



NEWSLETTER

Saltire Society Edinburgh Branch

Dear Member,

New year.....same old, mad world.....Whether it is the ongoing saga of Brexit, recently stirred up by Tony Blair's latest intervention, or the farce (should I say "tragedy?") of the American elections with President Trump already living up to his unorthodox views, nothing seems to be sane or sensible around us any more. But we should not totally despair as here in the Branch we do have reasons to be cheerful. Our winter programme has so far seen an excellent collection of speakers and talks on topics as diverse as Forensic Medicine in Edinburgh, St Andrews, the Scottish Enlightenment, the Water of Leith and the Lost Heritage of Edinburgh. If your curiosity has been excited why not join us for the **last two lunches of the year, on 4 March and 1 April**. Helen Scott will talk about Wilhelmina Barns-Graham and novelist and playwright Cathrine Czerkawska will speak about her latest book "The Jewel, the Life of Jane Armour". And don't forget the **Annual Dinner on 5 May** when Robyn Marsack, former Director of the Scottish Poetry Library, will be our Guest of Honour (booking form attached). Another date for your diaries is the **Branch AGM on 19 May**. This will be followed by the **Edinburgh Philosophical Institution Lecture** given by Lester Hillman on "Richard Hannay, 100 Year On". Lastly, our **Summer Outing on 3 June** will this year take us to **Penicuik** (please see separate information sheet). **Details of all events on page 4 of this Newsletter**. We do hope some of our events will be of interest to you and that you will enjoy reading this latest issue of the newsletter.

Laura Scott, Editor

Report from Saltire Council and HQ Update

At the meeting of 26 January Council **John Scott Moncrieff** was elected **Vice-Convenor**. It was agreed to offer our former treasurer **Eric Wishart** honorary membership in recognition of his services to many organisations. The storage facility that the Society currently has will be closed soon, with the books going to a library in Summerhall, Edinburgh and the furniture and paintings offered up for sale to members at their valuation price, with any not thus disposed of being sent for auction. A £5 charge will be introduced for non-members attending Awards events. HQ newsletters would be reduced from four to two per year. Voters had until 31 March to choose the first heroine for the hall of fame at the National Wallace Monument. Council expressed their thanks to **Jim Tough** for all his work and dedication to the Society during his time as Executive Director as he declined reappointment for a second term. A farewell party for him was held at HQ on 16 February..

John Yellowlees, Branch Representative

Branch AGM Calling Notice

The **Annual General Meeting of the Edinburgh Branch** will be held on **Friday 19 May 2017 at 7pm** at the Royal Over-Seas League, 100 Princes Street, Edinburgh.

The **Agenda** will be as follows:

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of AGM on 20 May 2016
3. Matters arising not on the agenda
4. Reports
 - a) Chairman's Report
 - b) Secretary's Report
 - c) Treasurer's Report
5. Election of Office Bearers and Committee
6. Any Other Competent Business
7. Date of 2018 AGM

Members are invited to give their support to the Branch by attending. One place on the Committee is currently still vacant. Volunteers and/or nominations to stand are welcome.

The meeting will be followed by the **Edinburgh Philosophical Institution Lecture** given by Lester Hillman on *Richard Hannay 100 Years On* (please see page 4 for details).

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Branch events from the Autumn/Winter

(John Yellowlees, Secretary)



At our **October lunch** Prof Tony Busuttill told us that the word forensic derives from forum, the place where in Roman times justice was dispensed. In 1583 The University of Edinburgh became Scotland's first to be established by a Town Council, and arising out of the barber surgeons it founded a Faculty of Medicine based on those of Padua and Leipzig in 1726 to attract foreign students and save Scottish ones from having to go abroad. Early evidence by doctors lacking the necessary expertise had resulted in miscarriages of justice such as the notorious Appin Murder of 1752 which was the subject of a case review in 2013 when experts led by Dame Sue Black found James Stewart not guilty of the killing of Colin Campbell of Glenure. Scottish jurisprudence as a medical speciality was born in 1789, and through the nineteenth century Edinburgh University through the production of doctors and lawyers exported its teaching of medical jurisprudence throughout the English-speaking world.



