



Broughton Tolbooth 1582-1829

# BROUGHTON HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 31

WINTER 2012/13

## Broughton First World War Project – Focus on People

Last summer Society member Jessie Denholm wrote about researching local WW1 memorials and the names of people with a Broughton connection on them.

Here she brings to life some of the individuals behind the names

In Newsletter 30 I outlined how the Broughton First World War Project was being tackled. By now we have nearly seven hundred names and we are going to set up a website. This will contain a list of names and some biographical notes for each person named. In this article I hope to give you a 'taster' of the sort of information that has been gathered and will eventually be available on the website.

### A Well-Known Local Teacher

**Peter Ross** was a mathematics teacher at Broughton Higher Grade School and lived with his wife, Alice, and their family at 23 Eyre Crescent. He was born in Thurso in 1877 and came to Edinburgh in 1897 to study mathematics and physics at Edinburgh



*Peter Ross*

University. He trained as a teacher at Moray House. He was actively involved in politics as a member of a group within the Liberal Party called the 'Young Scots' – they were very committed to the idea of Home Rule for Scotland. He was engaged in a study of the Highland Clearances and hoped to publish his work in 1915. In November 1914 he joined the 16th Battalion Royal Scots along with nineteen of his former pupils. He was commissioned in December 1914 and by May 1916 he was a Captain. He was one of over twenty Broughton men who died on 1st July 1916 – the first day of the Battle of the Somme. He is commemorated on the War Memorial in Thurso and

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Renewed thanks to Eileen Dickie for doing the Desktop Publishing, to Alan McIntosh for proof-reading – and to both of them for their advice.

Ideas or contributions for our next edition?

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or e-mail [[john.dickie@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:john.dickie@blueyonder.co.uk)].

in Edinburgh on those of Edinburgh University, Moray House, Broughton High School, Queen Street Church (now in St Andrew's & St George's West Church) and Kingsknowe Golf Club.

### An Artist

**James Andrew Price** lived at 5 Broughton Road. His father was an iron moulder. He attended Broughton Higher Grade School and was a member of the 46th Edinburgh Company of the Boys' Brigade which met at Canonmills Mission Hall (now Canonmills Baptist Church). He continued his education at Edinburgh College of Art and then went to work for a famous firm of jewellers, Messrs Tiffany of New York. We do not know whether he worked in New York or on commissions in Britain received by Tiffany's. It looks as if he was starting on a promising career – a considerable achievement for a boy from a working class background. He joined the 13th Battalion Royal Scots, became a Sergeant and was killed, aged 24, on 27th September 1915 – this was the third day of the Battle of Loos. James has no known grave and

is one of 20,603 men commemorated on the Loos Memorial in France. He is commemorated on the War Memorials of Broughton High School and 46th Boys' Brigade Company.

### Some Printers

Working on this project has made me realise just how important the printing trade was to the Broughton area. A lot of printers joined the army either as volunteers in the early part of the war or as conscripts after January 1916. So let's have a look at some of them.

**George Seggie** and his family lived at 7 Cornwallis Place and besides working as a printer he was the organist at McDonald Road United Free Church. He enlisted in the Seaforth Highlanders but was later transferred to the Labour Corps. He died on 27th October 1918, aged 40, as the result of injuries received in an explosion a few days earlier. He is commemorated on the War Memorials of McDonald Road Church and George Heriot's School.



George Seggie

**Robert Hall** lived at 6 Broughton Road and worked as a linotype operator for the *Evening Dispatch*. He was a good singer and was a member of what was then called the Bohemian Amateur Opera Company. He joined the Scots Guards, became a Lance Sergeant and was killed on 15th September 1916.



Robert Hall

He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial. The date of his death would suggest that he was taking part in the Battle of the Somme which lasted from 1 July 1916 until November 1916. He is also commemorated on the War Memorials of St Philip's Episcopal Church and of the *Scotsman*.

