lunches | 12.15 for 12.30pm at the Royal Scots Club |
| Saturday 5 October 2019 | Paul Sizeland on <i>Scottish Natural Heritage, Connecting People and Nature</i> |
| Saturday 2 November 2019 | Andrew Barr on <i>The 700th Anniversary of the Declaration of Arbroath</i> |
| Saturday 7 December 2019 | Jean Findlay on <i>CK Scott Moncrieff</i> |
| Saturday 4 January 2020 | Jamie Jauncey, great-great-grand nephew of <i>R B Cunningham Grahame</i> |
| Saturday 1 February 2020 | Susan Kruse on <i>Highland Heritage</i> |
| Saturday 7 March 2020 | Tom Brock on <i>Keeping Scotland Beautiful</i> |
| Saturday 4 April 2020 | Anne Pia on her <i>Scots-Italian Heritage</i> |
| Annual Dinner | |
| 1 May 2020 | Guest of Honour Duncan Hendry, retiring Chief Executive of the Capital Theatres Trust |
| Branch AGM | 6.30 for 7pm at the Royal Scots Club |
| Thursday 14 May 2020 | followed by the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution Lecture at 7.30pm
Our speaker will be Joe Goldblatt on <i>Adaptive Hope</i> |

Summer Outing - Saturday 13 June 2020 - V&A Museum Dundee - Details with the Spring/Summer Newsletter

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Saltire Society HQ Autumn Programme

- Annual General Meeting & Fletcher of Saltoun Awards Ceremony**
Saturday 21 September 2019, Maritime Museum, Shiprow, Aberdeen, 12 noon
- Outstanding Women of Scotland**
Saturday 5 October 2019, Women of the World Festival, Perth Theatre, 6pm
- Literary Award Shortlist Announcement,**
October 2019, Waterstones, Princes Street West End, Edinburgh, Date and time to be announced
- Saltire Literary Awards 2019 Ceremony**
Saturday 30 November 2019, Edinburgh, Venue and time to be announced
- Christmas Drinks, Monday 16 December 2019 at HQ from 5pm**

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