To mark the **Saltire Society's 80th anniversary, in October** we viewed the film Dummy Jim which weaves fiction, documentary, animation and archive to explore the eccentric adventures of profoundly deaf Scots long-distance cyclist James Duthie who in 1951 set out from his Aberdeenshire village on a lone cycling tour which after three months of pedalling took him across the Arctic Circle. Twelve years in the making, Matthew Hulse's film created a multi-layered memorial to a quietly determined maverick and the community that shaped him, with present-day village inhabitants emerging as creative participants, and was made possible by support from the Society.



At our **November lunch** Charles Burnett told us that no image from the flesh survives of our patron saint, but in the great artistic tradition of the Byzantine Orthodox Church he began to be shown as a bearded figure with a good head of hair, holding his Saltire cross. It was as though he wanted a different cross from that of Our Lord, and in 1385 the Scottish Parliament decreed that every soldier should wear a Saltire as a distinguishing mark. In 1390 the first gold coin in the reign of Robert IV carried the lion rampant on one side, St Andrew on the other, and by the mid-fifteenth century St

Andrews Cathedral was a place of pilgrimage because bones, supposedly of the saint, were washed up there and had been placed in the cathedral. James III began the tradition of a Scottish royal collar with a St Andrew pendant, and also at this time St Andrew was depicted bearing a book, and the motto "In my defens God us defends" from the Book of Hours became shortened to In Defens In 1687 James VII inaugurated the Order of the Thistle and wore a neck badge with thirteen rose-cut diamonds surrounding a cameo of St Andrew which is now on display in the Crown Room at Edinburgh Castle beside the Honours of Scotland. Russia has the same regard for St Andrew, and after Tsar Paul the Great visited Britain in 1689 he founded the Order of St Andrew the First Called which has recently been revived by President Putin.



On **22 November** we followed up her 2015 lecture by visiting the War Poets Collection at Edinburgh Napier University Craiglockhart Campus with Catherine Walker, who told us that, reopened on 1 November following a major refurbishment, the Collection has become more rounded so that it tells the story not only of Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen but also of the entire history of the Craiglockhart site. Since 1988 over 650 items have been acquired that tell the story of its requisitioning as a War Hospital and the regime under which injured officers received medical attention there. Arriving with genuine shellshock, Wilfred Owen called Craiglockhart an "excellent concentration camp", but hailed the company that he found there as providing "my free and easy Oxford" : he taught at Tynecastle, learned German and edited the Hospital's journal The Hydra. By contrast Siegfried Sassoon was delivered into its care as a protesting hero, and spent his time playing golf and writing poems in what he called "my counterattack notebook". Declaring that "many of us who came here slightly ill are now becoming dangerously well", Owen returned to the Western Front where he was killed just a week before the end of the War, whereas Sassoon fulfilled his potential as a novelist, dying in 1967.



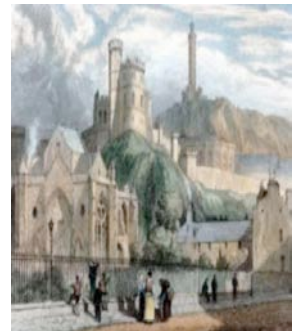
Mark McLean from the National Trust for Scotland at Newhailes House told our **December lunch** that Sir David Dalrymple 1726-92, 3rd Baronet of Hailes and later Lord Hailes, was an undersung hero of the Scottish Enlightenment whose defence of religion was important since three-quarters of the Enlightenment leaders were ministers of the Kirk. As Scotland became a world leader of thought and debate, he transformed into a "mansion of the mind" his home begun at the end of the seventeenth century to a design by James Smith which took its inspiration from Palladio's quest for the spirit of peace and reflection. In pre-new town Edinburgh where the churches, law courts, university and town council were all gathered together, everyone knew each other at least by sight, and Hailes was prominent in the Select Society which excluded only religion and Jacobinism from its deliberations. He helped found the Edinburgh Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, Science, Manufactures and Agriculture which adopted a practical approach to what would be useful in the city's development and his letter-writing helped make literary Edinburgh glow, and he was warm in his appreciation even of people that he had never met. His library grew to nearly seven thousand volumes, and he loaned them willingly to his friends, his generous enthusiasm extending to helping fund new libraries in the presbyteries of Dalkeith and Haddington. Dr Johnson called his the "most learned drawing-room in Europe", and famous trials over which he presided included those of Deacon Brodie, the Douglas inheritance and the Jamaican slave Joseph Knight, and his action ensured that the orphaned Elizabeth Leveson-Gower succeeded to the Earldom of Sutherland.