**Robert Day** lived with his parents at 23 Barony Street and worked as a printer – probably for Morrison & Gibb at Tanfield. On 29th November 1914 he enlisted in 16th Battalion Royal Scots and served in B Company which consisted mainly of skilled tradesmen. On 1st July 1916 the Battalion 'went over the top' on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. Robert was wounded and his right leg was amputated while he was still in France. He was

then evacuated back to Britain and ended up being treated in Dr Gray's Hospital in Elgin. B Company would have started with about 200 men – when a roll call was taken afterwards only 88 men were still around. Robert's injury was one which might well have been survivable but Robert was unlucky in that his stump did not heal. Eventually the doctors decided that they would have to re-amputate. Unfortunately he had a heart attack in the operating theatre and died, aged 37, on 16th February 1917. He is commemorated on the War Memorial of St Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral and is buried in Mount Vernon Cemetery, both in Edinburgh.

### Underage Boys

In the early years of the War the recruits seeking to join the army should have been at least 19 years of age. Many boys joined up under that age by giving false information. Let's look at two local boys who did this.

On 19th January 1915 young **Edward Mackintosh** from 57 Broughton Road

went along to the Drill Hall at Dalmeny Street to enlist. As he was only 4 feet 10 inches tall he did not meet the minimum height standard for enlistment. It was, however, possible to enlist as a Drummer at 17 years of age and this is what he did. Actually he was only 15 years old. He fell ill and died of diabetes in Flora Stevenson's School (then being used as a military hospital) on 11th October 1915. He is buried in Comely Bank Cemetery and his name is on the War Memorial of St Philip's Episcopal Church.



Edward Mackintosh

**Neil Macpherson** from 1 East Broughton Place was educated at Broughton Higher Grade School and at the outbreak of war was studying for entrance to the Customs and Excise Department. He joined the 5th Battalion Royal Scots, Territorials who met at the Drill Hall in Forrest Hill, and went with them to Gallipoli.



Neil Macpherson

On 26th October 1915 his father put a notice of his death in the *Evening News*. In it he stated that his son had died on 18th October 1915 in Malta aged 17 years 11 months and that the cause of death had been dysentery. He would have been evacuated from the beaches at Gallipoli and taken by hospital ship across the Mediterranean to hospital in Malta. His name is on the War Memorial of Broughton High School.

**These are just a few of the stories which will eventually be told on our website**

**Editorial footnote**

In last summer's article we featured **Rev John Campbell MacGregor** who was minister at St Oran's Gaelic Church in Broughton Street when the War broke out. There he held a meeting which triggered recruitment of Highlanders in Edinburgh. He signed up himself, as chaplain to Highland Division; and died after being wounded in November

1916. His name is the first listed on the parish memorial plaque, now displayed in Greyfriars Kirk. Until 2008 his Celtic-style army chaplain's cross was displayed in the Museum of Scotland's *Twentieth Century* gallery, lent by his great, great granddaughter Sue MacGregor. We wrote to ask what had happened to it when that gallery was replaced by the current *Scotland: A Changing Nation* gallery – was it displayed elsewhere, in storage or perhaps returned to the family. We now have the answer: 'The cross was indeed returned to Rev MacGregor's family.'

## The Story of the Music Teacher Annie Amelia Weierter

**John Robert Weierter now of Kelso continues the story started in our last edition**

The reproduction of the label from inside a book prize which appeared in the summer 2012 edition of this Newsletter eventually led to the identification of the music teacher who signed it as Annie Amelia Weierter, my great aunt. I promised more stories about my family who lived in the Broughton area.

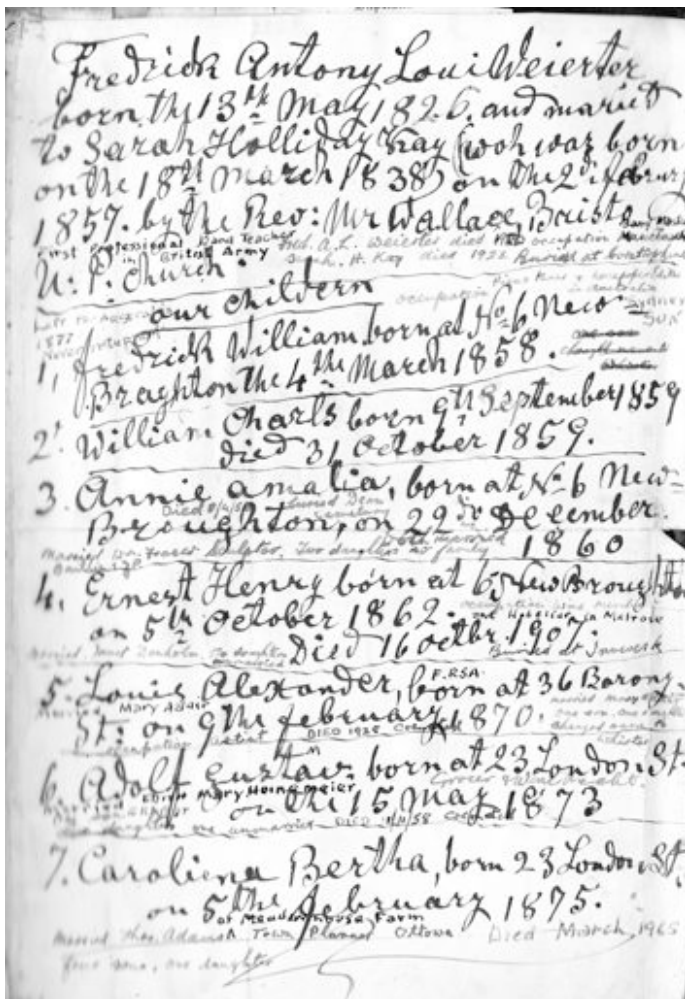
It seems best to start at the beginning. My great grandfather Frederick Anthony Louis Weierter, was born in 1826 in Hachenburg, Nassau, Germany. About 1856 he settled in Edinburgh as a music teacher and bandmaster of the 7th Royal Scots. The archives of the *Scotsman* newspaper show him advertising for piano pupils and I believe that he also taught at Melville College. In 1857 he married Sarah Holliday Kay, a seamstress from Fife.



*Sarah Kay and Frederick Weierter*



A family bible recently came into my possession. Inside the back cover Frederick had pasted a list of his family which is shown overleaf. According to the inscription, the bible had been given to his wife Sarah by their son Ernest Henry at Christmas 1889 and my father had added a note that it had been given to my brother Frederick, now deceased, at Christmas 1940 (when he was two years old) by his great aunt Annie Amelia. I suppose she must have inherited it.



Transcription of paper in Family Bible  
(original spelling preserved)

Fredrick Antony Loui Weierter  
born the 13th May 1826 and married  
to Sarah Holliday Kay (woh was born  
on the 18th March 1838) on the 2nd February  
1857. by the Rev: Mr Wallace, Bristo N.P. church.

our children

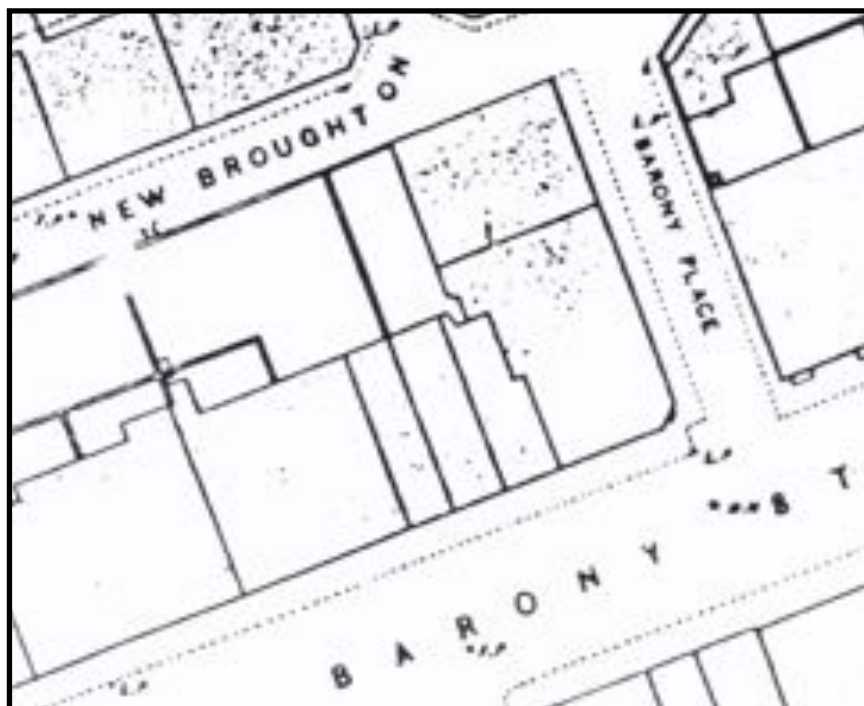
1. Fredrick William born at No.6 New Broughton the 4th March 1858.
2. William Charls born 9th September 1859 Died 31 October 1859.
3. Annie Amalia, born at No.6 New Broughton, on 29th December 1860
4. Ernest Henry born at 6 New Broughton On 5th October 1862. Died 16th October 1907
5. Louis Alexander, born at 36 Barony St. on the 9th February 1870.
6. Adolf Gustav, born at 23 London St. On the 15th May 1873
7. Carolina Bertha, born 23 London St. On 5th February 1875.