At our **January lunch** Charlotte Neary told us that from its 1988 inception the Water of Leith Conservation Trust's main purpose had been clean-ups, but an award of Millennium funding enabled the creation of its Visitor Centre which now attracts 17000 visitors annually, of whom 4000 are children participating in events such as treasure hunts. Over 150 volunteers staff the Centre, run fundraising activities and spend time out on the river, surveying wildlife, controlling invasive plants and managing the wildflower meadows. The Water of Leith Walkway stretching twelve miles from Balerno to the Victoria Bridge at Leith is a great walking and cycling route because there are so many opportunities to join or leave it, perhaps in search of nearby places of refreshment. Birdlife includes herons, kingfishers and swans, while the least seen of the river's mammals is its sole otter family. 76 working watermills once lined the river's banks until the last one closed in the 1970s. Today there are waterwheels, millstones and grottos, St Bernard's Well still functions on special occasions and Bell's Weir is a rural delight just twenty minutes' walk from the West End of Edinburgh.



We paid a visit on 18 January to the City of Edinburgh Primary Music School at Flora Stevenson, which is a Steinway School of Excellence with nine such pianos and has occupied its present purpose-built premises since 2009. It is Britain's only primary music school, and music pupils spend the majority of their week in a mainstream mixed-ability class. In addition to their weekly music class provision, they will have around two half-hour periods daily of specialist music – individual instrumental lessons, supervised practice and accompaniment plus small group sessions for theory, aural and general musicianship. Choral, orchestral and other ensemble work takes place both within and outwith the school day, and after their time at Flora Stevenson they are expected to continue their education at Broughton where they retain their instrumental teachers and their Director and Assistant Director of Music. **The School is giving a concert at the Queen's Hall on 10 March**, and instruments provided so far by the Edinburgh Branch are a cello, guitar and African percussion kit.

Hamish Coghill told our **February lunch** that the first map of Edinburgh in 1647 showed how compact was the city, with the High Street finishing at the Netherbow and Candlemaker Row then a country lane. There was no wall to the north where the Nor' Loch provided sufficient defence. It was a shame not to have kept the decorative Netherbow Port which became viewed as an encumbrance and was demolished in 1764, but by this time the City Council had decided that walls were no longer needed for its defence. Lord Provost Drummond knew that Edinburgh had to expand, and the direction chosen was northwards with James Craig winning a competition in 1766 to build the New Town which celebrates its 250th anniversary this October. Here the greatest casualty has been the Life Association building demolished in 1967 to make way for a modern development that includes the New Club. Nineteenth-century clearances were mostly without protest for the buildings were usually in decay, however the arrival of the railways prompted demolition of the 1460 Trinity Church (picture here) whose stones were numbered for rebuilding and laid out on Calton Hill but when a site was identified it emerged that many had been stolen. The George Square development of 1766 actually predated the New Town, being the initiative of a man called Brown but a lot of what he built was lost to University development in the 1960s. The St James Square development was built by Craig on Murtle Hill, but the Theatre Royal burnt down in 1946 was not restored, and when the City wanted more shopping and the Scottish Office needed an expanded headquarters the result was the St James Centre, a development typical of its time that is now coming down.



Membership News

We extend a warm welcome to two new members: **Sheila Petrie** and **Damian Boyd-Otley**, who currently lives in Carlisle but will soon be moving to Edinburgh..

The Branch send warmest wishes for a speedy recovery to long time Branch members **Margaret Street** and **Moira Stratton**, both presently recovering at home from a fall.

What they say about.....Scottish Gaelic Songs

"Scottish Gaelic song is the chief artistic glory of the Scots, and of all people of Celtic speech, and one of the greatest artistic glories of Europe".