Editor: So now we know Annie Amelia Weierter was born in 1860, at 6 New Broughton; as were two of her siblings before her. In his *Place Names of Edinburgh*, Stuart Harris says 'the street of New Broughton was formed in about 1860' – so it seems that the Weierters moved into a newly built house. By the time her brother Louis was born in 1870 they were at 36 Barony Street, and by 1873 23 London Street.

Sources:

Harris, Stuart (1996) *The Place Names of Edinburgh: Their Origins and History*, Edinburgh, Gordon Wright Publishing, page 121.

Map extract showing Barony Street, Barony Place and New Broughton, is from a large-scale 1893 Ordnance Survey map.



**We plan to have more about the Weierter family in a future editon.**

**Meanwhile we're still hoping there may be someone out there who can tell us something about her pupil Mary Ross.**

## Broughton in Literature

**“This was the sentence of the court: the said Major Weir to be taken on Monday the 11th inst. to the Gallowlee betwixt Edinburgh and Leith**

In the first appearance of our ‘Broughton in Literature’ series we quoted from Robert Louis Stevenson’s novel *Catriona* where David Balfour describes his journey from Edinburgh down to Pilrig in 1751. He pauses at Picardy:

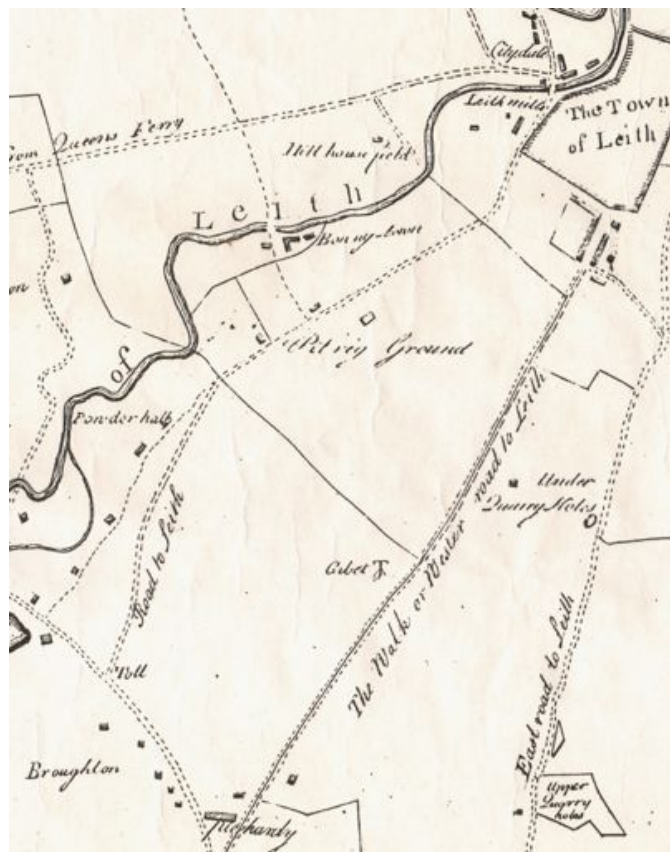
‘Here I got a fresh direction for Pilrig, my destination; and a little beyond, on the wayside, came by a gibbet and two men hanged in chains. They were dipped in tar, as the manner is; the wind span them, the chains clattered, and the birds hung about the uncanny jumping-jacks and cried.’

He’d reached the Gallowlee. In his *Placenames of Edinburgh* Stuart Harris explains the name and location: ‘THE GALLOWLEE was named as the grass field where... the town gallows were put up on a knove beside the road to Leith. They were in existence in 1570 and still in use in 1752; but by 1799 the knove had become the site of the house of SHRUB HILL’.

The references to the Gallowlee in James Robertson’s novel *The Fanatic* depict its use a century earlier. Most of his seventeenth-century characters were real people, including the main one James Mitchel – whose later-published collected papers are amongst the writer’s sources. The seeds of Mitchel’s religious beliefs were planted in the 1640s when he was still a boy. Then in 1656, recently graduated from the Town’s College, Edinburgh he met Major Thomas Weir whom he’d already heard preaching; started taking an active part at prayer meetings in the West Bow; and firmed up his adherence to the more fundamentalist wing of the Covenanters.

In 1666 James Mitchel joined the Covenanter force that had camped in the Pentlands after marching from Dumfries. Next day he was sent with letters to Edinburgh where they hoped to gather more support; but news of their defeat at the Battle of Rullion Green reached the city before he had time to deliver them. A few days later a government proclamation was read at the Mercat Cross in Edinburgh, listing Covenanters who must be hunted down as rebels: one of them was James Mitchel. He fled from Edinburgh to Rotterdam to join the refugee Covenanter community there, planning to wait until the hue-and-cry died down and then return to Scotland as ‘God’s battle-axe’ – and assassinate Archbishop Sharp.

‘Mitchel had been fortunate since leaving Edinburgh. The journey had been largely without alarm. The most disturbing event had come half an hour after taking his leave of Jean Weir, on the deserted road to Leith. Halfway between city and port he had paused for a moment in front of a bizarre spectacle at the Gallowlee. A cage-like iron frame suspended



The ‘Gibet’ at the Gallowlee is illustrated in this extract from a Plan of the City of Edinburgh with the Adjacent Grounds, circa 1759

from a wooden beam had acquired a layer of frost and icicles, which reflected the moonlight and gave the structure the appearance of a giant lantern. Within the frame the skeleton of some long-dead criminal, also frosted and gleaming, was displayed like an old twisted wick. As Mitchel looked, an enormous gull, which had been perched in the shadow at the dead man’s feet, rose out of the cage and flew off towards the sea. Startled, Mitchel turned away. He felt that he was being watched. Seized with a sudden panic, he broke into a run and regained the road. Then, thinking that if there were any soldiers out braving the cold a man running through the night to Leith would be sure to attract their attention, he slowed himself to a walk.’

On his return from Rotterdam, Mitchel prepared himself for his assassination of Archbishop Sharp of St Andrews by practising how to handle the two long pistols he had bought and reading religious texts. Then he went to watch the coach outside Sharp’s lodgings. A servant came out, opened the door, and stood aside. Sharp followed, and stepped into the coach. But by the time Mitchel reached the coach the Bishop of Orkney had followed Sharp in. Mitchel’s shot shattered the Bishop’s wrist, but the Archbishop was unhurt.

James Mitchel escaped, and remained at large for five years. During that time, in 1670, he heard horrifying news of Thomas Weir and his sister Jean. After many years of presenting himself as one of the holiest of men, at a prayer-meeting he declared himself guilty of dreadful sins. Soon thereafter when Jean was arrested she declared herself guilty of incest with her brother, and sorcery; and went on to accuse him of sins beyond those he'd already admitted. The 15 jurors chose not to take this, or any other evidence considered 'extra judicial', into account. They unanimously found Thomas Weir guilty of bestiality, and of incest with his sister; and, by a majority, of fornication and adultery. They found Jean guilty of the incest only.

"This was the sentence of the court: the said Major Weir to be taken on Monday the 11th inst. to the Gallowlee betwixt Edinburgh and Leith and there betwixt two and four in the afternoon to be strangled at a stake till he be dead, and his body to be burnt to ashes. And his sister Jean to be hanged at the Grassmarket of Edinburgh on Tuesday, being the day thereafter."



*Jean Weir was hanged on the Gallows at the east end of the Grassmarket – in the background the West Bow where she had lived*

'James Mitchel's acquaintance John Lauder asks Mitchel:

"Did ye gang to the Gallowlee?"

"Aye, its a solemn thing tae see a man sent on his wey, whether it's tae Heaven or tae Hell.'