Sorley MacLean (1911-1996), *"Old Songs and New Poetry"* in *Memoirs of a Modern Scotland*, edited by Karl Miller (London, 1970)

News Digest

A Trilogy in Scots



Publisher *Fons Scotiae* (www.fons-scotiae.com) have now brought out the last of three short books in Scots written by Saltire member Iain WD Forde. The first volume *Swallae an Amethyst: what happened to the Swallows and Amazons afterwards*, in Scots and English, is a projection of Arthur Ransome's resourceful characters into adulthood and old age, yet still maintaining an undimmed appetite for adventure. HMS Amethyst of the Yangtze Incident, 1949, also features in the story. The second book, *A Chronikil o Scotland* (featured in the last newsletter), in Scots with short English introductions to each chapter, tells of the fictional experiences throughout Scottish history of a character based on the

"kenspekkil" figure of the late Professor Robin Barbour, once Moderator of the Church of Scotland, and a source of inspiration for the author. Robin Barbour is a direct descendant of Alexander Stewart, the "Wolf of Badenoch", and so of Robert the Bruce. The Memorial Service for Robin Barbour was held in Dunkeld Cathedral, where the tomb of "The Wolf" is. The third volume *Twa Owthars in Thair Potestatur/Two Authors in Their Prime*, in Scots and English, is a lighthearted comparison between the great modern writer, Muriel Spark, and the author who, though of different generations and status, shared many experiences, starting with their both having been conceived within a short distance of each other in Edinburgh's Bruntsfield Place. For more information on these and other Scots books (or books in Scots) please contact susanforde@fons-scotiae.scot



A Milestone Anniversary!

Scottish PEN (www.scottishpen.org), the Scottish Centre of PEN International, the association which promotes Scottish literature and campaigns for freedom of expression is this year celebrating its 90th anniversary. Founded in 1927, it was initiated by Hugh MacDiarmid and supported by many of the prominent writers of the time. Today, based at the Writers' Museum in Edinburgh, it includes among its members leading figures in Scotland's literary community, from best-selling novelists to award-winning poets, biographers, historians and critics. A series of events to mark the anniversary are planned to take place all over Scotland from now until December. For further information please contact 0131 226 5590 or email info@scottishpen.org

Edinburgh Museums and Galleries: A Flourishing of Activities



Part of the Lower Level of the **National Gallery of Scotland** building on the Mound is currently closed to the public due to a major refurbishment to expand and improve the spaces devoted to Scottish art. The project will reach completion in Spring 2019. Many of the artworks from these rooms will be temporarily redisplayed elsewhere within the Gallery building. This comes after the **National Museum of Scotland** in Chambers Street has this year successfully opened ten new galleries, showcasing the very best of our internationally important collections in decorative art, design, fashion, science and technology. **The Museum is now overtaking Edinburgh Castle as Scotland' most popular visitor attraction.**

Branch Programme Spring/Summer 2017

A reminder to members of the **Spring/Summer events**. Please note that the evening lecture following the AGM is free but the **Annual Dinner** must be booked and paid in advance (a separate booking form is enclosed). This year the **Summer Outing** will be an open day, no booking required. Please see separate information sheet for all details. **Do come along and bring friends with you! We do hope to see many of you!**

Last 2 lunches of the 2016/2017 series:

Saturday 4 March 2017

12.15 for 12.30pm at the Royal Overseas League
Helen Scott on *Wilhelmina Barns-Graham*

Saturday 1 April 2017

Cathrine Czerkawska on *The Jewel, the Life of Jane Armour*

Annual Dinner

Friday 5 May 2017

6.30 for 7pm at the Royal Overseas League
Guest of Honour Dr Robyn Marsack, former Director of the Scottish Poetry Library

Branch AGM

Friday 19 May 2017

7pm at the Royal Overseas League
followed by the **Edinburgh Philosophical Institution Lecture** (7.30pm)
Our speaker will be Lester Hillman on *Richard Hannay 100 Years On*

Summer outing

Saturday 3 June 2017

Visit to Penicuik
For details on the excursion please see **separate information sheet**

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