"I heard he wasna deid when they burnt him?"

Mitchel shook his head. "Mebbe no. It was the hangman's job tae thrapple him, but he couldna get the breath oot o him. It was strange – he was that seik and feeble they'd tae harl him on a sledge aw the wey frae the Tolbooth, yet when they had him bound tae the stake there seemed a by ordnar strenth tae his struggles. Ye'd think the life was thrown oot o him and then he'd lift his heid and this roarin noise would come oot. The hangman came back wi the tow tae try again and Weir's heid would start tae batter itsel aff the stake. They couldna get the tow on him. They said tae him tae speir for the Lord's mercy but he wouldna. He was shoutin, I hae lived as a beast, let me die as a beast! Sae the hangman gied up and they pit the lunt tae the fire."

"And his staff?"

"That was flung in tae, yince the flames had gotten haud. The people wouldna let them pit it in afore for fear he'd use it tae escape."

"Aye", said Lauder. "I heard that. I heard folk say they thocht it was alive."

"Mebbe it was".'

At some point somebody, somewhere, talked and the name James Mitchel was attached to the attempted assassination. One day in 1674 Archbishop Sharp was told a man matching the description of Mitchel had been seen selling brandy and tobacco at a street stall in Edinburgh. He was arrested and put in the Tolbooth. There he was tortured, for two reasons: to extract a confession and to encourage him to name accomplices. His right leg was crushed in the boot, but he gave them nothing. He should have been released, without a confession there was not enough evidence for a conviction. Instead he was imprisoned on the Bass Rock – where we'll leave him. Read the book if you'd like to know what happened next!



*James Mitchel was tortured with apparatus known as 'the boots'*

However there's another dimension to the novel, another story that runs alongside the 17th-century one. Set in the 1990s, the characters are invented but the context is familiar. There's a vivid account of the life and mind of the main character Andrew Carlin; the link between the two stories being established when Carlin gets a casual job impersonating Thomas Weir on an Old Town tour. He spends many hours in Edinburgh Central Public Library researching not just Weir himself but also more widely into the Scotland of his day – becoming increasingly obsessive in the process. Meanwhile one night on the tour he stumbles on homeless Karen, sleeping rough: he re-routes the tour to avoid her being disturbed. When he eventually gets fed up with the job, instead of returning his costume to his employer he gives it to Karen – who turns out to have her own take on the Gallowlee.

'The black cloak around her was too big and kept catching under her feet. She had to hoist it up and grip it in a bunch at her waist. She also had to manage the long black stick with the knuckle-ended top, which was as tall as herself and seemed to be conspiring with the cloak to make life difficult for her. And there was the baldy-headed wig that sat too loosely on her head: the brow of it was forever slipping forward, cutting her vision in half.... Faster and faster she went down Leith Walk, the big wide pavement spreading out before her in Haddington Place.... On past the bus depot.

On the hill next to it was where they used to hang the poor in the old days. Hang 'em and burn 'em. They still dealt with the poor there today, only now it was Shrubhill House, the social work department. Ha. Even her cynicism felt good this morning. She could see the blue band of sea ahead of her, and above it the coast of Fife.'

Sources: Robertson, James (first published 2000, paperback 2001) *The Fanatic*, London, Fourth Estate

Harris, Stuart (1996) *The Place Names of Edinburgh: Their Origins and History*, Edinburgh, Gordon Wright Publishing.

*The copy of A Plan of the City of Edinburgh and the Adjacent Grounds was bought from the National Library of Scotland's Map Room, with their note '1759? – Richard Cooper' at the foot of it.*

*The picture of the gallows in the Grassmarket is described as a facsimile of an etching by James Skene of Rubislaw in James Grant's Old and New Edinburgh, Volume II page 233, London, Cassell, Galpin and Co., 1889.*

*The picture of the boots is from William Ritchie's Scotland in the time of the Covenanters, page 79, London, Longman Group Limited, 1975. 'Illustrated from contemporary sources' it says on the title page, with an acknowledgment to Edinburgh Public Libraries on the back page for this particular illustration.*



## They lived in Broughton

**This is the fifth in a series republishing articles first printed in our local paper *Spurtle*. Following two writers Robert Garioch and Compton Mackenzie, entertainer Harold Lloyd and soldier/coachmaker Patrick Critchton, we have John Ross Maclean's article about Mrs Charles Dickens (*Spurtle* 205, April 2012). Here we have the longer online version which appeared on the paper's website**

Mrs Charles Dickens (1815–79) – wife of Britain's most famous 19th-century author and social commentator – was born Miss Catherine Hogarth at 8 Hart Street in Broughton.

Catherine Hogarth was the eldest child of George Hogarth WS, a lawyer whose clients included Sir Walter Scott. The family, which eventually comprised 10 children, moved to larger accommodation at 2 Nelson Street (a double-upper) in 1820. They moved again in 1828 to 19 Albany Street which was their last Edinburgh address before they progressed to the 'big smoke' in 1831. They were a comfortable, cultured family. Catherine and her sisters were educated at home by their parents and received a grounding in the 3Rs,

geography and music, as well as the strictures of a French dancing master.

In London, Catherine's father soon established himself as a newspaper editor, as well as a musicologist and subsequent author of books on opera and Victorian musical life. As editor of the *Evening Chronicle* (for which Dickens was a journalist), he effectively became Dickens's employer, by dint of which Catherine came to Charles's warm attention. They were married in 1836 (the year Dickens's first novel, *The Pickwick Papers*, was serialised), and would have 10 children in their Bloomsbury home.

Catherine's sisters Mary and Georgina were highly significant members of the Dickens ménage, and



*Catherine Hogarth in her youth*

the latter remained in the household as housekeeper, adviser and friend from 1842 until Dickens's death in 1870. Mary, who died prematurely, was immortalised as Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

Despite constant pregnancies, the early years of Catherine's marriage appear to have been happy enough. She accompanied Dickens on his celebrated trip to America in 1842, and had

a minor acting role in the author's theatrical *Every Man in his Humour* for Leigh Hunt in 1845. Eventually, Dickens grew disenchanted with his marriage, finding Catherine 'an incompetent mother', and he cruelly blamed her for the birth of 10 children which caused financial worries. Dickens was himself hardly blameless. In 1857, he had a liaison with an actress, Ellen Ternan, who appeared in his play *The Frozen Deep*. In 1858, Catherine intercepted the gift of a bracelet intended for Ellen which had been accidentally delivered to the Dickens household.

In June 1858, Catherine and Charles formally separated. Catherine was given a house and her eldest son Charles moved in with her, but access to her other children was restricted. Ellen Ternan remained Dickens's companion until his death. Catherine never fully recovered from the break-up of her marriage. Poignantly, on her deathbed in 1879 (she died of cancer), she gave her collection of letters to daughter Kate, instructing her to '... give these to the British Museum, that the world may know he loved me once'. She is interred in Highgate Cemetery with her infant daughter Dora who had died in 1851 aged nearly 8 months.

### **Forthcoming Society Meetings 2013**

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| 22 April | Alanna Knight<br><i>James McLevy: Victorian Detective</i>    |
| 13 May   | Helen Rorrison<br><i>A German View of Victorian Scotland</i> |
| 10 June  | AGM and Members' Night                                       |

All at Drummond Community High School.  
Visitors are welcome  
Tea/coffee and biscuits from 7pm,  
Speaker at 7.30pm

### **Newsletter Circulation**

We print 120 copies of each edition. Around half go to Society members. Eight non-members who have shown a special interest get it regularly; and for each edition one or two on a once-off basis. I'm currently posting it to ten other history groups. And copies go to libraries, schools and local doctors' and dentists' waiting rooms.

### **Newsletter online**

We have a dedicated page of our own on the Broughton community paper's website ([www.broughtonspurtle.org.uk](http://www.broughtonspurtle.org.uk)). On their home page you'll see **Broughton History Society** in the left-hand column: click on that for general Society information, details of meetings, the current edition and previous editions going back to Summer 2007.

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## **Apology**

**In our last edition we included a short item about Society member Ronnie Cramond's dissertation on the motivation for creating the Museum of Scotland and the educational effectiveness of its history content for the visiting public. Unfortunately we made a mistake when reproducing the website address where you can find the full dissertation: our apologies to Ronnie, and to any readers who may have tried to access it.**

**The correct address is [www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/5537](http://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/5537)**